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## George Washington Memorial Parkway News Release

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### Interior Secretary Sally Jewell Announces \$24.9 Million Investment in Restoration of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

McLean, Virginia -- Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell this week announced \$24.9 million for restoration work at the National Park Service's Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve in Virginia, part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Dyke Marsh is one of 45 federal areas to receive Congressional funding after Hurricane Sandy for restoration and research projects. The projects to restore marshes, wetlands, beaches and shorelines will better protect the Atlantic Coast from future powerful storms. The research projects will look at storm impacts and will model mitigation of storm surges.

The restoration of Dyke Marsh will:

- Stabilize more than two miles of Potomac River shoreline
- Protect 60 acres of existing tidal marsh that is disappearing at a rate of 1.5 to 2.0 acres per year
- Rebuild nearly 150 acres of marsh that existed historically

Dyke Marsh is one of the last of the freshwater tidal wetlands on the upper Potomac River. It supports 230 species of resident and migratory birds and contains the only known nesting habitat in the Washington, D.C., area for state and regionally rare species such as marsh wrens, least bitterns and swamp sparrows.

The marsh has 300 plant species including rare state species such as river bulrush, Davis' sedge, and rough avens. Other Dyke Marsh species include 38 species of fish, 30 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 6,000 arthropod species.

"This is an amazing opportunity to restore critical habitat that has been in jeopardy for far too long," said Alex Romero, George Washington Memorial Parkway superintendent. "The Potomac River is the source of drinking water for more than 5 million metro area residents. The restoration work will help improve water quality in the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay because wetlands filter out pollutants and sediment loads from stormwater runoff."

Dyke Marsh once covered an area of nearly 200 acres. Today, the marsh is less than half that size due to sand and gravel dredging operations between 1940 and the early 1970s. Erosion continued because the marsh was left in a geologically unstable state after dredging operations ceased.

**The Dyke Marsh restoration is consistent with President Obama's Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force Strategy Report and the Administration's commitment laid out in the Climate Action Plan.**

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