



Friends of Ellisville Marsh

Spring 2020 Newsletter

Seeking Stability and Sustainability in an Era of Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

The uneventful winter of 2019-20 has allowed the Friends to defer Ellisville inlet maintenance originally planned for March. Work to gain replacements for regulatory permits that expire in 2020 is underway. The Commonwealth's project to implement a more sustainable solution to the problem of inlet blockage is also progressing. Our volunteer team will soon be staking the nesting areas for the return of Piping Plovers and Least Terns.

Spring is just around the corner.



Why Salt Marshes Are Important in This Era of Climate Change

A new initiative to better understand the local impacts of climate change is being undertaken by the Town of Plymouth, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and Old Colony Planning Council. This initiative is funded by a state grant and is called Climate-Ready Healthy Plymouth. Its goal is to develop a Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan to evaluate how climate change will affect Plymouth and the health and vitality of its residents. The kickoff meeting invitation exhorted community leaders to “Gather YOUR stories on how climate change is affecting you and what you believe is most important to protect in Plymouth.” Here is the story the Friends recently shared in a letter to the editor of the Old Colony Memorial.

The Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc., is a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit formed in 2007 by a group of concerned Plymouth citizens to help revitalize and preserve the only coastal salt marsh in town. Our ongoing work plays an important role in combating climate change and global warming. Here’s why, according to Dr. Ellen Russell, longtime Friends’ board member and science advisor:

Salt marshes have a litany of attributes: they act as “sponges” holding water and dampening the wave energy from coastal storm surge; their habitat functions as migratory, feeding, and breeding/nursery places for shellfish, fish and waterfowl; they trap plant-based carbon in layers of peat, keeping it out of the atmosphere; they remove pollutants from our waterways before discharge to the ocean; and they act as buffers to the intrusion of salt water into private wells and septic systems.

What often are not listed are the ways an expanse of salt marsh can make us feel and the emotions it can evoke. The soothing shades of the green grasses and haze of purple when the grasses are in bloom, and the way the evening light enhances the golden autumn grasses, are the subjects of many fine art paintings. Add to the visual, the briny smell and sometimes, rotten egg odors, that vary with the barometric pressures and tides, we may be reminded of our mysterious, primordial beginnings.

Whether you are fishing from a bank; jumping into an estuary channel; kayaking through the marsh; floating in on a high tide; spotting an osprey; or just sitting and gazing, you are communing with the salt marsh and in the process lowering your blood pressure, and enhancing your mental and physical well-being.

Ellen's scientific viewpoint and personal sentiments help to explain why nearly 200 Plymouth residents and people from beyond our town's borders have worked for the last dozen years to help Ellisville Marsh weather the challenges of climate change, some of which have already become evident. The stakes are

even higher today than when we formed the organization.

Ellisville Marsh Inlet – Then and Now



Fishing boats leaving Ellisville Harbor in 1981 at high tide

Ellisville harbor, located within the marsh, was a local center for fishing and lobstering until the 1980s.



Ellisville marsh inlet in 2020 at low tide

Although no longer navigable, the channel connecting Ellisville marsh with Cape Cod Bay has remained open this winter.



Board Decision

Ellisville Inlet Maintenance Deferred

The Friends' board of directors has decided not to perform inlet maintenance work in 2020. We had taken proactive steps to be ready to go in March, including requesting and receiving a waiver of time-of-year restrictions from the MassDEP, executing an agreement with our trusted contractor Richmond Excavating and carefully assessing the condition of the channel. Although our Army Corps of Engineers permit expired on February 4th, we were in a position to be grandfathered under the permit if maintenance had become necessary. Fortunately though, this winter has not produced the powerful storms we have seen in recent years and the inlet remains open and tidal flushing of the marsh is good.



Clean-up Day - April 25th

Join us for the Friends' annual beach and marsh clean-up day. It's a great way to meet your neighbors and make new friends. Details to follow. This is an outdoor event.

Welcome Spring! Bird Walk - May 2nd

The Friends are teaming up with the Wildlands Trust to offer the Welcome Spring! bird walk. This year's walk will again be led by Manomet's Evan Dalton and Brian Harrington. Details to follow. This is an outdoor event.



Regulatory Update

The Friends have retained LEC Environmental to assist us in acquiring our third US Army Corps of Engineers permit to enable continuing maintenance of the Ellisville inlet. This is our only federal permit. While the Friends were able to gain a replacement permit five years ago, the effort took more than a year and imposed a significant burden on Friends' directors who prepared the application and responded to agency information requests. LEC has requested permit re-authorization on our behalf and we are awaiting action by the agency.

Project to Reconstruct State Park Rock Jetty Continues

The Commonwealth's project to reconstruct the rock jetty that helps define the north side of the Ellisville inlet and channel is progressing toward a final report and permitting strategy expected to be released this summer. See prior article at: [Fall 2019 Friends newsletter](#). Key challenges are expected to be funding and equipment access.

Stranded Marine Animals? Who to Call

Periodically, marine life comes ashore on Ellisville beaches. You may find newborn seal pups in the Spring, sea turtles suffering the effects of hypothermia in winter, and marine mammals that have died from disease or been struck by ships. On February 18th, a dead Harbor Porpoise washed in. What to do if you

come across living or dead marine mammals or sea turtles? If they are alive, don't touch them. Baby seals may crawl toward you but it's best not to touch them and to clear away quickly - their mothers will come and retrieve them. For serious situations, call Marine Animal Rescue - the New England Aquarium is lead organization for the Plymouth area. You can reach them at [\(617\) 973-5247](tel:6179735247).



Baby harbor seal on beach. [Source of photo-National Marine Life Center](#)

Friends' Board of Directors - Who Does What?

Ever wondered how the work of protecting Ellisville Marsh gets done? How the organization is governed?

The Friends are governed by a board of directors, currently nine in number. A tight rein is kept on spending - every expenditure greater than \$100 is subject to a vote by the board. Perhaps most noteworthy is the fact that we are a *working board*. Each board member has a specific role. Here's what each director does:

Eric Cody--president and lead person for regulatory permitting.

Frank Doyle--treasurer and chief financial officer.

Pete Hruby--website and online services coordinator.

Diane Jordan--photography and threatened species monitoring.

Paula Marcoux--events coordination and threatened species monitoring.

Susan Pleadwell--secretary and membership coordinator.

Ellen Russell--scientific advisor and investigator of living shoreline solutions.

Jack Scambos--past president and lead for inlet maintenance planning/contracting.

Brad Winn--birding events lead person.

To reach any of our directors, or you wish to help in any of these areas, email us at board@EllisvilleMarsh.org.

Donate Now

Visit us at: www.EllisvilleMarsh.org

Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc.

PO Box 1728, Sagamore Beach
MA 02562 United States

You received this email because you signed up on our website or made a purchase from us.



[Unsubscribe](#)

