



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**NEWS**

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## **NJDOT embarks on 'sedimental' journey to improve 127 miles of New Jersey coastline Regional Sediment Management Framework developed for Back Bays**

**(TRENTON)** – With too much sediment clogging our waterways and too little sand surviving the erosion of our beaches, marshes and other natural habitats, keeping the New Jersey coastline healthy is a delicate balancing act. NJDOT is doing their part by maintaining State channels, nourishing our beaches and restoring marshes and other natural habitats using dredged material.

But it's hard to keep pace with the sediment needs on one side and the erosion and habitat loss on the other. We are therefore announcing the first-ever partnering of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), plus university and non-profit partners, to create the new Regional Sediment Management Framework (RSMF) for New Jersey Back Bays.

The RSMF establishes a collaborative process to prioritize and plan for managing sediment, to benefit NJ's Marine Transportation System and coastal communities, and provide resilience for coastal habitats. The goal is to keep sediment in coastal estuarine systems, when appropriate, to restore and maintain the ecology along New Jersey's 127 miles of Atlantic coastline.

### **Why is this important?**

The Atlantic coastal region of New Jersey is a densely populated and heavily utilized shore ecosystem that not only contains diverse dune, beach, marsh, and coastal forest habitats, but also hosts a large and complex marine transportation system comprised of Federal, State and local engineered waterways, boat ramps, berths, marinas and private slips, all supporting the Jersey Shore's \$50 billion maritime economy.

What's mud got to do with it? A lot. In the back bays of New Jersey, navigation channels must be routinely dredged to keep them clear for marine transportation. Historically, this dredged material has been transported to upland disposal sites often far from where it originated. But while sediment is being cleared from these navigation channels, nearby coastal habitats are losing sediment, struggling to keep pace with the rising sea level, increased storm events and the rippling effects of past coastal management measures, such as marsh ditching and diking.

This loss of sediment puts at risk both the coastal habitats and the adjacent communities. This new collaboration addresses both problems by maximizing the practice of keeping the dredged sediment in the estuarine system, whenever possible, to restore, enhance and protect these habitats.

While a variety of material management techniques will always be necessary to keep NJ's Marine Transportation System safe and navigable, NJDOT has beneficially placed more than 1 million Cubic Yards of dredged material since 2013. The partnership will ensure that coastal sites in need are agreed upon, prioritized and design-ready to advance through the permitting process and to receive dredged material when it is available.

"With the partners involved in the RSMF, NJDOT will be able to maximize the beneficial use of dredged material from navigation channels to protect vast areas of New Jersey's coastline," says Genevieve Clifton, Director of the NJDOT Office of Maritime Resources which leads the state's navigation dredging and maritime programs.

"Regional sediment management planning provides partners a road map to working together in a way that will benefit saltmarshes in the long run," says Virginia Rettig, Refuge Manager, Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

"This RSMF represents collaborative thinking on how we can facilitate the use of clean sediment for projects designed to benefit marsh ecosystems that are a necessary and critical component in the long-term stability of several coastal wildlife species," says Dave Golden, Assistant Commissioner for NJDEP Fish & Wildlife.

"We are grateful for the leadership of the New Jersey Department of Transportation in advancing this critical effort, which exemplifies the power of collaboration," says Barbara Brummer, New Jersey State Director for The Nature Conservancy.

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