

**Power Line Marsh, Housatonic River
Habitat Restoration Project
Milford, CT**

**Funding application through the
Housatonic River Basin Natural Resource Damages
Funding Program**

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Abstract

Power Line marsh is a 50-acre tidal wetland located along the east side of the Housatonic River Milford, CT. The property has several state and private owners. The marsh is connected to Housatonic River by a man made tidal channel; this primary tidal creek is effectively the backbone of the remnant grid pattern of mosquito ditches found throughout many of Connecticut's tidal wetlands. The entire 50 acres is dominated by Phragmites because the salinities in the tidal creek and this part of the Housatonic River are only 3 to 8 ppt salinity. The proposal for restoration of the tidal marsh at the Power Line Marsh is to create 6 large pools for wildlife habitat. In 500 acres of marshes in the lower Housatonic River, the only place there is wildlife habitat is at the Turkey Hill Brook Marsh north of Route 15 in Milford, a wildlife habitat project by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Protection of the creation of 5 large pools with Phragmites control.

Project Narrative

There is a clear need to restore Connecticut's tidal marshes to provide critical marsh functions such as habitat for wildlife, upland buffer during coastal storms, and to provide pollution filtration of upland runoff. As with many other coastal states, Connecticut's tidal marshes have been subjected to centuries of abuse and degradation based primarily on a lack of knowledge of the importance of these sensitive coastal habitats. Since colonial time's tidal marshes have been filled for agricultural purposes, and for residential and commercial development; they have been dike, drained and ditched for mosquito control; and have been restricted or cut off completely from tidal flow for transportation corridors. Only during the mid-twentieth century were tidal marshes recognized as a critical primary or nursery habitat for many commercially important species, in addition to primary habitat for many of the organisms those species depend upon for food and shelter. Even more recently tidal marshes were granted federal and state protection from further exploitation and development through enactment of legislation establishing regulatory programs. Through strong policies in the Connecticut Coastal Management Act, Connecticut's tidal wetland regulatory program is not only geared toward the protection and conservation of tidal wetlands, but also focuses on their restoration. Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) is recognized as a national leader in the field of tidal marsh restoration. The primary objective of this project is to restore the 50-acre Power Line marsh to a self-sustaining ecosystem that supports the diverse assemblage of plant and animal species found

in healthy tidal marshes. If funded, the proposed construction plan would permanently restore 50 acres. More detail on this is provided below.

Specific objectives include:

- Create 6 large pools;
- Create new tidal channels;
- An increase in invertebrate, fish (primarily *Fundulus* spp.), and bird use of the marsh;
- a natural form of mosquito control whereby *Fundulus* will prey upon mosquito larvae;
- Point source pollution control, since degraded wetlands are often sources of pollution;

Our plan is to restore tidal flow and then let the tides transport seeds of marsh plants. We have done this very successfully for many years and saved a lot of time and money by not purchasing new plant stock.

Community Involvement / Partnerships

Power Line marsh is state and private property and there will be community involvement with the restoration of this system. There are, however, several noteworthy partnerships: Ducks Unlimited, City of Milford and CT Waterfowl Association.

Assessment of the 'environmental effects'

No permanent or long-term negative impacts are expected by the completion of this tidal marsh restoration project. Only short-term impacts from the spoil material of the pools during construction, and even these are negligible. We expect only long-term positive benefits from the pools during the growing season. The new pools will create areas for fish which will bring in wildfowl.

