

The Reformulation Study was initiated in 1980, but halted in 1984, because of changing Federal and state cost-sharing formulas that assigned nearly all the cost of follow-up beach sand renourishment to the state. In 1986, Congress passed legislation assigning 65 percent of renourishment costs to the Federal government, resolving New York State's concerns and allowing the FIMP Reformulation Study to be reinitiated in 1993.

Interim Projects

In response to the damage and erosion caused by the December 1992 northeaster, New York State officials and Congress asked the Corps to develop "interim" protection projects for the most vulnerable portions of the FIMP Study area. The objective of the interim projects is to provide temporary and reversible storm damage protection for vulnerable areas until the findings of the Reformulation Study could be implemented.

The first interim project was spurred on by the 1992 breach at Westhampton that took nearly 10 months to close. New York State and the Corps developed a rapid-response Breach Contingency Plan (BCP). The plan was adopted and can be activated any time there is a breach. The BCP includes provisions to begin closure within 72 hours.

A second interim project was constructed in 1996 for the Westhampton Beach and the Village of Westhampton Dunes area.

The two other interim plans, dealing with the highly erosive area immediately west of Shinnecock Inlet and portions of Fire Island, are currently under review.

Reformulation Study Process

The Reformulation Study approaches the issue of storm damage along Suffolk County's south shore in a different way than previous studies:

- It looks at the study area as a comprehensive coastal system and evaluates alternatives for their impacts to specific locations, and to the entire system;

- It includes the participation, from the outset, of all major Federal, state and local government agencies, as well as of major scientific and environmental organizations.
- It includes state-of-the-art engineering, environmental, economic and planning studies to provide information about historic and existing conditions, and to model possible future conditions. To ensure objectivity and high standards, these studies will be independently reviewed.

To enlist the involvement of all the different agencies and non-governmental organizations, the Corps established an advisory group called the Interagency Reformulation Group (IRG), which meets quarterly to provide oversight and guidance to the study team. In addition, several Technical Management Groups (TMGs) include representatives of government agencies and experts. These TMGs provide technical review on wide-ranging issues, including environmental concerns, the development of non-structural alternatives, socio-economic and coastal issues.

Public Participation

The Corps of Engineers welcomes comments from the public. Documents concerning the Reformulation Study are on-line at the USACE New York District Web Site:
<http://www.nan.usace.army.mil/business/prjlinks/coastal/fi2mntk/index.htm>.

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New York District



**New York State
Department of
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FIMP Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point Reformulation Study

FIMP FOCUS:

November 2000

This issue of FIMP FOCUS is the first of a series of newsletters, which will be issued periodically to keep the public informed of the progress of the Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point Reformulation Study.
Next FIMP FOCUS: Developing Alternatives

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Introduction and Study Purpose

The purpose of the on-going Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point (FIMP) Reformulation Study is to identify, evaluate and recommend long-term solutions for hurricane and storm damage reduction for homes and businesses within the floodplain extending along 83 miles of ocean and bay shorelines from Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point. This area extends as far landward in some locations as Sunrise Highway and Montauk Highway. The study area also includes 26 miles of the Fire Island National Seashore, which is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

Congress and New York State have asked the United States Army Corps of Engineers to develop a comprehensive long-term plan of protection for areas that are prone to flooding, erosion and other storm damage. This plan would replace the numerous ad-hoc measures that have been used to protect individual properties, with a comprehensive management approach that considers the entire coastal system. The objective of the study, therefore, is to evaluate and recommend a long-term, comprehensive plan within the problem area, which maintains, preserves, or enhances the natural resources. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation supports the Reformulation Study and is the Corps' non-Federal partner.

In order to accomplish this objective, the study is now considering a wide range of structural and non-structural protection alternatives. These are being investigated for their long-term effectiveness in preventing storm and erosion damage along the Atlantic coast and in reducing flood damage to back bay development. In addition, to meet the objective of maintaining, preserving and enhancing existing habitats, the Corps is undertaking extensive natural resources studies.

Study Area Description and Background

The study area comprises about 70 percent of the total ocean frontage of Long Island and is entirely in Suffolk County. It includes low-lying

mainland and bay shore areas as well as the barrier islands, and ocean coastlines. The majority of the study area is susceptible to damage from storm erosion or inundation.

Since the end of World War II, heavy development has taken place along Suffolk County's south shore. Studies by the Regional Planning Board have identified over 17,000 residential structures, over 1.5 million square feet of commercial and industrial space, and numerous public buildings within the existing flood hazard area along the mainland of Long Island. In addition, there are over 5,000 structures on the barrier islands, including Fire Island National Seashore and various state and county park facilities. The number of structures at risk is only expected to increase, with increases in sea level and erosion of the ocean shoreline.

The increased urbanization within the study area has led to the potential for increased damages during storm events. Barrier islands play an important role in protecting the heavily developed mainland communities and the

diverse ecosystems of the bays. The barrier lands deflect the impacts of waves and lessen storm surges in the bays. When a severe storm breaks through, or breaches the barrier island, the impacts may include increased water levels in the bays and a resulting increase in storm damages to the mainland communities. The most recent breach at Westhampton in 1992 contributed to the widespread flooding during the March 1993 "Blizzard of the Century."

This increased development has also resulted in increasing intervention after major storm events. This local intervention has been undertaken with no overall planning and has included widespread beach scraping, beach nourishment, relocation of structures, bulkheading and other small scale shore protection measures.

Study History

The first Corps study of the area started in the mid-1950s following Hurricane Carol in 1954. A plan for Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point was developed in 1958 and authorized for

construction by Congress in 1960. Subsequent to this the New York coast was hit by Hurricane Donna in September of 1960, and by the Ash Wednesday nor'easter of 1962, one of the most destructive storms in the history of Long Island.

With strong local support, the Corps prepared a project design in 1963 that called for the construction of groins and the placement of beach fill. By the end of the decade, 15 groins were constructed in the Westhampton area, which was considered the barrier island most vulnerable to a breach. Two additional groins were constructed in East Hampton in the late 1960s. The uncompleted project was halted in 1972 because of a lack of funding.

In 1978, with renewed state and local interest, the Corps prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the previously authorized project. During the EIS review process it was determined that the project should be reformulated to consider a wider range of alternatives and to treat the entire project area as a system.

