



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER: ELLISVILLE MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT FEBRUARY 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.

THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

Three new directors have been added to the Friends' board. At the directors' meeting on January 21st, Paula Marcoux, Kelley O'Neel and Henry Riter joined the board, bringing its overall size to eight members. Each new board member has already demonstrated support for the Friends' mission and brings enthusiasm, commitment, and a fresh perspective to meeting the challenges of restoring and preserving Ellisville Marsh.

Winter tides and storms continue to re-sculpt the Ellisville inlet.



INTERAGENCY REVIEW PROCESS COMPLETED IN ADVANCE OF PERMITTING

As you know from a prior newsletter, the project to restore tidal flows to Ellisville Marsh has completed two of five critical stages. The project has obtained its MEPA (Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act) certificate and an Order of Conditions from the Plymouth Conservation Commission. These are significant milestones.

Since these objectives were achieved in September, the Friends have been engaged in a detailed interagency review process to resolve issues that surfaced during the MEPA process. This review process also served to clarify requirements that will need to be met for permits to be issued by the MA DEP (Department of Environmental Protection). Three half-day meetings were held, each attended by as

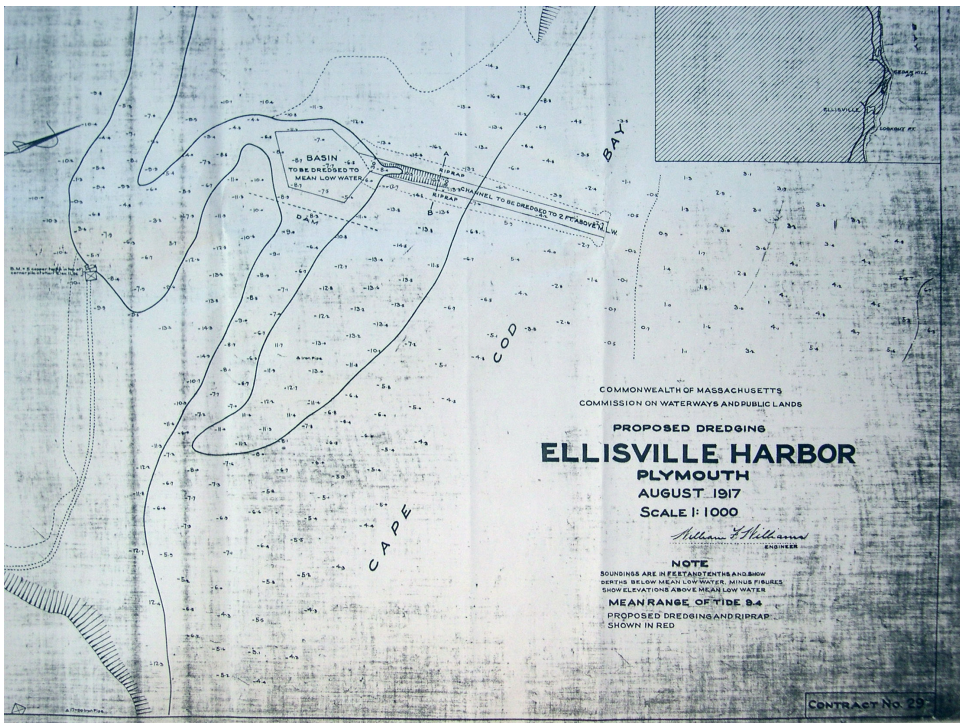
many as fifteen agency representatives, several Friends' directors and Stan Humphries of LEC Environmental, the Friends' consultant. Participating MA agencies included:

- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Division of Marine Fisheries
- Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
- Office of Coastal Zone Management

The Plymouth Conservation Commission and Department of Environmental Management also sent representatives.

During the interagency review, project plans surfaced showing that the Commonwealth and the Town of Plymouth have periodically dredged the inlet since 1917. One of our arguments all along has been that we are simply asking to return to the more responsible environmental stewardship practices of the past. These historic dredging plans are, in their own right, waterways licenses. Accordingly, the Friends plan to submit a permit application that builds on this past pattern of inlet maintenance and reduces the burden of proof placed on the Friends.

Did You Know That Ellisville Marsh Has a New Osprey Platform?
An osprey platform was erected on the state park side of Ellisville Marsh last fall as an Eagle Scout project. Several ospreys fish in the marsh during summer months so perhaps a pair will take up residence.



1917 Ellisville Harbor Dredging Plan prepared by the Massachusetts Commission on Waterways and Public Lands.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

In spite of the heavy cost burden associated with the permitting process to relocate the Ellisville inlet, the Friends remain in reasonably sound financial shape. The board of directors has developed realistic budgets and managed spending closely since the organization's inception almost two years ago. Cash flow was slightly positive for all of 2008, meaning that we took in a little more than we spent. Administrative and overhead expenses have been kept to a bare minimum, with the result that 94% of money spent to date by the Friends has been on work related directly to the marsh restoration program itself. This measure of so-called "organizational efficiency" puts the Friends in a class with the best-managed non-profits for which comparable data are available. (See for example: <http://www.charitynavigator.org/>).

Did You Know That Ellisville Marsh is Designated an *Important Bird Area* by MA Audubon?

Ever see Bald Eagles in the marsh? Black-bellied Plovers? Green-winged teal? American Avocet? Email us your sightings and we'll issue alerts when interesting birds are reported.

However, our project estimate indicates that at least another \$10,000 will be required to complete the permitting process as it currently stands. This is very much in line with the original project estimate we developed in 2007. ***So, if you haven't already renewed your Friends' membership, please consider doing so today. The mail-in application form can be found on the***

Friends' web site at: <http://EllisvilleMarsh.org/FEMcontent/membershipapplication.pdf>.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

The Friends' project to relocate the Ellisville inlet to its historical position and thereby restore tidal flows will have a number of critical data collection and monitoring requirements imposed as permit conditions, including most or all of the following:

- Piping Plover nest monitoring and protection program
- Beach elevation measurements
- Water quality sampling
- Offshore eel grass monitoring
- Shellfish survey work
- Marsh vegetation monitoring
- Finfish monitoring via reporting of fishermen's catches

If you are interested in volunteering to help on any of these data collection and monitoring programs, please email us at Board@EllisvilleMarsh.org. Team leaders or outside experts will provide needed training and the time commitments should be quite manageable. Our ability to conduct past monitoring programs using community volunteers has preserved the Friends' limited funds.

To CONTACT THE BOARD OR SHARE YOUR IDEAS:

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