

Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project

Glossary of Wetland Terms

Barge - an unpowered, flat bottomed vessel used mainly for transporting freight, but also used to transport materials, such as dredged sediment

Breach - a new opening in a narrow landmass that allows flow between water bodies on either side of the landmass

CEQA/NEPA process - state (California Environmental Quality Act, or "CEQA") and federal (National Environmental Policy Act, or "NEPA") regulations that require government agencies (and other parties in the case of CEQA) to consider the potential environmental impacts of their actions

Critical habitat - any habitat officially designated or generally accepted as essential to an endangered or threatened plant or animal

Dewatering - the process of removing water from dredged material placed in a habitat restoration area; the purpose of dewatering is to consolidate the dredged material

Dredge - the process of removing earth from the bed of a body of water by means of a scoop, a suction pipe, or similar machine

Ecosystem - a basic functional unit of nature comprising both organisms and their nonliving environment, intimately linked by a variety of biological, chemical, and physical processes

Habitat - the place where an organism naturally lives or grows

Hydrology - the science of dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water both on the surface and under the earth

Hydrophytic plants - water-loving plants commonly found in wetlands; able to withstand water saturation, changing water levels, and little available oxygen characteristic of a wetland environment

Intertidal - the zone between the high and low water tides

Invasive plants - non-native species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health

Levee - an embankment constructed to provide flood protection from seasonal high water

Maintenance dredging - the continued dredging of a constructed project over a period of time to remove recurring sediment to allow unobstructed ship and barge traffic

Marsh - a soft, wet area periodically or continuously flooded to a shallow depth; usually home to grasses, cattails and other low plants

Peat - unconsolidated deposit of semi-carbonized plant remains in a water-saturated environment such as a bog

Runoff - water from rainfall or melting snow which is not absorbed into the soil, but flows along the surface of the ground until it reaches a stream

Salinity - the number of grams of salt per thousand grams of sea water, usually expressed in parts per thousand

Sediment - solid material suspended in or settled from water; an accumulation of soil, rock, and mineral particles transported or deposited by flowing water

Water table - water that has seeped into the surface of the ground to occupy pores, cavities, cracks and other spaces in underground rocks

Wetland - areas where the frequent and prolonged presence of water at or near the soil surface drives the natural system, including the kind of soils that form, the plants that grow, and the fish and/or wildlife communities that use the habitat; swamps, freshwater and tidal (saltwater) marshes, and bogs are well-recognized types of wetlands

Sources: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

