

# **Report of the Massachusetts Coastal Erosion Commission**

## **Volume 1: Findings and Recommendations**

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# Table of Contents - Volume 1

Executive Summary .....	i
Chapter 1 - Introduction .....	1-1
Commission Authority, Charge, and Membership .....	1-2
Commission Process .....	1-3
Commission Working Groups .....	1-4
Public Workshops .....	1-5
Background and Context .....	1-6
Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission .....	1-6
Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee .....	1-9
Chapter 2 - Coastal Processes and Shoreline Characterization .....	2-1
Overview of coastal processes .....	2-1
Inventory and Assessment of Coastal Shoreline Engineered Structures .....	2-2
Publicly Owned Coastal Engineering Structures .....	2-3
Privately Owned Coastal Engineering Structures .....	2-3
Characterizing Landforms, Habitat, and Developed Lands at the Shoreline .....	2-4
Chapter 3 - Coastal Erosion Status and Trends .....	3-1
Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project .....	3-1
Assessment of Coastal Erosion: Past Trends and Estimates of Shoreline Change .....	3-2
Forecasting Shoreline Change .....	3-6
Chapter 4 - Coastal Erosion Impacts .....	4-1
Available Data Sources for Erosion Damage Assessment and Limitation of Use .....	4-1
FEMA's Disaster Recovery Programs .....	4-1
FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program .....	4-2
Estimation of Financial Damage from Erosion Since 1978 .....	4-2
Cost of Federal Disaster Declarations.....	4-3
Cost of NFIP Claims for Coastal Communities .....	4-3
Estimation of Financial Damage from Erosion in the Next 10 Years .....	4-5
Chapter 5 - Shoreline Management .....	5-1
Overview of Shoreline Management Practices .....	5-1
Overview of Regulations/Laws Pertaining to Coastal Erosion Protection .....	5-3
Wetlands Protection Act .....	5-4
Public Waterfront Act (Chapter 91) .....	5-5
Massachusetts State Building Code.....	5-6
401 Water Quality Certification .....	5-7
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act .....	5-7
Federal Consistency Review .....	5-9
Chapter 6 - Recommended Strategies and Actions .....	6-1
Science, Data, and Information .....	6-1

Legal and Policy .....	6-4
Shoreline Management, Assistance, and Outreach .....	6-9
Chapter 7 - Conclusion: Next Steps and Partners in Implementation .....	7-1
Commission Sunset .....	7-1
Next Steps .....	7-1
Partners and Key Organizations .....	7-3
Federal Agencies and Regional Partnerships .....	7-3
Municipalities and Community-Based Partnerships .....	7-4
Academia, Research Institutions and Conservation Organizations .....	7-5
Environmental Consultants and Engineers .....	7-7
Landowners, Businesses and the General Public .....	7-7
Conclusion .....	7-7
Appendix A – Summary of Coastal Erosion Commission Public Workshops May – June 2014 .....	Appendix A-1
Appendix B – References Identified and Consulted by Coastal Erosion Commission for Background and Context .....	Appendix B-1
Appendix C - Progress on Recommendations in Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission Report (2007) .....	Appendix C-1
Appendix D - Progress on Recommended Strategies In Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report (2011) .....	Appendix D-1



## List of Figures

Figure 2-1. Transects for shoreline characterization adapted from the Shoreline Change Project and shoreline characterization assessment units of approximately 50m.....	2-6
Figure 2-2. Example of coastal landform, habitat and developed lands, and shore parallel coastal engineering structures classes within assessment units. ....	2-6
Figure 2-3. Statewide shoreline characterization summary showing the percent occurrence of 11 categories of coastal structures, land use, and wetland resource areas along the assessed shoreline .....	2-8
Figure 3-1. Diagram showing transects, shoreline measurement points, and positional uncertainty utilized for the Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project. ....	3-2
Figure 3-2. Schematic diagram showing historical shoreline positions along a measurement transect that originates from a reference baseline and graph showing a linear regression fit to the shoreline positions .....	3-7
Figure 4-1. Federal dollars paid for public and individual assistance damages in Massachusetts resulting from FEMA disaster declarations .....	4-3



## List of Tables

Table 2-1. Summary of the miles of coastline protected by shore-parallel coastal engineering structures by coastal region and state total .....	2-4
Table 2-2. Shoreline characterization categories and corresponding classes of land cover/land use and wetlands .....	2-7
Table 3-1. Average shoreline change rates (feet/year) and uncertainty (standard deviation) for coastal communities .....	3-3
Table 3-2. Erosion “hot spot” areas listed from north to south .....	3-5
Table 4-1. NFIP claim totals by event for coastal communities .....	4-4
Table 5-1. Summary of shoreline management techniques, appropriate environments, and relative costs.....	5-2



## Executive Summary

In 2013, the Massachusetts Legislature established a Coastal Erosion Commission to investigate and document the levels and impacts of coastal erosion in the Commonwealth and to develop strategies and recommendations to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the magnitude and frequency of coastal erosion and its adverse impacts on property, infrastructure, public safety, and beaches and dunes. Within that charge, the Commission was tasked with (1) making a reasonable assessment of coastal erosion and corresponding appraisal of the financial damage to property, infrastructure and beach and dune resources incurred from 1978 to the present; (2) making a reasonable estimate of the damages likely to occur in the next 10 years under current conditions, regulations and laws; (3) evaluating current rules, regulations and laws governing shoreline management practices; and (4) examining possible changes and cost-effective measures to improve the ability of municipalities and private property owners to reduce or eliminate the impacts of coastal erosion without undue adverse environmental impacts.

This report presents the work, findings, and recommendations of the Coastal Erosion Commission. Since it first convened in March 2014, the Commission held eight meetings, reviewed the work and findings of similar state and national level commissions on coastal shoreline and floodplain management, convened five regional public workshops, and created three working groups—(1) Science and Technology, (2) Legal and Regulatory, and (3) Erosion Impacts. Because of their particular relevance and applicability, the Commission closely reviewed the reports and recommendations of two Massachusetts-specific initiatives—the 2007 Coastal Hazards Commission and the 2011 Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Committee. While much work is ongoing and several actions have not advanced, the Commission found significant progress and accomplishments on the vast majority of recommendations in these two reports.

The Commission released its draft report on January 7, 2015, for a 90-day public review and comment period. The Commission held five regional public hearings to receive comments and input on the draft report and the written comment period closed on April 7, 2015. In meetings held in June, July and September 2015, the Commission reviewed and discussed the input received during the public review period and developed consensus revisions to the draft report.

The Commission's report includes an overview of coastal processes, or the natural forces and interactions of wind, waves, tides, sea level rise, and human alterations on coastal shorelines. The movement of sediment along the coast and the loss and gain of shoreline—erosion and accretion—are continuous and interrelated processes. While erosion is a natural process and sediments from coastal banks and bluffs continue to feed the beaches, dunes, and barrier beaches along Massachusetts coast, it also causes damage to coastal property and related infrastructure and can have adverse effects on beaches and other habitat. Better understanding

of the movement of sediment along the coast can be informed by studies that identify sources and sinks and calculate volumes, rates, and direction of sediment transport.

Where engineered structures (e.g., seawalls, revetments, groins, and jetties) are used to stabilize shorelines, the natural process of erosion is altered, changing the amount of sediment available and erosion rates at adjacent areas. The report reviews current inventories and assessments of coastal shoreline engineered structures. An inventory of all publicly-owned shoreline stabilization structures was completed for the Commonwealth in 2009, and a full update is currently underway, expected to be completed by December 2015. To compliment the data and information developed for public infrastructure, an inventory of privately-owned coastal engineered structures was completed in 2013. The two inventories of coastal engineered structures together provide a comprehensive assessment of shoreline armoring coast-wide and results indicate that 27% of the exposed coastal shoreline is armored by some form of coastal protection. Broken down by regions, the percentage of coastline protected by coastal engineered structures is Boston Harbor - 58%, North Shore - 46%, South Shore - 44%, South Coastal - 36%, and Cape Cod and Islands - 13%.

As part of the Coastal Erosion Commission process, a shoreline characterization project was implemented to describe and categorize the land uses and natural resources potentially at risk from coastal erosion. The approach identified the occurrence and distribution of coastal landforms (e.g., dune, beach, and bank), habitats (e.g., forest, salt marsh, and rocky intertidal shore), developed lands (e.g., residential, commercial, and industrial), and shore parallel coastal engineered structures (e.g., bulkheads/seawalls and revetments) at the immediate, exposed shoreline that encompasses 57 Massachusetts communities. Of the assessed shoreline, 71% are comprised of coastal beach resource areas, while mapped coastal dunes, banks and salt marshes account for 35%, 22%, and 23% respectively. As described above, 27% of the assessed shoreline is armored by coastal structures with revetments occupying 17% and seawalls/bulkheads at 15%. Residential development accounts for 40% of the shoreline, with natural upland areas, maintained open space, and non-residential developed accounting for 32%, 23%, and 7% respectively. The results of the characterization provide a baseline from which to monitor and identify landscape-level trends and patterns for evaluating adaptation and hazard mitigation strategies for a particular location or region.

In this report, the Commission assesses the status and trends of coastal erosion by examining the information and results of the Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project and then providing a summary assessment of past shoreline change and rates. Launched in 1989, the Shoreline Change Project develops and analyzes data from historical and modern sources, mapping the local high water line and developing shoreline change rates and statistics over both a long-term ~150 year period (i.e., from the mid-1800s to 2009) and a short-term ~30 year period (from 1970-2009) at 50-meter intervals along the exposed shoreline. For more than 26,000 transects, data are provided on the net distance of shoreline movement, shoreline change rates, and

uncertainty values. The information provided by the Shoreline Change Project is useful insight into the historical migration of Massachusetts shorelines and erosional hot spots. In support of the Coastal Erosion Commission's work to analyze and present shoreline change trends, information from the Shoreline Change Project was combined with other data, and a shoreline change analysis was conducted for each community covered by the project. The report provides both the long- and short-term average change rates for each community, with the highest twenty erosion rates identified. Average short-term (~30 year) erosion rates for these top twenty communities range from 8.70 feet per year in Yarmouth along the Cape Cod Bay shoreline to 0.99 feet per year in West Tisbury. It is important to note that while the shoreline change averages are provided on a municipal basis, within every coastal city or town there are areas with greater and lesser erosion rates. To augment the information derived from the Shoreline Change Project, coastline and storm damage reports collected by the Massachusetts Rapid Response Coastal Storm Damage Assessment Team were reviewed to identify several "hot spot" locations where the combination of erosion, storm surge, flooding, and waves have caused significant damage to buildings and/or infrastructure over the past five years.

To address the task of providing a reasonable estimate of erosion damages in the next ten years, the Commission conducted a review of shoreline change forecasting approaches, which can be grouped into two types of methods: statistics-based and process-based. While historical rates of shoreline change calculated by statistical methods (e.g., linear regression analysis) can be extrapolated forward, process-based approaches to shoreline change forecasting combine the historical observations of shoreline positions with observations and/or parameterizations of wave processes, which is the dominant driver of shoreline change. The Commission piloted a process-based approach and based on the initial results is recommending advancing a method that combines the historical Shoreline Change Project data with wave-driven shoreline change models to further test and evaluate its ability to accurately forecast future shoreline change.

To make an appraisal of financial damage to property and resources sustained from 1978 to the present, the Commission reviewed available and potential sources of financial damage data, estimates of damages by location, post-storm damage reports, repair records, and other sources. Among the many sources considered, the Commission relied on two with the best available information and that could be extrapolated for the purposes of the requisite appraisal: (1) the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public and Individual Assistance Disaster Recovery Programs, and (2) FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program claims data. The report explains that while these data sources have reliable information on a statewide basis, there are significant limitations to their use in identifying and quantifying erosion damages alone. FEMA payments for federal disaster declarations for events in Massachusetts with coastal impacts (e.g., flooding and erosion) since 1978 total more than \$600 million. The data show that the major events in 1978 (Blizzard of '78) and 1991 (Hurricane Bob) far outweigh the costs of the more recent, and more frequent and less damaging events declared in the Commonwealth. In its review of another measure of damage costs, the Commission found

that the total costs from FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program claims for all coastal events since 1978 was nearly \$370 million. This review also noted that communities with northeast-facing shorelines are more susceptible to significant damage on a frequent basis (sometimes more than once in a given year) from Northeaster storms (i.e., rain or snow events with strong winds that blow from the northeast and typically occur from October through April), while communities with shorelines that do not face northeast may be subject to damage only from a specific subset of storms, particularly hurricanes.

With respect to the task of developing a reasonable estimate of the value of damages from coastal erosion likely to occur in the next 10 years, in the absence of robust short-term forecasts of shoreline change, the Commission sought to identify other sources of information on potential future risk from coastal erosion. The 2013 State Hazard Mitigation Plan includes an assessment of all natural hazards that have occurred or could occur in Massachusetts. Using a hazard analysis model, the plan reports that more than \$7.2 billion of building (structure and content) replacement cost value is exposed to the coastal erosion hazard. However, it is important to note that this figure represents the total replacement value of all buildings within areas that are *potentially* vulnerable to coastal erosion, so this estimate is considered to be very high.

Developed with input from the three working groups and local officials, residents, owners, and other stakeholders at the public workshops, and informed by the Commission's deliberations, the report contains a set of recommendations in the form of eight overarching strategies with specific actions to advance them. The Commission identified three strategies to advance science, data, and information to improve decision-making and management, two strategies to enhance the legal/regulatory and policy framework, and three strategies to enhance shoreline management practices and approaches, technical and financial assistance to communities, and outreach and communication efforts. The recommended strategies and actions are summarized below in Table i-3. Integrated within the strategies and reflected in different actions, the Commission identified a few key, high-level themes including:

- The importance of improving the understanding of coastal and nearshore sediment dynamics;
- The critical need to factor in the effects of climate change and sea level rise throughout planning, management efforts, project design, and regulatory review;
- Strengthening provisions to require that clean, compatible sediment that is dredged for navigational maintenance and improvement projects be placed on public beaches;
- Encourage the pro-active development of local and regional beach and shoreline management plans; and
- Support for the sensible use of suitable pilot, or "test" projects to advance new and creative solutions and encourage innovation in shoreline management approaches.



The Commission's recommended strategies and actions are addressed to a wide audience and have broad applicability. Their implementation will require efforts from state and federal agencies, local cities and towns, academic and/or research institutions, environmental consultants and engineers, landowners and businesses, non-profit organizations, and the general public. As described in the report, the Commission has advised that after its final report is completed, one of the next steps is for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to work with the legislature and others to examine options and opportunities for implementation of its recommendations.

## Recommended Strategies and Actions

Science, Data, and Information	
<b>Strategy #1: Increase understanding of coastal and nearshore sediment dynamics, including the effects of man-made, engineered structures, to inform potential management actions and other responses to coastal erosion.</b>	Action 1-A: Increase observational capabilities for waves, water levels, and coastal response.
	Action 1-B: Advance sediment transport mapping and modeling to develop regional sediment budgets.
	Action 1-C: Continue to assess long-term and cumulative effects of shoreline management techniques and practices, including impacts to adjacent properties and natural resources (physical and biological) and the costs and cost-effectiveness of the practices.
<b>Strategy #2: Enhance available information based on type, extent, impacts, and costs of coastal erosion on public infrastructure, private property, and natural resources to improve the basis for decision making.</b>	Action 2-A: Improve the ability to isolate damage due to coastal erosion from other hazards (e.g., flooding, wind damage).
	Action 2-B: Establish inter-agency agreements with federal agencies (e.g., FEMA, NOAA/NWS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey) to facilitate timely collection of perishable data on post-storm damage and impacts.
	Action 2-C: Develop a comprehensive economic valuation of Massachusetts beaches; including information at community, regional, and state level.
<b>Strategy #3: Improve mapping and identification of coastal high hazard areas to inform managers, property-owners, local officials and the public.</b>	Action 3-A: Develop estimates of future shoreline change by assessing use of approaches that combine observed and model-derived shoreline positions for shoreline change.
	Action 3-B: Improve ability to assess vulnerability of sites by characterizing geologic and geographic variables that are not currently accounted for in inundation maps but have potential to significantly increase risk to erosion and inundation hazards. Evaluate the potential integration of these factors into an exposure index or other tool.
	Action 3-C: Produce comprehensive online atlas of potential flood inundation areas from a range of scenarios, including different timescales and intensities.
Legal and Policy	
<b>Strategy #4: Reduce and minimize the impacts of erosion (and flooding) on property, infrastructure, and natural resources by siting new development and substantial re-development away from high hazard areas and incorporating best practices in projects.</b>	Action 4-A: Evaluate the applicability, benefits, concerns and legal authority for coastal hazard area setbacks.
	Action 4-B: Develop and promulgate performance standards for Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage under the state Wetlands Protection Act.
	Action 4-C: Adopt the 2015 International Building Codes for structures in floodplains, including freeboard requirements for buildings in “A zones”, in addition to current requirements for “V zones”.
	Action 4-D: Incorporate assessment of sea level rise impacts during regulatory review of coastal projects and evaluate alternatives that eliminate/reduce impacts to coastal resource areas and provide appropriate mitigation, as allowed within existing authorities.
	Action 4-E: Finalize and release the guidance document Applying the Massachusetts Coastal Wetlands Regulations – A Practical Guide for Conservation Commissions to Protect the Storm Damage Prevention and Flood Control Functions of Coastal Resource Areas.

Legal and Policy (continued)	
<b>Strategy #5: Improve the use of sediment resources for beach and dune nourishment and restoration.</b>	Action 5-A: Advance the evaluation and assessment of the use of offshore sand resources for beach and dune nourishment and restoration within the context of the 2015 Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan.
	Action 5-B: Strengthen criteria and implementation of existing standards in DEP Chapter 91 Waterways regulations and the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan to ensure that sediments dredged from state tidelands are public trust resources and use for beach nourishment is in the public interest.
	Action 5-C: Support the advancement of the top policy position in the joint Coastal States Organization and American Shore and Beach Preservation Association <i>Call for the Improved Management of America's Beaches</i> calling for national policy to ensure that beach-compatible dredged materials are beneficially used.
	Action 5-D: Explore and implement regional dredging programs to allow for greater efficiencies and cost-effectiveness.
	Action 5-E: Improve effectiveness of beach nourishment projects by reviewing and potentially adjusting standards and policies that restrict placement of sand below mean high water on the nourished beach.
Shoreline Management, Assistance and Outreach	
<b>Strategy #6: Promote the development of local and regional beach and shoreline management plans</b>	Action 6-A: Support coastal communities in their development of new or updating of existing local and regional beach and shoreline management plans.
<b>Strategy #7. Support the implementation and study of pilot projects for innovative solutions and the encouragement of learning-by-doing and experimentation in shoreline management approaches.</b>	Action 7-A: Implement new testing and evaluation protocols for the review of pilot projects for shoreline protection, as allowed by the revised WPA regulations.
	Action 7-B: Create a standing Technical Review Committee to provide impartial, external review of proposed pilot technologies/projects.
<b>Strategy #8. Maintain and expand technical and financial assistance and communication and outreach to communities to support local efforts to address the challenges of erosion, flooding, storms, sea level rise, and other climate change impacts.</b>	Action 8-A: Continue and expand the Coastal Community Resilience and Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience grants, that provide funds to cities and towns to increase awareness of hazards and risks, assess vulnerabilities, identify and implement measures to increase community resilience, and implement natural and nonstructural approaches, called green infrastructure.
	Action 8-B: Support the implementation of a voluntary program that would facilitate the “buy-back” of high hazard or storm-damaged properties, as supported by cost/benefit analyses and other assessments; evaluate feasibility of a voluntary program for low or no interest loans to support the elevation of existing buildings and infrastructure in coastal hazard areas.
	Action 8-C: Increase public awareness of coastal processes, storm events, and risks associated with development on/near coastal shorelines and floodplains; promote better understanding and adoption of best practices.



## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

The coast is a very dynamic environment, and coastal shorelines—especially beaches, dunes, and banks—change constantly in response to wind, waves, tides, and other factors such as seasonal variation, sea level rise, and human alterations to the shoreline system. The movement of sediment along the coast and the loss and gain of shoreline through erosion and accretion are continuous and interrelated processes. In Massachusetts, eroding coastal landforms and marine deposits are the primary sources of sand that created and continue to feed our beaches and dunes. While erosion is necessary and natural, it also causes damage to coastal property and related infrastructure and can have adverse effects on beaches and other habitat.

Created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2013 (Acts of 2013, Chapter 38, Section 200), the Coastal Erosion Commission was charged with investigating and documenting the levels and impacts of coastal erosion in the Commonwealth and developing strategies and recommendations to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the magnitude and frequency of coastal erosion and its adverse impacts on property, infrastructure, public safety, and beaches and dunes.

This report presents the work, findings, and recommendations of the Coastal Erosion Commission. While as a consensus document, the report does not reflect every single viewpoint expressed during the Commission's process, it compiles and summarizes the most current and best available information on a range of coastal erosion issues in Massachusetts with concurrence of all of the Commission members. It is organized into seven chapters with appendices and includes a second volume containing the reports of the Commission's Working Groups. This first chapter reviews the Commission's charge, covers its members and process, and provides important background and context. Chapter 2 provides an overview of coastal processes, an inventory and assessment of coastal shoreline engineered structures, and a description of work done for the Commission to characterize the landforms, habitat, and developed lands at the shoreline. Chapter 3 contains an assessment of coastal erosion in Massachusetts, describes ongoing work to measure and quantify past shoreline change, summarizes erosion rates for each coastal community, and describes an approach for estimating shoreline change in the next 10 years and beyond. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the available data sources for erosion damage assessment, describes the limitations of such data sources, provides a coarse estimate of the financial damage to property, infrastructure, and beach and dune resources sustained from 1978 to the present, and assesses potential risk in the next 10 years. Chapter 5 contains an overview of shoreline management practices and discusses their effectiveness and potential impacts. Chapter 5 also contains a synopsis of the primary laws and regulations governing erosion management practices and a general assessment of regulatory effectiveness.

The Commission's recommendations are contained in Chapter 6, in the form of eight overarching strategies with specific actions to advance them. Chapter 7 concludes the report with the Commission's advice for next steps to move forward with the implementation of the recommendations. The appendices include a report summarizing a series of regional workshops held by the Commission in May-June 2014, a list of the sources consulted in its review of Massachusetts and other state- and national-level commissions on coastal shoreline and floodplain management, a summary of the recommendations of the 2007 Coastal Hazards Commission and progress to date, and a summary of the coastal-related recommendations of the 2011 Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Committee and progress to date. Volume 2 contains the three Working Group reports prepared for and submitted to the Commission.

### **Commission Authority, Charge, and Membership**

The Coastal Erosion Commission was established by Section 200 in Chapter 38 of the Acts of 2013 to investigate and document the levels and impacts of coastal erosion and to develop strategies and recommendations to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the magnitude and frequency of coastal erosion. Specifically, the statute directs the Commission to:

*make a reasonable assessment of coastal erosion and a corresponding appraisal of the financial amount of damage to property, infrastructure and beach and dune resources which has been sustained from 1978 to the present and a reasonable estimate of the value of damages likely to occur in the next 10 years under current conditions, regulations and laws. Based on those assessments, the commission shall evaluate all current rules, regulations and laws governing the materials, methodologies and means which may be used to guard against and reduce or eliminate the impacts of coastal erosion and shall examine any possible changes, expansions, reductions and laws which would improve the ability of municipalities and private property owners to guard against or reduce or eliminate the impacts of coastal erosion without undue adverse environmental impacts. The commission shall focus particularly on increasing the availability of cost-effective measures to protect against coastal erosion.*

The legislation also specified the membership of the Commission as follows:

- The secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) or designee,
- The director of the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM),
- The commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR),
- The commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or designee, and
- 10 persons appointed by the governor:
  - 3 elected municipal officials from coastal communities,

- 2 conservation agents from coastal communities,
- A representative of a membership-based environmental organization,
- A representative of coastal property owners,
- A coastal geologist with relevant experience and knowledge pertaining to coastal erosion,
- A civil engineer with relevant experience and knowledge pertaining to coastal erosion, and
- A representative of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The Commission members are listed in the preface of this report. Consistent with the statute, EEA and its agencies provided technical support to the Commission. This report has been filed with the clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives.

## **Commission Process**

The first meeting of the Coastal Erosion Commission was held on March 27, 2014, in Boston. The initial work of the Commission included the review of its statutory charge, establishment and tasking of three Working Groups, a review of related efforts, and plans for public workshops to seek public and stakeholder input. The second meeting of the Commission was held on July 31, 2014, and included a review of the input and information received at the five public workshops, updates from the Working Groups, and a discussion of next steps. On October 16, 2014, at its third meeting, the Commission reviewed and discussed the Working Group reports and began initial deliberations on preliminary recommendations and the development of its draft report. At its fourth meeting on November 6, 2014, the Commission reviewed, discussed, and revised a complete set of recommended strategies and actions and approved an outline for its report. At its December 5, 2014, meeting, the Commission reviewed a complete, preliminary draft of its report and discussed next steps for finalizing the draft report and seeking public review and comment. The Commission released its draft report on January 7, 2015, for a 90-day public review and comment period. The Commission held five regional public hearings to receive comments and input on the draft report and the written comment period closed on April 7, 2015. Thirty-seven written comments were submitted and at the public hearings, 45 oral comments were provided. At its sixth meeting on June 2, 2015, the Commission met to review and discuss the input received during the public review period. The Commission met on July 23, 2015, for the seventh time to further discuss the comments and issues on the draft report identified for further review at the June 2 meeting and made plans to finalize the report. On September 29, 2015, at its eighth and final meeting, the Commission finalized revisions to the draft report.

## **Commission Working Groups**

The Coastal Erosion Commission established three Working Groups to provide assistance in completing its charge: Science and Technical, Erosion Impacts, and Legal and Regulatory. Information and content from the three Working Group reports provided the substantive foundation for Commission deliberations and for the development of this report. The three Working Group reports are contained in Volume 2. Technical peer review of the Working Group reports was provided by a group of scientists and coastal geology experts during the public review period.

### Science and Technical Working Group

The Science and Technical Working Group was assigned the four tasks described below to assist the Commission.

1. Characterize the Commonwealth's shoreline by providing an overview of coastal geology and coastal processes; characterizing the landforms, habitats, and developed lands at the immediate, exposed shoreline; and describing ongoing efforts to inventory and track coastal shoreline engineered structures.
2. Develop a reasonable assessment of coastal erosion by describing and quantifying, where possible, past erosion trends and estimates of shoreline change and providing the best advice on how to estimate erosion in the next 10 years.
3. Evaluate the methodologies and means that may be used to guard against and reduce or eliminate the impacts of coastal erosion and develop a summary of shoreline management practices, effectiveness, and adverse impacts.
4. Provide preliminary suggestions as to potential recommendations or strategies related to the science and technical aspects of reducing impacts of coastal erosion.

The Science and Technical Working Group held four meetings on July 30, September 3, September 19, and December 4, 2014.

### Erosion Impacts Working Group

The Erosion Impacts Working Group was given the three assignments listed below.



1. Appraise the financial damage to property, infrastructure, and beach and dune resources that has been sustained from 1978 to the present by inventorying available data sources and information.
2. Develop a reasonable estimate of the value of damages likely to occur in the next 10 years by utilizing best advice on erosion estimates in the next 10 years from the Science and Technical Working Group and developing and applying a method to estimate impacts.
3. Provide preliminary suggestions as to potential recommendations or strategies related to continued or new efforts and methods to characterize and assess financial impacts of damage to property, infrastructure located on bank, and beach and dune resources.

The Erosion Impacts Working Group held three meetings on April 25, May 5, and July 30, 2014.

#### Legal and Regulatory Working Group

The Legal and Regulatory Working Group was asked to address the following three tasks:

1. Summarize current rules, regulations, and laws governing/related to coastal erosion.
2. Provide input and feedback after an evaluation of the current rules, regulations, and laws governing the materials, methodologies, and means for coastal erosion protection and how they are applied.
3. Provide preliminary suggestions as to potential recommendations or strategies related to possible changes, expansions, reductions, and laws that would improve the ability of municipalities and private property owners to guard against or reduce or eliminate the impacts of coastal erosion without undue adverse environmental impacts.

The Legal and Regulatory Working Group held three meetings on May 22, June 19, and July 28, 2014.

#### **Public Workshops**

In May and June of 2014 regional public workshops were held to introduce the Commission and its charge, present information related to coastal erosion and shoreline management approaches, seek public and stakeholder feedback, and communicate the Commission's process and next steps. The five workshop dates and locations were:

- May 21 - South Coast Region, Buzzards Bay Coalition, New Bedford;
- May 22 - Boston Harbor Region, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Boston;
- May 28 - North Shore Region, Gloucester City Hall, Gloucester;
- June 3 - Cape Cod and Islands Region, Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates Chamber, Barnstable; and
- June 16 - South Shore Region, Marshfield Senior Center, Marshfield.

The agenda for the workshops was comprised of presentations on the basics of coastal processes and shoreline management approaches; background, context, and next steps for the Commission; and group discussion on topics including science and mapping needs, best management practices, and local assistance. In addition to members of the Commission and their technical support staff, more than 70 local public officials, residents, consultants, and members of environmental organizations attended the workshops. While workshop attendance varied, participation was highest at the Cape Cod and South Shore workshops. Logistical and planning support for and facilitation of the workshops was provided by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI). A report prepared by CBI that summarizes the workshops is contained in Appendix A.

