



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998

<http://www.mvcca.org>

Mary Ann Welton
Department of Planning and Zoning
Wetlands Board

Sept 11, 2017

Dear Ms Welton,

Ref: National Park Service Dyke Marsh Restoration Application MVCCA Resolution

On behalf of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizen's Associations (MVCCA) the attached resolution is forwarded for your action and consideration.

The MVCCA fully supports the full restoration of Dyke Marsh.

Cathy Ledec our Environmental Committee Chair is authorized to testify before the Wetlands Board on Sept 12, 2017 on our behalf.

Katherine Ward

**Katherine Ward
Co-Chair
MVCCA**

Attached: Resolution in support of the NPS Dyke Marsh Restoration

MVCCA Resolution 2017-02 (Environment and Recreation (E&R) Committee): Support for Full Restoration of Dyke Marsh to include time-of-year restrictions (update of MVCCA E&R 2013-03)

1. WHEREAS, Dyke Marsh is the last major remnant of once extensive freshwater marshes along the upper tidal Potomac River;

2. WHEREAS, Congress added Dyke Marsh to the National Park Service (NPS) system in 1959 and directed the Secretary of the Interior to administer the marshlands "...so that fish and wildlife development and their preservation as wetland wildlife habitat shall be paramount" (PL 86-41), and in 1974 directed that the marsh be restored (PL 93-251);
3. WHEREAS, between 1940 and 1972 Dyke Marsh was dredged for sand and gravel, resulting in the loss of about 100 acres of the 183 acres present in 1937;
4. WHEREAS, dredging removed a southern promontory that protected the marsh from tropical storms, hurricanes, and nor'easters driven up the Potomac River valley, leaving the marsh and adjacent neighborhoods potentially vulnerable to flooding and erosion from storms from the south and storms of increasing intensity;
5. WHEREAS, dredging created a deep channel next to the eastern edge of the marsh that acts as a scour channel that further erodes the marsh;
6. WHEREAS, the 2013 update of the 2010 US Geological Survey study concluded that,

"...Dyke Marsh presently is in its late stages of failure as a freshwater tidal marsh system...Erosion is fragmenting the marsh and dismantling tidal creek networks by stream piracy. In the absence of human efforts to restore the equilibrium balance between marsh and tide, and equilibrium to the other natural forces acting on this wetland, Dyke Marsh likely will continue to accelerate its degradation, erosion and fragmentation until it is gone. This will likely occur prior to 2035 AD."
7. WHEREAS, Dyke Marsh is a source of important and irreplaceable ecological, recreational, educational and scientific benefits, and protection by providing critical:
 - a. Natural habitat, nesting, feeding, and refuge areas for migratory and resident waterfowl and other birds (270 species of birds are documented in Dyke Marsh, including 40 that breed there and a state-listed rare species);
 - b. Spawning and nursery grounds for fish (38 species are in Dyke Marsh);
 - c. Natural habitat for other species including plants (300 species, including three state-listed rare species) and animals (6,000 arthropods, 16 reptiles, 14 amphibians);
 - d. Water quality improvements by trapping sediments and nutrients, reducing turbidity, and buffering inland areas from storm and wave energy and flooding;
 - e. Outdoor recreation opportunities for fishing, boating, nature study in and hunting around the waters of Dyke Marsh and the Potomac River;
 - f. Climate change resilience to the marsh and nearby residential neighborhoods; and
 - g. Providing scientific and educational value.
8. WHEREAS, these ecological, recreational, and educational benefits have been degraded and will be permanently lost if the marsh is allowed to disappear, while the irreplaceable loss of habitat will mean smaller and less diverse populations of fish, waterfowl, and other animals and plants;
9. WHEREAS, the National Park Service application to the Fairfax County Wetlands Board proposes full restoration;

10. WHEREAS, full restoration may include donated dredged fill, which should be clean and appropriate, and comply with EPA and Corps of Engineers technical criteria for dredged and fill material, resulting in significant cost savings;
 11. WHEREAS, major funding for this project will be provided by a grant from U.S. Department of Interior to the NPS.
 12. WHEREAS, in 2014 the Fairfax County Park Authority completed a wetland restoration project at Huntley Meadows Park guided by time-of-year restrictions that successfully protected breeding wildlife from the adverse impacts of construction activities: Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/VDGIF-Time-of-Year-Restrictions-Table.pdf> and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): <https://www.fws.gov/northeast/virginiafield/endangered/projectreviews.html>;
- A. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) supports Full Restoration as noted in our 2013 Resolution and urges the Wetlands Board to approve the application for the permit to begin the project;
 - B. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the MVCCA urges the NPS and all of its contractors for this project to follow USFWS time-of-year restrictions and use the FCPA's Huntley Meadows Park Wetland Restoration project as a guide for successful wildlife protections during construction.

Approved by the MVCCA Board of Directors