

# The Boston Globe

## Every day a beach day

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IT WAS high summer for the region's metropolitan beaches back in August, when Governor Patrick and state officials found \$2 million for the Department of Recreation and Conservation, which manages the shoreline gems. Now comes the hard part: sustaining interest and involvement as the days grow short and gentle ocean breezes turn into winter winds.

At the McCormack bathhouse in South Boston this morning, supporters of the 14 public beaches from Hull to Nahant will fill out scorecards on conditions at their local beach and entire 15-mile system. DCR commissioner Richard Sullivan, an ally in the fight to redeem the state's parks after years of neglect, will get an earful about maintenance, trash pickup, public safety, and programming. The hearing is sponsored by the Metropolitan Beaches Commission, created by the Legislature in 2006.

There will be good news to announce: A \$100,000 grant from the Boston Foundation to support the ongoing work of

the beaches commission, with \$25,000 of that earmarked for volunteer friends groups. The advocacy group Save the Harbor/Save the Bay will work with the foundation to distribute small grants to jump-start new programs at the beaches, such as swimming lessons, concerts or farmer's markets. A major finding of last year's commission report was that programming enlivens the beaches even on cloudy days, adding to security and enjoyment for all. DCR should consider matching that \$25,000, for a true public-private partnership.

Foundation president Paul Grogan admits that environmental grants are unusual for his organization, but the inspired civic engagement that built the beaches commission is squarely in the foundation's mission. "In the funding game you're always looking for leverage," he said. "There's an enormous payoff from this."

The hearing this morning comes one day after ceremonies on Deer Island



Sand sculpting competition on Revere Beach. (DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF)

dedicating a memorial park to federal District Judge A. David Mazzone, who presided over the \$4 billion cleanup of the Boston Harbor from 1985 to his death in 2004. The genius of the friends groups is their understanding of how to leverage that massive public investment, building a constituency that demands the harbor and its beaches stay clean. It's the best way to ensure that Mazzone's years of dedicated advocacy will be sustained. ■