## **Background and Context**

In order to inform its work, one of the first tasks of the Coastal Erosion Commission was to review the work and findings of other previous efforts in the Commonwealth, as well as similar state- or national-level task forces or comparable official groups on coastal shoreline and floodplain management. In its review, the Commission identified and consulted numerous sources and references, which are listed in Appendix B. Because of their particular relevance and applicability, two Massachusetts-specific initiatives—the Coastal Hazards Commission and the Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee—are summarized below.

### **Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission**

Launched in February 2006, the Coastal Hazards Commission (CHC) was charged with reviewing existing coastal hazards practices and policies, identifying data and information gaps, and drafting recommendations for potential administrative, regulatory, and statutory changes. The CHC was also tasked with conducting a pilot assessment of coastal protection infrastructure (e.g., seawalls and revetments) and estimating costs for maintenance and improvements with the overall objective to develop a 20-year coastal infrastructure and protection plan.

The CHC report, *Preparing for the Storm: Recommendations for Management of Risk from Coastal Hazards in Massachusetts*, was issued in May 2007 and included a suite of recommendations across four topic areas: hazards information, policy, planning and regulations, and protection. (The report can be accessed at: [www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/chc-final-report-2007.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/chc-final-report-2007.pdf).) For each recommendation, the report provides context and rationale and identifies agency lead(s), whether new funds are needed, and the next steps for action.

Significant progress has been made on many of the CHC recommendations. Appendix C contains a brief status of progress on the recommendation. Highlights of some of the accomplishments with the corresponding CHC recommendation include:

- *CHC Policy Recommendation: Establish a storm-resilient communities program to provide case studies for effective coastal smart growth planning and implementation.*
  - ▶ In 2008, CZM launched its StormSmart Coasts program that provides resources, tools, and strategies for cities and towns to address erosion, flooding, and sea level rise and also provides assistance to communities in the form of grants and technical support. See [www.mass.gov/czm/stormsmart](http://www.mass.gov/czm/stormsmart).
- *CHC Planning and Regulations Recommendation: Update the State Building Code requirements for coastal construction, and encourage collaboration between building inspectors and Conservation Commissions.*
  - ▶ Revisions to the Massachusetts Basic Building Code that became effective January 8, 2008, contain various changes to construction standards, including a new requirement for two-foot “freeboard” above base flood elevations for new construction in the velocity zone. See Appendix 8 Flood Resistant Construction at [www.mass.gov/eopss/consumer-prot-and-bus-lic/license-type/csl/8th-edition-base-code.html](http://www.mass.gov/eopss/consumer-prot-and-bus-lic/license-type/csl/8th-edition-base-code.html).
- *CHC Planning and Regulations Recommendation: Develop, update, and implement hazard mitigation plans for coastal communities.*
  - ▶ Since 2007, 18 coastal communities have developed or updated and received FEMA approval on their local/regional multi-hazard mitigation plans (list current as of June 2014 available at [www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/mema/mitigation/fema-approved-local-and-regional-multi-hazard-mitigation-plans.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/mema/mitigation/fema-approved-local-and-regional-multi-hazard-mitigation-plans.pdf)).

- *CHC Planning and Regulations Recommendation: Evaluate the feasibility of a guidance document or revisions to the Wetland Protection Act regulations to develop best management practices or performance standards for Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage.*
  - ▶ In 2014, DEP convened an Advisory Group to assist in the development and adoption of regulatory performance standards for the Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF) resource area under the state Wetland Protection Act (WPA). Standards are needed to preserve the characteristics of the landforms of the floodplain (e.g., slope, vegetative cover, and permeability) to protect the interests of storm damage prevention and flood control. For more information, see [www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/news/advisory-committees/land-subject-to-coastal-storm-flowage-advisory-group.html](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/news/advisory-committees/land-subject-to-coastal-storm-flowage-advisory-group.html).
- *CHC Hazards Information Recommendation: Map and model climate change and sea-level rise data related to coastal hazards in Massachusetts.*
  - ▶ The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) developed projections of inundation from sea level rise at high tide plus one foot increments of sea level rise up to six feet. NOAA's coastal inundation data have been added to the Massachusetts Ocean Resource Information System (MORIS) to allow users to interactively use the sea level rise scenario data with other information such as aerial photographs, assessor maps, public facilities and infrastructure locations, and natural resource areas. For more information and to access the data in MORIS, go to [www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/vulnerability/slr.html](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/vulnerability/slr.html).
  - ▶ In 2013, CZM released a guidance document, *Sea Level Rise: Understanding and Applying Trends and Future Scenarios for Analysis and Planning*, to help coastal communities and others plan for and address potential sea level rise effects on residential and commercial development, infrastructure and critical facilities, and natural resources and ecosystems. The document includes background information on local and global sea level rise trends, summarizes the best available sea level rise projections from the *National Climate Assessment*, and provides general guidance in the selection and application of sea level rise scenarios for coastal vulnerability assessments, planning, and decision making for areas that may be at present or future risk from the effects of sea level rise. The document is available at [www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/slr-guidance-2013.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/slr-guidance-2013.pdf).

- *CHC Hazards Information Recommendation: Identify and map potential offshore and inland sources of suitable nourishment sediment.*
  - ▶ Through its Seafloor and Habitat Mapping Program, CZM continues to work with partners such as the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center to collect data on seafloor sediment and deposits—either directly through field work or from published reports—and to interpret these data. This information directly supports elements of the state’s update of the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan, which is advancing the planning, analysis, and siting of potential offshore sources of sand for potential beach nourishment projects. For more information, see [www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/sediment-mapping](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/sediment-mapping) and [www.mass.gov/eea/MOP](http://www.mass.gov/eea/MOP).
- *CHC Hazards Information Recommendation: Develop a process to capture coastal conditions immediately after major storm events.*
  - ▶ CZM launched a coastal storm damage reporting tool on-line in 2009. StormReporter enables rapid delivery of damage information including coordinates and photographs to decision makers and emergency management personnel. CZM partnered with NOAA’s National Weather Service, the Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems, and the Northeast Regional Ocean Council to make StormReporter operational for the Massachusetts Rapid Response Coastal Storm Damage Assessment Team and for other states working to collect and report coastal storm damages. See [mycoast.org/ma](http://mycoast.org/ma).

### **Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee**

The Global Warming Solutions Act, passed by the Massachusetts Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2008, included a section that directed the EEA Secretary to convene an advisory committee to develop a report, analyzing strategies for adapting to the predicted changes in climate. As mandated by the Act, the Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee included representatives from the following sectors: transportation and built infrastructure; commercial, industrial, and manufacturing activities; low-income consumers; energy generation and distribution; land conservation; water supply and quality; recreation; ecosystem dynamics; coastal zone and ocean; rivers and wetlands; and local government. The Committee also included experts in public health, insurance, forestry, agriculture, and public safety. Five technical subcommittees provided forums for in-depth examination of specific topic or sector areas: Natural Resources

and Habitat; Key Infrastructure; Human Health and Welfare; Local Economy and Government; and Coastal Zone and Ocean.

To develop its report, the Committee's process included gaining public input, evaluating data and information, developing recommendations, and informing the Legislature. Issued in 2011, the *Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report* describes the process, principles, findings, and recommendations of the Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee, and presents a first step toward the identification, development, and implementation of strategies to advance Massachusetts's ability to better adapt to a changing climate. This report is available at [www.mass.gov/eea/waste-mgmt-recycling/air-quality/climate-change-adaptation/climate-change-adaptation-report.html](http://www.mass.gov/eea/waste-mgmt-recycling/air-quality/climate-change-adaptation/climate-change-adaptation-report.html).

The report is organized in two parts. Part I, which is comprised of three chapters, contains the over-arching conclusions and recommendations of the Committee. Chapter 2 presents a summary of the observed and forecasted changes in climate parameters and the known and expected impacts in Massachusetts. Chapter 3 contains several key findings that emerged from the Committee process and describes a set of principles that guided the process and should serve as guidelines for future development and implementation of climate change adaptation strategies. Chapter 3 also presents cross-cutting strategies, which were informed by and developed directly from the information and ideas generated by the individual sector-specific subcommittees. Part II contains individual sector-specific chapters, and each chapter provides a general overview of the topic area and its general vulnerabilities, followed by a description of sub-sectors with specific vulnerabilities and impacts that could result from predicted climate change, along with short- and long-term strategies to help increase resilience, decrease vulnerabilities, and better prepare the sector for a changing climate. In addition, "no regret" actions are also identified for each sector (i.e., strategies that are easily implemented, help to make systems more resilient, and would offer substantive benefits beyond climate change adaptation).

In its report, the Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee presented information on climate changes and trends already being observed and reviewed published literature for estimates of projected future conditions for many climatic parameters, including air and sea temperature, precipitation, streamflow, droughts, growing season, and—especially important for the Coastal Erosion Commission—sea level rise. Since that time, additional information sources have been published, including the third National Climate Assessment, *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*, and the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, both issued in 2014.

Chapter 8 of the *Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report* outlines potential strategies for three coastal zone and ocean issue areas: 1) Residential and Commercial Development, Ports, and Infrastructure; (2) Coastal Engineering for Shoreline Stabilization and Flood Protection; and (3) Coastal, Estuarine, and Marine Habitats, Resources, and Ecosystem Services. While all of the Coastal Engineering for Shoreline Stabilization and Flood Protection strategies are directly related to the work of the Coastal Erosion Commission, there are additional strategies related to the other two issue areas that are relevant. Additionally, Chapter 4 (Natural Resources and Habitat) contains four sets of recommendations related to coastal ecosystems. In a recent update for the Georgetown Climate Center's profile of state and local adaptation work, EEA reported progress on the vast majority of the recommended strategies ([www.georgetownclimate.org/adaptation/state-information/overview-of-massachusetts-climate-change-preparations](http://www.georgetownclimate.org/adaptation/state-information/overview-of-massachusetts-climate-change-preparations)).

Appendix D of this Coastal Erosion Commission report contains brief descriptions of progress on the coastal zone and ocean, as well as the coastal ecosystem, recommendations. Highlights of a few selected recommendations (in italics) and some key accomplishments to date are described below.

- *Coastal Zone and Ocean Recommendation: Promote the nationally recognized "No Adverse Impact" approach - advanced by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (2007) and underlying the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management's StormSmart Coasts program - that calls for the design and construction of projects to have no adverse or cumulative impacts on surrounding properties.*
  - ▶ As part of the StormSmart Communities program, CZM has produced the following coastal floodplain management publications:
    - *StormSmart Coasts Fact Sheet 1: Introduction to No Adverse Impact Land Management in the Coastal Zone* describes the No Adverse Impact (NAI) approach to coastal land management, which is based on a set of “do no harm” principles that communities can use when planning, designing, and evaluating public and private projects ([www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/ssc/ssc1-nai.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/ssc/ssc1-nai.pdf)).
    - *StormSmart Coasts Fact Sheet 2: No Adverse Impact and the Legal Framework of Coastal Management* discusses how the NAI approach can help communities protect people and property while reducing legal challenges to floodplain management practices ([www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/ssc/ssc2-legal.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/ssc/ssc2-legal.pdf)).
- *Coastal Zone and Ocean Recommendation: Strengthen the delineation of erosion and flood-hazard areas by incorporating current rates and trends of shoreline change as well as*

*additional analyses of the maximum vertical extent of wave run-up on beaches or structures.*

- ▶ CZM's Shoreline Change Project illustrates how the shoreline of Massachusetts has shifted between the mid-1800s and 2009. Using data from historical and modern sources, up to eight shorelines depicting the local high water line have been generated at more than 26,000 transects. Data are provided on net distances of shoreline movement, shoreline change rates, and uncertainty values. CZM has incorporated these shoreline change data into MORIS, the Massachusetts Ocean Resource Information System, and has developed a customized Shoreline Change Browser within the MORIS web-based coastal management tool. The Shoreline Change Project presents both long-term (approximately 150-year) and short-term (approximately 30-year) shoreline change rates at 50-meter intervals along ocean-facing sections of the Massachusetts coast. In a broad sense, this information provides useful insight into the historical migration of Massachusetts shorelines and erosional hot spots ([www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change/)).
- *Coastal Zone and Ocean Recommendation: Consider additional revisions to the State Building Code to expand the requirement for elevating new and substantially improved buildings above the base flood elevation in hazard areas beyond the "V" zone (velocity flood zone with wave heights >3 feet) in order to accommodate sea level rise.*
  - ▶ Currently, the State Building Code requires two feet of freeboard above the base flood only in "V" zones. EEA, DEP, DCR, and CZM are working with the Board of Building Regulations and Standards evaluating potential new requirements for other coastal high-hazard flood zones and resource areas ([www.mass.gov/eopss/consumer-prot-and-bus-lic/license-type/csl/bbrs.html](http://www.mass.gov/eopss/consumer-prot-and-bus-lic/license-type/csl/bbrs.html)).
- *Coastal Zone and Ocean Recommendation: Conduct an alternatives analysis when replacing failing public structures that pose an imminent danger, and ensure review of the analysis by local and state environmental agencies. Assessment of the analysis should consider cumulative impacts and the No Adverse Impact approach.*
  - ▶ CZM and DCR have completed comprehensive inventories of privately and publically owned seawalls, revetments, groins, jetties, and other coastal structures ([www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/seawall-inventory/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/seawall-inventory/)).
  - ▶ A new Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Fund provides financial resources to qualified projects where natural resources, public infrastructure and safety, and key economic areas are at risk due to



deteriorating infrastructure. In other instances, the structures no longer serve their purpose and removal provides the opportunity to restore natural systems ([www.mass.gov/eea/waste-mgmt-recycling/water-resources/preserving-water-resources/water-laws-and-policies/water-laws/draft-regs-re-dam-and-sea-wall-repair-or-removal-fund.html](http://www.mass.gov/eea/waste-mgmt-recycling/water-resources/preserving-water-resources/water-laws-and-policies/water-laws/draft-regs-re-dam-and-sea-wall-repair-or-removal-fund.html)).

- ▶ EEA is working on proposed changes to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) requirements that would require consideration of climate change impacts to new projects that are subject to MEPA.
  - ▶ DEP is working on potential changes to the state's Coastal Waterfront Act (Chapter 91) regulations to address coastal flooding and sea level rise.
- *Coastal Zone and Ocean Recommendation: Continue to advance use of soft engineering approaches that supply sediment to resource areas such as beaches and dunes in order to manage the risk to existing coastal development. Periodic nourishment with sand is essential to maintaining dry recreational beaches along many developed coasts.*
    - ▶ Recognizing that areas of many coastal communities are experiencing severe erosion, flooding, and storm damage, and that beach nourishment and dune restoration can offer an important alternative for shoreline protection that works with the natural system, EEA and CZM are updating the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan to advance the planning, analysis, and siting for potential offshore sand for beach nourishment ([www.mass.gov/eea/MOP](http://www.mass.gov/eea/MOP)).
    - ▶ CZM recently developed and released a series of fact sheets intended to help property owners work with consultants and other design professionals to select the best option or combination of options for their circumstances. Part of the StormSmart Coasts program, the StormSmart Properties guidance gives coastal property owners important information on a range of measures that can effectively reduce erosion and storm damage while minimizing impacts to shoreline systems ([www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-properties/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-properties/)).
    - ▶ CZM is administering the Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience Pilot Grants Program through its StormSmart Coasts program. This grant program provides financial and technical resources to advance the understanding and implementation of natural approaches to mitigating coastal erosion and flooding problems. Grants will support the planning, feasibility assessment, design, permitting, construction, and monitoring/evaluation of green infrastructure projects that implement natural or living shoreline approaches

[\(www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/green-infrastructure-grants/\)](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/green-infrastructure-grants/).

- *Natural Resources and Habitat Recommendation: Identify, assess, and mitigate existing impediments to inland migration of coastal wetlands. As sea levels continue to rise, the whole system of coastal wetlands and subtidal habitats will move inland. This cannot occur in areas where the topography does not permit it, or where barriers, such as roads, seawalls, or settlements, prevent it.*
  - ▶ Working with partners, CZM recently launched a project to examine the vulnerability of salt marshes to sea level rise. Initial efforts supported model selection and initial data compilation, with a focus on the North Shore's Great Marsh. The next phase expands the project to model salt marsh response and impacts under different climate and sea level rise scenarios and generates site-specific information and maps to identify and communicate vulnerability, risk, and impacts to Massachusetts coastal wetlands.

Many of the Commission's recommended strategies made in this report will advance those of the 2011 *Climate Change Adaptation Report for Massachusetts* and increase capacity and resiliency to the impacts of a changing climate.

## Chapter 2 - Coastal Processes and Shoreline Characterization

This chapter provides an overview of coastal processes, reviews inventories and assessments of coastal shoreline engineered structures, and summarizes work completed and underway to characterize the landforms, habitat, and developed lands along the Commonwealth's coastline.

### Overview of Coastal Processes

The natural forces of wind and waves continuously shape the shorelines of Massachusetts. These dynamic environments shift and change in response to relative shoreline shape and position, the availability of sediment, wind and waves, and continuously rising sea levels. The loss (erosion) and gain (accretion) of coastal land is a visible result of the way shorelines are reshaped.

Erosion of coastal banks (also called bluffs) created and continues to feed beaches, dunes, and the 681 barrier beaches along much of the 1,500-mile Massachusetts coast. For example, the material eroded from the Atlantic-facing bluffs of the Cape Cod National Seashore supplies sand to downdrift beaches on the extremities of Cape Cod. Additional sources of sand on the Massachusetts coast include other deposits of sediment, such as current and former river deltas.

Erosion, transport, and the accretion that results are continuous interrelated processes. Wind, waves, and currents constantly move sand, pebbles, and other small sediments along the shore (alongshore) or out to sea. Shorelines also change seasonally, tending to accrete during the summer months when sediments are deposited by relatively low energy waves and erode dramatically during the winter months and during coastal storms when sediments are moved offshore by high energy waves.

While erosion and flooding are natural processes, they have the potential to damage coastal property and related infrastructure, particularly when development is sited in unstable or low-lying areas. Erosion and flooding are dynamic and powerful processes that can expose septic systems and sewer pipes; release oil, gasoline, and other toxins into the marine environment; sweep construction materials and other debris out to sea; or even lead to the collapse of buildings, roads, and bridges. Public safety is further put at risk when these damages result in the contamination of water supplies, shellfish beds, or other resources.

Where engineered structures are used to stabilize shorelines, the natural process of erosion is altered, which can change the amount of sediment available and erosion rates of adjacent

areas. Under conditions of reduced sediment supply, the ability of coastal landforms to provide protection from storm damage and flooding is diminished, increasing the vulnerability of infrastructure and development. In addition, the Commonwealth's natural ecosystem attractions—beaches, dunes, barrier beaches, salt marshes, and estuaries—are also threatened and will slowly disappear as the sand sources that supply and sustain them are eliminated.

By improving the understanding of the magnitude and causes of erosion and applying appropriate management techniques that will maintain the beneficial functions of coastal landforms, coastal managers, property owners, and developers will be better prepared to work with the forces of erosion and not against it. In order to inform decisions regarding shoreline management, coasts can be divided into compartments called littoral cells. Each cell contains a complete cycle of sediment transport, including sediment sources, sinks, and transport paths. Sources of sediment contributing to the system include eroding coastal banks and dunes, sinks are often inlets or bays, and transport paths can include alongshore and onshore/offshore. A sediment budget can be calculated for each littoral cell to help understand the volume of sediment coming from the sources and the amounts being sequestered in the sinks. Calculations can also be used to help determine the volume, rate, and direction of sediment movement along the shoreline.

Littoral cells have been mapped for Cape Cod and the South Shore from Hull to the Cape Cod Canal. Sediment budgets have been produced for some small sections of the Massachusetts shoreline, such as portions of inner Cape Cod Bay, outer Cape Cod including the Cape Cod National Seashore, and the area from the Westport River to Allens Pond in Dartmouth. As described in Chapter 5, the development of sediment dynamics and budget information for the entire coast would greatly improve the ability of coastal managers to understand the historic erosion trends and predict how the shoreline may respond to various shoreline management strategies.

## Inventory and Assessment of Coastal Shoreline Engineered Structures

The coastal shoreline contains a variety of engineered structures designed for shore protection and stabilization. Seawalls, revetments, groins, jetties, and other engineered structures were designed and built to protect buildings and infrastructure. Many of these structures were built prior to modern coastal policies and regulations and, until recently, no centralized accounting of coastal structures existed. As described above, these structures significantly influence the movement and distribution of sediment—and therefore erosion patterns and rates—along the shoreline. The long-term maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of coastal structures built to protect both public and private development present significant challenges, including cost, current and future function and performance, and adverse effects. To inform state and local shoreline management, inventories of both

privately and publically owned seawalls, revetments, groins, jetties, and other coastal structures have been developed and are described below.

### Publicly Owned Coastal Engineered Structures

An inventory of all publicly owned shoreline stabilization structures was completed for the Commonwealth in 2009. The project was initiated by the Coastal Hazards Commission in 2006 and focused primarily on shoreline stabilization structures and their ability to resist major coastal storms and prevent damage from flooding and erosion. Since ownership and maintenance are major issues for these structures, the goal of the infrastructure project was to research, inventory, survey, and assess existing publicly owned coastal infrastructure along the entire Massachusetts shoreline. Led by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), the study identified publicly owned shore protection structures through research of local, state, and federal records. Each structure was located, recorded, and described prior to field work. Field inspections were conducted by civil engineers to perform visual condition assessments and collect photographs of the structures. A detailed report was prepared for each coastal community identifying each publicly owned coastal engineered structure, including type, material, height, length, elevation, Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map flood zone designation, condition, priority rating, estimated repair or reconstruction cost, and any records regarding the design and permits that were obtained for the structure. The condition of each structure was rated A through F, indicating a scale ranging from Excellent to Critical. The structures were also given a priority rating, based on the perceived immediacy of action needed and the presence of potential risks to inshore structures if problems were not corrected.

Continuing this effort, DCR initiated a project to update the inventory of publicly owned structures in 2013. The final project update will include identification of all work performed on publicly owned structures since the previous inventory, detailed assessments of publicly owned structures that were missed in the previous inventory, updated condition assessments for all structures, updated cost estimates for repairs and reconstruction, detailed reports for each coastal community, and GIS data. The update is expected to be completed by December 2015.

### Privately Owned Coastal Engineered Structures

To complement the data and information developed on public infrastructure, an inventory of privately owned coastal engineered structures was completed for CZM in 2013. These structures were delineated using remote sensing techniques to extract information regarding structure location, type, material, length, elevation, and height.

Various data sources were used to locate the coastal structures and determine their attributes, including: 2008/2009 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) color orthophotographs, Light Detection and Ranging (lidar) terrain datasets available through the Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS), Massachusetts Oblique Imagery (Pictometry), Microsoft Bing Maps, Tax Assessor Parcel records, and Chapter 91 license data. The final report, *Mapping and Analysis of Privately Owned Coastal Structures along the Massachusetts Shoreline*, includes a description of the methodology, details of the database, results, and appendices.

The two coastal structures inventories together provide a comprehensive assessment of shoreline armoring coast-wide and indicate that 27% of the exposed coastal shoreline is armored by some form of public or private coastal protection (Table 2-1). The detailed reports from both of the coastal structures inventories are available at

[www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/seawall-inventory/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/seawall-inventory/).

Geodatabases containing the coastal structures data are available in the online Massachusetts Ocean Resources Information System (MORIS), which can be accessed at the website above. In addition, CZM and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) mapped other public and private structures (e.g., piers and stairs) along the coastline and these data are available for shoreline characterization and erosion impact analyses.

Table 2-1. Summary of the miles of coastline protected by shore-parallel coastal engineered structures by coastal region and state total.

Region	Shoreline Length (miles)	Private Structure Length (miles)	Public Structure Length (miles)	Percent Shoreline with Structure
North Shore	160	50	24	46%
Boston Harbor	57	12	21	58%
South Shore	129	28	29	44%
Cape Cod & Islands	615	66	11	13%
South Coastal	154	49	7	36%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>27%</b>

## Characterizing Landforms, Habitat, and Developed Lands at the Shoreline

As part of the Coastal Erosion Commission process, a shoreline characterization project was developed and implemented by CZM to describe and categorize the land uses and natural resources potentially at risk from coastal erosion. The project identified the occurrence and distribution of coastal landforms (e.g., dune, beach, and bank), habitats (e.g., forest, salt marsh, and rocky intertidal shore), developed lands (e.g., residential, commercial, and industrial), and

shore-parallel coastal engineered structures (e.g., bulkheads/seawalls and revetments) at the immediate, exposed shoreline that encompasses 57 Massachusetts communities. The results of the characterization provide a baseline from which to monitor and identify landscape-level trends and patterns for evaluating adaptation and hazard mitigation strategies for a particular location or region.

The project utilized as a baseline the contemporary mean higher high water shoreline for exposed areas of the coast developed for the CZM-USGS Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project, 2013 Update. More information on the Shoreline Change Project is contained in Chapter 3 and detailed information and results can be found at [www.mass.gov/cca/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change](http://www.mass.gov/cca/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change). The contemporary shoreline (ca. 2007-2009) was developed from digital orthophoto images, lidar-based digital elevation models, and site-specific knowledge in a GIS environment. The exposed shoreline is that area of the coast where tidal and storm-driven constituents could have an effect on shoreline movement and generally excludes harbors and estuaries; however, sections of back barrier beach were included, as determined by the investigators for the Shoreline Change Project. Maps depicting the shoreline extents used for this project (referred to here as “assessed shoreline”) are included in the Science and Technical Work Group Report in Appendix A.

The transects used to measure shoreline change rates in the Shoreline Change Project were adapted for the characterization project to develop assessment units (i.e., linear segments) along the assessed shoreline (Figure 2-1). These transects are generally spaced every 50 meters along the shoreline, and therefore each of the assessment units are approximately 50 meters in length (Figure 2-1). This method provides more information at a finer scale than one where aerial coverage of features is summarized within a specified shoreline buffer. Attributes for hardened coastal structures, wetlands and landforms, and other land use/land cover features were spatially joined to transects, then to their respective shoreline segments (Figure 2-2). From multiple source datasets, 57 classes of land cover/land use were identified, and certain classes were aggregated to create 11 categories to summarize the data (Table 2-2). To improve the accuracy of the characterization, a process has been developed to order the classes within each assessment unit as they occur along the transect, moving from the subtidal zone to upland. This allows for enhanced analysis, such as the extent of development and natural resources landward of a dune, and for the identification of areas of specific interest such as where a coastal dune occurs seaward of a coastal engineered structure. A process has also been developed to measure the width of each class within the assessment unit to provide more than presence or absence information about each class, such as the actual beach width.



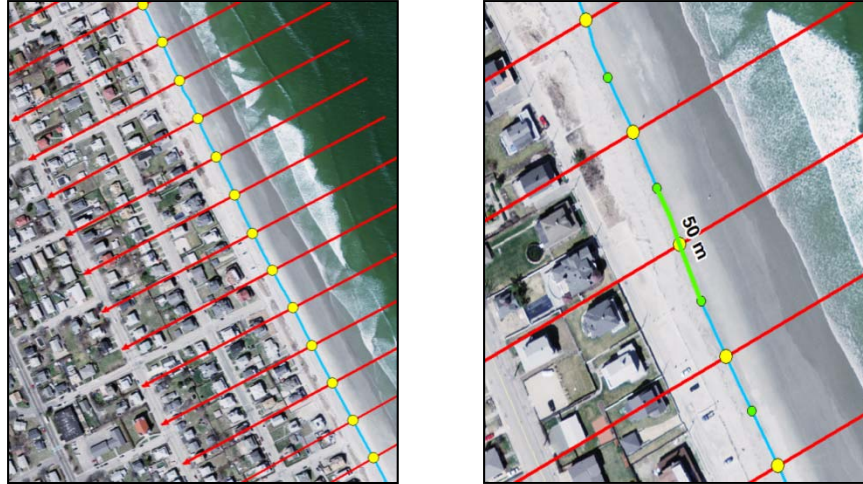


Figure 2-1. Left image shows transects for shoreline characterization adapted from the Shoreline Change Project. Right image shows shoreline characterization assessment units of approximately 50 meters.

