

## COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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### Media Release

COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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# FORGE RIVER, NARROWS BAY TO BE DREDGED

*\$3 Million, 11 Tributaries Will Begin Fall 2012*



(County Executive Steve Bellone, third from right, and Legislator Kate Browning, fifth from right, standing with Town of Brookhaven officials, Mastic Beach Village Officials, members of Save the Forge River Inc., and local civic organizations to announce the dredging of 11 tributaries throughout the Mastic/Shirley peninsula.)

**Mastic, NY** – The long anticipated dredging of the Mastic/Shirley peninsula is set to begin this October. The \$3 million project was solidified at this past Tuesday's legislative meeting when the Suffolk County Legislature approved the final \$1 million needed to include the Forge River. The county will be dredging eleven tributaries of the Forge River and Narrows Bay that feed into the Great South Bay. These waterways are in desperate need of navigational dredging in order to ensure the safety of recreational boaters and fisherman who rely on them to access the bay. County Executive Steve Bellone and Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) joined with Town of Brookhaven Supervisor Mark Lesko's Chief of Staff Brian Beedenbender, civic leaders and advocates for the Forge River at the Forge River Boat Club today to announce the approval of the plan.

The eleven tributaries to be dredged include; the Forger River, last dredged in 1999, Sheep Pen Creek, Pattersquash Creek, and the Mastic Beach Yacht Club, all dredged in the early 90's, Old Neck Creek (1973), Home Creek (1967), Lons Creek (1967), Poospatuck Creek (1967), and Wills Creek. Also, Johns Neck Creek and Unchachogue Creek will be dredged for the first time in their history.

“Many of these waterways are long overdue for navigational safety improvements,” stated Legislator Browning. “Several have not been dredged in over four decades and others have never been dredged. This is going to be a major improvement to our waterfront community.”

The project will result in the removal of an estimated 90,000CY-100,000CY of material. A majority of the spoils will be pumped to a site along the barrier beach of Fire Island pending approvals. Most areas will see an improvement of depths up to 4ft. while the Forge River, Old Neck Creek and Homes Creeks will be dredged at depths of 6ft.

“This is a major step forward for the safety and health of the Forge River,” County Executive Steve Bellone said. “I want to commend Legislator Kate Browning for helping me understand the importance of the Forge River and her determined advocacy for the communities she represents.”

The beleaguered Forge River, which has been declared an impaired waterway by New York State and has been the focus of an Army Core of Engineers study to remedy the problems causing high levels of nitrogen in the river, will also benefit from an improved tidal flow. While the project is not intended to clean up the Forge River, the unintended result will provide a short-term improvement until a long-term fix comes to fruition.

“The Forge River is going to need a substantial amount of resources at its disposal to remedy its problems,” stated Legislator Browning. “Although this is not the fix the river needs, it just so happens that this project will provide temporary relief to the problem.”

“On behalf of Save for the Forge River Inc. I would like to thank Legislator Kate Browning and County Executive Steve Bellone for moving this important dredging project forward,” stated Tom Lupski. “Any effort that improves tidal flow for the river is a step in the right direction.”

The particular waterways to be dredged this fall depend on the cost of bids received later this year. The Department of Public Works is hopeful that all tributaries can be address in 2012 however it may require a multi-year effort.

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