



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER: ELLISVILLE MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT FEBRUARY, 2011

This newsletter is produced on a periodic basis to keep members of the Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc., apprised of developments and opportunities to become involved.

Ellisville Inlet Reopened for Only 2nd Time Since 1987

Wednesday, January 19th, was a truly historic day in the life of Ellisville Marsh. For only the second time in almost 25 years, the blocked Ellisville inlet was reopened in its historical location and tides once again flowed unrestricted into and out of the marsh. Cleansing of moribund areas of the marsh quickly became apparent – dead marsh grass clumps were seen floating out, scouring of decayed material from the bottom was made apparent by a distinctive odor in the air, and large congregations of gulls gathered to feast on organisms liberated by renewed natural forces. The velocity of tidal flows in the channel increased dramatically and an impressive rip current formed at the mouth of the inlet. The Ellisville inlet had been diverted from its straight course out to Cape Cod Bay since early 2005 and marsh vegetation had continued its long-term decline, eventually exposing as much as ten acres



Ellisville Inlet before channel relocation work commenced (photo by Eric Cody).



Inlet (at left) after channel reopened, with final grading (photo by Diane Fletcher).

of bare mudflats. Why is tidal flushing so vital to a salt marsh? Because native plant species like *Spartina alterniflora* (smooth cordgrass), a key indicator of the health of a salt marsh, cannot tolerate being submerged for excessive periods of time. This was occurring on every tide cycle as efficient draining of the marsh was impeded by resistance to flow in the diverted channel.

This monumental accomplishment is the culminating event in a long and arduous

process that began in mid-2008 when the Friends filed the first of five regulatory permit applications. What is so singular about this restoration milestone?

- The Friends now hold local, state and federal permits that allow channel maintenance to be performed for the next several years without further regulatory permitting.
- Nine environmental monitoring programs are already in place to document and measure long-term, beneficial impacts of reopening the inlet.
- No taxpayer money has been spent. 100% of the funds needed for the Ellisville Marsh restoration project have come from caring individuals, families and private grants. Entergy has been a key financial supporter of the project since 2008.
- Ellisville Marsh and adjacent beaches are public-access lands, accessible by anyone 365 days a year at no cost. The Friends do not own this property; instead, we act as environmental stewards, insuring that Ellisville Marsh will eventually recover to its former healthy state and be preserved for the future.
- The Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with no paid staff. Committed volunteers with a passion for rescuing a very special place did it all.

Winter Photo Contest Deadline Fast Approaching – Don't be Left Out in the Cold!

Have you been procrastinating? Not motivated enough to go out in the cold with your camera? Well, time is running out. The deadline to submit your best winter photos of Ellisville Marsh and the surrounding watershed is fast approaching – entries must be received by February 15th. Great prizes have been donated by local merchants. To

enter, go to our web site at www.EllisvilleMarsh.org or just email your photos to us at photocontest@ellisvillemarsh.org. Winter photos less than 1.5 Mb in size only please!

Need a Tax Receipt Letter for 2010?

The Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc., is a designated 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; accordingly, all donations are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. If you donated \$250 or more in 2010, you should already have received a tax receipt letter for your records. If not, please email us at taxreceipt@ellisvillemarsh.org and we'll make sure you receive one shortly. If you gave less but would still like a tax receipt letter, we will gladly provide it.

Volunteers Needed for Beach Elevation Monitoring

Two or three new volunteers are needed to staff a second beach elevation monitoring team beginning in March. Our current team of Kelley O'Neel and Mary Ellen Mastrorilli will provide training and be working at the beach at the same time as your new team. With two teams operating, each semi-annual work cycle should be doable in a single day. This assignment requires one day on the beach in late March or early April and then again in September. No heavy lifting required. For a photo of Kelley and Mary Ellen using the equipment, please visit the first page of our October 2010 newsletter at: http://ellisvillemarsh.org/FEMcontent/Friends%20Newsletter%20Oct_2010.pdf. To volunteer, please send an email with your name and contact information to Volunteers@EllisvilleMarsh.org. And thanks!

To contact the Friends' board or share your ideas, please email us at Board@EllisvilleMarsh.org. We always welcome your inputs.