

# MASSACHUSETTS BAYS PROGRAM SOUTH SHORE REGION

Photo: NSRWA

## COMMUNITIES WITHIN OUR SOUTH SHORE REGION

Cohasset  
Duxbury  
Hanover  
Kingston  
Marshfield  
Norwell  
Pembroke  
Plymouth  
Scituate

## ADDITIONAL COMMUNITIES SERVED

Hingham  
Hull  
Weymouth

## Estuaries: Where Rivers Meet the Sea

A unique environment with many values, an estuary is a place where fresh water from rivers flows into the salt water of the sea. Estuaries offer protection from storm surge and flooding events, play a large role in improving water quality by removing pollutants and excess nutrients, and harbor countless species, many of which are commercially valuable. They also support a host of recreational uses such as boating, swimming, fishing, shellfishing, birding, and beach-going.

Despite these considerable values, estuaries are threatened in many ways, most of which are connected to human actions. Pressure from hundreds of years of an expanding population and associated development is taking a toll on the health of estuaries and their ability to maintain their ecological integrity.

## The Massachusetts Bays Program and the South Shore

In 1987, an act of Congress established the National Estuary Program (NEP) under the Clean Water Act to address problems facing these valuable coastal resources. The Massachusetts Bays Program (MBP) became a part of the NEP in 1990, highlighting the region as an “estuary of national significance.” Stretching from the New Hampshire border to the tip of Cape Cod, the 50 coastal communities in the region are home to over 1.7 million people. The MBP’s mission is to protect and enhance the coastal health and heritage of Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays.

The MBP’s priorities are to:

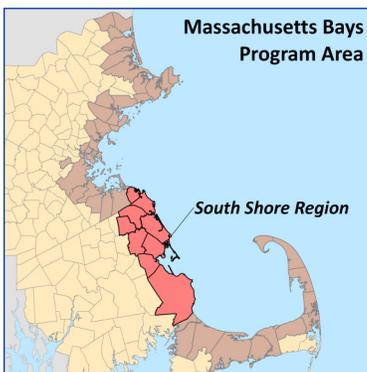
1. Protect and enhance coastal habitat
2. Reduce and prevent stormwater pollution
3. Protect and enhance shellfish resources
4. Manage local land use and growth
5. Manage municipal wastewater
6. Manage marine invasive species
7. Monitor marine waters
8. Adapt for projected impacts of climate change



Photo: NSRWA

**Demonstration rain gardens are now showcased in each MBP South Shore community, including one at Pembroke Town Hall.**

Because of its large size and geographic diversity, the MBP area is divided into sub-regions that are served by regional coordinators working to address coastal planning needs at the local level. The South Shore region is served by the North and South Rivers Watershed Association, a nonprofit organization committed to improving and protecting the coastal resources of the South Shore and its watersheds.



### MBP South Shore Coordinator

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## Highlights - South Shore Region

As regional MBP coordinator, the North and South Rivers Watershed Association (NSRWA) works with a wide range of partners and interests in the region. Accomplishments include:

- ◆ **Climate Change Monitoring** - To better understand shifts in environmental conditions that are potentially due to the impacts of climate change, NSRWA is leading an effort to measure temperature and water level in fish runs throughout the MBP region.
- ◆ **Water Quality Monitoring** - Aiming to improve the quality of estuarine waters, *Enterococcus* testing has been integrated into the NSRWA's Riverwatch water quality monitoring program, complementing an existing fecal coliform monitoring program.
- ◆ **Fish Habitat Enhancement** - An effort is ongoing to assess and model restoration options to improve fish passage and spawning habitat in Scituate's First Herring Brook.
- ◆ **Rain Gardens** - Demonstrating their beauty and practicality, rain gardens have been installed at public facilities in 11 South Shore communities.
- ◆ **No Discharge Areas** - Aimed at improved water quality in waters from Plymouth to Cohasset, assistance was provided to secure two No Discharge Area designations on the South Shore.
- ◆ **Greenscapes** - To reduce stormwater pollution and water use through homeowner education, the Greenscapes program was created to provide information about ecologically-friendly landscape practices and techniques to participating communities.
- ◆ **Stormwater Permit Assistance** - Six communities received assistance on stormwater outreach and implementation of best management practices in support of federal permit requirements.
- ◆ **Watershed Pollution Research** - Research is being conducted with the Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research, seeking to better understand sources of pollution in Cohasset Harbor and its contributing waters, as well as to provide real-life opportunities for student learning.
- ◆ **Wetlands Restoration** - In an effort to understand pre- and post-restoration conditions, salt marsh monitoring has been conducted at six priority wetland restoration sites.
- ◆ **Marine Invasive Species** - State-wide and regional assessments and surveys of docks, piers, and other parts of the shoreline have taken place with the aim of better understanding the status and trends of marine invasive species.



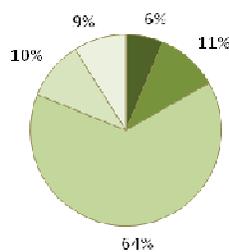
Photo: NSRWA

*Stream data, such as depth and flow rates, being collected by volunteers on the Third Herring Brook in Norwell can help to inform conservation and restoration decisions in our watershed.*

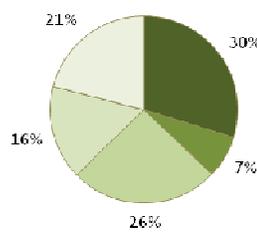
### KEY COLLABORATORS

- Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research
- Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1
- First Herring Brook Watershed Initiative
- Greenscapes Coalition
- Jones River Watershed Association
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
- Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game
- Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration
- Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
- Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
- Metropolitan Area Planning Commission
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Restoration Center
- Pembroke Watershed Association

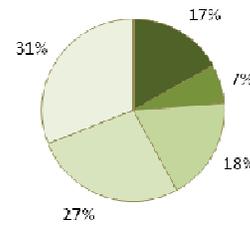
## Massachusetts Bays Program Regional Characteristics



Human Population



Shoreline Length



Land Area

