



photo by Robert Buchsbaum

A REGIONAL TREASURE

Salt marsh ecosystems are an integral part of Massachusetts's North Shore. In recognition of these extraordinary resources, approximately 25,500 acres of the Parker River/Essex Bay region were designated in 1979 as a coastal Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Within the towns of Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Essex, and Gloucester, the area includes significant natural and cultural resources:

- Barrier beaches
- Salt marshes
- Dunes
- Floodplains
- Salt ponds
- Historic sites
- Scenic sites
- Shellfish beds
- Wildlife habitat
- Anadromous fish runs
- Estuaries and tidal rivers



photo by Dorothy Keiper Monnelly

ACEC resources add ecological, economic, and recreational values to our daily lives both on the coast and inland where these resources are connected by river and stream networks.



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THE ACEC PROGRAM

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) administers the ACEC program and coordinates closely with the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (MCZM) Office regarding all coastal ACECs.

Federal, state, and local governments have partnered with conservation groups and citizens to reduce existing threats to water quality, salt marsh, fish, and shellfish resources. Coordination between these groups is essential to help preserve and manage the ACEC.

RELATED STATE REGULATIONS

Rather than creating new regulations, the goals of an ACEC designation are implemented through the existing state environmental regulatory and review framework. Projects within these boundaries require higher environmental standards and review. Specific state regulatory requirements concerning ACECs include:

- Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
- Waterways Regulations (Chapter 91)
- Wetlands Protection Act
- Solid Waste Facilities Site Assignment Regulations
- MCZM Policies

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ACEC RESOURCES AND PROGRAM CONTACT:

ACEC PROGRAM

Department of Environmental Management
Division of Resource Conservation
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02202
(617) 727-3160 x552
www.magnet.state.ma.us/dem/dem.htm

MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

North Shore Regional Office
2 State Pier
Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 281-3972
www.magnet.state.ma.us/czm/



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LOCAL GROUPS AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES CONTACT:

photo by Dorothy Keiper Monnelly



EIGHT TOWNS AND THE BAY

160 Haverhill Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
(978) 374-0519
www.thecompass.com/8TB

IPSWICH RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

218 Boston Street, Suite 204
Topsfield, MA 01983
(978) 887-8404
www.tiac.net/users/irwa

MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY

346 Grapevine Road
Wenham, MA 01984
(978) 927-1122
www.massaudubon.org

PARKER RIVER CLEAN WATER ASSOCIATION

Box 798
Byfield, MA 01922
(978) 462-2551
www.Parker-River.org

ECOLOGY

The Parker River/ Essex Bay ACEC, which includes diverse barrier beach, dune, salt marsh, estuarine, and riverine ecosystems, is part of more than 10,000 acres of salt marsh that are known locally as the Great Marsh. This region is a highly productive ecosystem that provides habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals including migratory birds and anadromous fish.



family photo by John F. Grundstrom

ECONOMY

The region is famous for shellfish resources as well as recreational activities that contribute directly to local economies. The use of rivers and bays for fishing, water sports, beach activities, and shellfish industries are all dependent on maintaining high water quality.

RECREATION

The scenic quality of the area provides a place to enjoy boating, fishing, hiking, birdwatching, and educational tours. Included within the ACEC are the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Sandy Point State Reservation, Crane Wildlife Refuge, and Crane Beach.

