



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER: ELLISVILLE MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT OCTOBER 15, 2008

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.

REGULATORY UPDATE: ELLISVILLE MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT PASSES TWO HURDLES

The Friends' project to restore Ellisville Marsh by relocating the channel inlet to its historical location passed two important regulatory hurdles last month:

- On September 5th the MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs issued the project a MEPA (Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act) certificate stating that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is not required for the project to proceed to permitting (see further discussion below).
- On September 8th, the Plymouth Conservation Commission held a public hearing on our Notice of Intent. The hearing was closed after a very positive discussion and the Commission voted unanimously to issue an Order of Conditions. This Order is needed to apply for the two MA Department of Environmental Protection permits the project needs.

1. INTERAGENCY REVIEW PROCESS TO BEGIN OCTOBER 20TH

The MEPA Certificate issued to the Ellisville Marsh Inlet Relocation project, while (thankfully) not requiring that an EIR be prepared, laid out requirements that will need to be met before permits will be issued by the MassDEP. Most importantly, the Friends are required to participate in an interagency process with DCR, MassDEP, Mass Division of Marine Fisheries, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management, and the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program "for pre-application review and permitting review." MEPA considers our proposed project to improve the health of Ellisville Marsh to be a *short-term* solution, whose requirements should be clarified by this interagency process. The MEPA certificate goes on to state that financing of a *long-term* solution at Ellisville Marsh should come from the interagency group. This policy statement should be very helpful to the recovery of the marsh and its ability to sustain itself over the long term. Our first meeting with these agencies is scheduled for Monday, October 20th. Directors Ellen Russell and Eric Cody, and consultant Stan Humphries, will represent the Friends. Further information is available on how we propose these meetings be conducted if you are interested.

2. HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS IN YOUR ATTIC?

The Friends are continually interested in obtaining historical accounts and photographs relating to Ellisville Marsh. Please contact us at Board@EllisvilleMarsh.org if you have items so we can make copies.



← Thanks to Don and Priscilla Maricle for this historical photo of Ellisville Harbor.



Renew at the \$100 level or higher to receive this Friends cap. (Logo design contributed by Adela Hruby)

3. MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS FLOWING IN

Since our 2008-09 membership year began as of the Annual Meeting on July 12th, we have received membership renewals from about 60% of our 2007-08 members, as well as some new members. We are very pleased by the continuing, community support, especially since the permitting process is requiring us to spend down our account. By judicious use of our financial resources, and in the absence of major setbacks from participating state agencies, we hope to be able to complete the complex permitting process in early 2009. We continue to pursue grant funding under national programs for coastal wetlands, estuaries and habitat restoration. *If you haven't already renewed, 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>.

4. SINCERE THANKS TO OUR ELECTED REPS, MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

During the MEPA process, a threatening situation arose in which two state agencies publicly stated their opposition to our project to restore Ellisville Marsh. The offices of Senate President Therese Murray, Representative Vinny deMacedo, and Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray took an active position on our behalf during this process and the positive outcome is undoubtedly due in no small part to their efforts. We extend our sincere thanks to them for their ongoing help. Thanks also to the following Friends members who took the time to write letters to MEPA and/or the Plymouth Conservation Commission: Elizabeth and Barry David, Dan Ellis, Kristina Engstrom, Vlad Hruby, Greg Lano, Paul and Bobbi Martino, Sheila McNulty, Kelley O'Neel, Robert and Pamela Palmer, Tom Russell, Ann Skelly and Sheila Valicenti. We also appreciated the supporting letters sent in by the

Cedarville Steering Committee; David Gould, Plymouth's Environmental Manager; and Ed Reiner, Senior Wetlands Scientist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

5. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SETS VEGETATION MONITORING BASELINE

On the morning of August 20th, the Friends captured our first color infrared photographs of Ellisville Marsh from the air. Analysis of this imagery (as shown below) will allow us to compare the extent and health of marsh vegetation as it changes over time, particularly after the channel inlet is reopened. This flight was the final part of our small contract with Col-East, an aerial photogrammetry firm operating out of North Adams, MA. Col-East donated the cost of the flight and photography, significantly reducing the overall cost to the Friends.



6. TO CONTACT THE BOARD OR PROVIDE FEEDBACK:

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