



Life Guard House and dunes of South Beach State Park. (See Appendix G for photo information.)

## SECTION 12. SOUTH BEACH STATE PARK

### 12.1. INTRODUCTION

South Beach State Park is located in Edgartown, along Martha's Vineyard's south shore. (Figure 12.1) Access is via Katama and Herring Creek roads.

The park has approximately one mile of white sand beach on the Atlantic Ocean. This beach, its scenic wind-sculpted dunes and high-energy waves, easy public access, and absence of residency requirement or fees make South Beach popular with beachgoers. The same waves that attract recreationists are rapidly eroding the shore.

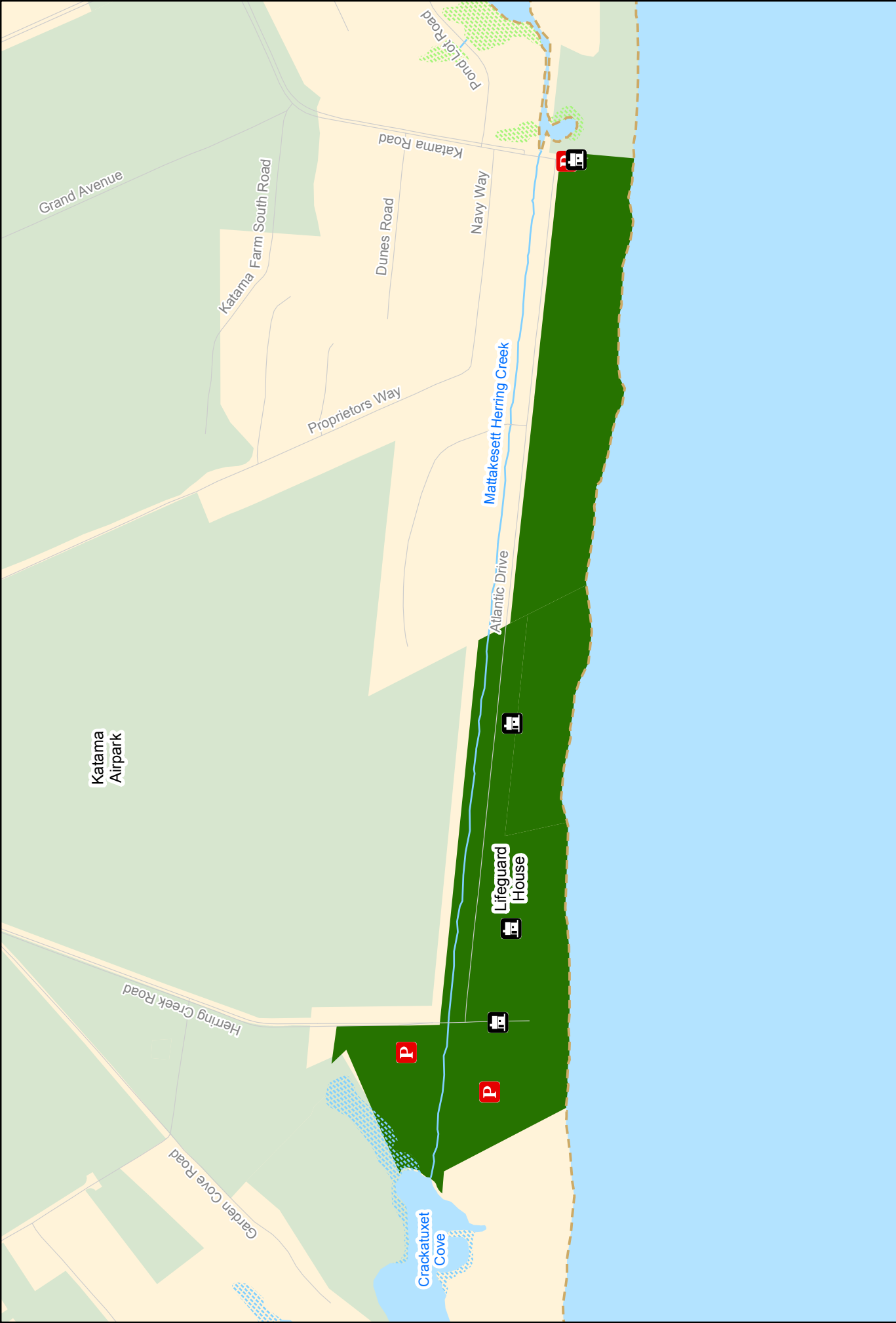
South Beach has long been a destination for recreation. In the 1870s, the area's natural grandeur was promoted to draw tourists to Edgartown (Martha's Vineyard Commission 1996). In the 1920s and 1930s the county acquired Norton Point Beach, which lies immediately east of today's state park. During the early 1940s, recreational use of the area was interrupted by World War II, which saw South Beach used as a naval gunnery range for aerial machine gun and rocket firing practice. Recreational use of the area resumed after the war, and in the 1970s the Town of Edgartown began leasing portions of the beach for recreation purposes, while working to permanently protect the property. From

1983–1988, with the support of the town, the DEM acquired the parcels that constitute South Beach State Park.

In 1988, shortly after the park's establishment, the beach's past military use became an issue as erosion revealed unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the dunes and nearshore waters. Much of the property was temporarily fenced off from the public and more than 1,000 pieces of munitions debris and UXO were removed (Delbonis 1989); a process that involved the removal, reconstruction, and revegetation of some of the park's dunes. Wind and wave actions continued to reveal munitions debris. In 2009, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertook surface and underwater operations to remove additional materials.

