



Friends of Ellisville Marsh

Fall 2021 Newsletter

Looking Back on Summer

It was a summer in which climate change seemed to manifest itself in the weather. It was hot. The humidity stuck around. When it rained, it poured. The winds were up as the jet stream followed new patterns. Surf whipped up by the winds washed volumes of goopy red seaweed onto the beach where it decomposed, issuing a distinct odor into the surrounding neighborhood. Through it all, the natural environment at Ellisville Marsh and its adjacent barrier beach remained constant. We had the best year for Piping Plover nesting in fifteen years. Eight chicks fledged, far higher than our long-term average of two per year. A robust nesting colony was established by Least Terns. Tern chicks could be seen running around the cobbled area near the marsh inlet. Marsh vegetation continued to spread from its foothold east of the dunes, providing chicks with cover from oppressive heat, heavy downpours, and predators. Our latest environmental intern, Anna Bishop, has headed back to the University of Maine. We continue to wrestle with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts over a long-term, sustainable solution to the problem of periodic Ellisville Marsh inlet blockage. In short, the global pandemic failed to slow us down.



Day-old Piping Plover chicks on Ellisville Beach in May.
Photo courtesy of Diane Jordan.

Inlet Maintenance Likely in Early 2022

Recent aerial images of Ellisville Marsh and its barrier beach show a well-established, but low-elevation, barrier spit at the marsh inlet (see photo below). The barrier spit becomes submerged at high tide so tidal flows into and out of the salt marsh are not yet restricted. However, winter storms are likely to build height and create the need for maintenance of the inlet by mid-March. All of the necessary local, state, and federal permits required to conduct periodic inlet maintenance are in the Friends' hands. Preliminary steps to enable work in March will begin in December to preserve the option.



Mike Brennan's Latest Aerial View of Ellisville Marsh and Beach September 2021

The "hook" at the eastern end of the marsh channel indicates the formation of a barrier spit that will gradually divert the channel and cause tidal flow restriction over time.

Anna Bishop Wraps Up Her Summer of Environmental Data Collection

Local college student gains 'total immersion' field experience at Ellisville Marsh

Anna Bishop, the latest in a string of college students with an interest in environmental science to work for the Friends, has completed her first season of data collection. She was trained and supervised by Friends' director and science advisor Ellen Russell. Anna has returned to her studies for the fall semester at the University of Maine at Orono, where she is majoring in Zoology.



In Anna's own words...

"It was a privilege to work with Dr. Ellen Russell and all the Friends of Ellisville Marsh. I greatly enjoyed learning about the fascinating natural habitat that surrounds us. Every time I walked out through it during the vegetation survey, I was reminded of how much this dynamic, diverse,

and beautiful ecosystem matters to so many of our local organisms (including humans!). I would like to thank all of the Friends of Ellisville Marsh for giving me the opportunity to work with Dr. Russell to help preserve and protect this invaluable natural treasure. Ellen has taught me the names, habitats, and growth patterns of our local marsh flora, and knowing these has given me a deeper appreciation for the inhabitants of this unique coastal wetland. Ellisville Marsh has a special place in my heart, and I feel incredibly lucky to have learned more about its ecology. I also feel lucky that my neighbors and friends - also the marsh's neighbors and friends - are committed to protecting this salt marsh and the wildlife that rely on it."

Update on the Commonwealth's Ellisville Inlet Stabilization Project

Phase 2 of the long-awaited study by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to identify, design, engineer, and implement a sustainable, long-term solution to the problem of periodic blockage of the Ellisville inlet has taken another turn. After a project delay of more than a year, the draft report has been released to the stakeholders for review. Unfortunately, the Friends were excluded from all discussions and decisions subsequent to the kickoff meeting in spite of our having "earned a seat at the table" with fifteen years of work on the site. The draft report estimated the cost to rebuild the deteriorated rock jetty on the Ellisville Harbor State Park side of the inlet, and to reconstruct dunes north of the inlet, at almost \$6 million. Members of the Friends' board carefully reviewed the draft report and submitted detailed comments to the project team. A project meeting is scheduled for later this month.

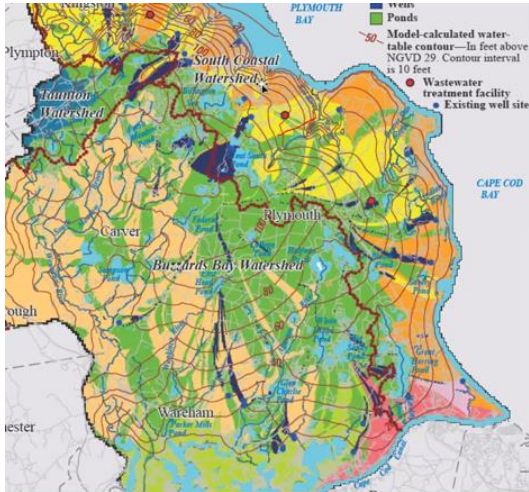
Linda Frascarella Joins the Friends' Board

Linda Frascarella has been elected to the Friends' board of directors. Linda has spent her summers in Ellisville since 1980 and has watched as the area has grown and evolved. She has a background in finance, teaching, technology, and project management. Linda and her extended family have always enjoyed the Ellisville area, walking the beach, boating, fishing, and hiking the trails. She would like to keep the area protected so future generations can appreciate all it has to offer.

Friends' Website is Back Up, and

Refreshed

Thanks to a team effort involving Friends' directors Pete Hruby and Linda Frascarella, and volunteer Nick Frascarella, the Friends' website has been fully restored on a more resilient platform with new features and graphics added. As noted in an earlier special newsletter, the site crashed on its earlier platform and had to be completely rebuilt. Go take a look for yourself at www.EllisvilleMarsh.org.



Town of Plymouth Wins State Grant to Study Saltwater Intrusion under Climate Change

A public/private partnership of the Town and numerous nonprofits, led by the Southeast Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance, has won a grant under the Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program to predict, assess, and mitigate saltwater intrusion. We will be following the project closely.

The membership year began July 1. Renew your membership now!

Your comments, questions, and suggestions are always welcomed.

Contact us any time at: Info@EllisvilleMarsh.org

Visit us at: www.EllisvilleMarsh.org

Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc.

PO Box 1728, Sagamore Beach
MA 02562 United States

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