

# Mordecai Matters



## 2006 UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, May 26,** 1–2:30 PM: "Living Museum" at Beach Haven School, 8th and Beach Avenue

**Friday, June 9:** Materials delivered to LEHYC for SWMER Project biolog placement

**Friday, June 9,** 7 PM: Trustees and SWMER biolog placement organizational meeting at Molly Allison

**Saturday, June 10:** 10 AM: Biolog placement. Meet at Molly Allison. 6 PM, dinner and party at Molly for volunteers and supporters

**Saturday, June 17,** 3:30–5:30 PM: Fundraiser at LEHYC for Congressman Jim Saxton (see inside article)

**Sunday, July 9,** 2–6 PM: MLT House Tour. 6–8 PM Cocktail Party at LEHYC

**Sunday, August 27,** 3–4:30 PM: Annual Meeting at Beach Haven Emergency Operations Center, West and Pelham Avenues

**Saturday, September 16,** 9:30 AM: Fall clean-up. Meet at Molly Allison dock.

**Friday, October 6,** 7 PM: Trustees meeting at Molly Allison

Don't know when your membership expires? The date on your mailing label is your expiration date. Use the enclosed envelope to renew or become a member today!

## ONE SMALL STEP FOR VOLUNTEERS, ONE GIANT STEP FOR MORDECAI

Progress tends to come in stops and starts, and the Trust is no exception. In late fall, while we continued our fundraising and grant writing efforts, we were also working hard to remain optimistic in spite of a series of setbacks toward beginning the actual physical work on the island.

It was a much needed boost of confidence for us when the SWMER (Southwest Mordecai Ecosystem Restoration) grant from the American Littoral Society came through in January. Jeanne Runne, our grant writer, and John Cranmer and Bill Pilling as project managers were notified that permission had been given to install biologs on the southwestern edge of the island.



After a few scheduling problems related to a Flounder Winter Restriction put in place by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, we were able to begin work on March 25th. 35 volunteers headed out to the island to begin the work of restaking and planting in preparation for the June 10th biolog placement.

The teams measured old stakes and removed them and inserted 42 new stakes, which were measured, photographed and tagged. Volunteers also removed some dead eelgrass from the



Bryan Becker, Craig Woolcott, and Linda Colgan



spartina close to the edge of the island and moved it further inland.

The following Tuesday a group of sixth graders from Beach Haven School gathered with MLT volunteers to plant grasses along the southwestern shore. Dr. Pat Daggy, superintendent and principal of the Beach Haven School, accompanied the 13 students and two teachers.

Eric Schradling of USFWS provided the Trust with 30 bayberries, 28 beach plum, and 20 red cedars for the Saturday group to plant. The Tuesday school group continued the work by planting 300 spartina patens in the same area.

On Saturday volunteers were assisted by Doug Gaffney of Coastal Engineering, Craig Woolcott, NOAA Coastal Restoration Specialist, and Bryan Becker, Coastal Restoration Coordinator from the American Littoral Society gave direction to the Beach Haven School group on Tuesday.

The next step, our most ambitious to date, is the June 10th biolog installation on the southwestern edge of the island. At least 50 volunteers are needed. To volunteer contact Pat Miller at 609-492-4963 or email at milpatsy@hotmail.com.



Bill Pilling and Chuck Maschal

## Breakwater Project Update

Last Fall, the Breakwater Project was given additional funds to analyze the geotechnical borings from Mordecai Island. This was time sensitive as the borings were drying. We were pleased to learn that the laboratory report was finalized this past March.

In February, we submitted an Appropriations Request Form with the offices of Senators Lautenberg and Menendez, requesting that fiscal year 2007 funds in the amount of \$780,000 be named for Mordecai Island in the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee Appropriations Bill "to complete the design phase and initiate and complete the construction phase for an offshore wave barrier to reduce the wave erosion occurring on the island." We understand that Congressman Jim Saxton started the process to make a similar request in the House for Mordecai.

Whether Mordecai is in fact allocated additional funds may not be known until as late as next February. Until then, we are largely in a holding pattern on this project.

Finally, we also pursued with the NJ Bureau of Tidelands Management the need to obtain a riparian license for the breakwater pro-

ject. We learned that such a license would be required and a suggestion was made as to how we should proceed.

This project has come a long way and we are very close to construction if the funding can be obtained. It is interesting to note that in its editorial on Sunday, April 23, 2006, the New York Times, under the heading, "Money Worth Spending," advocates making wetlands restoration a priority for New Orleans. The Times said:

The future of the region's habitability is tied to the health of its wetlands. Long before there were levees to hold back the floodwaters, there were wetlands acting as a buffer. This giant sponge can absorb the brunt of a hurricane; shrinking the sponge leaves that much more power in storms to wreak havoc.

Does this sound familiar? It should—Mordecai Island in the same way acts as a buffer for much of Beach Haven.

