



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER: ELLISVILLE MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT MAY, 2011

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.

Summer Begins Early Here—Environmental Monitoring is Underway!

Now that the long-blocked marsh inlet has finally been reopened (see February Newsletter for details), emphasis has shifted to documenting the effects of this important change on the health of Ellisville Marsh through its bird, plant and aquatic life. A wide variety of environmental indicators are being closely watched—threatened species, water quality, tidal ranges and wetlands vegetation, to name a few. The



High-stepping, male Piping Plover tries to impress his partner.

This year's nest monitoring on Ellisville beach began in April.

(Photo courtesy of Diane Fletcher)

objective is to determine if re-locating the marsh inlet and restoring tidal flows has a beneficial effect on fish, plants, and wildlife. It is likely to take several years to complete this evaluation.

Volunteers Sought for Summer Monitoring Programs

Ellen Russell, former Friends' Director and doctoral candidate at UMass-Amherst, is looking for several, "relatively fit" volunteers to assist her with environmental data collection this summer. Individuals who have worked on these programs in the past are encouraged to re-volunteer. Newcomers will be trained. Time commitments are for specific weeks but very manageable.

- **Water quality sampling** – 2 or 3 volunteers to help collect water samples under Ellen's supervision, once each in July and August.
- **Vegetation surveys** – 2 or 3 volunteers needed during a one-week period in the second or third week in August.
- **Deployment of tidal gauges** – One person is needed in late July to assist with placement of three submerged tidal gauges. (Scuba diver not required!)

To sign up or request further information, please send an email with your specific volunteer interest and contact information to: volunteer@EllisvilleMarsh.org

Alien Invaders Found in Ellisville

Ever noticed that pretty wildflower with the purple blossoms growing on the edge of the Ellisville channel amidst the poison ivy (see photo)? It's called Spotted Knapweed and it's one of a number of invasive plants that were found growing around Ellisville Marsh during a walk-around survey in April. The survey was led by Irina Kadis of the Arnold Arboretum and board member of the Friends of Myles Standish State Forest. A preliminary plan is afoot to interrupt the plant's seeding cycle in August – stay tuned!

Spotted Knapweed

According to the website salicicola.com, Spotted Knapweed is believed to emit substances inhibiting the growth of other plants. Soon after the invasion it becomes the sole inhabitant of the territory. Photo shows Knapweed in bloom – late summer.

(Photo Credit: salicicola.com)



New Volunteers Trained to Measure Beach Elevation Changes

Marc and Lisa Colburn have joined Friends' Director Kelley O'Neel and partner Mary Ellen Mastroilli on the team that records changes in beach elevations in seven Ellisville locations, twice per year. These measurements enable us to accurately document buildup and removal of sand that results from wind, tides and flows through the marsh inlet *without having to retain a survey team*. Training was conducted in March, enabling the first cycle of measurements to be taken prior to nesting by threatened birds, which can block access to parts of the beach for up to several months. A new Emery Rod apparatus for use by Marc and Lisa was fabricated at no cost to the Friends over the winter. With four team members, each measurement cycle can now be completed in a single day. Thanks to Marc and Lisa for stepping up to the plate, and to Kelley and Mary Ellen for sharing their know-how!



Another Successful Clean-up

Hardy volunteers turned out on April 30th for the Friends' annual marsh and beach clean-up event, coordinated with the Wildlands Trust and Town of Plymouth.

Director Peter Hruby, the event coordinator, observed that each year less trash is recovered and that most is washed in by the tides rather than left by humans.

(Photo courtesy of Diane Fletcher)

Who Will be Ellisville Marsh's Next Webmaster?

Do you have IT skills? Like designing web sites? Have a friend who does? If so, have we got an opportunity for you! Our web site (www.EllisvilleMarsh.org) is in need of an update and possibly a design makeover. Director Peter Hruby created it and has artfully maintained it since 2007. The plan is for Peter to transition responsibility for the site to its next talented webmaster by year-end. Email us at board@EllisvilleMarsh.org if you or a friend may be interested.

Connected with Mass Audubon

Wayne Petersen, Director of Mass Audubon's Important Bird Area Program, and Kathy Parsons, Director of the Coastal Waterbird Program, led this year's Ellisville Bird Walk on Mother's Day.

(Photo Credit: Eric Cody)



Did You Know that Ellisville Harbor is a designated Massachusetts Important Bird Area?

Check it out:

http://www.massaudubon.org/Birds_and_Birding/IBAs/index.php

To contact the Friends' board or share your ideas, please email us at Board@EllisvilleMarsh.org. We always welcome your inputs!