

Final Evaluation Findings

New Hampshire Coastal Program

October 2003 through August 2006



Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
National Ocean Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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New Hampshire Coastal Program
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) requires NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) to conduct periodic evaluations of the performance of states and territories with federally-approved coastal management programs. This review examined the operation and management of the New Hampshire Coastal Program (NHCP) by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES), the designated lead agency, for the period from October 2003 through August 2006.

This document describes the evaluation findings of the Director of NOAA's OCRM with respect to NHCP during the review period. These evaluation findings include discussions of major accomplishments as well as recommendations for program improvement. The evaluation concludes that DES is successfully implementing and enforcing its federally-approved coastal management program, adhering to the terms of its federal financial assistance awards, and addressing the coastal management needs identified in §303(2)(A) through (K) of the CZMA.

The evaluation team documented a number of NHCP's accomplishments during the review period. NHCP made significant progress in staffing by filling several positions with highly-qualified individuals. The program received approval to expand its inland boundary to include the jurisdictional borders of New Hampshire's 17 tidal municipalities. NHCP undertook a timely and comprehensive strategic planning process that incorporated revision of the Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy. The program worked extensively with DES and OCRM to resolve confusion surrounding its internal and external financial records. NHCP implemented strong salt marsh and river restoration programs that emphasized partnerships, science-based decision-making and long-term monitoring. In collaboration with its partners, the program prepared and submitted New Hampshire's draft Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan to OCRM. NHCP significantly contributed to the execution of the New Hampshire Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program by providing resources for efforts such as a pet waste reduction project, coastal biological monitoring, the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition, coastal watershed technical enhancements and technical assistance workshops. The program operated Competitive and Technical Assistance Grants Programs that provided money at the local level for projects such as public access, land-use planning, acquisition and restoration. NHCP strengthened its application of the federal consistency process by: (1) instituting new federal consistency public notification procedures; (2) updating the program's Federal Consistency Guide; (3) improving federal consistency webpages; and (4) hosting a New England Federal Consistency Workshop. The program has been a leader in regional ocean governance. NHCP developed a thoughtful and strategic approach to communications that improved program visibility. The program regularly engaged in many diverse partnerships.

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The evaluation team also identified areas where NHCP could be strengthened. OCRM's recommendations are in the form of four Program Suggestions. No Necessary Actions were identified. Recommendations address program identity and visibility, program boundary expansion, the Competitive and Technical Assistance Grants Programs and federal consistency.

II. PROGRAM REVIEW PROCEDURES

A. OVERVIEW

NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) began its review of the New Hampshire Coastal Program (NHCP) in June 2006. The evaluation process involves four distinct components:

- An initial document review and identification of specific issues of particular concern;
- A site visit to New Hampshire including interviews and a public meeting;
- Development of draft evaluation findings; and
- Preparation of the final evaluation findings, partly based on comments from the state regarding the content and timetables of recommendations specified in the draft document.

The recommendations made by this evaluation appear in boxes and bold type and follow the findings section where facts relevant to the recommendation are discussed. The recommendations may be of two types:

Necessary Actions address programmatic requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act's (CZMA) implementing regulations and of the federally-approved NHCP. Each Necessary Action must be implemented by the specified date.

Program Suggestions describe actions that OCRM believes would improve the program, but they are not currently mandatory. If no dates are indicated, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) is expected to address the recommendations by the time of the next regularly-scheduled evaluation.

A complete summary of accomplishments and recommendations is outlined in Appendix A.

Failure to address Necessary Actions may result in a future finding of non-adherence and the invoking of interim sanctions, as specified in CZMA §312(c). Program Suggestions that are reiterated in consecutive evaluations to address continuing problems may be elevated to Necessary Actions. OCRM will consider the findings in this evaluation document when making future financial award decisions relative to NHCP.

B. DOCUMENT REVIEW AND ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

The evaluation team reviewed a wide variety of documents prior to the site visit, including: (1) the federally-approved Environmental Impact Statement and program documents; (2) financial assistance awards and work products; (3) semi-annual

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performance reports; (4) official correspondence; and (5) relevant publications on natural resource management issues in New Hampshire.

