

MORDECAI MATTERS

May 2002

President's Update

If Mordecai Island is to be saved, it is up to us to save it!

An ongoing effort by the Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) to study ways of mitigating erosion on Mordecai Island is underway and scheduled for completion sometime in 2003. The project manager, Mr. Michael Giovannozzi, Coastal Planning Division, reports that the Army Corps is in the process of preparing a preliminary restoration plan for Mordecai.

Looking ahead, the Mordecai Land Trust anticipates a construction project that will cost perhaps as much as \$1,300,000. Of this amount, the Army Corps can be expected to fund 75%, while local sponsors, of which the Trust is one, must fund the remaining 25% known as the "local cost share." With this in mind, the Mordecai Land Trust has kicked off a \$275,000 Capital Campaign to fund the cash portion of local cost share for construction of an erosion control project on Mordecai Island. *(Continued on reverse side)*



Anthony Trivelli and his daughter Kristen collecting trash on Mordecai, April 20, 2002.

Annual Mordecai Clean Up

It's always interesting to see who shows up for the Annual Mordecai Cleanup, this year held on April 20 in conjunction with the Alliance for the Living Ocean's island cleanup day. It's even more interesting to see what the assembled group finds. This year was no exception, but there was a twist or two. Because this was a very warm spring, some birds were already nesting keeping the cleanup crew to the perimeter of the island. In addition, a very low tide at the appointed hour made landing on the island a bit of a circus. In the end, all landed safely and were eventually picked up, albeit a little wet and dirty.

The results of the morning's efforts made a formidable pile at the end Norwood Avenue and included the usual glass and plastic bottles, cans, chunks of Styrofoam, plastic bags, bicycle, car and truck tires, pieces of rope, and old sneakers and shoes. More interesting were balls of every *(Continued on page 4)*

Upcoming Events:

- **Erosion Measurement on Mordecai (Sunday, 5/26/2002)**
- **Adult Environmental Tour of Mordecai (Thursday, 8/8/2002 -- RSVP by email to info@mordecaimatters.org)**
- **Member Annual Meeting & Public Discussion (Sunday, 8/18/2002)**
- **Fall Clean Up of Mordecai in Conjunction with International Clean Up Day (Saturday, 9/21/2002)**
- **Erosion Measurement on Mordecai (Sunday, 10/6/2002)**
- **Art Show Fundraiser, "Islands of the Bay" (Saturday, 10/12/2002)**

President's Update *(continued)*

The Mordecai Land Trust expects help in raising the \$275,000 local cost share from other non-federal, governmental or non-profit sponsors. In addition to the Trust itself, other local sponsors might include the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, Ocean County or the Borough of Beach Haven. The more money the Trust is able to raise and apply toward the project, the easier it will be to attract other local sponsors.

Bill Pilling

Winter's Day

At dawn, I see 500 geese
Have gathered for the night
Protected in the cove, at peace
They honk and chatter with delight.

A marsh hawk in the purple sky!
Its mate flies close at hand
They dance and plunge to Mordecai
Their bed the grassy land.

At noon, I see the Buffleheads
All painted white and black
Making sure their young are fed,
Swimming up and back.

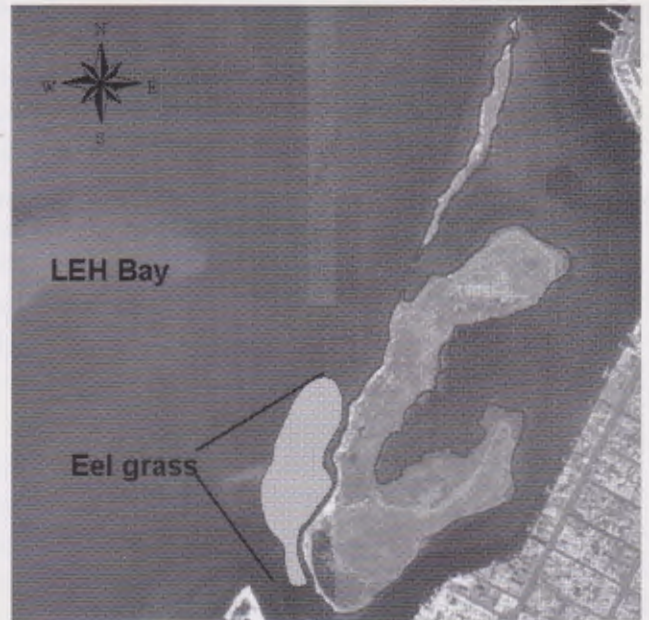
The hooded mergansers arrive
With colorful Mohawk crests
This pair, a proud and fearless tribe
In warrior feather dress.

The grasses lift their heads anew
Late in the afternoon
In quiet stillness, clear and true
The calling of a loon.

I peer along the tidal ledge
Although the sun has set
A heron stalks the island's edge
In twilight's silhouette.

Another winter's day gone by
And from our beds agree
So thankful for our Mordecai
The stars, the birds and me.

Laura Maschal



Mordecai Island and estimated eelgrass (1997 aerial photo).

