

Gov. Markell, Sec. O'Mara announce project to improve navigation of Murderkill River at Bowers Beach

Project includes beneficial reuse of dredged sand to widen the beach at South Bowers



Dredge equipment just offshore of Bowers Beach at the Murderkill River.

BOWERS BEACH, Del. (Jan. 27, 2014) – Today, Governor Jack Markell and DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara announced the project that will improve safety and navigable access of the Murderkill River and nourish the eroding shoreline at South Bowers Beach. Bowers Vice Mayor Ada Carter, state legislators, town council members and representatives of Delaware's commercial and recreational fishing industries joined in the tour to view the project now under way.

The project involves dredging approximately 45,000 cubic yards of material from the federal navigation channel in the river and the beneficial reuse of the clean dredged sand to widen the beach at South Bowers. The dredging of the Murderkill River will ensure safe navigation for the boating public, while the sand protects homes, infrastructure and habitat from the impacts of coastal storms. Nearly three-fourths of the dredged material is suitable beach-fill quality sand. The remaining unsuitable dredged material will be placed in an approved offshore disposal site.

"This project is a win for Bowers, South Bowers and Delaware,"

said Gov. Markell. “Improving navigation of the Murderkill River supports our economy, tourism and commercial and recreational fishing. By reusing the clean dredged sand to build a wider, more storm resistant beach, we are also improving our resiliency and preparedness for coastal storms.”

“The beneficial reuse of clean dredged material from navigation projects is the most cost effective way to nourish eroded shorelines,” said Sec. O’Mara. “Rather than discarding dredged material at a disposal site, we are using the clean sand to nourish a protective beach here at South Bowers and providing a model that can be replicated up and down the East Coast.”



Bowers Fire Company rescue boat takes DNREC Secretary Collin O’Mara and others to view the project underway to improve safety and navigation access of the Murderkill River and nourish the eroding shoreline at South Bowers Beach.

The communities along the Delaware Bayshore, like Bowers and South Bowers, enjoy a deep and rich maritime heritage and remain home to the state’s commercial and recreational fishing vessels. Fishing is very important to the local economy and vital to the economy of the state.

According to American Sportfishing Association, the economic value of recreation fishing in Delaware is almost \$150 million annually, while the commercial fishing industry’s annual value is estimated at about \$10 million. However, commercial and recreational boaters are experiencing difficulties navigating

the state's waterways due to the buildup of silt and sediment along main channels.

Many of the state's waterway management obligations, including dredging and channel marking in federally authorized waterways, have defaulted to DNREC in recent years. In the absence of federal funding, the State has stepped in and dredged the Murderkill River four times since the 1980's.

The project is expected to cost \$950,000 with funding provided by the State Legislature. An appropriation in the amount of \$627,000 was provided in the FY 2013 Bond Bill, with the balance being paid through DNREC's Shoreline and Waterway Management Bond Bill appropriation.

Manson Construction is the contractor for the project. Barring any weather-related issues, the project is expected to be completed in early February.