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Overview

The Dennis Township Salt Hay Farm Wetland Restoration Site covers 578 acres of wetland and adjacent uplands in Cape May County, New Jersey. The restoration area at the site includes 369 acres with 15 acres of upland buffer. Farming practices, including the construction of perimeter dikes, eliminated normal tidal inundation over the entire site. The diked areas continued to be farmed for salt hay until restoration construction activities were completed in 1996, returning daily tidal inundation and drainage to the site. Wetland enhancement and restoration efforts produced a marsh, indistinguishable in function and appearance, from natural marsh within 4 years of construction completion.

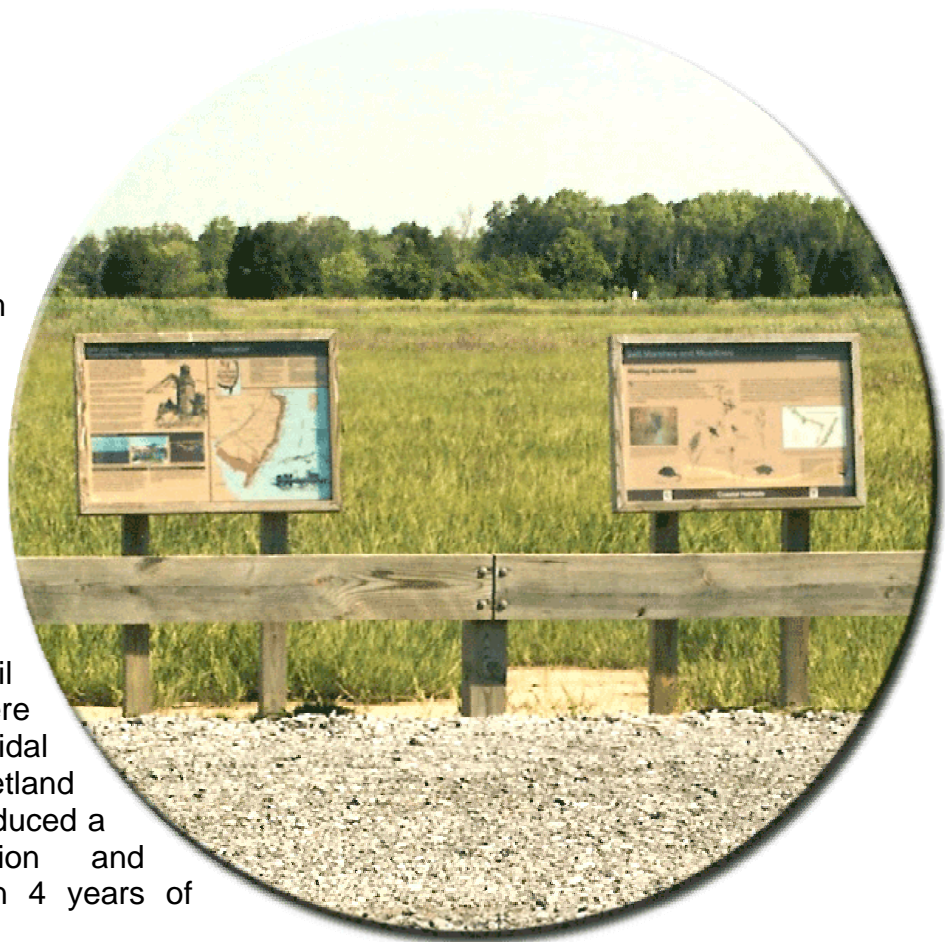
Goals

The goal of enhancement and restoration efforts for the site were to:

- Allow *Spartina* spp. and other desirable marsh plants to re-vegetate
- Preserve wetlands and upland buffer
- Restore tidal flow and drainage
- Expand spawning and nursery habitat for aquatic species

Actions Taken

The EEP took the following actions to achieve the enhancement and restoration goals for the site:



- Constructed channels and inlets
- Restored normal tidal flow to promote natural re-vegetation of *Spartina* spp. and other desirable marsh plants
- Created high marsh habitat

Accomplishments

As a result of actions taken by the EEP, the following has been accomplished:

- 369 acres of aquatic habitat has been added to the Delaware Estuary
- Re-vegetation by desirable plant species was achieved more rapidly than anticipated, meeting final success criteria in 2000
- The natural formation of small channels within the wetland restoration site was documented

Other Enhancements

The EEP also completed a number of additional enhancements to improve and enhance environmental education, public access and long-term use of the site, including:

