



# WAQUOIT BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

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**Date:** September 11, 2009

**Subject:** Support Letter for NERRA Proposal to NOAA Habitat Restoration Program

**To:** Matt Menashes, Executive Director, NERRA

Dear Matt:

The Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR) would like to voice its strong support for the NERRA proposal to the NOAA Habitat Restoration Program. Our Reserve, designated in 1988, and located on the southern coast of Cape Cod on Nantucket Sound, has been, since its inception, actively involved with many local partners in the acquisition of riparian lands, coastal resource protection and environmental restoration. Massachusetts, in general, but Cape Cod, in particular, has experienced rapid urbanization since 1950, almost all of it occurring within the state's designated coastal zone. In addition, many of the region's marsh lands have undergone literally centuries of manipulation from ditching and diking for agriculture, ditching for mosquito-control, berm-building for roadways, and infill for parking lots, residential homes and commercial businesses. Invasive plants such as Phragmites and Purple Loosestrife are also major problems within our watershed. But perhaps the most critical environmental issue for the region is estuarine eutrophication from excessive nitrogen-loading from residential wastewater. Restoration for our local coastal environment largely will mean improving hydrological conditions (greater tidal flow) to our restricted marshes and bringing back the once extensive eelgrass beds in our embayments by reducing nitrogen input to our watersheds.

Over many years, WBNERR has worked closely with both private non-profits (i.e., The 300 Committee, Trout Unlimited) as well as local government (i.e., Towns of Falmouth and Mashpee, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe), state (i.e., Mass. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Mass. Fish and Game) and federal agencies (i.e., US Fish and Wildlife) to identify and prioritize lands for acquisition and restoration. The NERRS have a unique role to play in coastal restoration owing to their mission as sites for intensive environmental monitoring and study. In close collaboration with other scientists, we are in an established position to develop, improve and validate restoration methodologies.

For the Cape region, the problem of coastal degradation and habitat loss, and the potential for their improvement, has enormous economic implications as the local economy is heavily based on its natural coastal setting and tourism. The need for coastal restoration is widely recognized in our local communities and is evidenced by a large and enthusiastic group of citizen volunteers involved all aspects of the Reserve's operations. WBNERR, along with its sister NERRS, are in the forefront coastal restoration as well as the science of restoration, and our tight linkage with local partners is one of our prime attributes as a system. The involvement of the NERRS guarantees the maximum leverage of the available funding for coastal restoration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Weidman, Research Coordinator