

Tidal tribs to West Moriches Bay (1701-0312)

Impaired Seg

Waterbody Location Information

Revised: 05/10/2007

Water Index No: (MW7.2a) AO-MB-168a thru 175 (sel.) **Drain Basin:** Atlantic-Long Island Sound
Hydro Unit Code: 02030202/130 **Str Class:** SC **Reg/County:** 1/Suffolk Co. (52)
Waterbody Type: Estuary **Quad Map:** MORICHES (R-29-3) ...
Waterbody Size: 50.0 Acres
Seg Description: total area of selected tidal tribs to coves

Water Quality Problem/Issue Information (CAPS indicate MAJOR Use Impacts/Pollutants/Sources)

Use(s) Impacted	Severity	Problem Documentation
AQUATIC LIFE	Impaired	Known
RECREATION	Impaired	Known

Type of Pollutant(s)

Known: D.O./OXYGEN DEMAND, NUTRIENTS (Nitrogen), PATHOGENS
Suspected: ---
Possible: ---

Source(s) of Pollutant(s)

Known: AGRICULTURE (duck farms), ON-SITE/SEPTIC SYST, OTHER SOURCE (boat pollution),
TOX/CONTAM. SEDIMENT (Organic/D.O. Demand), URBAN/STORM RUNOFF
Suspected: ---
Possible: ---

Resolution/Management Information

Issue Resolvability: 1 (Needs Verification/Study (see STATUS))
Verification Status: 4 (Source Identified, Strategy Needed)
Lead Agency/Office: ext/FRTF **Resolution Potential:** Medium
TMDL/303d Status: 1 (Individual Waterbody Impairment Requiring a TMDL)

Further Details

Aquatic life support and recreational use (fishing, boating) in these tidal tribs to West Moriches Bay - particularly, the Upper Forge River - are impaired by excessive nutrients (nitrogen), low dissolved oxygen and elevated pathogens. These contaminants are attributed to very dense development in the watershed, as well as contributions from sediments resulting from past/historic impacts from duck farms.

Water quality in the Forge River has been a concern for decades, the result of extremely dense, unsewered residential development in the river's ground watershed as well as the long history of multiple duck farms in the watershed. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services SCDHS has conducted water quality studies which show that the major contributor of nutrients loads is likely groundwater underflow, urban runoff and industrial discharges. Preliminary sampling data seem to show that the river is hyper-eutrophic. The SUNY MSRC is focusing ongoing research efforts on assessing the contaminant and toxicological contributions of the river sediments and the development of a nitrogen balance in the river. These efforts include thermal imaging to characterize groundwater discharge areas, installation of

additional groundwater monitoring wells, and possible use of tracers to ascertain cesspool/septic tank loads to the river. (DEC/DOW, Region 1, January 2007)

Concern for the river led to the formation of the Forge River Task Force which brings together stakeholders from local agencies and the Forge River community to coordinate efforts to address water quality conditions in the Forge River. The Task Force is chaired by the NYSDEC Regional Director. Current activities in the watershed include the on-going SUNY MSRC sediment characterization study, a state grant funded stormwater remediation project along Montauk Highway, the establishment of an illicit discharge reporting and response program in area communities and the development of a watershed management plan. In October 2006, the Town announced it was considering a watershed (development) moratorium. (DEC/DOW, Region 1, January 2007)

Tidal Tribs to Western Moriches Bay, including the Upper Forge River, is included on the NYS 2006 Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. These waters are included on Part 1 of the List as a waterbody segment requiring the development of a TMDL or other strategy to attain water quality standards for pathogens, nitrogen and dissolved oxygen demand. The Task Force community had sought this designation, through the application of the Baykeeper, in order to bring the proper degree of attention to the problems of the river. (DEC/DOW, BWAM, January 2007)

Year-round shellfishing restrictions also apply to most of these tribs to Western Moriches Bay due to pathogens from surrounding stormwater and urban runoff and recreational boating/marinas. Because these are Class SC waters, they are not assessed for support of shellfishing use. (DEC/FWMR, Region 1, October 2000)

This segment includes the Class SC portion of northern Harts Cove, tidal portions of Orchard Neck Creek (-171), Areskand Creek (-172), Senix Creek (-173), West Senix/Mud Creek (-173-1), Class SC portions of Forge River (-174), Old Neck Creek (-174-2), Poospatuck Creek (-174-3), Ely Creek (-174-4), Home Creek (-175) and smaller tidal tribs, boat basins and coves.