Based on this review and on discussions with OCRM staff, the evaluation team identified the following priority issues:

- NHCP's major accomplishments during the review period;
- NHCP's transition from the Office of Energy and Planning to DES;
- Effectiveness of DES in permitting, monitoring and enforcing the core authorities that form the legal basis of NHCP;
- Implementation of state and federal consistency authority;
- Extent to which NHCP is monitoring, reporting and submitting program changes to OCRM;
- Status of NHCP's grant tasks and reporting;
- NHCP's coordination with other federal, state and local agencies and programs;
- Effectiveness of local technical assistance programs in assisting coastal communities;
- Status of public access opportunities in the coastal zone;
- NHCP's approach to emerging local and regional coastal management issues;
- NHCP's advancement of the CZMA goals set out in §303(2); and
- The manner in which the state has addressed the recommendations contained in the previous §312 evaluation findings released in 2004. NHCP's assessment of how it has responded to each of the recommendations in the 2004 evaluation findings is located in Appendix B.

C. SITE VISIT TO NEW HAMPSHIRE

Notification of the scheduled evaluation was sent to NHCP, DES, relevant state and federal environmental agencies, members of New Hampshire's congressional delegation and regional newspapers. NHCP published notification of the evaluation and of the scheduled public meeting. In addition, a notice of OCRM's "intent to evaluate" was published in the *Federal Register* on June 29, 2006.

The site visit to New Hampshire was conducted on September 20-22, 2006. Ms. Rosemarie McKeeby, Evaluation Team Leader, OCRM National Policy and Evaluation Division; Ms. Betsy Nicholson, NHCP Specialist, OCRM Coastal Programs Division; and Mr. Carl Ferraro, Natural Resource Planner, Alabama Coastal Area Management Program, formed the evaluation team.

During the course of the site visit, the evaluation team interviewed NHCP staff, representatives of federal, state and local government agencies, and members of academic institutions and interest groups involved with or affected by NHCP. Appendix C lists individuals contacted during this review.

As required by the CZMA, OCRM held an advertised public meeting on September 20, 2006, at 6:00 p.m., at the NHCP Office, 50 International Drive, Suite 200, Portsmouth,

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New Hampshire. The meeting gave members of the general public the opportunity to express their opinions about the overall operation and management of NHCP. Appendix D lists individuals who registered at the meeting. OCRM's response to written comments submitted during the review is summarized in Appendix E.

The evaluation team gratefully acknowledges the support of NHCP staff with site visit planning and logistics.

III. COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

New Hampshire features 18 miles of coastline along the Atlantic Ocean and more than 230 miles of sensitive tidal shoreline. Approximately 60 percent of the Atlantic shoreline, composed of sandy beaches, dunes, rocky shores and harbors, is owned or managed by the state. The inclusion of tidal wetlands increases state ownership or management of the land within 1,000 feet of the coast to 77 percent. Development is prohibited in tidal wetlands areas, providing significant protection for natural habitat and open space. While most of New Hampshire's coastal sand dunes were destroyed through development prior to state regulation, three remaining dune areas in Hampton Beach and Seabrook have been restored to provide visual and physical access and to serve as buffers against storm surge. The Portsmouth Harbor and Piscataqua River area is a revitalized urban waterfront composed of shops, restaurants and historic sites that support tourism and water-dependent industries such as the state-owned commercial fishing pier, port terminal and private energy facilities. Great Bay is an inland tidal estuary surrounded by limited development.¹ The Great and Little Bay estuarine system includes more than 800 acres of saltmarsh and covers approximately 17 square miles.

NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) approved the New Hampshire Coastal Program (NHCP) in three phases. The Ocean and Harbor Segment was approved in May 1982 and covers the Atlantic coast from Seabrook to the Portsmouth Harbor line. The Great Bay Segment, approved in September 1988, expanded the program to cover all areas under tidal influence, including the lands that border Great Bay, Little Bay, and several tidal estuarine rivers and wetlands. In 2004, OCRM approved an expansion of NHCP's inland boundary to include the jurisdictional borders of New Hampshire's 17 tidal municipalities. NHCP's seaward boundary includes all coastal waters between the Seabrook and Portsmouth town lines to the three-mile limit of state jurisdiction.

NHCP is based on sixteen coastal policies² that serve as the framework for federal and state agencies' actions. Nine core state regulatory and management programs encompassing more than 60 statutes and 19 state agencies provide daily protection and oversight for coastal area resources. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) is the agency designated to administer NHCP. NHCP is networked with other state agencies³ that help enforce the coastal program's policies and conduct reviews of federal activities occurring in the coastal zone. DES is responsible for coordinating

¹ In 1989, NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management designated Great Bay a National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Great Bay Reserve serves as a long-term natural field laboratory for research and education in support of improved coastal management.

