



Focus: Recycling & Waste Management

Truly Evergreen

Discarded Christmas trees are put to good use in Brigantine Beach

By John Doring, Superintendent of Public Works, Brigantine, and Gene Herman, Consultant

The Christmas trees discarded by residents after the holiday season are a valued commodity in Brigantine Beach. That's because the city has found an important role the evergreen trees can play in helping the city fathers protect and maintain the city's renowned, pristine, and spacious beaches.

"All of us in Brigantine, our officials and our residents, are immensely proud of our city's natural beauty and our excellent beaches," said Mayor Philip J. Guenther. "Over the years, we have crafted many programs and initiatives and forged partnerships with government agencies and organizations to help us maintain our clean environment and protect our ecosystem."

The Mayor noted, "this past winter we made the final payment and now totally own our city's 18-hole golf course, which we have permanently preserved as open space. Our beaches and the quality of our ocean water obviously are our top priorities."

"Not only are they environmentally sensitive," he added, "but also vitally important to the quality of life in our community, as well as essential to the city's

economic health which, like other seashore communities, depends to a large degree on tourism."

Trees on the beach

Our Christmas tree recycling program is key to our beach management program. Christmas trees were first used in

Brigantine for beach dune protection some 40 years ago by an unlikely source, the now defunct Beach Buggy Association.



By the Numbers Beach Preservation

This winter, John Doring, Superintendent of Public Works and the department's staff concentrated on an area on the far south end of Brigantine Island near Absecon Inlet.

400 feet of snow fencing was erected and Christmas trees were laid directly behind it.

About **500 trees** were used this winter.

Trees were placed behind some **600 feet** of fencing where the State Department of Transportation dredged sand from the entrance to St. Georges Thoroughfare.

Beach work was completed in **3 days**

A **crew of 4** loaded the trees on trucks and positioned the trees.

In the beginning association members used their own trees, and John Doring, Superintendent of Public Works, Brigantine, remembers helping the Beach Buggy Association members collect the trees when he was a 16-year-old.

The trees were used sporadically to fortify dunes over the years, but it was not a formal program until some 10 years ago. Now they are used every year in areas where there is a need to protect dunes or to build new ones.

The discarded trees are used in conjunction with a snow fence to create or bolster a dune and for beach fortification. The action of the blowing sand through the fence leads to the development and growth of the dune. However, the dune begins to form about 10 feet behind the fence, leaving a chasm or gully between the fence and the growing dune. By placing the evergreen tree directly behind the fence, the gully fills in much faster and better than it would with a snow fence alone.

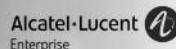


Ready to take your technology to the next level?

We can show you how!

RFP Solutions is a licensed and authorized **New Jersey State Contract Vendor** with over 250 K to 12 school districts and municipalities as clients. We provide design/installation services and 24/7 support for telephone systems, wireless data networks, CCTV surveillance systems, door access control, wireless clocks, and much more.

**For a free estimate, contact
Mike Cuneo – Vice President, Sales
856.686.0888, Ext. 117
mcuneo@rfpnj.com**



Truly Evergreen

The trees are placed on their sides and the blowing sand is trapped among the many needles on the evergreen trees branches. Because the sand adheres so well to the trees, the space between the gully and the dune is filled in very quickly.

“**Brigantine takes pride in the fact that the beaches of the City are award winners.**”

Moving forward

In the fall, beach grass will be planted in the areas where the new dunes were created. This is done in conjunction with the volunteer members of the city’s Green Team, which was organized through the Sustainable New Jersey program.

Last year, the trees helped fortify the dunes in the area from 3rd Street to 5th Street on the city’s south end.



John Doring, Superintendent of Public Works, Brigantine, with the beach-saving recycled Christmas trees at Brigantine’s beach.

Essentially, the trees are perfect repositories for sand granules. By placing the trees at strategic sites along the dunes, we are able to fortify our dune system and protect our beaches.

There is no need to pick up the trees because in a matter of weeks they are completely buried under the blowing sand and with no trace of the branches showing. After that, the firs, pines, and spruces decompose under the sand.

Cooperative collection

The Department of Public Works does not collect the trees from in front of residents’ homes. They are brought by residents to a central location, the headquarters of the Public Works Department. A sign at the site informs residents that tinsel, garlands, and lights must be removed. Trees not brought to the Public Works Department are collected from homes on the regular recycling schedule.

Brigantine takes pride in the fact that the beaches of the City are award winners. Brigantine was designated Atlantic County’s Best Beach by the New Jersey Favorite Beach program of the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium.

In addition, Brigantine’s beach was designated the second best beach in the entire state by Favorite Beach program judges. ♻️

TRIPLE R CAN
Reduce
Reuse
Recycle

Coast to Coast
Residential Recycling
Beach Collection
School Rooms
Recreation Centers
Office Buildings
Green Waste
Everywhere for Recycling

T.M. FITZGERALD & ASSOCIATES

850 WEST CHESTER PIKE, SUITE 200 HAVERTOWN, PA 19083-4442
Toll Free: 888-795-0660 • Direct: 610-853-2008 • Fax: 610-789-5168
Visit Us Online: www.tmfitzgerald.com

Want to read more?

Subscribe to view the full issue at
njlm.org/subscriptions

Already subscribe?

Log-in at
njlm.org/njmsubscribers