



# **Public Scoping Comment Summary Report**

## **Wilderness Breach Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement**



**February 2016**

*This page intentionally left blank*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Summary of the Scoping Process.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Definition of Terms.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Scoping Comment Analysis.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Content Analysis .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Public Scoping Comments.....</b>	<b>8</b>
AL1000 – Suggests a New Alternative or Alternative Elements.....	8
AL1100 – Supports Leaving the Breach Open and Managing Under Natural Conditions.....	13
AL1200 – Supports Closing the Breach .....	35
AL1210 – Opposed Closing the Breach .....	41
AL1300 – Supports Leaving the Breach Open and Establishing Procedures for Closing the Breach if Certain Conditions Occur.....	50
AL1400 – Supports Stabilizing the Breach to Provide a Permanent Inlet.....	55
AL1410 – Opposes Stabilizing the Breach to Provide a Permanent Inlet .....	61
BR1000 – Comments Related to the Cost of Implementing the Alternatives .....	62
BR3000 – Comments Related to Data Quality .....	63
NE1000 – Comments Related to the Scope of the Analysis .....	68
NE2000 – Comments Related to Public Involvement .....	73
NE3000 – Comments Related to Refinement of the Alternatives .....	74
OS1000 – Out of Scope .....	75
TO1100 – Comments Related to Physical Processes.....	80
TO2200 – Comments Related to Fish/Aquatic Communities .....	82
TO2300 – Comments Related to SAV.....	85
TO2400 – Comments Related to Special-Status Species.....	86
TO2500 – Comments Related to Wildlife .....	87
TO4100 – Comments Related to Access and Emergency Management.....	88
TO5000 – Comments Related to Wilderness and Wilderness Management .....	92
TO6000 – Comments Related to Economic Impacts.....	96
TO6100 – Comments Related to Flood Risk and Storm Damage .....	97

*This page intentionally left blank*

## INTRODUCTION

---

The National Park Service (NPS) has initiated a planning process to support a decision on how to manage the breach that was created within the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness Area (the wilderness) of Fire Island National Seashore (the Seashore) during Hurricane Sandy. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the NPS will prepare a Wilderness Breach Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (the plan/EIS) to provide a thorough evaluation to determine the potential benefits and consequences of management alternatives prior to making a decision on how to manage the wilderness breach.

## SUMMARY OF THE SCOPING PROCESS

---

An initial step in the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping is a process of collecting information to assist in the identification of management alternatives and issues relevant to analysis of the benefits and consequences of those alternatives. Scoping includes both internal – within the NPS – and external – with federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise; non-governmental entities; other interested and affected parties; and the general public.

On August 31, 2015, the NPS released a Public Scoping Newsletter for the plan/EIS to invite the public, agencies, and stakeholders to submit comments and engage in the planning process. A Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on September 8, 2015. On September 9, 2015 the NPS issued a press release to area news organizations. Information was also posted to the Seashore's website and Facebook page.

The scoping newsletter included a description of the purpose and need, a description of wilderness and how wilderness is managed, the desired outcome for the plan, the benefits and consequences of an open breach, and potential alternatives. The scoping newsletter listed four topic questions to prompt responses from the public:

1. What issues or concerns do you have about the wilderness breach that the National Park Service needs to consider in preparing the plan/EIS?
2. Does the desired outcome described on page 1 reflect what you think needs to be accomplished through this planning process?
3. If not, what else do you think needs to be accomplished?
4. Are there other strategies for managing the breach that have not been presented that you think should be considered?

The scoping newsletter is available at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/FireIslandBreachManagementPlan>.

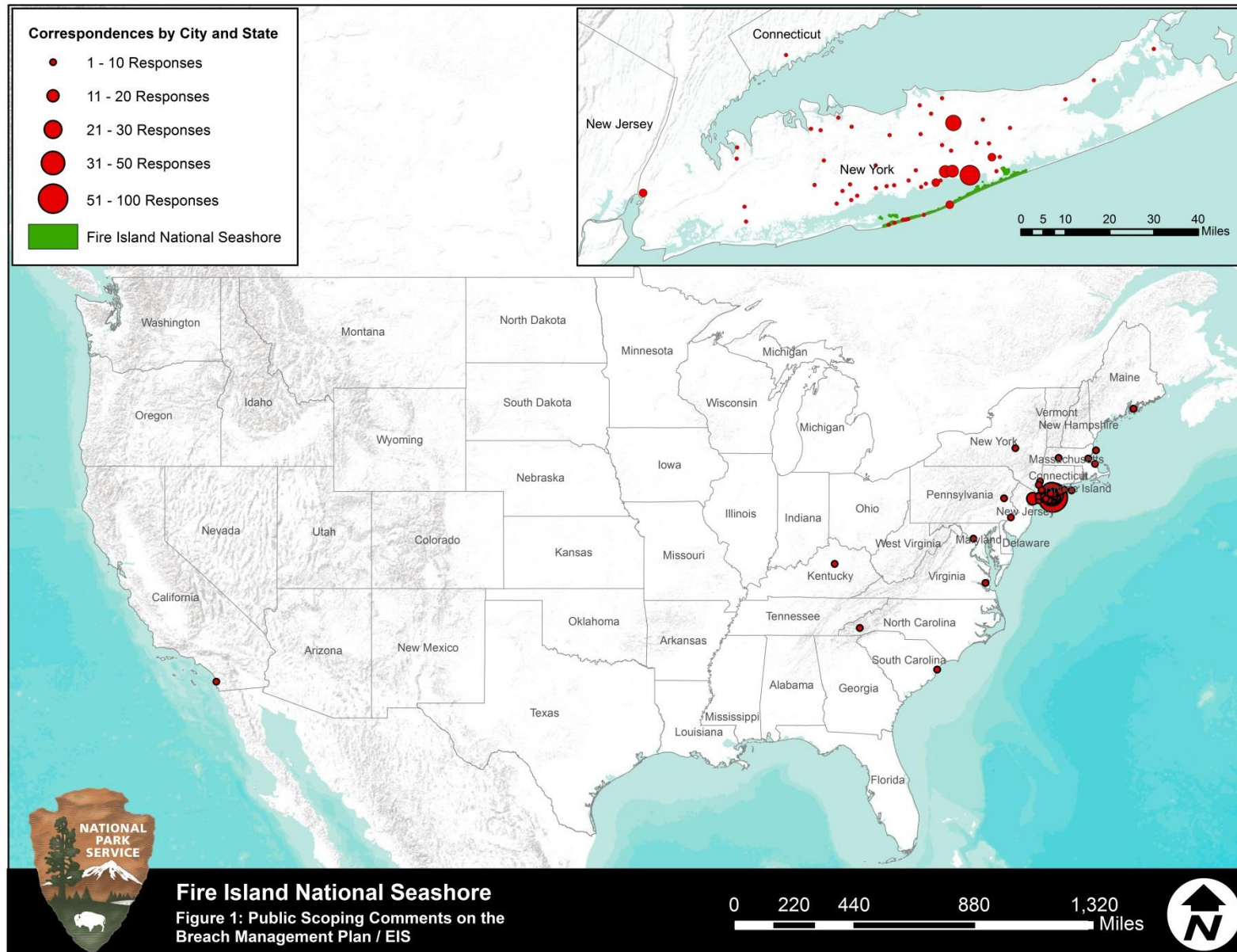
The public scoping comment period was open from August 31 through October 8, 2015. The public were able to submit their comments on the project electronically through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website and by mailing comments to the park. All comments received via mail and email were transcribed into the PEPC system. During the public comment period, 366 individual correspondences were received. Of these, a majority (355 correspondences) were submitted directly through the PEPC system.

Commenters will continue to be notified of the project's progress, and are encouraged to visit the NPS PEPC website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/FireIslandBreachManagementPlan> to view information about this project.

Table 1 presents the geographic distribution of public comments received during public scoping. Only 3 comments were submitted without demographic information, representing approximately 0.8 % of the correspondences received. Figure 1 presents a visual distribution of the public scoping comments by state.

<b>Table 1: Geographic Distribution of Public Scoping Comments by State</b>		
<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Correspondences</b>	<b>Percentage of Correspondences</b>
New York	348	95.1 %
Massachusetts	4	1.1 %
Maryland	2	0.5 %
Pennsylvania	2	0.5 %
California	1	0.3 %
Connecticut	1	0.5 %
Kentucky	1	0.3 %
Maine	1	0.3 %
North Carolina	1	0.3 %
South Carolina	1	0.3 %
Virginia	1	0.3 %





In addition to the general public, members of the following agencies and organizations submitted comments on the plan/EIS:

- Beaver Dam Boat Basin
- Bellport Bay Sailing Foundation Inc.
- Bellport Bay Yacht Club
- Bellport Sails
- Brookhaven Village Association
- Carmans River Maritime Center (CRMC)
- Citizens Campaign for the Environment
- Citizens for Clean Water Ways
- Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island (CRESLI)
- Davis Park Association
- Descience Laboratories
- East Islip Anglers
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Fire Island Ecology
- Fire Place History Club
- Friends of Bellport Bay
- Great South Bay Yacht Racing Association (GSBYRA)
- Green Party
- Healthy Planet
- Idle Hour Civic Association
- Interstate Dry Well Environmental Preservation
- Kayak Fishing Association of New York
- Long Island Beach Access Group (LIBAG)
- Long Island Contractors Association
- Long Island Friends of Clearwater
- Long Island Traditions
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Ocean Bay Park Association
- PeaceSmiths
- Save the Great South Bay
- Seatuck Environmental Association
- South Bay Cruising Club (SBCC)
- South Shore Boat Yard Inc.
- State University of New York Oneonta Biological Field Station
- Suffolk County Historical Society
- The Nature Conservancy, Mashomack Preserve
- The Nature Conservancy, New York
- Town of Brookhaven
- U.S. Coast Guard Aux Islip
- United States Power Squadrons (USPS) Moriches Bay
- Western Carolina University Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines



## DEFINITION OF TERMS

---

Primary terms used in this document are defined below.

***Correspondence:*** A correspondence is the entire document received from a commenter. It can be in the form of a letter, email, written comment form, note card, or petition. Each piece of correspondence is assigned a unique identification number in the PEPC system.

***Comment:*** A comment is a portion of the text within a correspondence that addresses a single subject. It should include information such as an expression of support or opposition to the use of a potential management tool, additional data regarding an existing condition, or an opinion debating the adequacy of the analysis.

## SCOPING COMMENT ANALYSIS

---

Comment analysis is a process used to compile and combine similar public comments into a format that can be used by decision makers and the project team responsible for preparing the plan/EIS. In the scoping phase, comment analysis helps the project team to refine alternatives and issues to be evaluated and considered in the plan/EIS.

Comment analysis will help the project team organize and clarify technical information, refine the scope of the plan/EIS, define alternatives and issues to be addressed, and effectively evaluate potential impacts associated with the alternatives.

A coding structure was developed to capture the content of all the comments received and to help sort comments into logical groups by topic and issue. The coding structure was derived from an analysis of the range of topics discussed during internal NPS scoping and from comments received from members of the public. Comments were coded into the following categories:

- New alternatives or alternative elements
- Support and opposition for the alternatives
- Cost of implementing the alternatives
- Refinement of the alternatives
- Data quality
- Scope of the analysis
- Public Involvement
- Physical processes
- Aquatic communities, wildlife, and special-status species
- Management of wilderness
- Access and emergency management
- Water level changes, flood risk, and storm damage
- Economic impacts

## CONTENT ANALYSIS

---

The following tables are produced from PEPC and provides information on the numbers and types of comments received, organized by code. Table 2 presents the coding structure used to analyze the comments and the distribution of comments within those codes. Tables 3 and 4 provide general demographic information, including the types of correspondences received and the correspondences received from organization types, respectively.

Table 2: Correspondence Distribution by Code			
Code	Description	Number of Correspondences	Number of Signatures
AL1000	Suggests a new alternative or alternative elements	37	37
AL1100	Supports leaving the breach open and managing under natural conditions	154	154
AL1200	Supports closing the breach	32	33
AL1210	Opposes closing the breach	76	76
AL1300	Supports leaving the breach open and establishing procedures for closing the breach if certain conditions occur	27	27
AL1400	Supports stabilizing the breach to provide a permanent inlet	45	45
AL1410	Opposes stabilizing the breach to provide a permanent inlet	8	8
BR1000	Comments related to the cost of implementing the alternatives	3	3
BR3000	Comments related to data quality	22	22
NE1000	Comments related to the scope of the analysis	16	16
NE2000	Comments related to public involvement	3	3
NE3000	Comments related to refinement of the alternatives	1	1
OS1000	Out of scope	27	27
TO1100	Comments related to physical processes	8	8
TO2200	Comments related to fish/aquatic communities	12	13
TO2300	Comments related to SAV	4	4
TO2400	Comments related to special-status species	2	2
TO2500	Comments related to wildlife	3	3
TO4100	Comments related to access and emergency management	23	24

Table 2: Correspondence Distribution by Code			
Code	Description	Number of Correspondences	Number of Signatures
TO5000	Comments related to wilderness and wilderness management	18	18
TO6000	Comments related to economic impacts	6	6
TO6100	Comments related to flood risk and storm damage	33	34

Table 3: Correspondence Count by Correspondence Type	
Type of Correspondence	Number of Correspondences
Web Form	355
Letter	5
E-mail	4
Park Form	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>366</b>

Table 4: Correspondence Count by Organization Type		
Organization Type	Number of Correspondences	Percentage of Correspondences
Conservation/Preservation	3	0.8%
Non-Governmental	1	0.3%
Unaffiliated Individual	362	98.9%

## PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENTS

---

This section provides the comments received during the scoping process. These comments are organized by the codes presented in table 2. The comments have been taken directly from the text of the public's correspondences and have not been edited; therefore, spelling and grammar errors have not been corrected.

### AL1000 – SUGGESTS A NEW ALTERNATIVE OR ALTERNATIVE ELEMENTS

**Correspondence Id:** 284 **Comment Id:** 474830

**Comment Text:** Make it a navigable water way. It will bring business into the great South Bay for both the main land and the barrier island. Also there is no bridge to obstruct traffic.

**Correspondence Id:** 318 **Comment Id:** 471787

**Comment Text:** Leave in natural state and dredge if begins to close

**Correspondence Id:** 325 **Comment Id:** 471818

**Comment Text:** The area around the breach is narrow and susceptible to another breach. Closing and building a dune and beach great enough to offer reasonable protection from another storm once the breach is closed is paramount. If you just close it this will happen again in short order. A simple close does not put this issue to rest.

**Correspondence Id:** 341 **Comment Id:** 471890

**Comment Text:** There could be more openings, perhaps under Fire Island, to emulate the positive effects of the Old Inlet breach, to speed up the cleaning process of the Bay.

**Correspondence Id:** 3 **Comment Id:** 473690

**Comment Text:** Please consider the tremendous water quality improvement in the Great South Bay. I would love to see it stabilized including a visitor center. since the closing of Barrett Beach marina, boating opportunities are now more limited. Boating and the Great south bay is why I stay on Long Island and bear with the high cost of living.

**Correspondence Id:** 7 **Comment Id:** 473693

**Comment Text:** One thing that could be done is to use selective dredging creatively and work with USFW to build a buffering wetland on the bay-side of the opening to absorb and divert storm surging, but this won't have any real anti-flooding meaning in a sustained storm like Sandy. It would however be something quite suitable to the location and certainly something that would help, not hurt. This would allow bay flushing to some degree, afford some measure of protection, and it would leave the new old inlet open.

**Correspondence Id:** 23 **Comment Id:** 473807

**Comment Text:** Rather than permanently closing it perhaps some type of lock system could be put in place. It could then be opened during calm weather and closed during storms. We should engineer and build additional ways for ocean water and bay water to mix. Either a man made inlet, some type of underground pipe that goes under Fire Island for bay/ocean water exchange or a lock system at one or two points that could be opened and closed as needed. The area between Water Island and the Pines looks like a good place to consider.

**Correspondence Id: 50    Comment Id: 474059**

**Comment Text:** I think more education needs to be done on what our ecosystem needs and does not need. More education on the Dynamics equilibrium of barrier beaches.

**Correspondence Id: 57    Comment Id: 474147**

**Comment Text:** Why not make a true "valve" or pipe that can be closed or at least regulated during storm risks, while providing any & all environmental gains from the inflow & outflow of fresh ocean water.

**Correspondence Id: 63    Comment Id: 474176**

**Comment Text:** Consider a policy of no interference in the wilderness. Trenching drainage canals wetlands adjacent to the barrier island should be banned. Perhaps this practice contributed to the breach in the first place.

**Correspondence Id: 66    Comment Id: 474202**

**Comment Text:** If the breach becomes stabilized and not too deep, consideration should be given to creating a pedestrian catwalk (NOT a bridge, but a catwalk on piles) so that people could walk from one side to the other.

**Correspondence Id: 83    Comment Id: 474305**

**Comment Text:** I know it is a wilderness area, but has any thought been given to bulk heading the breach w/ some method of pedestrian overpass? Not my first choice solution obviously (see my response to Ques. 1, point 3), but I've been curious about what is being discussed.

**Correspondence Id: 106    Comment Id: 474334**

**Comment Text:** So, I have always had the idea in my head that in order to flush the bay with clean water and do away with the Brown Tide, and that is another story. To do so my idea is to put in pipes 12 feet in diameter with a flap on either end and sink them under Fire Island. It is up to the engineers to determine how far out into the ocean they have to be, probably 55 feet of water as the Bergen outfall pipe is for the sewer plant, and how far the other end of the pipe has to be in the bay. When the tide goes out the flaps open up and the dirty water goes out into the ocean. When the tide turns clean water comes into the bay. Of course, you must have a shut off valve that can be turned by hand or an electric motor just in case, and I cannot think of what scenario you would want to shut off the cleaning of the bay by this method would be.

**Correspondence Id: 111    Comment Id: 474339**

**Comment Text:** While cost will likely be prohibitive, perhaps some form of bridge could be established that would preserve the breach & increase accessibility.

**Correspondence Id: 114    Comment Id: 474343**

**Comment Text:** Instead of thinking on spending millions on trying to close it spend one third dredging, stabilizing its banks, and create a area where people can access without trespassing and damaging what nature has given us. Dredge, mark correctly with buoys , and dedicate a area for boaters to access the beach and stay within the area then you can ticket if trespassing

**Correspondence Id: 117    Comment Id: 474349**

**Comment Text:** This season we have experienced cleaner bay waters than we have seen in years. The species of fish has grown and multiplied ravishing our bay with plentiful wildlife. The shoreline has prospered with growth of eel grass which has helped the clam beds to repopulate. My desired outcome would be to dredge the breach and create an inlet. I live close to the bay, within 60 feet and I have not experienced any flooding beyond the norm. In fact, the low tide is lower than normal. At the very least, preserve what nature has created again and leave it as it stands currently.

**Correspondence Id: 125    Comment Id: 474358**

**Comment Text:** If the findings support leaving the breach open, and possibly stabilizing it, I would like to pose this question. Most of the maintained inlets are done so by using jetties perpendicular to the beach. Several of our inlets want to naturally flow to the south and west into the ocean. Would stabilizing an inlet this way reduce the time needed between dredging?

**Correspondence Id: 131    Comment Id: 474367**

**Comment Text:** Dredging the inlet for boat navigation should be a project on the table also. I feel that if we could somehow flush the bay in many areas between the inlets like the new and existing inlets naturally do then we would have a thriving bay once again. The amount of jobs and industry that have been lost due to the poor water quality decimating the waters is a travesty. We have the opportunity to, at the very least, keep a part of the bay clean within the 30 miles between Moriches and Fire Island inlets. Think about THAT, 30 miles between inlets.

**Correspondence Id: 134    Comment Id: 474372**

**Comment Text:** We have to learn, from this event, as much as it is possible to learn about ocean breaches, breaching, and the ecological effects of breaching on back bays. The errors of the past, such as the mechanical closing of existing Fire Island inlets, have caused terrible and expensive damage to our priceless Great South Bay. We can't afford such errors, and will only avoid them through scientific study and the knowledge that it reveals. NPS must strongly endorse and support further scientific research.

**Correspondence Id: 144    Comment Id: 474388**

**Comment Text:** Yes, in the event that the breach is to be closed alternative measures need to be taken to allow water flow between the ocean and the bay to ensure and improve water quality in the Great South Bay. Yes - plum the ocean to the bay. In the event the breach is to be closed installation of several large bore pipes (8' to 10' diameter?) should be laid to connect the ocean to the bay. This should happen in several places, say 2-3 mile apart. The pipes would run perpendicular to Fire Island stretching from the bay to the ocean allowing for the free flow of water in/out of the bay. Effectively allowing the bay to flush itself into the ocean. Of course in a more sophisticated solution these pipes could have valves that would be closed during storm events. A further refinement would be hooking these pipes to pumps that could be employed during a storm surge to pump water out and reduce tidal surge in the bay. Crazy? Yeah. Costly, I think so... but we reversed the natural evolution of the barrier Island a long time ago and the bay is suffering. Something along these lines would allow the control of water into the bay and help restore the water quality.

**Correspondence Id: 150    Comment Id: 474400**

**Comment Text:** As minimal negative impacts have been associated with the breach (along with positive benefits such as flushing and water quality, potential for improved access for breeding aquatic wildlife, etc.) it seems to me that the major impact of leaving the breach open in a natural condition (no stabilization) would be the loss of vehicular access. If vehicular access is critical, a vehicular ferry service could be established to move those vehicles deemed critical for cultural continuity and emergency response.

**Correspondence Id: 153    Comment Id: 474403**

**Comment Text:** Consider using the natural breach as living live study experiment where as we can learn and allow schools and agencies to perform analysis and experiments so we can learn and build technology that will be used in situations like this in the future where we will know if we should close future breaches.

**Correspondence Id: 166    Comment Id: 474418**

**Comment Text:** While I believe the breach should remain open I as lso think responsible dredging in order to provide safe navigation could be beneficial.

**Correspondence Id: 168    Comment Id: 474420**

**Comment Text:** After walking from Smith point to the Breach, I noticed how vulnerable that other areas are susceptible to breaching. I believe that it would be more economical to secure these areas.

**Correspondence Id: 205    Comment Id: 474458**

**Comment Text:** The Parks Department could close the breach to preserve Fire Island. There could be construction of tunnels or pipes to allow water to flow freely from the Atlantic Ocean into or from the Great South Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 227    Comment Id: 474662**

**Comment Text:** Establish a baseline for the maximum rate of exchange of water between bay and ocean that has occurred since the breach opened. Calculate the minimum ocean-bay exchange rate required to maintain a healthful Bay ecosystem. If monitoring suggests that the exchange volume is approaching the minimum established in '2' above, initiate dredging to maintain the exchange volume above the calculated minimum and below the maximum exchange since the breach opened.

**Correspondence Id: 231    Comment Id: 474667**

**Comment Text:** I feel the ideal and natural course of action with the breach would be to leave it open, watch and see how it widens, shrinks, deepens or becomes more shallow and after a reasonable period of "watching and waiting", perhaps dredging or maintaining it would be appropriate. If it closes up significantly, then and only then, should the discussion begin on closing it artificially.

**Correspondence Id: 233    Comment Id: 474671**

**Comment Text:** The criteria for management should be clarified. There is a big difference between inconvenience (eg that there are two island which may it harder for the NPS to manage) and danger (catastrophic flooding on the south shore of Long Island).

**Correspondence Id: 240    Comment Id: 474711**

**Comment Text:** The breach should be kept open and a channel should be dredged and marked that allows for safe navigation by pleasure craft between Bellport Bay and the ocean. Proper and safe use of the channel should be enforced by FINS and Suffolk County police. To the extent technically feasible and cost effective, the configuration of the beach should be managed so as to maximize the "flushing" effect of ocean water that seems to be decreasing the concentrations of pollutants in Bellport Bay and increasing the cleanliness and clarity of the water in Bellport Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 241    Comment Id: 474714**

**Comment Text:** If the influx of new water is improving conditions in the bay, I don't think this should be interrupted. The water in the bay needs a new source to flush out contaminants and bacterial growth. I think stabilising the breach is a good idea. Perhaps a bridge could be built to connect the island?



**Correspondence Id: 257    Comment Id: 474735**

**Comment Text:** Perhaps a volunteer program to keep the beaches clean on each side of the inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 351    Comment Id: 474760**

**Comment Text:** Our recommendation is to dredge a deeper, permanent inlet so that there is an east end outlet to the Atlantic Ocean for Great South Bay. Why? 1) It will stop the flooding when strong easterly winds appear. 2) It will make a major difference in cleaning out the bay. The bay will once again be a viable living playground that it used to be.

**Correspondence Id: 356    Comment Id: 474775**

**Comment Text:** My concern is that NPS/FINS even has a breach management plan. It's in a designated wilderness area, the breach is a natural function, poses no threat to property or infrastructure, and provides tremendous benefit to the bay. There are much better ways to spend public time and resources where the environment of Fire Island and Great South Bay is concerned. Short of leaving the new inlet alone, it could be "managed" similarly to the way Southampton and East Hampton Trustees manage Mecox, Sagg, & Georgica. Let it close up naturally if that's what it wants to do, but open it manually to help the health of the bay seasonally/occasionally.

**Correspondence Id: 362    Comment Id: 474789**

**Comment Text:** Closing the breach will require dredges, and there are said to be few that would be available to do the work, even if present environmental regulations would permit it. Dredges at work for the County departed in mid-January, before they might have interfered with various forms of marine life. Statutes prevent their return to work until later in the year. That an emergency should be declared so that the necessary work can be done now seems not to have occurred to anyone as yet.

**Correspondence Id: 263    Comment Id: 474798**

**Comment Text:** The ocean water washing in and out the bay has proved to be positive for the bays water quality. If it becomes necessary to close the breach there should still be a tunnel of sorts so that ocean water continues to flow into the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 264    Comment Id: 474800**

**Comment Text:** I think several sluice pipes should be placed underneath Fire Island at critical points to keep the bay flushed properly.

**Correspondence Id: 283    Comment Id: 474829**

**Comment Text:** do like they did for the Moriches inlet ... Rock jetty

## **AL1100 – SUPPORTS LEAVING THE BREACH OPEN AND MANAGING UNDER NATURAL CONDITIONS**

### **Correspondence Id: 357    Comment Id: 479503**

**Comment Text:** Option 1 would be consistent with other New York State Management Plan is that also encourage leaving breaches to their natural processes. The Great South Bay Ecosystem-Based Management Plan recommends leaving the breaches to their natural processes. Strategic Action 4.1 states, "Amend coastal policy to acknowledge the value of breaches and overwash in terms of ecological integrity and long term viability of the barrier island. Stony Brook's science shows that "New Inlet" is having no impact on tidal amplitude on the mainland, but does appear to be increasing the oceanic water exchange in the eastern bay as evidenced by higher salinity since the storm. The fear of increased flooding to the mainland is not founded in current science. The 2100 Commission has also referenced the benefits of leaving the breach open. " Page 117: The breaches at Cupsogue and Moriches Inlet on Fire Island have already been closed. The State should monitor the impact of the Fire Island Wilderness breach on the barrier island, the bay, and the mainland to determine whether or not to close that breach in the near future. Limited monitoring to date suggests that the inlet is stable or closing slightly. This has resulted in improved water quality in Great South Bay and created a platform for new eelgrass and wetland growth, which may actually reduce flooding in certain cases (i.e., when winds blow from the west).

### **Correspondence Id: 1    Comment Id: 465698**

**Comment Text:** It would be best to leave the current breach alone. It would be costly to close and may open up in a subsequent storm. Furthermore, it has been open in the past.

### **Correspondence Id: 5    Comment Id: 465962**

**Comment Text:** There is a very simple issue that has already been resolved via Federal Legislation, and that is that the breach is within a Federally designated Wilderness, and as such is afforded all the protections available under wilderness designation, which is to leave it alone and let nature take its course. The science available for nearly three years now since the breach opened by Dr. Charles Flagg clearly shows that there is no imminent danger to life or property on the mainland, which would be the only reason to even consider closing it. Fire Island NS needs to set wilderness designation as it's priority in protecting the breach and the adjacent wilderness. Anything less is an abrogation of responsibility under the Organic Act, and Wilderness Legislation.

### **Correspondence Id: 14    Comment Id: 466333**

**Comment Text:** The inlet should be left alone or stabilized. DO NOT close this inlet. I have seen first hand the positive effects of this new inlet on the water quality in the Great South Bay

### **Correspondence Id: 33    Comment Id: 466951**

**Comment Text:** I have always felt that something needed to happen to assist the condition of the Bellport Bay which had been declining for the past several years. The breach that was caused by Super-storm Sandy seems to have accomplished that. The bay hasn't been this clean in decades! Also it has been observed that various species of fish and shellfish have returned. The Mastic Beach area which used to be more susceptible to high tides has reported that those conditions have eased since. The only negative effect I have observed is that the breach cut through the trail that allowed vehicular access from Smith Point. The breach should remain open until "nature" closes it.

**Correspondence Id: 316    Comment Id: 471781**

**Comment Text:** I feel it is imperative to allow a natural evolution of the New Old Inlet for the health of the Great South Bay . Scientific study ahs shown only positive benefit from the new inlet. I feel there should be no action by the National Park Service to interfere with this natural process.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 471876**

**Comment Text:** The primary concern should be maintaining the integrity of the barrier system, which includes both the natural dynamics of the barrier beach and unfilled, undredged and unhardened breach, as well as the water quality of the barrier lagoon. Recreating an ecosystem in which the traditional flora and fauna of Great South Bay can thrive is paramount. As the breach is accomplishing that on its own, it should be allowed to continue as it is.

**Correspondence Id: 348    Comment Id: 471917**

**Comment Text:** My concern about the breach is that The National Park Service will be pressured to act and close the breach. I live on the bay across from it and so far,I have seen benefits only, like more sand on our beach on the bay side and a cleaner bay among others. Please, Keep the Corps of Engineers away, leave the breach alone and let Mother Nature play its course.

**Correspondence Id: 15    Comment Id: 473696**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach open...it has brought new life into the Great South Bay...Nature actually brought us a gift and we should leave it alone. I believe you should use plan 1 and let nature take its course...like you say "natural barrier island precesses" it's good for our waters and good for the wildlife in the area.

**Correspondence Id: 18    Comment Id: 473708**

**Comment Text:** I would also like to see consideration of the natural geological process by which the barrier island migrates towards the mainland over the course of many years. Breaches have been opening and closing all over the barrier island since the last ice age. I would love to see it open until it closes on it's own. Perhaps another will form in the Otis Pike area in the future. I strongly feel that this wilderness area needs to be left to the natural geological processes that have been going on for much longer than FINS has existed.

**Correspondence Id: 19    Comment Id: 473743**

**Comment Text:** I think it's facetious to think that closing and/or keeping it open will have ANY affect on the surrounding area. It (the beach and the breach) is simply doing what it is supposed to do. Leave the breach alone. It will close or remain open as it's supposed to by itself. It doesn't need "management" by people who have to "manage" it under the auspices of bought and paid for public"servants." Let the breach go through it's natural life cycle.

**Correspondence Id: 17    Comment Id: 473744**

**Comment Text:** The science showed - - and continues to show - - that the breach contributes not at all to coastal flooding, and that it has remained relatively stable. We have since seen a small rebirth - - baitfish, fin fish, shellfish, birds, seals - - a dead zone transformed into one of the most beautiful places on Long Island if not in New York, and right on National Park Services land. The desired outcome is that nothing be done. Nature must be allowed to take its course. Man wants to draw straight lines - - walls of sand. He wants to control nature. Nature is about curves. The shifting mosaics of the deltas and sandbars around the breach are the reemergence of habitats that are otherwise fast disappearing in all our waters. Let Fire Island migrate northward towards the Mainland, as it has for thousands of years, and as it will for thousands more - -if we let it. Breaches form, they fill, the sands coming into the bay thicken Fire Island from the bay side, and so it rolls - - or should.

