

DECEMBER 30, 2009

## Second phase of Hart-Miller Island park to begin



After, 25 years, Hart-Miller Island is no longer accepting dredge material from the Harbor and Chesapeake Bay channels.

Part of the Baltimore County island was made into a wildlife sanctuary and recreational area after being built up with the sludge scooped from the water's bottom to accommodate large cargo ships. And now that material won't be going there anymore, the job can be completed, according to the Maryland Port Administration.

The port has put some 100 million cubic yards of material there since 1984 and stopped Dec. 22. In that time, 1,100 acres of park and rec space has been created near the Back and Middle Rivers.

"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 James J. White, the port's executive director, in a statement.

The port now turns its attention to Masonville, where dredge material to create land for a storage area for automobiles -- the port is one of the East Coast's largest handlers of imported and exported cars and trucks.

That's creates green of another kind for the state. However, the port has already cleaned up an area in

Masonville and built an eco-center for the public's use. Port officials say that the land used for that project was once a dumping ground for debris from the great 1904 fire in Baltimore.

Back at Hart-Miller, the island is divided into an 800-acre north cell and a 300-acre south cell. The south cell stopped accepting dredged material in 1990 and is now being managed as a wildlife habitat. There are more than 200 different birds and other animals there. For humans, there is also boating, fishing, camping and swimming. In 2010, the north cell will get its treatment.

For more information on Hart-Miller Island, go to [marylandports.com](http://marylandports.com) and click on safe passage.

*Baltimore Sun file photo of Hart-Miller Island/Jerry Jackson*