

J.T. Cleary Completes Complicated Leonardo Channel Project — On Time and with ‘No Touchup Necessary’

BY JUDITH POWERS

J.T. Cleary, Inc. recently completed its first Corps of Engineers dredging contract – maintenance dredging of the channel to the Leonardo Marina in Sandy Hook Bay, New Jersey. Jim Cleary, owner of the company, has been methodically expanding his marine services company into the dredging market, and bid on the project in November. He was awarded the \$4,434,064 project on November 20.

“Because of an environmental window for fish spawning from mid-January to May, we had a very tight timeframe and had to work 24/7. There was no room for mistakes” Cleary said.

The company set out to remove 41,000 cubic yards of material from the 2,000-foot-long navigation channel, and the project had to be complete by mid-January. Further complicating the project was the fact that the material had to be dewatered on-site for transport to an upland placement area, requiring tugs to move the barges approximately 21 miles, across Ambrose Channel, through the Verazano Narrows, and across the Lower Harbor to Jersey City. During the trip, they frequently had to contend with freezing spray and rough seas.

Sea Wolf Marine was contracted to transit the scows to the offloading site, and Miller Marine handled on-site shuffling of the scows to the mooring and decanting location offshore.

J.T. Cleary used a Liebherr crane mounted on a 60 by 150-foot spud barge with self-actuating spuds on each end. Digging was with a 5.5-cubic-yard Cable Arm environmental bucket for silty sand, and an Anvil digging bucket for the hard sand close to the marina. The approach to the marina is long and narrow, 2,400 feet long by 150 feet wide, with a

finished depth of eight feet MLW and two feet of overdepth.

The dewatering site was single point mooring on a very large anchor, placed about two miles offshore due to the shallow approach to the marina. Inspectors monitored the settling process in the barges, and when the water reached the desired clarity, it was pumped into a 200-foot-long

decant water barge, following which the material barge was transited to Clean Earth in Jersey City for unloading.

“We had up to seven barges at the dewatering mooring at a time,” Cleary said.

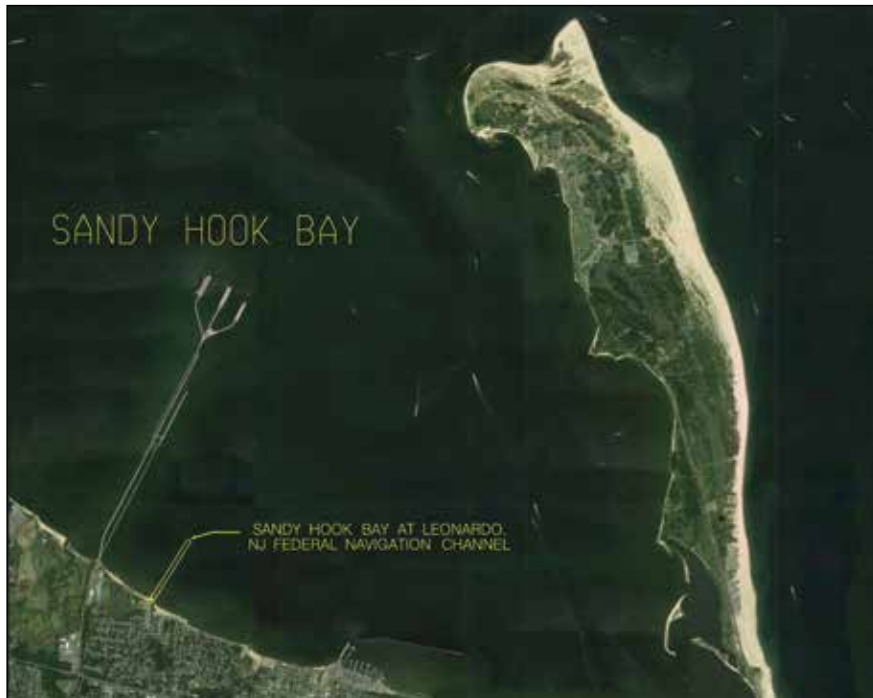
The material was considered for re-nourishment of an adjacent beach, but the silt content was too high for beach or open water placement.