**Correspondence Id: 26    Comment Id: 473811**

**Comment Text:** after reading the Breach Plan information, it seems the Breach has not adversely effected the Bay Area. It has actually improved water quality. So I believe that allowing nature to take its course might be the way to go. Human protection is of utmost importance. However if monitored diligently, I think nature will help to widen the wilderness area, and possibly close the Breach on its own. I believe allowing nature to take its course, along with monitoring, will be the way to go. I think creating a new inlet would be a mistake, and possibly create unanticipated issues.

**Correspondence Id: 28    Comment Id: 473814**

**Comment Text:** I have been traveling to the breach on weekends for the past 3 seasons and I've watched the area thrive. In it's first season, a sea turtle came through and feasted on jelly fish. The stripers come through, looking for bait. The clams have made a resurgence. The bay is much healthier for the tidal cleansing. My concern is that it remain open. Do not close the breach, allow it to take its natural course.

**Correspondence Id: 32    Comment Id: 473817**

**Comment Text:** The breach should NOT be closed artificially. The positive benefits of the breach, shown by data, outweigh any hypothetical problem for properties on Long Island, many of which were built on low lying plots at the owner's risk. Let the breach and seashore take its natural course. There is no need for management. Public access is available from Smith Point and Davis Park as it always has been.

**Correspondence Id: 34    Comment Id: 473818**

**Comment Text:** Inlet must remain open. There is no evidence of negative effects and only positive results. There should be no study. It's a waste of money. The breach doesn't need to be "managed". LEAVE IT ALONE They bay is alive again.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473939**

**Comment Text:** Based upon data on impacts of the new inlet, as well as our own observations, The Nature Conservancy supports Option 1. However, we also recognize the value of Option 3 in terms of establishing criteria to steer future management of the High Dunes Wilderness Areas dynamic landscape.

**Correspondence Id: 36    Comment Id: 474031**

**Comment Text:** The new Old Inlet has provided a twice-daily flush of ocean water into Great South Bay, greatly benefiting water quality and aquatic and avian life and the ecosystem as a whole. Closing it would set eliminate these great ecosystem benefits. Leave it alone, nature knows far better how to protect the wilderness.

**Correspondence Id: 38    Comment Id: 474035**

**Comment Text:** Please consider the fact that the breaching of barrier beaches is both a natural and an unstoppable process. The breach is beneficial to the Great South Bay. It provides a haven for shorebirds of many species. It has created opportunities for sports fishing and recreational boating. The way to safeguard the health and beauty of the Great South Bay is to leave the breach alone.

**Correspondence Id: 39    Comment Id: 474037**

**Comment Text:** It seems the bay is being "flushed" out twice each day and the new inlet is making a tremendous difference in the water quality. Let nature take its course. It may fill in on its own. Why spend millions of dollars to fill it and have it potentially open again. That is a lot of wasted dollars, and to what end. Seems better to leave it open. PLEASE DON'T FILL IN THE NEW "OLD INLET".

**Correspondence Id: 41    Comment Id: 474042**

**Comment Text:** the breach has caused no harm to the bay or to the coastline. no one in Bellport has been flooded out since the breach. the bay has been cleaner and the diffirent spieces of fish and the aboundince of them has been amazing. leave breach alone. do not waste our money closing it. if it closes by it self so be it. do not close breach. IT HAS BEEN THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO BELLPORT BAY IN THE PAST 60 YEARS. IT IS NOT AFFECTING OR IN DANGERING ANY OF THE SHORE LINE.

**Correspondence Id: 43    Comment Id: 474046**

**Comment Text:** I would be happy with two of the options. Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions & stabilize to provide a permanent inlet. The breach has given new life to the Great South Bay. It should remain open.

**Correspondence Id: 45    Comment Id: 474048**

**Comment Text:** I am against closing the inlet as it would destroy the "Natural" ecosystem of the ocean/bay. If we are going to preserve nature, then we should permit Mother Nature to take her course. Vast improvement in the cleanliness of the bay, fish and wildlife, and overall aesthetics of the bay have resulted from the inlet being opened. Please permit the inlet to remain open and take it's natural course.

**Correspondence Id: 48    Comment Id: 474051**

**Comment Text:** It brings new life into the bay. i think it should stay as is and be monitored. Nature will take care of it. It will close on its own in time.

**Correspondence Id: 50    Comment Id: 474057**

**Comment Text:** The water quality and animal life have deteriorated over the decades. Since the breach has opened the Wildlife seems to be thriving. I live 1000 feet from the waters edge on the bay.... I see no changes in water level nor do i see any complications from keeping the breach open. what i do see is more seabirds and fowl in the winter, more signs of life. Mother nature is correcting for our sins of pollution. I URGE you to keep the Breach open and natural.

**Correspondence Id: 51    Comment Id: 474060**

**Comment Text:** I would urge the National Park Service to at the least, pursue their first option, to leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Alternatively though inconsistent with NPS policies a program to stabilize the breach to provide a permanent inlet would be ideal.

**Correspondence Id: 53    Comment Id: 474140**

**Comment Text:** It seems clear that the most sustainable, beneficial to the environment and those making a living on the water, and affordable to manage option is to let the breach manage itself, including it remains open. It is ridiculous to continue to practice coastal management based on ideas of false rights to alter an environment for the convenience of a few and benefit of none.

**Correspondence Id: 54    Comment Id: 474141**

**Comment Text:** I think you should leave it alone and work on some REAL problems! For the first time in many years the Bay is actually clean. The water sparkles and there are many fish to be caught. The Bay used to look murky and brown, no more. Why would you want to go back to "the bad old days"? Leave the breach alone, give it a name and keep our Bay clean.

**Correspondence Id: 55    Comment Id: 474142**

**Comment Text:** The breach occurred naturally and has not caused harm to surrounding communities. It has improved water quality in the bay near the breach. Yes. The breach should remain open.

**Correspondence Id: 58    Comment Id: 474151**

**Comment Text:** I don't think it should be "managed" at all. Let nature take its course. It's going to anyway and the government needs to stop wasting taxpayer money on fighting this again and again and again. It's a waste of time, money and needless.

**Correspondence Id: 59    Comment Id: 474157**

**Comment Text:** The breach needs to be left alone and left to nature to manage it. Nature has managed it quite well for millions of years. This breach was here before. And the Bay was very healthy. When it close in the earlier part of the 20th Century there wasn't too much pollution or activity on the Great South Bay. As the years went on the bay became more active and more people moved to the Shore. And with that, POLLUTION!. It was observed with the opening of the breach at Moriches in '85, that the Bay needed to be flushed, and its health started to return. Then man entered and said close it.(BIG MISTAKE!).

**Correspondence Id: 60    Comment Id: 474161**

**Comment Text:** I live directly north east of it and I think it has done great things for the area. It is exactly what the area needed. O hope we leave it alone or stabilize it so it will remain

**Correspondence Id: 64    Comment Id: 474178**

**Comment Text:** I'm all for leaving it alone. The Park service has enough to do without having to worry about spending any money on the breach. The breach is the best thing that ever happened to the east end of the Great South Bay

**Correspondence Id: 65    Comment Id: 474198**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Under this alternative, growth or closure of the breach would be determined by natural barrier island processes. The reality here is that the beach is doing what it wants to do. That breach was filled once before, and it came back...

**Correspondence Id: 66    Comment Id: 474201**

**Comment Text:** We believe that the breach should not be filled. Thus, the first option is our first choice. Our second choice would be the third: Leave breach open and establish procedures.... According to FINS interpretation of Federal law, a breach may be repaired "in order to prevent loss of life, flooding, and other severe economic physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding area." In our view, these conditions have not been met. The breach has not caused flooding anywhere else. There has been no related loss of life. As for physical damage to the Great South Bay, not only has there been no harm, in all likelihood the breach is the best thing that could have happened to the biological health of the bay. Closing the breach would cost many millions of dollars, and would probably need to be redone later. It would not be a good expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

**Correspondence Id: 68    Comment Id: 474215**

**Comment Text:** I would like to see the inlet remain open. The exchange of water between the bay and the ocean has significantly improved the habitat for shellfish and other marine life. This is a personal observation. I think that this restores the bay to the condition before the 1938 hurricane which closed the inlet. I think we should let nature take care of this and not waste the taxpayer's money on closing the inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 357    Comment Id: 474262**

**Comment Text:** CCE strongly supports Option I: leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. This allows for the growth or closure of the breach to be determined by natural barrier island processes. This option is also consistent with management practices for national wilderness areas.



**Correspondence Id: 69    Comment Id: 474291**

**Comment Text:** It seems that having the breach open has been wonderful for the quality of the water in the Bay I would leave this breach alone and continue to monitor size of the breach and also whether sand is building up inside the bay

**Correspondence Id: 71    Comment Id: 474293**

**Comment Text:** The breach is a good thing for Great South Bay, and NPS should let nature decide if stays open or closes. The continued integrity of the beach is essential. Attempting a multimillion dollar closing of the breach is insane and counter to the very essence of a wilderness area. The breach should be allowed to take its natural course, as a wilderness area is designed to do, leave the beach open and see what happens. The Great South Bay has suffered from pollution and stagnation for decades. This is an opportunity for the bay to regain its health and provide a habitat for clams, fish, birds and other marine life

**Correspondence Id: 72    Comment Id: 474294**

**Comment Text:** We should not interfere with the natural process. Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. This end of Great South Bay is the healthiest it has been in DECADES. Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions! Let NATURE take its course!

**Correspondence Id: 73    Comment Id: 474296**

**Comment Text:** Closing the breach would be an extraordinarily costly enterprise, at a time when those funds undoubtedly could be earmarked for more worthwhile and urgent projects. I would not recommend disrupting the natural order to close the breach, so, too, I would not recommend spending monies to provide a permanent inlet connecting the Atlantic Ocean and Great South Bay. I am a proponent of allowing nature to take its course and, absent materially changed conditions, abiding by nature's will as the breach continues to evolve.

**Correspondence Id: 74    Comment Id: 474297**

**Comment Text:** in my humble opinion they should not close the natural gap. the Bay is cleaner and healthier leave it alone, let nature handle the opening

**Correspondence Id: 76    Comment Id: 474298**

**Comment Text:** DO NOT CLOSE THE BREACH. bellport bay has never been as healthy as it is today! I haven't heard any complaints about flooding from residents. Let mother nature take its course. She usually knows better than what we do!

**Correspondence Id: 81    Comment Id: 474302**

**Comment Text:** I hope that we consider what the scientists believe is the best course of action, there has been no change in the tides since the breach has been open, closing the breach does not prevent flooding due to catastrophic storms, the money spent on closing the breach should be saved and put back into FEMA to help all Americans. Unless they can guarantee that the surrounding areas will be in a much better spot, we should leave it alone. The Bay is so much clearer as there is much more turnover in the water. I think that the breach should remain natural.

**Correspondence Id: 82    Comment Id: 474303**

**Comment Text:** The breach has brought wonderful things to The Great South Bay, the new influx of tidal flow has freshened the threatened bay. I am concerned that any man made improvements will over time not serve the community. Expanded wetlands and natural tidal flow prevent flooding in low lying areas.



**Correspondence Id: 85    Comment Id: 474307**

**Comment Text:** We need to let the barrier island become scoped from naturally occurring storms. Leave the Breach ALONE. DO NOT 'FIX IT'. We have so much other, more important stuff to take care of, to pay for. We do NOT need to save/alter this breach

**Correspondence Id: 86    Comment Id: 474308**

**Comment Text:** While I can appreciate the desire to protect human lives from potential future acts of nature, that is the risk we all take as residents on an island. The sea was here long before we were. To close the breach to protect "economic" interests is not a reason to take action to close the inlet, in my opinion. Penny wise, pound foolish. Let nature take her course.

**Correspondence Id: 87    Comment Id: 474310**

**Comment Text:** I don't understand where the pressure to close the inlet is coming from, or why its even being considered. I think the public needs a clear reason why NPS would want to see this closed. When I think about the NPS and its stand on Nature and preservation it make's sense to me not Stabilize the inlet, but it also make sense not to fill it in. its Nature, just let it take its course, after all its wilderness.

**Correspondence Id: 88    Comment Id: 474311**

**Comment Text:** It is a wilderness area. Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions with growth or closure of the breach determined by natural barrier island processes.

**Correspondence Id: 89    Comment Id: 474313**

**Comment Text:** please leave it alone. nature doesn't really need to be managed. That's the essence of nature.

**Correspondence Id: 92    Comment Id: 474316**

**Comment Text:** The breach is nature taking its course. If funds were spent to fill it another hurricane will likely come along and open it again. This is the course of nature and history. I would like it to be left alone.

**Correspondence Id: 95    Comment Id: 474323**

**Comment Text:** leave it to develop naturally, without our interference. Another benefit to deciding to leave it alone and then doing it is saving lots and lots of money for other projects.

**Correspondence Id: 99    Comment Id: 474326**

**Comment Text:** I feel that the inlet should be left alone. There are far greater issues demanding attention. Let nature take its course in the wilderness.

**Correspondence Id: 100    Comment Id: 474327**

**Comment Text:** As a resident for 25 years I have never seen the South Bay so clean. Please leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Under this alternative, growth or closure of the breach would be determined by natural barrier island processes.

**Correspondence Id: 101    Comment Id: 474328**

**Comment Text:** I think the the quality of the water in the bay has increased immensely and has helped our marine life. I also think that the breach is a beautiful change for the area, and since it was created by nature that it is meant to stay as it is. Thank you.

**Correspondence Id: 105    Comment Id: 474332**

**Comment Text:** The water quality of the GSB has improved tremendously since the breach. My family and I live directly on the bay and enjoy the cleaner water everyday. Let nature take its course. please do not interfere with natures course Do not manage it. Leave it alone.

**Correspondence Id: 107    Comment Id: 474335**

**Comment Text:** I do not want this breach to be closed artificially. Improving the condition of the Great South Bay to a viable habitat for fish and wildlife is essential. Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. The health and wellbeing of the Great South Bay as an ecosystem should carry the most weight in the decision making process.

**Correspondence Id: 108    Comment Id: 474336**

**Comment Text:** I am just a long time resident of Bellport NY directly across from this new Sandy breach on the Great South Bay. All I know that since this breach opened the water quality in the Bay has improved dramatically, it is clearer and cleaner. Clams are thriving-game fish can now be caught in the Bay whereas before they were very rare (striped bass, fluke, flounder, bluefish). This breach has done nothing but drastically improve the Bay health and has been a very positive environmental impact. Please do not close it. Let nature run its course in this wilderness area.

**Correspondence Id: 109    Comment Id: 474337**

**Comment Text:** The breach should remain open and managed under natural conditions

**Correspondence Id: 113    Comment Id: 474341**

**Comment Text:** Yes leave the inlet the way nature created it Leave the inlet alone!

**Correspondence Id: 119    Comment Id: 474352**

**Comment Text:** It seems to me that closing the breach artificially would be a waste of time and the taxpayers' money- -especially given the fact that the bay's eco system has improved considerably. Let nature run its course.

**Correspondence Id: 122    Comment Id: 474355**

**Comment Text:** Manmade interference has caused many natural areas to be compromised. The breach will close itself. It's done so in the past. Sand migration can't be stopped and mechanical interfering with the process brings all sorts of unintended consequences. The bay needs to be flushed as often as twice a day for many more years to clean itself and allow oyster and clam industries to thrive again. Leave the breach alone to heal itself.

**Correspondence Id: 128    Comment Id: 474362**

**Comment Text:** My concern would be if breach gets closed we'll lose the cleansing, flushing-out effect that inlet has provided- cleaning up bay and supporting life. Let nature take its course- keep the breach open!

**Correspondence Id: 134    Comment Id: 474371**

**Comment Text:** This ocean inlet is a tonic to the Great South Bay and continues to prove itself inoffensive to shore communities. Not for a period of nearly three full years have we seen any harm. The tide phase has changed by fifteen or twenty minutes, that's the only change that I'm aware of and that's not a problem. In my view, it needs no management. The breach hasn't presented a problem during the course of the last three years and appears unlikely to do so going forward. It's nothing but a positive, so just love it and promote it as a feature of the Park.

**Correspondence Id: 135    Comment Id: 474375**

**Comment Text:** I live on a canal in Shirley, so I have a stake in keeping the breach open. I have no concern with flooding. I have not seen any increase in tide height what so ever, infarct, the tide this spring was abnormally low for weeks. Closing the breach makes no sense to me. The breach is a natural occurrence. The bay is alive again with Striped bass, Fluke, Mussels, clams. Why would you want to choke it off again and turn it back in to a dead stagnant bay? Please leave this breach alone, in the long run it will be good for the marine life and also good for the residents, making the area more desirable having its own inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 136    Comment Id: 474376**

**Comment Text:** We believe that you really cannot change Mother Nature and the breach should be left open.

**Correspondence Id: 144    Comment Id: 474387**

**Comment Text:** The issue of water quality in the bay, to me is a major issue. Loss of marine life and the increase of "bad" algae needs to be fixed. Yes, IMHO, Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions.

**Correspondence Id: 145    Comment Id: 474390**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. The water is finally getting clean and the amount of life that has sprung up around the breach is incredible. Many species that were sparsely scattered in this area are now abundant. I have seen young mussel beds, kelp, anemones, feather dusters, horseshoe crabs, schools of bunker, bluefish, striped bass and more. Closing the breach would kill the amazingly biodiverse environment that is now forming. Let's instead use this as an example of what happens when you introduce clean ocean water into the equation. Let's study the breach and use it as a tool to teach our children and inform the community. Nature is resilient and can bounce back from horrible pollution, but you have to give it a chance.

**Correspondence Id: 146    Comment Id: 474391**

**Comment Text:** It is a breach that comes and goes periodically cleaning the Great South Bay. You should be worrying about things far more an imperative to the environment and not a small natural inlet. Plan nothing and leave it alone

**Correspondence Id: 147    Comment Id: 474393**

**Comment Text:** The first option to leave it alone and let nature take its course. It's a wilderness area. The bay has never been cleaner, and the fishing better since the breach. The millions of dollars could be better spent building more park lands or wilderness areas.

**Correspondence Id: 148    Comment Id: 474394**

**Comment Text:** I think the breach is great for the environment and the ecosystem. I believe the breach needs to be left open. I think it should be either left alone or it should be made permanent.

**Correspondence Id: 150    Comment Id: 474396**

**Comment Text:** Barrier beach breaches are part of a natural process that has been going on for far longer than humans have inhabited Long Island. The process has been interfered with ever since settlers arrived in this area. This is a great opportunity to allow nature to take its course.

**Correspondence Id: 150    Comment Id: 474399**

**Comment Text:** Culturally, leaving the breach open will have minimal impact on the communities located along the Fire Island seashore. It will make vehicular access impractical; this will certainly impact surf fishermen and residents who rely upon driving to their favorite haunts, and will impact emergency vehicular access. On the other hand, alternatives to vehicular access have been available for a long time, namely, commercial and private boating access. Emergency responders also have access to new high speed vessels as well as aircraft. Closing the breach will benefit a few folks but will be going against the course of nature. Considering the minimal amount of flushing available in the eastern portion of Great South Bay I feel the benefits of allowing the breach to take a natural course far outweigh any negative impact on cultural life along the seashore. In my local area the bay benefits from the flushing action provided by both Fire Island and Jones Inlets. There has been no noticeable increase in the tides at my dock since the breach occurred. I can understand why folks who utilize the resources on the seashore are concerned about losing their most convenient means of access, but as a trained biologist who did his master's work in the Canadian arctic I feel that the benefits of convenience are trivial compared to the benefits of having a clean bay and healthy wildlife.

**Correspondence Id: 155    Comment Id: 474405**

**Comment Text:** I believe the breach (it has been there so long that we now call it an "inlet") should remain open in an unregulated state, allowing natural processes to determine its shape and size (which may result in eventual natural closure). The Bellport Bay area is now cleaner, the brown tides have lessened in impact, nitrogen levels are decreasing, bay biota are in the process of changing as a result of the increased salinity, eel grass growth should be improving, and many other positive factors. An original inlet existed in this area in the 1800s for decades if not centuries.

**Correspondence Id: 156    Comment Id: 474407**

**Comment Text:** DONOT close it !! Let Mother Nature manage the breach. We live (have for 18 years) on the great South Bay directly across from the inlet and have not noticed any change in the high/low tides.....no flooding.....with the new inlet, the water now has a way to exit the bay! The one thing we do see is a cleaner bay with more fish and shellfish. Please don't spend our hard earned money on closing the inlet - it's just a waste of money with no guarantee that it won't open again!

**Correspondence Id: 159    Comment Id: 474410**

**Comment Text:** I live across from the breach...I have been here for 38 years. Very close to Carmen's river. WE have not seen any rise in the level of the water on our property. No flooding before or after sandy. We have seen the Quality of the water dramatically improve however. It is has been nothing but positive. I would love it to stay open and change according to nature. We are not in any way threaten by the opening. The breach is within the wilderness area it seems a conflict of interest to close it unless nature does so with time

**Correspondence Id: 160    Comment Id: 474411**

**Comment Text:** It is called the Old Inlet for a reason. It is supposed to be an inlet. Let nature take its course.

**Correspondence Id: 161    Comment Id: 474412**

**Comment Text:** While the breach remains open it provides clean & replenishing waters to the bay, along with new habitats for marine life to thrive. Each year the threat of red tides & nitrogen blooms are a huge concern. The breach has helped to fend off these plights in the waters surrounding it. Along with the fact that the newly created sandbars will help to shield our water front home & business area from future storm damage I have not been able to see one good reason to close this breach. I believe the breach should remain open & managed by natural process. My concern if the breach is closed is that without the infusion of fresh ocean waters into the bay, we would see heavier pollutant buildup & be more susceptible to red tide conditions in the future.

**Correspondence Id: 167    Comment Id: 474419**

**Comment Text:** Let nature take it's course. sounds like it has improved the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 169    Comment Id: 474422**

**Comment Text:** Please do not close this inlet. Great South bay is much cleaner since this inlet opened. The Bay ecosystem is thriving again. I moved to Bellport in 1966 and have watched it's decline due to man's pollution. Closing this inlet is a MISTAKE. I have seen the many inlets up and down the east coast as I have traveled by boat back and forth to Florida. Why close this particular inlet when so many are thriving on our coast as Nature intends. Leave it alone and watch how nature repairs MAN'S damage.

**Correspondence Id: 170    Comment Id: 474423**

**Comment Text:** The health of the bay is the number one issue at hand. Since the breach occurred, Mother Nature has been doing a fine job of reversing all of the damage we humans have done to the ecosystem. Leave it alone!

**Correspondence Id: 171    Comment Id: 474424**

**Comment Text:** Please leave the Bayport/East Patchogue inlet alone. Its cleaning out the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 173    Comment Id: 474425**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned that it will be closed mechanically wasting taxpayer money if the desired outcome is to preserve continued integrity the natural and cultural features of the Seashore then it should remain open. If and when it closes naturally so be it. No, it should be left as is and let nature take it's course. There seems to be concern that communities west of the breach will be affected due to lack of emergency access from the Smiths Point area. This is a non-issue because those communities have their own emergency departments. Concern of mainland damage during storms has also been proven a non-issue as well. Closing would cost a lot as would stabilization. Those funds would be better spent stabilizing the bay side wetlands to continue the ongoing experiment that has been, and continues to be, the revitalization of the eastern bay. It will cost quite a bit of money in various infrastructure projects to bring the bay back but it will be money well spent. The continued recreational use of the bay and related revenue will help to offset the expenditures.

**Correspondence Id: 174    Comment Id: 474426**

**Comment Text:** Spending loads of tax dollars to counteract natural barrier island processes is wasteful and short sighted. there is no scenario where the local overall environment is sufficiently benefited to justify the cost of closing the breach. In fact closing the breach would be detrimental to local environment. The Bellport bay needs fresh water and an outlet, otherwise it gets stagnant. closing the breach counteracts this obvious benefit. Leave it to nature. there is very little downside to leaving the breach for local residents, since no shoreline properties flood because of the breach, as was initially feared.

**Correspondence Id: 178    Comment Id: 474429**

**Comment Text:** Leave it be. It has cleared out Great South Bay- - making water much healthier- - for wild life and humans. The shape of the inlet will continually change- - that IS NATURE. LEAVE IT BE! It is not damaging anything. There was an Inlet, ie., Old Inlet there for YEARS. It has opened up. The breach is also a release for when a hurricane comes- - where water that would otherwise be 'caught' up East in Bellport Bay, and can flow back out to the ocean. There was research a few years ago by Univ. of NY StonyBrook professor who showed that there is NO change in tide levels, water has less toxins, etc.

**Correspondence Id: 180    Comment Id: 474432**

**Comment Text:** Please leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions; let Mother Nature follow the proper course. Thank you.

**Correspondence Id: 181    Comment Id: 474433**

**Comment Text:** SAVE THE INLET: Don't mess with Mother Nature. Leave the Inlet alone. It brings great benefits to the area. Does the government have all this extra money they are looking to waste on something that doesn't need fixing??? I'm sure we can find other places to spend a couple million dollars instead of closing an Inlet that will only open up again one day - don't you think?!

**Correspondence Id: 183    Comment Id: 474435**

**Comment Text:** I fully understand the great concern expressed initially by the residents of Bellport when the breach occurred. Thankfully, cooler heads prevailed and people listened and observed for themselves, the great benefits to the health of their bays. It is amazing to watch Mother Nature's influence on the breach. I totally support the science supported argument for keeping the breach open.

**Correspondence Id: 184    Comment Id: 474436**

**Comment Text:** Keep the breach open allow it to evolve naturally.

**Correspondence Id: 185    Comment Id: 474437**

**Comment Text:** Continue to allow the tidal flushing to improve the quality of the Bellport Bay ecosystem. The breach has not impaired the natural and cultural features of the Seashore, and has not impacted the safety of persons or property on the mainland. The economic impact of closing the breach would be a continued decline in the health of the Great South Bay fishery, which now shows signs of reviving as the water is cleaner and supports more forms of fish and shellfish. Also the recreational boating industry benefits from continued improvement in the Bay's water quality.

**Correspondence Id: 188    Comment Id: 474439**

**Comment Text:** The breach is in a wilderness area which should be a defining characteristic. Allow the wilderness area to function as it should and be as close to nature as we can. Leave the breach alone and let it run its course. I grew up in bellport and have never seen the bay cleaner or more healthy and to close the breach would be counter productive and contrary to the goals of a wilderness area Don't touch the inlet, let the natural system do what barrier island systems are meant to do

**Correspondence Id: 189    Comment Id: 474440**

**Comment Text:** We feel strongly that the NPS should continue to follow the science and not cave in to public or political pressure which tends to be emotional and short-sighted. The cleansing of the bay is still in it's early stages 3 years later after the breach opened up so Nature's work is still in it's infancy. Let the inlet flow!!



**Correspondence Id: 190    Comment Id: 474441**

**Comment Text:** Leave it to nature, the park service should put the money to better use. I was just at Bellport Beach yesterday. I grew up there. There was an inlet near there prior to the hurricane in the 1800s. So, now there is an inlet again. There are numerous national parks and nature areas needing funds . Just leave it alone.

**Correspondence Id: 192    Comment Id: 474442**

**Comment Text:** the opening of the inlet has resulted in cleaner water and No Increased Flooding! Since this is the case the National Park Service and the Army Corp of Engineers should keep their hands off and let nature take her course. If nature closes it so be it. Meanwhile save the money for appropriate projects.

**Correspondence Id: 193    Comment Id: 474444**

**Comment Text:** Do not mechanically close the inlet, let nature take its course before money is wasted. According to the "statutes" of the Fire Island Natural Seashore the breach is not supposed to be manually closed, end of story, don't waste money.

**Correspondence Id: 194    Comment Id: 474445**

**Comment Text:** The only concern i have is that it we should 100% allow the breach to continue, as mother nature has intended. The benefits of keeping it open far outweigh any benefits of closing it. Water quality and coastal wild life are the things that should be paramount in this decision. Not the home owners on the south shore... If something is not done to help with both the water quality and wild life in the Great South Bay, it will be the south shore homeowners who will also pay the price.... It was already proven that the new breach has not affected flooding on south shore... And quite frankly if you buy or build a home on the water than you inherit the risk.

**Correspondence Id: 197    Comment Id: 474448**

**Comment Text:** The breach is having a positive effect on the bay the influx of sea water has helped to improve the quality of the bay the ecosystem. They bays behind the none breached sections suffer from poor exchange of water Having seen the area around the breach the difference in color and clarity of the water is amazing. It seems to have a positive effect on the eco systems in that my fellow boating friends have seen species of sea creatures no longer seen or rarely seen on other parts of the bays. If you close the breach the water quality and eco systems will suffer. Studies I have read indicate there has been no changes in the tide heights due to the breach. Leaving the breach is a positive step is restoring the water quality and eco systems of the bays. It is a process that has been going on the centuries. Since east to west water flow is almost none existent due to man made structures these breaches should be left alone regardless. People that live on barrier islands should realize they live on shifting sand and either learn to live with it or move off to shore.

**Correspondence Id: 199    Comment Id: 474451**

**Comment Text:** My only concern is that the NPS will try to manage the breach It should be left alone and let nature manage it.

**Correspondence Id: 203    Comment Id: 474455**

**Comment Text:** My main concern is the environmental health of the Great South Bay. I feel that it should remain open and allow the natural processes to continue.



**Correspondence Id: 204    Comment Id: 474456**

**Comment Text:** The breach should be left alone. It is beneficial to the overall health of the Great South Bay to have the influx of ocean water. The Bay water is so much clearer since the breach. It is a natural occurrence and it would be a waste of funds to attempt to reverse it.

**Correspondence Id: 304    Comment Id: 474594**

**Comment Text:** the current clean bay water should continue as a result from the positive influence of the opening breach I am in favor of leaving the breach OPEN , let nature take its course

**Correspondence Id: 308    Comment Id: 474598**

**Comment Text:** I would love to see Mother Nature have her way. Our bay has been a happier place for the wildlife since Sandy opened the breach. I hope you will make the decision to let the breach stay open until the ocean changes things again.

**Correspondence Id: 315    Comment Id: 474604**

**Comment Text:** I have an issue with any attempt to seal the breach. The Bellport Breach has breathed life into a dirty Great South Bay. Let nature run its course. The Great South Bay is healthier than it has been in years. The bay in my village of Bellport is the cleanest I can remember it. Please let the breach continue to exist in its own natural state. This is the best thing to happen to the Great South Bay in my lifetime. Let the Bay come back to life.

**Correspondence Id: 208    Comment Id: 474607**

**Comment Text:** leave breach alone and let nature take its course

**Correspondence Id: 212    Comment Id: 474611**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Under this alternative, growth or closure of the breach would be determined by natural barrier island processes.

**Correspondence Id: 213    Comment Id: 474612**

**Comment Text:** I live on the bay at Patchogue - I've seen some resurgence of the health of the Great South Bay since the time of the breach made by Sandy. More clams, cleaner water are evidence of a healthier bay but we still have a long way to go - the brown tide returns every summer, phosphates continuing to take their tragic toll. Closing the breach will only make things worse. Please allow the breach to remain as is and as little managed by human efforts to contain, stabilize or close it.

**Correspondence Id: 214    Comment Id: 474613**

**Comment Text:** Leave breach open as nature intended, Bay around that area is thriving.

**Correspondence Id: 215    Comment Id: 474615**

**Comment Text:** Keeping it open will benefit the Great South Bay. My concern is if it is closed the area will become over polluted again. Leave the Breach! Let nature take it's course.

**Correspondence Id: 216    Comment Id: 474616**

**Comment Text:** Protect Wildlife and the wilderness If the desired outcome is leave the breach open then yes. Leave the wilderness area as it was intended when it created and follow the mandate of "let nature take it's course".

**Correspondence Id: 318    Comment Id: 474632**

**Comment Text:** The inlet is the Gate way to endless hope. The Bay was a pool of stagnant,foul smelling water wich choked the life from all inhabitants. The Breech has breathed new life into the Bay.The water is clear once again.Fish,crabs,Turtles,clams,Ospreys and Eagles are thriving. This natural filter;given to us by Mother Nature, has been a God sent.To see the bait fish deep into the rivers and creeks during the ebbs and flows, gives a sense of comfort.It's a joy to know nature is thriving and the circle of life is being sustained. I implore to the powers to be,to please let the wild be wild and allow "Mother Nature" to dictate when the "old Inlet" should be closed again.

