

Catch up with MassBays!

Summer 2020 Issue

[View this email in your browser.](#)



Massachusetts Bays

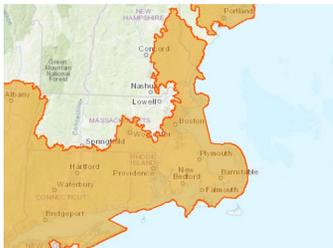
NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



Last Call

A new National Estuary Program Coastal Watersheds Grant Program, administered by Restore America's Estuaries with funding from EPA, is [seeking proposals](#) for projects in coastal and estuarine areas of national significance (see the map below). Up to \$1 million is available for projects that address habitat loss, invasive species, flooding and coastal erosion, and water quality. Grant awards will range from \$75,000 to \$250,000 for up to two years. Letters of Intent are due August 7; full proposals will be accepted by invitation only.

All proposals require an acknowledgment letter provided by the local NEP. [Let us know](#) asap if you need a letter from MassBays!



Grants awarded

MassBays is pleased to fund four projects through December 2021 under the Healthy Estuaries Grant Program:

Center for Coastal Studies, \$28,083 to expand their existing [water quality monitoring program](#) to include measures of coastal and ocean acidification.

Merrimack River Watershed Council, \$22,532 to re-establish their water quality monitoring program in the lower portions of the Merrimack River (monitoring sites in Amesbury, Newbury, Newburyport, and Salisbury).

Looking back, looking ahead

Each Spring, all [28 National Estuary Programs](#) develop their proposed scope of work for EPA review and consideration for funding under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act. Congress appropriated \$665,000 for each NEP for this year, along with funding for a competitive grant program (see "Last Call" at left).

MassBays compiled and submitted a [workplan](#) to EPA that incorporates plans from each of our five Regional Service Providers (RSPs), and Boston-based staff, as well as an accounting of accomplishments achieved under the previous year's grant.

This newsletter highlights some of the resources produced over the past year, and looks ahead to the next. Be sure to [contact us](#) with any questions or ideas for new partnerships!

2019-2020 Accomplishments

"Living shoreline" in place - MassBays' RSP on the Lower North Shore, Salem Sound Coastwatch, shepherded a significant project to completion on Collins Cove in Salem. With the help of 130 volunteers and funding from the Office of Coastal Zone Management, more than 15,000 salt marsh plants were planted to restore 0.75 acres of shoreline salt marsh. Partners at Salem State University continue to monitor conditions at the site over time. [This story map](#) (produced prior to implementation) describes the site and project goals; [contact Barbara Warren](#) for more information.

Social network analysis of restoration partnerships - MassBays' Metro Boston RSP Northeastern University conducted an inventory of coastal restoration projects in Massachusetts, and examined the collaborations that made them successful. Their findings will inform future efforts with analysis of the type of habitat restored, restoration technique(s) applied, partner sectors, and partners' modes of interaction. This work is a component of a Science for Nature And People Partnership ([SNAPP Project](#)) with Stanford University and The Nature Conservancy. For more, [contact Steven Scyphers](#).

State of the Waters: Cape Cod - The Association to Preserve Cape Cod, MassBays' Cape Cod RSP, produced a significant information and planning tool with its State of the Waters reporting program. On the [website](#) ([capecodwaters.org](#)) you'll find information about water quality in the Cape's estuaries and freshwater ponds, as well as drinking water. An accompanying [Cape Cod Waters Action Plan](#) highlights problems, needs, and recommended actions for progress at the local, regional, and state

Mystic River Watershed Association, \$30,000 to conduct an inventory of environmental conditions in Belle Isle Marsh leading to a comprehensive resource management plan for the last salt marsh in East Boston.

Salem Sound Coastwatch, \$15,000 to investigate the impacts of docks and piers on seagrass in Salem Sound.

We received many excellent proposals, and are already setting aside funds for the next call, scheduled for early 2022. For more details on these new projects, and a list of past projects and outcomes, [visit our website](#).



New resources

Septic Smart videos - produced by EPA for [Septic Smart Week](#), September 14-18, 2020

How's my waterway? - MassBays hosted a [webinar](#) to introduce this new online tool offered by EPA.

Value of volunteer time - Independent Sector updated the value of an hour of a Massachusetts volunteer to \$32.96/h.

Socially distanced science

Even as we keep our distance from each other, we can get closer to the natural world. Consider taking [iNaturalist](#) outdoors with you! iNaturalist is an easy-to-access website and app for your smartphone where you can record and share what you find outdoors. Here are some ways to contribute:

Document diversity in a specific location, like the [Salem Sound watershed](#), the [Great Marsh and Parker/Ipswich/Essex Rivers](#), or [Tidmarsh \(Plymouth\) wildlife sanctuary](#).

Track change via CZM's [marine invasive species monitoring program](#), [Project Porchlight](#), or this project to investigate the [types of oysters](#) found in Massachusetts.

Just take a photo! [Any observation](#) you make becomes available to the scientific community, and your photos (or sound recording!) will help researchers around world with

level. [Contact Jo Ann Muramoto](#) for more information.

