



US Army Corps
of Engineers
New England District

Project Information Sheet



Galilee Salt Marsh Restoration Narragansett, Rhode Island Section 1135 Environmental Restoration

February 2010

696 Virginia Road, Concord Massachusetts, 01742-2751

PROJECT NAME: Galilee Salt Marsh Restoration Project, Narragansett, Rhode Island

NON-FEDERAL PROJECT SPONSOR: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Fish and Wildlife

PROJECT PARTNERS: Rhode Island Department of Transportation, University of Rhode Island, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, Ducks Unlimited, and US Environmental Protection Agency

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION: The Galilee Salt Marsh is located between the Point Judith Harbor of Refuge and Bluff Hill Cove in the town of Narragansett, Rhode Island. The Galilee Escape Road separates the interior marsh from Bluff Hill Cove. Disposal of dredged material from the navigation improvements at the Point Judith Harbor of Refuge in the 1950s filled in a portion of the historic salt marsh and cut it off from tidal exchange for many years. This led to the degradation of the majority of the marsh from high value salt marsh habitat to lower value common reed marsh. The degradation had severely reduced the fish and wildlife habitat value of the marsh. The project restored 34 acres of former salt marsh from a degraded condition which consisted primarily of fresh water wetland overgrown with common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and shrubs. The modification has restored the site to salt marsh with valuable fish and wildlife habitat. The completed project is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 – Aerial view of Galilee Salt Marsh in 2004.

To allow regular tides entering from Bluff Hill Cove to flood the former estuarine habitat, the Corps' contractor reconstructed the historic channel and excavated the dredged material that was placed in the west side of the marsh during the 1950s, and installed new, twin 6 foot by 10 foot box culverts with self regulating tide gates beneath the Galilee Escape Road. (See Figure 2 for a photo of the gates.) The gates assure that properties adjacent to the interior marsh are not flooded during storm tides. The State of Rhode Island funded the installation of additional culverts and tide gates on the east side of the marsh completing the restoration of the majority of the former salt marsh.

Major construction work was accomplished under the direction of the Corps of Engineers' New England District by C. Pezza and Son, Inc. of Johnston, Rhode Island, at a cost of \$1,172,450. Crews from the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service excavated the interior feeder channels and performed additional site grading.

The reintroduction of tidal flushing and increase in salinity with the Galilee Salt Marsh Restoration Project increased the quality of habitat for migratory birds and estuarine fish and wildlife, and improved aquatic productivity to about 100 acres of formerly degraded marsh. The project won a Coastal America Partnership Award in 1999, as it represented a significant step toward Coastal America's goal of restoring degraded salt marsh habitat in the northeast region.



Figure 2 – Self-Regulating Tide Gates regulate tide levels in the restored salt marsh.