Since its establishment, the operation and management of South Beach State Park has been a cooperative effort between the DCR and the Town of Edgartown, with the town responsible for the day to day management and operation of the park.

South Beach's physical, political, and regulatory attributes are summarized below. (Table 12.1.1)



**Building**

**Parking Area**

**Major Road**

**Minor Road**

**Town Boundary**

**Hydrologic Connection**

**Marsh**

**Salt Marsh**

**Open Water**

**South Beach State Park**

**Other Protected Open Space**

**South Beach State Park**

**Figure 12.1.**

0 500 1,000 Feet

Geographic information provided by MassGIS and DCR GIS.

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Map of Massachusetts with a red dot indicating the location of South Beach State Park.

**Table 12.1.1. Physical, political, and regulatory settings of South Beach State Park.**

Setting	Name or Metric
<b>Location:</b>	Edgartown
<b>Area (acres)<sup>a</sup>:</b>	104.53
<b>Perimeter (miles)<sup>a</sup>:</b>	2.59
<b>Landscape Designation(s)<sup>b</sup>:</b>	Parkland
<b>Legislative Districts:</b>	
House	Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket
Senate	Cape and Islands
<b>Regulatory Designations:</b>	Priority Habitat

a. Calculated using a Geographic Information System (GIS).

b. For a summary of the DCR's landscape designations, see <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/ld/ld-factsheet-final.pdf>.

**Associated Properties.** There are operational connections between South Beach and all DCR properties on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The staff of Correllus serves as the point of contact for the Town of Edgartown's operation of South Beach. They are also responsible for Correllus (Section 10), Sylvia state beach (Section 11), and Nantucket State Forest (Section 13), and assists Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry personnel with the management of the West Tisbury Fire Tower property (Section 15).

## 12.2. Natural Resources

### Physical Features

South Beach is located on the Vineyard's south shore, atop the margin of the Martha's Vineyard outwash plain and coastal deposits. Interior portions of the park are located atop the former, and the southern portion of the park atop the latter, soils. An east-west oriented row of dunes parallels the shore.

Elevation changes quickly as you head northward, away from the shore. From sea level, elevation rises to approximately 20 feet atop the row of primary dunes. It then drops to approximately 10 feet behind the dunes and along Atlantic Drive. As you continue northward, up Herring Creek Road, the topography is nearly flat, with elevations reaching 18 feet at the adjacent Katama Air Park.

Between the mid-1800s and 1984, erosion along the south shore of Martha's Vineyard occurred at an estimated average rate of 5.6 feet per year (Brouillette-Jacobson 2008). The current rate of erosion for the south shore of Edgartown can exceed

10 feet per year (MVC 2014). The open ocean continues to eat away at the park.

### Water Resources

South Beach has abundant salt water resources and no fresh water resources. There is approximately 5,100 feet of ocean frontage. The park's western boundary partially borders Crackatuxet Cove; it is here that South Beach's limited wetlands are located. Mattakeset Herring Creek originates at the cove and flows eastward through the park. The creek allows for limited tidal exchange with Katama Bay, and the passage of anadromous fish (Robert L. Fultz & Associates 2002). A control structure on town property at Herring Creek Road regulates the creek's water flow. The park's water resources are summarized in Table 12.2.1.

**Table 12.2.1. Water resources of South Beach State Park.**

Water Resource	Name or Metric
<b>Watershed:</b>	Islands
<b>Aquifer:</b>	Martha's Vineyard SSA
Lens	N/A
<b>Rivers and Streams (miles)<sup>a</sup></b>	0.56
<b>Vernal Pools</b>	
Certified (#)	0
Potential (#)	0
<b>Wetlands (acres)<sup>a</sup></b>	0.49
<b>Lakes and Ponds (acres)<sup>a,b</sup></b>	32.59

a. Calculated using a Geographic Information System (GIS).

b. Metric includes portions of Crackatuxet Cove and the ocean.

South Beach is susceptible to flooding, storm surge, and sea level rise. (Table 12.2.2) The area adjacent to Crackatuxet Cove is susceptible to both 100- and 500-year floods, as is all of Mattakeset Herring Creek. Inundation associated with low-category hurricanes is predicted to come from Crackatuxet Cove to the west and Katama Bay to the east, rather than directly from the Atlantic Ocean. A Category 1 storm will flood the Mud Hole parking area, and a Category 2 storm will flood all infrastructure except for one boardwalk and the central changing station. A Category 3 storm is predicted to flood all infrastructure, with only the crests of tall dunes and limited portions of Atlantic Drive above the water. A one foot rise in sea level is predicted to impact only that portion of the park adjacent to Crackatuxet Cove.

**Table 12.2.2. Potential impacts of flooding, hurricane inundation, and sea level rise to South Beach State Park.**

Type of Impact	Acres	%
<b>Flooding:</b>		
100-year Storm	99.04	94.75
500-year Storm <sup>a</sup>	101.19	96.81
<b>Hurricane Inundation:</b>		
Category 1 Storm	11.94	11.42
Category 2 Storm <sup>b</sup>	42.23	40.39
Category 3 Storm <sup>b</sup>	68.95	65.95
Category 4 Storm <sup>b</sup>	73.23	70.05
<b>Sea Level Rise</b>	37.57	35.94

a. Cumulative value; includes 100-year storm impacts.

b. Cumulative value; includes impacts of all lower category storms.



