



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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NEW YORK DISTRICT

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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ANNOUNCES SIGNING OF INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT TO RESTORE SALT MARSH IN JAMAICA BAY, QUEEN, N.Y.

NEW YORK – (September 21, 2009) - While aboard the Army Corps' drift collection vessel HAYWARD, Col. John R. Boulé II, the Army Corps' New York District Commander, signed the Project Partnership Agreement that will allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore the Elders West salt marsh which is located within the Jamaica Bay Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area. Present at the signing were the partner agencies for the project: The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the U.S. National Park Service, the State of New York Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

The signing took place during a harbor inspection tour attended by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY-8), staff from 6 other area U.S. representatives and senators, representatives from 13 federal, state and city agencies, and also 6 non-governmental organizations. The purpose of the inspection tour was to discuss interagency and regional collaboration to achieve the restoration goals contained in the draft Comprehensive Restoration Plan for the Hudson-Raritan Estuary that was released in April 2009.

Restoring salt marshes and coastal wetlands in Jamaica Bay are a critical component of the Comprehensive Restoration Plan.

The marsh islands ecosystem within Jamaica Bay is a home for a variety of wildlife. Salt marshes provide valuable habitat for fish and shellfish, are an important food source for native and migratory birds, and also help improve water quality by removing nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphates.

"This signing is a tribute to the strong commitment by government agencies and other stakeholders to restore critical habitat within Jamaica Bay, balancing the needs of the environment with the economic benefits of deepening the Port of New York and New Jersey," said Boulé.

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The project will beneficially utilize about 200,000 cubic yards of clean sand from the ongoing New York-New Jersey Harbor 50 ft. deepening project to restore about 35 acres of low and high marsh habitat in Jamaica Bay.

It is expected to cost \$11.5 million, with 65 percent of the cost borne by the federal government and 35 percent divided between the State of New York and the City of New York. Included in the federal cost share are about \$3.9 million in federal stimulus funds. Construction is expected to begin in November 2009.

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Col. John R. Boulé II, the Army Corps' New York District Commander signs the Project Partnership Agreement aboard the Army Corps vessel HAYWARD. (l-r) Jim Tierney, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Water Resources, NY State Department of Environmental Conservation; Steve Lawitts, Acting Commissioner, New York City Department of Environmental Protection; Col. John R. Boulé, II, Army Corps' New York District Commander; Barry Sullivan, General Superintendent, Gateway National Recreation Area, National Park Service; and Richard Larrabee, Director of Port Commerce, the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. (Photo credit: Keegan O'Connell-Lilly)

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