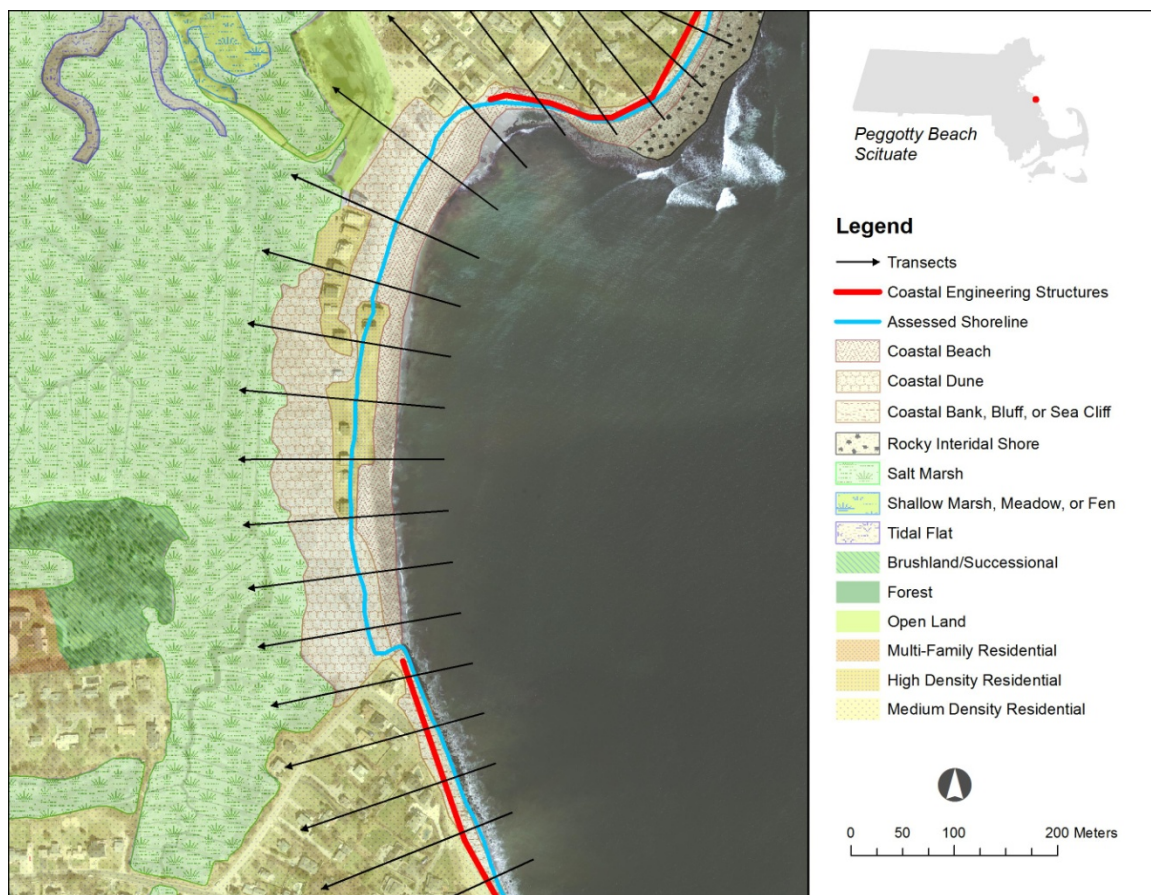


Figure 2-2. Example of coastal landform, habitat and developed lands, and shore-parallel coastal engineered structures classes within assessment units.



Table 2-2. Shoreline characterization categories and corresponding classes of land cover/land use and wetlands.

Shoreline Characterization Category	Land Use/Land Cover Class <sup>1</sup> or Wetlands Class <sup>2</sup>
Non-Residential Developed	Commercial
	Industrial
	Junkyard
	Marina
	Spectator Recreation
	Transitional
	Transportation
	Waste Disposal
Residential	High Density Residential
	Low Density Residential
	Medium Density Residential
	Multi-Family Residential
	Very Low Density Residential
Maintained Open Space	Cemetery
	Cropland
	Golf Course
	Nursery
	Open Land
	Participation Recreation
	Urban Public/Institutional
	Pasture
	Mining
	Cranberry Bog
	Powerline/Utility
	Water-Based Recreation
Natural Upland	Brushland/Successional
	Forest
Beach	Barrier Beach-Coastal Beach
	Coastal Beach
Coastal Bank	Coastal Bank Bluff or Sea Cliff
Dune	Barrier Beach-Coastal Dune
	Coastal Dune
Salt Marsh	Salt Marsh

(1) MassGIS land use datalayer created using 2005 digital imagery.

(2) DEP wetlands datalayer created using 1990-1993 photography.

A statewide summary is shown in Figure 2-3 depicting the percent occurrence of 11 categories of coastal structures, land use/land cover, and wetlands/landforms for the assessed shoreline. Of the assessed shoreline, 71% is comprised of coastal beach resource

areas, while mapped coastal dunes, banks, and salt marshes account for 35%, 22%, and 23% respectively. As described above, nearly 27% of the assessed shoreline is armored by coastal structures, with revetments occupying 17% and seawalls/bulkheads at 15%. Residential development accounts for 40% of the assessed shoreline, with natural upland areas, maintained open space, and non-residential developed accounting for 32%, 23%, and 7% respectively. It is important to note that at a given shoreline location more than one type of landform, habitat, land use, and/or structure may be present (co-occur) such that the percentages listed above do not total 100%. Results for each of the coastal communities and additional summaries are presented in the Science and Technical Work Group Report in Volume 2. The shoreline characterization project was presented at the Coastal Erosion Commission regional workshops in poster format. The posters are available on the Commission's website at [www.mass.gov/eea/erosion-commission](http://www.mass.gov/eea/erosion-commission).

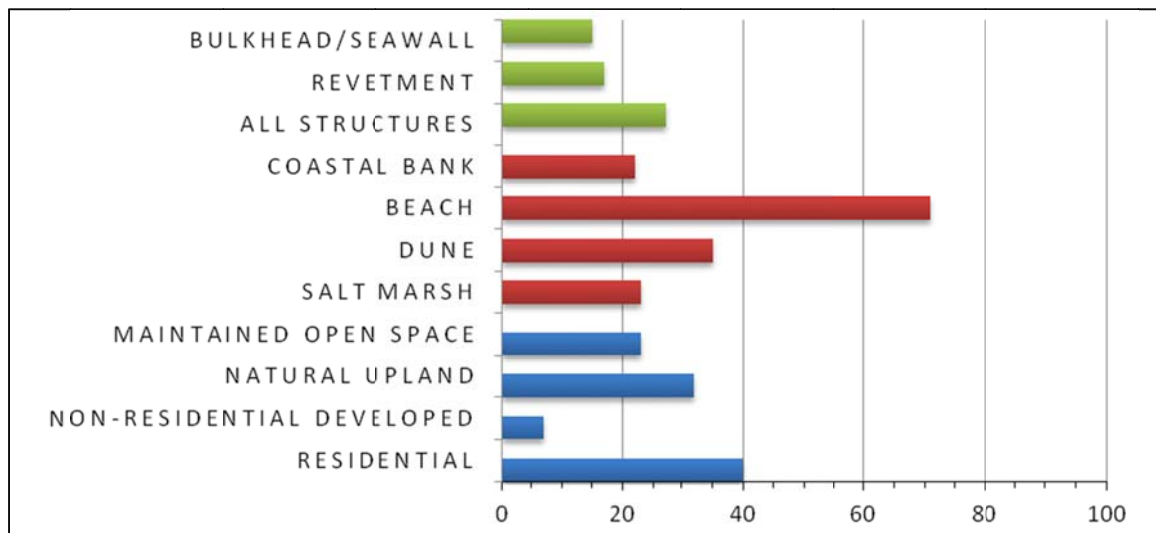


Figure 2-3. Statewide shoreline characterization summary showing the percent occurrence of 11 categories of coastal structures, land use, and wetland resource areas along the assessed shoreline. Multiple classes may occur at each shoreline segment.

## Chapter 3 - Coastal Erosion Status and Trends

As described in Chapter 2, coastal shorelines are dynamic environments; they change constantly in response to wind, waves, tides, sea level fluctuation, seasonal and climatic variation, human alteration, and other factors that influence the movement of sand and other material within a shoreline system. The loss (erosion) and gain (accretion) of coastal land is a visible result of the way shorelines are reshaped in the face of these dynamic conditions. This chapter addresses the status and trends of coastal erosion by first describing the Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project, and then providing a summary assessment of past shoreline change and rates and introducing an approach for estimating shoreline change in the next 10 years and beyond.

### Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project

To better understand and track the changes in the Commonwealth's exposed coastal shoreline, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) launched the Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project in 1989. Currently, in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the project develops and analyzes data from historical and modern sources—including historical maps, aerial photographs, and light detection and ranging (lidar) topographic data sources—mapping shorelines depicting the local high water line and developing change rates and statistics over both a long-term ~150 year period (i.e., from the mid-1800s to 2009) and a short-term ~30 year period (from 1970-2009) at 50-meter transects along the exposed shoreline. Figure 3-1 depicts an example of the measurement baseline, shoreline measurement points, and shoreline positional uncertainty along transects. The coast where tidal and storm-driven forces could have an effect on shoreline movement and generally excludes harbors and estuaries; however, sections of back barrier beaches were included. For more than 26,000 transects, data are provided on the net distance of shoreline movement, shoreline change rates, and uncertainty values. The information provided by the Shoreline Change Project shows the historical migration of Massachusetts shorelines and erosional hot spots. CZM has added all of the mapped shorelines at more than 26,000 transects with change rates, uncertainty values, and net distances of shoreline movement into the Massachusetts Ocean Resource Information System (MORIS) and has also developed a customized Shoreline Change Browser within the MORIS web-based coastal management tool, which can be accessed at [www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change). As described below, when analyzing shoreline movement over time, the uncertainty of the shoreline change rates must be considered, and, for transects where the uncertainty values are greater than the shoreline change rates, the change rates should be viewed as a range.

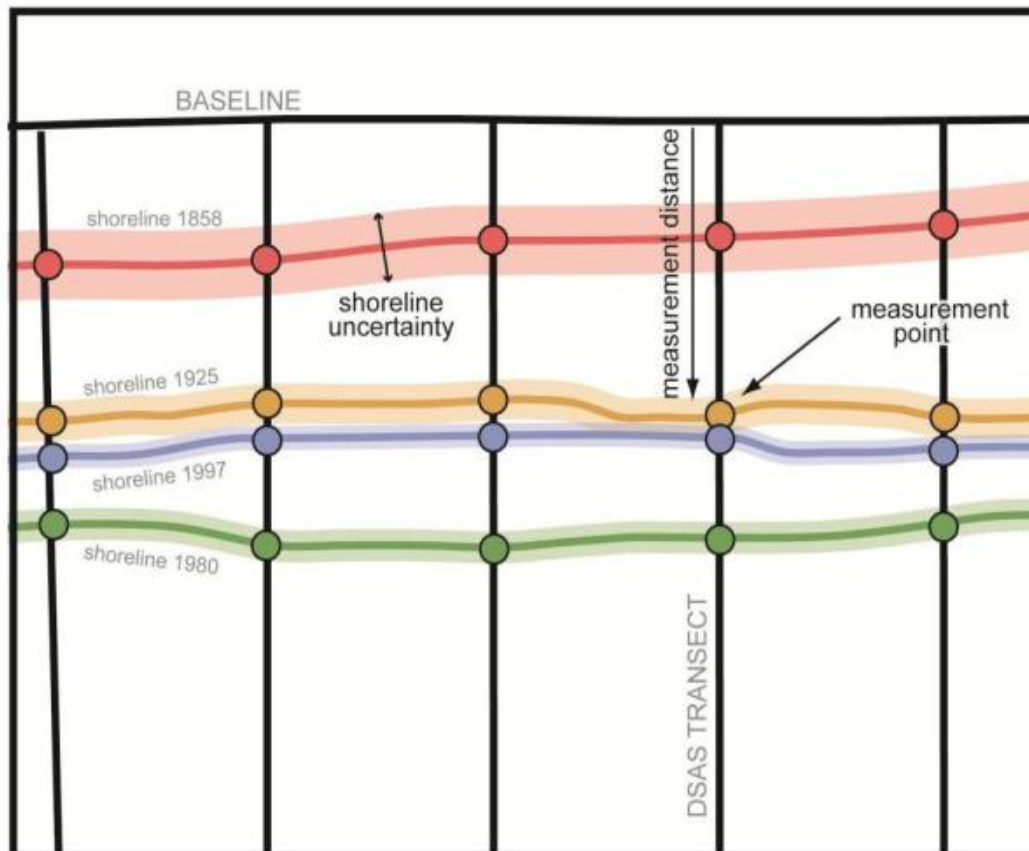


Figure 3-1. Diagram showing transects, shoreline measurement points, and positional uncertainty determined for the Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project.

### Assessment of Coastal Erosion: Past Trends and Estimates of Shoreline Change

In support of the Coastal Erosion Commission's work and as described in the Science and Technical Working Group Report (Volume 2), information from the Shoreline Change Project was combined with other data to analyze and present shoreline change trends. Because the project covers the entire exposed coast of the Commonwealth, there are various approaches to analyzing and presenting the data and information. For this report, shoreline change analysis was conducted for each community covered by the Shoreline Change Project. Based on the premise that exposed bedrock constrains shoreline movement in rocky intertidal areas, these areas were initially removed from the analysis. However, preliminary results did not reveal any significant differences when average rates were computed for each community. The original dataset was used for the remainder of the analysis. To provide an estimate of recent shoreline change and account for the influence of shore-parallel coastal structures (e.g., seawalls/bulkheads and revetments), the percent of shoreline physically restricted from moving landward (21%) was determined. Table 3-1 provides both the long- and short-term average change rates with uncertainty values (as measured by standard

deviation) for each community, with the highest 20 erosion rates indicated. For more information on shoreline change, including understanding uncertainty values, please see the most recent USGS Open-File Report at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2012/1189/>. It is important to note that the data presented in Table 3-1 represent averages for all of the Shoreline Change Project transects throughout the entire community, and that within each city or town there are areas with greater and lesser erosion rates.

Table 3-1. Average shoreline change rates (feet/year) and uncertainty (standard deviation) for coastal communities (listed alphabetically). Negative values indicate erosion; positive values indicate accretion. Rates for Cape Cod communities with shorelines facing multiple directions are provided in sub-regions (i.e., CCB = Cape Cod Bay, NS = Nantucket Sound, OCC = Outer Cape Cod bordering the Atlantic Ocean, BB = Buzzards Bay). \* - indicates top 20 short- and long-term erosion rate values.

Town	Town sub-region	Short-Term Rate		Long-Term Rate	
		Mean (ft/yr)	Std Dev (ft/yr)	Mean (ft/yr)	Std Dev (ft/yr)
Aquinnah		-0.3	2.8	-0.5	1.6
Barnstable	Entire town	0.4	5.2	-0.4	2.2
	CCB	1.1	7.2	-0.2	2.3
	NS	-0.3	2.1	<b>*-0.7</b>	2.0
Beverly		-0.3	0.7	-0.1	0.3
Boston		0.3	2.0	0.2	1.7
Bourne	Entire town	-0.3	1.1	-0.1	0.7
	CCB	2.3	1.8	-0.5	0.3
	BB	-0.4	0.9	-0.1	0.7
Brewster		0.2	5.2	-0.6	1.3
Chatham	Entire town	0.5	48.6	1.6	9.4
	OCC	0.6	51.0	1.9	9.7
	NS	-0.1	2.5	<b>*-1.7</b>	4.4
Chilmark		<b>*-1.8</b>	1.9	<b>*-2.1</b>	2.0
Cohasset		0.6	2.4	0.1	0.7
Dartmouth		-0.8	2.8	-0.2	0.6
Dennis	Entire town	-0.5	3.3	-0.8	2.9
	CCB	-0.7	4.0	<b>*-1.3</b>	2.8
	NS	-0.1	1.6	0.2	2.8
Duxbury		0.2	3.7	-0.6	0.8
Eastham	Entire town	-3.5	5.4	-2.5	1.7
	CCB	<b>*-1.7</b>	5.2	<b>*-1.9</b>	2.0
	OCC	<b>*-5.7</b>	4.7	<b>*-3.3</b>	0.7
Edgartown		<b>*-2.4</b>	9.6	<b>*-2.2</b>	3.7
Fairhaven		-0.8	0.9	-0.4	0.5
Falmouth	Entire town	-0.5	1.4	-0.3	0.7
	NS	<b>*-1.1</b>	1.1	<b>*-0.7</b>	0.9
	BB	-0.3	1.5	-0.1	0.4

Town	Town sub-region	Short-Term Rate		Long-Term Rate	
		Mean (ft/yr)	Std Dev (ft/yr)	Mean (ft/yr)	Std Dev (ft/yr)
Gloucester		-0.2	2.2	-0.1	0.4
Gosnold		0.6	1.3	-0.2	0.4
Harwich		0.1	1.9	0.8	1.7
Hingham		-0.9	1.9	-0.1	0.5
Hull		-0.2	1.8	0.0	0.5
Ipswich		<b>*-3.6</b>	11.0	-0.4	2.1
Kingston		-0.3	1.0	-0.2	0.4
Lynn		-0.8	1.1	0.4	1.0
Manchester		-0.2	0.7	0.1	0.3
Marblehead		-0.3	0.6	-0.1	0.4
Marion		0.1	1.0	-0.3	0.4
Marshfield		0.1	2.5	0.1	1.0
Mashpee		-0.7	2.6	<b>*-1.0</b>	1.6
Mattapoiset		-0.2	1.0	-0.4	0.4
Nahant		-0.2	1.8	-0.1	0.5
Nantucket		<b>*-2.7</b>	7.3	<b>*-2.2</b>	4.9
New Bedford		1.6	1.8	0.9	1.2
Newbury		<b>*-2.4</b>	3.1	-0.2	1.7
Newburyport		3.6	8.8	1.8	4.2
Oak Bluffs		-0.7	1.5	-0.5	1.2
Orleans	Entire town	-5.3	6.5	-2.2	3.2
	CCB	<b>*-1.7</b>	3.5	<b>*-2.8</b>	1.3
	OCC	<b>*-5.7</b>	6.7	<b>*-2.1</b>	3.3
Plymouth		0.1	3.3	-0.4	0.8
Provincetown	Entire town	0.2	3.9	1.0	2.1
	CCB	-1.4	3.0	0.9	1.8
	OCC	0.6	4.2	1.1	2.2
Quincy		-0.2	3.4	0.0	1.0
Revere		0.7	1.1	0.4	0.9
Rockport		-0.1	1.5	-0.1	0.6
Rowley		<b>*-3.3</b>	3.3	<b>*-1.3</b>	0.9
Salem		-0.3	0.6	0.2	1.0
Salisbury		<b>*-3.7</b>	1.9	0.0	0.8
Sandwich		2.3	4.1	0.2	2.1
Scituate		<b>*-1.3</b>	2.0	<b>*-1.0</b>	1.7
Swampscott		-0.9	1.1	-0.1	0.3
Tisbury		-0.9	1.1	-0.3	0.8
Truro	Entire town	-2.4	2.7	-0.9	1.4
	CCB	<b>*-1.6</b>	2.3	0.1	1.3
	OCC	<b>*-3.0</b>	2.8	<b>*-1.6</b>	0.9
Wareham		0.7	1.6	-0.3	1.0

Town	Town sub-region	Short-Term Rate		Long-Term Rate	
		Mean (ft/yr)	Std Dev (ft/yr)	Mean (ft/yr)	Std Dev (ft/yr)
Wellfleet	Entire town	-2.3	3.2	-1.6	1.8
	CCB	<b>*-2.0</b>	3.6	<b>*-1.2</b>	2.0
	OCC	<b>*-3.1</b>	1.7	<b>*-2.8</b>	0.3
West Tisbury		<b>*-1.0</b>	2.2	<b>*-2.3</b>	2.7
Westport		<b>*-1.0</b>	1.3	<b>*-0.6</b>	0.6
Weymouth		-0.7	2.8	0.1	0.4
Winthrop		0.4	1.9	0.4	1.1
Yarmouth	Entire town	-0.8	3.9	-0.3	1.3
	CCB	<b>*-8.7</b>	6.5	<b>*-2.8</b>	1.9
	NS	0.3	1.6	0.0	0.8

The short- and long-term rates of erosion can average-out episodic changes that occur, both seasonally and as a result of storm events. To augment the information derived from the Shoreline Change Project, coastline and storm damage reports collected by the Massachusetts Rapid Response Coastal Storm Damage Assessment Team were reviewed to identify several “hot spot” locations where the combination of erosion, storm surge, flooding, and waves have caused significant damage to buildings and/or infrastructure during coastal storm events over the past five years (Table 3-2).

Table 3-2. Erosion “hot spot” areas listed from north to south. Known locations where the combination of erosion, storm surge, flooding, and waves have caused damage to buildings and/or infrastructure during coastal storm events over the past five years.

Community	Location
Salisbury	Salisbury Beach
Newburyport	Plum Island
Newbury	Plum Island
Hull	Nantasket Beach
Hull	Crescent Beach
Scituate	Glades
Scituate	Oceanside Drive
Scituate	Lighthouse Point
Scituate	Peggotty Beach
Scituate	Humarock Beach (northern half)
Marshfield	Fieldstone to Brant Rock
Marshfield	Bay Ave.
Plymouth	Saquish
Plymouth	Long Beach (southern end)
Plymouth	White Horse Beach
Plymouth	Nameloc Heights
Sandwich	Town Neck Beach

Community	Location
Dennis	Chapin Beach
Nantucket	Siasconset
Edgartown	Wasque Point
Oak Bluffs	Inkwell Beach
Gosnold	Barges Beach
Westport	East Beach

## Forecasting Shoreline Change

As described in Chapter 1, one of the tasks of the Coastal Erosion Commission is to provide a reasonable estimate of erosion damages in the next 10 years. Implicit in this effort is some level of understanding of future erosion rates. The Commission's Science and Technical Working Group conducted a review of shoreline change forecasting approaches, which can be grouped into two general categories: statistics-based and process-based.

Statistics-based forecasting relies solely on historical observations of shoreline positions and forecasting changes based on different statistical techniques. The Massachusetts Shoreline Change Project utilizes a linear regression for the statistical analysis method to examine trends. Figure 3-2 depicts a schematic diagram of a linear regression fit for the different shoreline positions mapped in the project. At transects where the resulting linear fit to the data is poor, the uncertainty of the rate of shoreline change is higher.

The historical rates of change calculated by the linear regression method shown in Table 3-1 can be extrapolated forward; however, variability, or uncertainty, in the rate of shoreline change relative to the linear trend assumed in linear regression calculations must be considered. The shoreline change rates should be interpreted with the uncertainty (standard deviation) values as important context. For areas where the uncertainty values are approaching or greater than the reported shoreline change rate, the change rates should be viewed more as a range.

Process-based shoreline change forecasting uses historical observations of shoreline positions and integrates observations and/or parameterizations of processes that are a principal driver of shoreline change. As part of the Science and Technical Working Group efforts, USGS and CZM conducted a demonstration of a shoreline change forecasting using a variation of a statistical-based model. Described in its report in Volume 2, the Science and Technical Working Group applied the Kalman filter process technique at several different sites on Plum Island and in the towns of Scituate and Marshfield and compared the results to the linear regression values from the Shoreline Change Project. The advantage of a process-based method like the Kalman filter is that it integrates a shoreline change model that includes offshore wave conditions to optimize the forecast to include changes occurring



in the shoreline that are not predicted by the historical change linear regression. Three assumptions in the Kalman filter methodology that may limit its applicability along some shorelines are: (1) underlying geologic (e.g., bedrock) or anthropogenic (e.g., seawalls) factors do not limit the ability of the shoreline to move; (2) sediment availability is unlimited; and (3) a constant background trend exists.

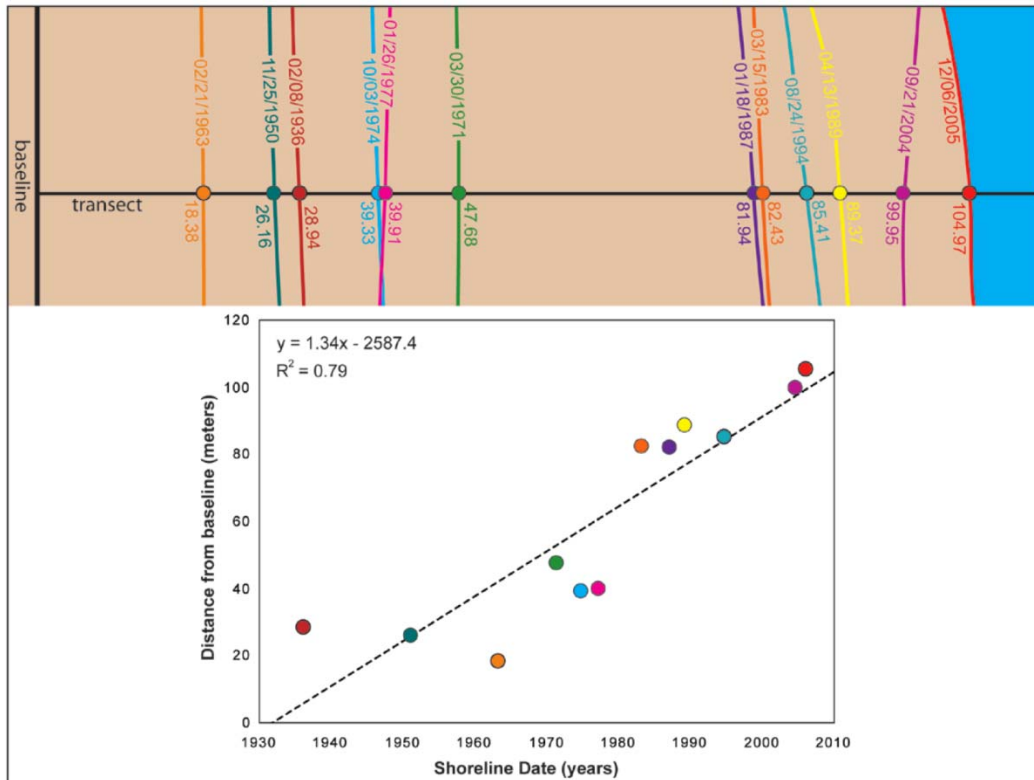


Figure 3-2. Top: schematic diagram showing historical shoreline positions along a measurement transect that originates from a reference baseline. Bottom: graph showing a linear regression fit to the shoreline positions, indicating a rate of change of 1.34 m/yr. (From Thieler et al., 2009.)

The ability to more accurately predict future shoreline change would be of significant value to state and local managers, property owners, and many others with interests in coastal shoreline and floodplain management. As described in Chapter 6, advancing an approach that combines the historical change data with wave-driven shoreline change models is a recommendation of the Commission.



## Chapter 4 - Coastal Erosion Impacts

This chapter provides an overview of data sources for an erosion damage assessment, describes the limitations of such data sources, and summarizes the best available information for making an appraisal of financial damage to property, infrastructure, and beach and dune resources sustained from 1978 to the present.

### Available Data Sources for Erosion Damage Assessment and Limitation of Use

To assist the Coastal Erosion Commission, the Erosion Impacts Working Group reviewed available and potential sources of financial damage data, estimates of damages by location, post-storm damage reports, repair records, and other sources to inform the Commission's task of assessing financial costs of damage to property, infrastructure, and beach and dune resources from 1978 to the present. The Erosion Impacts Working Group report is contained in Volume 2 and includes information and analysis of the available sources of damage data.

Among the many sources considered, the Working Group relied on two that had the best available statewide information that could be extrapolated for use in the appraisal: (1) the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance and Individual Assistance Disaster Recovery Programs, and (2) FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) claims data. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) administer and coordinate these federal programs for the state.

#### FEMA's Disaster Recovery Programs

FEMA's disaster assistance programs are triggered after a President's approval of a state request for assistance based on a showing that the disaster or event was of a severity and magnitude that effective response was beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments and that estimates of the disaster damage and its impact on individuals and public facilities exceed dollar damage thresholds set by FEMA. In the Public Assistance Program, cities, towns, state agencies, and certain private non-profits are eligible for post-disaster funding. This assistance is not available for homeowners or businesses. FEMA assistance for disaster-related costs will cover up to 75% of the costs for damages for eligible work. The eligible categories of work include: debris removal; emergency protective measures; and repair, restoration, or replacement of road systems and bridges, water supply and control facilities, buildings, contents and equipment, utilities, and parks, recreational facilities, and other facilities. MEMA manages reimbursements to the eligible and affected

applicants. Under the FEMA Individual Assistance Program, a variety of assistance is available through direct grants to eligible individuals and businesses for storm-related costs not otherwise covered by insurance. The program supports rental assistance, home repairs to make them safe and sanitary, and replacement of household items (not covered by insurance). After the program is initiated by FEMA, applicants apply and work directly with FEMA to receive funds.

Massachusetts has had 41 federal disaster declarations from 1978 to 2013. Of these, 23 were “Major Disaster Declarations”—events that met or exceeded the federal thresholds, triggering all of the categories of FEMA’s Public Assistance program, including permanent repairs. It is critical to note that the events that triggered these disaster declarations are not limited to coastal erosion events, but represent all types of hazards over a range of geographic areas across Massachusetts. Since the declarations are tracked at the county level, and not by community, the ability to look at the past disaster declaration data to determine if an event caused coastal erosion or other damage to the immediate coast is extremely limited. The types of events that have triggered FEMA disaster assistance since 1978 are: flooding, severe winter storm (northeaster), snow, tornado, tropical storm, and hurricane.

#### FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program

One readily available measure of damage from coastal events is the amount of flood insurance claims paid through the NFIP. The NFIP is a federal program, administered by FEMA, which makes flood insurance available to property owners in communities that agree to adopt floodplain management approaches that will reduce future flood damages.

It is critical to note that the use of NFIP claims data as a measure of coastal damage is limited by the fact that the program does not cover damage from coastal erosion that is not directly connected with a flood event. Another significant limitation is that the NFIP covers approved claims for damage from flooding to insured buildings and their contents. As a result, these figures do not include damages not submitted to the NFIP, uninsured damages—damages that were not insured because the property did not have a flood insurance policy through the NFIP or because the damage was not covered under the policy (e.g., deductible limits and damage above the coverage amount).

### Estimation of Financial Damage from Erosion Since 1978

Using data from FEMA’s Disaster Recovery Programs and NFIP, the Erosion Impacts Working Group developed summaries of the financial costs of damage related to storm and

other events that include coastal erosion impacts, but are not limited to this specific cause of impact.