Predicted hurricane inundation at South Beach State Park. Areas predicted to be inundated by Category 1 storms are represented in light green; additional areas inundated by Category 2, 3, and 4 storms are represented in dark green, yellow, and red, respectively. (See Appendix G for photo information.)

There are no barrier beaches.

## Rare Species

### State-listed Species

Twenty-one state-listed species are known from this park (Table 12.2.3); most are associated with the Katama Plains.

**Table 12.2.3. State-listed species of South Beach State Park, as identified by the NHESP.**

Species <sup>a, b</sup>	Type <sup>c</sup>	MESA <sup>d</sup>
Bushy rockrose	P	SC
Chain dot geometer	I	SC
Coastal heathland cutworm	I	SC
Coastal swamp metarranthus	I	SC
Common tern	B	SC
Data-sensitive plant <sup>e</sup>	P	E
Grasshopper sparrow	B	T
Least tern	B	SC
Melsheimer's sack bearer	I	T
New England blazing star	P	SC
Northern harrier	B	T
Pink salween moth	I	SC
Pink streak	I	T
Piping plover	B	T
Sandplain blue-eyed grass	P	SC
Sandplain euchaena	I	SC
Sandplain flax	P	SC
Sandplain heterocampa	I	T
Seabeach knotweed	P	SC
Roseate tern <sup>e</sup>	B	E
Waxed salween moth	I	SC

a. Presented alphabetically, by common name.

b. Fact sheets are available at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/mesa-list/list-of-rare-species-in-massachusetts.html>.

c. Types of state-listed species include: B = Bird; I = Insect; and P = Plant.

d. Status of species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA): E = Endangered, SC = Special Concern; and T = Threatened.

e. This species is also federally endangered.



South Beach and the adjacent Katama Plain provide habitat for state-listed species, such as this northern harrier. (See Appendix G for photo information.)



### Priority Habitat

The entire property (100.0%) has been designated Priority Habitat under MESA.

### Vegetation

There have been no comprehensive surveys of the flora of South Beach. In general, the dunes are dominated by American beach grass with other herbaceous plants (e.g., seaside goldenrod) present. In protected areas along the back dunes are clusters of trees and shrubs, such as pitch pine, eastern red cedar, northern bayberry, and rugosa rose.

Vegetation along the shore of Crackatuxet Cove was identified and described in Rizzo Associates, Inc. (1988). It includes a mixture of brackish and freshwater plants, such as prairie cordgrass, broadleaf cattail, and crimson eyed rosemallow.

### Invasive Species

This property has not been surveyed; only two invasive plants are currently documented.

**Table 12.2.4. Known invasive and likely invasive plants of South Beach State Park.**

Species <sup>a</sup>	Status <sup>b</sup>	Source <sup>c</sup>
Japanese knotweed	I	1
Spotted knapweed	I	2

- Presented alphabetically, by common name.
- Plants are classified as being either Invasive (I) or Likely Invasive (L) according to MIPAG (2005).
- Information contained in this table was obtained from the following sources:
  - Martha's Vineyard Commission (1996).
  - Dautreuil (2014).

### Natural Communities

South Beach's natural communities extend from the Katama Plain southward to the open ocean. Along the way they transition from sandplain communities, to communities associated with dunes, and finally to marine communities. Known community types are identified in Table 12.2.4.

**Table 12.2.5. Known natural communities of South Beach State Park.**

Community Type <sup>a</sup>	System <sup>b</sup>	State Rank <sup>c</sup>	Source <sup>d</sup>
Maritime Beach Strand	T	S3	1
Maritime Dune	T	S2	1
Marine Intertidal: Gravel/Sand Beach	E	S4	1
Sandplain Grassland	T	S1	2
Sandplain Heathland	T	S1	2

- Classified according to Swain and Kearsley (2011).
- E = Estuarine, P = Palustrine, T = Terrestrial.
- The NHESP ranks communities from most rare (S1) to the most common (S5).
- Information contained in this table was obtained from the following sources:
  - Swain and Kearsley (2011).
  - Barbour (1993).

Katama Plains is considered to be one of the largest and best examples of the sandplain grassland community type in Massachusetts. It extends both westward and southward from the Katama Air Park into South Beach.

One or more additional community types occur in the park. A palustrine community occurs along the western edge of the park, where Mattakesett Herring Creek enters Crackatuxet Cove; this community has not been classified. Shrub communities commonly associated with protected areas on barrier beaches, such as Maritime Shrubland or Maritime Juniper Woodland/Shrubland, may be developing between Atlantic Drive and the dunes. One or more forested community types may be present adjacent to Garden Cove Road.

### Forests

A limited amount of the park (23.22%) is forested; it is located west of Herring Creek Road and North of Atlantic Drive.

### Wildlife

No formal surveys have been conducted. However the beach and associated sandplain grassland and heathlands are popular birding sites. As a result, good information exists on the birds of the South Beach area. As of March 2015, eBird (<http://www.ebird.org>) lists 55 species of birds for South Beach State Park and 104 for the adjacent Katama Airport. Observations at the park are

primarily of sea ducks, gulls, and other water birds; while observations from the airport include both resident and migrant seabirds, shorebirds, raptors, and songbirds.

### 12.3. CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the known and potential cultural resource areas, including pre-Contact and post-Contact archaeological resources, and historic landscapes, buildings, structures, and objects. An overview of significant events in the history of South Beach State Park is presented in Table 12.3.1. The park's cultural resources are identified in Table 12.3.2.

