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Posted on: October 28, 2019

Ribbon Cutting for Ponquogue Piers

PRESS RELEASE
Oct. 25, 2019
Contact: Connie Conway
(631) 702-1743

Shinnecock Bay is viewed as one of the best diving and fishing areas on Long Island. Now access to the bay just became easier from the newly renovated Ponquogue Piers.

A ribbon cutting was held Friday, October 25, 2019 to mark the completion of the renovation to the south side of the old Ponquogue Bridge fishing and diving piers that were battered in Super Storm Sandy in 2012. The Town considered demolishing the structures, but members of the local community and the diving and fishing communities requested that the Town restore and improve the piers. And FEMA agreed to reimburse the Town for the renovation.

The Town submitted a very complex grant application to FEMA to secure funding to rehabilitate the bridge platforms. After a three and-a-half-year process, FEMA approved the Town's grant application.

The original Ponquogue draw-bridge was built in the late 1920's. The County constructed a more modern concrete bridge in the 1980's and the bridge piers were acquired by the Town of Southampton in 1988 for use as pedestrian access for fishing and wildlife enjoyment. Today, what remains of the old bridge has been refurbished and repurposed into a new fishing pier. Beneath the surface, the old structure serves as a great location for divers.

"The restoration of the old Ponquogue Bridge into a modern fishing pier celebrates our history and provides a great recreational activity for anglers and divers," said Supervisor Jay Schneiderman.

"One of my first diving experiences was diving under the old Ponquogue Bridge," said Councilman John Bouvier. "In particular, I remember swimming with the topical fish that were brought up by the Gulf Stream current. It is one of the fondest memories of my youth and set my life in a direction that led to exploring the oceans around the world."

"The restoration of the old Ponquogue Bridge is an intricate part of the Edward J. Warner, Sr. Marine Park which provides access for divers, anglers and sightseers," said Town Trustee President, Edward J. Warner, Jr. "It also provides the best sunrise and sunset views of Shinnecock Bay."

The $2 million reconstruction project began in December 2017, five years after Super Storm Sandy badly damaged both sections of the old bridge. Some of the improvements include:

- A new sustainable deck and handrail
- New bulkheads
- New recreational access ramps
- Improved access and safety
- Preservation and protection of the marine environment

The South side of the bridge will be used by divers while the North side is more suitable as a fishing pier.

The South side pier located in the Edward J. Warner, Sr. Marine Park will also feature interpretive signs donated by the Hampton Bays Rotary and created by Cornell Cooperative Extension to illustrate vegetation, birds and sea life that live there. The signs will be interactive, where the viewer can scan QR codes that take the viewer to various related links, including aerial and underwater videos.

Today's ribbon cutting follows an underwater ribbon cutting with the Long Island Divers Association and Supervisor Schneiderman, a certified diver.

Click on the link below to view the underwater ribbon cutting

Photo Credit : Eco-Photo Explorers for underwater video, still photos provided by Town of Southampton

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