

Wells Harbor – Sewer Line Update 07/25/22

What happened?

- The sewer line located under the Wells Harbor that runs between the jetties from Drakes Island to the Eastern Shore Parking Lot (end of Atlantic Ave) has been struck by boaters twice during this past week. It was struck due to the sewer line floating near the surface of the water due to its anchoring/covering becoming eroded.

What we know:

- The Wells Sanitary District (WSD), Town Officials and various Town Departments are working together and taking the matter very seriously.
- Raw sewerage is not currently going into the Harbor. The sewer line/pump was shut off as soon as a leak/break was identified, and an alternative sewer pump solution was implemented.
- The closure of the Harbor is a public health precaution and safety measure. There is no imminent danger.
- All outer beach areas remain open as they are being tested and levels remain normal and safe.



Contact the Town Manager's Office with Questions

What has been done:

- MDEP and Dept. of Marine Resources have been contacted and are in communication with the WSD and Town
- Increased frequency in testing is occurring by the WSD and Maine Heathy Beaches through the Wells Fire Department. All current test results indicated no health concerns.
- 24/7 pumping of sewer into trucks is ongoing until another option can be implemented to handle sewerage until the line is repaired

Solutions in the Works:

- The Harbormaster is working to install booms and moorings to guide all boat traffic away from the floating sewer line to prevent further damage and to secure the area for divers who must repair the pipe.
- The sewer line replacement project has been planned and is permitted to begin on or after October 11, 2022. The WSD is making every effort to try and move the start date to occur ASAP. This takes coordination with many specialized agencies, consultants and contractors.

History of the Sewer Line:

- This line was first installed in the Harbor in 1978 by the Wells Sanitary District, many feet below the bottom of the Harbor floor. Over time the cover to this line has eroded away and original anchors corroded.
- All public sewer lines are owned and maintained by the WSD.
- In 2018, three Northeasters hit New England causing the sewer line to become exposed enough to cause it to float.
- In 2018 the line was re-anchored to the bottom of the Harbor as a temporary fix while a permanent solution could be designed and permitted by MDEP, Army Corps and other Federal and State Agencies.
- The Town required this line to be inspected by the WSD every 6 months.