#### Archaeological Resources

One pre-Contact site, a shell midden, is documented within the limits of the park. Only one systematic archaeological survey has been conducted in the area, a town-wide reconnaissance reported as MHC #1957. South Beach has a moderate sensitivity for pre-Contact sites.

### Historic Resources

South Beach has been largely undeveloped throughout the pre- and post-Contact history of the island and little evidence of human impact remains. The beach became a recreational attraction in the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century as the island developed as a summer resort. In the 1940s, the U.S. Navy developed the area as a gunnery range for aerial machine gun and rocket firing practice. A target car shelter, oval shaped target track, and other support features were developed within a few yards of the shore (UXB International, Inc. 2010). Most of the former range has been lost to erosion. A faint imprint of a small section of the oval target can be detected in aerial photos. However, no extant remains have been discovered from this period. The area has returned to its pre-war function as a popular recreation beach.

**Table 12.3.1. Significant events in the history of South Beach State Park.**

Year(s)	Events
1928	County commissioners are authorized to “take by eminent domain...or acquire by purchase, certain land at South Beach” for park purposes. (Chapter 68 of the Acts of 1928, Chapter 124 of the Acts of 1929, and Chapter 192 of the Acts of 1936) This land is now Norton Point Park, to the east of the state park.
1943	U.S. Navy leased approximately 264 acres for machine gun and rocket firing practice. An observation bunker, targets, and other support features were constructed within yards of the ocean.
1959	Observation bunker undermined by ocean.
1977	Town of Edgartown begins leasing western half of beach for park purposes.
1981	Edgartown town meeting approves the Commonwealth’s use of eminent domain to acquire South Beach properties.
1983	DEM acquires approximately 24 acres of beach, additional acquisitions and takings follow.
1985	DEM and Town of Edgartown establish a Management Agreement for the park; this agreement is still in place.
1988	DEM acquires 53 acres of beach and portions of Katama Plain through an eminent domain taking.
1988	UXO exposed on shore and under water; a removal action follows. Dunes are restored and revegetated.
2000	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution establishes the Martha’s Vineyard Coastal Observatory, portions of which are in the park.
2009	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducts a surface and underwater action to remove additional UXO and munitions debris.

**Table 12.3.2. Cultural resources of South Beach State Park.**

Resource	Type <sup>a</sup>	Date <sup>b</sup>	Condition <sup>c</sup>	Integrity <sup>d</sup>	In Use <sup>e</sup>	Utilities <sup>f</sup>	MHC # <sup>g</sup>	Guidance <sup>h</sup>
Life Guard House	BU	-	4	M	S	E	-	1
Mattakesett Herring Creek	LA	ca. 1890	-	L	-	-	-	2
Foundation	AR	-	6	L	-	-	-	3

- Resource types include the following: AR = Archaeological; BU = Building; LA = Landscape; NRHD = National Register Historic District; OB = Object; and ST = Structure.
- Date of construction provided, when known.
- Preliminary condition assessment using the building system and equipment condition codes as used in the Massachusetts Capital Asset management Information System (CAMIS). The following codes are used: 1 = Excellent-easily restorable to like new condition; 2 = Good-routine maintenance required; 3 = Adequate-some corrective and preventative maintenance required; 4 = Fair-excessive corrective maintenance and repair required; 5 = Poor-renovation needed; and 6 = Fail.
- Integrity is a relative assessment of the condition of a resource's retention of its historic character-defining features; H = High; L = Low; M = Medium; and U = Unknown.
- Use categories include: N = building is not in use; S = building is used on a seasonal basis; and Y = building is used year-round.
- The following codes are used to identify utilities associated with buildings: E = Electric; H = Heat; I = Internet; S = Septic system; T = Telephone; W = Water; and W(S) = Water is available on a seasonal basis. This information is included for all buildings.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory number.
- The following guidance is offered for the ongoing maintenance of these cultural resources:
  - Refer to Historic Building Maintenance BMP (DCR n.d.i).
  - Refer to Historic Landscapes - Built Features BMP (DCR n.d.g).
  - Refer to Archaeological Features BMP (n.d.k).



Aerial images of South Beach in 1952 (top) and 2010 (bottom). The oval target system from the naval gunnery range is intact and visible in the top photo; much of it had washed away by 2010. From Funk et al. (2011). (See Appendix G for photo information.)

### Historic Landscapes

The only historic landscape at South Beach is Mattakesett Herring Creek, which was dug in the 1890s in order to provide spawning herring passage to Great Pond (Robert L. Fultz and Associates 2002). It allowed for the continuation of a herring fishery which had existed since the earliest years of European settlement on the island. The distinctly straight line of the creek maintains its integrity of shape and form. Culverts under Herring Creek and Katama roads were replaced in 2002 as part of a project to restore the hydrological connection between Katama Bay and Edgartown Great Pond.

### Buildings

A cinderblock and concrete foundation is located near the Mattakesett Herring Creek as it enters Crackatuxet Cove. The building was most likely constructed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century; however more research is required to determine its origin and purpose.

The only intact historic building at South Beach is the Life Guard House. The simple gable-front shingled building was built after 1952; more research is required to determine whether the

building could have been possibly moved from another location.

### Structures

There are no historic structures.

### Objects

There are no historic objects.

