

News Release



For immediate release: June 12, 2015

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Prime Hook Marsh Restoration Project Set to Begin this Month

Milton, D.E. – Work to restore the marshes at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge is expected to start this month, the first phase of a \$38 million project to build storm and sea level rise resilience into the natural landscape.

The project will repair breached marshes and reconstruct severely damaged shoreline, including critical dune restoration. It will also restore approximately 4,000 acres of back-barrier tidal marsh, which will enhance and support a long stretch of barrier beach along the Delaware Bay. The resilience and restoration efforts are funded by the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 through the Department of the Interior.

Al Rizzo, project leader for the Coastal Delaware National Wildlife Refuge Complex, says the first phase of the project, which involves carving out relic drainage channels that historically allowed the marsh to drain, will begin the week of June 15. Once the marsh drainage work is complete, the second phase, expected to start in October, will be to pump in 1.1 million cubic yards of sand along 7,000 linear feet of shoreline and fill the deep cuts formed during Hurricane Sandy and other storms. The dunes and restored beach area will be planted with beach grasses and shrubs to hold the sand in place. Work is expected to be complete by April 2016.

Rizzo said restored marshes at the refuge will provide a more resilient coast against future storms and create additional habitat for birds, including American oystercatchers and federally listed species such as rufa red knots and piping plovers.

For more information on this and other Service Hurricane Sandy resilience and recovery projects, visit <http://www.fws.gov/hurricane/sandy/>.

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