Site Map, Plans, and Photos
Project Location



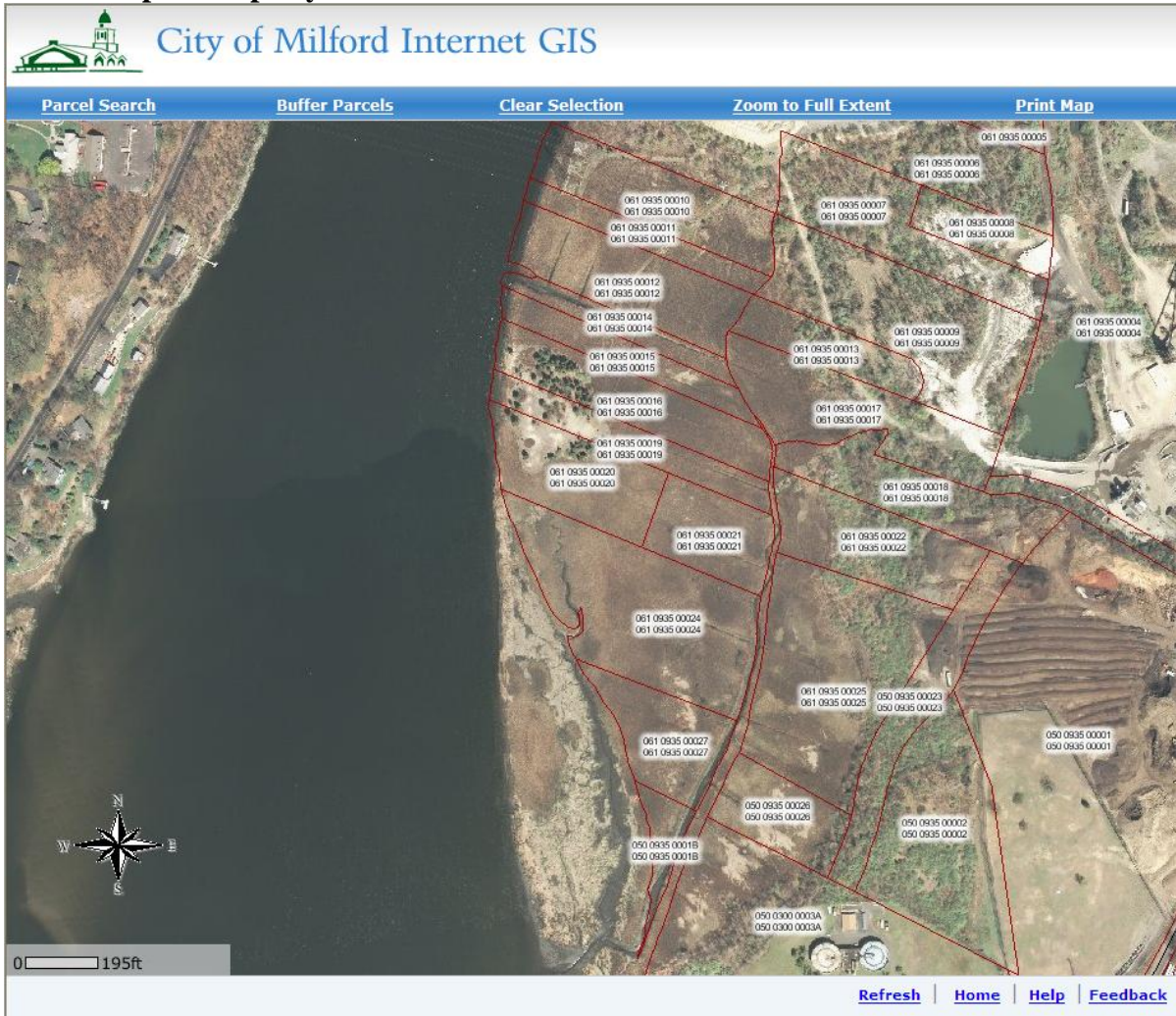
Created Pool at Turkey Hill Brook, part of the Wheeler WMA on Housatonic River 2009



Proposed Plans Housatonic River Power Line Marsh Wetland Enhancement Project, Milford, CT

Install six pools according to Integrated Marsh Management (IMM) techniques. Work to be completed by the DEP WHAMM Program using low ground pressure equipment.

Parcel Map of Property Owners at Power Line Marsh



Housatonic River (power line area), five owners – Parcel Map

- BEARD SAND & GRAVEL CO INC
- CONNECTICUT LIGHT & POWER COMP
- STATE OF CONNECTICUT
- CITY OF MILFORD
- BLACKITE CORPORATION

Project Budget

Power Line Marsh budget

\$60,000 cost estimate for construction

\$30,000 from Housatonic River NRD Fund

\$30,000 from the DEP WHAMM Program as match funds