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THE INDEPENDENT

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**Coast Guard
Auxiliary News**



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New Buoys in Moriches Bay, Heads Up!



Any mariner who has transited Moriches Bay knows that, in several places, it can be and will be very unforgiving if you stray from the channel. In some places, such as between buoy-26 and buoy-27 to the east of the US Coast Guard Station on Tuthill Point, it can be unforgiving while in the channel. The USCG Local Notice to Mariners has noted for over a year that depths of 18" (that's inches) have been reported there. And, for a couple of summers now, the US Coast Guard

has maintained buoys outside the charted channel because that was where the water was (see The Independent, "New Buoys in Moriches Bay – Head Up!", July 16, 2008.)

To The Rescue

Working with the Army Corps of Engineers, the US Coast Guard has returned the buoys to the original charted channel (see diagram – and please excuse my art work!) For those mariners who have had GPS way points for the "dog leg" channel, please reflect that the old channel is new again. Drive with your head up, looking ahead, not down looking at the GPS screen.

Buoys 27, 28 and 29 have been moved from the dog-leg channel back to the charted channel. As well, buoys 17, 18, and 20, further up west in Moriches Bay, have been moved back to their original charted positions (south, from their positions last season.)

Has It Worked?

Largely, yes – but you need to pay attention. I ran most of the new channel myself yesterday, assisting two jet skiers who were hopelessly lost in the fog and unable to make it from the north end of Seatuck Cove, where they sought refuge, to their home on the barrier island, just east of Swan Island. (Radar helps!)

But this is Moriches Bay. The in-coming tide will bring sand from the east and west "cuts," north of Moriches Inlet, to the main part of the bay and drop it as the water pressure/speed drops as it leaves those narrow cuts and thus loses the compressive action. Think garden hose with – and without a nozzle. And the out-going tide will take most – but not all – of that sand back out. So, whether we get one season or five seasons out of this exercise, only time will tell and God knows. But you need to know where the buoys are, now.

Lessons?

Plenty. First, the Law of the Sea still prevails. SeaTow (who put in a tremendous number of hours) and TowBoat-US often "held station" by the new channels to warn boaters not to run aground, despite it being in their commercial interest to be towing rather than not towing. Of course, all parties worked closely and well with US Coast Guard forces, both the active-duty regulars and auxiliarists. Second, keep your head up! Just because the GPS says "go right," only do so if your eyes confirm what your electronics are telling you. In fact, when I teach seamanship electronics, I start with "What do your eyes tell you?" then cross-check that to the electronics. If they don't agree, STOP THE BOAT AND FIND OUT WHY! There is no shame in safety first!

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at [DSO-HR](#) and we will help you "get in this thing..."