

**Re: Proposed Director visit to Great Marsh**

Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>

Thu 2/23/2023 3:42 PM

To: Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>

Hi Graham,

In order of preference, the dates we could accommodate the visit are (1) 3/16, (2) 3/15, and a distant (3) 3/17 (Denise's retirement celebration that day).

I have an already-scheduled call with the offices of Tarr, Moulton, and Markey scheduled for next Weds March 01 (to update them on Pink House), so I will also plan to add this to the meeting agenda as an invitation. Hopefully we'll have a date locked in by that point.

Thanks,

Matt

Matthew D. Hillman

Project Leader

Parker River NWR Complex

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<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/parker-river>

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**NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGE SYSTEM**

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**From:** Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 22, 2023 1:36 PM

**To:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>

**Subject:** Fw: Proposed Director visit to Great Marsh

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**From:** Racey, Meagan <meagan\_racey@fws.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 22, 2023 8:29 AM

**To:** Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>

**Cc:** Gaboriault, Holly T <holly\_t\_gaboriault@fws.gov>; Sittauer, Anne <anne\_sittauer@fws.gov>; LaRouche, Genevieve <Genevieve\_LaRouche@fws.gov>

**Subject:** Proposed Director visit to Great Marsh

Hi Graham!

You may remember that the programs recently worked on a handful of coastal resilience/ESA 50 NOAA + FWS event ideas. Kyla would like to proceed with a proposal for a visit by Janet Coit and possibly Martha/Wendi/Kyla to Great Marsh/Parker River March 15/16/17.

I'd like to see if the refuge could accommodate them during this time window -- it's earlier than originally proposed. Is that something you'd prefer to check on? If so, I'll drop the below info into an invitation form and ask the refuge for assistance filling any gaps, and then we'll get it surnamed and sent up to the Director's Office for scheduling.

Thank you!

1. Trip Name: Great Marsh Coastal Resiliency and Restoration

Location: Newburyport, MA (work in 4 adjacent towns: Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Essex)

Closest major city / distance: Boston (1-hour drive north)

DOI/FWS Priority: ESA 50th, Climate, Coastal Resilience, Infrastructure, America the Beautiful, Wildlife Conservation, Youth Leadership

DOI/FWS Connection: Parker River NWR (land ownership)

Opportunity: Visitors will view staff and partner efforts to restore tidal salt marsh within and adjacent to Parker River NWR to benefit wildlife and local communities and see examples of climate adaptations that are benefiting ESA-listed species and at-risk species (piping plovers, salt marsh sparrow, Atlantic sturgeon).

Timing: April would be ideal though we have a lot of flexibility; recommend avoiding July and early August due to greenhead flies.

Brief Description: Parker River NWR has been working with partners in the Great Marsh, including NOAA, to understand and pilot nature-based solutions to salt marsh loss. To date, we have successfully developed a comprehensive suite of low-tech, low-cost solutions that will restore the hydrology of the marsh, reverse marsh loss, improve saltmarsh sparrow habitat, and allow the marsh to adapt to future climate impacts. Local communities and partners have fully embraced these restoration techniques, and have been collaborating to plan, design, and implement landscape-level projects across ownership boundaries. The partnership recently received about \$4 million across 3 grants from NOAA that will advance restoration of 3,600 acres of salt marsh and remove 5 dams and 2 tidal restrictions. The Great Marsh supports 50% of Massachusetts' saltmarsh sparrow population and 5% of its global population. The six adjacent communities within the Great Marsh (Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Essex, Gloucester) recognize the importance of natural estuary to their identity, cultural history, and future resiliency, and have been integral partners in resiliency planning. Other visit highlights include walking the all-accessible Hellcat Trail; a community-based invasive control project involving local youth that has eradicated 40% perennial pepperweed from the Great Marsh; understanding how increasing storms affect a developed dune habitat compared to a natural dune habitat; and a large natural deposition event that added 10-years' worth of sediment to the marsh. The NWR also supports threatened red knots.

Key Partnerships/Stakeholders: MassWildlife, Ducks Unlimited, Trustees of Reservation, Mass Audubon, Ipswich River Watershed Association, NOAA

Congressional Districts: Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA-6), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Edward Markey (D-MA)

Meagan Racey (she/her)

Chief of Staff

Northeast Region

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
413-658-4386 (c)

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