² Fifteen of the 16 coastal policies have some enforceable authorities.

³ Including DES Wetlands Bureau, DES Wastewater Engineering Bureau, Department of Fish and Game, Division of Ports and Harbors, Department of Resources and Economic Development, and Department of Cultural Resources.

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the various state agencies that administer the permitting standards and overall policies that compose NHCP.

IV. REVIEW FINDINGS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

1. Staff

New Hampshire Coastal Program (NHCP) staff are responsible for the program's daily operations and management. The evaluation team was impressed by NHCP's staff and their achievements, many of which are described throughout this document. NHCP staff are dedicated, knowledgeable, accessible and responsive. During the review period, NHCP staff maintained a high level of performance while managing heavy workloads. Their commitment to and enthusiasm for their work have gained respect for NHCP among its many partners. A clear understanding of current threats to the state's coastal resources and a strong focus on priority coastal issues are evident in NHCP's results-oriented approach to coastal management.

During the review period, NHCP experienced a relatively high rate of staff turnover,⁴ which slowed the program's momentum for several months. At the time of the evaluation site visit, however, NHCP had made significant progress in staffing by filling several positions with highly-qualified individuals. Staff at the time of the site visit included the Program Manager, Executive Secretary, Coastal Restoration Coordinator, Federal Consistency Coordinator, Communications Coordinator, Grants Coordinator, Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Program Coordinator, a NOAA Coastal Management Fellow and two interns. The staff have a strong vision for the future of the coastal program. Their vision incorporates a watershed approach to balancing the preservation of New Hampshire's coastal resources with the social and economic needs of current and future generations.

Accomplishment: NHCP made significant progress in staffing by filling several positions with highly-qualified individuals. The staff is committed and enthusiastic and has a strong vision for the future of the coastal program.

2. Program Location and Structure

Towards the end of the previous review period, NHCP's lead agency, the Office of State Planning, was combined with the Office of Energy and Planning. At that time, all NHCP staff based in Concord were relocated to the NHCP field office in Portsmouth.⁵ In 2004, approximately one year later, NHCP was transferred from the Office of Energy and Planning to the Department of Environmental Services (DES). NHCP became a new

⁴ NHCP lost half of its staff during the review period.

⁵ NHCP's field office in Portsmouth was physically too small to accommodate all the combined staff; only one phone line was available for staff to share, and internet access was limited.

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program section within the DES Watershed Management Bureau. NHCP staff were relocated from the program's field office to the Pease Tradeport in Portsmouth. The move placed coastal program staff with personnel from the DES Wetlands Bureau, Nonpoint Source Management Program and Shellfish Program.

Undergoing two reorganizations and two relocations in two years was very challenging for NHCP. However, it appears that the program's transfer to DES has been positive. Prior to its transfer, NHCP had worked closely with DES, particularly the Wetlands and Watershed Management Bureaus, on issues such as coastal nonpoint source pollution and habitat restoration; thus, NHCP seems to fit well within DES. The evaluation team did not see any evidence of negative effects resulting from NHCP's move to the department. In fact, now that NHCP is a part of DES, collaboration with the department's other programs has increased. For example, NHCP staff noted that their coordination with DES' permitting programs has improved. Additionally, the relocation to Pease Tradeport provided staff with sufficient office space, equipment, services and meeting space that enables the program to host regional meetings. The evaluation team was pleased to note that following NHCP's transition to DES, the program maintained its structure, identity, visibility and ability to coordinate among other programs throughout the department. These factors are critical to NHCP's continued efficiency and effectiveness.

1. Program Suggestion: NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) strongly recommends that NHCP and DES work together to ensure that NHCP continues to maintain its structure, distinct identity, visibility and ability to coordinate among other programs throughout DES.

3. Program Boundary Expansion

As noted previously, OCRM approved NHCP in three phases. The Ocean and Harbor Segment was approved in May 1982 and covers the Atlantic coast from Seabrook to the Portsmouth Harbor line. The Great Bay Segment, approved in September 1988, expanded the program to cover all areas under tidal influence, including the lands that border Great Bay, Little Bay, and several tidal estuarine rivers and wetlands. During the current review period, OCRM approved an expansion of NHCP's inland boundary to include the jurisdictional borders of New Hampshire's 17 tidal municipalities.

