Massachusetts Bays
NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

10-year Blueprint for the Bays

Why do we care?	What is MassBays' role?	What will MassBays do? *MassBays will undertake fiscal planning to:*	What will MassBays accomplish?	What progress will we see?
Environmental Challenge: We're observing coastal habitat degradation and loss of biodiversity characterized by: • Altered hydrology • Impaired water quality • Vulnerability to climate change • Invasive species • Fragmentation **Management Challenges:** Progress on these challenges is hindered by: • Limited cross-agency and cross-discipline communication and collaboration • Inconsistent public engagement, especially among underserved communities • Lack of information to support decisionmaking	**MassBays provides new resources for research and management in the Bays.**	*Make new data available, especially to address specific gaps in knowledge* *Support valid (QA/QC) data collection and application* *Analyze and present existing data in multiple formats to document baselines and trends*	We will communicate about habitat conditions via a targeted Communications Strategy, including State of the Bays reporting	**Environmental progress:** • Improved habitat continuity and hydrology • Resilient coastal habitat, including implementation of nature-based coastal protection measures • Restored natural communities • Improved water quality **Management progress:** • Robust interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration and partnerships • Well-informed, multisector input to decisionmaking, including contributions from underserved communities.
	MassBays reaches all planning-area municipalities with actionable information about coastal habitats.	*Support, conduct, and disseminate research regarding ecosystem functions to inform state policy and local action* *Provide education, training, and technical support; share case studies (successful and not); and support collaboration and cooperation on specific topics* *Provide access to, and increase influence on decisionmaking by underserved communities*	A majority of MassBays municipalities will implement habitat protection and restoration practices, informed by diverse stakeholders, including underserved and under-represented communities.	
	MassBays provides regular and locally informed State of the Bays reporting that reflects the unique characteristics of MassBays assessment units (embayments, rocky shore, barrier beach), and documents progress toward target conditions.	*Establish target (improved) water quality and habitat conditions tied to desired uses and ecosystem services* *Guide local action to expand habitat and improve water quality according to targets* *Maintain MassBays' National Estuary Program status*	We will track and document measurable progress toward target conditions across the MassBays planning area.	

This outline for MassBays' Comprehensive Plan embodies our mission, and provides guidance for achieving our vision:

MassBays Vision: We envision a network of healthy and resilient estuaries, sustainable ecosystems that support the life and communities dependent upon them.

MassBays Mission: The Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program is dedicated to protecting, restoring, and enhancing the estuarine ecosystems of Massachusetts Bay and Cape Cod Bay. We facilitate partnerships to prompt local, state, and federal action and stewardship, by convening stakeholders on the local and regional level, providing scientific basis for management decisions, and working with decisionmakers to identify problems and solutions.

Make new data available, especially to address specific gaps in knowledge	• Identify gaps in data sets • Prioritize gaps according to need, completeness and reliability of existing and new data, relevance to underserved/underrepresented communities, and potential policy implications • Maintain records of data availability • Provide input regarding data needs to funders and entities conducting monitoring and restoration
Support valid (QA/QC) data collection and application	• Implement a MassBays-wide monitoring framework that incorporates long-term monitoring data and makes data and findings available to the public • Convene and partner with citizen monitoring coordinators, researchers, QA/QC agency staff, others to support and improve citizen monitoring and outputs
Analyze and present existing data in multiple formats to document baselines and trends	• Analyze connections among datasets and trends to inform reporting, actions, and policies • Provide State of the Bays reporting Bays-wide and for each region on a 6-year schedule • Provide online access to State of the Bays reporting
Support, conduct, and disseminate research regarding ecosystem functions to inform state policy and local action	• Identify, evaluate, and support research regarding effectiveness of conservation and restoration activities • Test and implement innovative monitoring, data management, and restoration approaches • Develop and support rapid field assessments
Provide education, training, and technical support; share case studies (successful and not); and support collaboration and cooperation on specific topic	• Revise and disseminate existing, effective education and outreach materials, and develop new materials providing context and integrating multiple sources • Engage with local decisionmakers and residents for habitat protection and restoration to mitigate impact of increased freshwater inputs, sea level rise, and storm surges, including promoting nature-based approaches • Communicate about climate change impacts and vulnerabilities at the local level
Provide access to, and increase influence on decisionmaking by underserved communities	• Review Management Committee composition to ensure diverse, representative input to MassBays' planning • Engage partners who work with underserved communities in Local Governance Committees
Establish target (improved) water quality and habitat conditions for each embayment tied to desired uses and ecosystem services.	• Identify indicators and metrics to describe diversity and similarities among embayments, rocky shore, beaches, and dunes across MassBays' planning area • Identify target conditions to guide management and restoration decisions
Guide local action to expand habitat and improve water quality according to targets.	• Develop and implement action plans based on target conditions • Prioritize habitat conservation and restoration projects based on regional needs assessments • Promote best practices to improve and protect estuarine values and resources Develop and implement action plans according to targets • Measure and report on progress toward targets
Maintain MassBays' National Estuary Program status	• Conduct evaluation of MassBays' organizational and programmatic impact • Establish and support collaborative efforts in MassBays' regions that increase opportunities to leverage new resources