

# News Release

*Edwin B. Forsythe*

*National Wildlife Refuge*

Great Creek Road P.O. Box 72, Oceanville, NJ 08231-0072  
609/652 1665 Fax: 609/652 1474 <http://forsythe.fws.gov>

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For further information:

Virginia Rettig, refuge manager, 609/652-1665, [Virginia\\_Rettig@fws.gov](mailto:Virginia_Rettig@fws.gov)

Tom Sturm, regional public affairs specialist, 413/253-8339, [Thomas\\_Sturm@fws.gov](mailto:Thomas_Sturm@fws.gov)

## **Post-Sandy debris clean-up to begin at E.B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge**

*Galloway, N.J.* – Hurricane Sandy left behind a 22-mile trail of debris in the fragile tidal marshes and woodlands of [Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge](#) in New Jersey. The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) has awarded a multi-million dollar contract to Coastal Environment Group, Inc., of New York to clean up the debris and restore these environmentally sensitive coastal areas.

The Service received nearly \$65 million in federal emergency funding for projects at national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries that were damaged during the 2012 super storm. The initial contract awarded to Coastal Environmental Group, Inc. has a total base value of just under \$4 million.

According to Refuge Manager Virginia Rettig, “Forsythe refuge’s marshes buffered inland areas from the full brunt of Hurricane Sandy. Nature is our best defense against future storms, and we will clean and restore this vibrant and resilient stretch of coast to sustain wildlife and protect the people of New Jersey in the future.”

[Coastal Environment Group, Inc.](#), is a small, minority-owned business that has a proven track record of working with the federal government on major environmental projects such as the response to Hurricane Katrina and remediation at Superfund sites. This year they worked on a post-Sandy debris removal project at Fire Island, N.Y.

“Coastal is committed to providing jobs and supporting businesses in the local area,” said Clint Whitton, the company’s project manager for the debris clean up. “We are in the process of hiring local personnel to staff our work crews.”

The cleanup at Forsythe refuge will begin in Brick, Stafford and Eagleswood townships, where the bulk of the debris is located. The project will proceed through project zones in Ocean, Burlington and Atlantic counties, and is expected to be done by next spring.

The debris field on the refuge includes large piles that contain roofs, docks, boats, household chemicals and drums which may contain contaminants, among many other items. Some debris will be removed using tracked vehicles to minimize damage to the marshes, and some will be removed by boats and specialized watercraft. Service biologists and independent project inspectors will be advising the company throughout the project.

E.B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge protects more than 47,000 acres of sensitive wetlands, marshes, and coastal habitats along the New Jersey shore. It is one of the most important habitats for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds east of the Mississippi River.

**For more information about Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts on national wildlife refuges, visit <http://www.fws.gov/hurricane/sandy>.**

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen in the Service's Northeast Region, visit [www.fws.gov/northeast](http://www.fws.gov/northeast).

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**Clint Whitton, Project Manager of Coastal Environmental Group, can be reached for comment at 631/234-4100, [cwhitton@coastalgrp.net](mailto:cwhitton@coastalgrp.net).**