## **12.4. RECREATION RESOURCES**

The park's recreational activities are largely beach dependent, including:

- Fishing, fin fish
- Kite flying (in designated areas)
- Nature study
- Sunbathing
- Surfing
- Swimming

South Beach's greatest recreation asset is its beach, which is guarded seasonally. Water quality is tested monthly during the beach season at three locations: West (i.e., the southern extension of Herring Creek Drive); East (i.e., the southern extension of Katama Road), and Middle (i.e., approximately halfway between the other two sampling points). Only one exceedance of *Enterococcus* bacteria standards was recorded between 2004 and 2010, and there have been no recorded exceedances since monthly sampling began in 2010.



A surfer rides the high-energy waves off South Beach. (See Appendix G for photo information.)

## **12.5. INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Property Boundary**

South Beach's southern and eastern boundaries are readily identifiable. The former is the ocean, and the latter is the southern extension of Katama Road. (Figure 12.1) A portion of the northern boundary is located along the south shoulder of Atlantic Drive, and is readily identifiable by the presence of a split-rail fence. However, as the property line shifts north of Atlantic Drive the fence does not, giving a false impression of the park's boundary. The western boundary abuts private property, municipal land, and MassWildlife land; it is not posted or otherwise identifiable on the ground.

### **Buildings and Structures**

The park's buildings and structures are primarily associated with recreation. (Table 12.5.1) The changing stations are universally accessible, and contain areas for the seasonal placement of portable toilets.



Example of changing stations used at the east and west entrances to South Beach. (See Appendix G for photo information.)

Non-recreation-related infrastructure includes a shed and mast associated with the Martha's Vineyard Coastal Observatory. The shed contains equipment and fiber optic cables that link two offshore sub-sea sensor platforms to an unmanned shore laboratory located at the Katama Air Park; the mast supports a variety of meteorological equipment (Austin et al. 2000). They are located in the park because it is a convenient location for the cables to come ashore, and for placement of the observatory's meteorological sensors. They have neither a positive nor negative impact on the park or its use.



**Table 12.5.1. Non-historic buildings and structures of South Beach State Park.**

Location and Infrastructure	Date <sup>a</sup>	Condition <sup>b</sup>	In Use <sup>c</sup>	Utilities <sup>d</sup>
Changing building - west	ca. 2013	1	S	-
Martha's Vineyard Coastal Observatory - shed <sup>e</sup>	ca. 2000	-	Y	E
Martha's Vineyard Coastal Observatory - mast (10 m) <sup>e</sup>	ca. 2000	-	-	-
Boardwalk	1995	3	-	-
Changing building - central	1996	4	S	-
Boardwalk	1995	3	-	-
Changing building - east	ca. 2013	1	S	-

a. Date of construction provided, when known.

b. Preliminary condition assessment using the building system and equipment condition codes as used in the Massachusetts Capital Asset Management Information System (CAMIS). The following codes are used: 1 = Excellent-easily restorable to like new condition; 2 = Good-routine maintenance required; 3 = Adequate-some corrective and preventative maintenance required; 4 = Fair-excessive corrective maintenance and repair required; 5 = Poor-renovation needed; and 6 = Fail.

c. Use categories include: N = building is not in use; S = building is used on a seasonal basis; and Y = building is used year-round.

d. The following codes are used to identify utilities associated with buildings: E = Electric, H = Heat; I = Internet; S = Septic system; T = Telephone; W = Water; and W(S) = Water is available on a seasonal basis. This information is included for all buildings.

e. Infrastructure located on DCR property, but not owned or controlled by the DCR. Its condition is not assessed.

## Roads

Three paved municipal roads border, and are partially located in, the park: Herring Creek Road, Atlantic Drive, and Katama Road. All three have dirt extensions into the park. Additional dirt roads are associated with the Life Guard House; an old military roadway north of and parallel to the dunes; and the Herring Creek Road parking lot. The extent and condition of paved and unpaved roads are identified in Table 12.5.2.

In the winter of 2004, the average daily traffic volume for Katama Road at South Beach was 832 vehicles; the following summer it was 1,726 vehicles. This is the most recent time period for which data are available (<http://www.mvcommission.org/>).

**Table 12.5.2. Condition and length of roads at South Beach State Park.<sup>a</sup>**

Road Condition	Paved (Miles)	Unpaved (Miles)
Good	0.05	0.60
Fair	0.00	0.26
Poor	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.86</b>

a. Based on field assessment; all distances calculated using GIS.

## Parking

There is parking for 462 vehicles; most (59.3%) in designated lots. (Table 12.5.3) There are two main lots, the "Mud Hole" and a grass lot located off Herring Creek Road. A seven-space, accessible lot is located adjacent to the east changing building. Although the number of accessible spaces is correct for the total number of spaces in the park, there are no accessible aisles or van accessible spaces. All roadside parking is along the north side of Atlantic Drive. Four bicycle racks are located near the intersection of Atlantic Drive and Herring Creek Road, and an additional rack is located in the park approximately halfway between the central and east changing buildings.

In the past, additional parking was allowed in the park, along road shoulders near South Beach, and off-site at Katama Farm. This information is included in Table 12.5.3 to allow for comparison between current conditions and conditions at the time of the 1996 management plan (Martha's Vineyard Commission 1996). Since then, park goers have been encouraged to use alternative forms of transportation. Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority bus stops are located near both the east and west changing buildings.

Seasonal employee parking is located adjacent to the Life Guard House; there is no formal lot or designated spaces.