**Correspondence Id: 319    Comment Id: 474633**

**Comment Text:** The water quality and sea life has improved dramatically since the breach. At the same time, fears of higher tides have not proven to be the case. Until we have a total south shore sewer system, the breach is our only means for any kind of help. I think FINs is taking the right approach. Let science and data drive the outcome. Allow it to close on it's own or remain open on its own.

**Correspondence Id: 220    Comment Id: 474634**

**Comment Text:** I haven't noticed any adverse issues caused by the breach. Bellport Bay is cleaner, the tides seem to be running normally, and the fish population seems to have improved, though the crab population seems to have declined. Yes. By all means, ensure the integrity of the natural and cultural features of the seashore and its surrounding ecosystems! I don't think it should be managed. Leave the breach open and let nature take it's course. She always does.

**Correspondence Id: 221    Comment Id: 474636**

**Comment Text:** I have no concerns. The breach hasn't had any bad effects on the Great South Bay. Do not close the breach. Let nature take its course.

**Correspondence Id: 324    Comment Id: 474639**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Under this alternative, growth or closure of the breach would be determined by natural barrier island processes.

**Correspondence Id: 327    Comment Id: 474644**

**Comment Text:** My main concern is that a plan is being considered! Sometimes it is better to stand back and marvel at nature working, rather than working to thwart it. This is a designated wilderness area, and we have been given a gift of better water quality from the tidal exchange between bay and ocean. "Wait and see" how the inlet develops. It might close by itself, or stay open. It would be a loss if it closed, but we shouldn't tamper with it. The inlet is beautiful and awesome, a fabulous destination for hikers and adventurous boaters and fisherman.

**Correspondence Id: 226    Comment Id: 474656**

**Comment Text:** There is no scientific data that points to any benefits of closing the breach apart from enriching certain companies that would do the work to close it. Don't close the breach. I've seen and documented through underwater video the benefits that the breach has given us. For example there are now some very large natural blue mussel beds that carpet areas of Bellport Bay - this creates habitat and feeding opportunities for many animals and a whole new ecosystem. Oysters are now being planted in the bay and already growth rings are being measured. Lastly - it's natural - and it's in the wilderness area. leave it alone as nature intended. the science does not support a breach closure - the science supports keeping it open. We need a healthier cleaner bay - Aquaculture can go a long way to help that - but only if we have a healthy clean system and enough tidal exchange with ocean water to help the bay clean itself out.

**Correspondence Id: 229    Comment Id: 474665**

**Comment Text:** I would like for the breach to be left to mother nature. I have been boating and fishing in the Great South Bay all of my life. I am 57 years old and I don't remember when the bay has been so clean. The fishing has improved in this area tremendously. I dock my boat from April to December and have not seen any significant change in the tides. I would not like it to be opened and maintained as this would be an additional financial burden. I would rather see the funds allocated to keep Moriches and Fire Island Inlets clear and safe. To disturb this natural inlet would be irresponsible and foolish.

**Correspondence Id: 232    Comment Id: 474669**

**Comment Text:** the only issue i have is it should be left alone let mother nature do her job. the waters of the great south bay have never been cleaner or more full of water life then before the breach.. if left open it will keep the bay cleaner and more marine life will be found. Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Under this alternative, growth or closure of the breach would be determined by natural barrier island processes

**Correspondence Id: 234    Comment Id: 474672**

**Comment Text:** The breach should not be closed. Mother nature does things for a reason. The great south bay needed to be flushed out do to many years of pollution. This is the best thing that could have happened to the bay. The marine live is starting to come back again the way it's suppose to be It should be left alone!

**Correspondence Id: 235    Comment Id: 474673**

**Comment Text:** I believe that the effects of the breach on the Great South Bay has been mostly beneficial to the ecosystem, and we've had enough time to observe the possible negative effects to determine that they are largely minimal. We've had three years to observe the effects of the open breach. As I stated above, I believe that net effect has been very positive and that the open breach does not pose a serious threat to the population of the south shore. Save a lot of money and leave the breach alone!

**Correspondence Id: 330    Comment Id: 474676**

**Comment Text:** My concerns are that by closing the breach we will be trying to change what is a natural occurrence. While Old Inlet was open the waters in the surrounding bays teamed with marine life. When closed we lost valuable fisheries. Now the breach is cleaning the bays by flushing harmful pollutants out to sea. I do not think the breach needs to be managed at all. Nature should be allowed to run it's course.

**Correspondence Id: 331    Comment Id: 474677**

**Comment Text:** I support a plan to keep the Wilderness Breach open and managed under natural conditions. This is due to my personal observations of healthier clams and a greater and more varied fish population near the breach, an increase in shorebirds on the sand flats, the influx of clearer and cleaner ocean water to the bay, and the associated increase in recreational uses of the area. This observation of a healthier bay near the breach is contrary to the long-term observation seen throughout the entire Great South Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 238    Comment Id: 474688**

**Comment Text:** Option 1 is the most consistent with NPS policies. Option 4 is very appealing to myself as an owner of a 27' sailboat that draws 4'but is not consistent wit NPS policies. I can only hope that the breach opens and deepens naturally as it did in the 1800's.

**Correspondence Id: 238    Comment Id: 474689**

**Comment Text:** I believe the Breach Contingency Plan was written by the Army Corps to take attention away from their huge miscalculation re; Westhampton Dunes. The breach there was caused by the Army Corps failure to complete the Groin project. The financial expense that they are scaring the public with was homes destroyed by a severely weakened barrier island for which I believe they were found liable. This does not compare to a breach in a national park that should be left natural and untrammelled by man(eg. The Army Corps to be precise)

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474695**

**Comment Text:** According to the NPS Scoping Newsletter, the desired outcome of the plan is to ensure the continued integrity of the natural and cultural features at Fire Island National Seashore and the surrounding ecosystems while protecting human life and managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas. While there is no evidence that closing the breach will protect human life or reduce the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas, allowing the breach to evolve with minimal human interference will assure the continued integrity of the natural and cultural features at Fire Island National Seashore and the surrounding ecosystems.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474697**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned with wrongheaded efforts to close the breach, rather than permit the barrier system to perform in a natural manner. Since the breach opened, eastern Great South Bay/Bellport Bay, which historically had serious problems with hypoxia and nutrient loading, particularly during the warm months, has been cooler, clearer and able to support far more life. Fish, including striped bass, bluefish and summer flounder, are returning to the eastern bay, quohogs are putting on robust annual growth and the clearing water is allowing eelgrass to receive enough sunlight to grow healthy again, although the beds are still just a remnant of what they were.

**Correspondence Id: 242    Comment Id: 474715**

**Comment Text:** This breach was created by a natural process and should be allowed to grow or close without human intervention

**Correspondence Id: 243    Comment Id: 474717**

**Comment Text:** Maintenance and emergency personnel have been accessing all parts of Fire Island for almost 3 years since the breach formed. There is no need to alter the course nature has taken to facilitate travel when alternative routes are present. Please leave the breach alone. Whether it fills due to shoaling, or enlarges slightly it is what nature intends. And should occur without imposing costs to taxpayers. There are a myriad of positive effects the increase in tidal flows have brought upon the Great South Bay, but they have been achieved without cost, and it should stay that way.

**Correspondence Id: 245    Comment Id: 474720**

**Comment Text:** I think the first strategy - leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions - is the only appropriate one for a wilderness. The shore ecosystem here has obviously benefited from ocean water. Flooding issues that we had prior to Sandy and the breach opening have improved, rather than worsened, which I believe relates to its opening. It appears to be slowly closing on its own, and if we allow nature to take its course, we may lose some of those benefits, but then, future breaches will undoubtedly occur that will restore them again - if we continue to allow nature's course. Our beach, from Moriches Inlet to approximately Sailor's Haven, is by far the healthiest of any along southern Long Island because of NPS protections and the prescient decision to designate it a wilderness when it was threatened with development. Closing the breach strikes me as a dangerous dilution of mission and a troubling precedent.

**Correspondence Id: 249    Comment Id: 474724**

**Comment Text:** My concern is that nature and the breach be left alone. Old Inlet breach has opened and closed at least several times in human memory. The Fire Island National Seashore was established as a wilderness and the breach should be simply left alone.

**Correspondence Id: 250    Comment Id: 474725**

**Comment Text:** The bay is benefiting from the influx of fresh water. The money needed to close up the breach can be better spent on something else. There is no guarantee that. Nature wont strike again and open it up. Leave it alone.

**Correspondence Id: 252    Comment Id: 474727**

**Comment Text:** It is my very strong opinion that the inlet is the best thing to happen to the bay in my life time. Please let it be!

**Correspondence Id: 255    Comment Id: 474731**

**Comment Text:** Old inlet breach should be left alone. The breach is helping to flush water into and out of the bay. This is beneficial to the eelgrass, clams, crabs and fish.

**Correspondence Id: 257    Comment Id: 474734**

**Comment Text:** We live on the water directly facing the breach and our only concerns would be that the breach could be closed. On most mornings the water in the bay is clear and the bottom can be seen out to approx 4-5'. We spend a lot of time in Maine and the water clarity is now similar to coastal Maine. The shellfish population is clearly more robust. We swim a lot in the bay and the change to water quality - - taste, smell, and clarity - - is considerable. Our biggest concern is that a decision could be made by a government agency without the local community's input. We are pleased to have this opportunity to express our strong wish to have the inlet remain a beautiful, beneficial and healthful natural occurrence. We also have the concern that should the decision somehow be made to close the breach that it would be at an extraordinary cost, money that could be put to more productive use. It also would bring a considerable "man made" element to a strip of land that has exquisite natural beauty.

**Correspondence Id: 258    Comment Id: 474736**

**Comment Text:** This new inlet is a blessing and should be treated as such and left alone - t's flushing the bay, with great results. Sometimes the best action is no action!

**Correspondence Id: 260    Comment Id: 474739**

**Comment Text:** The natural breach has been extremely beneficial to the health of the Great South Bay & the flora/fauna it sustains. Fire Island - and all other barrier beaches - were formed naturally over time & breaches/overwashes have been occurring just as long. They are part of a cycle that is integral to the Fire Island ecosystem. Sometimes they close naturally, sometimes they are kept open to form permanent inlets (Moriches, Shinnecock, etc) & sometimes they are closed by man. Since this breach has occurred in the undeveloped Otis Pike wilderness area, I implore the NPS to leave this breach alone...nature created it, nature will do what it wants with it. After all, there's a reason why the breach occurred at "Old Inlet"

**Correspondence Id: 338    Comment Id: 474745**

**Comment Text:** The NPS should also consider the that it is clear that the majority of people that live near the breach feel that it should NOT be closed manually. It is my feeling that one excellent outcome that the planning process could determine is to simply to allow mother nature to decide and leave it alone.

**Correspondence Id: 341    Comment Id: 474751**

**Comment Text:** The Great South Bay is polluted and the breach has greatly improved the area by bringing in fresh ocean water, welcoming life again, so my position is to leave it alone. Yes, I agree with the desired outcome and believe that time has proven the safety of the breach and the positive impact it has brought to the marine life, also welcoming birds.

**Correspondence Id: 261    Comment Id: 474753**

**Comment Text:** I am not qualified to comment scientifically, however a great deal has changed for the better since the breach opened, in particular the cleanliness of the bay water, and the obvious increase in wild life of all sorts. It would appear the breach has not caused any significant or worrying negative impacts, despite alarmist comments, some from the NPS, who should no better. Indeed this document contains several not supported by any evidence. I opt for Option 1, "1 Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Under this alternative, growth or closure of the breach would be determined by natural barrier island processes." Listen to the locals, look at the evidence. The breach has been very beneficial, it is a natural process of the constantly shifting barrier island. It does not require any human intervention either to stabilize the barrier island, make a permanent entrance, or block it up.

**Correspondence Id: 345    Comment Id: 474754**

**Comment Text:** I live in Mastic Beach and we love that the breach is open. The water quality has greatly improved with more marine life in the bay. Hurricane Sandy flooded our yard and crawl space. So I'm aware of the hazards. The parks service made the right choice in leaving it open. Let it stay that way for the good of our community. Let the breach stay as it is. It's a wilderness that can be enjoyed by all ages, benefits our community and brings nature closer to home. No, I really think that keeping it natural and open is the best plan. Even if we fill it in with rising tides and stronger storms it will only open again. The cost is free to all taxpayers to keep it the way it is and that is the best bet.

**Correspondence Id: 346    Comment Id: 474755**

**Comment Text:** The breach does not threaten the coast with additional flooding, this has been proven scientifically. Since it does not increase flooding risk to property on the mainland and the breach is in a wilderness area it should be left in its wild state without human intervention. The improved health of the bay and its sea life should be taken into consideration when a decision is made about any closing of the breach. Bellport Bay has not been this clean since the 1980's. The breach provides additional tourism and educational opportunities for visitors to the National Park.

**Correspondence Id: 349    Comment Id: 474757**

**Comment Text:** Please leave the breach alone for ever and let Mother Nature take its course. We live across from it and see the positive influence everyday. Interference from the Corps of engineers can only bring unforeseen and unfortunate consequences. The bay is much cleaner. Anything else will be a waste of the tax payers' money.



**Correspondence Id: 350    Comment Id: 474758**

**Comment Text:** The breach has created no adverse effects to the bay or the south shore of Long Island. Scientists have been monitoring the breach and its effects on tides and storm surge and have determined that there have been no significant changes. The inflow of seawater has made a significant improvement to the water quality of Great South Bay. Personally I have seen water clarity clear up considerably and the fish populations have increased in the east sections of the bay. Great South Bay will become a stagnate dead body of water with out this much needed flushing action provided by the breach. It has been well documented that there is an excess of Nitrogen that flows into the bay from lawn fertilizers runoff and the hundreds of thousands of cesspools on Long Island. This excess Nitrogen fuels the massive and destructive algae blooms that kill off all of the living plants and animals in the bay by blocking sunlight and create a hypoxic conditions. It would detrimental to the bay and the economy of Long Island to close the breach. If the bay, without the benefit of the breach, continues in this downward spiral of ever increasing algae blooms will cause property values to plummet. In closing the benefits of the many outweigh the benefits of the few who feel inconvenienced by having to drive a longer route to reach their summer homes. Let mother nature take her course.

**Correspondence Id: 353    Comment Id: 474765**

**Comment Text:** Option 1 “ Seatuck strongly supports the strategy to leave the breach open, manage it under natural conditions, and allow its future to be determined by natural barrier island processes. This alternative prioritizes the natural progression of the breach and allows it to function without interference. As the NPS newsletter recognizes, this approach would provide a range of ecological benefits, enhance the natural resources of the area and accommodate the island's natural migration and long-term resiliency.

**Correspondence Id: 353    Comment Id: 474767**

**Comment Text:** Option 3 - While an approach that provides for closure of the inlet in situations where public safety is at risk may seem prudent and logical, there has simply been no evidence of any such risk from the breach. In the absence of any demonstrable evidence of increased flooding or other risks associated with the breach, a strategy to create a contingency plan for an abstract, hypothetical risk seems unnecessary. If at some point in the future new evidence clearly establishes the existence of increased risks then modifications to the management plan should be considered.

**Correspondence Id: 298    Comment Id: 474773**

**Comment Text:** My main concern is the health of the Great South Bay. My impression is that the Bay is a lot cleaner since the breach and that the aquatic life has increased. I support leaving the breach as is. If it closes up naturally, okay.

**Correspondence Id: 356    Comment Id: 474775**

**Comment Text:** My concern is that NPS/FINS even has a breach management plan. It's in a designated wilderness area, the breach is a natural function, poses no threat to property or infrastructure, and provides tremendous benefit to the bay. There are much better ways to spend public time and resources where the environment of Fire Island and Great South Bay is concerned. Short of leaving the new inlet alone, it could be "managed" similarly to the way Southampton and East Hampton Trustees manage Mecox, Sagg, & Georgica. Let it close up naturally if that's what it wants to do, but open it manually to help the health of the bay seasonally/occasionally.

**Correspondence Id: 356    Comment Id: 474776**

**Comment Text:** My desired outcome would be that it be left alone to open and close naturally, and that public resources be directed to the so called stabilized inlets such as Moriches and Shinnecock.



**Correspondence Id: 361    Comment Id: 474786**

**Comment Text:** leave the old inlet breach as is. the bay is cleaner and mother nature will close it as in the past

**Correspondence Id: 364    Comment Id: 474792**

**Comment Text:** I'm not sure why people object to leaving the breach open. The Great South Bay has been revitalized. Scientists have stated that tide heights have not increased. I say leave it open and let nature take it's course, whatever that may be.

**Correspondence Id: 262    Comment Id: 474795**

**Comment Text:** My concern is that a decision may be made for the benefit of a few who want the breach closed at the expense of those of us who feel the breach should be left untouched and allow Mother Nature to determine the outcome. Option 1 is the only option for me.

**Correspondence Id: 263    Comment Id: 474799**

**Comment Text:** I'd like to make it very clear that in the three years since SANDY the breach has had a positive effect in my area. NO problems with tides and BETTER water quality. Please keep the breach and should it close naturally so be it...

**Correspondence Id: 266    Comment Id: 474802**

**Comment Text:** I understand that the issue of flooding has been determined to be negligible. Therefore I am strongly in favor of preserving the environmental benefits of the breach by keeping it open. I believe the breach should be allowed to maintain itself or at most to be subject to preparation of a plan to close in the event conditions change significantly enough to warrant reconsideration. The quality of the bay waters has vastly improved and is much appreciated by the local community. Quality of life for marine and land dwellers alike has improved. Let's not mess with it. Nature has spoken.

**Correspondence Id: 267    Comment Id: 474803**

**Comment Text:** the new inlet has has a positive effect on the bay, cleaner water, more fish, shellfish, turtles etc. The Baymen and boaters have waited for decades for this day for nature to clean up some of this pollution. Mother Nature made it so we should leave it alone, besides the Government wasn't too concerned when the original "Old Inlet" closed up after a ship grounding in it. Perhaps they should have done their job and dredged it then.

**Correspondence Id: 278    Comment Id: 474819**

**Comment Text:** We have Blue fish and Striped Bass being caught on their northerly run right off of Bellport Dock, as well as into Patchogue bay along the shore. The clams are growing in abundance, with seedlings being found along the flats on the South side of the bay into Patchogue bay. The Mussels are coming back, groups have reintroduced oysters into the bay. All of these mollusks will assist in cleaning the waters of Great South Bay and the environs. It should be allowed to be naturally cared for. If it closes on it's own, then it remains that way until it reopens. That is the nature of inlets along Fire Island. FINS works to keep things as natural as possible, this should not be an exception.

**Correspondence Id: 280    Comment Id: 474822**

**Comment Text:** I believe that there is no proof that there are any adverse problems stemming from the opening of this breach and it should be left for nature to decide its future I believe that this breach has been beneficial to the clarity of the bay water and to the fish and shellfish population that has increased since the opening of the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 282    Comment Id: 474827**

**Comment Text:** Leave it alone! It's a dynamic system that we can't control, no matter how much of our taxes get poured into the sea. The Great South Bay is cleaner as a result. As a resident of Brookhaven Hamlet, ~3 miles directly north of the inlet, I'm in a position to be most effected by this change. The change I see is a good change. We've had no algal bloom as a result. Other bays on LI have had 'brown tides' and dead zones. Let this influx improve our waterway.

**Correspondence Id: 291    Comment Id: 474835**

**Comment Text:** LEAVE THE BREACH AS IS. IT HAS CLEANED THE BY OUT. MOTHER NATURE WILL CLOSE IT AS IN THE PAST. MORE MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT ON BUILDING UP THE BEACH AND DUNES

**Correspondence Id: 294    Comment Id: 474840**

**Comment Text:** I would like to see the breach left open and managed under natural conditions. The improved quality of the water in the bay is obvious. As a local homeowner I accept the risks and responsibilities along with the rewards of living close to water in a flood zone. I expect my local gov to be prepared for evacuation, my insurance company to honor their commitments, and my Parks Dept to protect the national treasure of Fire Island Wilderness for future generations.

**Correspondence Id: 297    Comment Id: 474843**

**Comment Text:** The barrier beach is structurally a dynamic ecosystem that to the extent possible should be allowed to function unimpeded by man's interference. Risk to human health must be considered, BUT only in the context of giving priority to the unencumbered continuation of natural processes. In other words humans need to be resilient in the face of the natural changes and evolution of this dynamic ecosystem. Stabilization is costly and counter productive, let the breach, the barrier beach and nature take its course! Since 2012, valuable shallow water & tidal flats habitat has been created providing important habitat for declining populations of shorebirds, wading birds & waterfowl.

## AL1200 – SUPPORTS CLOSING THE BREACH

**Correspondence Id:** 296 **Comment Id:** 474842

**Comment Text:** - reduced flooding to bay front communities, including Davis Park and Ocean Ridge - reduce flooding on the south shore of Long Island - importance of year-round fire and emergency response - no appreciable improvement in bay water since the breach close the Breach as required by law within 60 day so breach.

**Correspondence Id:** 325 **Comment Id:** 471816

**Comment Text:** The only way to insure the continued integrity of the natural and cultural features of the Seashore and its surrounding ecosystems while protecting human life and managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas is to close the breach. Even the creation of a jettied inlet will still isolate the communities from eastern access and is inconsistent with NPS policies.

**Correspondence Id:** 37 **Comment Id:** 474034

**Comment Text:** The threat of flooding is real and filling in the breach will alleviate some of this potential.

**Correspondence Id:** 303 **Comment Id:** 474097

**Comment Text:** I feel the breach needs to be closed. The breach endangers all of long Island if the breach continues to get bigger and is not closed. For the safety of Long Island and fireisland the breach needs to be closed.

**Correspondence Id:** 83 **Comment Id:** 474304

**Comment Text:** I live directly across from the breach in Bellport. The adjacent wetlands south of my property were heavily inundated with sea and storm detritus pushed ashore from the Super Storm Sandy surge. For that reason alone, closing the breach as a protective measure to our coastal areas makes sense.

**Correspondence Id:** 90 **Comment Id:** 474314

**Comment Text:** The breach must closed before the next major storm. I am sure you are aware of the tremendous damage to the Great south bay communities. This was caused because the breach allowed 2x the amount of water to enter the bay during Sandy. Now that the breach is wider and deeper it only increases the danger. It must be closed so that it will not open again. To me this is obvious and to you as well.

**Correspondence Id:** 96 **Comment Id:** 474324

**Comment Text:** Fire Island has been a 32 mile Island since it was founded. Lets keep it that way!! There is no reason to keep this breach opened. I believe it will cause the Island to shift its sand into the bay area & change its shape. The breach could widen and cause a more aggressive flow onto the exposed areas eroding the Island further. Keeping the Island connected gives" two" in & out access to the mainland. I feel this is an important aspect of why the breach should be closed.

**Correspondence Id:** 103 **Comment Id:** 474330

**Comment Text:** The breach should have been closed when the other three were closed. The breach makes it impossible for emergency vehicles to reach the east end communities

**Correspondence Id: 116    Comment Id: 474348**

**Comment Text:** Please close the breach. I live nearby and see for myself that we need a barrier for future storms. We need land to protect LI from future storms. I don't care how clean the water is now that it is open. It is crazy to keep us unprotected!!!! What are you thinking? The next big storm and we are all wiped out. We need the dunes to protect us.

**Correspondence Id: 129    Comment Id: 474363**

**Comment Text:** NPS needs to be proactive and NOT let this breach happen again. Fill the breach, like it was BEFORE Sandy, apply rows of snow fence to capture the wind swept sand and let the beach be.

**Correspondence Id: 137    Comment Id: 474378**

**Comment Text:** While participating in the FIMI beach replenishment is an un-natural condition, in the long term it will enlarge and re-establish the barrier island for many generations. Creating a new vaster platform for specie establishment and survival. Also preventing negative impact to the Bay environment and the human specie survival in a suburban area which will not go away. Participate in the beach replenishment while this likely once in a lifetime second chance is available. Not participating is as harmful as not taking responsibility for our abuses and coming up with fixes that are good for all.

**Correspondence Id: 140    Comment Id: 474380**

**Comment Text:** My concern is waiting too long to correct this. If the breach is allowed to stay open it will more than likely continue to widen. I believe that there may be too much planing and not enough action. The breach needs to be closed as it will negatively affect the long term viability of the south shore of Long island mostly Suffolk county and also provide an access point for marine life that otherwise would not enter the bay under normal conditions.

**Correspondence Id: 141    Comment Id: 474382**

**Comment Text:** I have learned that you are questioning the reason to close the breach. It seems obvious that the open breach will do the following. 1 decrease the amount of sand on fire island by sending it into the bay and ocean depriving the island of the natural westerly flow of sand 2 continually become wider and more dangerous. 3 risk all properties along the great south bay to flooding. The next major storm will be more dangerous than Sandy because the water entering the bay will be greater by at least 2 fold. It is irresponsible for any delay and certainly will end in litigation as was the case in Westhampton Beach. Cleaning the bay did not work out this summer leading people to believe that it is a false premise and a weak one even if it were true. I am a Fire Islander for most of my life and do not wish it to be destroyed over an experiment. I am aware that the park does not want to have homes on the beach & is making every effort to destroy these homes by allowing or helping nature do their dirty work, but this is insanity. Sunken forest and the wilderness area will also be at risk as well as the confiscated houses that the park now occupies on the eastern part of Fire Island. CLOSE THE BREACH

**Correspondence Id: 142    Comment Id: 474383**

**Comment Text:** Safety for all those on the Eastern end of Fire Island; access to those areas by emergency services. Only the possible solution of closing the breach. All others are not acceptable. I am not an expert in this area, however, I am an exempt EMT and realize the danger in not having easy access to Davis Park by emergency vehicles.

**Correspondence Id: 152    Comment Id: 474402**

**Comment Text:** Close the breach. It will continue to open more widely. The homes are flooded when the storms come. Surge of water. Close the breach. We go sailing and boating there. It was safe when there wasn't any breach. We loved old inlet and the dock that was there. Miss it. Another big storm or hurricane and the homes in the area will flood. It's really not fair to leave that breach opened. We know fisherman think it's nice because they can get out to the ocean but locals who live in the area don't.

---

**Correspondence Id: 157    Comment Id: 474408**

**Comment Text:** The breach should be closed. There are many reasons, but top on our list are the following: 1. Current, and future, full time residents, emergency personnel, and contractors in Davis Park should have reasonable off season access and emergency egress to the east where the closest bridge exists. 2. The Great South Bay is a bay...it is not an ocean... The breach is causing the ecology to change and clams, horseshoe crabs, etc. are being killed or otherwise compromised... In our view, the breach is the number 1 issue with protecting the island. The FIMI project may be replaced with closing the breach, and we will be pleased. The National Seashore's reluctance to close this breach puts the relationship of homeowners/taxpayers at odds with the National Seashore...respect is lost.

**Correspondence Id: 186    Comment Id: 474438**

**Comment Text:** I live very close to it. Ever since it opened, our streets now flood much more. I am concerned about my property value. close the breach

**Correspondence Id: 202    Comment Id: 474454**

**Comment Text:** The breach should be closed. While routine tides have not changed in Mastic Beach, we have major flooding every time there is a storm. This never happened before the breach was created. With the prospect of sea levels rising with global warming all inlets will need flood gates in the coming years. If you do not close the inlet you will have to pay for flood gates. Plan for increasing sea levels which will threaten the barrier beach and the mainland it protects. You will be forced in future years to raise the dune level and control flooding during storms.

**Correspondence Id: 205    Comment Id: 474457**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned that this is a barrier beach to Long Island. I am concerned that if the breach is not stabilized it will continue to migrate west. I am in favor of closing the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 306    Comment Id: 474596**

**Comment Text:** I urge the Seashore to close the breach for the following reasons: A closed breach would contribute to reduced flooding to bay front properties. It is vital that fire and emergency vehicles be able to reach our community from the east. With the breach open, the response would have to come from the west, a much longer journey. Without timely response to a fire, for instance, The outcome could be the destruction of Davis Park/Ocean Ridge. In a medical emergency, fast access from the east could be a matter of life and death. We have observed no appreciable improvement in bay water since the breach and, indeed, have seen many brown tides.

**Correspondence Id: 307    Comment Id: 474597**

**Comment Text:** I strongly believe that the breach should be closed before it becomes any wider. Had it been closed right after Super Storm Sandy, it would have been an easy project. Now the dimensions of the breach, growing all the time, have made the project much more complex and expensive. My reasons for urging the closing of the breach are: the breach was supposed to improve the environment of the Bay. We have seen no appreciable improvement in the bay water since the breach has been open and have had many brown tides in these recent years. It is important that year-round fire and emergency response vehicles have rapid access to communities to the west. With the breach open the vehicles would have to come from the western end of the Island, a much, much longer journey than from the east. For Davis Park/Ocean Ridge, this lack of quick response could spell total disaster if there were a major fire and a high wind. In a medical emergency, it might be a life and death matter. A closed breach would reduced flooding on Bay front properties.

**Correspondence Id: 310    Comment Id: 474600**

**Comment Text:** My strong recommendation is that the breach should be closed for the following reasons: It cuts off the western part of Fire Island from emergency vehicles which used to travel via Smith Point. If there is a fire of significant magnitude, it would take hours for a mainland fire truck to reach Water Island, Davis Park or Watch Hill. This is a major safety issue - LIVES COULD BE LOST and property damaged as a result of the irresponsible maintenance of an open breach. It interrupts the littoral drift depriving sand from areas to its west. This will cause more breaches on fire island as well as property damage and potential LOSS OF LIFE in a storm event. It allows ocean water to stream into the bay during the tidal surges of storms. Resultant flooding could result in LIVES LOST and major property damage. Leaving the breach open also would negate the benefits of the FIMI plan wasting federal taxpayer money. It is my opinion that the risks to human life as a result of the breach being open vastly outweighs any potential ecological benefit of keeping it open. I have lived near the bay for over 30 years and notice no appreciable difference in water quality before or after the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 311    Comment Id: 474601**

**Comment Text:** I have summered on Long Island's south shore for years and I am simply amazed that FINS would even consider leaving the breach open. The flooding that the breach will allow during major storms is reason enough - of course water will pour into the bay during major storms and flood the mainland threatening people's lives and property. Why would you even consider that possibility?! It should be closed immediately. Secondly, fire and emergency services to Fire Island are severely hampered by the breach as land access to the eastern communities of fire island is now a several hour ordeal (if the beach is passable). This too could threaten life and property. Again, why would such a possibility even be considered? Thirdly, the bay has shown no water quality improvement. I have been an active swimmer in the bay for years and it is no different now than before sandy, so no good reason to leave the breach open. Lastly, the Otis Pike Wilderness is now bisected. Human enjoyment therefore has been reduced and it is now basically two wildernesses. Makes no sense.

**Correspondence Id: 322    Comment Id: 474637**

**Comment Text:** The breach seriously impacts the safety of people on the south shore mainland of fire island and it should be closed. It will cause lots of flooding during major storm events as it will allow a storm surge to inundate the residents of the south shore putting people's lives and property at risk. The breach also poses a safety risk to the residents of fire island as emergency services cannot access the eastern end of the island without a long laborious drive from Robert Moses. The water quality/ecology argument is suspect - there has been limited improvement to water quality, but we should not allow that limited improvement to threaten the lives of people.

**Correspondence Id: 333    Comment Id: 474681**

**Comment Text:** this breach should have been closed immediately after the storm. It would have saved the tax payers a lot of money!!!!

**Correspondence Id: 343    Comment Id: 474752**

**Comment Text:** The only strategy that makes sense is to "Close the Breach". It should be noted that there has been no appreciable improvement in bay water since the breach.



