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Overview

Situated along the southern New Jersey shoreline of the Delaware Estuary, the Commercial Township Salt Hay Farm Wetland Restoration Site covers approximately 4,171 acres in Cumberland County and is the largest EEP wetland restoration site. The site includes the preservation of 339 acres of upland buffer habitat and the preservation, restoration and/or enhancement of 2,894 acres of previously diked wetlands. Enhancement began in 1996 and was completed in 1997 with the return of daily tidal flow to the site.



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:



- 2,894 acres of aquatic habitat has been returned to the Delaware Estuary
- Re-vegetation by desirable plant species
- The natural formation of small channels within the wetland restoration site was documented
- Demonstrated fish utilization similar to adjacent natural marshes

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:

- Two boardwalks
- Observation platform
- Nature trail
- Car-top boat launch
- Three parking areas

Continuing Activities

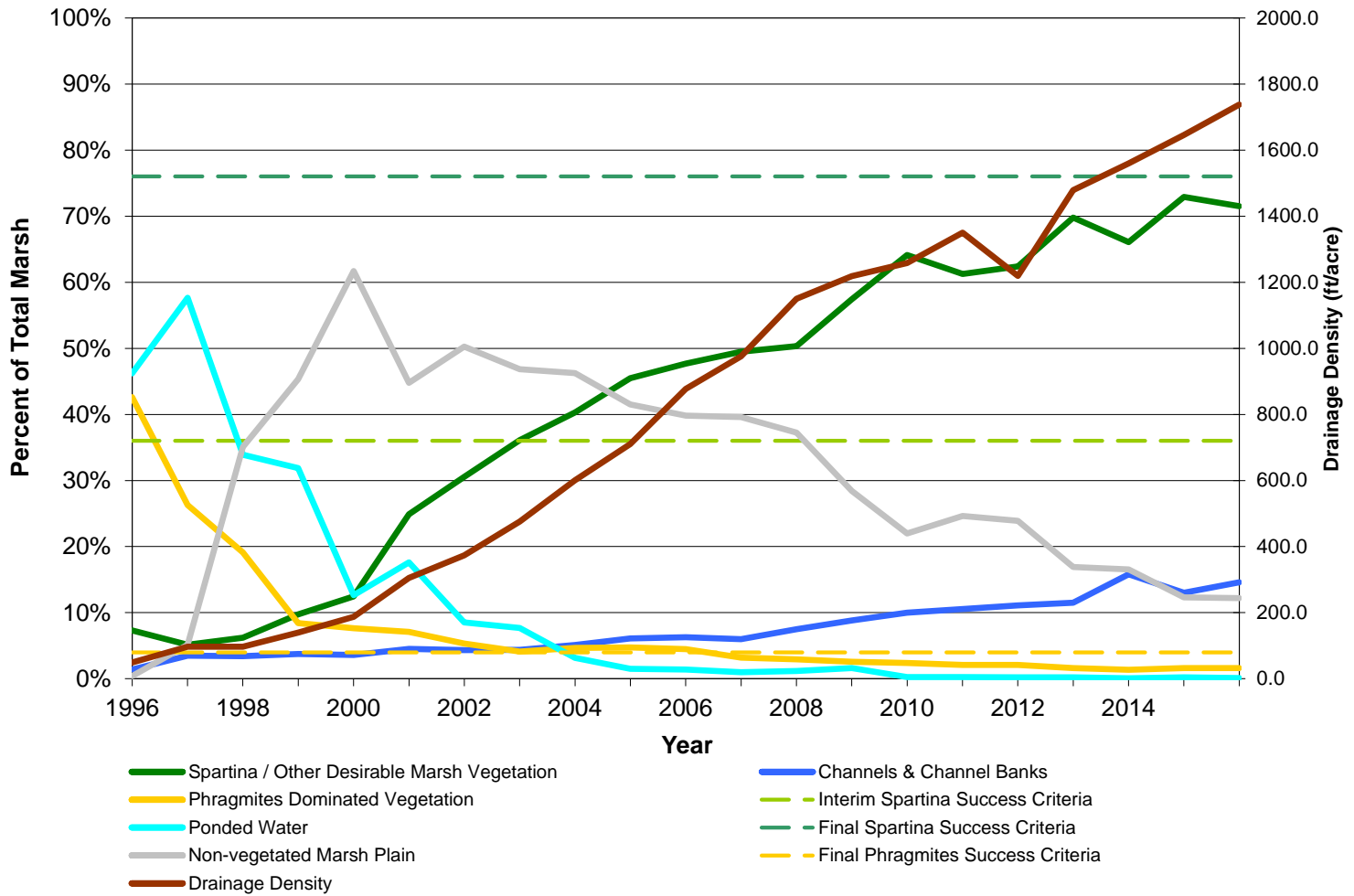
As part of its long-term commitment to the restoration of this site, the EEP continues to:

