

NFWF 2016 Hurricane Sandy Restoration Fund Press Event Media Report 6/7/2016 North Beach, Maryland



Students help restore eroded shoreline

06/09/2016 By Elisa Mattingly

North Beach, MD - Over the past two years, restoration specialists have worked tirelessly to reverse the effects of 20 years worth of erosion on the Walton Beach Nature Preserve.

A group of Huntingtown High School students were able to take a hands-on role in this restoration project, finishing their roles in the Living Shoreline Live Action Classroom on Tuesday, June 7.

The students put the finishing touches on the project by planting the last of the project's grasses and collecting data about the progress of the water quality, habitat and biodiversity of the shoreline that they have been able to witness.

"I remember this whole area was just sand in the fall," said Sydney Nader, a ninth grade student at Huntingtown. "We have come a really long way. We were here when they first started planting the plants, and it's really cool to see everything come together."

The shoreline has eroded over 40 feet in the past 20 years. That erosion has begun to compromise North Beach's 105 acre salt marsh, an important Black Duck habitat, and allow flooding on Route 261, an emergency evacuation route for North Beach.

"This is a vital transportation route, not just for automobile traffic but for emergency vehicles from North Beach that need to access the lower end of Anne Arundel County," said Mayor of North Beach Mark Frazer. "Without access along this road, their response times will be significantly lowered."

The Town of North Beach contracted the project out to Environmental Concern, a nonprofit whose mission is to promote the public understanding and restoration of wetlands.

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The nonprofit applied for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Hurricane Sandy grant on behalf of the town. They were awarded \$540,000 to help cover the cost of the living shoreline and the wetland restoration.

"The project that was designed is a 670 foot living shoreline," said Jessica Lister, vice president of Restoration for Environmental Concern. "It's restoring 3.6 acres of marsh habitat. The concept is that the marsh is slowing down the energy of the waves. It's creating another habitat here that's also helping to restore the roadbed."

Getting the students involved in the process allowed them to take part in a real action project, instead of just learning about the topic solely in the classroom.

"In the classroom, I don't think that they make the connections that they need to see that they can personally do these improvements, or monitor a site or determine where there are problems that need to be fixed," said Huntingtown High School teacher Jill Twetten. "I think it makes it more doable for them and definitely more real. They're definitely more engaged in an environment like this than in a classroom watching PowerPoint slides."

The Education Director at Environmental Concern Katelin Frase believes that they are teaching the students the necessary skills to create their own action projects through showing them the processes of planning, design, implementation and monitoring.

"Hopefully, the monitoring will allow them to see a restoration project not as just a project that finishes when you implement it but something that is a change in an ecosystem," Frase said.

The students will hopefully build a relationship with the site and take pride that they helped restore it.

"Long term, they're going to drive by this site and watch it slowly progress into a more mature ecosystem and know that they had a part in that," Twetten said.

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Honors students from Calvert County help finish crucial North Beach shoreline restoration

Mayor and town officials discuss and celebrate project success

06/19/2016

Honors Biology students from Huntingtown High School helped put the finishing touches on their town's major shoreline restoration project today, and discussed how critical this work is for protecting their town with project managers and town officials. Project Managers from Environmental Concern, the nonprofit tasked with managing the restoration work, were on hand to guide students through planting of shoreline grasses as well as five Living Shoreline classroom stations, where they collected data on ecosystem health.

In addition, these students have been a part of the work from the beginning, as a major component of the project has been educational outreach. Several Living Shoreline classrooms have taken place throughout the year, with the data students collect at these classroom "stations" being used to determine habitat and water quality improvements by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the main funder of North Beach's restoration work. Environmental Concern aided the Town of North Beach in attaining the \$540,000 grant through NFWF's Hurricane Sandy Restoration Fund.

(Funding for this project is provided by the Department of the Interior through a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program).

