

# Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)

## EWP Flood Plain Restoration in Cumberland County

**Emergency Watershed Protection Program Floodplain Easements (EWP-FPE)** compensate landowners for allowing vulnerable properties to flood in lieu of making costly structural repairs. The restored floodplains again serve as natural buffers, helping to lessen impacts to adjacent properties. Following Hurricane Sandy, NRCS purchased easements on two properties with \$456,000 of EWP-FPE funds.

One of the easements purchased was a 435 acre salt hay farm located near the Delaware Bay in Cumberland County. The easement was finalized with the landowner in July 2018. Since then, title has been transferred to the Natural Lands Trust, an organization that will steward the easement during restoration and into perpetuity.

Hurricane Sandy had caused extensive damage to dikes, tidegates, and other farm infrastructure. To repair the damages would have been costly and eventually futile against continuing sea level rise. Instead, the easement opportunity offered a more economical alternative with long term environmental benefits.

Restoration will focus on the removal of farm infrastructure.



A 12” metal pipe with a tidegate and support pilings is located in the perimeter dike of the former salt hay operation. During high tide, the flap of the tidegate closes to exclude elevated water levels from hindering salt hay farming operations. At low tide, the flap opened to permit internal drainage of the diked area. This structure and a portion of the dike will be removed to restore stream connectivity and natural tidal exchange.



This picture shows a breach in the dike at a former tidegate structure location. This view is looking into the former salt hay operation and flow is exiting the area as the tide goes down. The breach lies just outside of the easement area so further removal of the dike or widening of the breach cannot be performed. The dike will diminish over time as it is exposed to heavy storms, eventually allowing the farmed area to evolve into conditions resembling its adjacent landscape.



Remains of previous barn structures and debris will be removed off site. In addition, a well (not shown) is planned to be decommissioned, or sealed.