NHCP's latest boundary expansion represents a significant accomplishment for the program. The previous boundary had been approved in two separate segments. The first segment provided a wider landward margin from the Atlantic Ocean, Great Bay and the lower Piscataqua River than the second segment, which included only wetlands and banks of estuarine rivers. The Atlantic Ocean coastal boundary from Seabrook to Portsmouth did not meet on its landward side with the landward side of the tidally influenced areas and Great Bay and Little Bay coastal boundaries, resulting in a gap between the two coastal boundaries.

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During the prior review period, NHCP determined that a boundary expansion was appropriate and had public and governmental support. The program submitted a request for a program amendment to OCRM in 2003. OCRM approved the boundary expansion in 2004, making the landward coastal boundary coterminous with the political boundaries of New Hampshire's 17 coastal municipalities. The seaward boundary was not changed.

The boundary expansion has several benefits. It provides greater predictability and less confusion about the exact location of NHCP's jurisdiction. In the past, the previous boundaries had been challenged when determining the necessity of federal consistency reviews. Because the expanded boundary now coincides with political boundaries, NHCP can invoke federal consistency regulations with more certainty. The expansion also allows worthy projects that had been located in the "coastal boundary gap" to be funded. Additionally, the expanded boundary permits NHCP to enhance program management and to address indirect impacts more comprehensively.

Accomplishment: NHCP received approval to expand its inland boundary to include the jurisdictional borders of New Hampshire's 17 tidal municipalities. The expansion has resulted in several significant benefits for the program.

During the evaluation site visit, NHCP stated several times that the program's watershed approach to coastal management had moved NHCP's efforts "up the watershed" during the review period. As a result, the program regularly encounters planning efforts and projects that it views as relevant and valuable to coastal management, but that fall outside the program's boundary. Because such initiatives are not located within the program boundary, NHCP is unable to provide them with funding. NHCP indicated that the program's inability to provide funding to important efforts outside the program boundary had increasingly become a concern during the review period. In response, the evaluation team noted that a boundary expansion could potentially resolve the issue. However, given that the program recently expanded its boundary, and that boundary expansions are time- and resource-intensive, the evaluation team recognized that another boundary expansion might not be timely or feasible during the next review period. It was agreed that NHCP and OCRM would work together on this issue during the next review period.

2. Program Suggestion: NHCP and OCRM should cooperatively explore options for addressing the program's desire to provide funding to projects that it views as relevant and valuable to coastal management, but that fall outside the program boundary. Options should include potential expansion of the program boundary.

4. Program Planning

Strategic Plan

NHCP experienced a number of significant changes during the review period, including fluctuations in federal funding, a programmatic move to DES, a physical move to a new office and staff turnover. Partially due to these events, NHCP undertook a

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comprehensive strategic planning effort to determine the most effective methods of serving the program's constituents during 2006-2010. The strategic plan identified several key priorities and strategies:

1. Improve New Hampshire's management of ocean resources.
 - Increase knowledge of New Hampshire's ocean resources to provide information needed to implement current policies;
 - Participate in regional ocean-related organizations and task forces in order to leverage other efforts to protect coastal resources; and
 - Develop and implement new ocean and coastal policies that improve New Hampshire's ability to respond to proposals for new and different offshore uses.
2. Improve science-based decision-making in local communities.
 - Increase community planning to protect water resources;
 - Provide funding to organizations that assist communities with planning and data collection, compilation and interpretation; and
 - Empower volunteer monitoring groups to ask and answer questions that are locally and regionally useful to decision makers.
3. Protect and restore natural habitats in the coastal watershed.
 - Participate in developing, revising and implementing state policies that protect coastal resources;
 - Support restoration through both financial and technical assistance; and
 - Shift from salt marsh restoration to other types of habitat restoration and protection.
4. Build NHCP's capacity to carry out its mission.
 - Build program visibility;
 - Seek collaboration with a wide range of partners;
 - Proactively seek funds to implement new initiatives identified in the strategic plan; and
 - Implement internal changes identified during the strategic planning process.

NHCP's strategic plan will provide overarching guidance for the program as it continues to evolve. Such planning and guidance will allow NHCP to operate proactively and to respond to challenges and emerging issues more effectively.

Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy

In 1990, as part of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) reauthorization amendments, Congress created the Coastal Zone Enhancement Grants Program. The purpose of the program is to promote significant changes in the management of state coastal resources through innovative projects that result in institutional and legal changes in state coastal zone management programs. In 1991, as part of instituting an Enhancement Grants Program, New Hampshire conducted a detailed assessment of NHCP that identified the state's two priority coastal issues: (1) wetlands protection and restoration; and (2) cumulative and secondary impacts of development. Following the

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assessment, NHCP developed a five-year strategy document that described specific projects to address priority coastal issues.

The Coastal Zone Enhancement Grants Program requires each state periodically to: (1) assess its management program with respect to nine enhancement areas; (2) identify priority management needs; and (3) develop a new multi-year strategy. NHCP conducted assessments and strategies in 1994, 1996 and 2001; each time, the assessment identified wetlands protection and restoration and cumulative and secondary impacts of development as New Hampshire's priority coastal issues. The most recent revision of NHCP's Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy occurred during the current review period. The new assessment ranks wetlands protection and restoration and cumulative and secondary impacts of development as high priorities. The assessment also identified ocean resources as a high priority for NHCP.

New Hampshire's 2006-2010 Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy was developed as part of NHCP's comprehensive strategic planning process that was initiated in 2005. NHCP included stakeholders and partners in its strategic planning effort through surveys and personal interviews. Subsequently, the program participated in facilitated workshops to translate information gained through the stakeholder process into key issues and long-term strategies. After completing the draft assessment and strategy, NHCP held a 30-day public comment period. The program also invited a variety of stakeholders and partners to comment, including the New Hampshire Estuaries Project, the University of New Hampshire's (UNH) Jackson Lab, NOAA's Restoration Center, local conservation commissions, the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game, the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development and the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning. Comments reflected support for the assessment, strategy and management priorities. OCRM approved NHCP's 2006-2010 Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy in September 2006.

Accomplishment: NHCP undertook a timely and comprehensive strategic planning process that incorporated the revision of its Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy. As a result, the program's new strategic plan and Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy are well-integrated and complementary. The strategic plan clearly defines the program's priorities, goals and objectives, while the assessment and strategy describes specific actions and projects that will address NHCP's identified priorities.

5. Grants Management

OCRM awards grants to federally-approved coastal management programs to assist in the implementation and enhancement of those programs. During the review period, NHCP satisfactorily managed its federal funding, achieved desired results from funded tasks and built upon established projects. OCRM also requires coastal management programs to submit semi-annual performance reports for each grant; the reports present consolidated information about accomplishments related to a program's financial assistance awards.

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NHCP submitted performance reports containing necessary information on schedule during the review period.

As the result of several factors, including two program reorganizations in two years, NHCP's internal and external financial records were in disarray when the program moved to DES. During the review period, the Program Manager worked extensively with DES accounting staff and OCRM's New Hampshire Coastal Program Specialist to put all of the program's accounts in order. During the site visit, DES accounting staff noted that several of the processes instituted by the NHCP Program Manager to improve grants tracking and management served as good examples for other managers.

<p>Accomplishment: NHCP worked extensively with DES and OCRM to resolve confusion surrounding its internal and external financial records. The program also established strong grants tracking and management protocols.</p>

B. PUBLIC ACCESS

Nearly 78 percent of New Hampshire's beaches along the Atlantic coast are publicly owned by the state or local communities. While more of Great Bay's shoreline is privately owned, motorized and non-motorized access points as well as trails and wildlife viewing points are widely available. During the review period, NHCP supported the design and creation of new public access opportunities and the improvement of existing public access sites in the coastal area. For example, NHCP funded construction of a boardwalk at Odiorne State Park in Rye. The boardwalk provides public access from the parking lot to the park's trails. Prior to construction of the boardwalk, people walked across the marsh to access the trails. The project also improved a parking area and a boat access site in conjunction with native salt marsh restoration.

NHCP funded construction of a finger pier at the Pierce Island boat launch in Portsmouth. The lack of a pier at the city's only public boat launching facility coupled with the area's water depths and currents made launching boats at the site a challenge. The addition of the pier improves the facility's safety by allowing boaters to secure their watercraft. Additionally, the Pierce Island pier construction was undertaken in conjunction with two related recreational projects: (1) boat ramp improvements at the Pierce Island boat launch; and (2) development of the Portsmouth Canoe and Kayak Water Trail.

During the review period, NHCP also updated the New Hampshire Coastal Access Map, a popular publication last produced in 1999. At the time of the evaluation site visit, the new map was being finalized, and the program expected it to be available in late spring 2007. The map includes: (1) all coastal boat access points; (2) a guide to hiking trails, fishing spots and wildlife-viewing locations; and (3) points of interest such as museums and science and education centers.