**Correspondence Id: 355    Comment Id: 474771**

**Comment Text:** Analysis of the Otis Pike breach's tidal effects under non-severe weather conditions does not provide a fair assessment of the flooding threat that it poses in response to a hurricane. The active fair-weather breach channel has a cross-sectional area much smaller than that which would be exposed during a major tidal surge, given the expanse of compromised dunes flanking the channel. As a property owner in a low-lying area vulnerable to tidal flooding, I urge for closure of the breach, especially now that shoaling on the bay side has provided its benefit. Further shoaling will eventually fill in boat channels, requiring new expenditures for their maintenance. Money that would be saved by not filling in the breach shifts to other costs, such as maintaining these channels. A phase shift in the bay's tide cycle induced by the breach implies an increase in tidal range. Even an increase in bay tidal range of just ten percent (about one inch in fair weather), would have potential economic impacts to the mainland far greater than the cost of filling the breach, given a ten percent higher tide surge in Hurricane Sandy terms.

**Correspondence Id: 359    Comment Id: 474780**

**Comment Text:** We strongly advocate that FINS expeditiously consider closing the breach in the Otis Pike High Dunes Wilderness area that has now grown from a small over-wash entry to a half mile wide bay inlet along the Atlantic oceanfront in the three years since its creation during Superstorm Sandy in 2012. There appear to be no appreciable water quality or marine life improvements in the bay since the breach occurred. To the contrary, there has been noticeable increase in the incidence of the same brown tide which has had devastating impact on Peconic Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 272    Comment Id: 474809**

**Comment Text:** It has been argued that the breach at Old Inlet formed during Super Storm Sandy reflects the natural ebb and flow of ocean waters, and that breaches like this open and close as a consequence of normal ecological processes. This has been true throughout history, but does not pertain to the present. I believe it is important to strongly reject this naive argument: to accept it is to refuse to acknowledge global climate change and its consequences. Although events such as this have certainly occurred in the past, we can expect that they will continue with increased frequency. It is our responsibility to face the accumulated consequences of future climate disturbances if we fail to act: degradation of the coastal barrier islands that have existed for many thousands of years, disappearance of the Great South Bay and its unique ecology, unprecedented property loss and damage on Fire Island and the South Shore. Until there is a global solution to climate change, it is our responsibility to protect the natural environment that we have disrupted by taking affirmative action to close breaches such as this one so as to return Fire Island to its "natural" state.

**Correspondence Id: 275    Comment Id: 474816**

**Comment Text:** As a homeowner, just 300 yards from the Bellport Bay. I am concerned (considering the reality of global climate change and rising sea levels) that if another hurricane should hit this region, there will be significant damage to our homes and neighborhood. After Sandy, I saw the suffering of my neighbors as they had to deal with the damage done to their homes and their lives. The BARRIER BEACH is our LAST LINE OF DEFENSE, and thus in my opinion, the breach should be closed!



**Correspondence Id: 281    Comment Id: 474823**

**Comment Text:** 1) Leaving the breach open will likely result in more significant and faster flooding of low lying areas on the bayfront along the communities of the mainland south shore of Long Island during extreme tidal events. I agree with the studies that show the mean high tide has not been impacted, However, that is not the question that needs answering. The question should be - How does the breach effect the tides during a storm surge (one type of "extreme tidal event")? I would argue that the breach allows more high water into the bay at a faster rate than before the breach existed. This will cause major risks to human safety along the south shore as well as the potential for major property damage. Leaving the breach open is simply irresponsible. Additionally, the fact that we are spending millions of taxpayer dollars on the FIMI project to protect the south shore and would even consider leaving the breach open is shockingly wasteful. What would be the point of building dunes and berms while leaving a ready conduit for inundating the south shore open (any 10 year old could see that this verges on total stupidity)

**Correspondence Id: 281    Comment Id: 474824**

**Comment Text:** 2) Leaving the breach open creates major issues with regard to the safety of people on the eastern half of fire island. What if there is a major fire in the Watch Hill visitor center or Davis Park or Water Island? Currently, Fire trucks from the mainland would have to traverse 20 miles of ocean front to respond to such a fire. Lives could be lost, property could be damaged. What if a manmade fire started in the Watch Hill campground on a day when the wind was from the west and started a forest fire with devastating impact to the natural wilderness east of Watch Hill. The wilderness would be damaged, perhaps irreparably with wildlife suffering. This would not be a natural provess, as FINS likes to talk about...this would be a manmade occurence ruining the natural beauty of the wilderness area.

**Correspondence Id: 281    Comment Id: 474825**

**Comment Text:** 3) there have been no studies suggesting that the water quality of the bay has improved as a result of the breach. This is not a reason to leave it open.

**Correspondence Id: 281    Comment Id: 474826**

**Comment Text:** 4) The breach disturbs the littoral drift of sand down the length of fire island. Over time, this sand deficit will result in a sand deficit, leading to more overwashes and breaches to the west. We already have moriches inlet (which is dredged)hurting the sand in the littoral drift, why add yet another problem. More overwash and more breaches will threaten human life and property on the south shore of long island. Why risk that? Again, it would be irresponsible to leave the breach open.

**Correspondence Id: 295    Comment Id: 474841**

**Comment Text:** - reduced flooding to south shore communities of long Island, including Bayport and Blue Point. Tide on average are 6" to 8" higher on high tides and 6" to "8 Lower on low tides. - importance of emergency response during high tides and storms. - no appreciable improvement in bay water since the breach this breach should have been closed 60 after Sandy

## **AL1210 – OPPOSED CLOSING THE BREACH**

**Correspondence Id: 277    Comment Id: 474818**

**Comment Text:** Water is cleaner. More fish. Water safer to swim in. No negative effects. Keep it open!

**Correspondence Id: 4    Comment Id: 465878**

**Comment Text:** It has been my understanding that NPS 'leaves nature be' unless there is danger to people or the environment. The breach has been open for several years now and I feel FIRST HAND how it has improved the conditions in that part of the Great South Bay. I honestly do not understand why the idea of closing the breach is even being entertained at this late date. I feel closing the breach would have more negative environmental impacts than if it had been closed immediately.

**Correspondence Id: 16    Comment Id: 466467**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned that the breach will be closed, which will be detrimental to the bay's ecosystem and the livelihoods of working fishermen and baymen. The impacts of the breach are minimal to those who choose to live on the water.

**Correspondence Id: 21    Comment Id: 466766**

**Comment Text:** The obvious issue is the impact on the bay side of the breach. If it helps to improve the water quality which in turn will lead to a healthier bay with improved habitat for fish and wildlife, I'm all for leaving it open. The economic importance of a healthier bay should be a top priority in "selling " this to the public. Cleaner water means better habitat for the fish, crabs, waterfowl and shellfish that live in and on our bays. The sport as well as commercial fishing and hunting communities, recreational motor, sail and paddle boat users will benefit from a better environment.

**Correspondence Id: 6    Comment Id: 473691**

**Comment Text:** the "breach", or " new inlet", is healthy for the Great South Bay, the water, the wildlife, the surrounding communities. We have witnessed the rejuvenation of native water wildlife since the inlet opened back up, and we have seen no adverse effects. My sister lives right on the Bay with a marsh as her storefront and has a perfect place to witness the positive Impact of this new inlet . To (attempt to )close it would not only be long term futile, a colossal waste of tax dollars and energy. Please let it be. Please do not try to close the Fire Island/Belloport Bay breach, leave it as a new inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 17    Comment Id: 473747**

**Comment Text:** The greatest economic harm we could do would be to close the breach, for that would hasten the death of the bay, and with that greatly devalue the appeal of living by the bay, lowering real estate prices, decreasing tourism, and undermining the recreational fishing industry. To close it would be an utter failure of environmental stewardship and help seal the Great South Bay's fate.

**Correspondence Id: 23    Comment Id: 473805**

**Comment Text:** The south shore bays of Long Island are dying. This breach has restored a lot of life in a short time to Bellport Bay. I'm very concerned that there is a chance it will be closed. What the southern bays need is for the bay water to have more turnover with ocean water. Over time shell fish will return and begin to filter the bay water as nature intends. Eel grass will grow and stabilize the bay floor. There is no downside to a healthier bay and all Long Islanders would benefit. There are people concerned that this breach will increase flooding. We live on an island. There is always a chance of flooding. There was flooding before this breach and there will be flooding in the future whether we close the breach or not. Closing this breach would be a mistake.

**Correspondence Id: 27    Comment Id: 473812**

**Comment Text:** The desired outcome is fine as long as it does not include closing the breach. Although keeping the breach open is not without its risks, I firmly believe that the greater disservice to wildlife, the habitat, and the public would be to close it.

**Correspondence Id: 29    Comment Id: 473815**

**Comment Text:** I fear that it will be closed. It provides a cleansing of the bay. There is no scientific reason I know of to fill the breach back in. The planning process should stand back and observe the many pluses of this breach.

**Correspondence Id: 31    Comment Id: 473816**

**Comment Text:** The plan/EIS and any decisions about the breach should be informed and determined by "the best available science." The published science is clear and shows that the benefits of the breach are significant with regard to water quality in the areas adjacent to the breach. The data also show that there are no deleterious effects. Look to the published science, it clearly shows that closing the breach is not appropriate.

**Correspondence Id: 35    Comment Id: 473819**

**Comment Text:** Park Service needs to consider the cleaning effect the inlet has performed on the bay since its opening. Leave the breach open. It is better for all uses of the bay, the habitat and recreational use.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473956**

**Comment Text:** We do not support Option 2 (close the new inlet) for all the reasons we lay out in this letter.

**Correspondence Id: 40    Comment Id: 474040**

**Comment Text:** Please keep the breach, located in Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness open. The Atlantic sea water coming through the breach adds much needed dissolved oxygen to the great south bay, enhancing marine life. The additional sea water coming through the breach helps flush nitrogen out of the great south bay. The small sandy islands created by the breach will enhance wildlife environment. This additional wildlife will enhance the experience of visitors in the area. Finally, increasing the dissolved oxygen and lowering the nitrogen content of the water will enhance shellfish growth and other marine life in the great south bay.

**Correspondence Id: 46    Comment Id: 474049**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned that if the breach is closed, the health of the Great South Bay will continue to decline. The breach has allowed new water to flow from the ocean into the bay and vice versa. It has improved the health of the water surrounding the breach. This has aided species of all kind, including the clam population. I am also concerned that closing the breach would affect the wildlife species on land and in the water. If the breach closes, it could potentially choke out the species that are relying on the effects of breach to survive.

**Correspondence Id: 50    Comment Id: 474058**

**Comment Text:** My Concern is that if you close this breach - you shut the door on allowing the bays to flush and clean themselves. That we revert back to the decades of declining health for our waters.... and ultimately for us and our children. My concern is that the closing of this breach is done out of fear and not pure science or allowing this dynamic beach to change as it sees fit.

**Correspondence Id: 61    Comment Id: 474163**

**Comment Text:** It is my position that the "breach" - New Inlet - should remain open. Three years after its creation I have only experienced positive effects of it being there; namely, incredibly clean water in and around Bellport Bay, an abundance of fish and other marine life, and a wonderful place to go with family and friends to enjoy Fire Island National Seashore. Moreover, there has not been any increased incidence of flooding to the surrounding communities - water seeks its own level, after all!

**Correspondence Id: 62    Comment Id: 474170**

**Comment Text:** It is clear to me that the water quality of the Great South Bay has improved significantly since the breach opened after Hurricane Sandy. It would be a complete folly to spend the time and money to close the breach with clearly has been an environmental improvement to the area.

**Correspondence Id: 67    Comment Id: 474213**

**Comment Text:** What a shame to even consider closing this nature made gift to all of us who live near and on the Great South Bay. Although the bay has not cleared as much as hoped since the breach, it has cleared and there is a remarkable change in the water quality in the bay. There is a sparkle to the water and the bay is becoming alive again. The ecology in the bay is improving and to close the breach because one can is not a sound policy and risks returning the bay to what it was before, dead. The only justification that I can see to closing the breach, is to make it easier for the Park Service to travel from east to west, and that is a convenience not a justification. Keeping the Fire Island National Seashore in pristine condition is important, but improving the ecology of the Great South Bay is equally important. The National Park Service has the chance to hit a home run for the Seashore and the Great South Bay. Leave the Old Inlet breach as it is and we all win.

**Correspondence Id: 358    Comment Id: 474275**

**Comment Text:** The second management strategy of closing the breach immediately is, for the reasons set forth above, inconsistent with and contrary to the closure criteria enunciated in the statute.

**Correspondence Id: 70    Comment Id: 474292**

**Comment Text:** The bay has never been cleaner. Clear water. A return of fish and shellfish. Don't close the inlet. Don't close the inlet. Leave it open and let the clean and natural bay survive.

**Correspondence Id: 73    Comment Id: 474296**

**Comment Text:** Closing the breach would be an extraordinarily costly enterprise, at a time when those funds undoubtedly could be earmarked for more worthwhile and urgent projects. I would not recommend disrupting the natural order to close the breach, so, too, I would not recommend spending monies to provide a permanent inlet connecting the Atlantic Ocean and Great South Bay. I am a proponent of allowing nature to take its course and, absent materially changed conditions, abiding by nature's will as the breach continues to evolve.

**Correspondence Id: 77    Comment Id: 474299**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach open. The breach needs to stay open to help the Great South Bay stay clean and alive.

**Correspondence Id: 78    Comment Id: 474300**

**Comment Text:** I do believe that the "New" Old Inlet breach has made the Great South Bay cleaner. More than a century ago, this area was a well used inlet to the ocean for commerce. Now, it is a tiny break that brings needed relief for pollution in the Bay that directly affects the fishing industry. I do NOT want this inlet closed. From the photo that is shown, there are several sand deposits and bars that are keeping this opening to a minimum.

**Correspondence Id: 80    Comment Id: 474301**

**Comment Text:** Do not close the breach. it has made a significant difference in the clarity and movement of water in and around bellport bay. Eel grass is coming back and so are the horseshoe crabs the marine life has definitely increased. The breach allows for an outlet valve during storms when the water has blown to the west and then comes back in force the inlet allows much of the water to escape. high and low tides are insignificant. Little difference has been noted. To close the breach would be a great mistake and would go against a natural occurrence which has only contributed to our natural environment .

**Correspondence Id: 91    Comment Id: 474315**

**Comment Text:** The ecosystem of the Great South Bay is my main concern. The breach has cleaned the bay up and brought in new aquaculture. It's great. Save the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 93    Comment Id: 474320**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach - it seems to be having a beneficial result in the bay, and the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. I strongly advise that the breach be left so that the continual tidal influx can benefit the life of the back bay

**Correspondence Id: 94    Comment Id: 474322**

**Comment Text:** I feel strongly that the breach should be left alone and should NOT be closed.

**Correspondence Id: 102    Comment Id: 474329**

**Comment Text:** Leave the Preach open off Bellpot NY. - it is giving clean water in the Great South Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 104    Comment Id: 474331**

**Comment Text:** Keep the breach open. It is cleaning out the bay and making it much healthier. The breach/inlet is a blessing. It is so much better for the bay. All good. Total support to keep it open.

**Correspondence Id: 105    Comment Id: 474333**

**Comment Text:** If the breach is closed the water quality will drastically diminish. Oysters will not survive if the water quality changes.

**Correspondence Id: 112    Comment Id: 474340**

**Comment Text:** The breach should remain open to filter the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 117    Comment Id: 474350**

**Comment Text:** closing the breach will be devastating to Patchogue Bay and Bellport Bay. The revitalizing that is occurring within the ecosystem is only an asset to all who live and use the Great South Bay. Please don't close it.

**Correspondence Id: 118    Comment Id: 474351**

**Comment Text:** Please keep the waterway open to preserve the delicate ecosystem.

**Correspondence Id: 120    Comment Id: 474353**

**Comment Text:** i have lived on the bay in Bellport for the past 6 years and have discerned a much cleaner bay since the breach was produced from Sandy. I think it would be terrible to see it closed. Don't close the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 121    Comment Id: 474354**

**Comment Text:** we have seen tremendous benefit to the bay and environment. There is no reason to close it

**Correspondence Id:** 124 **Comment Id:** 474356

**Comment Text:** i think should be left open The breach has improved the water for everyone

**Correspondence Id:** 126 **Comment Id:** 474359

**Comment Text:** the desire to maintain the natural character of the wilderness area and the improved ecological system that has resulted from the breach - cleaner water, more shellfish, more bird life the bay is so much more alive that to close it would be a dereliction of the duty of the National Parks Service

**Correspondence Id:** 139 **Comment Id:** 474379

**Comment Text:** I beleive keeping the inlet open will improve the water quality in the bay it will Improve fishing I do not see any negative harm

**Correspondence Id:** 149 **Comment Id:** 474395

**Comment Text:** the new inlet needs to remain open. Keeping the inlet open by either monitoring it or stabilizing it. Not only is the inlet a positive to the bays ecosystem and fishermen, it is also an economic positive for the local economy of Patchogue and Bellport business in that it keeps fishermen in the local area to spend their money instead of going out of the area to fish and buy bait,tackle,dockage, repairs ect. This inlet is the best thing that has happened to this area in as long as I can remember, and I've been fishing the area for over 30 years. This is a no brainer. It has to stay open for the sake ot the local bays.

**Correspondence Id:** 154 **Comment Id:** 474404

**Comment Text:** It should be emphasized that even if the breach is closed, a subsequent major storm may well reopen it within the next few years, resulting in a complete waste of a large capital expenditure which would otherwise be applied to much more worthwhile projects

**Correspondence Id:** 158 **Comment Id:** 474409

**Comment Text:** The first issue that should be considered is how great the positive effect of the breach has been on the health of the Great South Bay. I am a life long resident [68 years] and have never seen the bay in such a clean state. The breach has changed the bay from a polluted mess to a pristine body of water. I live only a few hundred feet from the bay and have seen no negative results from the breach - no flooding, no erosion. I do not believe that any government agency has the legal right to close this inlet within the wilderness region.

**Correspondence Id:** 162 **Comment Id:** 474414

**Comment Text:** Leave it OPEN! There isn't any reason to close it.

**Correspondence Id:** 163 **Comment Id:** 474415

**Comment Text:** Since the breach was formed after Sandy, the water in the Great South Bay looks cleaner and clearer. I live waterfront on the southern shore of LI and have not noticed any change in water levels. I would hate to see the government spend so much money to close the breach when it creating such a positive environmental change.

**Correspondence Id:** 164 **Comment Id:** 474416

**Comment Text:** The cleaning of the Great South Bay needs to continue. The health has improved drastically and I even see the effects through Narrows Bay. Please make sure this positive direction isn't thrown off course by closing the breach.



**Correspondence Id: 166    Comment Id: 474417**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned about the water quality in the bay and I feel that the breach has improved conditions and provided a healthier environment for aquatic life in the area. Yes I feel leaving the breach open and possibly maintaining it will continue to improve water quality.

**Correspondence Id: 175    Comment Id: 474427**

**Comment Text:** Water in the Great South Bay has been much cleaner and clearer since the inlet opened. Since it did I've been seeing various shells washed up on Bellport's beaches that I hadn't seen here in the thirty six years I've lived here. I've seen hundreds of baby mussels washed up to the high tide mark. I think it would be a shame to close the inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 177    Comment Id: 474428**

**Comment Text:** After three years the breach has only shown to have had a major restorative benefit to the quality of the South Bay's eco system and water. Previously it was becoming a dead sea and getting worse. The breach has only been beneficial to the South Bay's eco system. I sail almost everyday and have seen an amazing restorative effect since the opening. I see no viable argument for closure and it would only destroy this natural restoration of the bay. I heard discussion of the water levels coming in from the Atlantic threatening homes on the waterfront and this is not science. Additionally my understanding the breach had been initially man-made closed and the opening is only a natural occurrence. I am totally against closure and after three years it has proven to be stable and productive.

**Correspondence Id: 179    Comment Id: 474431**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned that closing the breach will negatively affect the bay ecosystem. I have noticed several positive changes in the bay since the breach including increased water cleanliness and visibility and increased wildlife diversity. Our region is benefitting from the breach, and we should not close it.

**Correspondence Id: 195    Comment Id: 474446**

**Comment Text:** The bay has never been more alive with life, by closing the breach we will be suffocating the bay again. I think the breach should remain open or become a active water way into the ocean. By doing so we will have a cleaner bay and more active.

**Correspondence Id: 200    Comment Id: 474452**

**Comment Text:** I believe that today's water quality in Bellport Bay is vastly better than in years earlier. If USFINS then leader, Pat Martinkovic is correct, the wetlands have to benefit with the increased tidal flushing action. The foundation continues to battle phragmites up and down Beaver Dam Creek and I am hoping that an increase salinity will give the native grasses a better chance to reestablish themselves. How long is anybody's guess but I'll take what I can get. My law partner, a exuberant amateur fisherman, recounts his successes with his increased catches out from the breach. How far upstream Carman's River the tidal bait and migratory fish will go is to be determined, but it can only get better. Interestingly the showing on the bay side may in fact result in an increase of the barrier beach. I therefore am of the opinion that leaving the breach open will have the most benefit and also be a significant saving of dollars in something at best can only occur again, sometime- we know of two occurrences so three is likely, sometime.

**Correspondence Id: 309    Comment Id: 474599**

**Comment Text:** As discussed water quality in the great South Bay has improved since the breach occurred and no adverse effects such as significant change in tides or main land flooding have ensued the opening of the old inlet has had a very positive effect on this area and has significantly improved water quality in this stretch of the bay. Please leave the breach open



**Correspondence Id: 312    Comment Id: 474602**

**Comment Text:** I believe a healthy Great South Bay benefits all of Long Island and beyond! I feel the breach needs to be left open.

**Correspondence Id: 207    Comment Id: 474606**

**Comment Text:** The current breach has allowed a huge increase in water quality and circulation in the eastern end of the Great South Bay. As a waterfront property owner on the Swan River, less than 10 miles from the breach, I am very happy with the changes. I believe that leaving the breach open is important for the greater health of the Great South Bay ecosystem. I think the best management is to leave the current situation as it is.

**Correspondence Id: 210    Comment Id: 474609**

**Comment Text:** I hope that people realize that the breach is helping, not harming the bay or the residents that live near it. Please leave the breach open. There is no plus to closing it, and many negatives.

**Correspondence Id: 211    Comment Id: 474610**

**Comment Text:** The best desired outcome would be that the breach remain open. The bay has been cleaner than ever since the breach opened. The breach has also become a tourist attraction in its own right, encouraging people to walk along the beach.

**Correspondence Id: 217    Comment Id: 474620**

**Comment Text:** Of the potential management strategies, closing the breach mechanically is incompatible with ensuring the integrity of the natural features of the seashore and its surrounding ecosystem. It defies logic to claim that while mechanically closing the breach is an acceptable strategy, stabilizing the breach is inconstant with National Park policies and the Wilderness act.

**Correspondence Id: 219    Comment Id: 474625**

**Comment Text:** Let the breach remain as is. Since Superstorm Sandy, the breach has been valuable in improving the water quality of the Great South Bay and has been positively accepted by the surrounding communities. They now refer to it as an inlet, not a breach.

**Correspondence Id: 329    Comment Id: 474653**

**Comment Text:** I support a decision to keep the inlet open. I believe it is and will continue to have beneficial impacts to water quality and ecology of the bay, to recreational activities, and to protection of the Otis Pike Wilderness Area.

**Correspondence Id: 231    Comment Id: 474668**

**Comment Text:** Since the break opened, the water in Bellport Bay has never been cleaner . I have lived here for nearly 65 years and during that time, I have watched the GSB and especially Bellport Bay become a dead body of water. The oyster and clamming business has ended completely, there is no longer any eel grass or the eels that come with it, there are no jellyfish any longer and little or no fish life. This breach has breathed new life into the bay, the entire length of the bay, cleaning it daily with the tide and bringing in oxygen and the promise of life returning to the Great South and the Bellport Bays. Additionally, the cost to close the breach is, undoubtedly, astronomical and is becoming more expensive as the opening widens. As a taxpayer, I am opposed to the STATE or the Federal government spending my tax dollars to close a completely natural breach, one that will undoubtedly re-open at a later date and one that is currently bringing such positive benefits to the region.

**Correspondence Id: 235    Comment Id: 474674**

**Comment Text:** Opting to close the breach artificially could result in a large amount of effort and expense that could potentially be nullified when another major storm hits the island. The Great South Bay sorely needs the influx of unspoiled sea water that is coming in and diluting the water in the bay that has been spoiled with runoff from fertilized lawns and sewage.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474701**

**Comment Text:** In the thirty-one years that I have walked the shores of Great South Bay and run boats in the bay's waters, only one event has made any positive difference, and that is the opening of the breach. Although the breach is small, and has far less influence on the bay than does Fire Island Inlet, in the area where its waters flow strongly, the bay is cooler and clearer, dissolved oxygen levels are higher, brown tide does not occur, clams are growing more quickly, submerged aquatic vegetation is returning and there is an abundance of fish (as well as fish-eating animals such as seals and loons) that is greater than anything that I have seen in three decades. Quite simply, the breach is good for the bay, and what is good for the bay is good for the people that live on its shores and work and recreate on its waters.

**Correspondence Id: 337    Comment Id: 474710**

**Comment Text:** Please do not close the breach. Any of the other alternatives listed would be appreciated. The water in the bay has been so much cleaner. Long Island has always supported local fisherman and the fishing in and around the inlet has been helpful to business.

**Correspondence Id: 244    Comment Id: 474718**

**Comment Text:** Please do not close the inlet. The Bay and marine life are flourishing with the cleaner water. I live very near the shore and have witnessed no appreciable difference in the tide levels.

**Correspondence Id: 245    Comment Id: 474719**

**Comment Text:** The seashore is a wilderness. Our interference with it needs to be as minimal as possible. Closing the breach seems the opposite of the NPS' stated mission. Doing so in order to restore uninterrupted vehicle traffic is clearly not supportive of that mission.

**Correspondence Id: 247    Comment Id: 474722**

**Comment Text:** My concern is that the NPS or ACE will attempt to close the breach. Since hurricane sandy opened the inlet, the water quality in the Bay has improved and there is no link between flooding and the breach. The effects of the breach are only positive; there are no negatives. It would be a foolish waste of money to attempt to close the breach and I believe closing the breach would have an adverse effect on ecosystems of the Great South Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 248    Comment Id: 474723**

**Comment Text:** water near breach is cleaner than rest of bay shellfish are coming back leave it open

**Correspondence Id: 251    Comment Id: 474726**

**Comment Text:** Would like the breach to stay open to benefit the great South Bay ecosystem.

**Correspondence Id: 253    Comment Id: 474728**

**Comment Text:** We have seen the environmental benefits by seeing nature at work. The Bay is certainly in better health today than in 2011 or earlier. Please leave Old Inlet open, the health of the bay depends on it.

**Correspondence Id: 256    Comment Id: 474732**

**Comment Text:** The inshore waters were in a poor state of health prior to the beach. The increased flush from the new inlet has rejuvenated the bays and improved the habitat for wildlife in the area. To close the beach would be both expensive and counterproductive to helping our environment.

**Correspondence Id: 340    Comment Id: 474750**

**Comment Text:** due to the positive impact the breach has had on the bay and the financial investments already committed to a multi-year, comprehensive effort to re-populate the bay with shellfish that will strengthen the ecosystem of the bay as a whole, I strongly support a management plan that would leave the breach open.

**Correspondence Id: 352    Comment Id: 474762**

**Comment Text:** \*The breach is a way to restore the Great South Bay to a thriving aquatic ecosystem for shellfish and all aquatic life. \*The breach acts as a purge for the bay. This has given the opportunity to plant and restore oyster and shellfish beds that have been decimated by years of pollution. \*The breach has had a positive effect on our bay, without detriment to the mainland. With property on the south shore of the mainland, we have not seen any tidal changes or water level impact. \*The success with the growth and health of the planting of 100,000 oysters this summer should be considered. \*To close the breach would bring us back to an unhealthy bay. We should keep the breach open.

**Correspondence Id: 353    Comment Id: 474766**

**Comment Text:** Option 2 “ We strongly oppose any effort to mechanically fill and close the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 360    Comment Id: 474784**

**Comment Text:** According to FINS interpretation of Federal law, a breach may be repaired "in order to prevent loss of life, flooding, and other severe economic physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding area."\* In our view, these conditions have not been met. The breach has not caused flooding anywhere else. There has been no related loss of life. As for physical damage to the Great South Bay, not only has there been no harm, in all likelihood the breach is the best thing that could have happened in terms of the biological health of the bay. Closing the breach would cost many millions of dollars, and would probably need to be redone later. It would not be a good expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

**Correspondence Id: 363    Comment Id: 474791**

**Comment Text:** As a boater on Great South Bay for the last 40 years, I can personally attest to the benefits this breach has brought to the bay. Cleaner water, more fish, more and thicker (happier) clams. Back in the late 70's and early 80's while digging clams while in College, I could see my rake head on the bottom in 10-12 feet of water. That has not been the case until recently. This breach is helping flush the brown tide, the algae blooms, and the dirty water from run off. Everything man has done to harm this body of water, this breach is helping to correct and minimize. It would be a huge injustice to the health of the Bay to close this Breach.

**Correspondence Id: 274    Comment Id: 474814**

**Comment Text:** I have lived along the Great South Bay for 45 years. The bay has been deteriorating every year since I was a kid, except around the breach. I also own property and a house on Corey creek that I will be moving to. The breach seems to be cleaning up the waters there as well as Patchogue bay. I have not seen 1 shred of an increased high tide or a negative impact. IT NEEDS TO BE LEFT OPEN WHICH WILL BENEFIT ALL INCLUDING OUR PROPERTY VALUES>

**Correspondence Id: 276    Comment Id: 474817**

**Comment Text:** No concerns with the breach active as is. Keep it open. Water in Great South bay is so much cleaner and safer to enjoy. Types of and quantity of fish has increased dramatically. Keep it open!

## **AL1300 – SUPPORTS LEAVING THE BREACH OPEN AND ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR CLOSING THE BREACH IF CERTAIN CONDITIONS OCCUR**

**Correspondence Id: 22    Comment Id: 485717**

**Comment Text:** When more good can be accomplished in a wait and see approach that needs to be in the planning process.

**Correspondence Id: 7    Comment Id: 473692**

**Comment Text:** Increased inland flooding is a negative concern, Improved water quality is a positive concern. There may be a trade-off here, which may not be clear without measuring the impact of another storm, although, Sandy was unique. There also needs to be more environmental study, which of course is part of proposed alternatives. I recommend not doing anything except monitoring, and revisit this again in the future. Perhaps another year. Perhaps this should be reviewed on a yearly basis as more data is collected and more statistical information is produced and reviewed.

**Correspondence Id: 22    Comment Id: 473763**

**Comment Text:** I think the NPS has a very good approach wait and see. Weigh out the risks during that period a breach has formed. Then after a period of time, Years, put all the facts together and create a master plan for that breach. Yes the desired outcome is the seashore, and it must be left natural.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473939**

**Comment Text:** Based upon data on impacts of the new inlet, as well as our own observations, The Nature Conservancy supports Option 1. However, we also recognize the value of Option 3 in terms of establishing criteria to steer future management of the High Dunes Wilderness Areas dynamic landscape.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473957**

**Comment Text:** We do understand the merits of Option 3 in terms of working through the exercise of developing criteria for what conditions would warrant the closure of any newly created inlet. Much of our letter provides details of the attributes that should be considered when developing such criteria, particularly when developing benefit-cost analyses. Upon careful examination, we have not seen any evidence that would suggest that the conditions of this current inlet would justify its closure. But we do understand that there is value in developing decision criteria for future conditions and for use in revising and updating New York States Breach Contingency Plan. As it currently stands, the 1997 Breach Contingency Plan is woefully outdated, and the criteria for breach closure are inconsistent with the limited conditions under which federal law allows closure of breaches within the Fire Island High Dunes Wilderness Area.

**Correspondence Id: 44    Comment Id: 474047**

**Comment Text:** I strongly feel the inlet should remain untouched. I believe the NPS should consider environmental quality concurrent with natural processes should be a top priority. 2. Given the prevailing meteorological conditions closing the inlet is very possible a losing activity. I feel we should expect other breaches during storm events from the looks of the degraded dunes in the area. 3. Therefore, any efforts and the expense of closing the inlet will probably be fruitless. In my mind the best and most prudent "management" is simply to monitor changing conditions to advance our knowledge of such environments so future management activities (even in more developed barrier areas) can be more effectively carried out.

