

Northern Neck Buyers Guide

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Ever hear the story about the little Dutch boy who put his finger in the dike to stop the water from breaking the dike and flooding his town? Well, maybe that story is too old for most people to remember, or maybe the truth is that the little Dutch boy is really King George resident, Warren Veazey.

Veazey, VP of Seament Shoreline Systems, Inc., is the man on the local scene who is single-handedly trying to stop the Potomac River from doing its yearly damage along the shores of the Northern Neck.

This past week, Veazey installed eight “Hex” boxes at Fairview Beach, a community where the Potomac River is slowly moving to take over the land where several hundred stalwart souls live and enjoy their beach community in spite of the trials and tribulations of waterfront ownership.



For many years, members of the community have worked on beach erosion only to see the wind swoop down river unobstructed from as far away as Washington, churning the water and tearing up the waterfront. As a result, residents have come perilously close to losing their waterfront property, and the Commonwealth of Virginia and the County are coming close to losing their beachfront road and the sewer lines which sit riverside along that road.

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While the Fairview Beach Residents Association has worked hard over the years to raise money for erosion, the cost for protecting the waterfront has been beyond its financial capabilities. In addition to spaghetti dinners and flea markets, members of the Association had attempted to obtain grants from the state and financial help from King George County, only to be turned away because the beach at Fairview is not public property and residents jealously guard their privacy.

After a particularly bad storm last year, members of the Association made application for a riprap breakwater with the Virginia Marine Resource Commission (VMRC) at a cost of \$46,000 – and that was just the beginning of the costs they faced to fix up the beachfront. That was when Veazey entered the scene, proposing the use of his six-sided Hex boxes, which were half as expensive as the riprap, and which allow fish and crabs access to their corners and crevices.



That was last May, 2007. It took VMRC a year and some prodding from King George County to get a modified permit from VMRC. According to FBRA President Tom Hudson, it was the County's concerns for damage to the beachfront road and waterfront sewer lines from heavy truck loads of riprap being hauled to the site that convinced VMRC to allow Veazey to bring in his Hex boxes.

According to Veazey, "This is the 5th installation of Hex boxes, the first one was at the mouth of the Potomac River back in October, 2006. We have about 98 boxes in the water

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now. They've been very successful; building up beach behind them, with no scour from waves in front of them and resistant to wave action moving them or tipping them."

Veazey said he was able to produce the Hex boxes quickly for King George as he had just completed production of Hex boxes in White Sands Harbour in Northumberland County at the mouth of the river. "We made eight boxes for Fairview Beach and installed them over three days, with about 16 hours of work."

Veazey has also installed Hex boxes in the river in front of the Eagle Bay development near Fairview where the boxes are working to produce more beach and are withstanding the fury of the Potomac. That's no mean feat for anyone who has seen storms along the Potomac.

Veazey and his firm may be best known for their L walls and T walls which they have also installed along the Potomac. King George residents have seen them at the Fletcher's Chapel waterfront site where many people enjoy picnics along the Potomac. "We installed those walls in 1998 and it has been a picture perfect site through all the storms ever since. The beach has built up to the top of the groins out to the end of their 40' length and you can hardly see them any more," he said.

Hudson said that now that Phase 1 of the beach erosion is complete with the installation of the Hex boxes, the Association has started the permitting process for Phase 2 which will utilize Veazey's L and T walls to build up the bank of the river from 2nd to 5th streets. Cost for Phase 1 was about \$22,000, with an additional \$5,000 in labor provided by contractor and Beach resident Mike Shrewsbury. The Association has some money in the bank and will be looking to raise the necessary funds for Phase 2, but at least they are on their way, not just looking at the mess along their shoreline.

They can now watch the progress of the sand buildup on a daily basis and look forward to a healthier shoreline for their community.

by Ruth Herrink