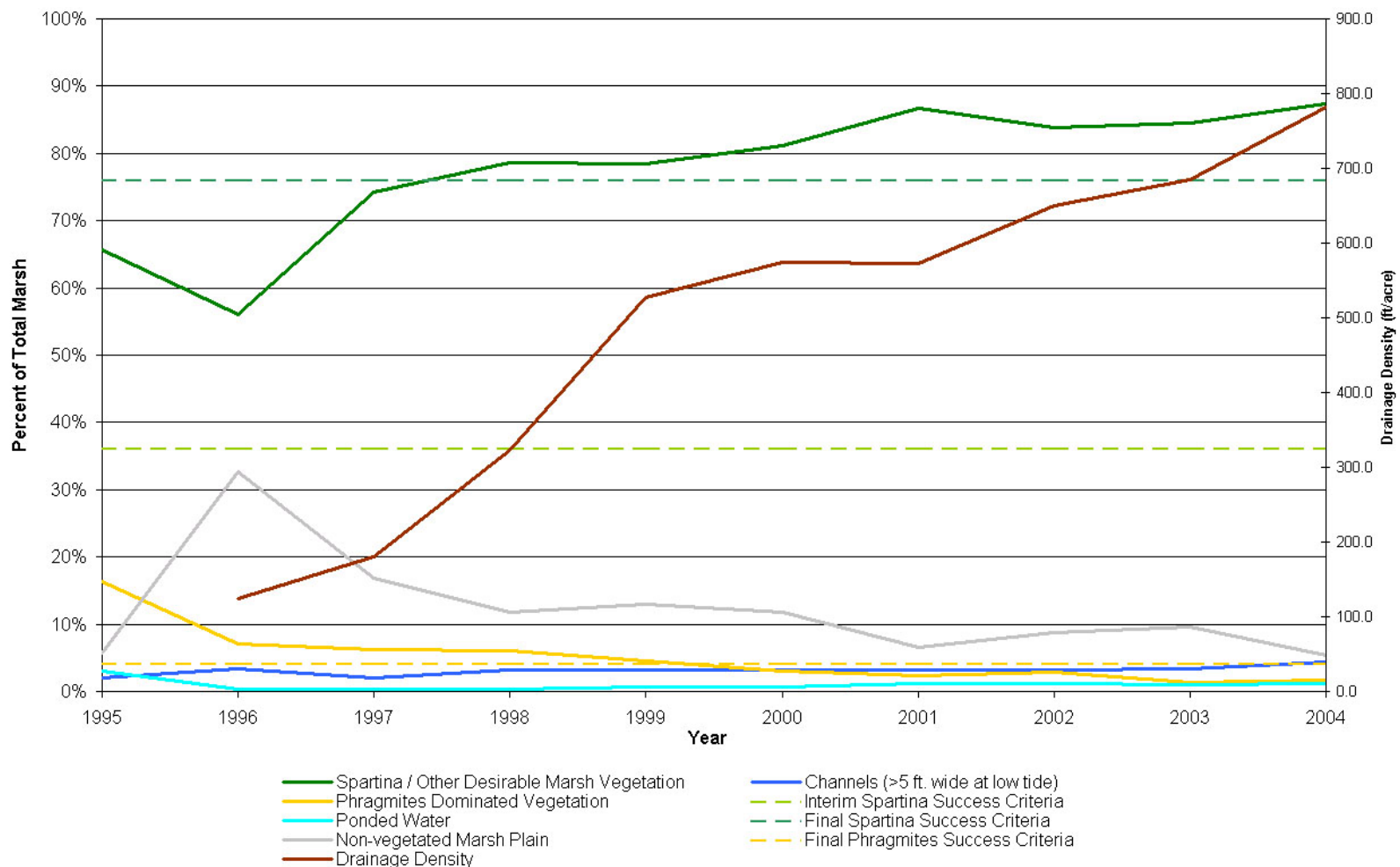
- Nature trail
- Car-top boat launch
- Two parking areas





Dennis Township Wetland Restoration Site Vegetative Cover Summary Chart

Tidal flow was restricted to support use of the site for salt hay farming in the past. The removal of dikes and the construction of channels re-established tidal flow. These actions allowed *Spartina* (green line) to flourish within the previously farmed portion of the site. Some *Phragmites* (yellow line) was present in the farmed portion of the site, and decreased over several years once tidal flow was re-established. The red line (linear feet of channel per acre) indicates the increased aquatic habitat at this site.





DENNIS TOWNSHIP SITE

Dennis Township Site – 1995

Spartina (dark green shaded areas) flourished in areas outside the salt hay farm; however, dikes present and the lack of tidal channels restricted favorable habitat within the farmed area. Some *Phragmites* (tan shaded areas) was present in farmed areas of the site.



Dennis Township Site – 2004

Removing dikes and dredging tidal channels restored habitat conditions favorable to *Spartina* (green shaded area) and the population now covers much of the formerly farmed areas. *Phragmites* (tan shaded areas) once present in the farmed areas has been nearly eliminated.

