



Friends Newsletter: Ellisville Marsh Restoration Project May, 2012

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.

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- **Beach clean-up nets less trash**
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Hold the Date!

The Friends' Annual Meeting will be held on **Saturday, July 14th at 10:00 am** at the Community Room of the Sagamore Fire Station. Please plan to join us. Further details including the agenda will be sent in June.

Environmental Monitoring Kicks Off 2012 Data Collection Cycle

Volunteer teams kicked off several of this year's environmental monitoring and data collection programs in March. Two teams, comprised of Kelley O'Neel, Mary Ellen Mastrorilli, Marc and Lisa Colburn, hit the beach at low tide in late March and early April to record beach elevations that scientifically document shifts in sand and cobble deposition. Using one set of second-hand equipment we were given and another that we built ourselves, the teams measure in centimeters the beach elevation every five feet along transects (imaginary straight lines) from the dunes out to the low water mark, sometimes hundreds of feet. Graphs comparable to surveyors' sections can be created from these measurements, which our volunteers have been doing semi-annually for several years now. By analyzing how the elevations change over time, insights can be gained into how the beach is changing, especially in light of the now-fixed position of the marsh inlet.



photo courtesy of Jeanne Lesperance

In the same time frame, Diane Fletcher, Bobbi Martino, Paula Marcoux, Eric Cody, Becky Harris, and Ellen Jedrey from Mass Audubon's Coastal Waterbird Program established initial parameters for this year's monitoring of threatened shorebird nests on Ellisville Beach. The objective is to protect specific areas that are being frequented by Piping Plovers and, later in the season, Least Terns as they plan their nests to be perfectly camouflaged and safe from predators. These areas are indicated by "scrapes" the male makes in the sand for the female to lay eggs in, among other indicators. Piping Plovers returned to Ellisville several weeks early this year and active nests have already been found by our volunteer team. Watch where you step!

What might we expect to see changing in the marsh this year? We're hopeful that the smooth cord grass (*Spartina alterniflora*)



Red foxes set up den near
Ellisville Beach. Photos
courtesy of Diane Fletcher

Pret Woodburn's true talents
become more apparent on
Clean-up Day.



One of Ellisville Beach's nesting Piping Plover pairs on April Fool's Day
photo courtesy of Henry Riter

that is the predominant plant species in the damaged back marsh will begin to spread and recolonize the bare mud flats. With the improved tidal flushing that began more than a year ago, the plant's roots are likely to have been spreading but last summer was too early for new growth to have been visible. Programs are in place to measure such changes in vegetation.

2012 Beach and Marsh Cleanup Nets Less Trash

On Saturday, April 21st, Friends' volunteers mounted their annual assault on trash, debris and other foreign objects that had accumulated over the winter in the marsh, on the barrier beach and along the roads that edge the marsh. This year we again received support and materials from the Town of Plymouth, which orchestrated a month-long, Town-wide cleanup effort. This year's highlight finds included:

- More of the small, plastic mesh disks that were released from the Hookset, NH, sewerage treatment plant after a heavy rainstorm in March 2011. Several million of the disks were carried down the Merrimack River to the ocean and have been depositing on beaches throughout the Gulf of Maine since.
- A vintage crank shaft found in Ellisville Harbor.
- Auto parts from the "non-vintage" vehicle that went off Ellisville Road and into the marsh this past winter.
- Damaged lobster traps washed in by nor'easters.
- Clusters of alcoholic beverage bottles, large and small.
- Deflated party balloons whose helium is long gone.

Clean-up organizers Peter Hruby and Paula Marcoux notice that the volume of trash and debris collected is smaller this year.



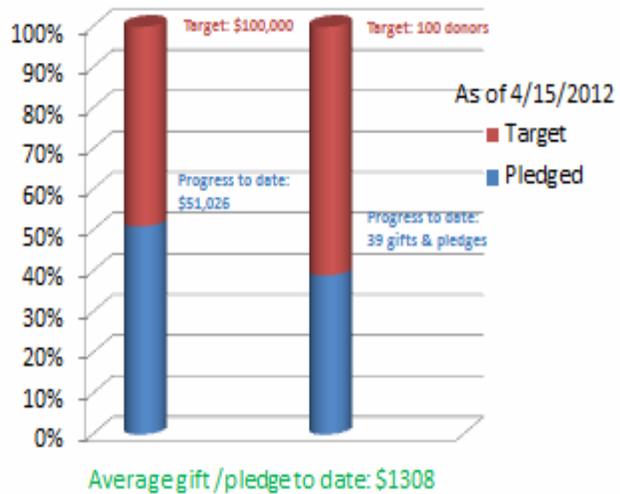
Donate Now

You can now give to the Friends directly on our web site at www.EllisvilleMarsh.org. The mail-in donation form is still available for download there too!

Long-term Endowment Fund Update

We are excited to report that the Friends' first-ever, Long-Term Endowment Fund campaign, which kicked off last November, has now passed the halfway mark. Thanks to a significant gift we recently received, the total of gifts and pledges has now reached \$51,000 from 39 generous donors. If you haven't already weighed in and helped assure the long-term health of Ellisville Marsh, please consider making a gift or pledge today.

Ellisville Marsh Long Term Endowment Fund: Progress Toward Campaign Targets



To provide feedback or ask questions about anything in this newsletter, please email us at board@EllisvilleMarsh.org

Some of the best ideas have come from you.