“We finished in early January, and the post-dredge surveys were completed by mid-month. In addition to the dredging, we dealt with a lot of debris – sunken boats, tires, rope and anchors. We received a positive review from the Corps of Engineers, and they were happy with our work. There was no touch-up necessary when the Army Corps completed their survey,” Cleary said.

Cleary’s entrance into dredging work is the result of a lifelong knowledge of the waters in and around New York and New Jersey. He grew up on the water in New Rochelle, New York, where he and his brother went into the underwater business in their teens, cleaning the hulls of racing sailboats, using their scuba diving skills.

“I loved being on or under the water, but these activities are expensive. So, early on I had to figure out a way to pay for it,” Cleary said.

He worked as an inland and offshore commercial diver for eight years after high school, and then obtained a bachelor’s degree in engineering from the University of Rhode Island in 1990. From 1990 to 1994, he



Aerial view of Sandy Hook Bay shows the location of the federal channel to Leonardo, as well as the long pier to the U.S. Naval Weapons Station at Earl, New Jersey. (Graphic courtesy of the New York District, Corps of Engineers.)



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Jim Cleary on the deck of the dredge – a barge-mounted Liebherr crane using a 5.5-cubic-yard Cable Arm Environmental bucket.

worked as a waterfront engineer at Han-Padron Associates (now CH2M Hill). He passed his professional engineering exams in 1994, and in 1995 started J.T. Cleary, Inc. - an underwater engineering company specializing in engineering assessments of underwater structures. While building this business, he finished his master's degree at night in structural engineering from Brooklyn Polytechnic University in 1997.

Soon his clients were telling him that they could not find anybody to execute the repairs he was recommending. So in 1997, he started the underwater construction division, which is still a very active part of his business. An ongoing project is for the underwater work on the new Tap-



J.T. Cleary's dewatering station, lower right, was a large anchor with a single-point mooring. The dewatering site at times had a half-dozen barges waiting for the water to clarify sufficiently for decanting. The pier to Naval Weapons Station Earle is in mid-photo, and the city of Manhattan in the background.

pan Zee Bridge on the Hudson River in Tarrytown, New York.

Concerning his launch into dredging, he said, "I had been studying the dredging industry for many years and finally saw an opportunity for a smaller dredging outfit to succeed in the greater New York area. The key was the change in the perception of dredged material as a 'solid waste' to a resource for beneficial use and coastal resiliency."

He attended the Texas A&M dredging course four years ago, and performed several smaller hydraulic and mechanical dredging jobs before taking on the Leonardo project.

J.T. Cleary's other ongoing projects include a marine bridge foundation project for the Gerritsen Inlet Bridge, for which they are subcontracted to CCA Civil. The new bridge is for the New York City Department of Transportation, and will be a 150-meter steel-concrete structure, consisting of three spans. J.T. Cleary is providing a Liebherr heavy duty crane mounted on a spud barge, the tugboat *Christy Ann* and push boat

Declan C, hopper barges, a 125- by 39-foot material barge, welding machines, clamshell buckets, an ICE vibratory hammer, a Delmag diesel impact hammer, a 63-meter concrete pump, and dive equipment.

In June 2014, Cleary attended the Western Dredging Association (WEDA) meeting in Toronto where he met Carol Shobrook, a member of the WEDA Board of Directors. Shobrook has several decades of experience in various aspects of the dredging industry, as well as experience managing large projects.

In September, Cleary hired Shobrook to be the company's director of business development, with the task of growing the dredging side of the business, as well as estimating and project management.

"From an operational standpoint, we proved to the Corps we can do the work," Cleary said, "but we have to execute on the business side, and that's where Carol's skills come into play."

Shobrook's background includes environmental dredging, dewatering, beneficial re-use of dredged material and dewatering of mine tailings. She has authored articles and papers for various publications, including Mining Magazine, IOSTC and the Florida Engineering Society Journal. She worked for Genesis Water, Inc. - a dewatering equipment company in the dredging sector -- and for civil and environmental engineering firm TKW Consulting Engineers. Other positions included campaign manager for a State legislator. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, she began her career working for the Central Intelligence Agency, and received a commendation during the Gulf War. She is fluent in Portuguese, Spanish and French.

The company's headquarters is in Chestnut Ridge, New York, just north of New York City. ↙



Carol Shobrook joined J.T. Cleary last September, and will manage the company's growth into the dredging sector.




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