**Table 12.5.3. Number of public parking spaces, by location and type, at South Beach State Park in 2014 and 1996.**

Location	HP	Other	2104 Total	1996 Total <sup>a</sup>
<b>Within Park</b>				
The “Mud Hole” <sup>b</sup>	0	73	73	131
Left Fork lot <sup>c</sup>	7	0	7	35
Right Fork lot <sup>d</sup>	0	0	0	25
Herring Creek Road – south <sup>e, f</sup>	0	0	0	28
Grass lot – off Herring Creek Road <sup>b</sup>	0	194	194	200
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>419</b>
<b>Roadside and Municipal</b>				
Herring Creek Road – north of Atlantic Drive <sup>f</sup>	0	0	00	156
North side Atlantic Drive – parallel parking <sup>e</sup>	0	150	150	189
North side Atlantic Drive – angled parking <sup>g</sup>	0	38	38	38
Katama Road – shoulder parking, both sides <sup>f</sup>	0	0	0	104
Katama Farm <sup>f</sup>	0	0	0	300
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>787</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>1,206</b>

- a. From Martha’s Vineyard Commission (1996).  
b. Number of spaces based on 9 by 18-foot spaces with 24-foot aisles between rows.  
c. Number of spaces based on posted HP signs and 9 by 18-foot spaces with 8-foot access aisle.  
d. Lot currently unmarked and unsigned for any use.  
e. Based on 8 by 24-foot parallel parking space dimensions.  
f. Parking is no longer allowed at this location (Wortman 2014).  
g. Based on 60° angled parking with 10.5 by 21-foot spaces.



HP parking at Left Fork lot; note the absence of pavement markings, access aisles, and signs identifying van accessible spaces. (See Appendix G for photo information.)

## Trails

Multiple trails extend from Atlantic Drive to the shore. The condition and extent of these trails are identified in Table 12.5.4.

**Table 12.5.4. Condition and length of official trails at South Beach State Park.**

Trail Condition	Length (Miles)
Good	0.37
Fair	0.44
Poor	0.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.06</b>

Five marked crosswalks are located on Atlantic Avenue; they connect to five of the six trail entrances. Beyond these entrances, a network of braided trails extends toward the shore.

## Kiosks and Signs

There are no signs that identify the park’s name or that it is owned by the DCR and operated by the Town of Edgartown. There are also no kiosks.

## Iron Ranger

There is no iron ranger.

## Memorials and Markers

There are no known memorials or markers.

## 12.6. INTERPRETATION

There is no interpretive programming.

Three different interpretive signs are displayed at various entrance points, they are:

- Caution: Endangered Birds Ahead (2 locations)
- Former Moving Target Machine Gun Range at South Beach (4 locations)
- Please Help Protect the Dunes (5 locations)

The endangered birds and dune signs are used elsewhere in the Complex. The former moving target sign is unique to South Beach. It explains the site’s past military use, includes photos of the types of ordnance encountered in the area, and identifies what to do if you find unexploded ordnance.



Interpretive panels inform the public of South Beach's past use as an aerial target range, and identify what to do in the event that they encounter unexploded ordnance. (See Appendix G for photo information.)

The Town of Edgartown also posts information on what to do if you get caught in a rip current; these signs are temporary.

## 12.7. MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

South Beach is owned by the DCR and managed by the Town of Edgartown. It is the town's Park and Recreation Commissioners that are responsible for the management of this park.

### Staffing

#### DCR Personnel

The Forest and Park Supervisor III at Correllus serves as the point of contact for the Town of Edgartown for issues related to the management of South Beach.

#### Partnerships and Volunteers

The Town of Edgartown and the DCR are partners for the maintenance and operation of this park. There is no friends group.

#### Public Safety

The Edgartown Fire Department provides fire response and emergency services. Law enforcement is provided by the Edgartown Police Department.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has conducted a series of "Time Critical Removal Actions" for military ordnance at the former Moving Target Machine Gun Range at South Beach.



Ordnance, such as this rocket motor, has been removed from much of the park and adjacent sub-tidal areas. However, the potential exists for additional ordnance to still be present. (See Appendix G for photo information.)

### Funding

#### Conservation Trust Fund

There are no Conservation Trust Funds.

#### Retained Revenue

This property does not generate revenues.

#### Other Revenues

A 1985 Management Agreement between the Town of Edgartown and the DEM allows the collection of a daily parking fee. Revenues in excess of the town's annual operating expenses for the beach, are payable to the Commonwealth's General Fund. The town has never collected a parking fee.

## 12.8. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The town manages the park under the terms of a nearly 30-year old annual, self-renewing management agreement. (Table 12.8.1) In this agreement, the DCR "agrees, at its own expense" to provide:

- Essential capital improvements to the beach, such as, but not limited to, well-defined parking areas, rest room facilities, and first aid stations.
- Staff consulting services to the town, when requested, in the areas of management, maintenance, interpretive programming, planning and design.
- Current salary schedules, park rules and regulations, and user fee schedules to the town.

In addition, the DCR provides \$5,000 to the town to defray the costs of leasing and maintaining portable toilets at the beach. This amount covered approximately half the cost of portable toilets in 1985; today it covers less than twenty percent of the cost. An updated agreement was drafted in 2007; it has not been endorsed.

