

For Immediate Release



Contacts:

Kaity Ryan
kryan2@newportmansions.org
401-847-1000 x132

Morgan Devlin
mdevlin@preserveri.org
401-272-5101 x202

Laura Freedman Pedrick
lpedrick@ailt.org
401-849-2799 x18

Sachuest Landscape Project Will Bury Power Lines Underground

(Middletown, RI) After nearly three years in the making, a project to bury the utility lines along the iconic Sachuest Point (or Second Beach) landscape has finally begun. The Aquidneck Land Trust, Preserve Rhode Island, and The Preservation Society of Newport County, joined the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to announce the project is underway. Project costs total approximately \$1.1 million. The project is funded through a generous public-private partnership between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the van Beuren Charitable Foundation with additional support from the Prince Charitable Trusts and the Easton's Point Neighborhood Association. The project will be complete by the summer.

This project will improve and preserve one of Rhode Island's most significant scenic resources: the coastline of historic Paradise Valley, more commonly known as Second Beach or Sachuest. Burying the utility lines will increase coastal resiliency, enhance pedestrian safety, improve utility infrastructure, promote stewardship of the cultural landscape, and restore historic views prized by residents and artists like John LaFarge and George Bellows who flocked here to paint.

The Aquidneck Land Trust, Preserve Rhode Island, and the Preservation Society of Newport County dedicated the past three years to building support and raising funds to bring this project to fruition. Brought together by a shared focus on preserving and enhancing the visual quality of Aquidneck Island's historic and natural places, the three organizations established the Scenic Aquidneck initiative. They enlisted the support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in its efforts

to increase coastal resiliency and together spearheaded the burial of the power lines along Sachuest Point Road.

The partners identified the Second Beach and Sachuest Point area as one of the most significant landscapes on Aquidneck Island. In its current state, however, the historic views and scenic character of this landscape are compromised by overhead utility lines and poles. With cooperation from the Town of Middletown, the utilities will be relocated below ground, restoring historic vistas of one of Rhode Island's leading cultural landscapes for the first time in decades.

In addition to restoring scenic views along Hanging Rock Road and Sachuest Point Road, the Sachuest project will provide a safer, more scenic place for the numerous cyclists, beach-goers, surfers, birdwatchers, and others that visit Second Beach as well as the Norman Bird Sanctuary, USFWS Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, St. George's School, Purgatory Chasm, and other nearby sites. The project will strengthen infrastructure and increase the resiliency of the area to weather coastal storms.

Second and Third Beach, the USFWS Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, Norman Bird Sanctuary, and the adjacent land connecting these sites attracts a substantial number of visitors annually; Second Beach is the largest economic revenue source for the Town of Middletown. Eliminating overhead utilities and the obstructed viewsheds they create, will positively impact a broad audience and restore some of the scenic character of this important cultural landscape.

About the Coalition

The Scenic Aquidneck Initiative is focused on preserving and enhancing the visual quality of Aquidneck Island's natural and cultural resources. It is an island-wide resource for improving gateways, historic landscapes and structures, key corridors, scenic views, and coastline for the benefit of the Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth communities. [**www.scenicaquidneck.org**](http://www.scenicaquidneck.org)