

# \$12M dredging begins

Moriches Inlet to be freed of sand clogging waters

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has begun a \$12 million emergency dredging of Moriches Inlet to remove heavy sand buildup, caused by several powerful nor'easters, that created hazardous boating conditions, federal and state officials announced Friday.

Four storms last winter created a buildup of 300,000 cubic yards of sand, clogging the inlet, which feeds Moriches Bay and sits between Smith Point County Park and Cupogue Beach County Park in Brookhaven and Southampton towns.

The inlet provides access to the Atlantic Ocean and is a major economic driver for marine-related businesses in the region.

"Failure to dredge these vital waterways would not only cause economic hardship and create a public safety crisis, but will bring about significant environmental issues," Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-Shirley) said at a news conference Friday at the U.S. Coast Guard Station in East Moriches. "Moriches Inlet provides a criti-



View looking south toward Moriches Inlet where emergency dredging is removing built-up sand.

cal environmental function, allowing the transfer of water between the bay and ocean. Without this exchange, the bay would become stagnant and the subsequent lack of oxygen in the water would threaten local marine life."

Since mid-March, the Coast Guard has advised against boat travel through the inlet because of significant shoaling, with mariners encouraged to find alternate navigable routes.

Zeldin in March asked the Army Corps for an emergency declaration to expedite dredg-

ing of the inlet. The emergency declaration was approved in April, allowing the Army Corps to coordinate funding and permits.

In June, House and Senate lawmakers announced that \$12.25 million in funding for the work was included in the Army Corps' fiscal 2018 work plan.

"It is full steam ahead for the Moriches Inlet emergency dredge that local fishermen, boaters, businesses and first responders desperately need to navigate this crucial waterway," Senate Minority Leader Chuck

Schumer (D-N.Y.) said in a statement.

Sand removed from the inlet will be placed at Smith Point County Park in Shirley to address beach erosion, restore dunes, support the boardwalk and defend the beach against future storms, officials said.

Moriches Inlet last had an emergency dredging after superstorm Sandy in 2012.

While \$12 million is enough to complete the emergency work, a more complete dredging of the inlet will cost an additional \$6 million, officials said.

## AAA warns LI motorists to watch for deer

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AAA Northeast is warning drivers, particularly in eastern Suffolk County, to be on the lookout for deer darting out from the woods during the evening hours.

A total of 566 motorists on Long Island — 555 in Suffolk and 11 in Nassau County — struck a deer in 2016, according to state Department of Motor Vehicle crash data analyzed by AAA.

The majority of those crashes occurred from October through December, the worst months statistically for deer strikes, AAA said.

During the final three months of 2016, 273 drivers struck a deer while traversing Suffolk roadways and 10 additional motorists hit one in Nassau, according to

the latest state data available on animal collisions.

"Striking a deer can be extremely dangerous, with the animal possibly going through the windshield, seriously injuring or killing the driver and passengers," said AAA spokesman Robert Sinclair.

Deer strikes have been declining on Long Island over the past three years, with 766 collisions in 2014 and 629 in 2015, the DMV data shows.

The majority of the crashes occurred in eastern Suffolk. In 2016, there were 152 deer strikes in the town of Southold, 95 in Brookhaven, 83 in Southampton, 68 in Riverhead and 65 in East Hampton, according to the data.

In total, there were 9,720 deer strikes across the state during the final three months of

2016, or equal to one every 15 minutes, AAA found.

The data shows deer strikes were more common in upstate counties. Orange County led the way with 581 deer strikes, followed by Monroe County with 469 and Erie County with 398, according to the transportation watchdog.

Deer strikes were far less frequent in the five boroughs with eight in Staten Island and four in the Bronx, AAA reported.

Deer, primarily nocturnal animals, were most often struck by drivers at night, according to the data. Crashes were most common at dusk, AAA found, from 5 to 7 p.m. during the evening rush hours.

While the natural tendency is to swerve to avoid striking a deer, AAA said evasive maneu-

vers can be dangerous.

Swerving to the right, particularly on a county road, could send the vehicle into a tree or light pole, while lurching to the left could cause a crash with another vehicle, AAA said. Hitting hard on the brakes is also not recommended, AAA said, which could send the front end of the vehicle into a nose dive, allowing the animal to roll up on the hood and through the windshield.

To avoid striking a deer, AAA suggests:

- Scanning the shoulders of the road as deer may dash out from wooded areas.
- Obeying the speed limit to give the driver more time to react to unexpected animal movement.
- Gently applying the brakes to lessen the energy of the crash.

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**THIS DATE IN HISTORY**

**1927** The era of talking pictures arrived with the opening of "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson.

**1973** War erupted in the Middle East as Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during the Yom Kippur holiday. (Israel, initially caught off guard, managed to push back the Arab forces before a cease-fire finally took hold in the nearly three-week conflict.)

**1981** Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade.

**1989** Actress Bette Davis died in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, at age 81.

**2008** As Wall Street reeled and global markets plunged, President George W. Bush said the U.S. economy was going to be "just fine" in the long run, but cautioned that the massive rescue plan would take time to work.

**2017** The board of directors of The Weinstein Co. said movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was on indefinite leave from the company he founded amid an internal investigation into sexual harassment allegations against him.