This project has become critical for restoring and protecting the Town of North Beach. Over the past 20 years, North Beach's shoreline has eroded over 40 feet, not only threatening homes and residents during storms, but

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lapping at the sides of Route 261, a critical emergency evacuation route. Environmental Concern and the Town of North Beach has restored the shoreline and adjoining saltmarsh, which will act as a buffer against rising sea levels and help prevent loss of property, restoring 670 feet of shoreline with over 10,000 plugs of grass, along with three acres of abutting saltmarsh. Today's event not only actively engaged these students in the monitoring of this crucial project, but helped solidify their interest in restoration work for the future. By helping plant the last of the project's grasses and discussing how the restoration has improved the water quality, habitat, and biodiversity at the site since their first visit, these future scientists have learned the value of a healthy habitat firsthand.

"When we came here in the fall, all of the plants over here weren't growing because we had a really big storm," said 9th grader Sydney Nader, whose favorite subject is biology and plans to study biological engineering in college. "Now that everything's growing and doing well, it's really nice to see. Lots of the people who are helping with the project came out, and definitely all the plants, there are so many more which is really good to increase our living shoreline so we can keep floods from going over [over the road] and the erosion, and keeping our water clean. It's really good to see. There was a bird with eggs and everything! Everything is coming together."

"I like coming with my class, it's great to come back and see all the progress that we've had. Driving past it in a couple years, you're gonna look over...it's kind of eye opening, like 'I did that.' It's really cool."

Nader also recognized the project's importance for protecting her town. "This work is really important. Again, with the road over there, that's an emergency roadway. So if it's blocked off with flooding, lots of emergencies can't be cared for and tended to as they should be...also keeping the water clean, helping to stop erosion and lots of pollution. I think just by getting the word out and doing these projects together, coming together as a community, it really helps keep everything healthier and safer."

North Beach's Mayor Mark Frazer was also onsite viewing the project's progress and discussing its importance. "Where we are standing now is the most challenged area of North Beach and really is a microcosm of what's going on in coastal communities up and down the eastern seaboard faced with rising sea levels. Here we had eroding shoreline and a badly depressed wetland. One of the main arteries in and out of town used during emergencies is threatened by tides, storms and serious flooding. This affects our residents and our streets. We are excited as the project appears to be meeting its objectives in arresting shoreline erosion and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has made it possible with their support."

"We were thrilled when we were awarded the \$540,000 grant from the NFWF organization," said Environmental Concern's Restoration Vice President Jessica Lister. "We were one out of three in all of Maryland that received the grant, so that was pretty impressive. We then were hired by the town to design the project and construct it, along with this big education effort...which really pulled everything together."

"I'm so excited this is all coming together," said longtime North Beach resident and Member of Town Council and Chair of North Beach's Environmental Committee Jane Hagen. "To see the students coming out to put it all together is great to see. North Beach was hit really hard during Hurricane Isabel; we lost so much, many

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people lost their homes. So we've seen firsthand how much we need this." Hagen has been active in town politics for 15 years, and has also seen the difficulty in keeping the project intact. "A lot of people don't understand how critical this project is, and don't understand their role in keeping it safe. People come out on the beach and can disturb the restoration. So we've got to keep people off the grasses. That's the most important thing."

Additional Information on Planning Process and Project Implementation:

The Town of North Beach worked with the USACE to develop a plan for Coastal Resilience. The plan identified three priorities:

- 1) Protect the eroding shoreline fronting five acres of tidal wetland
- 2) Restore the circulation and tidal exchange to the marsh area directly north of the residential area along 9th Street.
- 3) Restore the natural hydrologic and tidal exchange regimes altered by the hydrologic constrictions associated with the construction of RT 261.

These priorities are not mutually exclusive. They are enumerated separately in order to facilitate design and permitting as well as funding.

In 2013, the Town of North Beach engaged Environmental Concern (EC) to evaluate the concepts developed under the USACE study, and then to engineer, design and permit the selected concept(s).

To preserve/restore the eroding shoreline, EC proposed a vegetated tidal marsh protected by low profile stone containment structures (segmented sills). This alternative was reviewed and approved by USACE. The design included re-establishing tidal exchange to the Tidal Pond just north of 9th Street. The created/restored tidal marsh will improve water quality, expand/enhance sustainable habitat for the Black Duck and other targeted waterfowl species, improve shallow water habitat, and mitigate the impacts of future storms.

