

The Planning Process

NPS is preparing an EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to analyze impacts to the natural and human environment for any major federal actions, such as the development of this plan. NEPA also encourages the participation of affected citizens and federal and state agencies in the decision-making process. Steps in the planning process are identified in the graphic on the right, with an asterisk* indicating steps where public comment will be solicited.

How to Comment

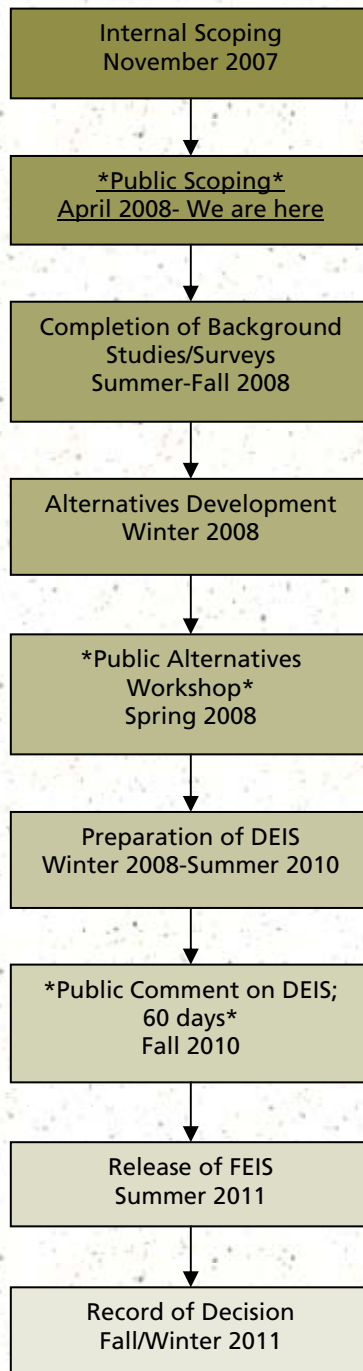
You can provide comments about the proposed plan by:

- Attending the public open house
- **Submitting comments electronically (preferred method):** <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp>
- Submitting written comments by mail:
Superintendent; 700 George Washington Memorial Parkway;
Park Headquarters, Turkey Run Park; McLean, VA 22101

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment -including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time.

However, if you do not include your information, we will be unable to add you to the mailing list and keep you updated with information pertaining to this project.

Turk's Cap Lily (*Lilium superbum*)
Photo by Ed Eder



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
Park Headquarters, Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101



Dyke Marsh

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Dyke Marsh Wetland Restoration and Long Term Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement

Public Scoping

April 2008

You're Invited!

Your Participation Will Help Shape This Plan

Because of your interest in the George Washington Memorial Parkway, we are requesting your input for developing a Wetland Restoration and Long Term Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) at Dyke Marsh.

The National Park Service (NPS) requests your participation in the project planning process to identify potential environmental impacts, issues, concerns, and alternative concepts. The NPS would like to discuss the proposal and gather any thoughts, ideas, or comments that you may have regarding this project.

Open House

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Belle View Elementary
6701 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria, VA 22307

6:00 - 9:00 pm



Format

The meeting will consist of an open house with NPS staff on hand to visit with you, answer questions, and record your input.

Attendees may also submit comments on written forms available at the meeting or on-line or by mail as described inside this newsletter.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Wetland Restoration and Long Term Management at Dyke Marsh

Dyke Marsh is a large tract of tidal freshwater marsh along the Potomac River that has been in existence for over 5,000 years. From 1940-1972, approximately 270 acres of marshland were dredged for sand and gravel. The NPS formally acquired control of the entire 485 acre site in 1976. Dyke Marsh is viewed as a national treasure—a natural oasis surrounded by a bustling urban environment. The marsh has extensive value not only in the flora and fauna that exist within, but for the recreational, educational and cultural values the marsh provides as well. Numerous studies, inventories and investigations have been undertaken within Dyke Marsh and will assist the NPS in analyzing a range of management actions to determine what means of restoration will be most successful while protecting and ensuring the existing marsh will be sustained in the future.

The Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this EIS is to develop a plan for the restoration and long term management of the tidal freshwater marsh and other associated wetland habitats lost or impacted in Dyke Marsh Preserve on the Potomac River.

