



# Welcome!

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

Public Scoping Open House

April 22, 2008

6:00-9:00pm

Formal NPS presentation at 7:00pm

Belle View Elementary





# Scoping Comments

The primary goal of scoping for a project is to determine the range of issues and alternatives to be addressed. At the time of scoping, the park provides a description of the project proposal, including a statement of the purpose of and need for the project and a list of project goals. The public is asked to submit comments, concerns, and suggestions relating to these goals.

The most useful types of scoping comments consider the following:

- Alternative approaches and ideas for accomplishing the project goals.
- The range of environmental and socioeconomic issues that need to be considered.
- Other potential projects that might affect or be affected by this project.
- Information that needs to be considered (such as related research) and why.
- Information on how you use the park and how a project might affect that use.





# How to Comment

Each person has an important perspective on the management of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) and can make a unique contribution to the planning process that will help the National Park Service produce better planning documents. The type of comment that is most useful in evaluating a plan or project depends on how far along it is in the planning process. The public is also encouraged to send in general comments for consideration by park staff at any time.

- Provide comments to NPS staff during the open house
- **Submit comments on-line at <http://parkplanning/nps.gov/gwmp> (preferred method)**
- Write your comments on comment sheets provided at the open house
- Mail comments to:  
Superintendent;  
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway;  
Park Headquarters Turkey Run Park;  
McLean, VA 22101

The formal scoping comment period will  
be open until May 23, 2008.



# Current Management Actions

Current management actions will become part of the No Action alternative in the EIS.

The No Action alternative describes the present course of action and provides a baseline upon which the action alternatives can be compared.

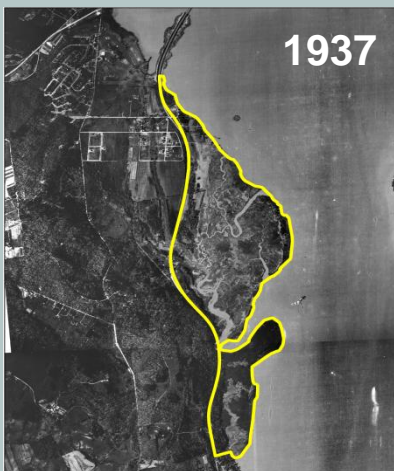
- Controlling exotics
  - Application of herbicides (Rodeo®) to control invasive plants (*Phragmites*).
  - Manages volunteer groups to physically remove non-native vines.
- Regulatory work
  - Law enforcement/ patrols, respond to emergency calls, limit public access during marsh wren breeding season.
- Facilities maintenance
  - Maintains and installs interpretive signage, maintains the Haul Road, emergency stabilization from storms, conducts shoreline cleanups with volunteer groups.
- Environmental education programs
  - Hosts watershed clean up days.
  - Conducts curriculum-based programs for local schools.
  - Friends of Dyke Marsh conducts bird walks



# Purpose of the Plan

Purpose is a broad statement of goals and objectives that the National Park Service intends to fulfill by taking action.

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



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



# Need for Action

Need is a discussion of existing conditions, problems that need to be remedied, decisions that need to be made, and policies or mandates that need to be implemented.

Need answers the question “Why is action is being taken at this time?”

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 Statement

Objectives are specific statements of purpose and state what must be achieved for the plan to be successful.

(Director's Order 12)

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.





# Objectives

## 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.



NPS photo

Dyke Marsh  
in Spring (L) and Fall (R)



NPS photo



# Objectives

## Cultural Resources

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



Above:  
Historic dike  
remnant

Below:  
Birdwatchers  
along the  
Haul road

## Visitor Experience

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



Right: Setting up  
a plot to study  
vegetation changes  
at Dyke Marsh





# Preliminary Alternative Elements

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

## Alternative Element Categories:

- 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.)





# Preliminary Issues

In NEPA, an “issue” describes the relationship between actions and environmental resources.

Issues often describe concerns or obstacles to achieving a park goal.

Director’s Order 12

- Dyke Marsh is one of the most valued and biologically diverse habits within the Washington metropolitan area. Its ecological, recreational and educational values could be enhanced by restoring areas previously lost through dredging.
- Evidence suggests that the existing marsh may be eroding. Preserving the existing marsh may require restoring those portions lost through sand and gravel dredging.
- The protection of the existing marsh from stressors such as the introduction of exotic species will need to be considered when re-creating new marsh areas.
- The possibility of restoring natural hydrology to areas west of the Haul Road will likely create substantial change in existing vegetation types.



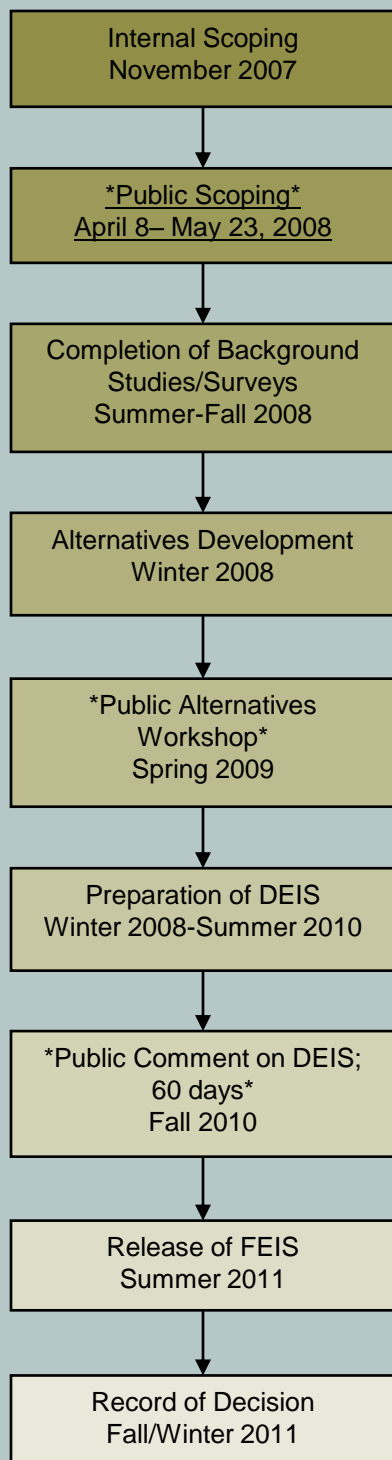


# Preliminary Issues

- Restoration of tidal marsh areas on NPS lands along the nearby Anacostia River has met varying levels of success. Goose herbivory and the establishment of exotic plant species have been problematic.
- The Dyke Marsh EIS process is expected to influence decisions concerning the Belle Haven Marina EA.
- Structural failure of a re-created marsh would have devastating environmental consequences to local water quality in the Potomac River and possibly the Chesapeake Bay.
- Dyke Marsh restoration activities cannot take place until nearby suitable fill is available. Likely sources include dredge material from the Potomac River or nearby tributaries.



# NEPA 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 left, with an asterisk\* indicating steps where public comment will be formally solicited.

The dates provided give a very general idea of when the planning process may be completed and implementation can begin. Throughout the process project updates will be available on the park's website ([www.nps.gov/gwmp](http://www.nps.gov/gwmp)) and PEPC ([parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp)).