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KARYN POLITO
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Baker-Polito Administration Breaks Ground at Belle Isle Marsh Marine Ecology Park

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Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito joined local officials to celebrate Seaport Economic Council award

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Winthrop – June 2, 2017 – Today Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito joined Town Manager James McKenna, Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Leo Roy to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Belle Isle Marsh Marine Ecology Park and Walkway.

Since 2015, the Town of Winthrop has received a total investment from the Seaport Economic Council of \$1.2 million for the construction of a pier supported walkway and a marine ecology park on public land that borders the marsh.

"Through this award, more Winthrop residents and visitors will be able to access the Belle Isle Marsh, one of the state's four Great Salt Marshes, and build stewardship of this important ecological asset," said **Governor Charlie Baker**. "Our administration actively seeks to foster partnerships with our municipalities, and we are pleased that this investment furthers Winthrop's own strategic plans for their town."

"The Belle Isle Marsh Ecology Park and Walkway will provide access for educational opportunities for our students and increase our eco-tourism offerings," said **Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, chair of the Seaport Economic Council**. "The Seaport Economic Council works closely with our 78 coastal communities to identify opportunities for collaboration to leverage existing assets and improve the blue economy."

When completed, the Marine Ecology Park and Walking Pathway will include viewing stations along the northern edge of Winthrop, on the Belle Isle Marsh. In 2016, DCR and the Town of Winthrop executed a license to allow the town's use of the land. The plans follow Winthrop's 2014 Strategic Economic Development Plan and 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan, which both identified the Belle Isle Marsh as a potential site for recreational and educational enhancements to benefit the community.

"The Seaport Economic Council reviews many proposals each year, and Winthrop's innovative use of this unique property is inspiring," said **Housing and Economic Development Deputy Secretary Carolyn Kirk, vice-chair of the Seaport Economic Council**. "The park and walking path will bring benefits to the community and become a destination for visitors to Winthrop, and we are proud to partner with the town on this effort."

"As Boston's last remaining salt marsh, it is imperative that we work together to ensure that the DCR's Belle Isle Marsh Reservation and the surrounding area is protected for future generations of people to explore and enjoy," said **Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Leo Roy**. "The Baker-Polito Administration remains dedicated to increasing access throughout the state parks system, and importantly, today's groundbreaking event signifies a critical step to advancing that goal at this incredible natural resource."

"As a coastal community at the border of Boston, Winthrop is already a great place to work, live and play. This new Belle Isle Marsh Marine Ecology Park will only add to the quality of life in the town we are so proud to call home," said **House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo**. "I thank the Administration, Lt. Governor Polito, the Seaport Economic Council, Town Manager McKenna, the activists and people of Winthrop for their efforts in making this vision a reality."

"Winthrop's waterfront and green-space are the Town's greatest resource," said **Senator Joseph Boncore**. "These funds will ensure continued and improved access to the Belle Isle Marsh for the community, students and natural lovers for generations to come."

The [Seaport Economic Council](#) advances the Baker-Polito Administration's support for coastal communities and residents by leveraging unique economic assets to drive sustainable regional growth. The council was re-launched in August 2015, with a mission to deepen the maritime economy, promote economic development, and support resilient infrastructure in all 78 of Massachusetts' coastal communities while preparing them to engage with the challenges posed by climate change and sea level rise. The council's capital grant program supports working waterfronts, local tourism, coastal resiliency, and maritime innovation, from the North Shore to Cape Cod and the South Coast.

