



The Maryland Port Administration PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 29, 2009

CONTACT: J.B. Hanson
MPA Communications
410 385-4702

NATIONALLY RENOWNED ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT HAS CEASED RECEIVING DREDGED MATERIAL AFTER 25 YEARS

Baltimore County's Hart-Miller Island is Home of Wildlife Sanctuary and Recreational Locale

(BALTIMORE, MD) – The Maryland Port Administration (MPA)'s Hart-Miller Island project, nationally recognized for being a leader in beneficial reuse, has ceased receiving dredged material from Baltimore Harbor as of December 22. The project, which began in 1981 with the construction of a large, oval-shaped diked enclosure, has resulted in the creation of 1,100 acres of wildlife and recreational land located near the Back and Middle rivers in Baltimore County. The placement of dredged material began in 1984. It has received about 100 million cubic yards of dredged material from the Baltimore Harbor and Chesapeake Bay channels.

“While controversial at the outset, this facility that has been critical to the prosperity of the Port of Baltimore is now an asset to the community,” said MPA Executive Director James J. White. “Today, Hart Miller is part of the recreational fabric of Baltimore County and the region. Throughout the lifespan of the project, we learned how to better gauge the impact such a project has on communities and the value of involving citizens early in the process. That lesson is being applied today in our Masonville placement project that includes the restoration of the waterfront for community use. Today, we look at Hart Miller and see it as a symbol of partnership where working closely with local citizens produced a project that would benefit the environment, the port and the public.

When the project began, the MPA invited several local citizens to participate in the planning process and operations of the Island. The group, which became known as the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee, volunteered their time to become community liaisons for the project. The Committee also works closely with Maryland Environmental Services, which runs the day-to-day operations of Hart-Miller for the MPA.

“We are pleased that the Maryland Port Administration and the State were able to keep their word and comply with the mandate of no further dredge materials being placed after December 31 of this year,” said Tom Kroen, Chairman of the Citizens Oversight Committee. “Just because dredged materials have stopped being shipped to Hart-Miller Island doesn't mean it is the end; it's just the beginning because now the North Cell development can begin.”

(more)

Hart-Miller Dredging Project

Hart-Miller Island is divided into an 800-acre north cell and a 300-acre south cell. The south cell closed to receiving dredged material in 1990 and is now being managed as a wildlife habitat home to more than 200 different birds and many other species of fauna and flora. Birds such as the Gadwell, Blue-winged Teal, American Bittern and the Hooded Merganser use Hart-Miller as a stopover point during their winter migration. Others birds like the Bald Eagles, the Pied-billed Grebe, Soras, Spotted Sandpipers and Common Moorhens have used the Island for breeding sites while Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons and Royal Terns use it for summer feeding. Foxes, deer and muskrat have also been observed at Hart-Miller. Beginning in 2010, the north cell will be developed into wildlife habitat similar to the south cell, greatly expanding this wildlife haven.

In addition to the wildlife area, Hart-Miller is also the home of a public recreational facility. Thousands of people travel to Hart-Miller annually to take advantage of its boating, fishing, camping and swimming opportunities. The island also includes a sandy beach for picnickers and offers public tours for educational purposes. For more information on Hart-Miller Island, visit marylandports.com and click on safe passage.

#