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Plymouth County Commissioners' Dredge Clears Clogged Waterways and Saves Falmouth Thousands of Dollars

Falmouth and Plymouth County Collaborate on Five Local Projects

PLYMOUTH, MA – March 16, 2020 – The Plymouth County Commissioners recently collaborated with the Town of Falmouth to work on five local projects that removed mountains of sand and silt to restore important water flow between the ocean and ponds in order to keep anadromous fish swimming upriver and help protect the local shoreline.

The Town of Falmouth leased the Plymouth County dredge excavator to remove over 2000 cubic yards of shoaling sand in these inlets. This sand was then used to fortify nearby beaches and protect coastal dunes, enhancing the beach stability against future erosion.

During a two-week period in February, the Plymouth County dredge, operated by a licensed Falmouth DPW team member, worked to clear five areas that had limited water flow due to large sand deposits. High tides, storm surges, and water diversions created sand plugs that blocked the river channels. The two largest dredge projects included clearing the ocean inlets into Little Pond and Salt Pond. The removal of this sand increases water flow which allow Alewives, Blueback Herring, American Eels, and other species to complete their spawning journey home each spring. Locally, fish migration occurs in late April through mid-June. The fish spend the summers in local water bodies, and then head back to sea before autumn.

The other Falmouth work projects included remediation work at Trunk River, Fresh River, and in the inner harbor. Falmouth saved thousands of dollars by completing these projects with the County

dredge using a town employee operator instead of outsourcing these projects to construction companies. After seeing the benefits of the program, Falmouth will be renting the dredge on a yearly basis.

The Plymouth County dredge is a John Deere 50-ton long reach track excavator that can move a mountain of sand in a day. The County obtained the dredge for use by municipalities that have projects requiring this type of specialized heavy equipment. Towns can save thousands of dollars by partnering with Plymouth County to utilize the dredge and many DPW teams have licensed operators with dredging experience that can operate the machine. The dredge can be used for tidal river clearing, restoring flow in clogged rivers, channel restoration, removal of old dams, silt removal, and management of invasive plant species in ponds and lakes.

Mark Kasprzyk, Conservation Land Manager/MES Technician for Falmouth, stated “Working with Plymouth County to complete this dredge project was easy. The streamlined process allowed us to complete five jobs back to back. The dredge saved us thousands of dollars! More so, this machine allowed us to complete the projects more efficiently and gave us the ability to reach and excavate areas further out. We could not have cleared the channels as well with smaller machines. These inlets are in the best shape they have been in decades.” He also said, “These projects have significantly increased tidal exchange and flushing which in turn will improve water quality reducing the intensity of algae blooms in the summer. The public has already expressed their appreciation for these improvements. Our Falmouth DPW said they are more than willing to talk to any Town about the advantages of using the County dredge excavator and the advantages.”

“County government is a way for our communities to realize greater efficiency. County government is in the business of finding regional solutions for regional problems.” said Commissioner Daniel A. Pallotta, Chairman (R – Hanover).

“The County dredge is a specialized piece of equipment that has great utility for many restoration projects. The Commissioners are happy to maintain the dredge as part of the services we offer our communities” said Commission Sandra M. Wright (R – Bridgewater).

“Plymouth County relishes the opportunity to help any municipality whenever possible. By using the County dredge, towns can complete more work in a shorter time for less money.” said Commissioner Gregory M. Hanley, (D – Plymouth).

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Founded in 1685, the County of Plymouth is a regional government encompassing twenty-seven municipalities in southeastern Massachusetts. In addition to the Registry of Deeds offices in Plymouth, Brockton, and Rockland, the County provides regional cooperative purchasing services, municipal dredging, a fire control airplane, parking ticket processing, 4-H programming, an entomologist, regional financial services, courthouses in Brockton, Hingham, and Wareham, and administration of the Plymouth County OPEB Trust (PCOT). See www.PlymouthCountyMA.gov for information about the County and its programs. For additional information, or to schedule a meeting with the Plymouth County Commissioners, please contact Frank Basler at 508.830.9104 or fbasler@plymouthcountyma.gov.



Salt Pond Falmouth before (left) and after (right)