### Cost of Federal Disaster Declarations

Figure 4-1 shows the federal disaster declarations for coastal events that have occurred in Massachusetts since 1978. The Working Group cross referenced this list of disasters with the NFIP claims data explained in the next section to ensure that each of these events resulted in coastal impacts (e.g., flooding and erosion). Although these federal payments include all damages (not just coastal erosion), the chart shows the magnitude of costs in present dollars. The chart in Figure 4-1 clearly indicates that the cost of the 1978 and 1991 events far outweigh the cost of the more recent, more frequent, and less damaging events declared in the Commonwealth.

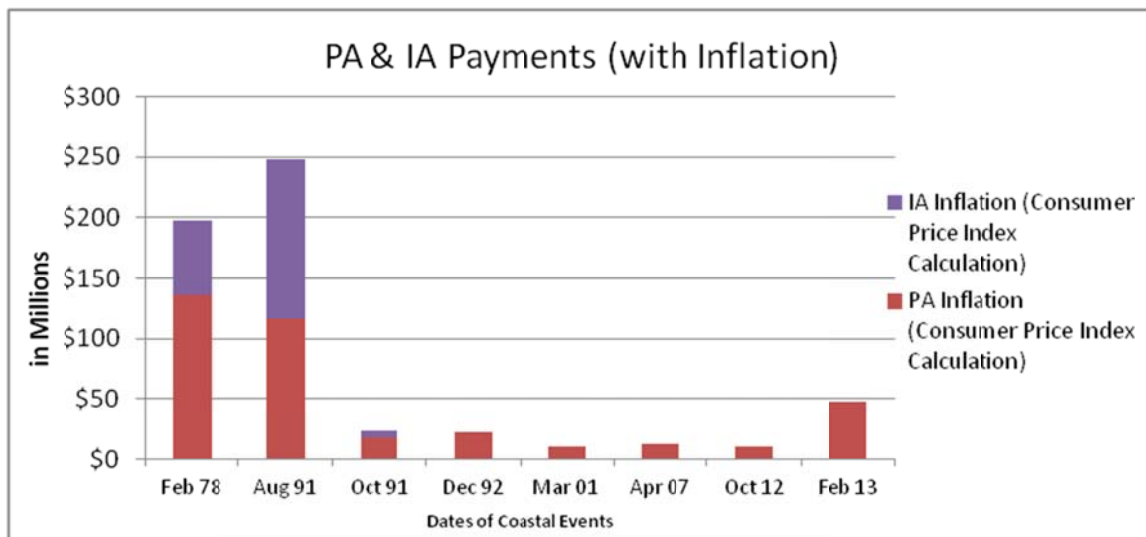


Figure 4-1. Federal dollars paid for public (PA) and individual (IA) damages in Massachusetts resulting from FEMA disaster declarations. Data is from MEMA, July 2014. Note: The October 2012 and February 2013 costs are not final; FEMA is still reviewing these.

### Cost of NFIP Claims for Coastal Communities

For the Erosion Impacts Working Group report, the data for all NFIP claims in Massachusetts from January 1, 1978, to present were obtained from FEMA's database and reviewed to determine which events had clusters of claims within coastal communities. To identify the events of greatest impact to coastal communities, the events were compared to the dates of the FEMA disaster declarations (referenced in the previous section of this report) and known coastal storm events with moderate to major impacts along the Massachusetts coast.

As described above, it is important to note that claims totals for these events include losses for damages from both coastal and inland flooding sources (since it is not possible to differentiate these separate but related impacts based on the available information). While flood insurance claims are not a direct measure of the damage caused by coastal erosion because they include damage from all flooding, the relative magnitude of the events provides insight into the events that most likely had the greatest damage from coastal erosion. The claim totals for each event were converted to constant 2014 dollar values through the use of the Consumer Price Index. Table 4-1 shows the magnitude of costs to illustrate the relative significance of individual events. The total costs from NFIP claims for all coastal events since 1978 was nearly \$370 million. It is important to note that the NFIP claims data do not represent all damages. The cost of the 1978 and 1991 events greatly exceed the cost of more recent events. While the number of NFIP policies in force and repetitive loss properties were not investigated, more recently, storm events causing NFIP claims have been be more frequent, but they have been less damaging than the earlier events. This does not rule out the fact that Massachusetts will experience another very severe coastal storm that will result in very high damages.

Table 4-1. NFIP claim totals by event for Massachusetts coastal communities. The claim totals for each event were converted to constant 2014 dollar values through the use of the Consumer Price Index.

<b>Coastal Flood Event</b>	<b>NFIP Claims (2014 \$)</b>
February 1978	72,424,237
January 1987	10,109,639
August 1991 <sup>(1)</sup>	76,160,852
October 1991 <sup>(2)</sup>	142,561,430
December 1992	29,954,478
March 2001	2,996,426
January 2003	2,535,020
April 2007	5,043,333
December 2010	8,539,816
October 2012	2,182,738
February 2013	14,399,292
March 2013	2,898,741
<b>Total for all events</b>	<b>\$369,806,002</b>

(1) Coastal damages from the August 1991 event (Hurricane Bob) were focused on the South Coastal and Cape Cod and Islands regions.

(2) The North Shore, Boston Harbor, and South Shore regions suffered their worst losses as a result of the October 1991 northeaster.

The Erosion Impacts Working Group analyzed NFIP claims data for individual communities to examine the relative impact of various storms. This analysis noted a distinctly different pattern for communities with primarily northeast-facing coastlines. Communities with northeast-facing shorelines are susceptible to significant damage on a frequent basis (sometimes more than once in a given year) from northeasters (i.e., rain or snow events with strong winds that blow from the northeast and typically occur from October through April). Communities with shorelines that do not face northeast may be subject to damage only from a specific subset of storms, particularly hurricanes.

## Estimation of Financial Damage from Erosion in the Next 10 Years

The Erosion Impacts Working Group and the Science and Technology Working Group provided assistance to the Coastal Erosion Commission in developing a reasonable estimate of the value of damages from coastal erosion likely to occur in the next 10 years. As described in Chapter 3, the Science and Technology Working Group was tasked with identifying the most appropriate methodology to forecast erosion for assessing expected erosion impacts over the next 10 years. After piloting an approach that integrates historical shoreline change data developed through the Shoreline Change Project with modeled shoreline response to offshore wave conditions, the Commission is recommending its advancement as a preferred approach for forecasting future shoreline change.

In the absence of forecasted shoreline change data, the Erosion Impacts Working Group looked to the Commonwealth's State Hazard Mitigation Plan as one of the next best available sources of information on potential future damage from coastal erosion. Described in the Working Group report, the State Hazard Mitigation Plan is developed by MEMA, DCR, and the State Hazard Mitigation Interagency Committee and includes an assessment of all natural hazards that have occurred or could occur in Massachusetts. Recently updated in 2013, the plan is reviewed, updated, and submitted to FEMA for approval every 3-5 years.

Among many other elements, the plan contains a Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and vulnerability assessment for the range of identified hazards. The assessment examines the exposure of state-owned and leased facilities with data provided by Department of Commonwealth Asset Management and Maintenance and the Office of Leasing. For the coastal erosion hazard, the estimates for state building replacement costs in those zones are \$82 million. To determine the exposure of the general building stock to erosion coast-wide, the plan utilized a hazard analysis model, Hazus-MH. Based on this modeled analysis, the State Hazard Mitigation Plan reported that more than \$7.2 billion of building (structure and content) replacement cost value is exposed to the coastal erosion hazard. It is critical to note that these figures represent 100 percent of the value of all buildings within resource areas that are potentially vulnerable to coastal erosion. This

estimate is considered extremely high because the likelihood of erosion affecting all of the resource areas along the entire coastline is low. However, severe coastal storms can result in significant coastal erosion in widespread areas, causing major damage. The costs in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan are estimates of risk and not estimates of future damage. See the Erosion Impacts Working Group report in Volume 2 for a breakdown of replacement costs by county.

Because of the limitations of the data sources described above and to better understand and quantify future damages from erosion, the Commission has recommended actions to enhance the available information-base on type, extent, and costs of storm damage to public infrastructure, private property, and natural resources. These suggested steps are contained in the Commission's strategies in Chapter 6.



## Chapter 5 - Shoreline Management

This chapter provides an overview of shoreline management practices and a summary of the Commonwealth's regulations and laws that govern the materials, methodologies, and means for addressing coastal erosion.

### Overview of Shoreline Management Practices

To assist the Coastal Erosion Commission, the Science and Technical Working Group reviewed available shoreline management practices and summarized their applicability and relative costs. The applicability of each shoreline management option varies according to the nature of the risk, local conditions, and the resources that are available. Using multiple, complementary techniques to manage erosion impacts can promote more resilient shorelines, and blending on-the-ground shoreline management practices with effective land-use management tools is a robust approach to reduce risk.

Costs of various shoreline management practices are relative and highly site-dependent, and in the evaluation and comparison of the total costs of different practices, all of the phases of the shoreline management technique—from design and permitting to construction and ongoing maintenance costs—must be included. Table 5.1 below provides a brief summary of various shoreline management techniques, their appropriate environments, and relative costs. It is important to note that relative cost differs from cost-effectiveness. Cost-effectiveness takes into account not only the costs of the shoreline management practice but the value of the practice(s) in protecting different types, extents, and values of development, infrastructure, and natural resources. For a similar summary of the costs, benefits, and other factors of various shoreline management practices, see the *Natural and Structural Measures for Shoreline Stabilization* fact sheet developed by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at [sagecoast.org/docs/SAGE\\_LivingShorelineBrochure\\_Print.pdf](https://sagecoast.org/docs/SAGE_LivingShorelineBrochure_Print.pdf). For additional information on factors that may influence relative costs and longevity of projects, see the StormSmart Properties fact sheets available at [www.mass.gov/czm/stormsmart-properties](http://www.mass.gov/czm/stormsmart-properties).

Table 5-1. Summary of shoreline management techniques, appropriate environments, and relative costs.

Shoreline Management Technique	Environment	Relative Costs <sup>(1)</sup>			
		Design and Permitting	Construction	Average Annual Maintenance Costs	Average Annual Mitigation Costs <sup>(2)</sup>
Adapting Existing Buildings and Infrastructure <sup>(3)</sup>					
Relocate Buildings	Low-High Energy	Low	Very High	None	None
Relocate Roads & Infrastructure	Low-High Energy	Low	Very High	None	None
Elevate Existing Buildings	Low-High Energy	Low	Very High	Low	None
Enhancements to the Natural System					
Dune Nourishment	Low-High Energy	Low	Low	Low	None
Beach Nourishment	Low-High Energy	Low-Medium	Low-High	Low-Medium	None
Nearshore Berm	Low-High Energy	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	None
Bioengineering on Coastal Banks	Low-High Energy	Medium-High	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Low
Erosion Control Vegetation	Low-High Energy	Low	Low	Low	None
Sand Fencing	Low-High Energy	Low	Low	Low	Low
Salt Marsh Creation	Low Energy	Low-High	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	None
Sand By-Pass (Replenishment)	Low-High Energy	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Low	None
Sand Back-Pass (Replenishment)	Low-High Energy	Medium-High	Low-Medium	Low	None
Cobble Berm/Dune	Low-High Energy	Low-High	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	None
Nearshore Coastal Engineered Structures					
Breakwater/Reef - Nearshore	Low- High Energy	Medium-High	High-Very High	Low	Low
Hybrid Options					
Perched Beach	Low Energy	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low	None
Sand-Filled Coir Envelopes	Low-High Energy	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Low
Shore Parallel Coastal Engineered Structures					
Dike/Levee	Low-High Energy	Medium-High	Medium-High	Low	Low

Shoreline Management Technique	Environment	Relative Costs <sup>(1)</sup>			
		Design and Permitting	Construction	Average Annual Maintenance Costs	Average Annual Mitigation Costs <sup>(2)</sup>
Rock Revetment - Toe Protection	Low-High Energy	Medium-High	High	Low	Low-Medium
Revetment - Full Height	Low-High Energy	High-Very High	Very High	Low	Medium
Geotextile Tubes	Low-High Energy	Very High	High	Medium - High	Medium
Gabions	Low Energy	High-Very High	High	Medium	Low
Seawall	Low-High Energy	High-Very High	Very High	Low	Medium-High
Bulkhead	Low Energy	High-Very High	High	Low	Low
<b>Shore Perpendicular Coastal Engineered Structures</b>					
Groin	Low-High Energy	Very High	Very High	Low	Low-High
Jetty	Low-High Energy	Very High	Very High	Low	Low-High
<b>Offshore Coastal Engineered Structures</b>					
Breakwater - Offshore	Low-High Energy	Very High	Very High	Low	None
<p><b>(1) Relative Costs</b> (average cost per linear foot of shoreline):  Low: &lt;\$200  Medium: \$200-\$500  High: \$500-\$1,000  Very High: &gt;\$1,000</p> <p><b>(2) Average Annual Mitigation Costs:</b> estimated annual costs averaged over the life of the project to compensate for the technique's adverse effects.</p> <p><b>(3) Note:</b> There are many good examples of relocation and elevation, such as in the towns of Brewster, Hull, the Cape Cod National Seashore, and others. Additional forms of managed retreat exist, but are not presented in this table. Relocation may not be an available option everywhere and is highly dependent on financial resources and available land.</p>					

## Overview of Regulations/Laws Pertaining to Coastal Erosion Protection

To assist the Coastal Erosion Commission, the Legal and Regulatory Working Group reviewed the Commonwealth's laws and regulations pertaining to shoreline management practices and provided a summary assessment as to their effectiveness and opportunities for potential enhancements. The Working Group used the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) guiding principles for regulatory reform when developing their recommendations for the Commission. Foremost, recommended reforms should not weaken or undermine environmental protection standards. The Working Group and Commission found that the current regulatory framework should be strengthened to require accommodation of sea level rise projections in project designs and allow pilot shoreline

management projects. In addition, appropriately sited and designed beach nourishment projects need to be encouraged through state and federal regulations. The current practice of offshore disposal of beach-compatible sand dredged from maintenance of navigation channels ultimately results in higher long-term costs to the Commonwealth, the loss of valuable sand resources for beach nourishment, and increased coastal property and infrastructure damage.

## Wetlands Protection Act

Authorities: M.G.L. c. 131, § 40: Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA); 310 CMR 10.00: Wetlands Regulations.

Administration: The WPA is administered by DEP and local Conservation Commissions.

Jurisdiction: Any wetland, including:

- Any bank, freshwater wetland, coastal wetland, beach, dune, tidal flat, marsh or swamp bordering on the ocean, estuary, creek, river, stream, pond, lake, or certified vernal pool;
- Land under any of the water bodies listed;
- Land subject to tidal action, coastal storm flowage, or flooding; and
- Riverfront areas in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Applicability: Any construction in or near a wetland resource, including intertidal and subtidal habitat, is subject to the provisions of the WPA.

Effectiveness: With input from the Working Group and from the public workshops, hearings, and comments, the Commission has found that the WPA is effective at protecting wetland resources and ensuring that the beneficial storm damage protection and flood control functions of these resources are maintained. A few topics related to the WPA were identified as having some concern. Before recent changes, the WPA regulations did not include special provisions for the testing of new technologies, including the short-term placement of temporary installations. Another concern is that the WPA currently lacks performance standards for the Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF) resource area. Some comments provided during public meetings and in writing expressed the desire for greater flexibility in the WPA regulations coupled with better guidance to support better and timelier local decision-making. Comments also brought up the issue of greater flexibility for actions taken during an emergency and the varying levels of emergency conditions. Finally—and this was another theme that cut across all regulatory

programs—is that sea-level rise needs to be factored into project siting, design, and permitting.

The Commission finds that enhancement of the WPA could be achieved through several means: (1) development and implementation of performance standards and guidance for the LSCSF Wetland Resource Area, (2) implementation of special provisions to allow certain pilot, or “test”, projects, (3) development of local beach and shoreline management plans, (4) consideration of sea level rise in project review, and (5) streamlining permit review for projects that restore coastal resource areas and would result in enhanced resiliency of the resource in the face of rising seas and more frequent coastal storms. These areas for enhancement are described in the Commission’s recommendations in Chapter 6. Implementation of LSCSF performance standards would be necessary to change development practices in the floodplain that likely result in increased storm damage and coastal erosion. DEP convened and is working with an Advisory Work Group to develop recommendations for performance standards. These recommendations should contain mechanisms to protect the beneficial functions of the floodplain and other coastal wetland resource areas to avoid or mitigate storm damage, including the effects of sea level rise. Mechanisms to allow for pilot projects that show appropriate environmental benefits while avoiding adverse shoreline erosion could be incorporated into the WPA regulations with performance standards to streamline their use in future applicable locations. Very recent amendments to the WPA regulations do allow for a streamlined permitting process for the short-term testing of qualifying innovative water-dependent technologies in areas subject to WPA permitting, Chapter 91 licensing, and 401 Water Quality Certification requirements. These amendments have been interpreted broadly to include pilot projects that would be small in scale and temporary in duration.

#### Public Waterfront Act (Chapter 91)

Authorities: M.G.L. c. 91: Public Waterfront Act; 310 CMR 9.00: Waterways Regulations.

Administration: Chapter 91 is administered by DEP.

Jurisdiction: Dredging, placement of structures, change in use of existing structures, placement of fill, and alteration of existing structures in any of the following coastal areas (recognizing that MGL c. 91 applies more broadly than to coastal areas):

- Flowed tidelands - projects in, on, over, or under tidal areas between the mean high water (MHW) line and the limit of state territorial waters (generally 3 miles from shore).

- Filled tidelands outside Designated Port Areas (DPAs) - projects up to the first public way or 250 feet from MHW, whichever extends farther inland.
- Filled tidelands inside DPAs - projects between the present and historic MHW (i.e., all filled areas inside DPAs).

Applicability: Any project proposed in, under, or over flowed or filled tidelands or great ponds requires a Chapter 91 license or permit. A Simplified Chapter 91 Waterways License is available to owners of small residential docks, piers, seawalls, and bulkheads. Water-Dependent Chapter 91 Waterways Licenses cover all new or unauthorized water-dependent use projects that are not eligible for the Simplified License. All new or unauthorized nonwater-dependent uses must obtain a Nonwater-Dependent Chapter 91 Waterways License. The term of a Simplified License is 10 years, all others are 30 years. Work that does not involve fill or structures, such as dredging, may apply for a Chapter 91 Waterways Permit. The term of a Permit is 5-10 years.

Effectiveness: With input from the Working Group and from the public workshops, the Commission has found that the Chapter 91 Waterways program is generally effective at regulating fill or structures in jurisdictional tidelands for the purposes of coastal erosion protection. The program could be enhanced by requiring that sea level rise be factored into project siting, design, and permitting considerations.

## Massachusetts State Building Code

Authorities: M.G.L. c. 143, §§ 93-100: Inspection and Regulation of, and Licenses for, Buildings, Elevators and Cinematographs; 780 CMR: Massachusetts State Building Code.

Administration: The building code is written by the State Board of Regulations and Standards and is administered locally by board-certified building inspectors.

Jurisdiction: Structural, life, and fire safety of buildings and structures in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Applicability: New construction, renovation or demolition of existing structures, and changes of use or occupancy of an existing building must conform to the provisions of the Massachusetts State Building Code.

Effectiveness: With input from the Working Group and from the public workshops, the Commission has found that some requirements of the state's building code are effective at providing structures with coastal erosion protection. Revisions to the

Massachusetts Basic Building Code that became effective January 8, 2008, contain various changes to construction standards, including a new requirement for two-foot “freeboard” above base flood elevations for new construction in the velocity zone.

To further enhance the effectiveness of the state building code, the Commission recommends adoption of provisions of the 2015 International Building Codes for structures in floodplains, including freeboard requirements for buildings in A Zones, in addition to current requirements for V Zones.

#### 401 Water Quality Certification

Authorities: 33 U.S.C. 1341 et seq., § 401: Federal Water Pollution Control Act, M.G.L. c. 21, §§ 26-53: Massachusetts Clean Water Act; 314 CMR 4.00: Surface Water Quality Standards, 314 CMR 9.00: 401 Water Quality Certification.

Administration: The 401 Water Quality Certification program is administered by DEP.

Jurisdiction: Dredge and/or fill projects in waters and wetlands subject to state and federal jurisdiction if a federal permit is required for the project.

Applicability: Any activity that would result in a discharge of dredged material, dredging, or dredged material disposal greater than 100 cubic yards that is also subject to federal regulation must obtain a 401 Water Quality Certification.

Effectiveness: The 401 Water Quality Certification program is generally effective at regulating fill and dredging projects for the purposes of coastal erosion protection. As with the WPA regulations, a few topics related to 401 Water Quality Certification were noted. The first is that current regulations do not include special provisions for the testing of new technologies, including the short-term placement of temporary installations. The other is that sea level rise needs to be factored into project siting, design, and permitting.

As described above, recent changes to the 401 Water Quality Certification regulations overlap with the Wetlands regulations (310 CMR 10.00) by establishing provisions that create an exemption for some short-term testing of innovative technologies permitted under the WPA regulations.

The effectiveness of the 401 program could be enhanced by requiring that sea level rise be factored in to project siting, design, and permitting considerations.

## Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act

Authorities: M.G.L. c. 30, §§ 61-62H: Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act; 301 CMR 11.00: MEPA Regulations.

Administration: The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) is administered by the MEPA Unit on behalf of the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Jurisdiction: The purpose of MEPA review is to identify the potential environmental impacts of a project and measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate those impacts. The analysis of alternatives is an important part of MEPA review and supports a demonstration that impacts have been avoided, minimized, and mitigated to the maximum extent feasible. Projects requiring a State Agency Action (permitting, licensing, funding) and that alter a coastal dune, barrier beach, or coastal bank must file an Environmental Notification Form (ENF). The purpose of the ENF is to document the environmental impacts of the project, evaluate how the project has been designed to avoid and minimize those impacts, and identify mitigation for any unavoidable impacts. Input from the public and state agencies during the comment period is critical to address potential issues early in the process and prior to the project proceeding to permitting. MEPA is not a permitting process and the regulations do not include performance standards with which a project must comply; however, the review will consider the project's consistency with associated regulatory standards (e.g., wetlands regulations, waterways regulations). A proponent may be required to evaluate additional feasible alternatives that have fewer impacts.

Effectiveness: Since the enactment of the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008, the potential effects of climate change on a site, including sea level rise, have been considered in the MEPA review of coastal projects, when appropriate. This review has included an analysis of the project site and proposed infrastructure and an assessment of vulnerabilities to flooding and storm surge based on existing conditions and potential conditions based on a range of sea level rise scenarios. As part of this review, measures that support adaptation and resiliency of the project have been identified to withstand a higher frequency and greater severity of storms. These measures include, but are not limited to, assessment of alternative site designs and stormwater management, elevation of structures, and location of infrastructure above the floodplain. The effectiveness of MEPA review could be strengthened by formalizing the policy for evaluating the potential effects of climate change on a site, when appropriate.



## Federal Consistency Review

Authorities: 16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.: Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, 15 CFR 930; M.G.L. c. 21A, §§ 2, 4: Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Act, 301 CMR 20.00: Coastal Zone Management Program, 301 CMR 21.00: Federal Consistency Review Procedures.

Administration: Federal Consistency review is conducted by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM).

Jurisdiction: Any project undertaken by a federal agency, requiring a federal permit, requiring a federal offshore oil and gas lease, or receiving federal funding that is in or may affect the land or water resources or uses of the Massachusetts coastal zone. The Massachusetts coastal zone is the area bounded by the seaward limit of the state's territorial sea (generally 3 miles from shore) to 100 feet landward of specified major roads, railroads, or other visible right-of-way (generally the first major transportation corridor inland of the shoreline). Projects outside this area but which may affect it may be subject to jurisdiction.

Applicability: Any project proposal that is above certain thresholds (generally, the MEPA thresholds) and that requires a federal license or permit must be found to be consistent with CZM's coastal policies.

Effectiveness: Federal Consistency Review is an effective tool for ensuring that projects requiring federal license or permits and other federal activities are consistent with Massachusetts coastal program policies as they relate to coastal shoreline management. Updates to the coastal program policies and legal authorities were made in 2011 and contain enforceable policies including: (1) protect and restore the beneficial functions of storm damage prevention and flood control provided by dunes, beaches, barrier beaches, coastal banks, and other resource areas; (2) ensure that erosion control projects demonstrate no significant adverse effects on the project site or adjacent or downcoast areas; and (3) ensure that state and federally funded public works projects proposed for locations within the coastal zone do not exacerbate existing hazards or damage natural buffers or other natural resources, are reasonably safe from flood and erosion-related damage, and do not promote growth and development in hazard-prone or buffer areas. The Federal Consistency Review program could be enhanced by requiring that the underlying legal authorities for the coastal program policies incorporate the analysis and assessment of sea level rise in project siting, design, and permitting.



## Chapter 6 - Recommended Strategies and Actions

This chapter provides the recommendations of the Coastal Erosion Commission within three topic areas: (1) Science, Data, and Information; (2) Legal and Policy; (3) and Shoreline Management, Assistance, and Outreach. Under these topics, eight overarching strategies are presented with specific actions to advance each strategy. The strategies and actions were developed based on suggestions contained in the three Working Group reports (Volume 2) and informed by input from the public workshops, hearings, and comments. Each recommended action is supported by a brief statement explaining the suggested work. Next steps to move forward with the implementation of the Commission recommendations are described in Chapter 7.

### Science, Data, and Information

The Commission has identified three strategies related to advancing science, data, and information to improve management and decision-making related to coastal shoreline management.

Strategy #1: Increase understanding of coastal and nearshore sediment dynamics, including the effects of man-made, engineered structures, to inform potential management actions and other responses to coastal erosion.

- Action 1-A: Increase observational capabilities for waves, water levels, and coastal response.

There are currently only four long-term tide gauges in Massachusetts and approximately four wave height and period buoys in offshore waters adjacent to the Commonwealth, which are not sufficient to collect representative data for the various conditions along the coast. Data at a finer scale supports a better understanding of coastal processes.

- Action 1-B: Advance sediment transport mapping and modeling to develop regional sediment budgets.

Coastal and ocean management decisions require better understanding of sediment sources, transport pathways, and sinks. The development of regional sediment budget and management plans requires more accurate mapping and modeling. Such information will support better understanding of shoreline and nearshore dynamics, prediction of future changes to shoreline positions, determination of optimal beach nourishment locations, and opportunities for sediment management across political boundaries.

- Action 1-C: Continue to assess long-term and cumulative effects of shoreline management techniques and practices, including impacts to adjacent properties and natural resources (physical and biological) and the costs and cost-effectiveness of the practices.

The scientific foundation and quantification of shoreline engineering impacts could be enhanced by more short- and long-term monitoring and investigations. Accessibility and usability of existing sources of information is also lacking. Accurate documentation of shoreline response to different techniques and site conditions will inform the review of future projects and assist in the development of best practices and future techniques. Information on the different elements of total project costs, from design and engineering through construction and ongoing maintenance, as well as data on the effectiveness and benefits of different practices, should continue to be compiled. In addition, monitoring data should be made easily accessible and comparable.

Strategy #2: Enhance available information based on type, extent, impacts, and costs of coastal erosion on public infrastructure, private property, and natural resources to improve the basis for decision making.

- Action 2-A: Improve the ability to isolate damage due to coastal erosion from other hazards (e.g., flooding and wind damage).  
Current sources of historical (since the 1970s) storm damage data (e.g., Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] disaster assistance data and National Flood Insurance Program data) do not distinguish between coastal erosion damage and damages from other types of natural hazards (e.g., flooding and wind). The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) formally started observing moderate to major coastal storm damage including erosion impacts after Hurricane Bob in 1991. In 2009, CZM launched StormReporter, an online and mobile tool for standardizing the collection and documentation of coastal storm damage observations. CZM is working to train local volunteers to input minor impacts on a more frequent basis. StormReporter and other efforts to document chronic coastal erosion impacts should be supported and expanded.
- Action 2-B: Establish inter-agency agreements with federal agencies (e.g., FEMA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]/National Weather Service [NWS], U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Geological Survey) to facilitate timely collection of perishable data on post-storm damage and impacts.  
Impacts from coastal storm events vary in nature, magnitude, and spatial variability. Following a disaster event, federal agencies are often best equipped to

collect and document damage-related data for disaster recovery, erosion mitigation, predictive modeling, and planning. Capturing and documenting coastal data (e.g., high water marks, damages to public and private property, natural resource impacts, and elevation changes) will increase data sets and allow for improved and informed decision making.

- Action 2-C: Develop a comprehensive economic valuation of Massachusetts beaches including information at community, regional, and state level.  
Current understanding of beach-related economic activity is limited and inhibits full benefit/cost comparisons needed to examine alternative policy and management options. Economic analyses need to value recreation, habitat, and storm damage protection functions of beaches.

Strategy #3: Improve mapping and identification of coastal high hazard areas to inform managers, property owners, local officials, and the public.