**Correspondence Id: 52    Comment Id: 474065**

**Comment Text:** I have seen no evidence that indicates the inlet is doing anything but helping the fisheries, the clarity of the water, and the "naturalness" of national seashore intent (and investment of vast amounts of public money) to prevent man's footprint or bulldozer for that matter from incroaching on wilderness areas. The government removed recreational facilities and all housing so that this would be natural, so leave it alone unless you can prove it would put people in peril. Why does it have to be "managed"? The ocean will close it or not. It's the management that causes problems.

**Correspondence Id: 66    Comment Id: 474201**

**Comment Text:** We believe that the breach should not be filled. Thus, the first option is our first choice. Our second choice would be the third: Leave breach open and establish procedures.... According to FINS interpretation of Federal law, a breach may be repaired "in order to prevent loss of life, flooding, and other severe economic physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding area." In our view, these conditions have not been met. The breach has not caused flooding anywhere else. There has been no related loss of life. As for physical damage to the Great South Bay, not only has there been no harm, in all likelihood the breach is the best thing that could have happened to the biological health of the bay. Closing the breach would cost many millions of dollars, and would probably need to be redone later. It would not be a good expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

**Correspondence Id: 358    Comment Id: 474267**

**Comment Text:** Of the three, we find the third most reasonable and consistent with statutory criteria and scientific evidence. In effect, the third alternative provides for a major revision to the 1997 Breach Contingency Plan ("BCP") that is altogether warranted as we pointed out in a letter to the NPS, the Corps and the State Department of Environmental Conservation dated April 11, 2013.

**Correspondence Id: 358    Comment Id: 474271**

**Comment Text:** The decision criterion in the BCP that the NPS, the Corps and DEC should move forward with wilderness area breach closure if such a breach is not closing naturally after some period of time is not consistent with the limited conditions under which the statute condones closure. Since we think it possible that the best available scientific modeling could establish that the Sandy breach under certain storm conditions could contribute in a substantial way to major flooding that could cause several economic or physical damage, we do not opt for the first management strategy. We have not seen such scientific evidence as of yet, but we are not in a position to say that it could not exist.

**Correspondence Id: 73    Comment Id: 474295**

**Comment Text:** As someone who has a house in Bellport (16 Rogers Avenue), directly fronting Great South Bay, I have seen the impact of the breach on a daily basis for nearly three years. From my vantage point, the breach has had a demonstrably positive impact on Great South Bay. The quality of the water in Great South Bay has improved noticeably over the past three years, in terms of its presentation and the marine and wild-life it now can sustain. The current or circulation in the Bay has accelerated, helping to maintain the water's quality. I haven't seen the growth of surface algae that existed at the end of the summer in the years that preceded the breach. There's now a vibrancy to Great South Bay that did not exist prior to the beach, spawning new species of fish and wildlife. I have not seen any difference in tidal or storm surges, following the breach. To me, the impacts of the breach have all been positive. It strikes me that, for the near future, the breach should remain open and be managed under natural conditions, while monitoring its effects to determine whether there are physical, environmental and economic risks/costs associated with the breach that warrant further study and consideration. I am not aware of any such risks/costs at present, certainly none that would justify the massive expenditure required to close the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 98    Comment Id: 474325**

**Comment Text:** We remember the time when Robert Moses planned to build a 4-lane highway through Fire Island, and the homeowners here petitioned to become part of the National Park system. This was with the understanding that the communities would remain, and the park would become a demonstration that natural areas can coexist with residential areas. We hope you will continue this concept and that YOU WILL ADOPT ALTERNATIVE #3 OF YOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN.

**Correspondence Id: 127    Comment Id: 474361**

**Comment Text:** We are supportive of alternative 3 - we intend to maintain our home on Fire Island and would like to see the participation of homeowners in the decision making process when determining how to proceed. I think it is extremely important that balancing the needs and desires of the homeowners and park visitors as well as protecting and maintaining the Fire Island National Seashore for many years to come.

**Correspondence Id: 151    Comment Id: 474401**

**Comment Text:** Fire Island is a naturally occurring barrier island, which by definition, protects the mainland shore line by being in constant change. The sand moves constantly. Trying to control that movement will be costly and ineffective. Any attempt to fill the breach will not last long as Mother Nature will shift that sand with the changing seasons. Yes, I believe that protecting human life is of utmost importance, however I do not believe lives are threatened by the wilderness breach at this time. Taking no action (except monitoring) will preserve nature's integrity and the surrounding environment. In the future, if conditions indicate potential danger to life on the mainland, then a strategy should be discussed. I live VERY near the Great South Bay along the shoreline and I appreciate the monitoring that is occurring and hope it continues. I am also an avid outdoors person and naturalist and I am thrilled at the water clarity and the variety of species that we see returning to our area of the Great South Bay. The opening of the breach is a wonderful, natural occurrence. I feel the authorities should only take action if absolutely necessary to protect human lives in the future.

**Correspondence Id: 168    Comment Id: 474421**

**Comment Text:** I believe the breach is a natural inlet that should remain as is with monitoring for public safety reasons. It is located directly south of my home. With the inlet open the Village of Bellport suffered relatively minimal damage compared to others on Long Island. Over the years with the breach closed we have similar high tides and flooding. The breach has made a very positive impact on the health of Bellport Bay, which I would think is part of preserving the National Seashore

**Correspondence Id: 196    Comment Id: 474447**

**Comment Text:** Since the breach reopened there has been a resurgence of healthy marine life in the bay. The water is clearer and the wildlife has increased. I am in favor of leaving it open unless it significantly threatens human life or property.

**Correspondence Id: 201    Comment Id: 474453**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach alone, The water quality has gotten better since it been there and should let nature handle it unless there is danger of lose of life only.

**Correspondence Id: 217    Comment Id: 474622**

**Comment Text:** Huge positive impact of the breach: The Great South Bay water quality is vastly improved by circulation with the ocean. If the breach is allowed to remain open it would be wise, as suggested, to monitor positive and negative impacts on a periodic basis. The current breach occurred at the site of an historic (and economically important) breach that closed naturally in the nineteenth century on a dynamic barrier island. The new breach is a natural event. Not interfering with the breach and accepting natural processes is entirely compatible with National Park policy.

---



**Correspondence Id: 218    Comment Id: 474623**

**Comment Text:** My concerns of closing the breach are that we will see more stagnant water in the Bay, and an increase in pollution. I hope the outcome is we leave the breach open and continue to monitor the situation. Please leave the Breach open and stop spending tax dollars to fight mother nature.

**Correspondence Id: 228    Comment Id: 474664**

**Comment Text:** Rise in tides and surges, that will negatively affect the mainland with damaging flooding to homes, roads, dock, boats, septic systems. Option 3 is my consideration of the best option. Leave the breach open and establish procedures for closing the breach if certain conditions occur. I think the 3 years of having the breach open and watching its natural course is good. The Bellport Bay has never been so clean looking. It was a good natural filtering or cleansing event. However, Option 3 is a fair compromise to environmentalists and residents at risk of damaging tidal surges. Quarterly monitoring of the salinity and tide levels should be done. Procedures to close when necessary is a good fail safe option.

**Correspondence Id: 233    Comment Id: 474670**

**Comment Text:** The breach should not be closed mechanically. The purpose of a wilderness is to permit nature to take its natural course unimpeded by considerations of convenience for human beings. The choice should be between leaving it open and never interfering and leaving it open and developing clear criteria for circumstances in which it might be more aggressively managed or even closed. As between the two, the second is probably more prudent, given the likely weather consequences of climate change over the next few decades. It should be left alone unless and until it is actually dangerous to do so.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474685**

**Comment Text:** Tidal inlets should be allowed to remain open wherever possible. Doing so reduces the long-term vulnerability of the barrier island system. Inlets should only be closed in cases where there is a clear need for barrier island continuity (e.g., a critical transportation corridor) or where the inlet is causing immediate and demonstrable harm. Closing inlets in natural areas, parks, and wilderness areas should require a very, very high burden of proof that the inlet is causing harm. In short, closing storm-formed inlets may seem like the logical response for those managing barrier island shorelines. But doing so ignores the significant benefits these inlets provide and will likely increase the vulnerability of the island and mainland over the long term.

**Correspondence Id: 254    Comment Id: 474729**

**Comment Text:** Just keep on monitoring it and recording the changes and the positive effects on the health of the bay and its ecosystems. Also make note of the fact that property owners are not being flooded out like they were initially afraid of. Also it's expensive to bring in sand and try to fill it in, and the next storm will just wash it away anyway and the government will have wasted our money. Overall the best thing is to leave the breach open and stop interfering with nature.

**Correspondence Id: 353    Comment Id: 474767**

**Comment Text:** Option 3 - While an approach that provides for closure of the inlet in situations where public safety is at risk may seem prudent and logical, there has simply been no evidence of any such risk from the breach. In the absence of any demonstrable evidence of increased flooding or other risks associated with the breach, a strategy to create a contingency plan for an abstract, hypothetical risk seems unnecessary. If at some point in the future new evidence clearly establishes the existence of increased risks then modifications to the management plan should be considered.



**Correspondence Id: 354    Comment Id: 474770**

**Comment Text:** I don't support "managing" it. I don't think it needs to be navigable, so I would support allowing the sands to shift as they will with each storm event. Leave it be. Flush the Bay. Monitor it. See what happens with the flora and fauna. And write it all down so we know more with the next one.

**Correspondence Id: 263    Comment Id: 474796**

**Comment Text:** The only issue or concern I have about the breach is the NPS consideration to close it. As a home owner directly on the water I feel the breach has had a positive impact in our area. Water quality is better and the breach provides a closer outlet to the ocean to discharge high tides. If the desired outcome is to leave the breach alone (which is what I would prefer) then the planning process needs to design tools and procedures to monitor the breach and its effect on the wetlands, quality of water in the bay, and the tidal results of east winds.

**Correspondence Id: 271    Comment Id: 474808**

**Comment Text:** We live within a mile of the dock. We have noticed cleaner water in Great South Bay and have heard that the fishing and clamming has improved. On the other hand, we worry that flooding is always a potential risk as our climate changes and the sea levels rise. A contingency plan should be in place.

**Correspondence Id: 286    Comment Id: 474832**

**Comment Text:** I recommend adopting a wait and see stance in regard to the breach. It is clearly healthy for the Bellport Bay and has offered new wildlife possibilities and cleaner water. There should be a contingency plan though if the breach poses any significant danger to the mainland during a storm surge .

**Correspondence Id: 288    Comment Id: 474833**

**Comment Text:** I would favor leaving the breach open and managed under natural conditions, with the issue to be revisited as other natural events change the existing breach, and surrounding shoreline. This should be achieved with a high degree of mindfulness to the issues that may arise or impact neighboring shoreline communities.

**Correspondence Id: 293    Comment Id: 474838**

**Comment Text:** The breach should be left alone. Allow nature to run its course until such time where severe damage to the mainland is a potential problem. As a boater, I have seen a definite change in the cleanliness of the bay. There are more fish now, which will also help clean out the stagnant bay waters. I believe the breach should be monitored, made safe and navigable for boaters all the while monitoring it and the mainland for potential severe damage related to its opening.

## **AL1400 – SUPPORTS STABILIZING THE BREACH TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT INLET**

**Correspondence Id:** 285 **Comment Id:** 474831

**Comment Text:** I think the breach should be stabilized by putting a jetty system in place. I feel that a new inlet will guarantee a "new life" for the once dying Bellport Bay. In any case, the breach SHOULD NOT BE CLOSED.

**Correspondence Id:** 9 **Comment Id:** 466121

**Comment Text:** Fresh flow to the Great South Bay is a great thing. Do not look Mother Nature's gift in the mouth. With all the toxic alga blooms, things in the Bay are getting worse, and this will help. stabilizing the Breach is a no brainer.

**Correspondence Id:** 10 **Comment Id:** 466208

**Comment Text:** Option #4. Leave the Breach, Stabilize it for a new inlet. It will help flush the bays that are desperately in need of new Marine Life.

**Correspondence Id:** 14 **Comment Id:** 466333

**Comment Text:** The inlet should be left alone or stabilized. DO NOT close this inlet. I have seen first hand the positive effects of this new inlet on the water quality in the Great South Bay

**Correspondence Id:** 20 **Comment Id:** 466724

**Comment Text:** Please just leave it alone, the water is so clear and lovely after this breach, just manage it so it doesn't get bigger.

**Correspondence Id:** 314 **Comment Id:** 471774

**Comment Text:** I think there should be serious consideration given to stabilize the breach so it can be a new inlet. Although I support the concept of wilderness beaches, keeping the new inlet open may be so beneficial that it is worth manipulating the natural state. It is worth further research.

**Correspondence Id:** 326 **Comment Id:** 471824

**Comment Text:** The water quality in the great south bay has never been as good in the past 50 years as it is now. This improvement is due to the breach allowing the bay to flush into the ocean. Keeping the breach open as an inlet will allow for the entire ecosystem in the bay to continue to improve.

**Correspondence Id:** 339 **Comment Id:** 471885

**Comment Text:** stabilize the breach and manage it so as to provide a permanent inlet connecting the great south bay and atlantic ocean. with the opening of the breach the bay has become clean and brought in fish that were not here in the past years. it is now pleasurable to be on the bay.

**Correspondence Id:** 3 **Comment Id:** 473690

**Comment Text:** Please consider the tremendous water quality improvement in the Great South Bay. I would love to see it stabilized including a visitor center. since the closing of Barrett Beach marina, boating opportunities are now more limited. Boating and the Great south bay is why I stay on Long Island and bear with the high cost of living.

**Correspondence Id: 42    Comment Id: 474043**

**Comment Text:** I live on the water in Lindenhurst. My home was flooded during Sandy. I have zero concerns about the breach. This breach has cleaned the bay in ways I have not seen in 20 years. Closing it would be idiotic. An opening in the barrier beach that is properly protected and maintained allows fresh water to circulate in the growingly disgusting Great South Bay. The level of the ocean will always meet the level of the bay because of tides. I'm tired of hearing uneducated people and politicians state false alarming facts about this. Please keep it open.

**Correspondence Id: 43    Comment Id: 474046**

**Comment Text:** I would be happy with two of the options. Leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions & stabilize to provide a permanent inlet. The breach has given new life to the Great South Bay. It should remain open.

**Correspondence Id: 51    Comment Id: 474060**

**Comment Text:** I would urge the National Park Service to at the least, pursue their first option, to leave the breach open and managed under natural conditions. Alternatively though inconsistent with NPS policies a program to stabilize the breach to provide a permanent inlet would be ideal.

**Correspondence Id: 60    Comment Id: 474161**

**Comment Text:** I live directly north east of it and I think it has done great things for the area. It is exactly what the area needed. O hope we leave it alone or stabilize it so it will remain

**Correspondence Id: 87    Comment Id: 474309**

**Comment Text:** I think federal moneys would be better spent stabilizing the inlet then filling the inlet in. I don't know who did, or when water quality was studied prior to Sandy but that comparison would be interesting data. I do know the Bay in Bellport had very poor water quality prior to this inlet opening.

**Correspondence Id: 115    Comment Id: 474345**

**Comment Text:** I believe that the study should not dismiss creating a permanent inlet simply because it is not an outcome that would be easy to accomplish and not in the guidelines established for this wilderness ares. There needs to be an information gathering exercise to determine if policies could be changed in order to create a permanent inlet. This breach was an inlet and was a great asset to this community a century ago and it should be considered now for the benefit of the bay and the south shore communities surrounding the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 131    Comment Id: 474366**

**Comment Text:** The breach should be widened and shored up by the our Federal Government to ensure that it will not close naturally. In shoring up the opening of the new sandy Inlet and making it permanent will provide much needed cleansing and introduce oxygen to an already suffocating bay. I see and understand water quality. I was able to see my feet in 1 foot of water for the first time in too many years this past Labor Day. I notice the species that have come to life in our bay since the breach. In May we had so many Menhaden (BUNKER) being chased by huge schools of bluefish and striped bass that you could smell it in the air. I just notice massive schools of peanut bunker 2 days ago (9/13/15) with mullet mixed in with them. The blue claw crabs and snappers were extremely plentiful again this August. We used to refer to the bay as The Great Dead Bay but not anymore. It's alive and building.

**Correspondence Id: 148    Comment Id: 474394**

**Comment Text:** I think the breach is great for the environment and the ecosystem. I believe the breach needs to be left open. I think it should be either left alon or it should be made permanent.

**Correspondence Id: 149    Comment Id: 474395**

**Comment Text:** the new inlet needs to remain open. Keeping the inlet open by either monitoring it or stabilizing it. Not only is the inlet a positive to the bays ecosystem and fishermen, it is also an economic positive for the local economy of Patchogue and Bellport business in that it keeps fishermen in the local area to spend their money instead of going out of the area to fish and buy bait,tackle,dockage, repairs ect. This inlet is the best thing that has happened to this area in as long as I can remember, and I've been fishing the area for over 30 years. This is a no brainer. It has to stay open for the sake of the local bays.

**Correspondence Id: 166    Comment Id: 474417**

**Comment Text:** I sm concerned about the water quality in the bay and I feel that the breach has improved conditions and provided a healthier environment for aquatic life in the area. Yes I feel leaving the breach open and possibly maintaining it will continue to improve water quality.

**Correspondence Id: 182    Comment Id: 474434**

**Comment Text:** Please leave the breach open and consider supporting it as an inlet. Please consider the benefits of leaving the inlet open - mainly - the vastly improved cleanliness of the water in the Great South Bay without any major negative impact on shoreline residents.

**Correspondence Id: 193    Comment Id: 474443**

**Comment Text:** The desired outcome I prefer is to stabilize the inlet to keep it open to continue to nurture and heal The Great South Bay. If a stable inlet is not to be created, wait and see what happens with a natural closure. The best thing for the Great South Bay, local shellfish and other fish in our area is to keep the breach open. The breach is cleaning our local waters and flushing out the bay. The breach is the only good thing that came out of Sandy. Please don't kill a good thing.

**Correspondence Id: 195    Comment Id: 474446**

**Comment Text:** The bay has never been more alive with life, by closing the breach we will be suffocating the bay again. I think the breach should remain open or become a active water way into the ocean. By doing so we will have a cleaner bay and more active.

**Correspondence Id: 198    Comment Id: 474450**

**Comment Text:** My concern is that we have seen sgh great improvement into the surrounding bays, that if it were closed (or allowed to close) we would lose much of that benefit. Every effort should be made, in my opinion, to keep the breach open and cleaner water flowing into our bays!

**Correspondence Id: 305    Comment Id: 474595**

**Comment Text:** I have seen no negative effects of the breach and just positive effects. I have lived here for 35 years and have not seen any difference in tides. Mind you i am writing my comment directly after having northeast winds 20-30mph, along with the supermoon and hirricane joaquin off the coast. have seen only positives such as mussels, new growth rings on what was dying clams, tremendous amount of bait, fish and I can even see the bottom of my canal. This breach has been a blessing from god and it should be stabilized.

**Correspondence Id: 206    Comment Id: 474605**

**Comment Text:** I grew up on a house on the water, my parents still live there. I am aware of the risks of owning a home on the water but I am also aware of the benefits and value of a healthy bay. Things have changed dramatically in the bay since I was a child. This breach, and the flushing it provides, is just one vital/necessary step to save the Great South Bay. I have followed studies done by Stony Brook University and have lived through MANY tidal surges and have not noticed any differences since the breach. I believe this breach needs to remain open. In a perfect world I would prefer it stay open by natural means, but if it were to start closing, I would lean towards an established/developed inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 209    Comment Id: 474608**

**Comment Text:** Please consider the positive impact it has had on our bays and community. People are using the bay again, the waters are clean and fishing has never been better. A stabilized inlet would be a great benefit to our region, it would also allow safe access to the breach area by boat.

**Correspondence Id: 320    Comment Id: 474635**

**Comment Text:** I'm concerned that the beach replenishment east of Smiths point is closing the inlet. The inlet is the best thing that could have happened to Bellport bay. It has revitalized the bay. Shellfish and finfish are returning to a body of water that was almost dead. The improved water quality has improved property values and brought many more people out onto the bay. There are no downsides to this inlet. It is not more of a safety threat than any of the other inlets and probably less so because of its relatively small size and the difficulty getting to it. If you are considering doing anything with this inlet it should be a plan to stabilize it so that the improvements that it has brought can be sustained! To even consider closing it at this point after seeing all the obvious benefits would be a total waste of funds, and extremely questionable.

**Correspondence Id: 222    Comment Id: 474641**

**Comment Text:** Ideally, the inlet should be stabilized as a permanent inlet to the ocean. At the least the inlet should be allowed to remain as it is, governed by mother nature.

**Correspondence Id: 223    Comment Id: 474643**

**Comment Text:** in my opinion, the inlet should be stabilized and the breach to provide a permanent inlet connecting the Great South Bay and the Atlantic. When said and done it will improve our great natural resource.... the Great South Bay - and - for all those concerned.... it will improve the value of their property because of the inlet to boaters as well as recreation.

**Correspondence Id: 224    Comment Id: 474647**

**Comment Text:** Safe Navigation by sportsmen. Option 4 would most benefit Suffolk County residents. The quality of the water in Bellport Bay has greatly improved since the breach reopened and it should be maintained open to continue to improve the water quality.

**Correspondence Id: 230    Comment Id: 474666**

**Comment Text:** Make the breach permanent, as well as safer for boaters. has improved water as well as fishing quality for local long islanders.

**Correspondence Id: 236    Comment Id: 474675**

**Comment Text:** I would like to see the beach stabilized providing permanent access to the ocean. Since 2013 no significant changes in tidal height has occurred as stated in the letter. Stabilization would also prevent further widening and erosion in the breach if uncertain conditions occur. Since the opening of the breach there has been a noticeable improvement in water quality and marine life within the Great South Bay. A stabilized open inlet would also provide better recreational environment. Since the opening many boaters enjoy fishing and mooring in the clear calm waters near the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 237    Comment Id: 474678**

**Comment Text:** I have not noticed any appreciable difference in storm tides since the breach has opened, which in my opinion would be the only reason to close it. Stabilizing the inlet may be against some policies, but would give another source of cleaner water into the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474696**

**Comment Text:** Although we strongly believe the breach should remain open and managed under natural conditions, we may be amenable to establishing procedures for closing the breach if certain conditions occur. If the latter option is selected, criteria and thresholds for assessing benefits, impacts, and risks; monitoring to provide data to assess benefits, impacts and risks; and periodic evaluation of benefits, impacts and risks must be developed in a fully open and transparent manner and be based on sound science, not speculation.

**Correspondence Id: 336    Comment Id: 474709**

**Comment Text:** I think the breach should be left and monitored. If it continues to provide the bay with good clean water, sand for marshes, and aquatic life like it has been then we should strongly consider making it permanent. You are preparing to close a breach that has been open before, and will open again. To spend money on undoing something that nature has intended defeats the point of a National Park. The inlet has very little effect on tidal flow and has been extremely beneficial to water quality and clarity in the bay. I have recreationally fished and clammed in the bay for 20 years and can honestly say that since the inlet has reopened I have seen an overall improvement in the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 241    Comment Id: 474714**

**Comment Text:** If the influx of new water is improving conditions in the bay, I don't think this should be interrupted. The water in the bay needs a new source to flush out contaminants and bacterial growth. I think stabilising the breach is a good idea. Perhaps a bridge could be built to connect the island?

**Correspondence Id: 254    Comment Id: 474730**

**Comment Text:** Leave the breach open! Possibly in the future consider stabilizing it so there is a permanent inlet, but it's too soon to decide on that. I would recommend waiting at least several years before taking any action because maybe it will stabilize itself. Keep on monitoring the breach and its effects. Thank you for asking for public opinion.

**Correspondence Id: 259    Comment Id: 474737**

**Comment Text:** As the NPS considers a plan for the breach at Old Inlet, it must consider the significant benefits the breach has brought to Bellport Bay and the Great South Bay overall. The Breach has allowed the bay to flush out in a way that hasn't happened in more than a century, and the benefits can be seen in the vast increase in fish and shellfish in the bay already. The breach should be kept open no matter what. Even if it is likely to close due to natural activity, the best plan would be for the NPS to maintain it as an open inlet. That's the only way to make sure the back bays are refreshed and kept clean.

**Correspondence Id: 338    Comment Id: 474746**

**Comment Text:** one can argue that a better outcome would be that the breach is stabilized in an open position, thus decreasing the chances that it will grow to a point that will once again panic the general public and officials and lead to a call to close it immediately. It is much less costly to stabilize the banks of the inlet now than to manually close it should it reach a certain size. Most likely the breach will grow larger over time as Smiths inlet did in the late 1700s and early 1800s. In the end Smiths inlet closed due to ships foundering in and around the inlet. At one point, Smiths inlet was 1/2 mile wide. The current breach is much much smaller today, but could dramatically increase in size over time. By stabilizing in an open position now, you eliminate the likely hood that a much larger inlet will have to be closed in the future. I feel that the option to stabilize the breach in an open position needs serious consideration. It appears that this option will ensure that the positive affects that the breach is having on health of the bay and the local economy would remain in place while diminishing the possibility the the breach will rip open and grow in size.

**Correspondence Id: 351    Comment Id: 474759**

**Comment Text:** I believe that stabilizing the breach to provide a permanent inlet connecting Great South Bay and the Atlantic Ocean would make great strides in fixing our Great South Bay and Fire Island National Seashore problems. What has happened since the "Breach?" 1) We have a cleaner bay. 2) Fish and shellfish are more abundant (less pollution.) 3) Happily, there is an insignificant change in high/low tides, i.e., less than three inches either way during normal weather. 4) All reports that we have read from local experts lean to keeping the new inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 299    Comment Id: 474774**

**Comment Text:** Consider some way to maintain the opening so the quality of the bay is maintained for fish, shell-fish, and foraging birds. I'm opposed to the plan for closing the breach, due to pollution concern

**Correspondence Id: 273    Comment Id: 474813**

**Comment Text:** Stabilize the breach so that it remains open. The bay is cleaner now than I have ever seen it.

**Correspondence Id: 274    Comment Id: 474815**

**Comment Text:** Just leave alone no planning needed. Unless you plan to stabilize it and make it a navigable inlet. I think making it a navigable inlet would benefit everybody on LI. Vacationers would come to the GDB again for clean beaches. Fish would return to the bay, which is happening already with the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 279    Comment Id: 474820**

**Comment Text:** If you decide to close the breach you will be sending the bay back to the state it was in before Storm Sandy. That which was a totally dead bay. make the breach a fixed inlet. the bay started to breathe normally after wheezing and slowly dying the last 50 years. leave it open for future generations to enjoy the great south bay

**Correspondence Id: 283    Comment Id: 474828**

**Comment Text:** stabilizing the breach .. Don't let it fill in ! please leave the inlet open! Since the new inlet the water has been cleaner .. Fishing and clamming has been better ! We need this to help flush the bay out .. If we allow more water to enter we should have a better bay! Please keep it open.



## **AL1410 – OPPOSES STABILIZING THE BREACH TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT INLET**

**Correspondence Id:** 229 **Comment Id:** 474883

**Comment Text:** I would not like it to be opened and maintained as this would be an additional financial burden. I would rather see the funds allocated to keep Moriches and Fire Island Inlets clear and safe.

**Correspondence Id:** 46 **Comment Id:** 474050

**Comment Text:** Fire Island is a barrier island. Breaches are normal, natural, and healthy. Creating a permanent inlet contradicts the idea of the area not being tampered by man. Although it sounds like a decent compromise, it's altering an area that should not have human influence.

**Correspondence Id:** 143 **Comment Id:** 474386

**Comment Text:** No, but I am sensitive to the additional operation challenges placed upon the Park Service by the breach creating two islands out of one. So, some infrastructure or other considerations must be evaluated, though I do not support the idea of stabilizing the breach (which is inconsistent with Federal law and NPS policies).

**Correspondence Id:** 317 **Comment Id:** 474631

**Comment Text:** I have seen statements in the paper talking about stabilizing the inlet much the same as Moriches. It is in the Wilderness and I don't think the Legislative History would allow that with out some sort of Congressional action. At meetings I have heard it CAN'T be done. Left alone it will cause harm, close it.

**Correspondence Id:** 227 **Comment Id:** 474663

**Comment Text:** Do NOT attempt to stabilize the breach (inlet) with 'hard structures' such as rock jetties, etc.

**Correspondence Id:** 348 **Comment Id:** 474756

**Comment Text:** My concern is that if it is decided to have the Corps of Engineers provide a permanent inlet using man made materials and who knows what, we will interfere with Mother Nature with unforeseen consequences. Leave the breach alone. If the breach eventually closes some day, then let it be, because another storm will reopen it in the future and will resume the process of cleansing the bay.

**Correspondence Id:** 353 **Comment Id:** 474768

**Comment Text:** Option 4 “ This alternative, as NPS recognizes, is fundamentally inconsistent with Federal Wilderness Act. The construction of rock jetties and other stabilization structures would establish permanent signs of human presence, clearly violating of the purpose and philosophy of wilderness designation. For this reason Seatuck advocates that this option be eliminated from further consideration.

**Correspondence Id:** 355 **Comment Id:** 474772

**Comment Text:** I applaud local attention to reducing the input of polluting nutrients into the bay. However, I disagree that the bay needs a toilet drain in the form of a breach, to be healthy. Stabilization of the breach into a permanent inlet should be out of the question.

## **BR1000 – COMMENTS RELATED TO THE COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE ALTERNATIVES**

**Correspondence Id:** 229 **Comment Id:** 474883

**Comment Text:** I would not like it to be opened and maintained as this would be an additional financial burden. I would rather see the funds allocated to keep Moriches and Fire Island Inlets clear and safe.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473946

**Comment Text:** Any benefit-cost analyses done as part of this EIS must acknowledge that the costs of closing the new inlet go well beyond the price of the sand-moving contract. The new inlet has been a transformative beneficial feature of eastern Great South Bay and Narrow Bay - both of which are impaired waterbodies on the NYS 303(d) list for violations of Clean Water Act standards. The formerly poorly mixed waters of eastern Great South Bay are unfortunately subjected to high loading of contaminants such as nutrients and pathogens from the land use in the adjacent watershed. While the new inlet has not reduced the contaminant loads, the increased circulation with the Atlantic Ocean is notably benefiting several ecosystem components which are now recovering. This recovery is benefiting both recreational and commercial human uses of the estuary. Manual closure of the new inlet would reverse this, triggering negative environmental and human use impacts that appear inconsistent with the objectives of the Clean Water Act.

**Correspondence Id:** 173 **Comment Id:** 474881

**Comment Text:** Closing would cost a lot as would stabilization. Those funds would be better spent stabilizing the bay side wetlands to continue the ongoing experiment that has been, and continues to be, the revitalization of the eastern bay.

## **BR3000 – COMMENTS RELATED TO DATA QUALITY**

**Correspondence Id:** 281 **Comment Id:** 474825

**Comment Text:** 3) there have been no studies suggesting that the water quality of the bay has improved as a result of the breach. This is not a reason to leave it open.

**Correspondence Id:** 11 **Comment Id:** 466229

**Comment Text:** Projection of algae growth trends in the bay with or without the breach need to be compared.

**Correspondence Id:** 7 **Comment Id:** 473695

**Comment Text:** Perhaps some computer modeling from inlets to estuaries and all in-between is in order, and perhaps FEDERAL-LEVEL SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS of the inputs to the GSB are called for because local and state agencies have a long history of coloring data to make things look much better than they actually are, except when they seek grant money, which is never properly accounted for and overseen. EPA data obtained by these lesser agencies and municipalities is at best questionable, so if the National Seashore, part of the GSB, is of importance to the Federal Government, then take the time to use your resource to fully comprehend the declining nature of this entire area and scope a course of action that will improve everything for everyone.

