

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



based on a photo by Judy Vander Maten

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THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

The National Estuary Program was established in 1987 by amendments to the Clean Water Act to identify, restore, and protect nationally significant estuaries of the United States. The NEP is a voluntary, community based, watershed program. The program focuses not just on improving water quality in an estuary, but on maintaining the integrity of the whole system—its chemical, physical, and biological properties, as well as its economic, recreational, and aesthetic values.

Each Estuary Program works with a diverse group of local stakeholders who make protecting the nation's nationally significant estuaries possible. Partners include citizens, business leaders, educators, environmental leaders, researchers and federal, state and local government agencies responsible for managing the estuary's resources. The partners identify problems in the estuary, develop specific actions to address them, and create and implement a formal management plan to restore and protect the estuary. EPA administers the program; the local community directs its policy and substance.

ESTUARIES

Estuaries are places where rivers meet the sea. The tidal, sheltered waters of estuaries support unique communities of plants and animals, specially adapted for life at the margin of the sea. Estuarine environments are among the most productive on earth, producing more food per acre than the richest Midwestern farmland due to mixing of nutrients from land and sea.

Of the 102 estuaries in the United States, only 28 have been designated as nationally significant. These estuaries include forty-two percent of the continental United States shoreline and are among the most productive in the nation. Over half of the US population lives in our coastal counties and that percentage is increasing. Economically, these estuaries of national significance produce over \$7 billion in revenue from commercial and recreational fishing and related marine industries, and over 16 billion annually from tourism and recreation.

THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS

The ANEP is a trade association comprised of the 28 National Estuary Programs. The organization supports the local programs and serves as a unified voice for issues affecting the National Estuary Program and the nations' estuaries. The association provides information to citizens and decision-makers at the regional and national level.

ANEP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Led the only organized drive towards reauthorization of the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 320.
- Led the effort to secure \$1 million extra appropriation (FY98), reversing a previously declining EPA budget.
- Produced the Citizens Report to the Nation, a compilation of information and summaries from each of the 28 NEPs.
- Produces a monthly update of the 28 NEPs activities, distributed to the NEPs and interested citizens around the country.



Albemarle-Pamlico Sounds, North Carolina

Barataria-Terrabonne, Louisiana

Barnegat Bay Estuary, New Jersey

Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts

Casco Bay, Maine

Charlotte Harbor, Florida

Lower Columbia River Estuary, Oregon/Washington

Coastal Bend Bays, Texas

Delaware Estuary, New Jersey/Pennsylvania/Delaware

Delaware Inland Bays, Delaware

Galveston Bay, Texas

Massachusetts Bays, Massachusetts

Mobile Bay, Alabama

Morro Bay, California

Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island

New Hampshire Estuaries, New Hampshire

New York-New Jersey Harbor, New York/New Jersey

Peconic Bay, New York

Puget Sound, Washington

San Francisco Bay, California

San Juan Bay, Puerto Rico

Santa Monica Bay, California