- Action 3-A: Develop estimates of future shoreline change by assessing use of approaches that combine observed and model-derived shoreline positions for shoreline change.  
Statistics-based shoreline change forecasting relies solely on historical observations of shoreline positions. Process-based shoreline change forecasting build on the historical observations of shoreline positions, by integrating information on nearshore and wave processes that are principal drivers of shoreline change.
- Action 3-B: Improve ability to assess vulnerability of sites by characterizing geologic and geographic variables that are not currently accounted for in inundation maps but have potential to significantly increase risk to erosion and inundation hazards. Evaluate the potential integration of these factors into an exposure index or other tool.  
Information on important drivers of shoreline change and other shoreline characteristics will advance the assessment of a site's or area's vulnerability. Parameters include: wave climate (direction and amount of wave energy), dry beach width (area between mean high water indicator and landward bank or other feature), shoreline type (geomorphology and dominant coastal landforms), historic shoreline change, coastal slope (topographic and bathymetric elevations extending landward and seaward of shoreline), beach slope (elevation between dune, or berm, and mean high water line), sediment budget information (sources and sinks of sediment, and the volume, rate, and direction of sediment movement within littoral cells), and coastal engineered structures (presence, type, and condition of coastal engineered structures).

- Action 3-C: Produce comprehensive online atlas of potential flood inundation areas from a range of scenarios, including different timescales and intensities. Aggregation of multiple flood (and erosion) hazard information will allow for comparison and enhance applicability. Hazard sources include: FEMA flood zones; storm surge inundation areas from models such as Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH); higher-frequency coastal flood-prone areas based on predicted water levels exceeding specific tidal heights as issued by the NWS Weather Forecast Office; sea level rise scenarios; and areas of repetitive FEMA flood claims.

## Legal and Policy

The Commission identified two strategies related to enhancing the legal/regulatory and policy framework to improve management and decision-making related to coastal shoreline management.

Strategy #4: Reduce and minimize the impacts of erosion (and flooding) on property, infrastructure, and natural resources by siting new development and substantial re-development away from high hazard areas and incorporating best practices in projects.

- Action 4-A: Evaluate the applicability, benefits, concerns, and legal authority for coastal hazard area setbacks.  
Setbacks provide buffers between hazard areas and coastal development to accommodate high water and erosion. Coastal states have implemented setbacks based on different shoreline features (e.g., seasonal high-water line, frontal dune toe, and vegetation line) and distance calculations. According to NOAA, two-thirds of coastal states have some type of shorefront no-build areas through setbacks as well as rolling easements and zoning. Setbacks can take different forms, and include local by-laws and zoning overlay districts. Currently, Massachusetts protects public interests and controls construction along its coast through Wetland Protection Act (WPA) regulatory performance standards that require “no adverse effect” on primary dunes, coastal beaches, and salt marshes. The Commission recommends an assessment and review report be completed that evaluates the applicability, benefits, concerns and legal authority for various coastal hazard area setbacks approaches.
- Action 4-B: Develop and promulgate performance standards for Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage under the state Wetlands Protection Act.

The WPA currently lacks performance standards for the Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage resource area. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has convened an Advisory Work Group to develop recommendations for performance standards. Proposed language should contain mechanisms to protect the beneficial functions of the floodplain and other coastal wetland resource areas to avoid or mitigate storm damage, including the effects of sea level rise. While specific regulatory language has yet to be formally proposed by DEP and therefore cannot be endorsed by the Commission, it does support the intent to improve management in these Wetlands Protection Act resource areas through the development of performance standards.

- Action 4-C: Adopt the 2015 International Building Codes for structures in floodplains, including freeboard requirements for buildings in “A zones,” in addition to current requirements for “V zones.”

Revisions to the Massachusetts Basic Building Code that became effective January 8, 2008, contain various changes to construction standards, including a new requirement for two-foot “freeboard” above base flood elevations for new construction in the velocity zone. Freeboard is a term that refers to the elevation of a building above predicted flood elevations by an additional height that provides additional safety given uncertainties and factors such as climate change in actual flood elevations. The effectiveness of the building code could be further enhanced through the adoption of provisions of the 2015 International Building Codes for structures in floodplains, including freeboard requirements for buildings in A Zones, in addition to current requirements for V Zones. On June 9, 2015 the Massachusetts Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) completed a year-long effort by approving a draft 9th edition state building code (780 CMR) based on the 2015 International Building Code. The BBRS expects the new code to become effective during the first quarter of 2016. The Commission supports the BBRS revisions to the state building code and the intent to improve management in floodplains through freeboard requirements for buildings in “A zones”.

- Action 4-D: Incorporate assessment of sea level rise impacts during regulatory review of coastal projects and evaluate alternatives that eliminate/reduce impacts to coastal resource areas and provide appropriate mitigation, as allowed within existing authorities.

Current and projected rates of sea level rise may have adverse effects on coastal shorelines and developed areas. Regulatory programs and project review mechanisms should require the evaluation of sea level rise scenarios (and other climate change impacts) in the siting, design, and permitting of proposed projects as allowed within their existing individual authorities. Several efforts currently

underway include development of a Climate Adaptation Policy for the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act and an advisory group examining potential changes to Chapter 91 Waterways regulations. *Sea Level Rise: Understanding and Applying Trends and Future Scenarios for Analysis and Planning*—a guidance document developed by CZM—provides background information on local and global sea level rise trends, summarizes the best available sea level rise projections, and provides general guidance in the selection and application of sea level rise scenarios for coastal vulnerability assessments, planning, and decision making for areas that may be at present or future risk.

- Action 4-E: Finalize and release the guidance document, *Applying the Massachusetts Coastal Wetlands Regulations - A Practical Guide for Conservation Commissions to Protect the Storm Damage Prevention and Flood Control Functions of Coastal Resource Areas*. Under development for several years, this coastal manual for Conservation Commissions and project applicants will provide direction for addressing the impacts of proposed projects that are likely to affect the storm damage prevention and flood control functions of coastal resource areas. The guidance will assist in the interpretation of existing Wetlands Protection Act Regulations, clarifies the delineation of the resource areas, expands on the description of their beneficial functions, and guides applicants and Conservation Commissions on how to apply and meet performance standards to protect existing functions. In addition, the manual explains in detail how Conservation Commissions should use the best available tools, data, and information for complete and accurate project review.

Strategy #5: Improve the use of sediment resources for beach and dune nourishment and restoration.

- Action 5-A: Advance the evaluation and assessment of the use of offshore sand resources for beach and dune nourishment and restoration within the context of the 2015 Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan. Massachusetts continues to face challenges for beach and dune nourishment and restoration efforts, including locating upland sources of sediment that are compatible with the nourishment site and contain volumes required for nourishment projects. Further the costs of upland sources of material are significant. In addition to costs, the logistics and impacts of transportation, as well as other factors, decrease the feasibility of upland sources. In addition, opportunities for beneficial re-use of sediments from navigational dredging projects may be limited by number and timing of dredging projects, compatibility of dredged material, proximity to receiving beaches, and availability of equipment. The 2015 Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan includes initial



work to advance planning and siting for offshore sand resources. The ocean plan contains standards and conditions for the use of offshore sand for beach nourishment, which require that: (1) public benefits associated with the proposed project must outweigh public detriments; (2) the proposed project must protect public infrastructure, natural resources, and other public interest factors; (3) alternative, compatible sand sources from beneficial re-use associated with navigational or other dredging projects or from upland sources are not reasonably practicable; and (4) a biological and physical monitoring plan for the sand source area and beach nourishment site must be developed and implemented. The ocean plan calls for an Offshore Sand Task Force to advance discussion and planning among many stakeholders on this issue. The ocean plan also provides a framework for further work, investigations, and consultations.

- Action 5-B: Strengthen criteria and implementation of existing standards in DEP Chapter 91 Waterways regulations and advance and implement provisions of the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan to ensure that sediments dredged from state tidelands are public trust resources and that their use for beach nourishment is in the public interest.

Currently DEP Chapter 91 Waterways (C. 91) regulations generally require clean dredged material to be used in support of beach nourishment, such that publically funded dredging projects are required to place suitable material on publicly owned beaches. If no appropriate publicly owned site can be located, private eroding beaches may be nourished if easements for public access are secured. The Commission recognizes that obtaining all required easements from private property owners may be difficult, but public interest should be the dominant factor in providing public assistance for beach nourishment. For privately funded dredging projects, such material may be placed on any eroding beach. As listed water-dependent uses, dredging and beach nourishment presumptively serve a proper public purpose, unless a clear showing is made by a municipal, state, regional, or federal agency that requirements beyond the C. 91 regulations are necessary to prevent overriding detriment to a public interest. The 2015 Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan includes a standard for offshore sand projects for beach nourishment such that the public benefits associated with the proposed project must outweigh public detriments.

- Action 5-C: Support the advancement of the top policy position in the joint Coastal States Organization and American Shore and Beach Preservation Association *Call for the Improved Management of America's Beaches* calling for national policy to ensure that beach-compatible dredged materials are beneficially used. There are many examples of projects where clean, compatible material from federal navigational dredging projects is placed at offshore disposal sites or in the

nearshore and not directly on beaches that have critical need for sediment. In 2014, the Coastal States Organization (CSO), which represents the 35 coastal states, territories, and commonwealths, joined the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) in the development of a joint call to Congress and the Obama Administration to support a new, coordinated approach to beach management through five policy positions. The top position from CSO and ASBPA was to ensure that beach-compatible dredged materials are beneficially used through national policy measures such as (1) a Presidential Executive Order and/or a Joint Resolution of Congress, and/or (2) a federal standard that includes the economic evaluation of sand, including ecosystem restoration benefits, storm damage reduction benefits, and other economic values, as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' determinations of the "least cost alternative" for the disposal of dredged materials. The Commission supports actions to advance the CSO/ASBPA policy position and recommends improving coordination with and institutional support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

- Action 5-D: Explore and implement regional dredging programs to allow for greater efficiencies and cost-effectiveness.

Communities could address significant needs for the maintenance and improvement dredging of navigational channels in Massachusetts ports and harbors through coordinated and shared access to a program that supports planning, permitting, and dredging. The Barnstable County Dredge Program serves as an excellent model, and the towns in Barnstable County have developed local dredge/nourishment plans to site placement of materials from the dredged sources. State funds supported the purchase of the equipment, and the towns pay a nominal fee for dredging and for maintenance of the equipment. Similar practices may be effective and efficient in other areas.

- Action 5-E: Improve effectiveness of beach nourishment projects by reviewing, and potentially adjusting, standards and policies that restrict placement of sand below mean high water on the nourished beach.

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be asked to review applicable regulatory standards and policies in order to identify potential revisions or conditions that would allow for placement to optimize the width and slope of a nourished beach, increasing longevity and shoreline protection while minimizing impacts to fisheries and bird habitat. A Memorandum of Understanding to streamline the process could be developed among the appropriate agencies.

## Shoreline Management, Assistance, and Outreach

The Commission identified three strategies related to enhancing shoreline management approaches, technical and financial assistance, and outreach and communication efforts to improve management, decision-making, and understanding of coastal erosion.

Strategy #6: Promote the development of local and regional beach and shoreline management plans.

- Action 6-A: Support coastal communities in their development of new or updating of existing local and regional beach and shoreline management plans. These management plans are valuable, pro-active tools that serve as blueprints for addressing ongoing and new issues, including, but not limited to, beach access, beach and dune restoration, beach grass planting/maintenance, dredging practices and beneficial re-use of beach-compatible dredged sediments, securing private easements, and coordination among various municipal departments. Beach and shoreline management plans should include procedures and definitions regarding coastal emergency situations, including the various stages from pre-storm preparation to post-storm response/recovery activities and criteria for mobilization. The development and adoption of local plans also provide an important forum for public and stakeholder engagement, as well as community leadership coordination, which are extremely important and beneficial to increase awareness of and support for proposed actions and activities before issues become critical or emergency conditions exist. The Commission recognizes the central role of cities and towns in beach and shoreline management and plan development but also strongly supports regional approaches where communities can work together on geographies beyond municipal boundaries to those of natural systems. Regional approaches can represent significant economies of scale. Groups like the Merrimack River Beach Alliance can serve as venues for coordination and can provide key support for regional studies and actions. State review and approval is not required of local plans, but there are significant benefits for communities to seek and receive such review and approval. In some cases, local, state, and federal review may be required to implement certain proposed actions.

Strategy #7: Support the implementation and study of pilot projects for innovative solutions and the encouragement of learning-by-doing and experimentation in shoreline management approaches.

- Action 7-A: Implement new testing and evaluation protocols for the review of pilot projects for shoreline protection, as allowed by the recent revisions to the Wetlands Protection Act regulations.

Guidance could be developed under the Wetlands Protection Act for permitting of small-scale pilot projects that allows for minor Resource Area impacts, or trade-offs, in order to achieve other interests of the Act (e.g., placement of low rock sills on Land Under the Ocean or Land Containing Shellfish as part of a salt marsh creation and/or enhancement pilot project for shore protection on fronting beaches). Some projects or technologies that have been identified as candidates for pilot project studies include: nearshore sills for storm surge protection and habitat restoration or enhancement; sediment back-passing; and shellfish or similar nearshore reefs. Monitoring of pilot projects should include documentation of both environmental and economic components which should inform the future implementation of these practices.

- Action 7-B: Create a standing Technical Review Committee to provide impartial, external review of proposed pilot technologies/projects.

The regulatory review of proposed new or innovative shoreline management practices that have not been implemented in the Commonwealth or of proposed projects that involve trade-offs among wetland resource areas or interests of the Wetlands Protection Act would be enhanced by expert advice and through means to allow certain experimental projects. A standing Technical Review Committee, comprised of a small team of credentialed geologists and engineers, could provide un-biased, external review of proposed pilot technologies/projects and advise state and local permitting agencies on reasonably foreseeable benefits and adverse effects, robust pre- and post-monitoring studies, establishment of success/failure criteria, and standards for removal of and mitigation for pilot projects that have adverse effects.

Strategy #8: Maintain and expand technical and financial assistance and communication and outreach to communities to support local efforts to address the challenges of erosion, flooding, storms, sea level rise, and other climate change impacts.

- Action 8-A: Continue and expand the Coastal Community Resilience and Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience grants that provide funds to cities and towns to increase awareness of hazards and risks, assess vulnerabilities, identify and implement measures to increase community resilience, and implement natural and nonstructural approaches, called green infrastructure.

These grant programs assist communities in the identification, characterization, and assessment of coastal hazard risks and support local actions to reduce the

impacts of erosion and flooding, increase resilience, and respond to coastal storm damages to property, infrastructure, and natural resources, which are projected to worsen and broaden with the effects of climate change. Outside of disaster-related assistance, there are no similar sources of this much-needed local assistance.

- Action 8-B: Support the implementation of a voluntary program that would facilitate the “buy-back” of high hazard or storm-damaged properties, as supported by cost/benefit analyses and other assessments; evaluate feasibility of a voluntary program for low or no interest loans to support the elevation of existing buildings and infrastructure in coastal hazard areas.

Existing development in high-hazard areas experiences recurring and repetitive damages. In many cases, repair of these chronic damages is supported by claims under the National Flood Insurance Program. Provisions and recommendations for a voluntary program to acquire land in coastal high hazard areas where lands or structures suffer repeated damage by severe weather events and pose a high risk to public health, safety, or the environment are contained in the legislation and reports below.

- Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission report (2007): The Coastal Hazards Commission recommended that the Commonwealth “conserve coastal land and minimize loss through acquisition of storm-prone properties from willing sellers in fee or through conservation restrictions and easements.”
- Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report (2012): The Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee recommended that the Commonwealth “seek to reduce the number of vulnerable coastal properties through land acquisition from willing sellers in fee, or by conservation restrictions.”
- Environmental Bond of 2014: An Act providing for the preservation and improvement of land, parks, and clean energy in the Commonwealth included \$20 million authorization for the purchase of storm damaged properties. The availability of resources authorized by a bond bill requires the appropriation of the resources in an agency’s spending plan.
- In July 2015, the Massachusetts Senate passed Senate Bill #1979 - An Act providing for the establishment of a comprehensive adaptation management plan in response to climate change. The bill contains a section authorizing the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to purchase land from willing sellers where structures have been substantially and repeatedly damaged by severe storms.

- Action 8-C: Increase public awareness of coastal processes, storm events, and risks associated with development on/near coastal shorelines and floodplains; promote better understanding and adoption of best practices.

To help property owners fully understand the risk and types of hazards that potentially threaten their development, land, and other assets, enhanced outreach to landowners on erosion hazards and practices could be advanced by including information in insurance premium notices, assessor bills, and other mailings.

Erosion damages could also be better understood and communicated by working with insurance companies, the real estate sector, and other businesses. Overall, content and distribution/availability of information and educational materials for the general public should be improved while recognizing that sensitivity regarding property values exists.

## Chapter 7 - Conclusion: Next Steps and Partners in Implementation

This chapter concludes the Coastal Erosion Commission's report by outlining several key next steps to move forward with the implementation of the Commission recommendations.

From its first meeting in March 2014 to the release of this final report, the work of the Coastal Erosion Commission has spanned 17 months and included eight meetings of the Commission, five regional workshops, numerous meetings of the three Working Groups, five regional public hearings and a 90-day public review and comment period, and significant efforts on the part of Commission members and the staff of their organizations to address its legislative charges.

The statute authorizing the Coastal Erosion Commission calls for its report to be submitted to Massachusetts Legislature. In addition to informing state senators and representatives, the Commission's recommended strategies and actions are also addressed to a wide audience and have broad applicability. Their implementation will require efforts from state and federal agencies, local cities and towns, academic and/or research institutions, environmental consultants and engineers, landowners and businesses, non-profit organizations, and the general public. As described below, the Commission has advised that one of the next steps is for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and other cabinets to work with the legislature to examine options and opportunities for implementation of its recommendations.

### Commission Sunset

With the issuance of its final report and its submission to the clerks of the State Senate and House of Representatives, the Commission will have satisfied its statutory obligations and will dissolve. Commission members have indicated a willingness to participate in additional consultations and provide advice during the evaluation, prioritization, and implementation of its recommended strategies and actions. Described below, the Commission also proposed several vehicles to assist with ongoing coordination, implementation of recommendations, and tracking of progress.

### Next Steps

Contained in Chapter 6 of this report, the recommendations of the Coastal Erosion Commission take the form of eight overarching strategies with specific actions to advance them. The strategies and actions were developed based on recommendations contained in its Working Group reports (Volume 2) and by Commission deliberations and were informed by

input from the public workshops, hearings, and comments. The Commission has asked that the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs—as the lead executive office agency on coastal erosion-related issues and in its statutory role as providing technical support to the Commission—work with the Legislature, other agencies, and partners beyond state government to examine options and opportunities for implementation of its recommendations.

For recommended actions that involve commitments, efforts, and resources from EEA and its agencies, the Commission has requested that EEA thoroughly evaluate these actions and work to build those identified as priorities into its capital and operational plans. For state agency actions that may require other resources or may be longer-term efforts, the Commission supports efforts by the Baker Administration to work with the Legislature to seek opportunities to advance their implementation.

A number of the Commission's recommendations and proposed actions will require the involvement and efforts beyond state government, including federal agencies, local cities and towns, academia, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. The Commission requests that EEA and its agencies actively communicate the recommendations in this report to these organizations and entities with the goal of developing collaborations and partnerships to pool and leverage resources and make meaningful progress on the report's recommended actions. As evidenced through the frameworks established in the 2007 Coastal Hazards Commission report *Preparing for the Storm* and the 2011 Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation report, blueprints that specifically identify key steps for advancing progress on critical issues have proven to be very effective in bringing visibility and developing partnerships to address known data and information, legal and policy, management, and communication needs.

With the completion of its tasks and the sunseting of the Commission, members have agreed that it will be important to track the progress and implementation of its recommendations and to identify alternative venues for much-needed coordination and collaboration among and between local communities, state agencies, and other partners, such as the Massachusetts Municipal Association. To address the need for tracking progress, the Commission suggests that an update should be completed by EEA five years from the issuance of the report. This update should detail progress and steps made in the implementation of recommendations, highlighting success and identifying any areas needing attention. In regard to coordination and collaboration, the Commission agreed that there were significant benefits in utilizing existing regional groups such as the Merrimack River Beach Alliance and the Barnstable County Coastal Resources Advisory Committee, described below. The Commission also supported a recommendation to EEA to convene a standing state agency team with representatives from agencies with roles and authorities related to coastal erosion that would serve to coordinate on state programs and policies and



serve as a go-to point of contact for communities with questions and issues on projects or issues involving multiple agencies.

## Partners and Key Organizations

The Commission acknowledges the work to date of EEA and other state agencies and encourages other organizations and institutions to collaborate on efforts to advancing the actions in this report and improve coastal shoreline management and increase resiliency to a changing climate. Partners and key organizations with important roles in coastal shoreline management are described below.

### Federal Agencies and Regional Partnerships

On the federal level, a number of agencies have important roles and functions in coastal shoreline and floodplain management, permitting, and science. In addition, existing regional partnerships enhance inter-governmental coordination and support science, mapping, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) conducts research on the changes to the coastal and marine environment that impact lands, lives and livelihoods, and vulnerable ecosystems. These efforts provide science to inform decisions that ensure safe and resilient coastal communities and sustainable use and protection of marine resources. EEA, its agencies, and USGS have an ongoing working relationship and in recent years have partnered on several important initiatives, including the seafloor mapping program and the Shoreline Change Project.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) supports and informs improved decision making and end-to-end coastal preparedness, response, recovery, and resiliency. NOAA has technical resources that provide an overview of storm surge, along with information on storm surge impacts, preparedness, forecasts and warnings, models and observations, research and development, event history, and products and resources to help prepare coastal communities and residents.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is regularly involved in navigational dredging improvement and maintenance projects as well as flood damage reduction and shoreline protection projects. As part of the North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study, the ACOE—together with project partners and stakeholders—is applying science, engineering, and public policy to configure an integrated approach to risk reduction through the use of nonstructural and structural measures that also improve social, economic, and ecosystem resilience.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) works to prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from all hazards. FEMA provides grants for state and local projects that reduce risks, improve public safety, and protect the environment. FEMA responds to threats and disasters and coordinates support from other agencies

The Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal and Ocean Observing Systems provides coastal planners and emergency managers with access to critical historical and real-time ocean and weather data as well as detailed forecasts of coastal inundation to help them as they plan for and respond to coastal hazards.

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee works to promote regional dialogue on broad-scale adaptation strategies for responding to the effects of sea level rise by acting on data acquisition priorities, developing user-friendly tools to support planning for and responses to coastal hazards, and partnering with academia, industry, and public agencies to develop a plan for an Integrated Ocean Observing System that supports storm surge and inundation forecasting and response.

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (GOMC) helps communities take effective action to address more variable and extreme weather events through the GOMC Climate Network, which serves as a regional clearinghouse for information on climate impacts and adaptation strategies.

### Municipalities and Community-Based Partnerships

Given the home rule governing structure of Massachusetts, coastal cities and towns play a significant role in coastal shoreline and floodplain management. From the city council and board of selectmen to the local conservation commissions and building inspectors, local boards and committees make important land-use decisions and administer regulations at the municipal level (including the Wetlands Protection Act). Many of the recommended actions in Chapter 6 can be advanced through local actions that promote smart development choices and protect and enhance critical coastal landforms and ecosystems.

Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) also provide key assistance and support to cities and towns and many are actively engaged in efforts to increase coastal resiliency in their member communities. The coastal area RPAs include the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Merrimac Valley Planning Commission, Old Colony Planning Council, Cape Cod Commission, Martha's Vineyard Commission, and Nantucket

Planning and Economic Development Commission. The regional District Local Technical Assistance Programs (DLTA) provide state funds to support RPA work with municipalities on sustainable development and partnerships to achieve planning and development goals consistent with state and regional priorities. Under the DLTA, many RPAs work with communities to enhance the resilience of homes, businesses, public infrastructure, and natural amenities in the event of natural disasters or in response to climate change.

In addition to municipal and regional government, community-based partnership can provide highly effective forums for bringing federal, state, and local officials together with stakeholders and citizens to identify and find solutions for priority local issues. Two examples of community-based partnerships are the Merrimac River Beach Alliance and the Barnstable County Coastal Resources Committee.

The Merrimac River Beach Alliance (MRBA) is a voluntary coalition with representatives from three communities, private citizens groups, state-elected officials and agencies, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and chaired by state Senator Bruce Tarr (R. 1<sup>st</sup> Essex and Middlesex). MRBA is focused on issues related to the Plum Island and Merrimac River area, and while it has no formal authority, it allows for greater coordination, communication, and consensus building and has been successful in advocating for projects like dredging, beach nourishment, repair of jetties, and regional sand budget studies.

The Barnstable County Coastal Resources Committee (CRC) provides technical and policy advice on coastal resource management issues to the Barnstable County Commissioners, the Cape Cod Commission, and state agencies. The group enhances communication linkages between the towns, county, and state regarding the region's coastal resources. The CRC supports the Cape Cod Dredge Working Group, assists in the identification of potential restoration projects, and works on project coordination and coordination of resources.

#### Academia, Research Institutions, and Conservation Organizations

Academic institutions throughout the Commonwealth are involved in strategic research, education, and communication efforts that are advancing the understanding of coastal and marine environment and the challenges faced. For example, geoscientists at the University of Massachusetts Amherst recently received a grant from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to evaluate sand resource needs at 22 public beaches along the Massachusetts coast over the next two years, establishing baseline characteristics for the first time and providing the data needed for future beach restoration planning.

The Commonwealth's two Sea Grant programs, MIT Sea Grant and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) Sea Grant, both support research, education, and extension projects that encourage environmental stewardship, long-term economic development, and responsible use of the Commonwealth's coastal and ocean resources. Recent efforts have focused on examining shoreline change, coastal processes, and the effects of sea level rise and climate change.

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR) was designated a National Estuarine Research Reserve by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for the purpose of studying this area to improve the understanding of coastal ecosystems and human influences on them, then translate that information to promote more informed decision making regarding coastal resources in a broader context. WBNERR facilitates research on related themes including climate change, sea level rise, and storm events, as well as environmental services provided by estuarine habitats and ecosystems. As part of the New England Climate Adaptation Project, WBNERR, in collaboration with project partners, developed a role-playing project that helps analyze coastal processes and the local impacts of sea level rise.

The Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown is currently engaged in research for the National Park Service to assess coastal instability and cross-shore sediment movement to inform decisions by the Cape Cod National Seashore on the fate of public access and facilities in light of expected increases in sea level rise and weather effects of climate change.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) works to promote policies that promote nature-based solutions as a way to reduce risk and increase community resilience. Working collaboratively with a diverse range of stakeholders and partners, TNC has helped to protect over 20,000 acres in ecologically sensitive land in Massachusetts. TNC takes a scientific approach to conservation, selecting the areas it seeks to preserve based on analysis of what is needed to ensure the preservation of the local ecosystems and then applies field-tested science to restore and preserve these ecological treasures, creating a resilient coastline that will provide a natural defense against wind-driven waves, erosion, and flooding.

The Massachusetts Audubon Society (Mass Audubon) manages more than 35,000 acres of wildlife habitat across the state, ranging from barrier beaches to open fields to northern hardwood forests. They regularly inventory and monitor their land and implement management actions to ensure that Mass Audubon wildlife sanctuaries truly are protecting the nature of Massachusetts. Mass Audubon is undertaking a

multi-pronged policy approach to address climate change. Mass Audubon assists with drafting legislation, advising state and national panels on energy projects, supporting regulatory reform, and encouraging communities to take action at the local level.

The Trustees of Reservations (The Trustees) own and protect more than 70 miles of coastline, including more than 26 miles of beaches, from Wasque on Martha's Vineyard to Crane Beach on the North Shore. Together with volunteers and partners, The Trustees manage their coastal properties for their natural beauty, nature, and public use and enjoyment. The threats to their properties include climate change, including rising sea levels and more intense storm surges that are exacerbating the natural coastal erosion process.

### Environmental Consultants and Engineers

Strategies for preparing for and addressing coastal erosion and climate change will come from a variety of sources, but project design and execution will rely largely on environmental consultants and engineers. Their expertise and knowledge of coastal processes, applicable environmental regulations, and design must make use of the best available information regarding the extent and elevation of current and future flooding risks and reflect an integrated approach to reduce coastal hazard risks in the face of climate change.

### Landowners, Businesses, and the General Public

Whether it involves new construction, rebuilding, or renovation, residential and commercial property and business owners, as well as chambers of commerce, need to be aware of all the relevant information regarding the vulnerability of their coastal property. They also need to use the best available information regarding the predicted extent and elevation of flooding included in the most recent Flood Insurance Rate Maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Other important considerations include elevating structures and choosing proper erosion and shoreline management techniques that can effectively reduce erosion and storm damage while minimizing impacts to shoreline systems.

## Conclusion

The Coastal Erosion Commission has worked over a period of a year and a half to meet its charge to investigate and document the levels and impacts of coastal erosion in the Commonwealth and develop strategies and recommendations to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the magnitude and frequency of coastal erosion and its adverse impacts on

property, infrastructure, public safety, and beaches and dunes. These efforts have included eight face-to-face meetings, significant work by the Commission's three Working Groups, technical peer review of the Working Group reports, and stakeholder and public input through workshops, public hearings, and written comment.

This report compiles and summarizes the most current and best available information on a range of coastal erosion issues in Massachusetts. Specifically, it includes: a comprehensive characterization of Commonwealth's shoreline; an assessment of coastal erosion and summaries of erosion rates for each coastal community; an estimate of the financial damage to property, infrastructure, and beach and dune resources sustained from 1978 to the present; a measure of potential risk in the next 10 years; an overview of shoreline management practices and a discussion of their effectiveness and potential impacts; a synopsis of the primary laws and regulations governing erosion management practices and a general assessment of regulatory effectiveness; and a series of recommendations in the form of eight overarching strategies with specific actions to advance them.

