



*For immediate release*

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## **ELLISVILLE MARSH GETS NEW LEASE ON LIFE**

*Non-Profit Group Lands Final Permit to Reopen Ellisville Inlet*

November 2, 2010 – Plymouth, MA.

The long-blocked inlet to Ellisville Marsh will be reopened this winter. The Friends of Ellisville Marsh, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has done what some state agency staffers initially said was impossible – the group has obtained all of the local, state and federal permits necessary to reopen the inlet. This, the Friends say, will fully re-establish tidal flows and help marsh vegetation and water quality rebound over time. The marsh inlet has been partially blocked for all but fourteen months of the past twenty years.

The Friends group embarked on its journey through the complex permitting process more than two years ago with little more than a deep concern for a special place and a willingness to work hard to reverse decades of damage to the marsh ecosystem. The group successfully navigated its way through what it describes as a “minefield” of regulatory permitting requirements to achieve its stated purpose of enhancing fisheries and wildlife in the marsh. According to Eric Cody, the organization’s president, “We encountered resistance from some state agencies along the way because Ellisville Marsh is designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Having this designation means a very high standard must be met before anyone can touch it, even if important environmental benefits will be realized.”

Winning the right to reopen the inlet required the Friends to complete the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review and obtain four permits. These included an Order of Conditions from the Plymouth Conservation Commission, a Water Quality Certification and Chapter 91 Waterways permit from the Massachusetts DEP, and a General Permit for work in US waterways from the US Army Corps of Engineers, which was the final permit awarded.

What the Friends group has accomplished so far may be unprecedented in Massachusetts. Every dollar the non-profit has raised has come from private donations and grants so no taxpayer money has been used. Moreover, the permits allow the group to maintain the inlet over the next several years, as was the practice until the mid 1980s. Cody is quick to point out that the permitting process has been expensive and more money is needed to fully fund the dredging scheduled for this winter, “In spite of the fact that we did a lot of the permitting leg work ourselves, it cost a great deal of money to obtain these permits so additional donations are needed to cover the dredging work.” He adds, “Ironically, gaining the permits to do this work cost a lot more than the work itself will cost.”

At this time, the Friends have been offered a 100% match for new donations. This means that every dollar collected until year-end will be matched by one of the Friends’ founding members. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The Friends need help now to complete this important restoration project. Anyone interested in learning more about the Friends or making a donation should visit the organization’s web site at [www.EllisvilleMarsh.org](http://www.EllisvilleMarsh.org).

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