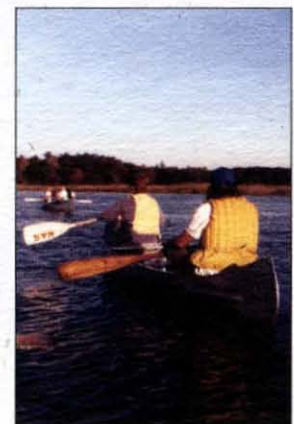
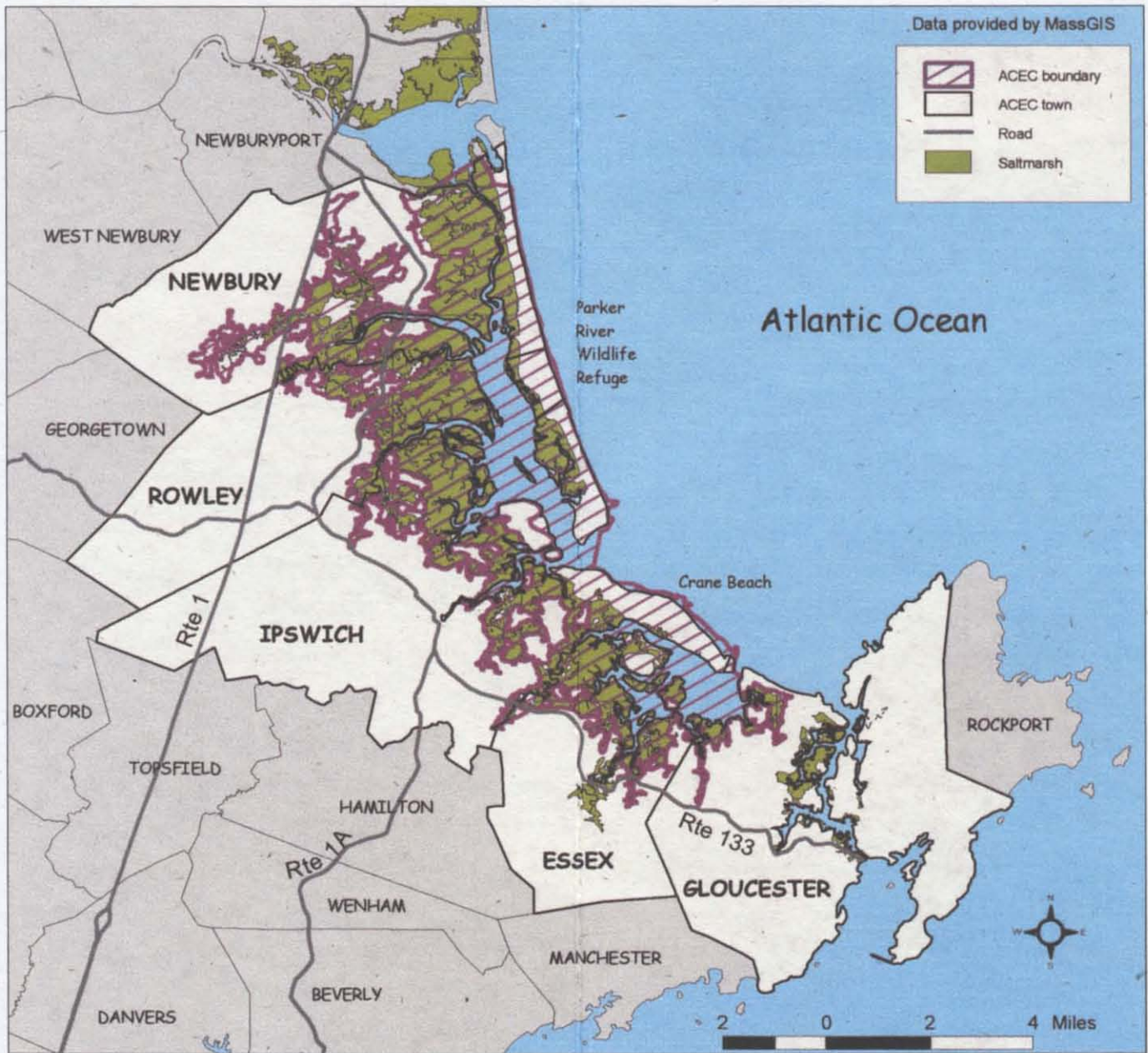


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PARKER RIVER/ESSEX BAY ACEC

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor
Jane Swift, Lieutenant Governor

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Bob Durand, Secretary



COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

Peg Brady, Director

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Peter C. Webber, Commissioner

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