Need for Action

Dyke Marsh wetland resources, community structure, and natural ecosystem functions have been damaged by previous human uses and are subject to continuing threats. A restoration and long term management plan is needed at this time to:

- Protect the existing wetlands from erosion, exotic plant species, loss of habitat and altered hydrologic regimes;
- Restore wetlands and ecological functions and processes lost through sand and gravel mining and shoreline erosion;
- Reduce increased restoration and management costs associated with continued wetland loss;
- Improve ecosystem services that benefit the Potomac Watershed.

Ecosystem Services: the processes by which the environment produces resources that humans often take for granted, such as: moderating weather extremes and their impacts, purifying the air and water, maintaining biodiversity, protecting stream and river channels from erosion, and mitigating droughts and floods.

Source: Ecological Society of America

Objectives: What must be achieved to a large degree for the action to be considered a success. All alternatives selected for detailed analysis must meet all objectives to a large degree, and resolve the purpose and need for action.

Objectives of the Plan

The goal of the actions described in the plan/EIS is to restore areas of Dyke Marsh that were previously impacted using soil elevations that will permit the establishment of sustainable plant communities while preventing damage to vegetation in the existing wetland. In the long term, the project will provide additional wetlands to the Potomac River watershed ecosystem, preserve the aesthetic and natural values of Dyke Marsh and the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and continue to offer recreational opportunities currently available. Specific objectives of the plan are listed below.

Natural Resources

- Restore, protect, and maintain tidal freshwater wetlands and associated ecosystems to provide habitat for fish, wildlife and other biota.
- Ensure management actions promote native species while minimizing the intrusion of invasives.
- Reduce or eliminate erosion of the existing marsh and provide for erosion control measures in areas of restored marsh.
- To the extent practicable, restore and maintain hydrologic processes needed to sustain Dyke Marsh.

Cultural Resources

- Protect the historic resources and cultural landscape features associated with Dyke Marsh and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Visitor Experience

- Enhance appropriate educational, interpretation, and research opportunities at Dyke Marsh, accessible to diverse audiences.



Green Heron,
photo by Ed Eder

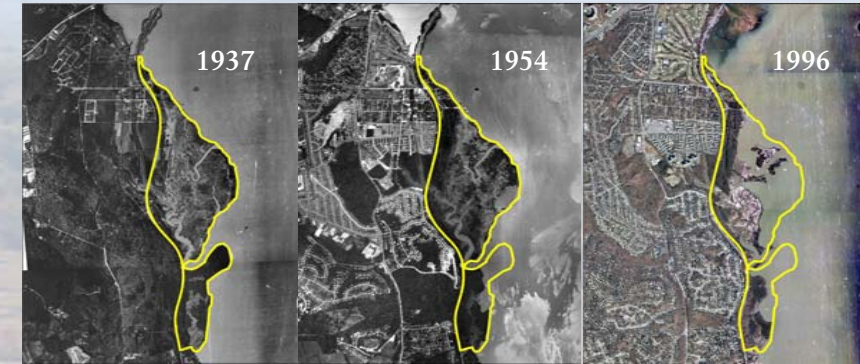


Birdwatchers on the Haul Road
photo by Ed Eder

Alternative Elements

Preliminary scoping also identified broad categories of elements that will be further defined as alternatives become developed. These categories include:

- Types of actions that may be taken (stabilizing the existing marsh, restoring wetlands lost to sand and gravel mining, restoring historic tidal flows, etc.)
- Various ways these actions could be implemented (types of containment structures, placement of tidal channels, stabilization techniques, etc.)
- Where and to what extent the actions may be taken (full vs. partial restoration, identification of priority areas, considerations related to the timing of the actions, etc.)



Aerial photographs of Dyke Marsh illustrate the wetland loss due to sand and gravel mining operations, erosion, and other disturbances.

Will the plan only address restoring wetlands?

While the focus of this plan will be on restoring the tidal freshwater wetlands that have been lost to dredging, other ecosystems may also benefit from management actions as a result of this plan.

For example, the forested areas to the west of the Haul Road are currently inundated with exotic plant species, especially porcelain-berry (see photo). Before the Haul Road was built, this area was subject to daily tidal flows and could potentially be an area where the restoration of tidal influence may help to control invasives and allow a more natural ecosystem to flourish. Other ecosystems that could potentially benefit from this planning effort include the riparian zones.



NPS photo