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# MORDECAI MATTERS

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November 2000

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## Petition Drive Over Labor Day Weekend Nets 362 Signatures

**Bill Pilling**

*Co-Chair, LEHYC Environmental Protection Committee*

Through the efforts of Chuck Maschal and Nancy Davis, members of our Committee, 362 signatures were collected on a petition to save Mordecai Island. The petition expressed the commitment of residents, homeowners and visitors of Long Beach Island to stabilize erosion on Mordecai Island to preserve and protect its precious marine habitats, shorebirds and wildlife. Copies of this petition were sent to Congressman Jim Saxton and State Senator Len Connors. In response to our letter, Senator Connors and Assemblymen Moran and Connors wrote to Commissioner Shinn of the NJ DEP in connection with the DEP's ongoing inquiry into Mordecai. We very much appreciate Senator Connor's efforts and those of the Forked River Delegation on behalf of Mordecai.

## Dredging Project by Mordecai on Hold

**Bill Pilling**

*Co-Chair, LEHYC Environmental Protection Committee*

In response to a complaint, the Army Corps of Engineers sent a survey team to determine if the Intercoastal Waterway required dredging adjacent to Mordecai Island. A dredging project might have provided the material for retarding erosion on Mordecai. We recently learned in a telephone call with the Army Corps office in Philadelphia that the survey team found clear water. A strip of water 400' in length was determined to have a depth of less than 6', but the shallowest point was 4'8". While it appears that dredging is not necessary at the present time, it was thought that a marker might need to be relocated.



**A pair of American Oystercatchers takes flight from Mordecai Island. As many as four pairs may have nested on the Island in 2000.**

## Philadelphia Office of Army Corps of Engineers Allocates Funds for Mordecai

**Bill Pilling**

*Co-Chair, LEHYC Environmental Protection Committee*

Mr. William Mueller, Philadelphia Planning Division, Army Corps of Engineers, informed us in early October that Mordecai Island is one of two sites in his budget for the coming year for the beneficial use of dredge spoil. That is great news! This came about mostly through the efforts of Congressman Jim Saxton, who at our request contacted the Army Corps about Mordecai in late August. The other site being funded is in Cumberland on the Delaware River. Mr. Mueller also noted that, while it would be faster and easier if there had been a dredging project adjacent to Mordecai in the coming year, this is not the only way to proceed. Our next step will be to better define the scope of a project on Mordecai. See the article, "NJ DEP Visits Mordecai" on the reverse side and stay tuned!

## NJ DEP Visits Mordecai

**Bill Pilling and John Cranmer**

*Co-Chairs, LEHYC Environmental Protection Committee*

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Mark Mauriello, Coastal Zone Supervisor, NJ DEP, and Ms. Helen Owens, Staff, Land Use Permits, NJ DEP, toured Mordecai Island with John Cranmer and Bill Pilling. Dr. Stewart Farrell, Director, Richard Stockton Coastal Research Center, who is presently conducting a study of Mordecai arranged this visit. Dr. Farrell had written a brief memo to Mr. Mauriello in September, suggesting possible avenues for using biological materials to retard erosion on Mordecai.

Mr. Mauriello told us that the NJ DEP has some experience with similar situations. He thought that closing the gap might present issues because of the establishment of an ecosystem and open water pathway since 1986. As an aside, we might take issue with concerns about the ecology in the gap. Of greater significance, given the wave intensity, Mr. Mauriello thought that any solution would necessarily entail a breakwater of some type together with biological materials. The breakwater might consist of timber, plastic sheets, a rubble mound or a geo tube. Any breakwater would require a NJ DEP Waterfront Development Permit for structures beyond the mean high water mark. We would also need a riparian license for any breakwater.

While these conversations were merely informal, they suggest how we might proceed. Mr. Mauriello and Ms. Owens concluded their visit by suggesting that Dr. Farrell propose one or two solutions and then discuss them with the NJ DEP to obtain feedback to avoid issues with permitting. Dr. Farrell agreed to do this.

## Mordecai Advisory Committee Formed

**Bill Pilling**

*Co-Chair, LEHYC Environmental Protection Committee*

Joan Koons, President, Alliance for Living Ocean, Ken Smith, President, The Coastal Advocate, Art Baron, neighbor, and Debbie Whitcraft, Mayor, Beach Haven, were invited to serve on a Mordecai Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to act as a source of ideas, as well as a sounding board for any proposals we submit concerning Mordecai.

The initial Advisory Committee meeting was held on October 6<sup>th</sup>. In attendance were Art Baron, Joan Koons and Ken Smith together with Bill Pilling, Chuck Maschal and Stokes Carrigan from LEHYC. Bill Pilling reported on the activities of the LEHYC Environmental Protection Committee. There followed a lively discussion. Among other things, Art Baron suggested various ways to further publicize existing conditions on Mordecai. Ken Smith and Joan Koons suggested obtaining the endorsement of all six municipalities on LBI. We are pursuing these and other suggestions. We very much appreciate the assistance and advice of this Committee.

## “M” is for Mordecai

**By the O'Neill Family – Joe, Jennifer, Luke, Maggie, Charlie and Norah Pat**

**M** is for the mud we get on our feet  
**O** nly if we forget to let out the sheet  
**R** ight past the channel at low tide  
**D** own Liberty Thorofare on the west side.  
**E** grets, gulls, and bay heather flourish there.  
**C** hildren and grownups need to take care  
**A** lways to guard, protect & defend  
**I** sland Mordecai on which so many depend.

**Please send any name or address updates or comments to the attention of William Pilling, 2600 One Commerce Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Telephone: 215-564-8079**  
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