



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERS CELEBRATE DEDICATION OF SALT MARSH *Project restores 15 acres of salt marsh in Barrington, R.I.*

NOAA officials, members of Congress, national and state government partners, and project volunteers gathered in Barrington, R.I., to dedicate the restored Walker Farm salt marsh today. This celebration marks the completion of an important restoration project, which revitalized the salt marsh and provided new and healthy habitat for the fish, fowl and other wildlife that reside in and around the marsh.

Outdated dams and restricted tidal flow led Walker Farm salt marsh to be overrun with reeds and decreased water salinity. This caused a loss of characteristic salt marsh grasses and degraded plant and animal habitat.

“The Walker Farm salt march is a great example of President Bush’s commitment to promoting cooperative conservation,” said retired Navy vice admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “By bringing local citizens together to solve local environmental problems, we can successfully conquer many of today’s environmental challenges.”

Volunteers and project partners completed the marsh restoration in 2005, with some additional work in spring 2006. They replaced three culverts, and removed road fill to improve tidal flow in and out of the marsh. Volunteers conducted extensive post-restoration monitoring of the project site to assess conditions for plants and animals.

“Restoring the natural conditions of our nation’s coasts and oceans is one of many things that NOAA does well,” said Sam Rauch, deputy assistant administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service. “We are particularly proud of the successes we have achieved with our partners over the past 10 years through NOAA’s Community-based Restoration Program.”

“It will take several growing seasons for the salt marsh to restore itself fully, but now that salt water can flow freely in and out of the marsh, the Walker Farm salt marsh is on its way to becoming a healthy, fully functioning salt marsh,” Rauch said.

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The NOAA Restoration Center Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) is celebrating its 10-year anniversary as a financial- and technical-assistance program that promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to restore fisheries habitat. NOAA CRP works with organizations and government to support locally-driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas. NOAA CRP funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities, and provide long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. Since 1996, more than 1000 projects in 26 states, Canada and the Caribbean have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners.

In 2007 NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. Starting with the establishment of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA. The agency is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

On the Web:

<http://www.noaa.gov>

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>