



For Immediate Release

Sconset Beach Preservation Fund Condemns Intentional Damage to Geotube Project
Damage Threatens Public Safety, Baxter Road, and Bluff Stability

(Sconset Beach, MA/February 6, 2026) – The Sconset Beach Preservation Fund (SBPF) strongly condemns the intentional damage to the geotube erosion-control system protecting the easternmost face of Nantucket. This damage poses serious risks to the Sconset Bluff, Baxter Road, nearby utilities, and public access to one of Nantucket’s most important and cherished landmarks, the Sankaty Head Lighthouse.

SBPF has reported the incident to the Nantucket Police Department, and the matter remains under investigation. SBPF is also working closely with independent coastal engineering and construction experts to assess the extent of the damage and to determine appropriate immediate and long-term repair.

While it is important to allow the investigation to proceed, photos and video from the site show multiple clean cuts—each several feet in length—through the very dense geotextile material. An independent review by the geotextile manufacturer confirmed that the cuts were caused by a sharp instrument and are inconsistent with storm-related debris, wave action, or material failure, indicating deliberate damage to the system.

Deliberate harm to coastal protection infrastructure is deeply concerning and extends beyond a single project. Damage to this system increases risks to public property (Baxter Road), public safety, private property, and the long-term stability of the bluff, with potential consequences for the broader Nantucket community.

“This should be understood first and foremost as a serious threat to public safety and public infrastructure,” said **Meridith Moldenhauer, a representative of the Sconset Beach Preservation Fund**. “Until repairs are made, the damage materially increases the risk to Baxter Road and the utilities it supports. SBPF is committed to working constructively with the Town, the Natural Resources Department, and state partners to identify a path forward that protects the community.”

The approximately 950-foot geotube installation provides a highly specialized, engineered form of protection at the base of the bluff. The system is designed to stabilize the slope, absorb wave energy, and slow erosion along Nantucket’s most vulnerable eastern edge. Because the system functions as an integrated whole, damage to any portion compromises its overall integrity and increases the risk of further failure, particularly along the bluff-top adjacent to the road corridor at Baxter Road.

This section of geotube was constructed at the most vulnerable and erosion-prone stretch of the Sconset Bluff, directly in front of Baxter Road, where previous storm events demonstrated an imminent risk to the roadway and surrounding infrastructure. The project was undertaken to stabilize this critical area, protect public access, and allow the community and Town to plan for long-term coastal resiliency without being forced into emergency responses.

The geotube project was originally constructed following a major storm event more than a decade ago that resulted in the loss of approximately 30 feet of land in a single storm. Since that time, the system has played a critical role in stabilizing the bluff and maintaining access



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along Baxter Road while enabling long-term planning to occur in a measured and deliberate manner.

For more than 20 years, SBPF has worked to protect this area and the surrounding community through private homeowner donations, without reliance on taxpayer or Town funds. SBPF remains steadfast in its view that geotubes represent the most effective and practical erosion-control solution currently available for this highly exposed section of coastline.

Separately, a recent Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) comment letter related to a proposed future expansion of the geotube system is part of an ongoing regulatory review and is advisory in nature. SBPF is committed to working constructively with state agencies throughout the continued review process. The letter does not approve or deny the project and commits only to the review of the geotube expansion approved by the Conservation Commission in 2025, not the existing geotube system currently in place that was vandalized.

“Those responsible for this damage may have hoped to disrupt progress,” Moldenhauer added. “Instead, it underscores why protecting the bluff and public infrastructure matters to the entire Nantucket community.”

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