



**Point O' Woods Association**  
**Point O' Woods, N.Y. 11706**  
**Phone 631-583-5660**

February 14, 2016

Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street  
Washington D.C. 20240

Assistant Secretary Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Army Corps of Engineers  
108 Army Pentagon, Rm. 3E446  
Washington D.C. 30210

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Steve Bellone, County Executive  
Suffolk County  
100 Veterans Memorial Highway  
Happauge, N.Y. 11788

Dear Elected and Appointed Leaders,

With the Fire Island to Moriches Inlet Emergency Plan (FIMI) underway, your respective organizations now govern our beach. In such light, we would like to bring to your attention a matter of great gravity to the 4500 homeowners on Fire Island, and especially to the hundreds of year-round residents on this slim barrier island in the State of New York. Recent storms have over-washed the primary dirt road serving the island on several occasions and in several locations. This, together with suspension of limited ferry service due to the freezing of the Great South Bay, has effectively isolated the island from the mainland for days at a time (most recently 2/7 – 2/10). During these times, should there be a structure fire, or any other major incident (four international airports are nearby), the island's very limited resources will be hard pressed to respond with requisite resources. Mutual aid (fire departments backing each other up) is already difficult with the departments seasonally depleted of volunteers, and it will now be non-existent with over-washed roadways and alternate police or fire units from the mainland unable to respond due to the frozen bay (no boat access). You may not realize, but prior to Hurricane Sandy the interior of Fire Island was accessible from either end of the island, but Sandy created a new inlet, which the NPS has sought to maintain, and thus there is now only one egress point during the winter. With that cut-off by an over-wash, there is none.

While we recognize and applaud all the great work and effort that have gone into bringing the long-awaited Fire Island to Moriches Inlet Project (FIMI) into action, we as the emergency responders on Fire Island, as well as all the town managers and leaders, note there is no ongoing operational component nor immediate emergency response component to FIMI. It's a capital construction program without a maintenance plan (funding or accountability) in place. The Fire Island to Montauk Reformulation Plan (FIMP) may someday assume this role, but has no current standing. In situations like this most recent over-wash, there is no one agency or entity tasked with IMMEDIATELY responding with the adequately-sized equipment necessary to address an over-wash or full breach. This time, after several days, thanks to Chris Soller, the NPS did respond and brought in outside contractors to begin to close the over-wash. Beyond simply impairing mutual aid among responders, you should also know that when these over-washes occur, the children of our



**Point O' Woods Association**  
**Point O' Woods, N.Y. 11706**  
**Phone 631-583-5660**

year-round residents cannot get to school, nor do the residents have access to grocery stores, pharmacies, or other basic services.

Of additional note, the incident highlighted something else related that we would bring to your attention. In the wake of Sandy, the State of New York established several grant programs (i.e. Rising Hazard Mitigation Grant Program - HMGP) with FEMA funding to help Emergency Responders in such post-storm periods. So far, while many of these funds have been distributed, none have in fact made it to the communities like ours that are truly on the front line.

We would in light of these recent incidents hope that collectively, the Army Corps and NPS, New York State, and Suffolk County will:

- Quickly find a way to establish a protocol for emergency notification and provide an immediate response with adequate resources for future emergency over-washes and breaches, and
- Reach out to NYS Emergency Management to encourage the timely and appropriate distribution of the FEMA funds that were supposedly destined to help each of our fire departments fund back-up generators, communications systems, and fuel depots for times like these.

Please do realize that we all fully understand and are truly appreciative of how much time and effort has gone into bringing FIMI to Fire Island, and how hard all the local officials have worked to address the issues at hand. However, ensuring the ability of our first responders to still serve the needs our communities and the region continues to require our attention.

Again, thank you in advance for your help on these current matters, as lives depend upon our response.

On behalf of the Communities on Fire Island,

**Point O' Woods**

R.V. Bragg, Fire Chief; Commissioners  
Spencer Hays, Alex Brash, Leslie Ash, Alex  
Smith, Al Kavasch  
Dixon Brown, President, Jeffrey DeJarnette,  
Town Manager

**Dunewood**

Cathy Bimberg -President  
Maggi Vale - Vice President  
Merry Fisher - Secretary  
Thomas Cain - Treasurer  
Ellen Abramowitz - Director  
Robert Squicciarini - Director

Julian Millstein - Director  
Kevin Henner - Director  
Larry Piergrossi - Director

**Fire Island Pines**

Jay Pagano

**Village of Ocean Beach**

Mayor Mallott, Dep. Mayor M. Blake, as well  
the OBFD and PD  
Trustees Bendicksen, Power

**Robins Rest, Summer Club, Corneille  
Estates**

Don Sussman



**Point O' Woods Association**  
**Point O' Woods, N.Y. 11706**  
**Phone 631-583-5660**

- C. Commissioner Basil Seggos, NYS DEC
- Director, Kevin Wisely, NYS OEM
- Superintendent Soller, NPS
- RD Gallagher, NYS DEC
- Pres. Goldhirsch, Fire Island Assoc.
- Senator Schumer, Gillibrand
- Reps. King, Zeldin