Construction funding for these two priorities was provided by the Town of North Beach and a U.S. Department of the Interior grant administered by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The construction of these two priorities is substantially complete.

The third priority, restoring the natural hydrologic and tidal exchange regimes altered by the hydrologic constrictions associated with the construction of RT 261, requires State Highway Administration (SHA) participation. In 2013, the Town of North Beach requested SHA participation. The SHA is now working with the Town to develop a plan and a timetable to restore these important hydrologic and tidal exchange regimes.

About the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores our nation's wildlife and habitats. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private contributions. NFWF works with government, nonprofit and

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corporate partners to find solutions for the most intractable conservation challenges. Over the last three decades, NFWF has funded more than 4,000 organizations and committed more than \$2.9 billion to conservation projects. Learn more at www.nfwf.org.

Town of North Beach, MD

Nestled on the Chesapeake Bay's western shore at the northern tip of Calvert County, the Town of North Beach is known as "The Jewel of the Chesapeake Bay."

North Beach is a pedestrian-friendly town with attractions clustered within easy walking distance. North Beach was recently voted "Best Bay Beach" and "Best Bay Town" and is becoming one of the most sought out venues for outdoor weddings by the beautiful Chesapeake Bay.

Environment Concern: A 501(c)3 public not for profit corporation that is a dedicated to working with all aspects of wetlands. After more than 40 years of providing wetland services in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond, they continue to broaden their partnership efforts. They have made significant progress in the ongoing efforts to improve the water quality in the bay. They are headquartered in St. Michaels, Maryland.

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Calvert County students help restore North Beach shoreline

06/16/2016

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The logo for Chesapeake Current features the word "Chesapeake" in a black, serif font, positioned above the word "Current" which is written in a large, blue, cursive script font.

Chesapeake
Current

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Students Help Plant Shoreline



A group of Honors students from Huntingtown High School helped plant the final grasses in North Beach's shoreline restoration project this week. This marks a milestone for area restoration work along the shore of the Chesapeake Bay.



In addition, these specific students were part of the project from the very beginning. They visited and collected data back when construction first began, giving them a unique and informed perspective. The Mayor as well as other town officials were on hand to speak and chip in, along with project managers.

Social Media

GreenSmith PA 

We're here in North Beach, MD where @HtownHSCCPS students are screening to measure fish populations. @NFWFnews



EnvironmentalConcern 

Students participate in Environmental Concern's North Beach Restoration project.



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GreenSmith PA
@GreenSmithPA

Following

These students are testing soil quality and recording their data on a Munsell Chart



RETWEET 1 LIKE 1

9:07 AM - 7 Jun 2016

This tweet shows three students in blue shirts in an open field. One student is using a shovel to dig a hole in the soil, while the other two stand nearby, one holding a long-handled tool. The background shows a residential area with houses under a clear blue sky.

GreenSmith PA
@GreenSmithPA

Following

Students planting beach grass to help restore this section of the nature preserve @EnvConcern @NFWFnews



RETWEET 1 LIKE 1

9:37 AM - 7 Jun 2016

This tweet shows two students in green shirts on a sandy beach. They are kneeling and planting small grass seedlings into the sand. In the background, there are large rocks, a body of water, and a building.

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GreenSmith PA
@GreenSmithPA

Following

Mark Frazer, the mayor of North Beach, is on sight helping the students measure for species abundance. @NFWFnews



RETWEET 1 LIKE 1

8:30 AM - 7 Jun 2016

GreenSmith PA
@GreenSmithPA

Following

These same students helped plant the site last year and are now observing how the plants have grown



RETWEET 1

8:25 AM - 7 Jun 2016

GreenSmith PA
@GreenSmithPA

Following

These honors biology students are working with @EnvConcern to observe the ecosystem and plant beach grass.



RETWEET 1

8:25 AM - 7 Jun 2016

GreenSmith PA
@GreenSmithPA

Following

Students measuring the Chesapeake Bay pH and temperature under the guidance of @EnvConcern. @NFWFnews



RETWEETS 2 LIKES 2

8:48 AM - 7 Jun 2016