

Director's Award for Natural Resource Research

Dr. Norbert Psuty

Director of Sandy Hook Cooperative Research Programs of the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences
Rutgers University

Dr. Norbert P. Psuty is Professor Emeritus in the Departments of Geological Sciences, and Marine and Coastal Sciences and Geography at Rutgers University. He is currently the Director of Sandy Hook Cooperative Research Programs of the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, and is located at the Sandy Hook unit of Gateway National Recreation Area. He is a coastal geomorphologist whose research encompasses the dynamics of the coastal zone, incorporating process-response studies of beaches, coastal dune processes and morphology, sediment budget studies, barrier island dynamics, estuarine sedimentation, and sea-level rise. Through his research and long-term knowledge of coastal ecology he has worked throughout his career to provide the scientific basis supporting the NPS's coastal management policies. Although his basic research establishing the importance of coastal dunes in moderating the effects of storms as well as the detrimental effects of shoreline hardening and other artificial storm damage prevention methods has been applied nationally and internationally, his work in the Northeast Region supporting coastal barrier parks (Assateague Island National Seashore, Gateway National Recreation Area, and Fire Island National Seashore) has been critical in helping park managers understand these processes. He has been and continues to be the primary science advisor to the Northeast Region on shoreline dynamics and coastal barrier change. He has been doing research on Sandy Hook, part of Gateway National Recreation area, since 1969, and at Fire Island National Seashore since 1976. His inquiries at Sandy Hook on sediment supply and sediment budget have been instrumental in forging the current sediment management plan that integrates maintenance of Park infrastructure with natural resource management and recreational functions. At Fire Island, his research produced the Dune Management District that has been the basis for limiting and directing development in the communities occupying portions of Fire Island. His long-term records have led to an improved understanding of coastal dune dynamics on barrier islands and have generated a coastal dune model based on sediment supply and sediment budgets. Dr. Psuty is currently working on an Inventory and Monitoring project through the Northeast Coastal Barrier Network on shoreline monitoring.