



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, New York 11772
(631) 687-4750

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7615(FIIS-Dredging EA)

September 5, 2013

Dear Fire Island National Seashore Stakeholders and Cooperators:

The National Park Service (NPS) has released for public review an environmental assessment (EA) for a project that proposes to dredge the existing navigational channels and their associated marinas and docking facilities at three sites on Fire Island. The purpose of the project is to re-establish safe, public access to NPS facilities in the aftermath of multiple storm events, including Hurricane Sandy which occurred in October of 2012.

Navigation channels at these locations provide vessel access that is utilized by the general public, concession operated ferries, NPS personnel, law enforcement, emergency response vessels, and others. Sediment that has accumulated in the navigation channels, marinas and around some of the docking facilities at these three areas has caused the channels to narrow to a width significantly below the width considered adequate for safe passage. Restoring channel depths and widths to their previous dimensions through re-dredging will provide the required, continued safe access to Fire Island at the project areas.

Continuation of current conditions would ultimately result in damage to natural resources and property damage to vessels, and possible injury to vessel operators and passengers from boats running aground. Ultimately, if left un-dredged the channels would no longer be navigable and would lead to the cancellation of ferry operations, the inability of concessionaires to service their businesses, and the loss of public access to some Fire Island National Seashore facilities.

The EA was completed in accordance with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality.

No public meetings are planned for this project. Notification of the EA has been made to the State of New York, various federal agencies, affected communities, area landowners, and parties who have expressed an interest in this project. A copy of the EA can be downloaded from the National Park Service Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) webpage.

The National Park Service encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process. The EA comment period will extend 30 days beginning September 9 through October 9, 2013. Please submit comments regarding the project: **EA for Dredge Sailors Haven, Watch Hill, and Barrett Beach Channels and Marinas for Public Use and Safety** electronically through the PEPC web site at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/fiis> or by mail to:

Fire Island National Seashore
Attn: Superintendent – Dredging EA Scoping Comments
120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, NY 11772-3596

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chris Soller". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

K. Christopher Soller, Superintendent