Coastal acidification monitoring - MassBays has several projects underway to characterize the decreasing pH in Massachusetts' coastal waters. A new continuous monitoring system is undergoing final testing in Duxbury Harbor (a partnership between MassBays and UMass Boston, with assistance from North and South Rivers Watershed Association [NSRWA]); volunteers with Salem Sound Coastwatch collected water samples from mudflats in Salem Sound for analysis and sharing via the [Northeast Coastal Acidification Network](#); and Sara Grady, our South Shore Regional Coordinator from NSRWA, is a member of the Commonwealth's Commission on Ocean Acidification formed by an [Act of the Legislature](#). For more information, [contact Prassede Vella](#).

2020-2021 Plans

State of the Bays - MassBays will provide an overview of trends and conditions in Ipswich Bay, Massachusetts Bay, and Cape Cod Bay -- and share targets for future conditions -- next Spring. A central component of our [Blueprint for the Bays](#), the State of the Bays brings together ongoing work to [support community-based monitoring](#), [document current conditions](#), and determine how and where we can [drive improvements](#). [Contact Pam DiBona](#) for more information.

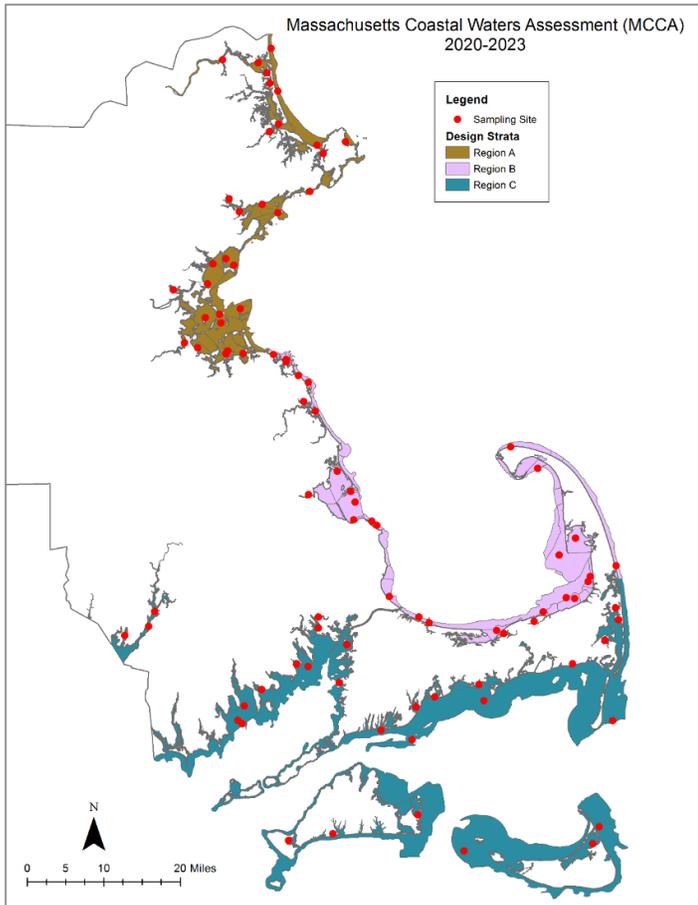
Cyanobacteria monitoring - Cape Cod's ponds are the subject of ongoing monitoring for the toxins produced by harmful cyanobacteria blooms. The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (MassBays' Cape Cod RSP) and University of New Hampshire's Nancy Leland are partnering on with research to determine the connection between blooms in the Cape's ponds and coastal ecosystems. They're concerned that that herring will eat the bacteria and may carry the toxins into the coastal ecosystem. [Find out more here](#).

Finding microplastics - On the Upper North Shore, monitoring in the Merrimack, Parker, Plum Island, Rowley, Ipswich, Essex, and Annisquam Rivers is underway to assess the extent of microplastics pollution using protocols developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Our RSP, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, is teaming up with Seaside Sustainability in Gloucester and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute on this effort. [Contact Peter Phippen](#) for more information.



A manta net deployed in the Merrimack River to collect microplastics for analysis. (Photo: Peter Phippen)

their efforts to increase our knowledge about and understanding of the natural world.



New! Massachusetts Coastal Condition Assessment

Massachusetts' Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recruited MassBays to assist with coastal monitoring to determine the suitability of water and sediment quality for supporting fish, other aquatic life, and wildlife. The 2020 sampling season is a pilot year; three additional years of sampling will yield data from 90 near-shore sites along the Massachusetts coast. MassBays and DEP staff produced a field operations manual and quality assurance guidelines to be employed by Normandeau Associates, the successful bidder on the field sampling component of the effort. [Prassede Vella](#) has more information.

Regional Coordinators & Staff

Upper North Shore:

[Peter Phippen](#), [Merrimack Valley Planning Commission](#)

Lower North Shore:

[Barbara Warren](#), [Salem Sound Coastwatch](#)

Metropolitan Boston:

[Torrie Hanley](#), [Northeastern University Marine Science Center](#)

South Shore:

[Sara Grady](#), [North and South Rivers Watershed Association](#)

Cape Cod:

[Jo Ann Muramoto](#), [Association to Preserve Cape Cod](#)

Boston-based staff:

[Pam DiBona](#), Director

[Prassede Vella](#), Staff Scientist

[Jill Carr](#), Coastal Monitoring Circuit Rider



The Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Partnership is a cooperative venture of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

[Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#) - Charlie Baker, Governor; Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
[Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs](#) - Kathleen A. Theoharides, Secretary
[Office of Coastal Zone Management](#) - Lisa Berry Engler, Director
[Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Partnership](#) - Pam DiBona, Executive Director

Copyright © 2020 Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Partnership, All rights reserved.

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#) [subscribe to our newsletter](#)