Coastal erosion—like other environmental processes—is necessary and natural, and many of Massachusetts coastal shorelines are highly dynamic, shifting and changing in response to shoreline shape and position, availability of sediment, wind and waves, and continuously rising sea levels. Coastal erosion also causes damage to coastal property and related infrastructure and can have adverse effects on beaches and other habitat. The Commission believes that this report will support a better understanding of the magnitude, causes, and effects of coastal erosion, and through the implementation of its recommendations, coastal managers, property owners, local governments, and stakeholders will have more and better tools, information, and support for identifying and implementing appropriate management techniques and approaches to maintain the many beneficial functions of coastal landforms.

Appendix A –  
Summary of Coastal Erosion Commission Public Workshops  
May – June 2014





**MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL EROSION COMMISSION:  
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS  
MAY – JUNE 2014**

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute



July 29, 2014



## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

The Massachusetts Coastal Erosion Commission was established with the purpose of investigating and documenting the levels and impacts of coastal erosion in the Commonwealth and developing strategies and recommendations to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the magnitude and frequency of coastal erosion and its adverse impacts on property, infrastructure, public safety, and beaches and dunes.

In May-June 2014, the Commission held five regional workshops to solicit public input to inform the Commission's work. The workshops were held in New Bedford, Boston, Gloucester, Marshfield, and Barnstable. This report summarizes public comments and feedback received verbally and in writing, both in hard copy and electronically, from the regional workshops.

Broadly, participants expressed significant concern about coastal erosion affecting residents and communities throughout coastal Massachusetts. Workshop attendees identified a number of specific geographic areas of particular concern, which are listed in the report. Workshop participants shared many suggestions about scientific, information, and mapping needs; regulations and state involvement; what kinds of local assistance they feel are needed; best management practices and approaches the Commission should support; and offshore beach nourishment. Overarching themes from the workshops included:

- Support for the ongoing science, data and information and a need for additional locally relevant information, modeling, and technical support to assist communities in managing erosion. Participants were especially interested in better understanding beach nourishment dynamics and the costs and benefits of different erosion management approaches over time. They hope for additional science and mapping that is accessible to laypeople and can be shared across communities.
- The desire to explore ways to allow for flexibility in regulations and policies that would enable locally-appropriate coastal erosion management approaches. In particular, people requested support to make beach nourishment easier to pursue at a local level.
- The need for additional state-level guidance, financial resources, and support of pilot projects for erosion management. Participants expressed a desire for guidance on how municipalities should manage erosion and focused on the idea of grants and low cost loans to support both standard and innovative management approaches.
- A request for more stakeholder education and outreach to ensure that municipal officials, conservation commissioners and others are knowledgeable about current erosion management opportunities and approaches.
- A call for greater coordination and dovetailing among agencies working on and policies relevant to coastal erosion. This could include regional coordination or resources such as regional sand borrow sites.

The report contains detailed information on the varied and thoughtful input provided by participants during the public workshops, organized by the following topic areas: geographic

areas of particular concern; scientific, information, and mapping needs; regulations and state involvement; local assistance; best management practices and approaches ; and offshore beach nourishment. The report also captures additional challenges and opportunities for the Commission raised during the workshops.

## Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3#
I.# INTRODUCTION .....	7#
II.# REGIONAL WORKSHOP OVERVIEW .....	8#
i.# WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION .....	8#
ii.# COASTAL GEOLOGY, PROCESSES, AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW .....	8#
iii.# COASTAL EROSION COMMISSION: CONTEXT, EXAMPLES, AND NEXT STEPS .....	8#
III.# SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK .....	9#
i.# GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN .....	9#
ii.# SCIENTIFIC, INFORMATION, AND MAPPING NEEDS.....	10#
iii.# REGULATIONS AND STATE INVOLVEMENT .....	12#
iv.# WHAT KINDS OF LOCAL ASSISTANCE ARE NEEDED? .....	14#
v.# BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND APPROACHES THE COMMISSION SHOULD SUPPORT.....	15#
vi.# OFFSHORE BEACH NOURISHMENT.....	17#
viii.# ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS.....	19#
APPENDIX: COMMISSION MEMBERS, DELEGATES, AND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE .....	22#



## *I. INTRODUCTION*

The Massachusetts Coastal Erosion Commission was established by the 2014 Massachusetts Budget Bill with the purpose of investigating and documenting the levels and impacts of coastal erosion in the Commonwealth and developing strategies and recommendations to reduce, minimize, or eliminate the magnitude and frequency of coastal erosion and its adverse impacts on property, infrastructure, public safety, and beaches and dunes. Specifically, the Commission was asked to evaluate erosion levels since 1978 and assess the resulting financial damage to property, infrastructure, and beach and dune resources. It was also asked to estimate the likely cost of damages over the next ten years under current conditions, regulations, and laws. Based on those assessments, the Commission will evaluate all current rules, regulations, and laws governing the materials, methodologies, and means that may be used to guard against and reduce or eliminate the impacts of coastal erosion. The Commission will also examine any possible changes, expansions, reductions, and laws that would improve the ability of municipalities and private property owners to guard against or reduce or eliminate the impacts of coastal erosion without undue adverse environmental impacts.

As part of its work, the Commission held five regional workshops in May and June 2014. The first meeting was held in New Bedford; the second in Boston; the third in Gloucester; the fourth in Barnstable; and the fifth in Marshfield. The intent of the workshops was to present information related to coastal erosion and shoreline management approaches; to seek public and stakeholder input, especially with respect to suggestions for Commission recommendations and strategies; and to communicate the Commission's process and next steps. Meetings were open to the public. Participation varied from meeting to meeting, with the largest meeting including about 40 people. Workshop participants typically included a mix of local public officials and agency personnel, state agency representatives, environmental consultants, and residents. Every meeting was attended by members of the Commission and technical support staff. See Appendix A for a list of Commission members and their delegates and/or staff who attended the meetings. Further information about these meetings, including presentations, handouts, and other materials, as well as information about the Commission's continuing work, can be found on the Coastal Zone Management website: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/waste-mgmt-recycling/coasts-and-oceans/coastal-erosion-commission.html>.

At each meeting, feedback and comments from participants were solicited through a variety of approaches. As information was presented in two presentations (see below), participants were encouraged to ask questions and provide comments. Following the presentation session, participants were engaged in a 45-minute group discussion centered on four guiding questions:

- What science and mapping is most needed?
- What best management practices should the Commission support and promote?
- What assistance is needed to support local planning and action, given state regulations and local needs?
- Do you have any other input for the Commission recommendations?

Participants were also asked to provide feedback and guidance for the Commission through a short survey administered during the meetings. Finally, they were encouraged to write down any additional thoughts or ideas they wanted to share with the Commission on notecards available on each participant table.

The Consensus Building Institute (CBI) facilitated the workshops.<sup>1</sup> CBI is a nonprofit organization that empowers public, private, government and community stakeholders to resolve issues, reach better, more durable agreements, and build stronger relationships. CBI staff prepared this summary, which includes input provided by participants verbally and in written form, such as through surveys completed at the workshops and via email during the period of the public workshops. The summary is not intended to capture every statement made, but rather to distill key feedback for the Commission's consideration. This summary will inform the work of Commission members and will be made available to the public.

## ***II. REGIONAL WORKSHOP OVERVIEW***

This section describes the general structure followed at each of the regional workshops.

### **i. WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION**

Each workshop began with a Bruce Carlisle, Director of the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), welcoming participants and introducing the Coastal Erosion Commission members in attendance. Mr. Carlisle then described the Commission and communicated the goals of the workshop. Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions about the Commission and the intent of the workshop.

### **ii. COASTAL GEOLOGY, PROCESSES, AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW**

Following the introduction, a presentation on coastal geology, processes, and management was provided by Commission members Rob Thieler (USGS Scientist) or Rick Murray (Boston University Professor and Town of Scituate Selectman), except for in Gloucester, where Mark Borelli (Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies Marine Geology Director) gave the presentation. The presentation covered the scientific and management dimensions of coastal change; beach and coast fundamentals; shoreline management strategies and their potential impacts; and the results of recent sea level rise assessments.

Participants were then invited to ask questions and share comments. They asked mainly clarifying questions, but a few participants raised substantive questions about things like the uncertainty associated with sea level rise projections. One participant reminded the Commission to explicitly consider wildlife impacts. Another noted that a number of groups, such as the Woods Hole Group, have done a lot of research on coastal erosion in Massachusetts and cautioned the Commission against "reinventing the wheel."

### **iii. COASTAL EROSION COMMISSION: CONTEXT, EXAMPLES, AND NEXT STEPS**

Mr. Carlisle gave the second presentation at each workshop, describing the context of the Coastal Erosion Commission, examples of the Commission's work, and next steps. The presentation explained that this Commission is not the first commission or task force on coastal erosion in Massachusetts or elsewhere in the U.S., and discussed key themes and findings from similar efforts. These lessons include the need to: improve mapping of erosion hazard zones; promote better building practices; consider new policies such as one that requires "beneficial reuse" of dredged clean sand; and improve communication, education, and outreach. Mr. Carlisle then gave an overview of the Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission (2006-2007) and progress since its work. He then discussed best practices for and examples of different approaches for managing coastal erosion, such as bio-engineering for shoreline stabilization and

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<sup>1</sup> The CBI team was comprised of Ona Ferguson, Patrick Field, Griffin Smith and Danya Rumore.



beach and dune restoration and management. The presentation also reviewed financial and technical assistance available for communities and landowners. He then explained the Coastal Erosion Commission's current efforts and next steps and noted that while the Commission is focused on erosion, erosion cannot be entirely separated from storm impacts (including wave energy, storm surge and flooding). The Commission's next steps include: reviewing public input and feedback solicited through the regional workshops; developing working group information and materials; conducting Commission meetings (there will be three meetings of the Commission during the summer and fall); and drafting a report and recommendations in the fall. The Commission includes a science and technical working group; an erosion impacts working group; and a legal and regulatory working group. The Commission plans to release its final report in winter 2014-2015.

Participants were invited to ask questions and provide comments during and following the presentation. There were a few clarifying questions. One participant asked whether the Massachusetts congressional delegation supports the Commission's work. Commission staff responded that the Commission is the result of a state statute, and said they will be mindful of keeping the federal delegation updated on their work.

### *III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK*

This section captures the input and feedback participants provided during the workshops, through their surveys, and through other forms of written communication. In light of very low participant numbers at the New Bedford meeting, no comments are recorded from that region. Broadly, participants expressed significant concern about coastal erosion, seeing the problem as affecting coastal residents and communities throughout Massachusetts. Their comments and feedback on specific issues are organized by subcategory below.

#### *i. GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN*

On the survey administered at the workshops, participants were asked whether erosion is a priority for their community as a whole, or more of an issue specifically for those living on the shoreline. They were also asked to identify areas of specific concern within their region.

Participants seemed to agree that, in the Boston area, erosion is mostly an issue for coastal communities as well as communities along the Charles River. Areas of particular concern that were identified included along the Charles River; the Boston Harbor area; Winthrop-Revere; and Hull. One participant noted that much of the waterfront in the Boston region is a working waterfront, with many sites already having seawalls; hence, erosion is not a significant problem in these areas.

In Gloucester, participants indicated that the shoreline is the main area of concern for erosion. Sites of high concern that were identified by participants included: the Fort Green proposed hotel site, the west half of Coffins Beach East; Crane Beach; Salisbury Beach State Park and private homes in the area; Plum Island (particularly sewer and homes in the area); and the Haverhill Merrimack River sewer line. One participant indicated that protecting coastal infrastructure and property should be a main concern.

In the Barnstable region, there were mixed opinions about whether erosion was a problem only for those living on the shoreline or for the community as a whole. A little more than half of the

people in Barnstable who completed surveys indicated they think the problem is a concern for the entire community, with some explaining they think coastal erosion will have community-wide economic, environmental, and recreational effects. One of these participants indicated erosion is a problem for the community as a whole but private landowners on the coast tend to be the most vocal about it. Another participant said that erosion is a community issue, but feels that until erosion's impacts on resources and amenities become more visible, the public will likely remain largely unaware. While many people in Barnstable see erosion as a community-wide issue, a number of others think it is mainly a problem on the shoreline. Specific sites of concern in the Barnstable region identified by participants included: public beaches and beach access in general; Town Neck Beach (identified as very important by a number of participants and as "critical" by one participant); Spring Hill Beach; Sandy Neck; Blush Point; Dead Neck/Sampsons Island; East Sandwich Beach; Sandwich Downs/Scorton Neck; Sandwich Village; Nauset Bay, Pleasant Bay; Town Cove; Cape Cod Bay; Chapoquoit Beach; most beaches on the sound; and developed private shorelines, specifically in North Chatham, Pleasant Bay, and Chatham Harbor.

In Marshfield, more than half of the participants said they think erosion is a problem for the entire community because local businesses along the shoreline are affected; and because in some communities, barrier beaches protect the entire community. Areas of specific concern identified by participants included: Duxbury Beach; Central Avenue; North Scituate; Minot; Peggotty; the Fort Point Road area in Weymouth; the dock and town beach in Hingham; Ocean Bluff; Green Harbor; Brant Rock; and Plymouth Long Beach. A number of participants said that all beaches in the area are areas of major concern.

## ii. SCIENTIFIC, INFORMATION, AND MAPPING NEEDS

During the workshops and on surveys, participants were asked about the adequacy of information related to the nature of coastal erosion hazards and potential responses. They were also asked to provide input on scientific, mapping, and information needs. A number of participants stated that existing information on coastal erosion is adequate and that information is not a limiting factor. However, a number of other participants stated that information is not adequate, with this sentiment being most prevalent in Barnstable and Marshfield. Participants shared the following suggestions for how to improve science, mapping and information.

*Make information more accessible:* Many participants stated that CZM provides good guidance and information but that existing information is not easily accessible for the "layperson" and that it needs to be more easy to find. They also indicated that information should be made more understandable to the public.

*Facilitate information sharing:* Participants said it would be helpful to have a better way for communities to share information with each other. One suggestion was to create a database that aggregates existing information of things like erosion rates and helps communities and organizations share the results of their projects and research with each other.

*Help communities understand existing models and how to use them:* A number of participants indicated that communities find it challenging to understand the many different coastal erosion and sea level rise models that exist and how best to use them. They suggested that the Commission could produce a fact sheet on useful beach erosion and sea level rise models that explains each model's purpose and how it can be used.

*Develop other tools to help conservation commissions:* A few participants suggested the Commission should develop tools to help conservation commissions tackle the coastal erosion problem. Participants were vague about what kinds of tools would be useful, but people from all workshops agreed that conservation commissions would benefit from additional support on the coastal erosion issue.

*Map shoreline change more often in areas with higher rates of change:* Several participants would like more shoreline change mapping, particularly in areas with higher rates of change.

*Additional mapping needs:* A suggestion was made to start routine mapping of the top of banks/bluffs/dunes as a great tool to compliment tracking shoreline change at the high water mark. Another suggestion was for applied science and mapping to determine volume estimates of regional and local sediment budgets.

*Research on beach nourishment dynamics and related concerns:* Many participants described a need for more information and research on beach nourishment. Specifically, they mentioned the need for a better understanding of the long-term dynamics of beach nourishment (e.g., how long the sand stays, where it goes, etc.); the effectiveness and long-term benefits of nourishment; and the costs associated with nourishment (including impacts on fisheries, bird habitat, and other environmental systems), both in terms of sand extraction and placement. They mentioned that some research has been done that can be leveraged, but that site-specific studies are needed. They also mentioned that communities typically do not have the resources to do this kind of research. Related to this, a number of people indicated that communities need information on where to find usable sand, which is currently a significant challenge. One participant also said that her community was told by DCR that it was possible to pump sand from below without affecting fisheries, but she has not heard anything about this since; she thought more information on this would be helpful to communities. Participants generally felt more research and information on the specifics of beach nourishment would help coastal communities make informed decisions about whether and how to nourish beaches.

*Provide cost/benefit analysis information at the local scale:* Many participants emphasized the importance of cost/benefit analysis, indicating that, to make good decisions, communities need to have a good idea of the costs, how long something will last, what kinds of effects the approach might have, and what the negative impacts might be. They generally emphasized that cost/benefit analyses need to be done at the local scale, since the costs and benefits of an approach will vary by community. One participant emphasized that such analysis needs to look at the costs of inaction and the costs and benefits over time (for example, the cost of maintaining beach nourishment and benefits to down-shore communities as the sand moves).

*Locally relevant information and models:* The need for locally relevant information and models was a theme that emerged across all workshops. Related to this, one participant at the Marshfield workshop mentioned that the nearest long-term gauge is in Boston, making it hard to do locally relevant modeling on the South Shore.

*More information and research on innovative approaches:* People at several workshops brought up the need for more information about innovative approaches for addressing coastal erosion,

such as offshore breakwaters, with many indicating the need to learn from pilot projects that could be monitored.

*Other:* Participants also felt the following would be helpful: more information on the effect of climate change on coastal bird habitat; a map of shoreline structures that can be removed to restore coastal processes; and, better documentation of the storms that occur and the impacts they cause. Finally, a couple of participants raised questions about the trustworthiness of science, information, and mapping. In particular, they said that, in light of recent concern with the latest FEMA flood map updates, many communities do not feel they can trust information and maps, particularly from FEMA.

### iii. REGULATIONS AND STATE INVOLVEMENT

Through comments shared during workshops and on surveys, participants voiced a number of thoughts about state and federal regulations and perspectives on what role the state should play in managing coastal erosion. Themes that emerged include the following:

*Review regulations for beach nourishment and erosion control:* Broadly, many participants said that existing regulations for erosion control, specifically for beach nourishment, are challenging for this type of erosion management. They suggested the Commission review existing regulations and try to make them more supportive of, or less prohibitive of, effective local action.

*Ensure consistency and compatibility across regulations and requirements:* A number of participants indicated that there is a need to review regulations at the state and federal level and to ensure consistency of regulations and requirements from various departments and agencies. Related to this, one participant suggested coastal erosion regulations should be coordinated with the NOAA fisheries/NEFMC Omnibus Habitat Amendment, which will be released this summer.

*Allow for more locally appropriate solutions:* A number of participants emphasized the need for regulations to be modified to allow for more locally appropriate solutions. Generally, these participants expressed concern about one-size-fits all regulations and restrictions, which they indicated prevent common sense solutions in localities and inhibit innovation. While many people said the solution to this problem is to relax regulations, particularly for beach nourishment, others provided a more nuanced perspective, saying that the goal should be to build in more flexibility to allow for site-specific responses. In a similar vein, a number of participants pushed for more local control over policy and management practices. One participant suggested the state should take the same approach to coastal erosion as it has taken for beach access and plover issues, which the participant said allows for greater local autonomy.

*Provide a state-level mandate and guidance:* Many participants said they would welcome more state guidance, involvement (and maybe regulations) in dealing with coastal erosion. They said that more regional vision and influence might help get local decision-makers and stakeholders on board. They commonly felt this guidance should provide direction to communities while accounting for the fact that communities have different biophysical dynamics, contexts, and resources.

*Pair mandates with financial support for implementation:* Related to the above point, a few participants mentioned that, if the state is going to impose regulations, any mandates should come with financial support for implementation. One participant said that often regulations are put in place before the financial support for implementation, and he encouraged the state to be mindful of putting in place support for implementation before imposing regulations on communities.

*Provide resources and technical support:* At all workshops, participants suggested that the state should provide more resources to communities dealing with coastal erosion, saying there is no way towns can afford to address erosions issues on their own. The need for technical assistance was emphasized across meetings, as was desire for more grants, low cost loans, and matching funds for communities. Some also suggested that the state should support experimentation with new, innovative ideas, and that grant programs seem to stimulate action.

*Support experimentation, pilot projects, and learning-by-doing:* A common sentiment across all workshops was the desire for the Commission and the state at large to support more experimentation in erosion management approaches; to cultivate and support pilot projects, particularly for innovative solutions; and to encourage learning-by-doing. For example, a number of people suggested the state experiment with a breakwater somewhere along the coastline.

*Require maintenance:* One participant mentioned that the maintenance of coastal protection should be explicitly required. He said that, too often, people build coastal protection and then forget about it for decades.

*Rethink sand borrow regulations:* A couple participants mentioned Massachusetts needs to update its policies on sand borrow pits. One suggestion was for the state to create regional sand borrow site regulations. As part of this, participants suggested the state might support studies to identify where sand resources are and make sand available for use by a range of stakeholders, both public and private. Participants suggested the Commission look at the Cape Cod Commission's regulations for sand borrow sites as an example.

*Support programs for buy back of hazard properties:* A couple of participants expressed support for a policy or program that facilitates the buy back of high hazard or storm-damaged properties, especially in cases where cost/benefit analysis shows that this makes good economic sense. A few participants noted that the requirements to receive federal monies available for buy-back are so onerous as to make the program unusable.

*Give conservation commissions leeway to make decisions on a case-by-case situation:* A few participants indicated that conservation commissions should be given leeway to make decisions on a case-by-case situation to allow them to support erosion management measures that are most appropriate in the specific case. Participants felt that a certain approach may be harmful on some beaches and not on others, and that conservation commissions should be able to make decisions accordingly.

*General concerns about federal regulations:* A few participants said that federal regulations hamper coordination and make planning difficult. They fear these will inhibit the development of a holistic coastal erosion strategy. They did not have any suggestions about how to improve

this, but their comments generally indicated that the Commission should consider how to help communities manage coastal erosion amid existing federal regulations and requirements. Participants raised a number of concerns related to US Army Corps of Engineers policies and laws. One participant mentioned that the Corps has to dispose of sand in the cheapest way possible, which often precludes better uses of the dredged material for beach nourishment.

*National Flood Insurance concerns:* Participants mentioned that the National Flood Insurance Program has been an important factor in supporting continued coastal development in high hazard areas. Participants suggested the Commission might need to look at how public policy encourages building in problematic areas and what needs to change to support communities in preparing for sea level rise.

*Wetlands Protection Act:* A participant said that the Commission should look at the Wetlands Protection Act to understand the ambiguity in the law and clarify the law as it relates to coastal erosion. Another participant expressed concern that the Wetland Protection Act could be weakened due to coastal erosion concerns and that this would undermine the work that local conservation commissions do. This participant felt that scientific recommendations about how to best manage wetlands should take priority over private property concerns. Other participants suggested that, if the Commission looks at the Wetlands Protection Act, it may want to involve the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) and local conservation commissions in its review.

Additional specific regulatory changes suggested include:

- Allow appropriate dredged spoil and sand to be placed in the near-shore and intertidal zone;
- Pass the Cape Cod Ocean Management District of Critical Planning Concern regulations;
- When hard engineering solutions are put in place, better enforce follow-through with required beach nourishment to aid in maintaining beach levels. This would enable local conservation commissions to approve these projects;
- Allow for “resource banking”—an approach that would aggregate smaller, individual site nourishment requirements to allow for more meaningful regional beach restoration;
- Consider allowing rock sill and similar engineering approaches to support the creation of fringing salt marshes in higher energy areas.

#### iv. WHAT KINDS OF LOCAL ASSISTANCE ARE NEEDED?

When asked specifically about what kinds of local assistance are needed, as well as in comments made throughout the workshops and in written form, participants identified the following local assistance needs.

*Financial resources:* Participants broadly stated that communities need financial assistance to help them deal with the coastal erosion problem. When encouraged to be specific about what kinds of financial resources and for what purposes, people put forward a number of suggestions. Many indicated that funds for more local research and technical analysis would be helpful. A number of participants indicated that regulations and mandates, if imposed, should be preceded or accompanied by funds to help communities fulfill the mandates. Many mentioned a desire for state matching funds to help secure federal grants. One person said that since beach nourishment projects will benefit other communities as sand moves down shore, the state should provide some matching funds or support for communities investing in beach

nourishment. A few participants referenced the recent community grants from CZM and supported this type of approach.

*Technical assistance:* Many people said that it would be helpful to have additional technical assistance to help communities evaluate different erosion control measures, decide whether and how to rebuild existing erosion control structures, and understand the impacts of different approaches. This could come in the form of state-provided technical support, or as funding to help communities undertake their own analyses. Related to this, several participants indicated that it would be helpful to develop tools that allow communities, groups, and individuals to more easily assess the cost and effectiveness of different erosion management strategies.

*Planning support:* A couple of participants indicated that, since communities are already overwhelmed by their current concerns, planning support to assist communities in thinking ahead despite their current constraints would be helpful.

*Forums for information sharing and joint learning:* A couple participants indicated that it would be helpful to communities to have organized forums where people doing coastal erosion projects, using best management practices, and undertaking pilot projects can easily and effectively communicate with and learn from each other. Some people indicated this might take the form of workshops; others suggested some form of online database.

*Help communities identify appropriate sand sources:* A few participants said that communities have a hard time figuring out where appropriate sand sources are, and that they need help figuring out where the sand is and how they can use it.

*Help communities think about relocation, or “retreat”:* A few participants brought up the subject of retreat from sea level rise, indicating that it would be helpful to provide communities with guidance and support regarding when and how to consider this approach. One participant said it would be useful to have a cost/benefit analysis study looking at relocation as compared to a hard coastline approach. Retreat-related topics participants suggested should be looked at include: at what point does it make sense to not rebuild the seawall that your community has invested in for decades? At what point do you retreat? Under what conditions do you retreat? How do you reallocate the money that goes into building and maintaining sea walls into the acquisition of vulnerable properties? Given that this is an extremely challenging problem for communities, participants suggested some thought and planning need to go into this now to be implemented in the future.

v. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND APPROACHES THE COMMISSION SHOULD SUPPORT

During the workshops, participants were asked to reflect on what kinds of best management practices and approaches the Commission should support. In response to this question and through comments provided during the meetings and on surveys, participants suggested a number of best practices and general approaches they would like to see.

*Proactive management:* A number of participants emphasized that coastal erosion should be proactively rather than reactively managed to maximize efficiency and lower costs.

*Invest in experimentation, pilot projects, and learning by doing:* A large number of participants across the workshops expressed interest in experimentation and support for pilot projects. They

generally felt that it is important for the Commission to invest in pilot projects and support experimentation and learning from pilot projects rather than just moving ahead with a particular regulatory approach or set of management strategies.

*Experiment with offshore breakwaters:* A number of participants expressed support for offshore breakwaters, as well as innovative offshore structures (such as floating tire structures) that can disturb waves. A couple people indicated they would like to see the state experiment with offshore breakwaters by doing test projects in a few places.

*Build flexibility into regulations:* As indicated above, many participants feel strongly that there needs to be more flexibility in the application of regulations. They think some flexibility is needed to allow communities to pursue locally appropriate approaches and make decisions about balancing resource area trade-offs. The “cookie cutter” or “one-size-fits-all” regulatory approach, participants said, can cause problems, rather than solving them.

*When evaluating projects, look at the entire affected area:* A few people said that, when looking at coastal erosion projects and management approaches, the entire profile of the effected area needs to be considered. They said there are effects and tradeoffs that must be considered within a management zone, and these need to be looked at and weighed before pursuing a management approach.

*Conduct more holistic cost/benefit analysis:* A couple of participants indicated that, when evaluating options, people need to look at the pros and cons of the approach and weigh them against each other, rather than simply looking at impacts. Similarly, participants said that cost/benefit analyses should consider the implications of doing nothing, as well as the costs and benefits of maintaining a management strategy over time. As indicated above, people also felt that cost/benefit analyses should be done at the local level to provide a sense of whether strategies make sense given local context and considerations.

*Develop best practices for urban areas:* A participant in Boston noted that the Commission has a strong focus on sub-urban areas and needs to develop best practices for urban areas. Related to this, one participant suggested that the Commission add a member who specifically represents an urban area, since all members are currently representatives of suburban communities.

*Frame the coastal erosion conversation around “management” and not “solutions”:* One participant from Barnstable suggested that, when talking about erosion, the conversation should be framed around “management” rather than “solutions.” She feels this is important to make sure people understand that we are talking about managing ongoing impacts and risks, not fixing the problem.

*Make it easier for communities to pursue beach nourishment:* The topic of beach nourishment and sand mining was important for many participants, particularly in Marshfield and Barnstable. As one participant in Marshfield said, “It all comes down to sand.” While some participants expressed concern about the potential ecological impacts of dredging and beach nourishment, many people expressed their support for beach nourishment and indicated they would like to see the state make it easier for communities to evaluate the effectiveness of and pursue nourishment as an erosion management approach. One participant suggested that the



regulatory process should be streamlined for several soft solutions, including for beach nourishment. A few participants indicated they would like to see the state relax requirements for beach nourishment; for example, coarse sand is currently not allowed for beaches with fine grain material, but perhaps coarse sand might be preferable, because it stays on site longer.

*Consider offshore sand:* A number of participants expressed interest in offshore sand for beach nourishment, indicating this approach has been used in other regions and that Massachusetts should consider this method of beach replenishment.

*Consider a broader beach nourishment strategy rather than parcel by parcel:* Several people said that beach nourishment should be considered as a broad community strategy, rather than being considered parcel-by-parcel. In response to this, a conservation agent noted that it is not clear how to accomplish this. She said people have suggested creating a fund that would be paid into by applicants so that a larger sand fill project addressing a more appropriate area might be undertaken, but this would be challenging to implement.

*Discourage dune damage:* One participant said that, given how important dunes are to community resilience, there should be a policy or system for making people liable for damage to dunes. He would like to see a policy or program that discourages people treating dunes poorly.

