



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER: ELLISVILLE MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT OCTOBER 1, 2009

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.

UPDATE ON REGULATORY PERMITTING

Two applications for regulatory permits to relocate the Ellisville inlet to its historic location prior to 1987 are now pending before the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). Three state agencies have submitted comments to the MassDEP, mostly related to specific environmental monitoring programs they are asking the Friends be

Have Old Photos or Documents?

Karyl Silva (gilkaryl@peoplepc.com) and Bobbi Martino (Bobbi43sml@aol.com) are assembling an archive of historical information about Ellisville Marsh – let them know what you have.

ordered to undertake as conditions of the permits. Ellen Russell, Eric Cody, and Stan Humphries of LEC Environmental, our consultant, prepared the Friends' reply comments. Any member who would like to read these comments should send an email to Board@EllisvilleMarsh.org and we'll be happy to

email them. We remain optimistic that these permits will be granted, after which we will submit the application for the final permit needed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

FRIENDS' VOLUNTEERS MAP ELLISVILLE EEL GRASS BED

Did you notice two men in a yellow kayak off Ellisville beach around 7:00 am one Saturday in August? If so, it was Friends' directors Henry Riter and Eric Cody recording GPS coordinates along the edge of the eel grass bed that lies just off shore (red dots on the accompanying figure). The Friends' initial attempt to map the eel grass bed as a baseline against which future changes can be monitored used a kayak borrowed from Vlad and Marie Hruby and GPS unit borrowed from Randy Parker of Land Management Systems, Inc. Measurement was done during a seasonally low tide, just twenty-four hours before Tropical Storm Bill roared through. Mass Fisheries has insisted that the eel grass be closely monitored before and after the inlet is dredged.

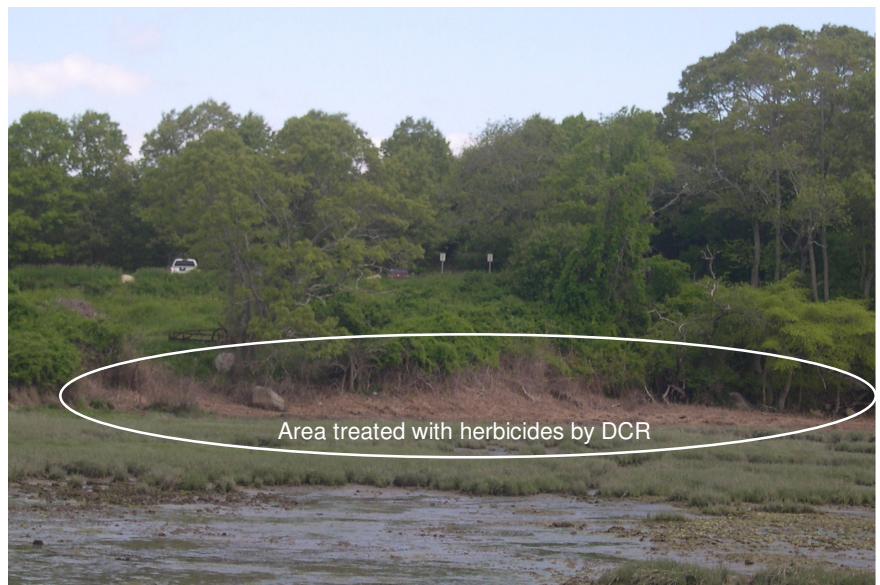


NEW EDUCATIONAL BROCHURE OFF TO THE PRINTER

Thanks to a \$1000 grant from the New England Grassroots Environment Fund, the Friends will soon be printing our first educational outreach brochure. A near-final copy of the two-page brochure is attached so you can see how your board of directors has chosen to present the organization and its mission to the world. Any members who would like printed copies to share with work colleagues, friends and family should send an email to Board@EllisvilleMarsh.org. Special thanks to Friends member Adela Hruby for her assistance in producing the graphic design and to David Marsh, Don Maricle, Peter Hruby, Henry Riter, Eric Cody, and the David Ellis Family, who contributed photographs.

PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS IN ELLISVILLE MARSH

Phragmites australis, also known as the common reed, is an invasive plant that spreads in salt marshes when water quality deteriorates or become brackish. Capable of reaching heights of six to twenty feet, it can spread rapidly under the right conditions, displacing native and higher quality vegetation. A stand of Phragmites can be seen along Ellisville Road (further research is needed to determine whether this is a native variety of the plant). The invasive variety is growing in the stagnant pool



below the bluff on Lookout Point where the tidal inlet channel ran until late 2003. An additional stand at the marsh's edge below the parking lot at Ellisville Harbor State Park was treated with herbicides by DCR in late summer 2008. Scientific studies have shown that improving tidal flows to a salt marsh, as the Friends' proposed inlet relocation project is designed to do, should control the spread of this plant naturally.

STORM-BREACH OF BARRIER SPIT HOLDING (SO FAR)

As many beachgoers have undoubtedly noticed, Mother Nature took direct action earlier this year to reduce the length of the inlet channel (no permits required!). A nor'easter in late February breached the barrier spit and created a new inlet, reducing the length of the channel through Ellisville Beach by as much as 400 feet. This natural event appears to have improved tidal flows in and out of the marsh somewhat. However, similar events in the past were often short-lived. Accordingly, the Friends are not wavering in our pursuit of the regulatory permits needed to fully restore tidal flows to Ellisville Marsh.

ELLISVILLE MARSH FISHERIES

Improved tidal range and water quality expected to result from the proposed relocation of the inlet channel should also improve fishing prospects in Ellisville Marsh. Indeed, that is one of the stated objectives of our project. In the months after the 2003 dredging, large striped bass were taken by fishermen in the back marsh. And in the past few weeks, possibly as a result of marginal improvement in tidal flows (see article above), legal-sized stripers have again been taken.



Are You Good with Numbers?

The Friends are looking for a dependable person who is good at keeping track of receipts and expenses and can balance a checkbook to transition into the role of treasurer later this year or early in 2010. Ellen Russell, Friends' treasurer since 2007, is playing a leadership role in setting up our environmental monitoring programs and needs to be relieved of her financial duties.

Friends director Henry Riter proudly displays the 29" striper he caught in the marsh on September 7th (Photo by Paula Riter).

The Friends will be required to monitor the presence of finfish in the marsh as a condition of permits to be issued by the MassDEP (see article above). We propose to ask fishermen to report their catches by date and time and to provide details such as species, length, weight and location caught. We hope to create a reporting feature on the Friends' website (www.EllisvilleMarsh.org) for this purpose.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS TRICKLING IN

We are happy to report that the Friends have received numerous membership renewals since the start of this membership year on July 1st. Revenues generated by renewals have enabled us to cover current consulting costs and maintain a small, positive cash flow. With conservative management of the organization's financial resources, we believe we can

Our New Mailing Address:

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complete the permitting process. However, additional funds will be needed for the dredging itself and for environmental monitoring equipment we are unable to borrow or lease. Our membership renewal form can be found at:

<http://ellisvillemarsh.org/FEMcontent/membershipapplication.pdf>

TO CONTACT THE BOARD OR SHARE YOUR IDEAS:

Please email us at Board@EllisvilleMarsh.org . We welcome your ideas and inputs.