

Resources

Contact the following organizations for more information about education programs, public access opportunities, and ongoing efforts to protect and restore the Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Regional Agencies

**Department of Conservation and
Recreation - North Region**
(617) 727-5350

Massachusetts ACEC Program
(617) 626-1394

**U.S. Environmental Protection
Agency - New England**
(617) 918-1692

Rumney Marsh Advocacy Organizations

Friends of Rumney Marsh
(781) 286-2841

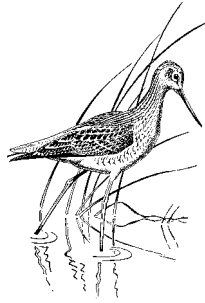
Saugus River Watershed Council
(781) 233-5046
srw@shore.net

Belle Isle Marsh Advocacy Organizations

Friends of Belle Isle Marsh
friendsofbelleislemarsh@comcast.net

Boston Natural Areas Network
(617) 542-7696
info@bostonnatural.org

The Boston Harbor Association
(617) 482-1722
mail@tbha.org



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Saugus River Watershed Council

P.O. Box 1092
Saugus, MA 01906
www.saugusriver.org



374 Congress Street, Suite 609
Boston, MA 02210
www.tbha.org

Rumney Marshes

Area of Critical Environmental Concern



*View from the observation tower
at Belle Isle Marsh.*

The Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is a 2,600+ acre urban salt marsh system that encompasses both the 2,274-acre Rumney Marsh in Saugus, Lynn, and Revere, and the 360-acre Belle Isle Marsh system in Revere, Boston and Winthrop. Rumney Marsh is located in the southern portions of the Saugus River watershed while Belle Isle Marsh is located within the northern area of the Boston Harbor watershed. The region was designated by the state as an ACEC in 1988 to preserve its critical environmental value as one of the most biologically significant salt marshes north of Boston. The marsh provides valuable habitat and feeding grounds for a wide variety of fish, shellfish, birds, and mammals.

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About the Rumney Marshes ACEC

Importance of Salt Marshes

Salt marshes are one of the most productive ecosystems in the world. Salt marsh estuaries, where salt and fresh water mix, provide sheltered nurseries for fish and shellfish as well as important habitat for resident and migratory birds and other animals. Salt marshes also help protect nearby homes and businesses



Rumney Marsh

by providing significant flood storage capacity, and absorbing much of the water and reducing swells associated with coastal storms.

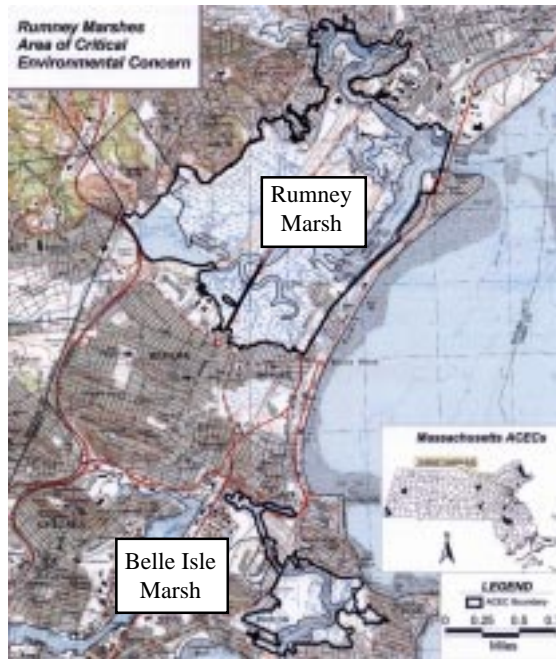
Wildlife and Natural Resources

The Rumney Marshes Area of Critical Environmental Concern includes tidal flats, extensive salt marshes, and all or part of the Saugus River, Pines River, Bear Creek, Belle Isle Creek, Diamond Creek, and Sales Creek. These areas provide significant habitat and feeding grounds for a wide range of migratory and native birds, fish, shellfish, and mammals.

The Rumney Marshes ACEC provides important habitat for migratory and native birds such as snowy egrets, great blue heron, terns, glossy ibis, buffleheads, black ducks, snowy owls, sandpipers, and plovers. Fish such as alewife, blueback herring, smelt, bass, and many others live out portions of their life in the marsh. Shellfish inhabitants include ribbed mussel, soft-shelled and razor clams. The ACEC is also home to mammals such as raccoon, red fox, muskrat, and meadow voles.



Great blue heron



The 2,600+ acre Rumney Marshes ACEC includes Rumney Marsh and Belle Isle Marsh.

Challenges

Many areas within the Rumney Marsh ACEC have been degraded by filling, drainage problems, illegal dumping, and other sources of pollution. These actions have led to a loss in spawning and nursery grounds, and the expansion of invasive vegetation such as Phragmites (common reed). Increases in Phragmites displace native salt marsh species such as Spartina (cordgrass), eliminating important habitat and food sources for native animals.

Restoration Efforts

Thanks to the efforts of federal, state, and local public agencies working with property owners and environmental organizations, much progress has been made toward protecting and restoring

the natural resources of Rumney Marsh. Recent accomplishments include: 1) completion of a Rumney Marshes ACEC Salt Marsh Restoration Plan, which identifies priority projects to restore degraded salt marsh within the ACEC; 2) several self-regulating tide gates have replaced older broken tide gates to restore flow to over 50 acres of salt marsh; 3) more than 25 acres of old I-95 fill have been removed to restore clam flats and salt marsh habitat; 4) the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries is working toward re-opening shellfish beds in Rumney Marsh; and 5) environmental organizations and public officials are working together to prevent illegal dumping, improve water quality, and reduce sources of pollution to the ACEC.

Education and Awareness

All of Belle Isle Marsh and much of Rumney Marsh are publicly owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation or by municipalities. Both marshes provide opportunities for hiking, fishing, and birdwatching. As you explore the flora and fauna of the ACEC, please help protect these precious natural resources by taking only pictures and leaving only footprints.

Canoe and birding trips, nature walks, volunteer projects, and environmental education programs are often conducted by the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Saugus River Watershed Council, Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, The Boston Harbor Association, and Boston Natural Areas Network. Use the resource listings in this brochure to learn about these programs as well as opportunities to help protect and restore the natural resources of the Rumney Marshes ACEC.



Pines River