

April 21, 2026

Dear Masons Island Fire District Constituents,

Six years ago, the then President of the MIFD Board, Jim McAuley, suggested a road protection task force be formed to investigate how to protect our community's sole access/egress road, Chippechaug Trail, from the obvious shoreline erosion and potential flooding at Allyn's Alley. Jim would have been proud of our community's support given for this endeavor.

2021 MIFD Voters approved \$30,000 for an initial feasibility study done by engineering firm GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc.. \$26,000 was spent on a completed study.

2022 MIFD voters approved \$50,000 for engineered design plans for a living shoreline. Fortunately, a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant through NOAA was awarded for these costs.

2023 MIFD voters approved \$75,000 for obtaining permits for the design plans. Fortunately, a second National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant was awarded for these costs this time from the Department of Defense (defending our shoreline).

2024 The Masons Island Company (MICO) contacted CT DEEP asking if an alternative rocks-only design plan could be considered. CT DEEP answered yes. Additional engineering work by GZA was done to generate a revised "pilot" plan. Unfortunately, an invitation to apply for a Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant had to be turned down due to this delay.

2024 MIFD Voters approved \$180,000 for the next phase of protecting the road, and we began to seek construction grants for MICO's alternative design with offshore rocks but no added sand or fill. When MICO withdrew their permission for the offshore Living Shoreline design, an alternative onshore design, a buried stone revetment on MIPOA land running parallel to Chippechaug Trail roadway, was approved by the MIFD Board and \$120,000 of the approved \$180,000 was spent to install the revetment in early 2025.

January 2025 MICO reversed their position allowing for the submission of construction permit applications for the rocks only Living Shoreline pilot design, which were submitted to the Town of Stonington, CT DEEP and United States Army Corps Of Engineers (USACE).

Mid July 2025, MICO contacted the Town of Stonington and CT DEEP, refusing landowner's permission for the construction permits. As a consequence, MIFD had to withdraw those two applications. Soon thereafter, the USACE granted permission for the project to move to construction as designed.

As a result, the offshore Living Shoreline project and the task force's role ended, leaving the rock wall revetment as the sole protection of Chippechaug Trail at this time.

I wish to thank the MIFD Shoreline Road Protection Task Force and our community members for their support these past six years for initiatives that were taken to protect the longevity of Chippechaug Trail roadway for the benefit of all who depend on it. Thank you for all the volunteer hours involved.

Yours truly,

Kristin Foster, MIFD Shoreline Road Protection Task Force Chair