

Center sand moved to create emergency ramp

By Victor Tine
Staff writer

PLUM ISLAND — The state's environmental agency has allowed Newbury to build a dirt ramp at Plum Island Center to get emergency vehicles onto the beach if necessary.

But the Department of Environmental Protection also wants a large pile of sand in the Center parking lot returned to an Olga Way storage area from which it came, a DEP spokesman said yesterday.

Police Chief Michael Reilly and Highway Superintendent Tim Leonard met Tuesday with a DEP representative to get the agency's approval to build up enough sand to create a rough incline from the Center parking lot to the beach, DEP spokesman Joe Ferson said. The dune had been scoured out by tidal action so that there was a precipitous drop to the beach.

The ramp was constructed, and as of yesterday, about half the remaining sand had been moved back to Olga Way. Front-end loaders were parked next to the pile at Plum Island Center, presumably to move the rest of the sand.

Neither Reilly nor Leonard could be reached for comment yesterday. Selectmen Vincent Russo and Joseph Story confirmed the substance of the meeting with DEP, although neither attended.

Russo said Leonard had asked to be allowed to leave the extra sand at the Center, to avoid the fuel expense of transporting it back to Olga Way, but had been turned down by DEP representative Ron Stelline.

Story said he was happy to see the large pile of sand moved back to Olga Way.

"I've been concerned about it for some time now," he said. "It's a real attractive nuisance."