*Look at the Cape Cod Commission's work on coastal erosion as a possible model:* Someone suggested that the Commission look at what the Cape Cod Commission is doing to address coastal erosion. These efforts, according to an email from a Cape Cod Commission representative, include developing a floodplain bylaw, investigating the viability of establishing a District of Critical Planning Concern; considering "undevelopment" in the floodplain through acquisition and removal of vulnerable structures and properties; implementing minimum performance standards; and establishing setbacks based on long-term erosion rates. A representative from the Cape Cod Commission encouraged the Commission to adopt the Cape Cod Oceans Management plan recommendations for sand mining and beach nourishment.

#### vi. OFFSHORE BEACH NOURISHMENT

On the survey administered at workshops, participants were asked: "What are your thoughts or concerns about the use of offshore (ocean) sand for beach nourishment?" There were a number of participants who said they are opposed to the idea of using offshore sand for nourishment. However, the majority of participants expressed support for this option, although most of their responses were caveated with questions about impacts and indicated the need for more information. Participants in Marshfield were particularly supportive of this option, with many responding along the lines of "Let's do it!" A number of participants said they do not know enough about this approach to have an opinion or to comment.

Participant comments in response to this question generally fit into the below categories:

*Concern about impact on ocean habitat and wildlife at the source area:* Many participants indicated that they are concerned about potential effects on ocean habitat, fisheries, and other marine wildlife at large. They are concerned that the process of mining sand offshore will destroy habitat and that the entire process could negatively affect fish and mammals. Some participants simply wanted more information and research on the potential impacts; others do not support this approach due to their concern.

*Concern about possibility of introducing contamination at receiving areas:* A few participants expressed concern about the possibility of offshore sand mining introducing contamination into receiving areas.

*Concern about the disruption of the offshore sediment budget:* A few participants expressed concern about offshore sand mining disrupting the sediment budget and interfering with natural replenishment.

*Concern about unanticipated impacts and consequences:* One participant cautioned that offshore sand mining could have unanticipated consequences that would far outweigh the benefits, and that these potential impacts should be seriously considered and investigated before this approach is pursued.

*Concern about the sustainability of this approach:* One participant expressed concern about the sustainability of offshore sand mining, suggesting it will be necessary to regularly re-borrow sand from offshore to maintain the nourishment area, particularly as sea level rises and storm intensity increases.

*Concern about the cost:* A few participants expressed concern about the cost of this process. One person felt that pursuing offshore sand borrowing would cause a lot of local budget stress for the benefit of only a few people. An individual from Barnstable indicated that soft solutions such as beach nourishment are very costly and do not appear to be holding up well on Cape Cod Bay due to the strong winds and 11 foot tides.

*A viable option needing appropriate regulatory framework:* A few participants said they think using offshore sand is a viable and realistic option, and that they think a regulatory framework allowing and facilitating nourishing beaches with offshore sand should be put in place. Participants indicated regulation should allow for the process to move forward in a timely manner. One participant would like to see the regulations include reasonable compensation to the Commonwealth, since offshore sand is a public resource.

*Other places are doing it:* A couple of participants said the method is used in other states and/or throughout the world, and that they would like to see Massachusetts use it as well.

*Appropriate if no other options exist:* Some participants indicated they think offshore mining is appropriate only if no other viable sand borrowing options exist.

*Can be appropriate, but sound assessments and surveys must be done first:* A few participants said they think nourishment with offshore sand could be appropriate, but that it should only be done following thorough assessments and surveys.

*Beneficial to use sand within the coastal system rather than trucking in terrestrial sand:* A couple participants expressed support for this approach as it will reduce the need to truck in sand from upland sites, which they suggested is costly and has an impact on communities.

*Specific places to dredge from:* One participant from the Cape said that a shoal off of the east end of the channel and a near shore shoal near Scusset beach could be used as sand borrow

pits, saying these deposits were not there 50 years ago and have the right grain distribution for beach sand.

vii. ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

In their verbal and written comments, participants mentioned the following challenges and concerns:

*Dealing with the question of retreat:* A number of participants at different workshops noted that, for many communities and in particularly vulnerable sites, retreat may be the only viable long term way to deal with sea level rise. These participants generally wondered what role the Commission and the state will play in helping communities begin a conversation about retreat and manage retreat going forward. Some participants encouraged the state to create regulations to facilitate retreat, or at least prevent further development on the coastline. As indicated above, others thought a first step would be in helping communities understand and evaluate the costs of continued development and rebuilding coastal infrastructure versus retreat, as well as providing guidance and resources to help communities begin to transition their development away from the coastline.

*Environmental justice:* One participant noted that environmental justice is a concern on the Cape. They said there are a number of people with limited income, and given beach erosion control projects require a lot of money, many people cannot afford the erosion management that needs to be done.

*Implementing the Commission's plan:* One participant explicitly asked the Commission to have an implementation plan, indicating that the 2007 plan has largely not been implemented.

*Need to protect offshore sandbars:* A few participants mentioned that management strategies ought to consider both what is on the beach and offshore habitat. Offshore sandbars are important habitat for flounder and other fish species.

*Balancing private property rights and public interests:* A number of participants alluded to the challenge of balancing private property rights with public interests. These people often indicated that, when looking at individual coastal erosion projects, private rights tend to trump public interests, and that small private projects are often approved without consideration of broader impacts and whether they fit within a larger strategy.

viii. ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In the course of the workshops and through surveys and other written feedback, participants shared the below thoughts on additional opportunities for improving coastal erosion management.

*Education and outreach, particularly for key stakeholders:* Numerous participants at all workshops emphasized the importance of education and outreach as a way to improve coastal erosion management throughout Massachusetts. In particular, they emphasized the need for more education and outreach targeted at zoning boards, conservation commissions, planning staff, harbor masters, harbor commissions, and other similar stakeholders involved in or affected by coastal erosion management decisions. They suggested this could include alerting stakeholders about state agency programs, resources, and technical expertise, as well as

bringing experts to key organizational meetings. Since staff in conservation commissions and boards turn over fairly frequently, workshop participants suggested outreach should be ongoing.

*Align stakeholders working on erosion-related issues:* On a related note, one participant suggested that one of the most helpful things the Commission could do is to clarify who is working on this issue, and to help get these bodies working on erosion-related issues pointing their goals in the same direction and supporting communities in implementing effective coastal erosion management.

*Public engagement:* Many participants said that, in addition to focusing more on education and outreach for key stakeholders, the state should invest more in public engagement. Some people thought this would simply be helpful whereas others said it is necessary. In addition to calling for more public engagement in general, people suggested there is a specific need to engage politicians, young people, and people living away from the coast. One participant suggested that many towns have health and safety fairs and these fairs might provide a good opportunity to do public engagement around erosion issues. Another participant felt that figuring out how to give people a tangible sense of current and future coastal erosion risks would be helpful for engaging the public in the erosion conversation.

Related to the above point, a number of participants—particularly in Gloucester—expressed frustration with the lack of public outreach conducted for the Commission’s regional workshops, which some felt is reflective of state public engagement in general. These participants said that the Commission’s meeting should have been much better advertised. They emphasized that, to be effective, public engagement needs to be meaningful and events must be well advertised and well attended, perhaps by using local partners and their networks to improve attendance.

*Experimentation and pilot programs:* As indicated above, many participants see a great opportunity for learning from experimentation and building support for management efforts through investing in pilot programs. It was suggested that pilot programs in particularly high impact areas would be very beneficial. Related to this idea, one participant asked whether there is any venture capital-like money from CZM or elsewhere that could be used to foster innovation and the development of new approaches.

*Innovative ideas competition:* One participant suggested that an agency like CZM could host a competition to help people come up with innovative ideas about how to address coastal erosion. Within the competition, there could be a professional category, a student category, and other categories. The winning idea or ideas could be implemented as a pilot project.

*Derive state benefit from dredging:* A participant suggested that it might be worth exploring ways that the state can benefit from all dredging projects. For example, if a private entity mines sand offshore, perhaps they should pay a fee for using the public resource, and this money could be paid to the Commonwealth for the public benefit. According to participants, some states are apparently already doing this.

*Make use of existing resources:* Participants mentioned the following existing resources that could be helpful for advancing coastal erosion management in Massachusetts.

- The Massachusetts Ocean Resource Information Systems (MORIS) website is a resource for communities: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/mapping-and-data-management/moris/>
- Cape Cod Community College has an environmental technology program that might be interested in assisting with coastal erosion management, such as helping develop innovative approaches.

***APPENDIX: COMMISSION MEMBERS, DELEGATES, AND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Maeve Bartlett	Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)	Commission member
Bruce Carlisle	Director, Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)	Commission member
David Cash	Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)	Commission member
Jack Clarke	Director of Public Policy & Government Relations, Mass Audubon	Commission member
Anne Herbst	Conservation Administrator, Town of Hull	Commission member
Patricia Hughes	Selectwoman, Town of Brewster	Commission member
Jack Murray	Commissioner, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)	Commission member
Rick Murray	Selectman, Town of Scituate and Professor, Boston University	Commission member
Doug Packer	Conservation Agent, Town of Newbury	Commission member
Marty Suuberg	Undersecretary, EEA	Commission member
Rob Thieler	Geologist, U.S. Geological Survey	Commission member
Jim Baecker	Regional Planner, DCR	Delegate or staff
Bob Boeri	Project Review Coordinator, CZM	Delegate or staff
Jason Burtner	Boston Harbor Regional Coordinator, CZM	Delegate or staff
Gary Davis	General Counsel, EEA	Delegate or staff
Valerie Gingrich	Boston Harbor Regional Coordinator, CZM	Delegate or staff
Kathryn Glenn	North Shore Regional Coordinator, CZM	Delegate or staff
Rebecca Haney	Geologist, CZM	Delegate or staff
Liz Hanson	Policy Advisor for Climate Preparedness, EEA	Delegate or staff
Julia Knisel	Coastal Shoreline and Floodplain Manager, CZM	Delegate or staff
Liz Kouloheras	Wetlands Section Chief, Southeast, DEP	Delegate or staff
Lealdon Langley	Director, Wetlands and Waterways Program, DEP	Delegate or staff
Margot Mansfield	Coastal Management Fellow, CZM	Delegate or staff
Steve McKenna	Cape and Islands Regional Coordinator, CZM	Delegate or staff
Kevin Mooney	Senior Waterways Engineer, DCR	Delegate or staff
Joe Orfant	Bureau of Planning & Resource Protection Chief, DCR	Delegate or staff
Mike Stroman	Wetlands Program Chief, DEP	Delegate or staff
Brad Washburn	Assistant Director, CZM	Delegate or staff

Appendix B –  
References Identified and Consulted By  
Coastal Erosion Commission  
for Background and Context





References identified and consulted by  
Coastal Erosion Commission for background and context

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Appendix C –  
Progress on Recommendations in  
Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission Report (2007)



## Progress on Massachusetts Coastal Hazards Commission Report (2007)

Recommendation		Activity
1	Assist FEMA financially and technically to update and maintain FIRMs for the coastal zone of Massachusetts. <i>(Priority)</i>	DCR regularly provides technical review of FIRM updates. EEA convened a meeting with FEMA to explore options for incorporating best available science and modeling. EEA is currently seeking consultant services to update and map coastal A Zones.
2	Compile Coastal Hazards Characterization Atlases for the North Shore, South Coast, Cape Cod and Islands, and Boston Harbor regions.	Numerous variables have been mapped and made available via MORIS, CZM's online mapping tool. CZM and DCR mapped public and private shoreline stabilization structures. CZM and USGS updated the Shoreline Change Project with maps and statistical analysis of historic shoreline locations from mid-1800s to 2008/2009. WHOI Sea Grant mapped littoral cells and longshore sediment transport directions for Cape Cod. NOAA and others provided sea level rise layers.
3	Develop an RVAM for each coastal community using a standardized GIS methodology.	An RVAM is completed as part of each coastal community's multi-hazard mitigation plan.
4	Map and model climate change and sea-level rise data related to coastal hazards in Massachusetts.	USGS has created a Coastal Change Hazards Portal that provides data on the vulnerability of the coast to sea level rise. Other data and viewers have also been developed.
5	Develop a process to capture coastal conditions immediately after major storm events.	CZM developed StormReporter, an online and mobile tool for rapid delivery of coastal storm damage information to decision makers and emergency management personnel. NWS also has a pilot project in Scituate that involves reference markers and the collection of high water data.
6	Model potential storm damage based on historical event data to educate decision makers and the public to the magnitude of risk in the coastal zone.	NWS has included historic high water marks in modeling for a pilot project in Scituate. The potential extent of coastal inundation in Scituate is provided on an online map.
7	Create and maintain an online portal to resources, websites, and data-sharing systems that distribute coastal hazards information including data and tools.	In addition to providing coastal hazards data via MORIS, CZM created the StormSmart Coasts program to provide coastal hazards information, strategies, and tools. NOAA expanded the StormSmart Network nationally. Coastal hazards data and tools are also provided by numerous partners such as NERACOOS and the Georgetown Climate Center.
8	Evaluate the distribution of coastal hazards and emergency management information to coastal communities before and during major storm events.	MEMA determined the need for hurricane evacuation zones and now provides evacuation zones to the public via PDF and an online map.
9	Establish a storm-resilient communities program to provide case studies for effective coastal smart growth planning and implementation. <i>(Priority)</i>	CZM developed the StormSmart Coasts program to provide information, tools, and strategies to address erosion, flooding, and sea level rise. StormSmart Coasts also provides targeted, hands-on assistance to coastal communities, which results in case studies.
10	Finalize guidance document for state and local agencies on the implementation of Executive Orders 149 and 181 relative to publicly funded infrastructure projects, and develop guidance for the remaining sections of Executive Order 149.	
11	Provide additional outreach to coastal homeowners with insurance policies to ensure that they have appropriate wind and flood coverage, and to uninsured coastal homeowners to explain the importance of homeowners and flood insurance.	As part of a StormSmart Coasts pilot project, the communities of Duxbury, Kingston and Plymouth mailed a brochure to property owners in flood-hazard areas.
12	Provide incentives, such as reduced insurance premiums, for retrofitting homes in coastal areas to lessen the potential risk due to storms.	

Recommendation		Activity
13	Raise the maximum coverage of the Guaranty Fund above its \$300,000 limit to lessen the impact of coastal disasters.	The Legislature explored options for raising the limit, but no action has been taken.
14	Conserve coastal land and minimize loss through acquisition of storm-prone properties from willing sellers in fee or through conservation restrictions and easements.	The Legislature supports establishing a coastal buyback program to acquire, by voluntary purchase, properties repeatedly damaged by severe weather that intersect ecological services with high potential for buffering inland areas against wind and storm surge.
15	Encourage coastal communities to adopt the CPA and use the Community Preservation Fund to acquire storm-prone properties.	Additional coastal communities have adopted CPA.
16	Develop, update, and implement hazard mitigation plans for coastal communities. <i>(Priority)</i>	Multi-hazard mitigation planning is ongoing with individual communities and Regional Planning Agencies. Seventeen of the 78 coastal communities have current, approved plans. In addition, the state plan has been updated.
17	Update the State Building Code requirements for coastal construction, and encourage collaboration between building inspectors and Conservation Commissions.	The current MA Building Code includes design and construction requirements for buildings and structures located on dunes and in V Zones. Additional requirements are currently being considered.
18	Develop informal local coordination processes or modify bylaws to provide for the coordination of permitting and approval by local departments.	As part of a StormSmart Coasts pilot project, Oak Bluffs adopted a floodplain zoning bylaw and regulations that facilitate local coordination. Hull, Chatham, and other communities have also expressed interest in enhancing coordination.
19	Evaluate the feasibility of a guidance document or revisions to the Wetland Protection Act regulations to develop best management practices or performance standards for LSCSF.	DEP has convened an Advisory Group to provide recommendations for draft regulations for LSCSF.
20	Create a biannual coastal conference to provide coastal managers and members of the public with a forum for the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences to prevent and address coastal hazards.	Numerous coastal conferences have been held including the Cape Coastal Conference, Northeast Shore and Beach Preservation Association Conference, and the Great Marsh Sea Level Rise Symposium.
21	Identify existing culverts and tide gates associated with transportation crossings of coastal wetlands that are priorities for replacement due to flood hazards or environmental resource concerns, and address flooding, wetlands hydrology, and maintenance in the early stages of the design and implementation of new or replacement transportation projects that cross coastal wetlands and waterways.	The MassBays National Estuary Program is beginning to evaluate tide gates in the MassBays region.
22	Implement a program of regional sand management through policies, regulations, and activities that promote nourishment as the preferred alternative for coastal hazard protection. <i>(Priority)</i>	Sediment budget studies have been conducted and there are ongoing beach nourishment projects.
23	Develop a process using existing or newly enacted policies and/or regulations, which (1) improves coordination between the USACE, state agencies, and municipalities, (2) identifies cost-share funds, and (3) achieves permit requirements in a timely manner, so as to ensure that all dredged material suitable for beach nourishment will be placed on adjacent or nearby eroding public beaches.	The State's Dredge Team, which CZM leads, improves coordination and identifies possible beneficial reuse locations.
24	Conduct a regional sand management study that identifies (1) critically eroding public beaches where access is open to the public, (2) areas most vulnerable to coastal hazards, and (3) potential regional nourishment methodology and costs.	CZM has identified eroding public beaches, beaches with little natural storm damage protection, and storm damage hot spots based on Storm Team reports.
25	Identify and map potential offshore and inland sources of suitable nourishment sediment.	USGS and CZM have identified possible sand resource areas offshore for further investigation.

Recommendation		Activity
26	Update and finalize existing draft document entitled <i>Assessing Potential Environmental Impacts of Offshore Sand and Gravel Mining for the Purposes of Beach Nourishment</i> to include contemporary state of knowledge regarding the potential short and long-term physical and biological impacts associated with offshore sediment removal.	CZM is currently updating this information.
27	Establish a Technical Advisory Committee, consisting of a broad range of qualified professionals, to evaluate and develop construction and monitoring guidance, and recommend appropriate approval conditions for those protection approaches determined to be new and innovative.	
28	Build upon an ongoing study by WHOI Sea Grant and the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension to quantify the inherent values of Cape Cod coastal beaches for storm damage protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat to develop similar values for all Massachusetts beaches.	Researchers at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution have done work on economics of shoreline change, seawalls, and coastal property values.
29	Develop a standardized benefit-cost analysis model using an approach adapted from that used by the USACE to justify projects that fully compares the capital, societal, and natural resource benefits and costs of proposed shoreline protection projects and appropriate alternatives.	






Appendix D –  
Progress on Recommended Strategies  
In Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report (2011)



Progress on Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report (2011)  
Recommended Strategies from Coastal Zone and Ocean  
and Natural Resources and Habitat - Coastal Ecosystems

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Residential and Commercial Development, Ports, and Infrastructure	
Recommendation	Progress
Continue to discourage and avoid siting in current and future vulnerable areas, such as floodplains, velocity zones, and areas with high erosion rates. Additionally, by planning development to account for the future locations of important resource areas such as salt marshes, dunes, and areas subject to storm flowage, the ability of natural systems to respond to changing conditions can be protected;	Many resources already exist to reduce risks to development in the coastal zone. Massachusetts has statutory and regulatory programs that govern the siting and design of new construction and redevelopment, including the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), The Public Waterfront Act (MGL chapter 91) and the Wetlands Protection Act. Certain Massachusetts General Laws (e.g., Zoning Enabling Act, Wetlands Protection Act, Subdivision Control Law, and the Septic System Regulation-Title V) grant powers to municipalities to guide siting and design for growth. Local officials rely on Flood Insurance Rate Maps, the state Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit, and funding via the Community Preservation Act to help guide siting and development. The Massachusetts Basic Building Code 780 CMR 120.G, Appendix G, Code for Flood Resistant Construction in Coastal Dunes and Flood Hazard Zones, was revised and became effective January 8, 2008.
Consider building on Executive Orders 149 and 181 (intended to reduce vulnerability and damage costs in floodplains and on barrier beaches); explore issuing an Executive Order that specifically directs state development and significant redevelopment, as well as state-funded projects, out of vulnerable coastal areas;	The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) StormSmart Coasts program provides information, strategies, and tools to help communities and people working and living on the coast to address the challenges of erosion, flooding, storms, sea level rise, and other climate change impacts. The program also promotes effective management of coastal landforms, such as beaches and dunes. Major StormSmart Coasts initiatives include: StormSmart Communities (Tools for Local Officials) - Resources for local officials to improve erosion and floodplain management along the coast, including information on the No Adverse Impact approach to coastal land management, local pilot projects, and technical assistance on topics from flood mapping to infrastructure siting. StormSmart Properties (Tools for Homeowners) - Strategies for property owners to reduce coastal erosion and storm damage while minimizing impacts to the shoreline and neighboring properties. Assessing Vulnerability of Coastal Properties - Resources to identify areas of the Massachusetts coast most vulnerable to erosion and flooding, including shoreline change data, Flood Insurance Rate Maps, and maps depicting coastal inundation with sea level rise and hurricanes.
Strengthen the alternatives analysis for development siting and design standards to identify, characterize, and avoid project risk and adverse effects associated with climate change impacts;	CZM issued its guidance document <i>Sea Level Rise: Understanding and Applying Trends and Future Scenarios for Analysis and Planning</i> to help coastal communities and others plan for and address potential sea level rise effects on residential and commercial development, infrastructure and critical facilities, and natural resources and ecosystems. The document includes background information on local and global sea level rise trends, summarizes the best available sea level rise projections, and provides general guidance in the selection and application of sea level rise scenarios for coastal vulnerability assessments, planning, and decision making for areas that may be at present or future risk from the effects of sea level rise. The document is intended to be updated as new science and information becomes available.

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Residential and Commercial Development, Ports, and Infrastructure	
Recommendation	Progress
Develop Chapter 91 policy guidance to fully implement 310 CMR 9.37(2)(b)(2), which states "[In the case of a project within a flood zone]...new buildings for non-water-dependent use intended for human occupancy shall be designed and constructed to...incorporate projected sea level rise during the design life of buildings," in a manner consistent with predicted sea level rise stated in this report. Consider a change to the regulation to include all new development and any redevelopment considered significantly vulnerable;	MassDEP is working towards incorporating new standards into the state's Coastal Waterfront Act (Chapter 91) regulations to address coastal flooding and sea level rise (SLR). Efforts to assess and mitigate the impacts from sea level rise (SLR) on waterfront structures are underway, beginning with a review of our Chapter 91 regulations. MassDEP is looking closely at CZM's new document titled <a href="#">Sea Level Rise: Understanding and Applying Trends and Future Scenarios for Analysis and Planning</a>  file size 3MB to determine what actions are appropriate to accommodate predicted SLR.
Examine Wetlands Protection Act rules and/or policies for potential revisions that address predicted changes in spatial extent of coastal wetlands;	MassDEP has also begun review of its Wetlands Protection Act Regulations in order to develop performance standards for "Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage," a.k.a. the coastal floodplain. Current literature and the state of the science will be reviewed, stakeholder interests will be identified, and recommendations of a previous advisory group on this topic will be considered for adoption or revision. A more detailed list of actions and a schedule will be developed in the coming months.
Promote the nationally recognized "No Adverse Impact" approach - advanced by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (2007) and underlying the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management's StormSmart Coasts program - that calls for the design and construction of projects to have no adverse or cumulative impacts on surrounding properties;	As part of the StormSmart Communities program, CZM has produced the following coastal floodplain management publications: StormSmart Coasts Fact Sheet 1: <i>Introduction to No Adverse Impact (NAI) Land Management in the Coastal Zone</i> describing the No Adverse Impact (NAI) approach to coastal land management, which is based on a set of "do no harm" principles that communities can use when planning, designing, and evaluating public and private projects. StormSmart Coasts Fact Sheet 2: <i>No Adverse Impact and the Legal Framework of Coastal Management</i> - which discusses how the NAI approach can help communities protect people and property while reducing legal challenges to floodplain management practices. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-communities/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-communities/</a>
Consider expanding recent revisions to the State Building Code, with provisions that strengthen requirements for storm-resistant building designs, materials, and features;	EEA is working with the Board of Building Regulations and Standards evaluating potential new requirements for flood zones and resource areas.
Update coastal erosion and flood-hazard zones delineations, especially in areas that experience high velocity floodwaters and breaking waves, so that they incorporate projected rather than historic rates of sea level rise; and	Map layers are available on NOAA's Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flooding Impacts Viewer as well as the Massachusetts Ocean Resource Information System (MORIS), which allows users to interactively view the data with other information such as aerial photographs, assessor maps, public facilities and infrastructure locations, and natural resource areas. The data in MORIS show current mean higher high water plus one foot increments of sea level rise up to six feet. Confidence (80%) of the mapped inundation area is also available and is based on the accuracy of the elevation data and the mean higher high water tidal surface. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/vulnerability/slr.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/vulnerability/slr.html</a>

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Residential and Commercial Development, Ports, and Infrastructure	
Recommendation	Progress
Consider whether a rise in water table levels warrants changes to the Massachusetts Septic System regulations (known as Title V) to provide for additional protective separation distances for septic systems.	Through a Massachusetts Environmental Trust grant the Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod is working with USGS is working on a study to analyze the effects of sea level rise on groundwater flow in the mid-Cape region, the most densely populated area of the Cape. The study builds on previous USGS models of the Cape aquifer and will produce GIS maps of regional changes in water table elevations, cross-sections showing changes in the saltwater/freshwater interface, and tables of stream-flow changes for different sea level rise scenarios.
Consider additional revisions to the State Building Code to expand the requirement for elevating new and substantially improved buildings above the base flood elevation in hazard areas beyond the "V" zone (velocity flood zone with wave heights >3 feet) in order to accommodate sea level rise. Examine expansion of this standard to Federal Emergency Management Agency designated "A" zones (wave heights <3 feet) in coastal areas.	EEA is working with the Board of Building Regulations and Standards evaluating potential new requirements for flood zones and resource areas.
Consider incentives such as insurance cost reduction and hazard mitigation grants for communities that embrace climate change adaptation measures.	The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission facilitated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding in 2013. This funding was designated to reduce risks to the population and structures to natural hazards. Some of the eligible project types include: storm-water management, drainage and culvert improvements, property acquisition, slope stabilization, infrastructure protection, seismic and wind retrofits, structure elevations, public outreach, Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan development, etc. All proposed projects require a non-federal share 25% (or more) of the total estimated project cost. <a href="http://www.cmrpc.org/hazard-mitigation-funding-available">http://www.cmrpc.org/hazard-mitigation-funding-available</a>
Seek to reduce the number of vulnerable coastal properties through land acquisition from willing sellers in fee, or by conservation restrictions. Evaluate the use of Transfer of Development Rights, a smart growth technique that is currently in use, to direct coastal redevelopment inland.	
Consider a statewide rolling easements policy for existing development along the shoreline. These rolling easements are typically coupled with policies that prevent armoring of the coast. Similarly, require that reconstruction of buildings significantly damaged by storm events comply with new standards and delineations of erosion and flood-hazard zones.	

