



**US Army Corps
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Philadelphia District

News Release

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— FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE —

Lower Cape May Meadows Ecosystem Restoration Project planting to begin

PHILADELPHIA (June 3, 2005) --- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners in the Lower Cape May Meadows Ecosystem Restoration Project today announce the beginning of the first wetland planting phase and will conduct a media availability at the Cape May Point State Park Hawk Watch Platform, 9:00 am Tuesday June 7.

Lower Cape May Meadows is an internationally significant coastal freshwater wetland situated along the Atlantic flyway, one of the most important migratory stopovers in the world for birds. It has been severely impacted by shoreline erosion that has left the existing freshwater ecosystem substantially degraded through saltwater intrusion and drainage pattern alteration. Dune breaching has resulted in alterations to the freshwater wetlands and their ability to support the unique and endangered animals and plants that reside there.

With the completion of the first phase of the ecosystem restoration, re-establishment of the protective beach and dune, construction can now begin on the wetland restoration phase.

About 80,000 wetland species, grown from seeds collected at the Meadows, as well as some rare plants collected prior to herbicide treatment, will be planted during the next 3 weeks. The freshwater species being planted were all grown from seeds collected from the Meadows by Keith Seager, a volunteer with The Nature Conservancy.

All planting will be conducted on Cape May Point State Park property.

Staff from our consulting firm Versar, Inc. will conduct the planting with assistance from Northern Ecological Associates (NEA). The work entails the actual planting (with some areas being purposely left bare), installing control plots for future monitoring efforts, installing and establishing photo monitoring stations, and mapping any persistent *phragmites australis* populations that may need to be re-treated in the Fall.

The first phase of ground spraying using the EPA-registered glyphosate-based herbicide Glypro®, was conducted Sept. 20 to 25, 2004 to manage the *phragmites australis* within about 50 acres of the Cape May Point State Park and the Nature Conservancy-owned Cape May Migratory Bird Refuge.

One of the most widely used herbicides on the market, glyphosate has been registered for use since 1974 by the EPA and classified as a non-carcinogenic compound for humans.

Mowing of the dead *phragmites australis* within the Cape May Point State Park was completed in April by Cape May Point State Park staff members.

Members of the press who plan to attend the availability should arrive at the Hawk Watch Platform at Cape May Point State Park at 9:00 am. The planting can be seen from the platform and the press will also be given the opportunity to go out to the planting. Please dress appropriately for wet and muddy conditions.

For further information please contact Merv Brokke, Philadelphia District, at 215 656 6032, 215 313 1146 or email mervin.e.brokke@usace.army.mil; the Philadelphia District Information Hotline (215) 656-6931 or 866 531 2055; Project website <http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Projects/LCMM/index.htm>