

optimum. NEWS 12 Newsday nyc42/ARSTY exploreLI allNEWYORK Newsday Cars Newsday Homes

Subscribe to Newsday Today's paper ▾ My Newsday ▾ Traffic alerts 4 ▾ Islip, NY 87° ▾ Register Log in

LONG ISLAND Newsday knows which rapper MTV just added to the list of performers at the VMAs.

Long Island Sports Entertainment News Lifestyle Business Health Opinion Jobs Cars Real Estate More ▾

Take the Podium Viewsday Walt Handelsman Cartoon Roundup Letters to the editor Submit your letter Columnists

Opinion Newsday

✉ 🖨️ A+ A-

38 Comments

Like Like Tweet 9 +1 Pin it

Editorial

Editorial: Don't rush to plug Fire Island breach

Originally published: February 1, 2013 8:37 PM
 Updated: February 3, 2013 9:51 PM



Photo credit: Doug Kuntz | A breach in Fire Island is shown. (Dec. 20, 2012)

In just a few hours, Sandy seems to have done what many years of effort and many millions of dollars couldn't: jump-start a healthier [Great South Bay](#).

This unexpected dividend from the superstorm's devastation is a breach of Fire Island that has created a new path for fresh ocean water to flush out the polluted waters of the eastern bay, an area plagued by red and brown tides. The [Army Corps of Engineers](#), which has already closed the two larger cuts in the barrier island, is prepared to close the one in the part of the Fire Island National Seashore known as the Otis Pike High Dune Wilderness.

abc NEWS SPECIAL REPORT

A Weird Trick To Transform Your Lips Without Surgery

advertisement | advertise on newsday

Newsday Opinion features



Walt Handelsman's Cartoons



Cartoonists on NSA surveillance



National cartoon roundup

Show toolbar ▲

N Follow us Submit ▲ RSS Today's most popular My headlines Register Log in

That would be a mistake. Let nature take its course.

MORE: [Analysis and discussion from Viewday](#) | [Newsday columnists](#) | [More opinion](#)

CARTOONS: [Walt Handelsman's Cartoons](#) | [National Cartoon Roundup](#)

CONNECT: [Subscribe to our e-mail list](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

Charles N. Flagg of [Stony Brook University's](#) School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences has been monitoring the breach from the air. Flagg estimates that at its widest, the breach is 150 meters -- about the length of

1 1/2 football fields -- and that's pretty small, compared to the established and manually maintained inlets at Fire Island and [Moriches](#). More important, Flagg and others have determined that the salinity of the Great South Bay has risen from the influx of ocean water -- and that means more oxygen and fewer pollutants. This benefits shellfish, fin fish and the growth of dune grass. Local fishing boat operators are reporting a cleaner bay.

Flagg has been watching the tides, too. Other than high tide arriving about 18-20 minutes earlier along the interior shoreline, there seem to be few other changes. It's even possible that the breach might act as an escape valve when high winds send more water into the bay.

A decision to wait and monitor the breach's impact is not without some risks. But in the three months since Sandy, there has been no increased flooding to the low-lying coastal communities such as the [Moriches](#) and [Mastic Beach](#). So, as the [Nature Conservancy](#) advises the [National Park Service](#), "There is no need to hastily react as if it were an emergency." Besides, estimates are that it would cost about \$6 million to close the opening -- that's money that can be put to more immediate restoration needs along the coastline.

Action to close the two larger breaches began 48 hours after Sandy under the 1996 [New York State](#) Breach Contingency Plans developed by the [Army Corps](#), the [National Park Service](#) and the state [Department of Environmental Conservation](#). The parks service and DEC Commissioner Joseph Martens are taking a wait-and-see approach on the wilderness breach. That's the wise choice.


The breach, which is considered stable, is being closely monitored. In time, months or years, migrating sand will fill it. If it gets larger and the threat of flooding increases, that's when man, not nature should act.

User rating: ★★★★★ (10) [Click to rate](#)

You might also be interested in:

- [NY trooper accused of attacking 3 women](#) From [newsday.com](#) - News
- [Attorneys agree killing of mom, toddler 'horrific'](#) From [newsday.com](#) - Long Island News
- [Drunken driver's sentence angers victims' family](#) From [newsday.com](#) - Long Island News
- [Cops: Holbrook bar confrontation spills onto LIE](#) From [newsday.com](#) - Long Island News

Selected for you by our sponsor:

- [The World's Top 5 Highest Paid DJs](#) From [Las Vegas Weekly](#)
- [A Smart Approach to Landings](#)  From [The Boeing Company](#)

Recommended by 

Comments

Please log in to comment. Civility matters; [click here](#) to read our commenting guidelines.

Most popular

Stories

Photos



Voters approve \$32.5M Oyster Bay land sale
8/20/13

Police probe 'very serious' Freeport crash
7:30 AM

Cops: Officer kills dog after being attacked
8/20/13

Police release photo of hit-run suspect
8:39 AM

Reports: 'NSync to reunite on VMAs stage
8/20/13



UP TO 70% OFF
DESIGNER BRAND HOME GOODS

Joss & Main

[SHOP NOW >>](#)

advertisement | [advertise on newsday](#)

Network Security Scanner

www.gfi.com

Automatically Downloads & Detects Security Updates. Try for Free Now!

FreeCreditScore.comTM

www.FreeCreditScore.com

A Good Credit Score = 700 & Above. See Yours Now for \$0.

[Data security](#)