



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
50 Bend Road, Charlestown, RI 02813 401/364-9124 Fax: 401/364-0170

For Immediate Release

July 17, 2014

For Further Information Contact:

Charlie Vandemoer, Refuge Manager (401) 364-9124 ext. 11

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service Seeks Public Comment on Under-grounding Utilities near Second Beach in Middletown, Rhode Island

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking public comments related to removing the above ground utility lines and poles along Sachuest Point Road in Middletown RI and placing the utility lines underground. The area affected would be from Surfers end and Second Beach to the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge.

The Service has received funding from the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 enacted to help repair damage from Superstorm Sandy and to make communities and facilities better able to withstand future storm events. The above ground power lines in the area were damaged both from Hurricane Sandy and again from Winter Storm Nemo. The resulting power outages threatened the Sachuest Point Visitor Center with further damage from freezing weather and no power to run the building infrastructure.

Working in collaboration with many local partners, the proposal is to place the utility lines into conduit generally three feet underground, and removing the above ground wires and power poles. The new underground utilities would be buried within the Sachuest Point Road right of way, and in some cases underneath the road. The line is approximately 4,500 feet in length. The timing of construction activities would be limited to the period outside of the busy summer beach season, and would likely occur in the late fall/winter/early spring period.

The anticipated result of under-grounding the utilities include better protection of utilities from adverse weather events; improving the aesthetics of the area by removing the above ground portions of the utilities, increased safety of motorists by removing the poles adjacent to the roadways, and reducing impacts of the power line on migratory songbirds. No wetlands or key resources would be affected.

The Service will be completing an analysis consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act for the proposal. The public is encouraged to submit any comments, issues, or concerns they may have regarding the project so they can be considered in the process.

Written public comments should be mailed by August 20, 2014 to:

Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, ATTN: Utility Under-grounding
50 Bend Road, Charlestown, RI 02813

Public comments will also be accepted at the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center at 769 Sachuest Point Road in Middletown, Rhode Island.

----- End -----