Bill Pilling

## Phil Flagler : Volunteer Extraordinaire

*"As one who has enjoyed the many wonders of Mordecai Island for almost 60 years, it hurts me deeply to see it slowly disappearing. That's why I continue to join in the work to try to save it. I am enough of a realist to know that in the long run this is a losing battle. On the other hand, if we can slow the process by even a few years, it will mean that tens and even hundreds of thousands of our children and grandchildren will have had the opportunity to also enjoy and learn from those same wonders - and that, to me, is a goal worth pursuing."*

Phil Flagler

Phil Flagler has been involved in the effort to save Mordecai since 1998, before the formation of the Land Trust. He was one of the original trustees of the Land Trust, beginning with its formation on July 20, 2001 and has served continuously since then. He has also served as the assistant treasurer since inception and originally maintained the membership database and member contributions. Phil has served as treasurer, unofficial photographer, chief measurer, secretary, and unofficial co-editor of Mordecai Matters.

He has been a leader who has inspired us to do more. One of his most important contributions was to refine the erosion monitoring, which was started many years ago by John Walton and John Schwendemann. Phil then developed the measuring protocol and has taken photos of problem areas at each measuring session since 1999. If anyone can attest to the severe erosion of the island, it would be Phil.

Working side by side with all three Presidents, his sage advice and

counsel have been invaluable to all of us at the Land Trust. Bill Pilling, who served as the first president of the Land Trust, said, "Phil made himself available to me during the very hectic time MLT was being formed. It is no small task to start an organization from scratch. He was my sounding board and editor. Phil wrote many articles for Mordecai Matters and helped put together a variety of fund raising materials. He has great common sense and was a valued advisor and friend during this period. Just about every night during 2001-2002, I spoke with Phil about this or that. I could not have started the Trust without his advice."

There is no question that any organization is only as good as its volunteers. Phil Flagler has set the standard for professionalism, courtesy, and determination for all of us who are dedicated to the restoration of Mordecai Island.





**Mordecai Site Visit** John Cranmer, MLT SWMER project coordinator, participated in a site visit to Mordecai on February 28th in preparation for the June biolog placement. The group, including Doug Gaffney (Coastal Engineering), Don Kneznick (Pinelands Nursery), Eric Schradling (USFWS), Bryan Becker (American Littoral Society), John Cranmer (SWMER project coordinator) and Pete Evert (captain), landed a boat on the southwest side of the island, bringing along three sample biologs to demonstrate how the installation would work. They also measured where the biologs would be installed and flagged the beginning and ending points of the installation.

### Mordecai: Bird's Eye News

- ✓ MLT has been awarded \$1,000 from the Garden Club of Long Beach Island to be used toward the aerial survey of the island scheduled for late spring.
- ✓ Mordecai Land Trust community volunteers were recently recognized for their efforts to save the island on the Restoration Marketplace website. Pat Miller, Membership Chair, was the highlighted community member. Pat was honored for her work in motivating "larger numbers of the year-round community in the work of the organization, and in her work in MLT's educational outreach programs.
- ✓ In March MLT was given a \$1,000 contribution from the Northeast Shore and Beach Preservation Association to use toward progress in completing the island's preservation projects.
- ✓ In April The Trust for Public Land and the Barnegat Bay Environmental Grant Fund Advisory Board awarded MLT \$1,000 toward our educational program entitled "Mordecai Island Ecological Survey Field Trip for Southern Regional Middle School Ecology Group." The project, slated for this fall, is a partnership between Stockton College, the Southern Regional Middle School Ecology Club and MLT. Jeanne Runne, MLT Vice-President, wrote and submitted the grant.

### Fundraiser for Congressman Jim Saxton, MLT Friend and Conservationalist

On Saturday, June 17, 2006 a group of appreciative citizens will sponsor a fundraiser for Congressman James Saxton. The event will take place between the hours of 3:30 - 5:30 at the Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club, Berkeley Avenue and the Bay, Beach Haven New Jersey.

Congressman Saxton has been a champion for many bills that concern cleaner waters, ecology, and Long Beach Island beach preservation. He has also been a supporter of the Mordecai Island Restoration. Jim currently is the 3<sup>rd</sup> ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee and is Vice Chairman of Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee.

The Officers, Trustees and Members of Mordecai Land Trust want to take this opportunity to thank Jim for his unyielding efforts on our behalf and to encourage his continued support. This is an election year and we would like to see Congressman Saxton in Washington representing us again.

Refreshments will be served. A contribution of \$100 is suggested. Most important for the success of this event is to have our supporters in attendance.

*Mordecai Land Trust*

# Bird's Eye View

*BIRD'S EYE VIEW*

Sunday, July 9th

House Tour and Cocktail Party

House Tour 2 - 6 PM

Cocktails 6-8 PM at LEHYC

Call 609-492-4153 for information

*Volunteers needed!*

Mordecai Land Trust  
P.O. Box 1414  
Beach Haven, NJ 08008-0084



Address Correction Required

*Mordecai Matters*

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**We're on the web! [Mordecaimatters.org](http://Mordecaimatters.org)**

## **5 REASONS TO BE A MLT VOLUNTEER**

- Meet some really nice people
- See some friendly birds and a few curious crabs
  - Learn what all those acronyms mean
    - Watch sunsets over Mordecai
    - Make a difference in the world

*Help needed for the June 10th biolog placement  
And the July 9th House Tour*

Contact Pat Miller at 609-492-4963  
or email [milpatsy@hotmail.com](mailto:milpatsy@hotmail.com)