

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Narragansett Bay

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

Narragansett Bay is located in Rhode Island, yet the majority of the watershed extends into southeastern Massachusetts. Aside from its historic charm, Narragansett Bay is a thriving spot for commercial fishing, international shipping, and recreation and tourism. Each year, about 100 different species of fish (flounder, bass), lobster, and shellfish (quahog, oyster) visit the bay at one time or another. Home to more than 2 million people, this 1,853 square mile watershed is relatively urbanized, yet visitors and residents alike treasure the bay's waters, beaches, parks, and piers.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Targeted Watersheds Grant will focus on addressing the major threats to this valuable and highly productive estuary.

- Key problems include fishery declines due to habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, and the impacts of land and coastal development.
- Nutrient overloading – especially nitrogen from fertilizers – create hypoxic conditions (i.e., low dissolved oxygen), which impairs the growth and reproduction of fish, shellfish, and other aquatic organisms.
- Toxic metals and bacterial pollution from industrial discharges continue to impair the bay's ecosystem.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Partnership for Narragansett Bay will use EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to carry out the following activities:

- Re-establish, repair, and maintain fish runs and passageways for anadromous fish in a number of designated areas throughout the watershed.
- Install stormwater management practices to remediate significant sediment and nutrient loading.
- Re-establish eelgrass beds by growing eelgrass for restoration from seed. This will provide a sustainable source of seed without negatively impacting the few remaining natural seagrass beds.

"It's ironic; we've converted trash dumpsters and a wastewater treatment site to an ecological restoration center."

– Michael Traber
University of Rhode
Island Graduate
School of
Oceanography



Bay quahog.

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The Partnership for Narragansett Bay represents over forty diverse bay stakeholder organizations. Its partners include:

- Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
- Rhode Island Rivers Council
- Pawtuxet River Authority
- Save the Bay, Inc.
- Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association
- Leesville Pond Association
- The towns of Attleboro, North Attleboro, Auburn, and Taunton, Mass. and the town of Narragansett, RI.
- And many more



The bay is considered one of the best sailing locations in the world.



University of Rhode Island and Save the Bay volunteers work to harvest and plant eel grass, which provides critical habitat, food, and shelter for many bay species.



Mike Traber, a project implementer from the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography, inspects eelgrass seedlings raised in the EPA-funded eelgrass mariculture facility. (Photo Credit: Narragansett Bay Estuary Program)

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EPA'S TARGETED WATERSHEDS GRANT PROGRAM

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program is a new, competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/>



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