**Table 12.8.1. Key legal agreements for South Beach State Park.**

Party and Subject of Agreement	Type <sup>a</sup>	Expiration Date <sup>b</sup>
Town of Edgartown Management Agreement (1980)	A	N/A
Town of Edgartown Management Agreement (1985)	A	N/A
Town of Edgartown 2007 Draft; not signed by either party.	U	-

- a. Agreement types include: A=Memorandum of Agreement; E=Easement; L=Lease; and U=Memorandum of Understanding.  
b. Year that agreement expires. Permanent agreements are indicated by an expiration date of "None."

Only one management plan has been developed for the park (Table 12.8.2); it was never formally adopted. It is unclear how much of this plan was implemented and remains in effect.

**Table 12.8.2. Key management and guidance documents for South Beach State Park.**

Author and Document	Year
Martha's Vineyard Commission 1996 Management Plan for South Beach, Edgartown, Massachusetts.	1996

## Annual Maintenance

An annual maintenance schedule is unavailable for this park.

## Natural Resources

### Water Resources

The town is responsible for the maintenance of Mattakesett Herring Creek, and the culverts and water control structures beneath Herring Creek Road.

### Rare Species

State-listed shorebirds are monitored and managed by the Massachusetts Audubon Society under a system-wide agreement between that organization and the DCR. Audubon field personnel periodically monitor South Beach for the presence of piping plovers and terns, which are known to nest on private land immediately west of the park.

### Invasive Species

There are no known monitoring or management activities.

### Vegetation

The Town of Edgartown manages vegetation along the shoulders of Atlantic Drive, and Herring Brook and Katama roads.

Because the entire park is Priority Habitat, all vegetation management not occurring within 10-feet of a paved road (e.g., mowing the grass parking lot west of Herring Creek Road) requires review under MESA.

## Cultural Resources

There are no cultural resource management practices unique to this property.

## Recreation Resources

The Town of Edgartown promulgates and posts rules and regulations for the operation of all public park and beach areas under its jurisdiction, including South Beach. The following regulations were in effect during the 2014 beach season:

- No wood, paper, or fibrous fires are permitted.
- No child under the age of 12 may use the beach unless accompanied by a person 16 years or older who will be responsible.
- Surfing and sailing shall be permitted in designated areas.
- Two-wheel vehicles, motorcycles, minibikes, mopeds, ATVs and ATCs are absolutely prohibited on all beach and park areas. No towing of paragliders is permitted. [This rule does not apply to beach operations; lifeguards use ATVs to patrol the beach.]
- The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.



- Fishing or surfcasting in patrolled beach areas is permitted only in those sections so designated.
- Dogs or other pets are not allowed on beach areas.
- Interfering with the duties of any park employee is not permitted.
- The landing and launching of boats within swimming areas is prohibited.
- Kite flying, ball playing, and related activities will be permitted in designated areas only.
- All Park Department properties close at 12 A.M.
- All appropriate Town Bylaws will be enforced.

South Beach is staffed from late June through Labor Day. The beaches are guarded, and beach wheelchairs and portable toilets are available during this time period. Organized events are not allowed.

### **Infrastructure**

Under the 1985 Management Agreement, the DEM is responsible for providing “essential capital improvements, such as, but not limited to, well defined parking areas, rest room facilities, and first aid stations, to the beach before and during its opening *as may be provided by appropriation.*” The Town of Edgartown has “complete responsibility for the year round management, operation, and maintenance of” South Beach, and is to provide, *subject to appropriation*, all equipment, materials, and supplies necessary for the proper management, operation, and maintenance of” South Beach. Among the town’s infrastructure-related responsibilities specified in the agreement is providing “public toilet facilities during the swimming season.”

### **Buildings and Structures**

The construction and maintenance of structures is a cooperative effort between the town and the DCR. Boardwalks and changing buildings were constructed with DCR-purchased materials and a combination of town and DCR labor.

### **Roads**

Maintenance of Herring Creek Road, Atlantic Drive, and Katama Road is the responsibility of the Edgartown Highway Department. The town also rebuilds the dunes at the southern end of Katama and Herring Creek Roads after the beach season, in anticipation of winter storms.

### **Parking Areas**

Capital improvements to “well defined parking areas” are the responsibility of the DCR, ongoing maintenance is the responsibility of the town.

### **Trails**

Maintenance of trails and walkways is performed by the town.

