

## Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, A Chronology

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**1800s** - Landowners built dikes and tried to convert the marsh into places for ships to tie up and into pasturelands.

**1930s** - Smoot Sand and Gravel acquired 650 acres from Bucknell University.

**1932** - The National Park Service built the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

**1940 to 1972** - Smoot Sand and Gravel dredged at least 270 acres of sand and gravel and the swamp forest wetlands of the promontory on the south end of Dyke Marsh and built the Haul Road.

**1947** - *Spring in Washington* by Louis J. Halle, published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, highlights spring's rebirth in Dyke Marsh and other natural areas of the Washington metropolitan area.

**1959** - Congress passed and the President signed on June 11 P.L. 86-41, adding the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve to the National Park System "so that fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount." Congressman John Dingell (D-Michigan), one of the authors of the legislation, stated, "We expect that the Secretary will provide for the deposition of silt and waste from the dredging operations in such a way as to encourage the restoration of the marsh at the earliest possible moment."

**1974** - Congress passed and the President signed P.L. 93-251 which authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to assist NPS in planning, designing and implementing the restoration of Dyke Marsh.

**1975** - Smoot Sand and Gravel relinquished their mining rights.

**1976** - The Friends of Dyke Marsh was formed and incorporated.

**1977** - The National Park Service prepared an environmental assessment proposing management options for Dyke Marsh, including "attempt re-establishment of portions of the dredged marsh."

**2004** - The University of Maryland, Center for Environmental Science, Appalachian Laboratory held a workshop titled, "Should We Restore Dyke Marsh"?

**2007** - The Water Resources Development Act directed NPS to restore Dyke Marsh.

**2009** - The U.S. House of Representatives approved H. Res. 701, introduced by Cong. Jim Moran in the 111th Congress, recognizing Dyke Marsh as a unique and previous ecosystem that should be conserved, protected and restored.

**2010** - The U.S. Senate approved S. Res. 297, introduced by Sen. Jim Webb in the 111th Congress, recognizing Dyke Marsh as a unique and previous ecosystem that should be conserved, protected and restored.

**2010** - The U.S. Geological Survey study confirmed that the marsh is unstable and could disappear in 20-30 years. (<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2010/1269/>). *Analysis of the Deconstruction of Dyke Marsh, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Virginia: Progression, Geologic and Manmade Causes, and Effective Restoration Scenarios*. By Ronald J. Litwin, Joseph P. Smoot, Milan J. Pavich, Helaine W. Markewich, Erik Oberg, Ben Helwig, Brent Steury, Vincent L. Santucci, Nancy J. Durika, Nancy B. Rybicki, Katharina M. Engelhardt, Geoffrey Sanders, Stacey Verardo, Andrew J. Elmore, and Joseph Gilmer)

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### **2013**

March 27, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority announced a statement of findings, making \$2.5 million available to NPS for construction of the first phase of restoration a promontory in the southern part of the marsh.

October 3, the U.S. Geological Survey published a follow-up report, concluding that ". . . Dyke Marsh presently is in its late stages of failure as a freshwater tidal marsh system . . . In the absence of human efforts to restore the equilibrium between marsh and tide, and equilibrium to the other natural forces acting on this wetland, Dyke Marsh likely will continue to accelerate its degradation, erosion, and fragmentation until it is gone. This likely will occur prior to 2035 AD."

*Rates and Probable Causes of Freshwater Tidal Marsh Failure, Potomac River Estuary, Northern Virginia, USA*. By Ronald J. Litwin, Joseph P. Smoot, Milan J. Pavich, Erik Oberg, Brent Steury, Ben Helwig, Helaine W. Markewich, Vincent L. Santucci and Geoffrey Sanders. See <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13157-013-0461-6#page-1>.

October 25, U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell announced the award of a \$24.9 million grant to the George Washington Memorial Parkway to restore Dyke Marsh.

### **2014**

January - NPS issued the draft *Restoration and Long-term Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement* and held a public meeting and comment period from January 15 to March 18.

October - NPS issued the final *Restoration and Long-term Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement*