

News Release

Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Block Island NWR □ John H. Chafee NWR at Pettaquamscutt Cove □ Ninigret NWR □ Sachuest Point NWR □ Trustum Pond NWR
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For Immediate Release

June 21, 2016

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Utility Undergrounding work along Sachuest Point Road to Continue

Traffic delays to Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge may be Encountered

Charlestown, RI – The preparation work for undergrounding of power and communication lines along Sachuest Point Road in Middletown will start again June 27 for the next four weeks. While the road-side work will be confined to that portion of the road south of the Town campground to the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge to avoid summer beach traffic, weekday intermittent lane closures will impact those trying to reach the Refuge.

Work crews under the direction of Doyon Management Services, the Government’s main contractor, will be working immediately adjacent to the road, installing buried telecommunications and electrical conduits and pull boxes alongside the existing utility poles. While every effort will be made to keep traffic flowing and keep their operations from impacting summertime traffic, some intermittent lane closures will be inevitable.

“For those visiting the Refuge over the next few weeks, please use extra caution, and allow extra time to get here” Refuge Manager Charlie Vandemoer said today. “Carpooling and planning your visit to the refuge after work hours and on the weekends will be helpful in lessening the impact these lane closures will have”. No utility work will be done on weekends, holidays, or at night. “Simply put, we won’t be able to accommodate all of the traffic to the Refuge during this time.” Vandemoer said.

The project to eventually move 7,000 feet of above ground powerlines from Surfers end to the Sachuest Point Refuge underground is being funded by federal Hurricane Sandy Repair funds along with the very generous donations from the Aquidneck Land Trust, Van Beuren Charitable Foundation; Prince Charitable Trusts; and the Easton’s Point Association. Additional project partners include the Town of Middletown, Preserve Rhode Island, and the Preservation Society of Newport County.

Earlier this year, most work in the Second Beach Parking lot was completed prior to Memorial Day, and also near the Refuge Visitor Center. Following completion of this work segment, further roadside activities will be delayed until after Labor Day.

We understand that this is not the best time of year to be impacting traffic to the refuge, but it can’t be avoided. The federal funding for the project will expire in December of 2016, so we need to be sure enough headway on this project is made to meet that deadline. Following the installation of the conduits, the above ground poles and wires will be removed sometime late this fall.

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