

BHWCA Position on Lagoons

Beach Haven West is the largest man-made lagoon community in New Jersey, consisting of approximately 24 miles of waterways in 102 lagoons. The lagoon community is bordered on the south by Mill Creek, which is a natural waterway, and the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

The first section was opened in 1957, and various additional sections were opened until the Wetlands Protection Act of 1970 prevented the community from expanding farther into the wetlands to the south. According to the 2010 Census, 4,571 housing units make up the lagoon community.

Over time, major weather events have impacted the community, most recently, Superstorm Sandy in 2012. In addition to weather events, the natural flow of tides continues to impact the waterways, causing silting and shoaling. In addition, the abrupt ending of the development during the 1970s may have caused poor water flushing in the areas farthest from Barnegat Bay.

The newest section of Beach Haven West is approximately 38 years old, while the oldest section is approximately 66 years old. Until the Bathymetric Survey was conducted in 2020, no efforts had been made in BHW's six decades to maintain the lagoons. That statement is based on multiple attempts to find documentation of efforts to address the overall health and navigability of the lagoons, as they are an asset not just to Beach Haven West but to the entire Stafford community.

Although much of the waterway network is navigable today, there are areas that need - or will need - attention to maintain healthy as well as navigable status.

The Bathymetric Survey was a very encouraging sign that the township realized the value of our waterways. It is not the only sign, however, as it has endorsed other related studies and developed relationships with regional, state and federal agencies. This is especially noteworthy in that post-Superstorm Sandy, researchers have determined that clean sediment is an asset to environmental efforts to restore declining marshlands and bay islands, as well as to maintain waterways.

In a recent presentation before the BHW Civic Association, an Army Corps of Engineers official noted that clean dredge material is "currency" in this new approach. We also have been advised that the Bathymetric Survey revealed BHW has "high quality" dredge material can be used to support the health of Barnegat Bay.

With firm resolve that Stafford's waterways be treated as part of the township's infrastructure, the BHW Civic Association will continue to vigorously support these efforts that we believe have placed Stafford in the forefront of this advancing state and national approach to waterway maintenance.