Eelgrass Beds..... Habitat for Tomorrow

Eelgrass, *Zostera marina*, is a true submerged aquatic plant that is found from the low water mark to about 3 meters of water depth. It is not a seaweed, but rather a true flowering plant, producing seeds and spreading via seed germination. The majority of eelgrass observed floating during the summer months has naturally detached from its root and is carrying seed to be deposited days later in another area of the bay. As many of us know, eelgrass beds are considered to be important nursery areas. Nearly all of our (inshore) commercially and recreationally important fish utilize eelgrass beds, especially in their first two years of life.

Eelgrass habitat provides shelter and protection from predators for many species, including black seabass, tautog, winter flounder, weakfish, bluefish, blue claw crabs, bay scallops, and many more. These submerged grass beds also dampen the impact of wave action, stabilizing shorelines and providing a calm area where organic matter and sediments are deposited. This dampening of wave action contributes to the lower erosion rates found along the southwestern end of Mordecai Island, where a modest eelgrass bed can be found in the shallow waters. (Continued on page 4)

Become a Member Today!

Membership Application Form

<i>First Name</i>		<i>M.I.</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	
<i>Address</i>				
<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>	<i>Zip Code</i>	
<i>Area Code</i>	<i>Telephone No.</i>		<i>E-Mail Address</i>	

Membership Fees

- Student \$ 10
- Basic 25
- Pewter 35
- Silver 50
- Gold 75
- Platinum 100

2002-2004 Capital Campaign

- Sandpiper 100
- Laughing Gull 125
- Mallard Duck 250
- Kingfisher 500
- Black Skimmer 1,000
- Great (American) Egret 2,500
- Great Blue Heron 5,000
- Write your own amount! \$ _____

All \$5,000 or above donors will be listed on stationary as founding members, if received by December 31, 2003!

Total Membership Fee & Capital Campaign \$ _____

- Contact me to make a planned gift to the Trust.
- Contact me to arrange donation of stock or securities.
- My company makes matching gifts!
- I would like to meet personally to learn more about the project and talk about making a gift.
- Please send me a brochure that describes the 2002-2004 Capital Campaign and project to be funded.
- I claim membership based on six hours of service (*Student*: three hours of service).

Amounts contributed to the 2002-2004 Capital Campaign will be placed in a restricted account and applied toward the 25% local cost share of an erosion control project on Mordecai Island.

Make your check payable to "Mordecai Land Trust." Mail your completed application and check to above address.

INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY CALLING (973) 504-6215. REGISTRATION WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT.

As benefits of membership have insubstantial monetary value, the entire amount of your membership fees and donation to the Capital Campaign should be tax deductible as a charitable contribution for federal income tax purposes. See, IRS Publication 526 (Dec. 2000). The IRS has determined that the Mordecai Land Trust is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 ("Code") and not a private foundation pursuant to sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Code.

Mordecai Annual Clean Up *(continued)*, description, including tennis, golf, soccer and whiffle balls, as well as balloons, surgical gloves, minnow traps, decoys, buckets, baskets, channel markers, pvc pipe, shotgun shells, toy action figures, a refrigerator and a plastic 55 gallon drum.

Braving the cloudy, sometimes rainy day were Harv Restrick, Kit and Wes Heilman, Bill, Andrea, Colie and Andrew Pilling, Anthony and Kristen Trivelli, Gail Greenwald, John Walton, Michael Davis, Joe Taggart (all the way from Idaho), Bud Hermann, Bill Haig, Phil and Tim Flagler, Bob Olson, and Ed McGlynn. In all about 35 bags of trash and assorted debris were removed from the island, as well as the nineteen people whom we think went out in the first place. If you happen to see anyone still out there frantically waving, let us know right away. They may have missed the boat!

Phil Flagler

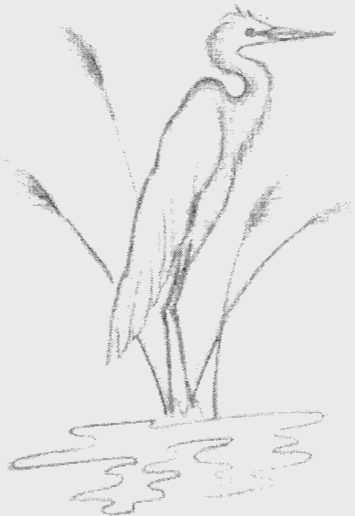
Habitat for Tomorrow *(continued)*

Current threats to eelgrass beds include nutrient loading and boat operations. Excess nutrients in the bay waters cause algae blooms that in turn decrease light transmission to the bay floor, decreasing growth rates of submerged vegetation. Personal watercraft and small boats operating in shallow waters should take care during lower tides when propeller action can damage the plants.

For those fisherman who dredge for grass shrimp in the eelgrass beds, be careful to allow your net to ride on and over the plants and keep the juvenile fish and crabs in a bucket of water until the seagulls leave you alone. This will ensure maximum recruitment of juvenile fish to that year's population.

Steve Evert, Field Station Manager
Stockton's Marine Science Program

William S. Pilling, III, Editor
Telephone: 215-564-8079
E-mail: info@mordecaimatters.org
Website: mordecaimatters.org



Address Correction Requested

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