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Residential and Commercial Development, Ports, and Infrastructure	
Recommendation	Progress
Evaluate and update hazard mitigation, evacuation, and emergency response plans to address the changing conditions associated with new development and climate change, especially related to sea level rise and increased storm intensity and frequency. Make updates to these plans as refinements are made to climate change projections and development patterns change within a community, or at a minimum of every five years.	<p>In 2013, an update of the Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation Plan was released, providing both short-term and long-term strategies for implementing hazard mitigation measures by state agencies as well as local municipalities throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This Plan accomplishes this by identifying actions that will lower the risks and lower the costs of natural hazards. The State Hazard Mitigation Interagency Committee, working with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is responsible for the Hazard Mitigation Plan and will review and revise this plan at least every three years.</p> <p>The evidence of such updates to plans is in Boston. On February 5, 2013, Mayor Thomas M. Menino announced new planning and policy initiatives to better prepare Boston for Hurricane Sandy-like storms and other effects of the changing climate. In October 2013, the Mayor announced significant progress on these initiatives, which all contribute to the 2014 update of the City's Climate Action Plan. Also, the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management offers preparedness resources for a variety of hazards including power outages, floods, hurricanes and extreme heat.</p> <p><a href="http://www.cityofboston.gov/climate/adaptation/">http://www.cityofboston.gov/climate/adaptation/</a></p>

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Coastal Engineering for Shoreline Stabilization and Flood Protection	
Recommendation	Progress
Strengthen the delineation of erosion and flood-hazard areas by incorporating current rates and trends of shoreline change as well as additional analyses of the maximum vertical extent of wave run-up on beaches or structures. With additional resources, state agencies could acquire and update this information every five to ten years for effective management of risk, especially in a changing climate.	<p>Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Shoreline Change Project illustrates how the shoreline of Massachusetts has shifted between the mid-1800s and 2009. Using data from historical and modern sources, up to eight shorelines depicting the local high water line (i.e., the landward limit of wave runup at the time of local high tide) have been generated with transects at 50-meter (approximately 164-feet) intervals along the ocean-facing shore. For each of these more than 26,000 transects, data are provided on net distances of shoreline movement, shoreline change rates, and uncertainty values. CZM has incorporated these shoreline change data into MORIS, the Massachusetts Ocean Resource Information System, and has developed a customized Shoreline Change Browser within the MORIS web-based coastal management tool. The Shoreline Change Project presents both long-term (approximately 150-year) and short-term (approximately 30-year) shoreline change rates at 50-meter intervals along ocean-facing sections of the Massachusetts coast. In a broad sense, this information provides useful insight into the historical migration of Massachusetts shorelines and erosional hot spots.  <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/shoreline-change/</a></p> <p>CZM recently launched a Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience Pilot Grants Program through its StormSmart Coasts program. This grant program provides financial and technical resources to advance the understanding and implementation of natural approaches to mitigating coastal erosion and flooding problems. Grants will support the planning, feasibility assessment, design, permitting, construction, and monitoring/evaluation of green infrastructure projects that implement natural or living shoreline approaches.</p>
Continue to advance use of soft engineering approaches that supply sediment to resource areas such as beaches and dunes in order to manage the risk to existing coastal development. Periodic nourishment with sand is essential to maintaining dry recreational beaches along many developed coasts.	<p>Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) is administering the Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience Pilot Grants Program through its StormSmart Coasts program. This grant program provides financial and technical resources to advance the understanding and implementation of natural approaches to mitigating coastal erosion and flooding problems. Grants will support the planning, feasibility assessment, design, permitting, construction, and monitoring/evaluation of green infrastructure projects that implement natural or living shoreline approaches.</p> <p>Recognizing that areas of many coastal communities are experiencing severe erosion, flooding and storm damage, and that beach nourishment and dune restoration can offer an important alternative for shoreline protection that works with the natural system, EEA and CZM recently issued a draft update to the state's Ocean Management Plan that identifies preliminary offshore sand resource areas for further investigation with the goal of advancing up to three pilot projects in next five years to evaluate the future use of offshore sand for shoreline protection.</p> <p>As of June 2013, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is working to revitalize areas of Winthrop Beach to make it safe and user-friendly to its nearby residents. The project is aimed at shore protection, intended to reduce flooding from coastal storms. As a result of the beach nourishment to date, the damage of the winter storms was mitigated.  <a href="http://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/Pages/WinthropMA_BBBoard/0001B3E9-80000001/I03FF8B54">http://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/Pages/WinthropMA_BBBoard/0001B3E9-80000001/I03FF8B54</a></p> <p>In 2011 a nourishment project designed and permitted by Woods Hole Group for the Town of Falmouth Menauhant Beach - which was among the winners of the American Shore &amp; Beach Preservation Association's (ASBPA) annual "Best Restored Beaches" contest.  <a href="http://woodsholegroup.wordpress.com/tag/beach-nourishment/">http://woodsholegroup.wordpress.com/tag/beach-nourishment/</a></p>

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Coastal Engineering for Shoreline Stabilization and Flood Protection	
Recommendation	Progress
Adhering to provisions of the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan, examine issuing a state policy regarding the mining of sediment from the seafloor to guide the use of sand resources from Massachusetts' tidelands, especially for nourishment of private beaches.	Recognizing that areas of many coastal communities are experiencing severe erosion, flooding and storm damage, and that beach nourishment and dune restoration can offer an important alternative for shoreline protection that works with the natural system, EEA and CZM recently issued a draft update to the state's Ocean Management Plan that identifies preliminary offshore sand resource areas for further investigation with the goal of advancing up to three pilot projects in next five years to evaluate the future use of offshore sand for shoreline protection.
Consider prioritizing placement of sediment on public beaches over offshore disposal. Management of sediment resources is a necessary component of the overall resiliency approach that will allow competing interests to adapt and coexist in the dynamic coastal zone.	State policies and regulatory programs require that beach nourishment project with sand from submerged public tidelands require a public easement as a condition of Chapter 91 licensing and other authorities.
Conduct an alternatives analysis when replacing failing public structures that pose an imminent danger, and ensure review of the analysis by local and state environmental agencies. Assessment of the analysis should consider cumulative impacts and the No Adverse Impact approach.	<p>CZM and DCR have completed comprehensive inventories of both privately and publically owned seawalls, revetments, groins, jetties, and other coastal structures have been developed and are described below.</p> <p>A new Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Fund grants financial resources to qualified projects that share our mission to enhance, preserve, and protect the natural resources and scenic, historic and aesthetic qualities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In some cases, public safety and key economic centers are at risk due to deteriorating infrastructure. In other instances, the structures no longer serve their purpose and removal provides the opportunity to restore ecological systems.</p>
Plans to replace or construct new coastal engineered structures could better incorporate local conditions and higher sea levels. Analyses of benefits and costs may support large-scale engineered, structural protection of areas that are highly-developed urban centers or have significant water-dependent and marine industry that cannot be relocated.	<p>In 2014, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy &amp; Environmental Affairs began looking at changes to the Mass Env Policy Act (MEPA) requirements which would require consideration of climate change impacts to new projects which are subject to MEPA. This work will continue into 2015.</p> <p>CZM issued its guidance document <i>Sea Level Rise: Understanding and Applying Trends and Future Scenarios for Analysis and Planning</i> to help coastal communities and others plan for and address potential sea level rise effects on residential and commercial development, infrastructure and critical facilities, and natural resources and ecosystems. The document includes background information on local and global sea level rise trends, summarizes the best available sea level rise projections, and provides general guidance in the selection and application of sea level rise scenarios for coastal vulnerability assessments, planning, and decision making for areas that may be at present or future risk from the effects of sea level rise. The document is intended to be updated as new science and information becomes available.</p> <p>MassDEP is working towards incorporating new standards into the state's Coastal Waterfront Act (Chapter 91) regulations to address coastal flooding and sea level rise (SLR). Efforts to assess and mitigate the impacts from sea level rise (SLR) on waterfront structures are underway, beginning with a review of our Chapter 91 regulations. MassDEP is looking closely at CZM's new document titled <a href="#">Sea Level Rise: Understanding and Applying Trends and Future Scenarios for Analysis and Planning</a> to determine what actions are appropriate to accommodate predicted SLR.</p>



**Coastal Zone and Ocean: Coastal, Estuarine, and Marine Habitats, Resources, and Ecosystem Services**

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Bolster land conservation efforts and account for changing landscape and natural communities, protect valuable ecological resources, and provide zones for migration: Protect land from future development through direct acquisition or conservation restrictions.</p>	<p>The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) was established by Congress in 2002 "for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses," giving priority to lands that can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value. Since the CELCP program began functioning under its current competitive format in 2007, Massachusetts's Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has nominated ten projects to NOAA for consideration in its national ranking process. Two of these projects ranked high enough to be awarded CELCP funding. The Center Hill Beach Conservation Project, in Plymouth, was awarded \$2,263,500 in 2007, and the Great Neck Conservation Partnership Project in Wareham was awarded \$1,986,500 in 2009. For the 2013 Federal Budget NOAA did not run the CELCP because of funding issues.</p> <p><a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/coastal-habitat/celcp/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/coastal-habitat/celcp/</a></p>
<p>Include factors that examine the predicted future changes to the project area in terms of landscape, community, and habitat changes in the evaluation and prioritization criteria for potential acquisition or restriction. Also, include tracts/habitat complexes at varying scales and geographic distribution in preservation targets. The ability of prospective areas to accommodate shifting natural communities and features like floodplains and seasonal wetlands will enhance natural resiliency.</p>	<p>In November 2013, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) adopted new guidelines to address climate change impacts on a development project. The proposed addition to Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code, called "Climate Change Preparedness and Resiliency Guidelines," require a checklist to be completed and approved before the BRA authorizes Final Design Approval and/or Article 80 documents. The new guidelines help analyze, identify, and address climatic and environmental changes and their effects on a project's environmental impacts, including the survivability, integrity, and safety of the project and its inhabitants over the lifetime of a project.</p> <p><a href="http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/dbb8c39c-9385-458a-a15d-67c45406fe06">http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/dbb8c39c-9385-458a-a15d-67c45406fe06</a> There are no state-wide guidelines.</p> <p>In 2014, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy &amp; Environmental Affairs began looking at changes to the Mass Env Policy Act (MEPA) requirements which would require consideration of climate change impacts to new projects which are subject to MEPA. This work will continue into 2015.</p> <p>MassDEP is working towards incorporating new standards into the state's Coastal Waterfront Act (Chapter 91) regulations to address coastal flooding and sea level rise (SLR). Efforts to assess and mitigate the impacts from sea level rise (SLR) on waterfront structures are underway, beginning with a review of our Chapter 91 regulations. MassDEP is looking closely at CZM's new document titled <a href="#">Sea Level Rise: Understanding and Applying Trends and Future Scenarios for Analysis and Planning</a> to determine what actions are appropriate to accommodate predicted SLR.</p>
<p>Identify the location of future habitats (and resource areas) through the implementation of predictive mapping and modeling, as a necessary step in the protection of these evolving ecosystems.</p>	<p>The Massachusetts Natural Heritage &amp; Endangered Species Program and The Nature Conservancy's Massachusetts Program developed "BioMap2" in 2010 as a conservation plan to protect the state's biodiversity. BioMap2 is designed to guide strategic biodiversity conservation over the next decade by focusing land protection and stewardship on the areas that are most critical for ensuring the long-term persistence of rare and other native species and their habitats, exemplary natural communities, and a diversity of ecosystems. To capture all the elements of biodiversity, BioMap2 approaches the conservation of Massachusetts' biological resources at multiple scales. BioMap2 combines hundreds of individual pieces of geospatial data about the state's species, ecosystems, and landscapes. These elements of biodiversity fall into one of two complementary categories, Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape. Critical Natural Landscape identifies larger landscape areas that are better able to support ecological processes, disturbances, and wide-ranging species. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/land-protection-and-management/biomap2/biomap2-overview-and-summary.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/land-protection-and-management/biomap2/biomap2-overview-and-summary.html</a></p>

**Coastal Zone and Ocean: Coastal, Estuarine, and Marine Habitats, Resources, and Ecosystem Services**

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Improve resiliency of natural habitats, communities, and populations to climate change through habitat restoration, green infrastructure, and invasive species management efforts; design projects for future conditions. Healthier natural systems are better able to absorb and rebound from the impacts from weather extremes and climate variability: Ensure that projects account for future changes in the ecosystem, investments are justified given those predicted changes, and the project is designed and engineered for sea level rise and changes in hydrology.</p>	<p>EEA has a number of initiatives and regulatory programs that protect natural systems, including land conservation, habitat restoration, stormwater/LID/Smart Growth, and new Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resiliency grants for example. Wetlands and water quality regulatory programs serve as key elements in habitat protection.</p>
<p>Promote resiliency through use of habitat enhancements such as constructed wetlands, oyster or mussel reefs (or other types of shellfish aquaculture), and for storm-damage prevention and floodwater control in lieu hard engineering solutions, where feasible.</p>	<p>The first shellfish habitat restoration project in Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays was an oyster reef restoration project begun in 2008 by the Massachusetts Audubon Society (Mass Audubon) in partnership with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Nature Conservancy, and the Town of Wellfleet. In 2011, this three year experimental oyster restoration in Wellfleet was completed, resulting in a population between 60,000 to 250,000 oysters. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/mass-bays-program/grants/oyster-reef-wellfleet-2011.html">www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/mass-bays-program/grants/oyster-reef-wellfleet-2011.html</a></p> <p>Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) is administering the Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience Pilot Grants Program through its StormSmart Coasts program . This grant program provides financial and technical resources to advance the understanding and implementation of natural approaches to mitigating coastal erosion and flooding problems. Grants will support the planning, feasibility assessment, design, permitting, construction, and monitoring/evaluation of green infrastructure projects that implement natural or living shoreline approaches.</p>
<p>Increase natural resiliency and reduce anthropogenic stressors through directed improvements in estuarine and marine water quality that minimize unavoidable impacts to habitat. This could be achieved via the following methods: Consider retreating and migrating wetlands, expanding floodplains, rising sea level and water tables, and increased inundation and flooding through program specific criteria, guidance, policies, or performance standards.</p>	<p>With two federal grant wards, CZM recently launched a project to examine the vulnerability of salt marshes to sea level rise. Initial efforts supported model selection and initial data compilation, with a focus on the North Shore's Great Marsh. The next phase expands the project to model salt marsh response and impacts under different climate and sea level rise scenarios and generate site-specific information and maps to identify and communicate vulnerability, risk, and impacts to Massachusetts coastal wetlands.</p>
<p>Strengthen consideration of cumulative impacts as influenced by climate change at project planning levels, whether through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review or the State Revolving Fund Loan Program Project Intended Use Plans.</p>	<p>In 2014, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy &amp; Environmental Affairs began looking at changes to the Mass Env Policy Act (MEPA) requirements which would require consideration of climate change impacts to new projects which are subject to MEPA. This work will continue into 2015.</p>

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Coastal, Estuarine, and Marine Habitats, Resources, and Ecosystem Services	
Recommendation	Progress
Consider use of the No Adverse Impact approach, which calls for the design and completion of projects so that they will not have adverse or cumulative impacts.	The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) developed the StormSmart Coasts and StormSmart Communities program which provides tools for local officials to improve erosion and floodplain management along the coast. The program offers information on the No Adverse Impact approach to coastal land management, supports local pilot projects that implement StormSmart tools and strategies, and provides technical assistance on topics ranging from flood mapping to safe siting of community infrastructure. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/</a>
Consider development of No Net Increase approaches such as the nitrogen cap policy implemented by the Cape Cod Commission, which requires an offset of each increment of additional nitrogen load with some means of nitrogen removal for other nitrogen loads in the watershed.	The Cape Cod Commission recently released a complete update of its 1978 Section 208 Water Quality Management Plan for Cape Cod. This 2014 draft update is a comprehensive Cape-wide review of water quality issues facing the region, focusing on nutrient management and water quality planning for Cape Cod's coastal embayments.
Maximize incentives, training opportunities, and requirements for Low Impact Development natural design and stormwater best management practices in local planning and regulatory processes to enable routine implementation of these proven smart growth tools, improving water quality and stormwater absorption and reducing flooding impacts.	
Evaluate incorporating flexibility into fisheries management systems to accommodate species shifts. Expand biological surveys into estuaries, which is where climate change effects are anticipated to be especially pronounced. To avoid unnecessary burdens on recreational and commercial fisheries, fisheries managers could consider a move to a management system that incorporates more contemporary estimates of productivity and ecosystem processes, ensuring that targets are realistic and achievable. Ecosystem-based approaches that address cumulative impacts, establish cross-jurisdictional management mechanisms, and incorporate triggers and methods for adjustments based on evolving knowledge and information will provide significant institutional resilience to climate change.	<p>Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MarineFisheries) has developed a series of strategies and policies to address ecosystem changes and fisheries impacts resulting from climate change and ocean acidification. As part of the MarineFisheries Strategic Plan, the agency will continue to examine impacts to living marine fisheries resources associated with climate change as a strategy to achieve the goal of improving fisheries sustainability. Another goal of the Strategic Plan is to promote and support commercial and recreational fisheries through the introduction of a green fishing initiative to save fuel and reduce costs, pollution, and green house gas emissions. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dmf/programs-and-projects/climate-change.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dmf/programs-and-projects/climate-change.html</a></p> <p>From the MarineFisheries 2010 Strategic Plan, the first goal is to: Improve fisheries sustainability, promote responsible harvest and optimize production of our living marine resources. The related strategy is to examine impacts to living marine fisheries resources associated with climate change by: 1. investigating changes in species distribution and abundance; and 2. working with federal, state and local authorities to adjust overall harvest levels commensurate with changes in abundance. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dfg/dmf/publications/dmf-strategic-plan.pdf">http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dfg/dmf/publications/dmf-strategic-plan.pdf</a></p>

Coastal Zone and Ocean: Coastal, Estuarine, and Marine Habitats, Resources, and Ecosystem Services	
Recommendation	Progress
Improve shellfish management and aquaculture by incorporating predictions of harmful algal blooms, marine pathogens, and rainfall. Obtain higher model resolution in the nearshore to aid in managing highly productive coastal and estuarine shellfish growing areas.	A set of buoys with high-tech sensors for detecting harmful algal bloom (HAB) organisms (commonly called red tide) have recently been stationed along the coast of New England. These buoys, developed and deployed by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), carry novel robotic instruments that can detect and measure red tide causing organisms. These buoys will provide near real-time data creating a more complete picture of red tide events and provide an early warning for coastal managers.
Use acoustic mapping to provide base information necessary for determining bathymetry and seafloor hardness and roughness.	The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has published, contributed to, and/or funded the following seafloor mapping publications: <i>High-Resolution Geophysical Data from the Inner Continental Shelf: Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts</i> - This 2013 CZM/USGS report contains geophysical data collected by the USGS on three cruises conducted in 2009, 2010, and 2011, and additional bathymetry data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 2004. The geophysical data include (1) swath bathymetry using interferometric sonar and multibeam echosounder systems, (2) acoustic backscatter from sidescan sonar, and (3) seismic-reflection profiles from a chirp subbottom profiler. <i>High-Resolution Geophysical Data From the Inner Continental Shelf at Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts</i> - This 2013 CZM/USGS report contains geophysical data collected between 2009 and 2011. The data include (1) swath bathymetry from interferometric sonar, (2) acoustic backscatter from sidescan sonar, and (3) seismic-reflection profiles from a chirp subbottom profiler. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/publications/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/publications/</a>
Develop a better understanding of the spatial and temporal distribution and habitat needs of marine animals and plants.	Since 2010, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has been collecting benthic samples and seafloor imagery to map the distribution, and in some instances the abundance and relationships, of flora and fauna in Massachusetts marine waters. This work is important to marine spatial planning activities ranging from identifying and classifying habitats to siting new ocean uses such as renewable energy. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/water-column-mapping/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/water-column-mapping/</a>
Track other important biotic components, especially endangered sea turtles, seabirds, major avifauna and bat migratory pathways, benthic communities of flora and fauna, certain pelagic fish, and areas of high trophic support (primary and secondary productivity and forage fish).	Since 2010, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has been collecting benthic samples and seafloor imagery to map the distribution, and in some instances the abundance and relationships, of flora and fauna in Massachusetts marine waters. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/water-column-mapping/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/water-column-mapping/</a>
Contribute to and support the development and operation of regional and local "ocean observing system" infrastructure. Support and augment the few existing efforts that routinely collect such data, including the ocean observation system, whose buoys provide a range of information essential for navigation, safety, and oceanographic modeling and forecasting.	Formed in 2008, the Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal and Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS) is a regional nonprofit organization that leads and coordinates the development, implementation, operation, and evaluation of a sustained, regional coastal ocean observing system for the northeast United States and Canadian Maritime provinces, as part of the United States Integrated Ocean Observing System. NERACOOS develops, assesses, and disseminates important data and data products on a multitude of ocean conditions and parameters, including current observations, forecasted conditions, and information on average weather and ocean conditions between 2001 and the present to examine trends in climate patterns. Massachusetts serves on the NERACOOS board and on its Strategic Planning and Implementation Team.

**Coastal Zone and Ocean: Coastal, Estuarine, and Marine Habitats, Resources, and Ecosystem Services**

Recommendation	Progress
<p>Develop models of coastal hydrodynamics and inundation (coupled with biological and chemical models) to support scenario analyses of future conditions and to test hypotheses.</p>	<p>The NOAA Coastal Services Center Coastal Inundation Digital Elevation Model (DEM) is utilized by the Boston Weather Forecast Office (BOX WFO) for Massachusetts and Rhode Island. These data were created as part of NOAA'S Coastal Services Center's efforts to create an online mapping viewer called the Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flooding Impacts Viewer. The purpose of the mapping viewer is to provide coastal managers and scientists with a preliminary look at sea level rise and coastal flooding impacts. The DEM includes the best available LiDAR known to exist at the time of DEM creation that met project specifications for the Boston WFO, which includes the coastal counties of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. <a href="http://catalog.data.gov/dataset/noaa-coastal-services-center-coastal-inundation-digital-elevation-model-boston-weather-forecast">http://catalog.data.gov/dataset/noaa-coastal-services-center-coastal-inundation-digital-elevation-model-boston-weather-forecast</a></p>
<p>Continue and augment other high priority baseline datasets, such as seafloor and water column temperature and salinity measurements, which can be used to track decadal, annual, and seasonal trends in salinity, temperature, and water column stratification. Improved measurements of waves and chlorophyll are also important for providing baseline information for modeling.</p>	<p>In 2011, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) recognized that a better understanding of the water column - the region between the seafloor and the sea surface - would support its ocean planning efforts. Starting in 2011, CZM led a working group to oversee a University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology project sponsored, in part, by SeaPlan to map specific features of the water column, including temperature, salinity, and currents. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/water-column-mapping/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/seafloor-and-habitat-mapping/water-column-mapping/</a></p>

Natural Resources and Habitat: Coastal Ecosystems	
Recommendation	Progress
Land Protection: Identify and protect undeveloped areas that are upgradient from coastal wetlands to allow wetland migration and buffer intact ecosystems; and	<p>Upland buffers have been mapped and the Wetland Protection Act regulates activities in the buffer zone, but does not completely protect them. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage &amp; Endangered Species Program and The Nature Conservancy's Massachusetts Program developed "BioMap2" in 2010 as a conservation plan to protect the state's biodiversity. BioMap2's Wetland Cores includes a statewide assessment of the most intact wetlands in MA and a variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers.</p> <p><a href="http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap_map_files/images/component_pdf/Wetland%20Core.pdf">http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap_map_files/images/component_pdf/Wetland%20Core.pdf</a></p> <p>The MWPA does not provide direct protection to the upland habitat that many wetland dependent species require for completion of their life cycle. Instead it provides indirect protection over some areas of the buffer zone by regulating activities that will alter the physical, biological or chemical characteristics of the wetland through impact to habitat features or overland flow into the wetland.</p> <p><a href="http://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/interest-topic-pdfs/final_project.pdf">http://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/interest-topic-pdfs/final_project.pdf</a></p>
Develop high-resolution elevation models (based on LiDAR data) to identify and prioritize protection of areas that may become wetlands in the future as sea level rises.	<p>There is new LiDAR data, but not specific evidence as to mapping wetlands from this data. The Woods Hole Sea Grant worked with Applied Science Associates to generate three dimensional simulations of sea level rise and flood event inundation in an effort to enhance hazard mitigation planning, emergency response, and public awareness. Specifically, this project visualizes various levels of sea level rise and/or storm surge flooding, in Falmouth on Cape Cod. <a href="http://www.whoi.edu/seagrant/page.do?pid=55816">http://www.whoi.edu/seagrant/page.do?pid=55816</a> In January 2013, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted Post Hurricane Sandy LiDAR for the coasts of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York. <a href="http://www.lidarnews.com/content/view/9459/">http://www.lidarnews.com/content/view/9459/</a> With two federal grant wards, CZM recently launched a project to examine the vulnerability of salt marshes to sea level rise. Initial efforts supported model selection and initial data compilation, with a focus on the North Shore's Great Marsh. The next phase expands the project to model salt marsh response and impacts under different climate and sea level rise scenarios and generate site-specific information and maps to identify and communicate vulnerability, risk, and impacts to Massachusetts coastal wetlands.</p>
Policy, Flexible Regulation, Planning, and Funding: Expand use of ecological solutions to sea level rise. Hurricane Katrina dramatically illustrated the adverse consequences of removing natural ecological wetland buffers to coastal storms and relying entirely on engineered solutions. Investigate the benefits of shifting from engineering-based and infrastructure-focused solutions toward a union of engineering and ecological planning;	<p>Originally called StormSmart Coasts, the StormSmart Communities program was developed by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) to help local officials prepare for and protect their communities from coastal storms and flooding - both now and under higher sea levels. In 2013, the StormSmart Coasts website was broadened to include information for coastal property owners on a wider range of coastal hazards issues. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-communities/about-stormsmart-communities.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-communities/about-stormsmart-communities.html</a></p> <p>In the fall of 2014, the Mass Dept of Environmental Protection will finalize changes to its Wetland Regulations (310 CMR 10.00). These changes include streamlining the permitting process for ecological restoration projects including dam removal, freshwater culvert repair or replacement, culvert replacement to eliminate or reduce tidal restrictions, stream daylighting, restoration of rare species habitat, and improvement of fish passage.</p> <p>CZM recently launched a Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience Pilot Grants Program through its StormSmart Coasts program. This grant program provides financial and technical resources to advance the understanding and implementation of natural approaches to mitigating coastal erosion and flooding problems. Grants will support the planning, feasibility assessment, design, permitting, construction, and monitoring/evaluation of green infrastructure projects that implement natural or living shoreline approaches.</p>



Natural Resources and Habitat: Coastal Ecosystems	
Recommendation	Progress
Policy, Flexible Regulation, Planning, and Funding: Consider developing more flexible conservation regulations that take into account potential sea level rise and changing floodplains; and	<p>According to the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), Massachusetts is focused on providing local government officials with the regulatory and planning tools they need to prepare for sea level rise. MA CZM tailors the information it offers - which ranges from zoning overlay recommendations to guidance on how to retrofit critical infrastructure - to various groups, including elected officials, conservation commissioners, members of boards of health and public works department employees.</p> <p><a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/slr-guidance-2013.pdf">http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/stormsmart/slr-guidance-2013.pdf</a></p>
Policy, Flexible Regulation, Planning, and Funding: Encourage integrated community planning. Coastal habitats in Massachusetts are often areas with competing interests, stakeholders, and multiple jurisdictions. Extend planning of coastal areas beyond the state and federal agencies and involve other stakeholders to ensure representation of varied interests.	<p>The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) mission is to balance the impacts of human activity with the protection of coastal and marine resources. As a networked program, CZM works with other state agencies, federal agencies, local governments, academic institutions, nonprofit groups, and the general public to promote sound management of the Massachusetts coast. MA CZM is focused on providing templates and other easy-to-apply models for use by various municipal entities, including planning offices and elected officials. The StormSmart Communities program was developed by CZM to help local officials prepare for and protect their communities from coastal storms and flooding - both now and under higher sea levels. In 2013, the StormSmart Coasts website was broadened to include information for coastal property owners on a wider range of coastal hazards issues. This program provides ongoing assistance with local implementation of StormSmart strategies.</p> <p><a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-communities/about-stormsmart-communities.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/stormsmart-coasts/stormsmart-communities/about-stormsmart-communities.html</a></p>
Management and Restoration: Identify, assess and mitigate existing impediments to inland migration of coastal wetlands. As sea levels continue to rise, the whole system of coastal wetlands and subtidal habitats will move inland. This cannot occur in areas where the topography does not permit it, or where barriers, such as roads, seawalls, or settlements, prevent it;	<p>With two federal grant awards, DER and CZM recently launched a project to examine the vulnerability of salt marshes to sea level rise. Initial efforts supported model selection and initial data compilation, with a focus on the North Shore's Great Marsh. The next phase expands the project to model salt marsh response and impacts under different climate and sea level rise scenarios and generate site-specific information and maps to identify and communicate vulnerability, risk, and impacts to Massachusetts coastal wetlands.</p>

Natural Resources and Habitat: Coastal Ecosystems	
Recommendation	Progress
Management and Restoration: Identify and assess potential restoration of coastal wetlands. Sea level rise destroys habitats since the rate of rise exceeds the rate at which wetland soils are replenished by sediments. It may be possible at some sites to mitigate this and preserve the wetlands;	<p>To help reverse the negative effects of past wetland damage, the Division of Ecological Restoration works with many partners to implement a wide variety of wetland restoration projects across Massachusetts. Restoration by the Numbers (as of March 2013)*</p> <p>Completed Wetland Projects: 85 Acres Under Restoration: 1,427 Active Projects: ~30</p> <p><a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/der/aquatic-habitat-restoration/wetlands-restoration/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/der/aquatic-habitat-restoration/wetlands-restoration/</a></p> <p>MassDEP has also begun review of its Wetlands Protection Act Regulations in order to develop performance standards for "Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage," a.k.a. the coastal floodplain. Current literature and the state of the science will be reviewed, stakeholder interests will be identified, and recommendations of a previous advisory group on this topic will be considered for adoption or revision. A more detailed list of actions and a schedule will be developed in the coming months.</p>
Management and Restoration: Manage the spread of invasive species. Support efforts to reduce nutrient loading of waterways and water bodies.	<p>A variety of state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations have formed the Massachusetts Aquatic Invasive Species Working Group. With leadership from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), this group works to prevent new introductions and manage the impact of AIS already established in the Commonwealth. <a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/aquatic-invasive-species/">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm/program-areas/aquatic-invasive-species/</a> The Office of Water Resources in the Department of Conservation and Recreation is operating invasive species removal in waterways. MA spends about \$500,000 annually on the battle, and municipalities and private associations spend about another \$1.5 million . A new state law requires the DCR to write rules to combat the spread of invasive species and impose penalties for those who fail to comply. From: "State, volunteers battle invasive plants in waterways" Boston Globe, July 18, 2013 - which has examples of invasive species removal from lakes and rivers all over the state - which is not focused on coastal habitats. <a href="http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/north/2013/07/17/state-volunteers-battle-invasive-plants-waterways-north-boston/a6lwy3v8LdjEfi8j7qTqMJ/story.html">http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/north/2013/07/17/state-volunteers-battle-invasive-plants-waterways-north-boston/a6lwy3v8LdjEfi8j7qTqMJ/story.html</a></p>
Monitoring, Research, and Adaptive Management. Track the movement of tidal resources as they respond to sea level rise using on-the-ground sensing (e.g., more tide gauges), and remote sensing (e.g., increased regular photo coverage of vulnerable areas). Integrate this information into management plans so that decision-makers are alerted when management thresholds that trigger new policies are reached.	<p>EEA, DCR and CZM are working with USGS to install a series of new tide, stream and storm surge gauging stations and rapid-deployment sites.</p> <p><a href="http://newengland.water.usgs.gov/projects/active/sandy/index.html">http://newengland.water.usgs.gov/projects/active/sandy/index.html</a></p>