- Monitor vegetation
- Track hydrologic / channel formation

Commercial Township Wetland Restoration Site Vegetative Cover Summary Chart

Phragmites and ponded water dominated this wetland site prior to restoration activities. As shown in the graph, a rapid decline in the *Phragmites* population followed the channel creation and dike removal. This site reached final *Phragmites* control success criteria (yellow dashed line) in 2003, and the *Spartina* revegetation (green line) continues on the restoration trajectory. The red line (linear feet of channel per acre) indicates the increased aquatic habitat at this site.

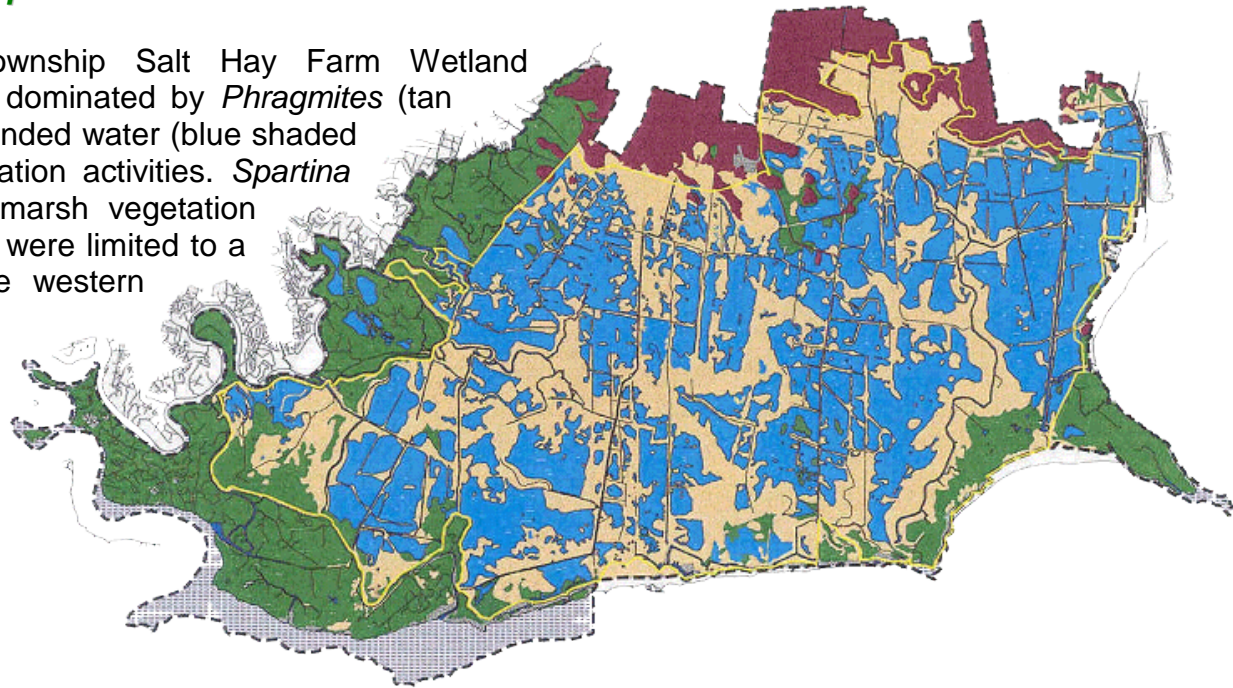
**Commercial Township Wetland Restoration Site
Cover Category and Drainage Density Summary**





Commercial Township Site – 1996

The Commercial Township Salt Hay Farm Wetland Restoration Site was dominated by *Phragmites* (tan shaded areas) and ponded water (blue shaded areas) prior to restoration activities. *Spartina* and other desirable marsh vegetation (green shaded areas) were limited to a small area along the western perimeter of the site.



Commercial Township Site – 2016

After channel creation and dike removal, ponded water (blue shaded areas) and *Phragmites* (tan shaded areas) populations declines substantially and the wetland is now dominated by *Spartina* (green shaded areas) and re-vegetating mud flats (grey shaded areas).

