



# Media Advisory

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## Army Corps of Engineers to hold media day at Blackwater Wildlife Refuge, September 23

Baltimore - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold a media day, Monday, September 23, from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center to explain a demonstration project aimed at studying ways to restore thousands of acres of lost marshlands within the refuge.

The media day will include an overview of the project by experts from both agencies, an opportunity to film an innovative dredged material spraying technique, and weather permitting, take an airboat tour of several important sites.

As part of an ongoing comprehensive study, scientists are evaluating various marshland restoration techniques and components on a 20-acre site within Blackwater's 17,000 acres of wetlands, woodlands and croplands. One of the techniques under study is a relatively new approach to rebuilding degraded marshlands. Because portions of the Blackwater system does not lend itself to traditional forms of dredged material placement, such as mechanical means or through a pipe system, experts are spraying the dredged material in thin layers to recreate these lands.

Scientists are measuring the effectiveness of the spraying technique, amount of material settlement and the rate the material can be placed. The best times of the year to plant vegetation, planting techniques and how differing marshland elevations perform are also being studied.

"If this demonstration project is successful, it will likely be applied on a larger scale," said Steven Kopecky, Army Corps of Engineers' geographer managing the Blackwater study. "Ultimately, there is the opportunity to restore up to 7,000 acres of marshland habitats, making Blackwater potentially one of the largest marsh restoration project on the East Coast."

It is estimated that Blackwater loses between 150 and 400 acres of wetlands a year to saltwater intrusion, altered marsh hydrology, sea level rise and damage from invasive nutria.