**Correspondence Id:** 31 **Comment Id:** 473816

**Comment Text:** The plan/EIS and any decisions about the breach should be informed and determined by "the best available science." The published science is clear and shows that the benefits of the breach are significant with regard to water quality in the areas adjacent to the breach. The data also show that there are no deleterious effects. Look to the published science, it clearly shows that closing the breach is not appropriate.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473944

**Comment Text:** The assertion previously made by the USACE and its sand-moving contractors that, once initiated, breaches will continue to grow, appears to be based upon observations of the Pikes and Little Pikes breaches in Westhampton in 1992-93. However, there is no place within or adjacent to The Fire Island Wilderness Area that has similar enabling conditions to the situation that existed at that place and time. In their assessment of the Westhampton example, the United States Geological Service states that Well-intended interests to preserve and protect expensive beach front property and homes ultimately resulted in a major disaster for barrier island residents down shore. In this situation, a groin field impeded the natural flow of sediment and starved down current areas to the west of sand. This directly contributed to initiation, persistence, and growth of breaches in Westhampton. Using this example as the basis of predictions for how a breach along the undeveloped stretches of Fire Island would progress, and the impacts that such a progression would have on bayside water levels, produces findings that are unsubstantiated and contradictory to actual observations. Based upon rigorous empirical data collected and disseminated by Stony Brook University, Fire Island National Seashore, and USGS, the new inlet can best be described as dynamically stable. These observations unequivocally contradict the initial USACEs breach growth rates and size predictions.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473948**

**Comment Text:** On November 20, 2014, NYSG organized a workshop where several researchers presented preliminary results of their research on the new inlet. Findings included documentation that increased mixing between the bay and ocean in the eastern Great South Bay was making the eastern bay saltier, cooler in summer, it was lowering dissolved nitrogen levels, lowering micro algae, increasing water clarity, reducing brown tide intensity and duration (near inlet), and decreasing the toxicity of Dinophysis, a harmful algae. Dr. Chris Goblers lab at Stony Brook University, in partnership with Suffolk County Department of Health Services has been collecting a large amount of data from this area and adjacent areas for comparison. The existence of pre-Sandy water monitoring has allowed for direct pre-post inlet comparisons. Data showing the lowered level of brown tide in the eastern bay, along with aerial photos of the expulsion of brown water on the outgoing tides provide a powerful example of how important the new inlet has been, at least locally, in mitigating what is arguably Great South Bays greatest scourge.

**Correspondence Id: 51    Comment Id: 474062**

**Comment Text:** It seems apparent from studies done and anecdotal evidence gathered since the breach has opened, that virtually none of the negative impacts predicted, (flooding, higher tides, higher water tables, etc) have occurred. In fact the ecological and infrastructure benefits appear to outweigh any risks.

**Correspondence Id: 357    Comment Id: 474263**

**Comment Text:** A breach helps to improve water quality. Water quality in the Great South Bay has significantly degraded. The Great South Bay is in need of flushing by ocean waters, and the ongoing science indicates the new inlet is helping to improve water quality. On Long Island, a healthy bay leads to a healthy economy. We need to ensure the inlet is not artificially closed. In the 1970's 700,000 bushels of hard clams, which was half of the nation's harvest, came from the Great South Bay. The shellfish filtered more than 40% of the bay's waters. Today less than 10,000 bushels of clams are harvested from the bay and only 1% of its waters are filtered naturally. In October of 2008, the NYS DEC estimated that the wholesale (dockside) value of the Great South Bay hard clam fishery at its peak landings in 1976 was approximately \$12 million, which represented an estimated economic return of \$51 million to the State's economy. In 2008, the dockside value of the hard clams was at its lowest - a mere \$600,000. Improving water quality has the potential of improving hard clam populations in The Great South Bay. Many on Long Island have worked aggressively to protect and restore this estuarine system. We are losing the battle. Red Tide and Brown Tide have a strong and steady foothold on these waters. Nitrogen levels are increasing and water quality is degrading. Towns, Suffolk County and NY State have spent millions in collaborative efforts to aid restoration. Now nature has provided us with a precious opportunity that may be a significant force in helping to obtain a cleaner and productive Great South Bay. According to Dr. Chris Gobler of Stony Brook University, brown tide blooms have been greatly diminished in the waters of the Great South Bay that are influenced by the ocean water exchange allowed by the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 357    Comment Id: 474264**

**Comment Text:** CCE urges the National Park Service to incorporate the new science from Dr. Charles Flagg and Dr. Chris Gobler into the Draft EIS. The absence of localized flooding and improved water quality need to be included and assessed in the EIS process. We also encourage the Park Service to reach out to local bayman and recreational fisherman to ensure recent fishing and clamming data is accurately represented in the Draft EIS.

**Correspondence Id: 358    Comment Id: 474270**

**Comment Text:** In order to establish that closing the breach at some point in the future is necessary in order "to prevent ...flooding", the EIS should present in detail all field data and best available scientific modeling and analysis in support of such a proposition. The statute, in our view, does not envision the "flooding" that could trigger closure as changes in normal tidal prisms (if there were such evidence) or occasional modest increases in water elevations in the bay during storm events, but flooding that would have major impacts. To date we have seen no such evidence. It is our understanding, however, that both USGS and the Corps of Engineers have been conducting recent modeling of the impact of the Sandy breach on flooding conditions in the bay. We look forward to reviewing these data and modeling results. The EIS should disclose and assess this information in detail since it constitutes the primary basis for articulating what the criteria and procedures for closing the breach at some point in the future in the third management strategy that are consistent with statutory prescriptions should be . An assessment of the potential of the Sandy breach to cause significant flooding that its closure would be designed to prevent should scientifically take place in a context of assessing the potential flooding impacts of Fire Island Inlet, Moriches Inlet and breaches and overwashes that could occur during storm events. Closing the Sandy breach might have less than consequential impacts on bay flooding during a major storm event if there were a reasonable likelihood that that storm could cause new breaching and overwashes that could cause such flooding. In addition, the EIS should assess the impacts of Fire Island Inlet in particular on water elevation and flooding in Great South Bay in order to evaluate effectively the magnitude of flooding impact that could result from leaving the Sandy breach open. In connection with the maintenance of Fire Island for navigation, including its dredging post Sandy, we have seen no modeling of its potential impact on flooding in the bay and south shore Long Island communities. This is a propitious time to see the results of such modeling that is essential to weight the significant of potential flooding impacts of leaving the Sandy breach open. It is paramount that the EIS disclose this information.

**Correspondence Id: 92    Comment Id: 474317**

**Comment Text:** I think study of fish and birdlife should be done - closing the breach will end their lives.

**Correspondence Id: 115    Comment Id: 474344**

**Comment Text:** Based on all information that has been presented by various groups, including research from Stony Brook University, I find that there is no evidence that this breach is causing any harm and there has been no compelling argument that there is a risk if this inlet remains open. In fact, all research suggests that this breach has been beneficial to the bay and the surrounding communities.

**Correspondence Id: 127    Comment Id: 474360**

**Comment Text:** I am concerned that there is sufficient research done prior to any decisions being made regarding the breach, and that homeowners (such as ourselves) as well as others who utilize the Fire Island parks are included in the discussions regarding how to address the breach. There are other places in the world that have faced similar obstacles - it does not appear, for instance, from the new dune plan (FIMI) that the experiences (good and bad) of these other locations have been taken into consideration or researched thoroughly to determine the most cost effective and most likely to succeed options. It is also important to us that whatever decision is made can be supported with scientific evidence supporting the value of the proposal. It is extremely important that the financial support that will be needed to carry out and maintain any proposed changes is investigated and provided for.

**Correspondence Id: 137    Comment Id: 474377**

**Comment Text:** 1- I believe the effects of the ever widening breach will not be evident for many years and will likely be irreversible. 2- Statements that the "Bay is noticeably cleaner since the breach" are subjective and as such incorrect. The Bay was noticeably cleaner for a few years prior to Sandy due to storm drain management, nitrate management (fertilizers) and elimination of many years of Duck farms. The red tide in the Great South Bay was as bad if not worse in 2015, and 2014 than in previous years.

---

**Correspondence Id: 143    Comment Id: 474384**

**Comment Text:** I believe that the questions of Great South Bay water quality, hydrology, ecology and wildlife habitat growth/protection, as well as effect on ocean-front dune systems physical stability and habitat preservation are important considerations. The effect on compromised function as a barrier to flooding and other storm effects on Long Island and the South Bay are also issues to be evaluated. I agree with the outcomes as stated, though I believe that evaluation of this situation should be incorporated into the ongoing evaluation of the FIMI project in response to Superstorm Sandy, as well as into the continuing work to update and implement the General Management Plan by the National Park Service. As the breach was created by a highly unusual storm event, I would like to better understand how the continued presence of the breach can be expected to modify previously "normal" water quality and ecology conditions on both the Bay side and ocean side of the barrier island or, conversely, if the presence of this breach is the historically "normal" situation which has been artificially altered through recent years/decades with the ecological and other effects that the the elimination of breaches brings to the South Bay. The impacts of storms that are predicted, within normal ranges of intensity and physical impact, on these systems and on human communities both with and without the presence of the breach is important to understand. In addition, whether closing this breach could be expected to lead to the creation of another breach at another location during a future storm, or if another breach might be precluded if this breach remains, to the extent that these events can be analysed and quantified, is important to understand the consequence of either closing or leaving open the existing breach.

**Correspondence Id: 145    Comment Id: 474389**

**Comment Text:** The most Important thing to consider is the environmental impact of the plan. Research has shown that water levels at high tide have not changed significantly since the breach. The argument that the breach may lead to further property damage, loss of life, and flooding should be viewed as fanaticism. We can not base a decision on fear, instead we have to look at the science.

**Correspondence Id: 314    Comment Id: 474603**

**Comment Text:** scientific data must be used when determining whether the breach is a danger to human life. It would be a travesty if the opinions of a few property owners rather than hard science were used to determine that the breach should be closed.

**Correspondence Id: 224    Comment Id: 474649**

**Comment Text:** There is little information being passed on to the public concerning the benefits of the breach to water and aquatic life in Bellport Bay. Have any official certified studies been completed and published ?

**Correspondence Id: 226    Comment Id: 474650**

**Comment Text:** I believe the science bears out the fact that the breach has many benefits including the return of shellfish and cleaner water in the surrounding area along with the widening of the barrier island. While increased flooding is a concern the studies done by SUNY Stony Brook and Chris Gobbler in particular state that there is no significant increase in flooding due to the new inlet. Bellport Bay has seen a resurgence in both fin fishing and also there are new oyster beds that have been planted and are thriving due to the efforts of Brookhaven Town and the Friends of Bellport Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474693**

**Comment Text:** we are unaware of any evidence showing that closing the breach will prevent loss of life, reduce the potential risk of adverse impacts to mainland development from flooding or mitigate economic and physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding areas.



**Correspondence Id: 239    Comment Id: 474702**

**Comment Text:** Additionally, NPS needs to obtain and review the scientific data to determine if closing the breach is necessary to prevent loss of life, flooding and other severe economic and physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding areas. Park management needs is not, in and of itself, a sufficient reason to close the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474703**

**Comment Text:** There is no real downside to keeping the breach open. Studies conducted by Dr. Chris Gobler at Stony Brook University demonstrate that the breach does not lead to higher water levels in Great South Bay; when higher-than-normal tides occur, the sea flows in from Fire Island Inlet and the Smith Point Narrows, and reaches its level throughout the South Shore bay system. Hydrological records demonstrate that when water levels were higher in Great South Bay during the winter and early spring of 2012-2013, similar levels were observed all along the coast, at least from Chesapeake Bay to Massachusetts. They were caused by large-scale oceanographic phenomena, and not by the breach. However, on a more local level, the breach can help to minimize flooding in the eastern bay; when strong northwest winds push water from the western bay into the bay's eastern end, the breach creates a sort of "safety valve" that allows some of the water to escape without having to flow through the Narrows, into Moriches Bay and ultimately out Moriches Inlet. Thus, if anything, the breach helps to prevent, rather than cause, flooding.

**Correspondence Id: 340    Comment Id: 474748**

**Comment Text:** Shortly after the breach occurred, Stony Brook University School of Marine and Atmospheric Science's Great South Bay Program began to monitor the bay to gain an understanding of its biogeochemistry in an effort to support science-based decision making. Through their research and monitoring of the breach, it was concluded that "the breach at Old Inlet has not made any appreciable alteration in either the tides or water levels." In addition, their studies show that the overall salinity of the bay has increased since Hurricane Sandy, creating a more hospitable environment for the growth of both oysters and eel grass, which are integral components to the continued health of the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 362    Comment Id: 474788**

**Comment Text:** Meanwhile, environmental and scientific entities are funding consultants and scientists to monitor various aspects of the breakthrough of the barrier. But these studies are not concerned with what happens to Fire Island or the mainland communities Fire Island must protect when the next nor'easter strikes. Legislators and public engineers, however, do not have that luxury. So the question of whether to close or leave open any breach in the barrier island, like the new inlet itself, remains open. According to a January 27 story in Newsday, almost a dozen and a half separate studies related to the breach are underway, even if some scientists say the inlet doesn't have to be left open to conduct them. The studies can be done by computer simulation. That the act that created Fire Island National Seashore specifically allows for creation of new inlets if deemed beneficial seems beside the point.

## NE1000 – COMMENTS RELATED TO THE SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS

**Correspondence Id: 40    Comment Id: 474872**

**Comment Text:** The Atlantic sea water coming through the breach adds much needed dissolved oxygen to the great south bay, enhancing marine life. The additional sea water coming through the breach helps flush nitrogen out of the great south bay.

**Correspondence Id: 11    Comment Id: 466227**

**Comment Text:** Is the likelihood of a natural breach higher after filling in the current wilderness breach? Where will the next natural breach likely occur? How will water quality be affected inside the bay (nitrate and oxygen levels in particular). How will algae growth and bloom develop at the current nitrate inflow without the mitigating effects of the breach?

**Correspondence Id: 320    Comment Id: 471802**

**Comment Text:** Stop calling it a "breach" and call it an inlet. Water flows in and out, that makes it an inlet. The ocean breached Fire Island in many places during Sandy, but not all of them became inlets.

**Correspondence Id: 22    Comment Id: 473765**

**Comment Text:** in this case the health of the great south bay needs to be considered, as in this case the breach is enhancing the health of the surrounding water, which needs to be incorporated into the thinking process.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473941**

**Comment Text:** According to the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness Act, 16 USC 1132, P. L. 96-585 (Dec. 23, 1980)(d) Wilderness designation shall not preclude the repair of breaches that occur in the wilderness area, in order to prevent loss of life, flooding, and other severe economic and physical damage to Great South Bay and surrounding areas. Thus, should Option 3 be selected, the criteria for deciding upon closing the new inlet in the wilderness area must present strong evidence and supporting documentation of how such an action will prevent loss of life, flooding, and other severe economic and physical damage.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473945**

**Comment Text:** For the reasons outlined above, any potential benefits that are used to justify manual closure of the new inlet must be well-documented, justified based on recent observations, and transparent in terms of data sources, assumptions, and calculations. Any analyses claiming to show that manual closure of the new inlet will prevent loss of life, flooding, and other severe economic and physical damage must inclusively consider the impacts of the new inlet in the context of the cumulative sources of floodwaters, including rain, aggregate inflow of storm surge through all of the inlets, and local wind forcing within the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473952**

**Comment Text:** Barrier island breach events, such the one that created the new inlet in the wilderness area, result in the creation of overwash fans and bayside flats, which are critical habitat for migratory and nesting shorebirds. Since the creation of the new inlet, the bayside flats have offered critical foraging habitat for at least 20 species of both resident and migratory shorebirds, namely the federally threatened Red Knot (*rufa*) and the federally threatened New York State endangered Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*). Every year since the new inlet opened, Piping Plovers have been nesting within the vicinity of the inlet. In 2015, the entirety of Fire Island Wilderness Area had three nesting plover pairs, all in the vicinity of the new inlet. Least Terns are just one of 7 tern species that have been documented to utilize the newly created bayside flats around the new inlet. Other important tern species using this location include the federally and NYS endangered Roseate Tern along with substantial numbers of Common (NYS threatened), Black (NYS endangered) and Royal Terns. The documented numbers and diversity of shorebirds and terns strongly reiterates the importance of this habitat for both resident and long-distance migrants. Any decision for manually closing the new inlet should carefully consider the new information that has been collected on shorebirds utilizing the area in consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition to its intrinsic natural value, bird watching is important to the visitor experience to the Fire Island Wilderness Area.

**Correspondence Id: 313    Comment Id: 474104**

**Comment Text:** If the "breach" has been open since 2012, it seems, then, that it is an "inlet" rather than a "breach". Has the NPS made an honest and transparent assessment of this? If so, I think that this assessment and the decision-making behind the use of the term "breach" rather than "inlet" should be included as public background information for this planning process (including the implications of using one term over the other". My understanding is that politically, the term "breach" is used instead of designating an "inlet" to avoid tighter restrictions and regulations regarding the management of inlets (i.e. not being able to close inlets). I don't think you can move forward in this planning process without a thorough analysis and explanation of the decision-making (and the implications of the decision) to use "breach" instead of "inlet" as it could have legal implications on the future final decision.

**Correspondence Id: 63    Comment Id: 474175**

**Comment Text:** How closing the breach could affect nitrate levels in the Great South Bay/Bellport Bay basin. Also, how closing the breach could affect tidal surge during a strong storm with winds coming from the West. An investigation needs to be made that would show an actual benefit of closing the breach, not what certain politicians say.

**Correspondence Id: 357    Comment Id: 474265**

**Comment Text:** our understanding of breaches (which are new inlets) is constantly improving. We now recognize that these breaches are important transporters of sand into the bays, which allows new wetlands and eelgrass beds to start and provides a platform for the barrier islands to roll onto as sea level rises. Absent this platform, the barrier islands may drown in place. Further, new inlets can improve water quality in the bays.

**Correspondence Id: 358    Comment Id: 474268**

**Comment Text:** In assessing the potential adverse impacts of leaving the breach open conditionally, we should look at the statutory basis for closing a breach in the Wilderness Area. The Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness Act, 16 USC 1132, P.L. 96-585 (Dec. 23, 1980) provides: "(d) Wilderness designation shall not preclude the repair of breaches that occur in the wilderness area, in order to prevent loss of life, flooding, and other severe economic and physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding areas." The scoping newsletter at the bottom of p. 2 reiterates most of this statutory criterion for closure but leaves out the adjective "severe" in the phrase "other severe economic and physical damage": "While storm events and breaches are part of a barrier island's natural processes, allowing this breach to remain open carries the risk of potential adverse impacts to mainland development from flooding, loss of life, and other economic and physical damage".

**Correspondence Id: 358    Comment Id: 474269**

**Comment Text:** "Severe" as an adjective carries different meaning from "significant", "major" or "any". If the NPS or any party is of the view that changes in sediment budgets, bay circulation or the division of Fire Island into two islands constitutes potentially "severe" economic or physical damage, that party has the burden of providing scientific and economic cost data to buttress that assertion. It is a tall order.

**Correspondence Id: 366    Comment Id: 474272**

**Comment Text:** The Great South Bay and the Atlantic Ocean have been designated as essential fish habitat (EFH) for a variety of life stages of fish managed under the New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Great South Bay supports areas of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) including eelgrass (*Zostera marina*). SAV habitats are among the most productive ecosystems in the world and perform a number of irreplaceable ecological functions which range from chemical cycling and physical modification of the water column and sediments to providing food and shelter for commercial, recreation as well as economically important organisms (Stephan and Bigford 1997). Larvae and juveniles of many important commercial and sport fish such as bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*), summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*), spot (*Leiostomus xanthurus*), Atlantic croaker (*Micropogonias undulatus*), herrings (*Clupeidae*) and many others appear in eelgrass beds in the spring an early summer (Fonseca et al 1992). Studies from the lower Chesapeake Bay found that SAV beds area are important for the brooding of eggs and "for fishes with demersal eggs and as habitat for the larvae of spring-summer spawners such as anchovies (*Anchoa* spp.), gobies, (*Gobiosoma* spp.), weakfish (*Cynoscion regalis*), silver perch (*Bairdiella chrysoura*) (Stephan and Bigford 1997). Heckman and Thoman (1984) concluded that SAV beds are also important nursery habitats for blue crabs (*Callinectes sapidus*). According to Peterson (1982) in Kenworthy (1988) shallow dwelling hard clams (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) may be protected from predation by the rhizome layer of seagrass beds. (continued in comment 474273)

**Correspondence Id:** 366 **Comment Id:** 474273

**Comment Text:** (continued from comment 474272) SAV has been designated as a habitat area of particular concern (HAPC) for summer flounder by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. HAPCs are subsets of EFH identified based on one or more of the following considerations: 1) the importance of the ecological function, 2) extent to which the habitat is sensitive to human-induced degradation, 3) whether and to what extent, development activities are stressing the habitat type, or 4) rarity of habitat type (50 CFR 600.815(a)(8)). Studies by Weinstein and Brooks (1983), Adams (1976) and Lascara (1981) in Packer et al. (1999) indicate that SAV is important habitat for juvenile summer flounder. Rodgers and Van Den Avyle (1983) suggest that SAV beds are important to summer flounder, and that any loss of these areas along the Atlantic Seaboard may affect summer flounder stocks. As part of the DEIS, you should prepare an EFH assessment to address the direct, indirect, individual, and cumulative effects of breach management alternatives being considered on EFH, federally managed species and their prey. For a listing of EFH and further information, please see our website at: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/habitat>. The website also contains information on descriptions of EFH for each species, guidance on the EFH consultation process including EFH assessments, and information relevant to our other mandates

**Correspondence Id:** 366 **Comment Id:** 474274

**Comment Text:** Great South Bay is a highly productive habitat for a wide variety of other NOAA trust resources, shellfish and other aquatic resources including important forage species such as silversides (*Menidia* spp.), killifish (*Fundulus* spp.), menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*), and bay anchovy (*Anchoa mitchilli*). The abundance of forage species makes the bay an important feeding and nursery area for a number of estuarine-dependent, commercially and recreationally important species, including summer flounder, winter flounder (*Pseudopleuronectes americanus*), bluefish, striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*), weakfish (*Cynoscion regalis*), Atlantic tomcod (*Microgadus tomcod*), and tautog (*Tautoga onitis*). The bay also supports an economically significant hard clam (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) shellfishery and is a spawning, nursery, and foraging area for blue crab. Other species occurring in the project area include blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*), bay scallop (*Argopecten irradians*), eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*), horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*), American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), spot, Atlantic croaker (*Micropogonias undulatus*), northern kingfish (*Menticirrhus saxatilis*), and northern puffer (*Sphoeroides maculatus*). The DEIS should evaluate the effects of the breach management alternatives being considered on the numerous aquatic species and habitats that exist within Great South Bay.

**Correspondence Id:** 143 **Comment Id:** 474385

**Comment Text:** I would emphasize that the focus should be on natural, hydrologic, marine and terrestrial wildlife, and beach and dune dynamic system impacts. Protection of property and property values on Fire Island should be of secondary importance, though estimation of potential financial impacts on Fire Island and Long Island due to naturally-occurring storms and sea level rise should be included.

**Correspondence Id:** 329 **Comment Id:** 474654

**Comment Text:** Water Quality in the Bay - The clarity of the water in Bellport Bay has improved dramatically since the breach. This improvement in clarity should help in the restoration of eelgrass beds, which declined drastically in the area prior to the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 331    Comment Id: 474679**

**Comment Text:** As part of the EIS will a cost-benefit analysis be conducted leveraging experts in ecosystem services and environmental economics? The breach has reduced the amount of vehicular traffic in the wilderness area. In my experience, vehicular traffic greatly reduces the quality of the beach, the amount of vegetation and subsequent stability of the dune, and degrades potential shorebird habitat. As part of the EIS will a study be conducted to determine the potential effects of increased vehicular traffic on shorebirds and their habitat including federally- and state-listed endangered species? As part of the EIS will the location of the sand needed to fill in the breach be determined prior to making a decision to maintain or close the breach? Additional environmental strain can be caused by dredging and should be considered during the pre-planning process to fully consider the cumulative effects of the final decision.

**Correspondence Id: 353    Comment Id: 474763**

**Comment Text:** Based on various ongoing studies, as well as a great deal of anecdotal evidence, it is clear that the breach has resulted in significant water quality and ecological improvements to the eastern reaches of the Great South Bay. At the same time, there appears to be only minimal impacts on the tidal regime and no adverse effects to local communities situated on the South Shore. We encourage the National Park Service ("NPS") to undertake a detailed ecological and hydrological assessment of the breach that would - we expect - bolster the already strong case regarding the benefits of barrier island breaches. The effort should include an assessment of the numerous estuarine, marine, and adjacent terrestrial resources and species (both resident and migratory) located in the areas around the breach. It should also specifically include benthic species in addition to the more motile and mobile species in the water column. Additionally, NPS should document hydrographical changes that have been caused by the breach. These changes should include documenting changes, if any, in the pattern of currents, tidal prism (with an emphasis of potential flooding), salinity, and impacts to sediment transport.

**Correspondence Id: 353    Comment Id: 474764**

**Comment Text:** According to the NPS Newsletter the desired outcome of this plan is "to ensure the continued integrity of the natural and cultural features of the Seashore and its surrounding ecosystems while protecting human life and managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas." Seatuck concurs that the integrity of the natural and cultural features of the National Seashore, as well as managing economic risks, are important; however, we don't believe they warrant equal consideration and weight in decisions regarding management of Fire Island. The primary purpose of the National Seashore is to protect and conserve Fire Island's natural resources. While the National Seashore provides broad recreational opportunities and recognizes the rights of private landowners, it has always been clear that such uses are secondary to, and should not interfere with, the public's primary interest in protecting Fire Island's natural resources. As such, while we support the consideration of cultural features and economic risks, we urge that the island's natural resources and ecological functions remain the primary focus of the NPS planning process.

**Correspondence Id: 269    Comment Id: 474806**

**Comment Text:** a bit vague as to what the determining line is "while protecting human life and managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas" detailed clarification of what circumstances would need to be in effect to alter the plan to "ensure the continued integrity of the natural and cultural features of the Seashore and its surrounding ecosystems" above all else

**Correspondence Id: 289    Comment Id: 474834**

**Comment Text:** If the decision is made to close the breach. Where will the fill material be taken from? If offshore, as has been the historical method. Won't that just pass the problem on to another area of the barrier beach? This has been the case in which past attempts to infill the beach front further east have had an immediate consequence further west.



## NE2000 – COMMENTS RELATED TO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

**Correspondence Id:** 127 **Comment Id:** 485715

**Comment Text:** Timely communication and true opportunities for input must be included in any future plan. I understand that climate change and rising water levels are a concern, and wish to be involved in the process of determining the best way to address these issues while balancing the needs of all involved.

**Correspondence Id:** 88 **Comment Id:** 474312

**Comment Text:** How is the scoping newsletter distributed? Is it within NY, Long Island, or nationally? How are residents near the area informed about the latest developments? Much more outreach to the public must be made.

**Correspondence Id:** 125 **Comment Id:** 474357

**Comment Text:** However; I feel there should be representation from Long Island residents during the process to share positives or negatives with regard to the breach and it's impacts thus far on their lives. I believe a small panel of local representatives should be formed, and allowed to participate throughout the decision process. For example, property owners, marina owners, restaurant owners, vessel captains, beachgoers, etc. These potential participants should be required to put their desire to participate in writing. Then there is the question of who decides to whom is on the panel. local mayors could decide, or other elected officials that are governing in the communities effected by the breach.

## **NE3000 – COMMENTS RELATED TO REFINEMENT OF THE ALTERNATIVES**

**Correspondence Id:** 313   **Comment Id:** 474105

**Comment Text:** Also, for the alternative of closing the breach- -is that a one-time closure or does it mean that every time the breach re-opens (which it will eventually) that it can be administratively closed without going through another planning process or will the planning process need to take place every time the breach re-opens. The use of the terminology of breach and inlet may play into the answer of this question.

## OS1000 – OUT OF SCOPE

**Correspondence Id:** 356 **Comment Id:** 485721

**Comment Text:** If they are to be maintained for navigation, they need to be better engineered, better maintained, consistently funded and include sand bypass systems. Or, just remove the jetties and let them open and close as and where they will.

**Correspondence Id:** 348 **Comment Id:** 471918

**Comment Text:** Please stop dredging out in the ocean in front of Fire Island because doing so, weakens the dunes's first line of defense.

**Correspondence Id:** 356 **Comment Id:** 471944

**Comment Text:** The Westhampton Beach jetties should also be gradually removed, starting from East to West. East Hampton jetties as well

**Correspondence Id:** 17 **Comment Id:** 473746

**Comment Text:** What we need to do is to move out of the flood prone areas, often on former marshes, and onto higher ground, while restoring the marshes so we can buffer the flood waves and protect the remaining homes. Where possible, we should also do what we can before the breach to restore shellfish beds and eelgrass, also an important part of coastal resilience.

**Correspondence Id:** 17 **Comment Id:** 473748

**Comment Text:** To save the bay, we need an immediate moratorium on lawn fertilizers and pesticides. We need to replace as many of the low lying cesspools and septic tanks as quickly as possible. We need to grow oysters wherever in the bay that can be done so that the bay's water can be filtered and cleaned. The more we can bring the bay back, the more we can build in coastal resilience. If the big issue is how we protect Fire Islanders and their property and property owners along the South Shore, we need to have water clean enough to support the return of protective natural habitats.

**Correspondence Id:** 17 **Comment Id:** 473749

**Comment Text:** If the fear is flooding, then why do we have dams and spillways on virtually every stream, creek and river emptying into The Great South Bay, with countless more blocking water from flowing across Long Island? Let all the mill ponds, a legacy from the 19th Century, revert to marshes and streams so that in the event of a storm surge the water would have a place to go. That's what flood plains are for. Block the water, you got flooding. Taking down the dams would also allow fish migration and spawning such as Long Island has not seen in 150 years - - alewife, shad, herring, sturgeon. Bring the habitats back and revive the fishing and shellfishing industries. A vibrant ecosystem would be an economic boon at the same time that it would protect Long Islanders and Fire Islanders from future storms.

**Correspondence Id:** 24 **Comment Id:** 473810

**Comment Text:** The need to reduce waste materials running into the Bay seems to be a more urgent problem that must be addressed. Mount a cooperative campaign with communities on both north and south shores to reduce undesirable materials polluting the Bay. This should be part of the shared stewardship envisioned in the GMP. It should involve the county, the towns, and all the communities which contribute to the problem.

**Correspondence Id: 37    Comment Id: 474033**

**Comment Text:** Instead of relying on a temporary breach to eliminate pollution and high nitrogen levels , local governments with the aid of New York State and possibly the US Government should be moving to eliminate the source point of all the pollution and high nitrogen levels and moving with haste to eliminate cesspools and install sewers and to treat that effluent correctly!

**Correspondence Id: 58    Comment Id: 474152**

**Comment Text:** too many homes are on our barrier beaches. I would like to see them either demolished or as they sink into the ocean, do not rebuild. Our shores are fragile and building on them is not how to protect them.

**Correspondence Id: 65    Comment Id: 474195**

**Comment Text:** Main issues we have on the south shore of Long Island, specifically Bellport and Patchogue Bay is the lack of a flushing mechanism for the bay water. The run off from fertilizers and cesspool leaching knocks the water quality apart by late summer so the breach at the new old inlet offers some assistance there. The broader issues are nitrogen fertilizers, which needs to be addressed, but closing the Inlet would only trap the water further.

**Correspondence Id: 66    Comment Id: 474204**

**Comment Text:** We do not, however, feel that the Wilderness Area should be totally neglected. In past years the trail through the Wilderness was well-maintained, but in recent years it has been neglected, so the general public cannot readily gain access to the wilderness area. We urge that the trail once again be properly maintained. Of course, the breach does present a problem here; we hope FINS can come up with some reasonable way for people to get across.

**Correspondence Id: 84    Comment Id: 474306**

**Comment Text:** Although this may seem unimportant, there is discussion about whether the 'deer fencing' in front of the dunes (and or sandbags) is useful or not. My understanding has been that it's function is to trap sand. Please enlighten me and others re why and how it's effective. Also, while Seaview has put enormous sand bags in front of the dunes, why aren't other communities doing the same? If they are beneficial, is there some way that we can support a more island-wide use of them?