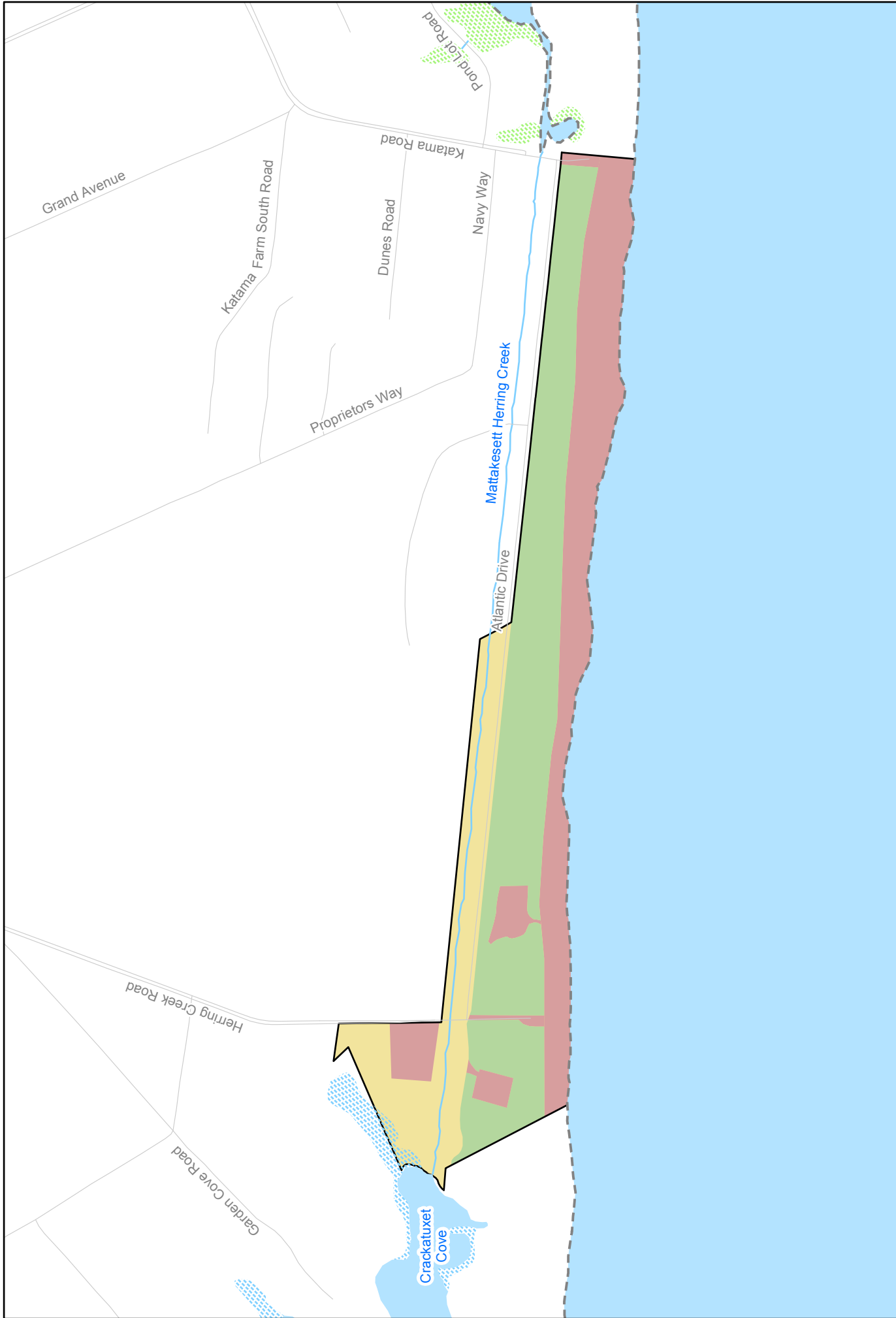
### **Kiosks and Signs**

There is no kiosk to update. The town posts and maintains beach regulation signs and rip current warning signs. The 1985 Management Agreement is silent on who is responsible for maintaining interpretive signs.

## **12.9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

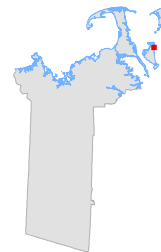
This section provides recommendations for the near- and long-term management of South Beach State Park. Applied Land Stewardship Zoning recommendations provide general guidance for managing the park. Future activities and projects should be checked against the zoning map (Figure 12.2) for consistency. Management recommendations for South Beach are all high-priority, and should be addressed as soon as resources become available.



- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Town Boundary
- Hydrologic Connection
- Marsh
- Salt Marsh
- Open Water
- Land Stewardship Zoning
- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Zone 3

## South Beach State Park

Figure 12.2. Recommended Land Stewardship Zoning



Geographic information provided by MassGIS and DCR GIS.

## Applied Land Stewardship Zoning (Figure 12.2)

The following Land Stewardship Zoning is recommended for South Beach State Park.

### Zone 1

The following sections of South Beach have been designated Zone 1.

- All dune areas from the foredune northward to Atlantic Drive.

### Zone 2

- Portions of the park north of Atlantic Drive.

### Zone 3

- The beach, from the foredune to the low tide line. This area is intensively used for swimming and sunbathing.
- The Life Guard House and adjacent altered areas.
- Formal parking areas, including the Mud Hole and paved areas adjacent to the east and west changing buildings.

## Significant Feature Overlay

There are no Significant Feature Overlays.

## **Management Recommendations**

Three priority management recommendations were developed for South Beach State Park. (Table 12.9.1) For a recommendation to be considered priority it must address one or more of the following criteria:

- Regulatory compliance or compliance with legal agreements.
- Threats to the health and safety of park visitors and employees.
- The imminent loss of a natural, cultural, or recreation resource.

Additional maintenance and management needs observed during the preparation of this RMP, but not meeting one or more of the above criteria, are not included in this plan.

The following recommendations are of equal priority.

**Table 12.9.1. Priority recommendations for South Beach State Park.**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation<sup>a</sup></b>
Work with the Town of Edgartown to prepare and submit a Habitat Management Plan, for mowing the parking area west of Herring Creek Road, to the NHESP for review.	P, R
Work with the Town of Edgartown to develop an updated Memorandum of Understanding for the operation and management of South Beach State Park.	L, R, V
Add pavement markings and “Van Accessible” signs to accessible spaces in the lot adjacent to the east changing building.	C, R, V

- a. The following codes identify the party or parties responsible for implementing the recommendations: B = Bureau of Ranger Services; C = Contractor; E = Division of Engineering; F = Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry; L = Legal Services; O = Other; P = Bureau of Planning, Design & Resource Protection; R = Regional and district staff; U = Universal Access Program; V = Volunteer or partner; and X = Office of External Affairs and Partnerships.

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