

RESOLUTION
MARKING THE BOUNDARIES OF DYKE MARSH
E&R 2008-5

WHEREAS, Dyke Marsh is a 485-acre freshwater tidal wetland, one of the last large freshwater tidal marshes along the Potomac River shoreline in the Washington, D.C., area;

WHEREAS, Dyke Marsh is at least 5,000 to 7,000 years old, has survived in a metropolitan, heavily developed area, and is one of the most significant temperate, climax, riverine, narrow-leafed, cattail marshes in the U. S. National Park System, nationwide;

WHEREAS, Dyke Marsh was designated by the U. S. Congress “so that fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount”;

WHEREAS, there were 400,000 visitors to the Belle Haven/Dyke Marsh area in 2007 and 1.2 million users of the Mount Vernon Trail annually;

WHEREAS, Dyke Marsh is the site of scientific research by the U. S. National Park Service, Georgetown University and others and offers educational opportunities;

WHEREAS, there has been a decline in some bird species, including the Marsh Wren, the Least Bittern, King Rail and Virginia Rail; there is at least one plant on the federal endangered and threatened species candidate list, one plant is extinct in Dyke Marsh (*Plantago cordata*) and at least one fish, the *Short-nosed sturgeon* (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) is on the federal endangered list;

WHEREAS, Dyke Marsh supports the only known nesting population of the Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus plaustris*) in the upper Potomac tidal zone;

WHEREAS, the U. S. National Park Service has begun an environmental impact statement process to prepare a management and restoration plan to enhance the ecological services, enhance the historic viewshed for the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and enhance the scientific research and educational and interpretative programs offered to the public;

WHEREAS, the eastern boundaries of the marsh are not marked and the actual eastern boundaries of Dyke Marsh exceed the vegetated area of the marsh;

WHEREAS, the Belle Haven Marina is the Dyke Marsh and boaters, canoers, kayakers and others cannot determine when they are in the marsh or in sensitive areas;

WHEREAS, vessels with internal combustion engines are prohibited in the marsh without an NPS permit, water skiing and jet skis are prohibited and pets must be leashed;

WHEREAS, intrusions into sensitive breeding and nesting areas have been observed;

WHEREAS, the poaching of turtles has occurred in Dyke Marsh for many years;

WHEREAS, waterfowl hunters can erect duck blinds on the borders of the marsh and to enable hunters to erect blinds outside the boundaries, the boundaries must be marked;

WHEREAS, with the opening of National Harbor, the expansion of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, and Alexandria's encouragement of boat customers, river traffic, including jet skis, will increase, causing more wakes and detrimental erosion;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations asks the Board of Supervisors, and our federal, state and local legislators to do whatever is required to ensure that the National Park Service marks the boundaries of Dyke Marsh immediately and not wait for the completion of the Dyke Marsh Restoration and Long Term Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.