



**For Immediate Release:**  
October 13, 2021

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## **Nantuxent Creek dredging project to restore safe navigation to Money Island port in Cumberland County Project will also restore essential habitat for endangered species**

**(Trenton)** - New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) officials today announced the start of the Nantuxent Creek dredging project that will restore channels to a safe navigable depth and restore endangered species habitat in Cumberland County.

The \$1.6 million project will dredge the State Channel in Nantuxent Creek to allow for safe navigation in and out of the port at Money Island, while restoring a section of shoreline to serve as essential habitat for endangered species. Dredging is underway and will continue 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, through November 2021. An estimated 40,000 cubic yards of sediment will be removed from the channel. The channel will be dredged to a depth of nine feet at low tide with an allowable over dredge of one foot.

Large storm events, most notably Superstorm Sandy in 2012, have caused extensive damage to the Money Island shoreline and deposited large quantities of sediment, which has narrowed the channel.

Nantuxent Creek is located directly between premier oyster grounds and Bivalve, NJ, and Money Island serves as the Delaware Bay Oyster Industry's most prominent and profitable landing port. It contributes millions to the state's economy annually and bolsters New Jersey's reputation as a premier national seafood processor.

"The Delaware Bay Oyster Industry, which is worth \$42 million to the state economy would like to thank the Department of Transportation for working with us and getting this done," Barney Hollinger, chair of the Delaware Bay Shellfisheries Council said. "Without the channel being dredged it would have been devastating to the industry in the near future."

NJDOT's contractor, H&L Contracting LLC, will work to place all material removed from the channel onto 1,800 linear feet of shoreline to create a dune ridge, sand beach, and essential habitat for endangered species in an area decimated by Superstorm Sandy. The shoreline has been identified as critical habitat for federally-listed threatened Red Knot and the Horseshoe Crabs.

NJDOT's Office of Maritime Resources is leading the project, working in collaboration with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Blue Acres program, Division of Fish and Wildlife, and Division of Coastal Engineering.

Channel use may be limited where the mechanical dredge is in operation and where the barge is carrying dredged material to its placement locations. Full channel closures are not expected, although this is subject to change.

Mariners should be advised that State Aids to Navigation (ATON) will be removed as necessary for the duration of the project. Updates to the Local Notice to Mariners and NJDOT Social Media should be expected as the project progresses.

The public is advised to be aware of and stay alert for the pipeline, buoys, dredge, and other equipment during this time. NJDOT asks that no one approach the construction site or any related project equipment under any circumstances, whether or not active dredging operations are observed. Boaters should proceed through dredging maintenance and construction zones with the utmost caution. No wake speed should be observed in active work zones throughout the project duration.

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