

## Building a Coastal Maritime Ridge and Marshlands in Louisiana



Working with the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center (PMC), the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and the Greater Lafourche Port Commission are constructing a maritime-forest ridge and marshlands-restoration project in southeast Louisiana. The main purpose of reestablishing the ridge and marshlands is for the protection of coastal lands and to provide habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

“This will be one of the first created or restored ridge and maritime-forest initiatives in Louisiana,” said Gary Fine, Golden Meadow PMC manager.

One of the goals of this 120-plus acre project is to use appropriate herbaceous-woody plants to restore habitat that once existed on the site. And, most significantly, not only will this project begin to restore local fisheries by adding productive-marshland edges; it will also help to protect the local area’s coastal defenses from severe storms.

Using heavy machinery, a forest ridge will be shaped along a 2,000 to 6,000 foot area. Once constructed to specifications, both the upland and marshland areas will be planted with woody species. The species selection will be determined by compatibility as well as by elevation across the site.

“We feel it’s important to point out that this restoration effort is not being developed as part of existing mitigation policies imposed by any governmental agency,” said Fine. “This project



is an example of how coastal restoration can work with multiple partners and provide multiple benefits while creating an appreciation of these habitats and wildlife for all to see.”

The final phase of the project will include marshland approximately 100-feet wide on both edges and will have an estimated elevation of over one and half feet. The ridge itself will be approximately eight feet in height.

Upper left, middle right, middle: High school students volunteer to help plant new ridge



“We’ll build tidal channels every 1000 feet along the length of the marsh,” said Fine. “This will provide access for maritime wildlife from the open water to the north and the constructed marshlands to the south.”

Upon completion of all three phases, project managers plan to build foot paths and boardwalks, observation platforms and bridges along the ridge that extend onto the marsh. Kiosks and interpretive signage will be constructed as well. Long-term plans include a nature/interpretive center. The Greater Lafourche Port Commission will manage and maintain the site.

For more info: <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/news/chieftour.html>  
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# Festival Park Restoration of Coastal Marsh and Maritime Forest

In 2000 Festival Park in the District of Wilmington, North Carolina was faced with an environmental problem. 1,500 feet of coastal marsh and maritime forest was eroding along the shoreline. Not only was this marsh an important habitat for oysters, fish, sea grass and wildlife it also supported commercial fisheries.

The Cape May Plant Materials Center in New Jersey in cooperation with the Wilmington District and State of North Carolina began an ambitious restoration project of Festival Park with an approximate cost of \$1 million for planning, design and construction.

Ultimately the project restored and now protects five acres of maritime-forest and shallow-estuarine habitat.

As was hoped, sea grasses are becoming established in the protected open water between the shoreline and the rock sill and marsh grass show vigorous growth and good seed production.

A letter sent from the Roanoke Island Commission sums up the success of the project: There now exists a project that all are proud to claim...the public will not only enjoy the site, but also become educated about the value of environmental restoration and management.



Before: Eroding Shoreline  
Lacking Low Marsh

After: Stable Shoreline  
Low Marsh Fringe

**For more info:** The Cape May PMC, <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/njpmc>  
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## From the Field

Plans are underway for the National Park Service (NPS) to construct a new visitor's center at Homestead National Monument in Beatrice, Nebraska. The Natural Resources Conservation Service Manhattan, Kansas Plant Materials Center (PMC) is going to provide technical assistance for the project. Russ Haas, RCS/NPS liaison, visited the Homestead National Monument on May 11, of this year to provide guidance on projects the NRCS Plant Materials Program could assist the park in completing.



The process of providing seed for landscaping around the visitors center will use local commercial seed vendors and specifying local cultivars or source identified releases from neighboring states. The 211-acre monument or park, like the Homestead Act that it represents, has no undisturbed prairie other than a small area around the site of a one-room period school house.

The Homestead Act of 1862 was one of the most significant and enduring events in the westward expansion of the United States. Signed by President Lincoln, the act granted 160 acres of free land to claimants, thus allowing nearly any man or woman a chance to live the American dream.

The Manhattan PMC has worked on one other national park service project. The project involved producing seed and transplants for the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument located in Western Nebraska. Through out the country, the Plant Materials Program is assisting many national parks to revegetate and retain the genetic integrity of native plants found within the parks.

**For more info:** Homestead National Monument, <http://www.nps.gov/home>  
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