

## COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



**KATE BROWNING**  
County Legislator, 3rd District  
Public Safety Committee, Chair

**Media Release**  
June 5, 2013

COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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### **Browning Directs Dept. of Public Works to Initiate Dune Replenishment Project at Smith Point Park**

**Hauppauge, NY** – The restoration of the barrier beach at Smith Point Park in Shirley took a major step forward yesterday with the approval of Introductory Resolution 1314-13, sponsored by Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley), at the Suffolk County Legislature’s general meeting. The resolution directs all County departments required to submit applications and/or documentation in furtherance of a dune replenishment project to State and/or Federal regulatory agencies within thirty days. The resolution also directs Suffolk County to secure appropriate funding to complete an emergency dune replenishment project.

On October 29, 2012 Super Storm Sandy ravaged the entire south shore of Long Island and caused several breaches to develop on the barrier beach. Super Storm Sandy caused breaching of Fire Island at three locations; Cupsogue Beach County Park; the undeveloped portion of Smith Point County Park; and the ‘Wilderness Area’ of Fire Island National Seashore, known as Old Inlet. A Breach Contingency Plan was established after similar breaching occurred in Westhampton in the 1990s, which enabled the United States Army Corps of Engineers, with the help of Suffolk County Department of Public Works and Parks Departments, to close the two breaches that occurred within Suffolk County Parkland during Sandy. Smith Point’s breach was one of these two and was closed within weeks of the storm. What would have normally taken months, if not years, to permit and actually construct, was done in a few weeks.

However, during two subsequent minor storms, observations were made of the ocean tide rising above the elevations of the closed breach at Smith Point, and over-washing at Smiths Point where the dunes were washed away during the storm caused additional flooding of mainland Mastic Beach. In no case did an actual breach occur, but the fact that the ocean appeared to be able to directly flow into Moriches Harbor caused a great deal of concern for all levels of government. The over-washing occurred because prior to the storm dune elevations ran between 15 and 16 feet, but the Breach Contingency Plan only allows restoration up to 9 feet.

“Suffolk County acted quickly under the Breach Contingency Plan to close the breach at Smith Point in order to take emergency measures to protect the residents of Mastic Beach immediately following Super Storm Sandy,” stated Legislator Kate Browning. “Unfortunately, guidelines under the plan that were approved by the Federal government did not allow Suffolk County to rebuild to pre-storm elevation. While closing the breach was the right thing to do, more needs to be done to protect the mainland.”

Legislator Browning’s resolution, IR 1314-13, will now pave the way for a dune replenishment project that will finish the work needed at Smith Point. Once applications for the project are submitted, Suffolk County will need State and Federal approval to move forward. The legislation also requires that all County departments,

involved in the application, documentation and funding of this project shall report project status updates in writing every thirty days, beginning with the date of initial application for a permit to regulatory agencies.

“This resolution ensures that Suffolk County is progressing with a project to restore the dunes at Smith Point to address the wash-overs,” concluded Legislator Browning. “Once the application is submitted I will be working with State and Federal officials to make sure the County gets the necessary approvals it needs to move forward.”