Summary
The Trustees do not conduct shoreline armoring on their own beach properties and will allow natural processes to proceed unhindered except when necessary to protect or advance conservation interests on Trustees property.

Policy
Due to the critical need for migrating sand to maintain resilient coastal beaches, landscapes, and ecosystems, The Trustees do not conduct shoreline armoring on their own beach properties and will allow natural processes to proceed unhindered except when necessary to protect or advance conservation interests on Trustees property.

Beach stabilization on Trustees' land may be undertaken only in the rare instance where the action is shown to have no net adverse impact to Trustees property and where conservation interests are enhanced as a consequence of the work.

Background
The Trustees of Reservations protect more than 70 miles of coastline, including more than 26 miles of beaches, from Wasque on Martha’s Vineyard to Crane Beach on the North Shore. Together with volunteers and partners The Trustees manage our coastal properties for their natural beauty, nature and public use and enjoyment. While these coastal areas are naturally prone to erosion some are more prone to erosion than others and this process will be exacerbated by climate change. The Massachusetts coastline, in particular Nantucket, Cape Cod and Martha’s Vineyard currently experience some of the greatest erosion rates and have been identified as the most vulnerable to erosion in coming decades in all of New England.

The constant and uninterrupted supply of migrating sand from natural coastal erosion is critical to the long-term survival of coastal beaches. Beaches are dynamic landscapes shaped by wind and water moving sand. Without the constant nourishment from migrating sand, beaches would “starve,” becoming vulnerable to erosion and diminishing in size and integrity. The threats from climate change, including rising sea levels and more intense storm surges, are exacerbating these natural processes.
By creating barriers that interrupt the natural transport of sand, beaches will be threatened and become less valuable for habitat, recreation, and storm damage prevention, including flood control. While manmade barriers might help prevent or slow erosion in one area, they also deflect wave energy to unarmored adjacent areas, shifting and accelerating erosion patterns and interfering with the natural beach-building process.

Any easement or property right to be conveyed to other parties shall be consistent with the Land Conservation Policies of the Trustees of Reservations and The Massachusetts Land Conservation Trust as outlined in Policy # 8, Disposition of Land or Interests in Land.

Sources

