

## ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



Massachusetts Bays NEP • 617.626.1231 • [www.state.ma.us/massbays](http://www.state.ma.us/massbays) • March 2001

### MASSACHUSETTS BAYS

*The Massachusetts Bays Program is a partnership of local, state, and federal governments, as well as citizens, scientists, educators, and businesses, all united behind a principal mission: the preservation and management of a healthy ecosystem of living resources in Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays, useable by the public. The Massachusetts Bays region covers over 800 miles of coastline from the tip of Cape Cod Bay to the New Hampshire border, and encompasses 49 coastal communities. The program focuses on building partnerships, promoting local and regional solutions, and developing models that work.*

#### FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- Roughly 3.8 million people now live in the Massachusetts Bays watershed, and the number is growing.
- Overall, tourists in coastal Massachusetts spend about \$1.5 billion per year, and support over 80,000 jobs. Water-based economies such as tourism, commercial fisheries, and marinas directly depend on the wealth provided by the Massachusetts Bays.
- Boston Harbor is a center for countless activities including shipping, marine research, whale watching, and the Harbor Island Park system. Less urban parts of the Massachusetts Coast attract visitors from all over New England looking to sunbathe, kayak, sail, hike, and simply enjoy being outdoors.
- The number of housing units on Cape Cod more than doubled between 1970 and 1990 (from 65,676 to 135,192)—the equivalent of adding almost 10 new housing units a day for 20 years.

## HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Massachusetts has lost close to 30 percent of its original coastal wetlands due to development.
- Disease causing viruses and bacteria regularly close more than 20 percent of the state's shellfish resources.
- Overflows and leaks from large centralized wastewater facilities and individual onsite septic systems cause local and regional declines in water quality and ecosystem health.
- Development is producing more impervious surface coverage (e.g., roads, driveways, buildings) and as a result increasing stormwater volumes and velocities.
- Increasing stormwater runoff, sewage-related pollution, and development pressure on fragile coastal habitats threatens the health of the bays.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Continuing a successful volunteer wetland assessment program.
- Expanding the Wetlands Health Assessment Toolbox program on the North Shore.
- Restoring tidally restricted wetlands on the North Shore, South Shore, and Cape Cod.
- Restoring "pocket" wetlands in the Metropolitan Boston area.
- Providing technical expertise on stormwater issues to municipal officials and nonpoint source pollution outreach to the public throughout the region.
- Pursuing "No Discharge Area" plan designations and developing guidelines for personal watercraft use on Cape Cod.

### *New England Clam Chowder*

*(the white kind!)*

12 medium clams, chopped  
1 stick butter  
1 small onion, minced  
1 small stick of celery, minced  
1 bay leaf  
thyme  
fennel (optional)  
black pepper  
3/4 cup flour  
3 cups half and half  
1 large or 2 medium potatoes, diced  
(red, with skin)  
1 strip of raw bacon or equivalent of  
salt pork, chopped

Soak clams in slightly salted water just before chopping and save water and shells.

SautØ bacon, onion and celery in butter until onions are soft. Slowly add flour, blending well and cook, stirring, over low heat for 5 minutes, being careful not to brown. Slowly pour about 2 cups of reserved water from clams and 1 cup of half and half, stirring well to prevent clumping. Add bay leaf and dashes of thyme, fennel and black pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add diced potatoes. Simmer 20-30 minutes or until potato is just tender. Stir in the remainder of the half and half.

Remove from heat and add chopped clams. Stir then let sit 1 minute. Makes 10 satisfying servings.