**Correspondence Id: 92    Comment Id: 474318**

**Comment Text:** I also think Long Island governments need to force less use of fertilizers which fill the Great South Bay with toxic nitrogen.

**Correspondence Id: 93    Comment Id: 474319**

**Comment Text:** I think that monitoring of the back bay is important, particularly with regard to chemical run-off from developments close to the shoreline.

**Correspondence Id: 140    Comment Id: 474381**

**Comment Text:** A lot of the problems with beach erosion stem from the jetties that were placed in Southhampton after the 1929 hurricane and stop the natural flow of sand westerly. I grew up on the south shore and have seen hundreds of feet of beach erode since I was a child. The removal of these jetties should be done.

**Correspondence Id: 146    Comment Id: 474392**

**Comment Text:** Please control those things that you can such as run off and waste. clean up human waste that is dumping into the bay. Then the bay can clean itself.

**Correspondence Id: 155    Comment Id: 474406**

**Comment Text:** The "mainland" shoreline area needs continued and perhaps improved management to assure the growth of marsh grasses which would mitigate tidal flows and surges from weather conditions. The Newsletter mentioned the possibility that marsh grasses (and other plants) would colonize the newly formed sand "islands" near the breach. I believe this is true; this would benefit "mainland" shoreline residents in lowering the damage caused by potential ocean surges.

**Correspondence Id: 162    Comment Id: 474413**

**Comment Text:** Please clean up our waterways by enforcing fertilizing laws and getting rid of the cesspools on long island. We want a beautiful bay!

**Correspondence Id: 178    Comment Id: 474430**

**Comment Text:** Purchasing up more land for Wild life preserve, or for human walking- - parks.

**Correspondence Id: 197    Comment Id: 474449**

**Comment Text:** Several more controlled breaches would actually improve the bays and eco systems surrounding fire island and the south shore. Unless all the issues with the exchange of water are addressed such are removal of the meadow brook parkway and wantuagh parkways. there needs to be a comprehensive plan on the federal and state levels to address all the issues plaguing the bays with sufficient funding. The breach is the only positive event in the clean up of the bays performed to date.

**Correspondence Id: 214    Comment Id: 474614**

**Comment Text:** Need to stop dumping waste into GSB Dredging of canals need to be done

**Correspondence Id: 217    Comment Id: 474618**

**Comment Text:** Improved wilderness experience: Elimination of all motor vehicle traffic on the beach.

**Correspondence Id: 317    Comment Id: 474630**

**Comment Text:** The bay area in Bellport is cleaner with a more rapid exchange of water in that area. The causes of the unclean water have NOT been addressed or rectified. We are only moving the garbage in Bellport bay to the ocean faster.

**Correspondence Id: 224    Comment Id: 474648**

**Comment Text:** Include tide charts and aids to navigation, access for Kayaks and other water sports

**Correspondence Id: 239    Comment Id: 474705**

**Comment Text:** Should the Seashore contribute the land beneath the area of the breach to the Secretary of the Army to fulfill the intent of Public Law 88-587, Section 8(b) (the act which created the National Seashore) and which provides that NPS should contribute to the Army Corp of Engineers land within the Seashore as mutually agreeable between such agencies for the creation of a new inlet across Fire Island.

**Correspondence Id: 246    Comment Id: 474721**

**Comment Text:** Long Island needs to come up with a plan to contain the contamination that is getting into our bay. It is extremely important to deal with cesspools and lawn chemicals. Without changes, we will continue to lose tourism dollars. 30 years ago, we could not sail across the bay without having trouble due to all of the clammers. Today, there are hardly any clams, oysters, fish, etc. to find. It's a very sad situation. Please take the time to deal with the issues and do not coddle the few who believe that ease of driving is the most important issue.

**Correspondence Id: 256    Comment Id: 474733**

**Comment Text:** Housing along the low lying costal areas need to be relocated

**Correspondence Id: 356    Comment Id: 474778**

**Comment Text:** Stop doing stupid things. Things such as bulldozing the dune vehicle crossing at Sailors Haven. The roped planks worked well for decades and minimized damage to the integrity of the dune line. Bulldozing it to grade lead to Sandy blowing it open much wider. Sand was then deposited inland (which is a natural function of a storm breached dune) burying the cement path. Rather than appropriately rebuilding as a board walk at the new elevation, the bulldozers came back to uncover the cement path, making an unholy and unsightly mess. Busting nude sun bathers and al fresco trysters. Do Rangers need busy work this badly? These things occur in areas where no families with children would even think of trekking.

**Correspondence Id: 356    Comment Id: 474779**

**Comment Text:** Put Army Engineering talents to work on the mainland. Removing mill dams, wet lands restoration(for storm resiliency), tackling road runoff/drainage issues. For both mainland and barrier, strict building/rebuilding guidelines to include elevation and set back requirements. (Rather than drawing arbitrary lines through peoples property)

**Correspondence Id: 362    Comment Id: 474787**

**Comment Text:** There are certain well intentioned (if self-appointed) observers of the breach at Fire Island's Old Inlet that are urging government - that is to say, the US Army Corps of Engineers - to keep hands off. They believe Great South Bay will benefit from the influx of clean ocean water. Maybe it would in the short term. But long term, life isn't that simple. Only better sew-age treatment and control of automobile runoff will permanently restore water quality in the bay. This will cost billions, as experience on Long Island Sound has shown.

**Correspondence Id: 264    Comment Id: 474801**

**Comment Text:** The breach is a good thing. However, we need help in managing the entire bay. The ponds and rivers. Look what happened this summer.. Every day during the swimming season a person from the county comes to the town beaches and checks for bacteria in the water. The report is given out the next day. You might have been swimming in a high bacteria area and wouldn't know it until the next day... My question is: why is there so much bacteria in such a large bay that you have to wait for a tide change in order to swim again. There should not be so much disscussion about this problem. There should be more action... Save The Great South Bay!

**Correspondence Id: 272    Comment Id: 474810**

**Comment Text:** If cogent ecological arguments can be made that additional breaches are needed to reinvigorate Great South Bay, then these breaches must be managed appropriately to ensure that they do not expand in future storms. However, given the pristine waters of the Bay that existed as recently as 50-100 years ago, a strong argument can be made that the same objective can be reached through serious action to limit man made pollution of the bay.



**Correspondence Id:** 272 **Comment Id:** 474811

**Comment Text:** This issue has been divorced from the larger ecological issues facing Great South Bay and Fire Island. This is an integrated natural system that has been seriously impacted by human activity and climate change. If the solution for pollution of the bay is to let in ocean waters through this breach, then the EPA and federal government have abdicated their responsibility for correcting sources of pollution to the bay, and for managing the consequences of climate change. The consequences of inaction in the face of climate change, industrial and residential pollution of the bay are dire. We cannot argue that pollution of the bay and global disturbances in the climate are "natural". I doubt that any professional ecologist would argue that it is proper under these conditions to let "nature take its course". We need to act to preserve nature as it would exist in the absence of our activities. Inaction in the face of these human problems will ultimately lead to environmental destruction and collapse.

## TO1100 – COMMENTS RELATED TO PHYSICAL PROCESSES

**Correspondence Id:** 292 **Comment Id:** 474837

**Comment Text:** The breach does not permit the proper littoral drift of sand from east to west which has been one of the major causes of problems for Fire Island since the groins built at Westhampton have trapped sand.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473940

**Comment Text:** As to the third referenced impact-potentially altering sediment movement and bay circulation-the statute requires that any physical damage to Great South Bay and surrounding areas be severe. No such showing has been or can be made with regard to sediment movement and bay circulation.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473943

**Comment Text:** While the natural processes of breaching and overwash may cause damage to manmade infrastructure on a barrier island-though not in the instant case in the Wilderness Area-they do not in and of themselves represent damage to the underlying long-term integrity of the barrier island itself. Quite to the contrary, storm-caused breaches and inlets provide a critical aspect of long term barrier island maintenance by adding sand shoals, flood tide delta platforms and islands, and creating the potential for new wetlands. These are the very processes that have enabled barrier islands to persist and maintain themselves naturally for thousands of years.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473947

**Comment Text:** Beneficial impacts the new inlet is currently having largely stem from 1) the increased mixing between the formerly stagnant and impaired waters of eastern Great South Bay/Narrow Bay and the Atlantic Ocean through the new inlet, 2) the flushing out and burial of fine grained organic sediments that have accumulated for decades due to eutrophic conditions, 3) the influx of sandy sediments that create new habitats and fortify the back bay area, 4) the an additional conduit for migration of marine and diadromous species, and 5) the additional exit valve for eastern Great South Bay under high water conditions caused by localized westerly winds.

**Correspondence Id:** 327 **Comment Id:** 474646

**Comment Text:** The sediment in question is the excess sand deposited in the bay which the littoral drift would have transported to the west. If this sand is deemed important enough, hydraulic dredging could move sand out of the bay or from offshore, and deposited to the west side of the inlet to make up for the lost sand.

**Correspondence Id:** 329 **Comment Id:** 474660

**Comment Text:** Barrier Island Dynamics - The presence of inlets serves a vital function in barrier island dynamics, providing important functions in the movement of sand and long-term survival of the islands in response to changing sea level.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474683**

**Comment Text:** Inlets are a critical part of natural, coastal processes. Storm-formed island breaches are, in fact, an important aspect of long-term barrier island maintenance. These naturally occurring inlets are often temporary, but while open they transport sand from the nearshore zone into the back-barrier, adding width to the island. Inlets, and their associated sand shoals and flood tidal delta platforms build land and wetlands. This is visible in numerous locations up and down the east coast. The widest portions of the barrier islands are frequently those areas with old inlet locations. This is Certainly true for Fire Island, Westhampton Dunes, Assateague Island and significant portions of the North Carolina Outer Banks among many others. Carefully managing storm-formed inlets is a critical adaptive strategy for preserving barrier islands in response to long-term climate change. Islands that are narrow and sand-poor on the backside are more likely to fragment and "fall apart" in response to rising sea level and future storms. Islands with an inlet formed sand platform on the backside can migrate back, and up onto the flood tidal delta sands, shoals, and marshes. In effect, storm-formed inlets are like beach nourishment projects for the estuarine side of the island, and they can add significant wetland acreage to the back of the island (along with all the values those wetlands provide).

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474698**

**Comment Text:** Barrier islands are supposed to develop breaches and evolve with changing oceanographic conditions; they are not supposed to be maintained in a static state. Life there evolved to exist with such change. Sealing the breach is inconsistent with the concept of wilderness area.

**Correspondence Id: 338    Comment Id: 474742**

**Comment Text:** Another risk identified is that the breach can affect sediment budgets along downdrift parts of the ocean coast and changes in circulation in the bay. I feel that the science and data suggests that there is sand that is entering the back bay through the breach thus creating acres of islands and sandbars, thereby, strengthening the barrier island system in the vicinity of the breach. It also appears that Davis Park, the community to the west of the breach has not suffered from lack of down drift sand that is any different then before the breach was created.

**Correspondence Id: 281    Comment Id: 474826**

**Comment Text:** 4) The breach disturbs the littoral drift of sand down the length of fire island. Over time, this sand deficit will result in a sand deficit, leading to more overwashes and breaches to the west. We already have moriches inlet (which is dredged)hurting the sand in the littoral drift, why add yet another problem. More overwash and more breaches will threaten human life and property on the south shore of long island. Why risk that? Again, it would be irresponsible to leave the breach open.

## TO2200 – COMMENTS RELATED TO FISH/AQUATIC COMMUNITIES

### **Correspondence Id: 278    Comment Id: 474886**

**Comment Text:** We have Blue fish and Striped Bass being caught on their northerly run right off of Bellport Dock, as well as into Patchogue bay along the shore. The clams are growing in abundance, with seedlings being found along the flats on the South side of the bay into Patchogue bay. The Mussels are coming back, groups have reintroduced oysters into the bay. All of these mollusks will assist in cleaning the waters of Great South Bay and the environs.

### **Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473947**

**Comment Text:** Beneficial impacts the new inlet is currently having largely stem from 1) the increased mixing between the formerly stagnant and impaired waters of eastern Great South Bay/Narrow Bay and the Atlantic Ocean through the new inlet, 2) the flushing out and burial of fine grained organic sediments that have accumulated for decades due to eutrophic conditions, 3) the influx of sandy sediments that create new habitats and fortify the back bay area, 4) the an additional conduit for migration of marine and diadromous species, and 5) the additional exit valve for eastern Great South Bay under high water conditions caused by localized westerly winds.

### **Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473950**

**Comment Text:** Great South Bay has historically been known for its abundance of several species of economically important shellfish (oysters, bay scallops, and hard clams). However, the recent collapse of what was once the most important hard clam fishery in the US, combined with modern understanding of the ecological importance of shellfish as a foundational species in shallow coastal estuaries, has made hard clam restoration a high priority. The combination of clearer water and rebounding clam growth has ben followed by an increase in public participation in recreational shellfishing, and has also inspired citizens to become more engaged in shellfish restoration. Restoring healthy self-sustaining levels of shellfish to Great South Bay has significant positive ecologic and economic ramifications. For the private and public investors who have contributed resources to meet these objectives, the new inlet represents an enormous boost in terms of the timeline and probability for success. A decision to manually close it would be counterproductive to all of the public and private expenditures made towards restoring shellfish in Great South Bay.

### **Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473953**

**Comment Text:** The availability of sportfish that can now migrate freely in and out of the eastern Great South Bay has been a big boon to fishermen and the fishing economy in the area. As the only natural inlet on the south shore of Long Island, the new inlet, with natural shorelines as opposed to rock seawalls, and very little boating activity provides the most natural and unimpeded of all the corridors from the ocean to the South Shore Estuary Reserve. Even with an angling renaissance, the gnarly submerged roots and trees left behind by Sandy provide fish refugia in and around the new inlet. The new inlet is also now providing access to diadromous fish seeking out the Carmans River. Much effort is going into restoring fish passage for river herring in the Carmans River, direct migratory access for adults and juveniles through the new inlet is facilitating the recovery of this species. Fishing and boating is big business on Long Island. There are over 64,000 boats registered in Suffolk County . The resurgence of fishing opportunities in eastern Great South Bay and Narrow Bay because of the new inlet is not a trivial matter - the negative impacts to fishing and the local fishing economy from closing the new inlet would likely be significant. Thus impacts to the local fisheries and fishing economies must be a consideration when examining the costs of closing the new inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 302    Comment Id: 474592**

**Comment Text:** I'm also concerned about the lack of eelgrass in the bay, ergo, the lack of horseshoe and blue claw crabs. The breach has definitely changed the bay life despite what the experts from Stony Brook say, I've seen it.

**Correspondence Id: 226    Comment Id: 474651**

**Comment Text:** I also believe the economic benefits will be significant if the breach is left alone - shellfisherman and Baymen are already seeing growth of hard clams far in excess of anything seen in the last 40 years I think aquaculture needs to be encouraged in both Bellport Bay and the Great South Bay at large. In particular Oyster aquaculture should be encouraged and bottomlands should be opened up for Oyster and hard clam farmers to plant and harvest. Every Oyster filters between 30 and 50 gallons of water a day - that filtration process on a large scale would help in cleaning up the water of suspended solids and also algae and the organisms that cause brown tide. I would direct you to read a recent study done by Jeff Levinton of Stony Brook University to explain in great detail the benefits of Aquaculture in the GSB - not to mention the economic benefits local oyster farmers would bring

**Correspondence Id: 329    Comment Id: 474655**

**Comment Text:** Clam Populations - Improvements in water quality and circulation should benefit the bay's clam population, which also declined seriously prior to the breach. Considering all factors affecting setting, growth rates, predation and survival, the net benefit of the inlet should be positive for clams in the bay. I personally have examined clams that were stunted with eroded shells from Bellport Bay that subsequently showed renewed growth after the breach, as indicated by shell conditions. I have also examined young clams less than 3 years old in proximity to the breach with shells indicating rapid growth. I have photos demonstrating this growth and would be happy to share them if there was interest.

**Correspondence Id: 329    Comment Id: 474658**

**Comment Text:** Recreational Fishing - Opportunities for recreational fishing have increased substantially in the area of the breach. Whereas Bellport Bay was not known for significant fishing prior to the breach, I have observed catches of striped bass, summer flounder, blue fish and sea bass in the inlet environs. Significant recreational fishing opportunities have been created by the new inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 338    Comment Id: 474747**

**Comment Text:** I want to add that as a Co founder and co director of Friends of Bellport Bay (FoBB) I can inform the NPS that our 3 year research permit granted by the FINS this past summer to plant oysters near the breach in collaboration with NYSDEC, Brookhaven Town, and Cornell Cooperative of Suffolk County has yielded excellent results. Since July FoBB has planted approximately 100,000 oysters south of Ridge Island west of the breach , This area was chosen is part due to the fact that the daily exchange of ocean and bay water has kept the toxic algae tides from taking hold in the southern part of Bellport Bay. The absence of toxic tides such as Brown tide can be directly connected to the breach. This silver lining has allowed for the oysters to experience great growth and the beginning of what can be a successful reintroduction of oysters into The Great South Bay. It is the toxic tides, in part, stemming from mainland runoff that prevents the shellfish from making a come back. The breach has allowed for shellfish to have a fighting chance to prosper in the bay. Closing the inlet will surely destroy the new colony of oysters that have been planted in Bellport Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 340    Comment Id: 474749**

**Comment Text:** Due to the improvements in water quality and salinity of the bay as a result of the breach, the Town of Brookhaven has recently partnered with the Friends of Bellport Bay (FoBB), a newly-formed group whose mission is to improve water quality in the bay. The Town has signed an agreement with FoBB to provide 100,000 oyster spat per year to the group to be seeded along Ridge Island over the course of the next few years. In addition, the group has been granted a 3 year research permit from FINS to monitor the health of these oysters. The restoration of shellfish populations is strongly encouraged as a method to strengthen ecosystems because shellfish, such as oysters, provide water quality maintenance by filtering nitrogen and particulates from the water. In addition, oysters provide shoreline protection, sediment stabilization, and habitats for other organisms. In addition to this effort, the Town of Brookhaven has also partnered with Suffolk County to fund a \$130,000 project for the continued purpose of restoring three species of shellfish; hard clams, oysters and scallops, and eelgrass in Bellport Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 352    Comment Id: 474761**

**Comment Text:** In the process of planting oysters and restoring oyster reef in and around Ridge Island, we are monitoring and recording their progress with FINS. We have seen good growth and health with the shellfish this summer. The breach has had a positive impact on the quality of the water and health of the shellfish. This should be considered a positive response to keeping the breach open.

**Correspondence Id: 359    Comment Id: 474781**

**Comment Text:** In addition, numerous persons engaged in clamming have reported alarming increases in raking closed empty clam shells containing drill holes thought to be caused by the ocean bearing "moon shell" snails, certainly a threat to any possible return of the defunct Great South Bay economic powerhouse clamming industry.

**Correspondence Id: 108    Comment Id: 474874**

**Comment Text:** this breach opened the water quality in the Bay has improved dramatically, it is clearer and cleaner. Clams are thriving-game fish can now be caught in the Bay whereas before they were very rare (striped bass, fluke, flounder, bluefish).

**Correspondence Id: 145    Comment Id: 474877**

**Comment Text:** The water is finally getting clean and the amount of life that has sprung up around the breach is incredible. Many species that were sparsely scattered in this area are now abundant. I have seen young mussel beds, kelp, anemones, feather dusters, horseshoe crabs, schools of bunker, bluefish, striped bass and more. Closing the breach would kill the amazingly biodiverse environment that is now forming.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474884**

**Comment Text:** Although the breach is small, and has far less influence on the bay than does Fire Island Inlet, in the area where its waters flow strongly, the bay is cooler and clearer, dissolved oxygen levels are higher, brown tide does not occur, clams are growing more quickly, submerged aquatic vegetation is returning and there is an abundance of fish (as well as fish-eating animals such as seals and loons) that is greater than anything that I have seen in three decades.



## **TO2300 – COMMENTS RELATED TO SAV**

**Correspondence Id:** 117 **Comment Id:** 474875

**Comment Text:** The species of fish has grown and multiplied ravishing our bay with plentiful wildlife. The shoreline has prospered with growth of eel grass which has helped the clam beds to repopulate.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473949

**Comment Text:** Researchers also concluded that conditions that resulting from the new inlet, (increased water clarity, decreased summer heat, and new sand platforms) would foster the re-establishment of eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) which is considered essential fish habitat, and a habitat of particular concern by the Mid Atlantic Marine Fisheries Management Council. should there be a government decision to artificially close the breach at Old Inlet it will make the conditions for eelgrass in eastern Great South Bay less hospitable, an action that would directly conflict with the intentions of the 2012 New York State Seagrass Protection Act and the objectives of the South Shore Estuary Reserve Comprehensive Management Plan.

**Correspondence Id:** 302 **Comment Id:** 474592

**Comment Text:** I'm also concerned about the lack of eelgrass in the bay, ergo, the lack of horseshoe and blue claw crabs. The breach has definitely changed the bay life despite what the experts from Stony Brook say, I've seen it.

**Correspondence Id:** 219 **Comment Id:** 474627

**Comment Text:** We must restore the eel grass marshlands to help mitigate storm impacts. This can only be accomplished by restoring the health of the water surrounding the National seashore.

## TO2400 – COMMENTS RELATED TO SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES

**Correspondence Id:** 329 **Comment Id:** 474657

**Comment Text:** Protected Species - I have personally observed the presence of species that are protected or of special concern at the new inlet, indicating that the area has become an important habitat. Examples include large numbers of young winter flounder along the banks on the east side of the breach, and seals utilizing the tidal deltas during the winter.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473952

**Comment Text:** Barrier island breach events, such the one that created the new inlet in the wilderness area, result in the creation of overwash fans and bayside flats, which are critical habitat for migratory and nesting shorebirds. Since the creation of the new inlet, the bayside flats have offered critical foraging habitat for at least 20 species of both resident and migratory shorebirds, namely the federally threatened Red Knot (*rufa*) and the federally threatened New York State endangered Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*). Every year since the new inlet opened, Piping Plovers have been nesting within the vicinity of the inlet. In 2015, the entirety of Fire Island Wilderness Area had three nesting plover pairs, all in the vicinity of the new inlet. Least Terns are just one of 7 tern species that have been documented to utilize the newly created bayside flats around the new inlet. Other important tern species using this location include the federally and NYS endangered Roseate Tern along with substantial numbers of Common (NYS threatened), Black (NYS endangered) and Royal Terns. The documented numbers and diversity of shorebirds and terns strongly reiterates the importance of this habitat for both resident and long-distance migrants. Any decision for manually closing the new inlet should carefully consider the new information that has been collected on shorebirds utilizing the area in consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition to its intrinsic natural value, bird watching is important to the visitor experience to the Fire Island Wilderness Area.

## **TO2500 – COMMENTS RELATED TO WILDLIFE**

**Correspondence Id:** 241 **Comment Id:** 474712

**Comment Text:** Did wildlife generally cross the area that is now water? I believe that inbreeding is a problem for the deer on the island, the break will make it worse.

**Correspondence Id:** 129 **Comment Id:** 474364

**Comment Text:** Too many Fox's and deer because they cannot move EAST because of the breach.

**Correspondence Id:** 303 **Comment Id:** 474101

**Comment Text:** If you don't close the breach and fire island erodes away what animals and nature do you have to protect. With less and less beach there is less space for all of the animals. We will then be faced with the same problem too many deer.

## TO4100 – COMMENTS RELATED TO ACCESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

**Correspondence Id:** 327 **Comment Id:** 479505

**Comment Text:** Closing off the natural inlet for convenience of park operations is not the purpose of a wilderness area. There are many parks with islands, split by running water and other natural obstacles. Obliterating a natural feature to make the park easier drive on shouldn't be a consideration.

**Correspondence Id:** 333 **Comment Id:** 471860

**Comment Text:** As a homeowner on Fire Island, we have no access to our homes during the winter months except by boat. We have no emergency police or fire protection off season.

**Correspondence Id:** 303 **Comment Id:** 474099

**Comment Text:** I also feel unsafe with only one drivable road off the island. What if something really bad happens on west end we now can't get off by driving to east end. I also feel it is a lot of wear and tear on the west end road having everybody drive on it. It now also takes a very long time for emergency services to get to any type of emergency in the pines. It was much faster to get help from the east end.

**Correspondence Id:** 55 **Comment Id:** 474143

**Comment Text:** There should be a plan in place for emergencies that could occur on either side of the breach. Boaters and swimmers should be educated about the dangers of entering the channel.

**Correspondence Id:** 64 **Comment Id:** 474179

**Comment Text:** Special Interest groups try and camouflage there interest in closing the breach by saying emergency vehicals will take to long to get to there property in the event of an emergency..... the fact is that mutual aid for fires comes from other communities on fire island and the fire departments on the mainland don't even own pumpers that can go down the beach. The only time a mainland Fire Department tried to send a vehicle it was a chiefs truck and it got stuck and never made it to the big fire in the Pines Commercial District.

**Correspondence Id:** 64 **Comment Id:** 474181

**Comment Text:** I'm a contractor that works only on Fire Island, I commute by boat as much as I can until the weather prevents me from doing so. Yes it's inconvenient to go all the way to Robert Moses and it adds over an hour to my commute plus the fuel cost of such a long ride. But Fire Island is such a "Cash Cow" for those of us that are lucky enough to work there that no matter what I'll find a way.

**Correspondence Id:** 130 **Comment Id:** 474365

**Comment Text:** Leaving the breach open makes it impossible for emergency responders to reach the easternmost communities on Fire Island expeditiously. This is particularly true for fire responders who need their equipment.

**Correspondence Id:** 131 **Comment Id:** 474368

**Comment Text:** I understand that emergency workers need to get there in extreme cases. There are large fire departments there with many trucks and equipment and the volunteers need to access the beach. The only time they cannot access is when the bay freezes over and as of now you must drive from Robert Moses Park. For the communities such as my own on the East end its more difficult to get to then the rest. There should be a simple solution. Take the cost of what it will take to close the breach and spend it on a vessel that will cut thru the ice making it possible for emergency volunteers and contractors and homeowners to get back and forth. FINS has a fleet of very nice boats, why not add one that does some good for the bay.

**Correspondence Id: 132    Comment Id: 474369**

**Comment Text:** Firefighter and Emergency response to Fire Island is impaired by the breach. The Davis Park Fire Department had a longstanding practice of responding to fires during winter months from Smith's Point when the bay is frozen. Other departments used this route as well. This last winter the bay was iced up for a longer period of time than usual. The community could not be reached by ferry during that time. There have been a number of serious fires in neighboring communities since Sandy occurred. Response time from the west, via Robert Moses Causeway will take significantly longer, assuming the beach is passable.

**Correspondence Id: 150    Comment Id: 474398**

**Comment Text:** Emergency access to the various villages along the seashore has been compromised only if one considers vehicular access. Other emergency options are available in the form of high speed watercraft and rotary winged aircraft (helicopters); as facilities to accommodate these emergency options are already in place there should be no need to close the breach for this reason.

**Correspondence Id: 205    Comment Id: 474459**

**Comment Text:** The opening of the breach has impacted my ability to get to the home I own at Fire Island Pines. In the past, I entered the beach at Smith Point Park and drove West with the required permits. Today, I must drive an hour west to Robert Moses entrance and then drive east on the ocean. I drive threw many communities which takes over an hour to reach the Pines. Should there be an emergency or need for Fire, Police or Parks Department in Davis Park, Watch Hill, Water Island, Pines, Cherry Grove these emergency personnel will need to travel west to get to the eastern communities.

**Correspondence Id: 302    Comment Id: 474593**

**Comment Text:** I also would like to voice some concerns about the lack of fire protection for the Fire Island communities, such as Davis Park. I am a frequent visitor to Davis Park and it is a long way to travel from Robert Moses to Davis Park, should there be a fire mid-winter, when the bay is frozen over.

**Correspondence Id: 317    Comment Id: 474628**

**Comment Text:** New Old Inlet has now cut off access to about 1300 to 1400 homes and business on the east end of Fire Island that usually entered Fire Island in the "off" seasons via Smith Point to enter and maintain those homes or businesses. The Town of Brookhaven, responsible for walks and trails within the communities, is now relegated to drive through the west end Islip entrance to accomplish tasks.

**Correspondence Id: 317    Comment Id: 474629**

**Comment Text:** Mutual aid via other fire departments has been reduced when we have experienced a few more off season fires probably due in some part to Sandy water intrusion. Our recent storm with high tides had people asking what sort of staffing was available in eastern communities as it was certain the western ones could NOT respond in any emergency with the high tides.

**Correspondence Id: 325    Comment Id: 474640**

**Comment Text:** the economic and human safety factors are not being given enough consideration. That we are no longer able to access the beach from Smiths Point. A second breach to the west will isolate communities and cause catastrophic harm to the bay and the shore areas of Great South Bay

**Correspondence Id: 333    Comment Id: 474682**

**Comment Text:** Since this breach occurred, my husband who has worked on Fire Island for many years, has had great difficulty gaining access to Davis Park. He now has to travel the west end and it takes approximately 2 hours travel each way. The travel time could be more time depending on the tides and beach conditions, during the winter months. There are times when he can not even go to work and has become difficult to make a living there. The breach being closed would make it much easier to travel to Davis Park.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474704**

**Comment Text:** While it may be true that the breach can cause some minor inconvenience to residents of the eastern end of Fire Island, as it does not allow access and egress through FINS and ultimately the Smithy Point Bridge, such inconvenience is one of the costs of living on an island, where life goes on at the whim of wind and water. No one forced anyone to take up residence in the island communities; in fact, few live in such communities year-round. Those who do should not be able to impair the public trust resources of Great South Bay and Fire Island itself in order to attain some small personal gain.

**Correspondence Id: 338    Comment Id: 474744**

**Comment Text:** Another concern is that the breach divides the Seashore into two islands, which has altered park operations, visitor experience, and emergency access. I feel that although the breach may be a nuisance with regard to the management and operation of the park the value and the positive affects that the breach is having on our environment far out way the problems that are associated with the park being divided into two islands. I feel that a new park management strategy can be easily implemented that will provide the public with proper access and safety. In fact, one can argue that park attendance is up since the breach occurred with a spike in visitors to the east side of the breach via Smith Point Park

**Correspondence Id: 359    Comment Id: 474782**

**Comment Text:** Winter fire safety for the Davis Park/Ocean Ridge community has been seriously compromised by the breach, now requiring a journey of at least two hours to get personnel to the scene in the event of a fire when the bay is frozen.

**Correspondence Id: 365    Comment Id: 474794**

**Comment Text:** Also some other serious consequences of the breach are ( will continue if it is not closed): 1) When the bay freezes, the inability of first responder (fire depts. police others to get to the eastern communities example the serious fire at Cherry Grove likely occurred after the bay thawed 100 fire fighters were able to ferry across to prevent more serious widespread devastation - this would not have been possible if the bay was still frozen in the past responders were able to cross Smith Pt bridge travel swiftly to the eastern communities. 2) Residents contractors, utilities, police are now forced to travel much longer distances from to the eastern communities when there is a very limited or no ferry service or the bay is frozen. 3) It has eliminated the safety of an alternative escape route in case of emergency (All residences businesses are required to have an entrance and exit! 4) Forces more vehicles to travel through inhabited areas vs 7- 8 miles on uninhabited beach from Smith Pt to Eastern communities.

**Correspondence Id: 263    Comment Id: 474797**

**Comment Text:** Access between the two islands can only be accomplished by boat reducing traffic on that part of the beach. That's great for the wilderness area but does effect the ability of emergency services to take action in that area. Better access (helo pad on east end of west island for example) for first responders is needed.



**Correspondence Id: 270    Comment Id: 474807**

**Comment Text:** As residents of Ocean Ridge, Davis Park, Fire Island, we are extremely concerned about safety issues regarding the closing of the breach due to Hurricane Sandy. The opening of the breach has created a situation whereby, police, fire, service and utility groups have no quick and effective means of reaching our communities during times of emergency. Prior to the breach the trip to our community was 1/8 miles in length and now the distance is 22 miles through areas that on a good day provide difficult access. Without quick passage to our community and some communities West of us we are subject to long delays in quick and effective response times. The breach must be closed. In addition I have grave concerns that the reasons for keeping the breach open have not been proven conclusively and that the entire process in closing the breach should have been done in a timely manner.

