



Friends of Ellisville Marsh

Special Announcement

Ellisville Marsh Inlet Successfully Reopened

*Friends conduct inlet maintenance for seventh time in eleven
years*

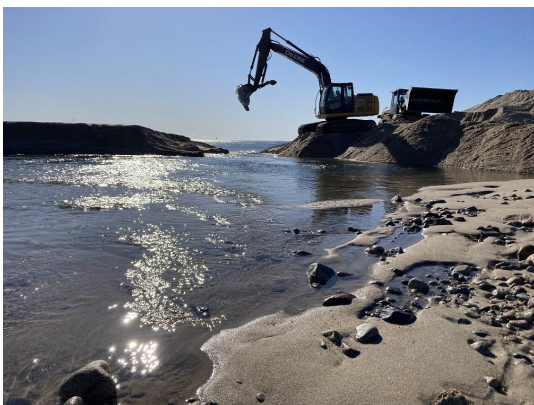
Inlet Maintenance in Photos
(click on photo to enlarge)



Aerial image showing the
blocked inlet. Photo
courtesy of Mike Brennan.



Work gets underway. Photo
courtesy of Mike Brennan.



George R. Richmond, Inc.
breaches the barrier spit
and releases the backed up
water. Photo courtesy of
Paula Marcoux.



The inlet is restored to its
most efficient path for tidal
flushing. Photo courtesy of
Eric Cody.

March 24, 2022
For immediate release

The Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc., a Plymouth-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has once again reopened the blocked tidal inlet connecting Ellisville Marsh with Cape Cod Bay, restoring tidal flows that help maintain the health of fisheries and wildlife in the salt marsh. The work was performed by local contractor George R. Richmond, Inc. on March 21 and 22 under contract to the Friends. Richmond has performed this work for the Friends seven times since early 2011 and is highly trusted for his firm's deep understanding of the natural forces involved and knowledge of how to use them beneficially. The Friends received the full cooperation of the Wildlands Trust, the land conservation organization which owns Shifting Lots Preserve, the property on which the inlet work is performed.

According to Friends' president Eric Cody, a barrier spit at the mouth of the inlet had grown in height and length to a point at which tidal flows into and out of the marsh were becoming severely restricted. "Thanks to this winter's nor'easters, the inlet had become so distorted and flow-restricted that the salt marsh was not able to fully drain in the time available between tide cycles. A consequence of this was that native wetlands vegetation such as *Spartina alterniflora* was essentially drowning in the lower areas of the marsh."

Cody points out that formation of the barrier spit is not something new. "This is a problem that goes back hundreds, if not thousands, of years," he says. Major winter storms block the inlet by pumping sediment into the mouth of the channel through a process known as avulsion. An estimated fifty million gallons of water, more than 2,000 gallons per second, flow each way through the inlet during every six-hour tide cycle so it's easy to imagine what even a partial blockage can do. Climate change is exacerbating the problem by producing more powerful storms.

The Friends are working with the Town of Plymouth and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on a project to implement a long-term, sustainable solution to the challenge of periodic inlet blockage that involves rebuilding the rock jetty on the northern side of the Ellisville inlet. The jetty was built around 1960 and its currently degraded condition contributes to the blockage problem.

Nature-based approaches such as planting of native vegetation in strategic locations, alternatively known as "Living Shoreline," are also being researched and proposed by the Friends. Dr. Ellen Russell, the organization's scientific advisor, is leading this effort and has initiated a discussion with state officials.

Until a more sustainable solution is found, maintenance of the Ellisville inlet will continue to be needed to ensure that the salt marsh ecosystem receives its prescribed daily dose of salt water from the Atlantic Ocean. As proven once again this month, the Friends are fully committed to this task in spite of the onerous burden of maintaining all the required local, state, and federal regulatory permits.

The Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation formed in 2007 and dedicated to the recovery of native plant life, fisheries and wildlife in Ellisville Marsh. Anyone interested in learning more about the Friends or becoming a member should visit the organization's web site at www.EllisvilleMarsh.org.

Friends of Ellisville Marsh, Inc.

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