

Creating a More Resilient Coast

It's been 2 years since Hurricane Sandy struck the Atlantic Coast communities. The Service has been working on projects to restore coastal areas and help make our communities more resilient in the face of future storms. The first phase of one of these, the Ferry Point, Nanticoke River – Pocomoke Sound Marsh Project, has been completed.

High tides from the storm spread Phragmites, an invasive plant with little value to fish and wildlife. Unlike native grasses with high density root systems, Phragmites' thin roots make soils more susceptible to erosion by waves.

Two thousand acres of degraded marsh on the Nanticoke River in Dorchester and Wicomico counties were treated to control Phragmites.



Removing this plant restores the marsh, protecting part of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and nearby private land from storms. The restored marsh also provides public hunting and fishing opportunities and supports nature tourism in the town of Vienna, MD.

The second phase will restore 600 acres of tidal salt marsh on Pocomoke Sound. The marsh was historically ditched and drained for insect control, but this compromised the integrity of the watershed and its flood resiliency.

Ditch plugs will be installed to maintain water in pools during low tide, restoring natural hydrology. This will make the marsh more resilient to sea-level rise and increase its ability to protect the City of Crisfield and 3,000 acres of adjacent salt marsh at the State of Maryland's Cedar Island Wildlife Management Area

The end result will be improved resiliency on two critical river systems on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

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