**Correspondence Id: 272    Comment Id: 474812**

**Comment Text:** Emergency access to Eastern communities for fire and emergency vehicles could be provided temporarily (until the breach closes naturally) using "floating" or "pontoon" bridges with severely restricted permitting. However, filling in the the breach would be less expensive and would not set a precedent for "temporary" construction in the park. There are serious safety concerns given the present state of the breach. Emergency vehicle access to Davis Park and Water Island is seriously hampered under existing conditions.

**Correspondence Id: 281    Comment Id: 474824**

**Comment Text:** 2) Leaving the breach open creates major issues with regard to the safety of people on the eastern half of fire island. What if there is a major fire in the Watch Hill visitor center or Davis Park or Water Island? Currently, Fire trucks from the mainland would have to traverse 20 miles of ocean front to respond to such a fire. Lives could be lost, property could be damaged. What if a manmade fire started in the Watch Hill campground on a day when the wind was from the west and started a forest fire with devastating impact to the natural wilderness east of Watch Hill. The wilderness would be damaged, perhaps irreparably with wildlife suffering. This would not be a natural process, as FINS likes to talk about...this would be a manmade occurrence ruining the natural beauty of the wilderness area.

**Correspondence Id: 292    Comment Id: 474836**

**Comment Text:** The breach threatens our safety as it takes away a very important route to evacuate or get help when there is an emergency. Consideration should be given to providing vehicle access from Smith Point bridge to the western communities.

**Correspondence Id: 150    Comment Id: 474879**

**Comment Text:** It will make vehicular access impractical; this will certainly impact surf fishermen and residents who rely upon driving to their favorite haunts, and will impact emergency vehicular access. On the other hand, alternatives to vehicular access have been available for a long time, namely, commercial and private boating access. Emergency responders also have access to new high speed vessels as well as aircraft.

**Correspondence Id: 243    Comment Id: 474885**

**Comment Text:** Maintenance and emergency personnel have been accessing all parts of Fire Island for almost 3 years since the breach formed. There is no need to alter the course nature has taken to facilitate travel when alternative routes are present.

## TO5000 – COMMENTS RELATED TO WILDERNESS AND WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

**Correspondence Id: 71    Comment Id: 474873**

**Comment Text:** Attempting a multimillion dollar closing of the breach is insane and counter to the very essence of a wilderness area. The breach should be allowed to take its natural course, as a wilderness area is designed to do

**Correspondence Id: 280    Comment Id: 474821**

**Comment Text:** The word "wilderness" is defined as a wild uncultivated region or a tract of land designated as such and protected by the government. That being said, any attempt to close the breach or manage the breach would be against the principle of calling this land wilderness. Protection by the government is protection from man himself so for man to interfere in the natural processes happening in this wilderness is against the principles keeping it defined as a wilderness.

**Correspondence Id: 362    Comment Id: 474790**

**Comment Text:** We should remember that the breach occurred in the only Wilderness Area in New York State, several hundred acres of which have already disappeared - or at least assumed a radically different form. Simply dithering as change continues to happen seems a less than optimum way to maintain a Wilderness Area that Congress has deemed worthy of preservation.

**Correspondence Id: 360    Comment Id: 474785**

**Comment Text:** We do not, however, feel that the Wilderness Area should be totally neglected. In past years the trail through the Wilderness was well maintained, but in recent years it has been neglected, so the general public cannot readily gain access to the area. We urge that the trail once again be properly maintained. Of course, the breach does present a problem here; it is hoped that FINS can come up with some reasonable way for people to get across.

**Correspondence Id: 243    Comment Id: 474716**

**Comment Text:** Cost to manage a wilderness area should be the highest priority. The basic doctrine of wilderness areas is supposed to be to let nature run its course. We should not allocate huge sums in an attempt to influence the course of nature if there isn't an imminent threat to human life.

**Correspondence Id: 239    Comment Id: 474707**

**Comment Text:** The National Seashore was created in 1964 by Federal legislation. The expressed purpose was to conserve and preserve the unspoiled and undeveloped beaches, dunes and other natural features. In 1980 the Federal government passed Public Law 96-585 which designated the 8 miles of Fire Island between Watch Hill and Smith Point as Wilderness Area. Management of Wilderness Areas are governed by 16 USC Sections 1131 through 1135 which contemplate the property being untrammelled and protected and preserved in its natural condition. This doesn't mean that a picture is taken in 1980 and the area's condition is static. NPS isn't supposed to replace a tree when it dies with a similar tree. It is to leave the area alone, unimpaired by the acts of man. However, the 1980 legislation allowed one departure from the management protocol prescribed by 16 USC 1131. The statute provides that breaches in the Wilderness Area may be repaired in order to prevent loss of life, flooding and other severe economic and physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding areas. The EIS should study if breach management is necessary only for one or more of the reasons identified in the legislation and for no other reason. Consider other reasons violates PL 96-585 and 16 USC 1131 through 1135.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474706**

**Comment Text:** the breach should be left alone because, in a wilderness area, that is only right. Long Island is a crowded and overbuilt place; the purpose of wilderness areas such as that at FINS is to allow us to escape to a place where we can, for a while, return to ancient rhythms and ancient realities, and be reminded that nothing, most particularly an island, can last forever.

**Correspondence Id: 239    Comment Id: 474700**

**Comment Text:** the desired outcome should be to preserve, insofar as possible, the wilderness or potential wilderness character of Fire Island Wilderness subject to repairing breaches to prevent loss of life, flooding and other severe economic and physical damage to the Great South Bay and surrounding areas. This is derived from Public Law 96-585 which is the statute creating the Fire Island Wilderness act.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474698**

**Comment Text:** Barrier islands are supposed to develop breaches and evolve with changing oceanographic conditions; they are not supposed to be maintained in a static state. Life there evolved to exist with such change. Sealing the breach is inconsistent with the concept of wilderness area.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474694**

**Comment Text:** The NPS Scoping Newsletter implies that an open breach can negatively affect sediment budgets along downdrift parts of the ocean coast and changes in circulation in the bay, and states that the breach divides the Seashore into two islands, which has altered park operations, visitor experience and emergency access. Even if these conditions do exist, they clearly do not meet the minimum standards presented in Section (d) of Public Law 96-585 necessary to repair the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474692**

**Comment Text:** The entirety of Section 2. (c), in conjunction with Section 4. (c) of Public Law 88-577 clearly preclude the artificial closing of the breach in the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness Area.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474690**

**Comment Text:** It is implausible to believe that a breach created in 2012 by natural processes, and currently in excess of 2,500 feet in width, can be artificially closed in a manner that results in a human imprint that is "substantially unnoticeable." • To the contrary, artificially closing a natural feature, such as a breach or inlet, in a federally-designated wilderness area will clearly result in a human imprint that is substantial, significant and permanent.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474687**

**Comment Text:** The section of the NPS Scoping Newsletter entitled, "What Is Federal Wilderness and How Is It Managed?" provides an incomplete and inaccurate definition of Wilderness because it omits additional pertinent content found in Section 2. (c) of Public Law 88-577 that states, "An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which: (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable..."

**Correspondence Id: 329    Comment Id: 474659**

**Comment Text:** Otis Pike Wilderness Area Protection - The Otis Pike Wilderness Area is further protected by the breach. Prior to the breach, the ocean beach and front dune areas were subjected to heavy vehicular traffic which was detrimental to wildlife and maintenance of a natural beach profile. The reduction of this traffic by off-road vehicles since the breach has been substantial.

**Correspondence Id: 327    Comment Id: 474645**

**Comment Text:** The two goals stated for the desired outcome need to be examined closely. The first is "to ensure the continued integrity of the natural and cultural features of the Seashore and its surrounding ecosystems." It is clear that "Federal wilderness areas are wild, undeveloped, ... and protected by Congress ... to be managed "to preserve natural conditions" and to be "untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." • The goal is met by standing by. The second goal is "protecting human life and managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas." High water would be the mechanism of threats to life and property. However study of adverse tidal effects show that height of high tide has not changed significantly since Sandy. Therefore closing the inlet would do little to preserve life and developed property.

**Correspondence Id: 317    Comment Id: 474626**

**Comment Text:** The wilderness is now cut in half complicating its administration and visitation. The Legislative History for Fire Is in section 7 talks about a "mutually acceptable" location for any new inlet. I don't believe there was a press release from BOTH Secretaries stating their "mutually acceptable" location of New Old Inlet. Sec. 7 also goes on to say the choice of a location needs to be "consistent with the purposes of the Act" Purposes in Sec 1 a talks about "conserving and preserving" " unspoiled and undeveloped beaches and dunes" They are now missing as opposed to being conserved and preserved.

**Correspondence Id: 217    Comment Id: 474621**

**Comment Text:** Walking away a short distance from any of the access points in the National Seashore does give one a true wilderness experience with wildlife and incomparable views of the shoreline and ocean. This experience needs to be protected and should be the primary goal.

**Correspondence Id: 133    Comment Id: 474370**

**Comment Text:** it is a wilderness area and by definition the park service should let nature take its course. Do not make any efforts to interfere with the inlet. I was one of the strong advocates for the creation of the national seashore and worked to make sure that the beautiful scenic area would be preserved in its natural state. I was one of the attorneys that worked on the legislation that created the wilderness designation. Taking any action to manipulate, or close the inlet would be contrary to the letter and spirit of that legislation.

**Correspondence Id: 111    Comment Id: 474338**

**Comment Text:** The breach, while good environmentally, limits the usefulness of the wilderness visitor center. Most of the Pike wilderness is now not accessible from the visitor center. Wilderness hikers and campers are now forced to take a ferry. While I'm in favor of keeping the breach open, this aspect needs to be considered.

**Correspondence Id: 36    Comment Id: 474032**

**Comment Text:** In addition, the elimination of motor vehicle traffic down the length of Fire Island has improved the wilderness qualities of the Otis Pike wilderness. Less noise, air, and water pollution are the result, to say nothing of increased safety for beach combers.

**Correspondence Id: 27    Comment Id: 473813**

**Comment Text:** It is a federally designated wilderness and I conclude that the spirit of that act precludes the closing of the breach. The protection of the only Federally-designated wilderness area in NYS should be the paramount concern.

**Correspondence Id: 350    Comment Id: 471923**

**Comment Text:** I believe the National Park Service must consider that this breach is in a Federally designated Wilderness area and must manage it "to preserve natural conditions" It is well know that breaches naturally occur and also naturally close so the NPS should follow this mission.

**Correspondence Id: 25    Comment Id: 466801**

**Comment Text:** No. There is no mention of the benefits of a natural barrier like this wilderness inlet for preventing the local FINS bureaucracy violating the spirit of the Wilderness Act by allowing commercial, recreational and other vehicles on the wilderness's 8-mile fragile ocean beach. The idea of wilderness and vehicle traffic is an oxymoron. One cannot enjoy a wilderness experience hiking in the tire ruts on the sandy beach, smelling exhaust fumes and watching out so not to get run over. Since the inlet opened three years ago it seems to me that FINS is more interested in closing the inlet so that it can resume vehicle traffic to the western Fire Island beach communities rather than having a wilderness area.

## TO6000 – COMMENTS RELATED TO ECONOMIC IMPACTS

**Correspondence Id:** 185 **Comment Id:** 474882

**Comment Text:** The economic impact of closing the breach would be a continued decline in the health of the Great South Bay fishery, which now shows signs of reviving as the water is cleaner and supports more forms of fish and shellfish. Also the recreational boating industry benefits from continued improvement in the Bay's water quality.

**Correspondence Id:** 149 **Comment Id:** 474878

**Comment Text:** Not only is the inlet a positive to the bays ecosystem and fishermen, it is also an economic positive for the local economy of Patchogue and Bellport business in that it keeps fishermen in the local area to spend their money instead of going out of the area to fish and buy bait,tackle,dockage, repairs ect.

**Correspondence Id:** 294 **Comment Id:** 474839

**Comment Text:** I give priority to the integrity of the natural features of Fire Island over its cultural features. Culture is malleable and man made, if we break it we can fix it, not so a Wilderness. Managing the potential risks of economic and physical damage associated with leaving the breach open should be the responsibility of other government agencies and private individuals. Short term private interests should not outweigh long term public interest.

**Correspondence Id:** 338 **Comment Id:** 474741

**Comment Text:** The third concern listed is a risk of economic damage. One can argue that since the breach has opened fishing in and around Bellport Bay has realized a rebirth. I spent several hundreds of dollars in the local economy purchasing fishing poles,tackle and frozen bait for my daughters who wanted to also catch blues and snappers off the Bellport Dock. In fact a bait store opened up in E. Patchogue due to high demand of frozen bait. The breach has certainly added dollars to the local economy. I will note that closing the breach manually will most likely cost the taxpayers and will squash a reemerging recreational fishing industry in Great South Bay.

**Correspondence Id:** 357 **Comment Id:** 474266

**Comment Text:** A cost benefit analysis should be conducted for closing the breach and for leaving it open. Such analysis should account for the economic benefits of improved water quality, fisheries and increased recreational value of cleaner water.

**Correspondence Id:** 342 **Comment Id:** 473953

**Comment Text:** The availability of sportfish that can now migrate freely in and out of the eastern Great South Bay has been a big boon to fishermen and the fishing economy in the area. As the only natural inlet on the south shore of Long Island, the new inlet, with natural shorelines as opposed to rock seawalls, and very little boating activity provides the most natural and unimpeded of all the corridors from the ocean to the South Shore Estuary Reserve. Even with an angling renaissance, the gnarly submerged roots and trees left behind by Sandy provide fish refugia in and around the new inlet. The new inlet is also now providing access to diadromous fish seeking out the Carmans River. Much effort is going into restoring fish passage for river herring in the Carmans River, direct migratory access for adults and juveniles through the new inlet is facilitating the recovery of this species. Fishing and boating is big business on Long Island. There are over 64,000 boats registered in Suffolk County . The resurgence of fishing opportunities in eastern Great South Bay and Narrow Bay because of the new inlet is not a trivial matter - the negative impacts to fishing and the local fishing economy from closing the new inlet would likely be significant. Thus impacts to the local fisheries and fishing economies must be a consideration when examining the costs of closing the new inlet.



## TO6100 – COMMENTS RELATED TO FLOOD RISK AND STORM DAMAGE

**Correspondence Id:** 161 **Comment Id:** 474880

**Comment Text:** the newly created sandbars will help to shield our water front home & business area from future storm damage

**Correspondence Id:** 134 **Comment Id:** 474876

**Comment Text:** The tide phase has changed by fifteen or twenty minutes, that's the only change that I'm aware of and that's not a problem.

**Correspondence Id:** 281 **Comment Id:** 474823

**Comment Text:** 1) Leaving the breach open will likely result in more significant and faster flooding of low lying areas on the bayfront along the communities of the mainland south shore of Long Island during extreme tidal events. I agree with the studies that show the mean high tide has not been impacted, However, that is not the question that needs answering. The question should be - How does the breach effect the tides during a storm surge (one type of "extreme tidal event")? I would argue that the breach allows more high water into the bay at a faster rate than before the breach existed. This will cause major risks to human safety along the south shore as well as the potential for major property damage. Leaving the breach open is simply irresponsible. Additionally, the fact that we are spending millions of taxpayer dollars on the FIMI project to protect the south shore and would even consider leaving the breach open is shockingly wasteful. What would be the point of building dunes and berms while leaving a ready conduit for inundating the south shore open (any 10 year old could see that this verges on total stupidity)

**Correspondence Id:** 268 **Comment Id:** 474805

**Comment Text:** I don't believe anyone has factored in the amount of damage the increased flooding has done to the southwest shoreline areas and communities in Suffolk County. I have seen no studies regarding the collapsed drainage systems and crumbling bulkheads that have occurred since the appearance of this breach. A comprehensive study and plan to sustain our south shore communities with infrastructure repairs completed as soon as possible with the breach left open or if it's closed.

**Correspondence Id:** 268 **Comment Id:** 474804

**Comment Text:** My concern about the open breach is the increased flooding events and the severity of the events since the breach appeared in the barrier island. The southwest shoreline of Suffolk County has been inundated with flood waters during average inclement weather events post Sandy. No one is publicly speaking about how the breach might be responsible for the increase in the water levels that are inundating our streets and our communities. I am not an engineer, but the evidence across the communities here in the south shore for the past three years shows significant increased flooding. We need to address the continued devastation that has been occurring since the breach appeared, and we need to address the needs of our bay ecosystem. I cannot believe that we can either have clean water or we can have a safe place to live. There must be some way to achieve both.

**Correspondence Id:** 365 **Comment Id:** 474793

**Comment Text:** Since Sandy there have been numerous examples of abnormal flooding and damage on both the mainland and FI without a storm in the immediate area, due to the additional water pushed into the by winds from the S, SE, NE. There are also complaints of increased water tables; flooding of basements malfunctioning the flushing toilets washing machine discharge since Sandy, which never occurred before w/o a storm in the immediate area.

**Correspondence Id: 359    Comment Id: 474783**

**Comment Text:** It goes without saying that the south shore of Long Island bordering Great South Bay, especially in the Bellport/Patchogue area is more susceptible to flooding as is the bay side of Davis Park/Ocean Ridge. Certainly it will be expensive to close the breach but continued delay will exacerbate the cost. The example of the West Hampton/Shinnecock breach some years ago is a good illustration. Timely action there could have saved taxpayers a very large sum of money.

**Correspondence Id: 356    Comment Id: 474777**

**Comment Text:** FINS regularly conspires with Army Corp of Engineers and select groups of property owners to perform environmentally damaging, wasteful, pointless, and short lived "replenishment" projects. "Borrowing" sand to the detriment of one group of property owners, to the illusory benefit of other property owners. FINS should simply not allow such projects to occur. Threatened homes are already insured by the tax payers, and should they no longer be viable, or the lot able to be rebuilt on for lack of septic etc., that property owner needs to accept that. Anybody buying on Fire Island should understand the risks and vicissitudes and plan accordingly, and accept come what may.

**Correspondence Id: 355    Comment Id: 474771**

**Comment Text:** Analysis of the Otis Pike breach's tidal effects under non-severe weather conditions does not provide a fair assessment of the flooding threat that it poses in response to a hurricane. The active fair-weather breach channel has a cross-sectional area much smaller than that which would be exposed during a major tidal surge, given the expanse of compromised dunes flanking the channel. As a property owner in a low-lying area vulnerable to tidal flooding, I urge for closure of the breach, especially now that shoaling on the bay side has provided its benefit. Further shoaling will eventually fill in boat channels, requiring new expenditures for their maintenance. Money that would be saved by not filling in the breach shifts to other costs, such as maintaining these channels. A phase shift in the bay's tide cycle induced by the breach implies an increase in tidal range. Even an increase in bay tidal range of just ten percent (about one inch in fair weather), would have potential economic impacts to the mainland far greater than the cost of filling the breach, given a ten percent higher tide surge in Hurricane Sandy terms.

**Correspondence Id: 338    Comment Id: 474740**

**Comment Text:** The first concern is flooding on the mainland. Since the creation of the breach there has been no evidence that the breach has caused additional flooding on the mainland. In fact the science and data collected by Charlie Flagg at SOMAS at Stony Brook suggests that the flood tides in Bellport Bay are mitigated and are lower historically due to the breach acting as a release valve allowing a flooding Bellport Bay to drain into the ocean sooner and faster. The breach is actually protecting the mainland from the annual and wind driven flood tides that have adversely affected the shoreline around Bellport Bay.

**Correspondence Id: 259    Comment Id: 474738**

**Comment Text:** There has been some concern on the part of people around Bellport Bay that the breach has contributed to higher tides and flooding. These concerns are entirely unfounded. Data show that the bay is no more subject to higher tides than it was before the breach opened.

**Correspondence Id: 336    Comment Id: 474708**

**Comment Text:** By stating in the newsletter the goal of closing the breach is to "prevent loss of life" changes people's position and misleads them from the truth. Truth as written is that tidal changes are indeed very minimal. If Long Island gets hit by another large storm the breach will reopen, and people living near the water will need to take careful precautions regardless if it is there or not. To say that the breach is capable of causing loss of life is ridiculous. It is no more capable then any other natural hazards we face day to day.

**Correspondence Id: 335    Comment Id: 474699**

**Comment Text:** The outcome as stated seems to place economic and physical damage on a par with the other values. To the extent that such damage results to structures on the barrier island itself, policymakers must come to understand that barrier islands are ephemeral, and not permanent structures, and thus anything built on them cannot be viewed as permanent structures. The cost of closing breaches and pumping sand onto beaches will, in the end, be greater than the value of the property supposedly protected. To the extent that the language refers to damage to structures on the mainland, there is no convincing evidence that the breach increases the threat to such structures; in fact, data compiled by Dr. Gobler at Stony Brook University strongly demonstrates that the breach has not increased water levels in Great South Bay at all. Thus, any suggestion that the breach must be closed to protect mainland structures is based on a fallacy.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474691**

**Comment Text:** According to Section 4. (c) of Public Law 88-577, "...there shall be no use of...motorized equipment...no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area" except measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area. This 3-year old breach clearly does not represent an emergency nor does it pose a threat to the health and safety of any individuals.

**Correspondence Id: 334    Comment Id: 474686**

**Comment Text:** Increased storm vulnerability for back barrier water bodies and infrastructure should not simply be assumed, but proven and measured. Any cost benefit analysis for closing the inlet must take into account the benefits that will be provided by increased island width, decreased island vulnerability, and the growth of estuarine wetlands (and the services they provide).

**Correspondence Id: 238    Comment Id: 474684**

**Comment Text:** There is no greater risk to property, mainland development, loss of life and other economic and physical damage any more than areas like Islip and Oakdale(opposite Fire island inlet),Center Moriches and East Moriches(opposite Moriches inlet), and Hampton bays and Southampton(opposite Shinnecock inlet). Surely you are not proposing to close these inlets as well.

**Correspondence Id: 329    Comment Id: 474661**

**Comment Text:** Bay Water Levels - As a waterfront property owner, I have not observed any discernible changes in high and low tide levels in Great South Bay since the breach, based on almost daily observations. Carefully collected scientific data should be relied upon to document whether there have been any changes in water levels attributable to the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 327    Comment Id: 474645**

**Comment Text:** The two goals stated for the desired outcome need to be examined closely. The first is "to ensure the continued integrity of the natural and cultural features of the Seashore and its surrounding ecosystems." It is clear that "Federal wilderness areas are wild, undeveloped, ... and protected by Congress ... to be managed "to preserve natural conditions" and to be "untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." • The goal is met by standing by. The second goal is "protecting human life and managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas." High water would be the mechanism of threats to life and property. However study of adverse tidal effects show that height of high tide has not changed significantly since Sandy. Therefore closing the inlet would do little to preserve life and developed property.

**Correspondence Id: 324    Comment Id: 474638**

**Comment Text:** The underwater surface changed that is why flooding us occurring in areas it didn't before. Not the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 217    Comment Id: 474619**

**Comment Text:** The one issue that was originally raised to support closing the breach - higher than normal tides affecting bay front properties - appears to be unfounded. I have been impressed by the build up of sand bars, obvious on the bay side but now clearly developing on the ocean side, as a mitigation of a storm surge across the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 310    Comment Id: 474600**

**Comment Text:** My strong recommendation is that the breach should be closed for the following reasons: It cuts off the western part of Fire Island from emergency vehicles which used to travel via Smith Point. If there is a fire of significant magnitude, it would take hours for a mainland fire truck to reach Water Island, Davis Park or Watch Hill. This is a major safety issue - LIVES COULD BE LOST and property damaged as a result of the irresponsible maintenance of an open breach. It interrupts the littoral drift depriving sand from areas to its west. This will cause more breaches on Fire Island as well as property damage and potential LOSS OF LIFE in a storm event. It allows ocean water to stream into the bay during the tidal surges of storms. Resultant flooding could result in LIVES LOST and major property damage. Leaving the breach open also would negate the benefits of the FIMI plan wasting federal taxpayer money. It is my opinion that the risks to human life as a result of the breach being open vastly outweighs any potential ecological benefit of keeping it open. I have lived near the bay for over 30 years and notice no appreciable difference in water quality before or after the breach.

**Correspondence Id: 302    Comment Id: 474591**

**Comment Text:** One of my many concerns about leaving the breach open is this now new advent of high tides and water in the streets. I live across from the bay and this has not been pretty to watch. It seems that we don't need a full moon or a new moon to incur these tides.

**Correspondence Id: 150    Comment Id: 474397**

**Comment Text:** Studies have shown minimal direct impact of higher water levels attributable to the breach in addition to improved water quality. Although a breach in this location may allow for some increased flooding during certain conditions, it may also allow high waters to recede at an accelerated rate.

**Correspondence Id: 93    Comment Id: 474321**

**Comment Text:** Shoreline homes need to be raised or moved if people are worried.

**Correspondence Id: 65    Comment Id: 474196**

**Comment Text:** NY Rising program has option for homeowners to retrofit their properties against flood risk.

**Correspondence Id: 64    Comment Id: 474180**

**Comment Text:** People will also try to blame flooding on the breach. Flooding in Bellport Bay is generally caused by wind driven storm surge. With the breach open at least there's another place for some of the water to drain out of the eastern end of the GSB. People don't realize that when the tide is rushing out of the breach the current is still moving east under Smith Point Bridge. The amount of water running in the breach is very limited by the shallowness of the bay in the area.

**Correspondence Id: 59    Comment Id: 474159**

**Comment Text:** It was said that that beach would cause undue flooding on the main land as well as other issues. Tides would be higher. And if we had another big storm (which we did) there would be a tremendous amount of damage from it. None of this occurred. Now the Bay has come back, again, and those with no knowledge are at it again. I live near the water. There has been NO noticeable change for the worse.

---

**Correspondence Id: 57    Comment Id: 474145**

**Comment Text:** Fire Island has always been a barrier beach... the first line of defense against storms & tides for the mainland. When storms & high ocean tides occur, inlets have always worked as "valves" regulating the flow & timing of incoming water. All development, flood elevations, etc. were compiled using data from when this new "valve" (breach) did not exist. Meanwhile, the breach continues to grow, creating a larger & larger "valve" able to pass increasingly large amounts of tidal flow. If left unchecked, all properties along the south shore of Long Island would undoubtedly suffer more rapid, and more severe flooding. The economic impact on the property owners, municipalities, and taxpayers (via FEMA) could be unprecedented. Meanwhile, to place the financial burden entirely on those property owners because they "should have known better" would not be legally feasible, as they relied on established government issued building codes & flood requirements that were in place.

**Correspondence Id: 313    Comment Id: 474106**

**Comment Text:** The phrase "managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas" is somewhat vague. Acceptable levels of risk of economic damage and acceptable levels of risk of physical damage will need to be defined in order to know if this metric is being met. Hopefully these acceptable levels of risk will be debated and defined (or presented) as the planning process continues.

**Correspondence Id: 303    Comment Id: 474098**

**Comment Text:** I know people who have lived in the same houses on canals on the mainland in bayshore New York for over 50 years and this is multiple people. These people since the hurricane are now seeing high tides all the time. They had never flooded before and now flood all the time. We also see it here in fire island on the bay extremely high tides.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473955**

**Comment Text:** Perpetual and costly manipulation of sand on Fire Island will not substantially reduce risk of flooding on mainland communities. Rather, work needs to be done in those communities to prepare for and adapt to inevitable conditions. To the extent that it is possible, it would be of value for this EIS to emphasize these points so that investments in mainland community adaptation that were already appropriated under the FIMP might get prioritized and implemented before their authorization expires. Unlike sand moving projects, preparations and adaptations within flood prone communities lowers risk to life and property under any storm or flood scenario.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473954**

**Comment Text:** Another important factor to considering when weighing the cost-benefit of manually closing the new inlet is whether doing so may actually increase the probability of breaching and over-washing of other parts of Fire Island, potentially in a less appropriate location. There are several factors that make the current inlet a location ideal compared to most other alternatives. Any chance that closing the new inlet could expedite a breach or overwash in another location might prove to be problematic and costly. Similarly, closing the new inlet might have little consequence on bay flooding during large storm events, if, in addition to water exchange through the existing navigation inlets - water is also being exchanged through new breaches. Another factor for benefit-cost considerations is that in its current location, the new inlet may be providing a release valve for the high waters that would otherwise characteristically flood the community of Bellport. Thus manually closing off this area may actually exacerbate eastern Great South Bay flooding that occurs as large coastal storms pass and the winds shift from east to west and local wind-forcing pushes bay water, already swollen by storm surge, from west to east.



**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473951**

**Comment Text:** Sadly, most of Great South Bay east of the breach at Old Inlet has been seasonally or fully uncertified for shellfishing year-round due to the threat that water-borne pathogens (from stormwater runoff and failing septic systems) pose to human health. Although it requires many consecutive measurements by NYS DEC, it is believed that ocean mixing through the new inlet is diluting lower pathogens to the point that parts of Bellport and Narrow Bays will once again be certified. Reducing this impairment is a high priority for New York State, Suffolk County, Brookhaven Township, and the South Shore Estuary Reserve. The ability of the new inlet to reduce the use impairments of the eastern Great South Bay, and Narrow Bay waters should be included in the cost benefit analyses for closing the new inlet.

**Correspondence Id: 342    Comment Id: 473942**

**Comment Text:** Supporters of manually closing the new inlet initially asserted that it would cause economic and physical damage, and that it would continue to grow in size and worsen flooding and storm damage to mainland communities. However, extensive data collected in the last several years has revealed that the assumptions underlying these assertions were unsubstantiated. The south shore of Long Island most certainly contains several notorious flood-prone communities that must seriously grapple with forecasted impacts of sea level rise and increasing frequency and intensity of storms. Unfortunately, little if any risk to bayside communities can be mitigated by moving sand on the barrier beaches or by manually closing this new inlet. Instead, much more emphasis needs to be placed on activities, adaptations, and preparations within the flood prone communities, some of which have already been proposed or initiated by The Governors Office of Storm Recovery, FEMA, HUD, and local governments. The USACEs public commitment of \$500,000,000 to elevate 4,400 residences in flood-prone communities along Great South Bay, modify tens of miles of flood prone roads, and fortify and/or adapt critical facilities is a much more effective way to prevent economic and physical damage during future storms. Regrettably, these efforts have taken a back burner to the USACEs more traditional sand-moving proposals.

**Correspondence Id: 24    Comment Id: 473809**

**Comment Text:** The slow addition of water to the Bay will increase the frequency and severity of flooding from the Bay. Already, this is evident at almost every full moon high tide. The bay is higher than at any time in my memory (more than 30 years), and the increase has not been a gradual one as if it were caused by sea level rise. It rose abruptly in the year after Sandy, and has mostly stayed above the "usual" levels since then. Water going in through the breach far exceeds water going out. It's like a funnel. It's also accelerated by the action of tides and waves. By leaving the breach open, you are only exacerbating the problem of bayside flooding. The harm to many far outweighs the benefits to a few.

**Correspondence Id: 17    Comment Id: 473745**

**Comment Text:** The notion that closing the breach would somehow be 'protecting human life and managing the risk of economic and physical damage to the surrounding areas' is a myth. It would not ease flooding in a storm. The water is going to come in anyway. If anything, the massive sand delta formed inside Bellport Bay would cut down on the wave action in the bay in the event of a large storm. Further, if we are hit with another Sandy, there is realistically not a lot we will be able to do to prevent large scale damage to homes in low lying areas.

**Correspondence Id: 332    Comment Id: 471856**

**Comment Text:** Public opinion is important but so is a realistic, practical approach to problem solving. Houses flooded on the long island coast before the breach opened and they'll happen after its potentially closed. So we will have flooded houses and a nitrogen filled bay that can't sustain life. Let's agree if you build on the water you take a risk and stop trying to fight nature by moving sand.

**Correspondence Id:** 18   **Comment Id:** 466671

**Comment Text:** Yes, but I believe the needs of the wilderness need to be held in higher regard than the fears of the few who believe that the breach causes flooding- The flooding that occurred after the breach formed was a result of higher than usual tides all along the local Atlantic seaboard.