

Sinking Sand and Landslide  
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*Undated - end of White Lake where the sand hill might have been – now the hollowed-out area.*

One of the most curious phenomena of the lake shore was noticed at the foot of White Lake where last year a towering sand hill occupied the region between the old Green Mill and the woods of Sylvan Beach.

According to an article that appeared in the local newspaper on 19 July 1894, all of a sudden, the hill began to sink away and in the space of a few hours was entirely lost to sight. Now a great pool of water marks the spot where it formerly reared itself to a great height. What became of the immense mountain of sand is a mystery.

The water in White Lake near that point is deeper than at any other place on the lake, sounding about forty feet. It is thought that the weight of the hill caused the submarine banks to give way, and the big sand dune sank into the waters much as the big sink-holes sometime form. The suddenness of the hill's departure was certainly a most wonderful affair.

On Wednesday afternoon, 23 April 1902, about 12:00 o'clock noon, a landslide occurred, about 200 feet north of the Sylvan Beach landing. The land for some distance from what was formerly the beach is now covered by about thirty feet of water.

Iva Russell's boat house containing the launch Amelia, located near where the slide first began were drawn into the whirlpool. When the water became quiet it was found that both boat house and launch were under 30 feet of water and were filled with sand.

Captain Lysaght's lifesaving crew were summoned and at once began raising the boat. At last reports they had made good progress, having one end out of the water. The boat house was built

during the summer and was valued at \$1,000. The launch Amelia was purchased last season for \$8,000.

Iva Russell, having arrived at Sylvan Beach a few days before, was superintending the work of getting the boat into readiness to be shipped to a New York resort where the Russell family will be spending the summer. Mr. Russell and the workman had just quit working in the boat house and were but a short distance from the boat house when it began to sink.

The article went on to say that a landslide occurred some distance north of the present one about two years ago. It is but a short distance at the point from White Lake and Lake Michigan. A review of the local papers did not produce any coverage of this incident. Perhaps they were referring to the incident in 1894, and just lost track of time.

Years ago high hills were between the two bodies of water but now most of them have sunk and a person can see across the stretch of land.

In addition to sinking sand and landslides, blowouts have been known to occur. Blowouts are sandy bowl like depressions in a sand dune caused by the removal of sediments by wind. They tend to form when the wind erodes into patches of bear sand where there has been reduction or damage to vegetation.

There are several ways to preserve sand dunes, including:

Planting native vegetation to help trap sand and stabilize sediments. Beach nourishment which adds sand to eroded dunes and beaches to help restore their height and width. This was often done with the sand that was dredged out of the channel in years past. Reducing human activity and limiting access to dunes by building paths and walkovers to prevent trampling of the area.