



OCEAN COUNTY SALT MARSH RESTORATION PROJECT

Location: Ocean County, New Jersey
Restoration Type: Estuarine Marsh
Project Type: Coastal Program

Barnegat Bay spans 42 miles of shoreline in a watershed that covers over 400 square miles. The Bay is designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a National Estuary Program site. The Bay supports many diverse habitats including migratory bird habitat, finfish nursery areas, and shellfish beds. In addition, the watershed contains a wide



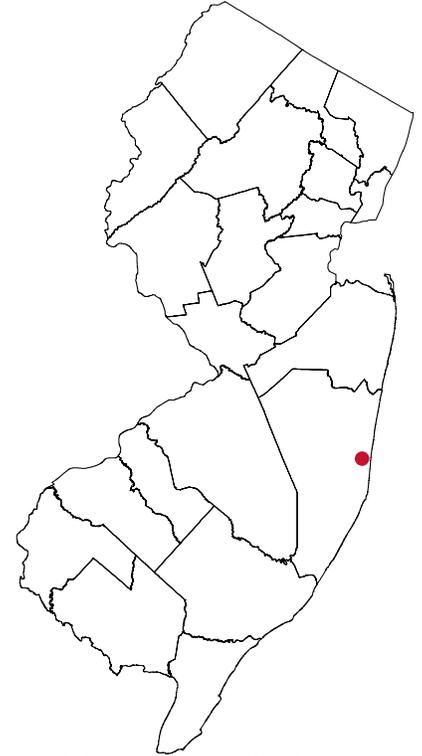
diversity of ecotypes including coastal dune communities, intertidal estuarine wetlands, freshwater wetlands, and pine/oak forests. Recent anthropogenic influences have resulted in habitat loss and habitat alteration.

The objective of this restoration effort was to restore salt marsh complexes at two sites in Ocean County (Sloop Creek Road and Berkeley Island Park) by controlling common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and implementing hydrological alterations through the

use of Open Marsh Water Management (OMWM). Implementation of the restoration plan began in September 2001 with the aerial application of a glyphosate-based herbicide to approximately 36 acres of *Phragmites* at the two sites. The Ocean County Mosquito Extermination Commission began and completed OMWM work in spring 2002. The final application of herbicide occurred during September 2002.

OMWM activities have improved hydrologic tidal flow within the marsh providing access to the marsh for interjurisdictional fish and the forage fish they rely on *e.g.* mummichogs (*Fundulus heteroclitus*). Providing access to habitat for fish is an important component and goal of this project. *Spartina patens* and *S. alterniflora* now dominate the salt marsh areas at both sites.

The Ocean County Salt Marsh Restoration Project benefits interjurisdictional fish and migratory birds that have historically used



intertidal estuarine wetlands in Barnegat Bay. As a result of improving habitat conditions in the Bay, this project also increases recreational fishing opportunities for the public. This project is an example of how partnerships and a collaborative effort can work to restore fish and wildlife habitat.



Degraded salt marsh before restoration work

Partners

- Ocean County Planning Department
- Ocean County Mosquito Extermination Commission
- Berkeley Township
- Fish America Foundation
- Ducks Unlimited, Incorporated



Salt marsh after OMWM work



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