

Southern New England – New York Bight

Coastal Program in Rhode Island

Represented by Members of Congress:

Senator Jack Reed (D)
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D)
Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy (D-1st)
Rep. James R. Langevin (D-2nd)

Contact

Project Leader
S. New England-New York Bight
Coastal Ecosystems Program
50 Bend Road
Charlestown, RI 02813-2503
Phone: 401/364 9124
Fax: 401/364 0170
TDD: 800/877 8339
<http://www.fws.gov/r5snep>

Purpose

The Coastal Program works through partnerships to conserve the ecological integrity of the area's heavily populated coastal zone. The program supports coastal resources in the area from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape May, New Jersey. This area includes two of the largest, most heavily impacted estuaries in the country: Long Island Sound and New York/New Jersey Harbor.

The work of the Coastal Program is guided by several laws and legislative authorities, including:
Clean Water Act
Endangered Species Act
Oil Pollution Act
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
Coastal Barrier Improvement Act
Coastal Wetland Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

Program Activities

The Coastal Program provides biological, GIS and partnership expertise to protect and restore coastal habitats. The program also plays a critical role in multi-agency programs by identifying and mapping coastal habitats and assisting with the recovery of species protected under the Endangered Species Act.



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Piping plover

Current partners include *Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, NOAA, EPA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Coast Guard, Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, Save the Bay, University of Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy, Washington County Land Trust, Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, and the Coastal Resources Management Council*

Highlights

- Assisted the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex with grassland habitat restoration near Trustom Pond, and exhibit design for the new visitor center in Charlestown
- Provided GIS services and ecological expertise to South County land trusts working to identify priority lands for conservation
- Provided funds and technical assistance to the state's Department of Environmental Management for the planning and design of fish passage alternatives for the Pawtuxet River
- Collaborated with the Narragansett Indian Tribe to develop a grant proposal for raptor survey, conservation and awareness education

Issues

Coastal lands are in extreme demand throughout the state, and property values are among the highest in the country. Land acquisition, as a priority means of protecting habitat, comes at an exceptional cost and limited funds do not stretch as far as they do in other parts of the country.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
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