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NHCP's Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy has cited the lack of maintenance of and upgrades to existing facilities as the primary impediment to coastal public access in New Hampshire. Most of New Hampshire's beach access facilities were built in the early 1960s and were not designed to accommodate current visitor levels. The Department of Resources and Economic Development's Division of Parks and Recreation is self-funded and relies on user fees; it does not have a capital improvement fund⁶ or long-term maintenance plan for its facilities.

New Hampshire's beaches experience erosion from coastal storms, and yearly beach nourishment is required to ensure public beach access. However, each town has its own resources, and there is no consistent, cooperative effort to understand and to address coastal erosion processes on a regional basis. NHCP has identified a need for local communities and the Division of Parks and Recreation to collaborate regionally on beach erosion.

Another complicating factor is that no single agency is responsible for tracking all coastal access information and providing it to the public. Instead, several agencies track different types of access. For example, the Office of Energy and Planning maintains a draft database of public access points to the water. However, the list does not include other types of coastal access such as trails, boardwalks or interpretive centers. The Department of Fish and Game maintains a list of boat launches and fishing access points. These tracking systems overlap in some ways but not in others, making it difficult to track the overall availability of coastal public access in New Hampshire.

NHCP has ranked public access issues such as facilities maintenance and beach erosion as a medium priority for the program. NHCP plans to continue working on public access and will assess whether future program changes will be required. Specifically, NHCP will focus on: (1) developing and conducting a survey of New Hampshire residents' perceptions of coastal access; (2) working with the Department of Resources and Economic Development to develop a long-term beach facilities maintenance plan; and (3) exploring ways to fund research on coastal sediment transport processes.

C. COASTAL HABITAT

1. Habitat Restoration

NHCP implements a strong habitat restoration and monitoring program. NHCP emphasizes coordination with partners such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and UNH to bring together the skills and expertise necessary to conduct scientifically-based restoration and monitoring. Several examples of NHCP's restoration and monitoring efforts are described below.

⁶ At times, NHCP's Enhancement Grants Program has provided funding to assist the Division of Parks and Recreation with public access facilities' maintenance and upgrades.

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Salt Marsh Restoration and Monitoring

NHCP continues to be a leader in community-based salt marsh restoration. During the review period, the program worked with local communities to restore approximately 75 acres of salt marsh. NHCP received more than a million dollars in special federal grant funds for salt marsh restoration, and the program also leveraged hundreds of thousands of dollars in other grant funds and in-kind services.

NHCP had a key role in the restoration of Awcomin Marsh in Rye during the review period. The project removed the equivalent of 9,000 dump trucks of fill from the marsh and created a new tidal creek system and open water habitat. In addition to restoration work, the partners built a boardwalk and two viewing platforms to provide recreational access to the marsh while minimizing adverse impacts. The successful completion of the Awcomin Marsh restoration was the culmination of almost six years of planning and construction. Project partners included the Town of Rye, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), UNH, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership and Conservation Law Foundation.

While restoration projects are very popular, surprisingly few of them are monitored afterwards. Without monitoring, restoration practitioners cannot evaluate the success of individual projects, compare projects, or predict potential outcomes of future projects. NHCP recognizes that monitoring is a critical component of restoration, and in addition to being a leader in salt marsh restoration, the program also is recognized throughout New England for its rigorous restoration monitoring program. NHCP and Ducks Unlimited implement the “New Hampshire Marsh Monitors,” a structured volunteer monitoring program based on Gulf of Maine Council protocols.⁷ Through the program, UNH researchers lead teams of volunteers in collecting high-quality data on salt marsh hydrology, salinity, vegetation, birds and fish. The primary goal of the Marsh Monitors is to track restoration projects’ effectiveness in reestablishing salt marshes’ natural functions, processes and characteristics. The program’s secondary goal is to engage the community in learning about salt marsh ecology and restoration. The volunteer monitoring program has collected five years of data that is used to evaluate the effectiveness of restoration projects.

River Restoration and Monitoring

Throughout the Gulf of Maine, restoration practitioners are removing dams, replacing undersized and impassable culverts, and improving fish and aquatic species passage. Common goals for river barrier removal projects include restoring watershed connectivity and improving conditions for native species. All of New Hampshire’s coastal rivers have dams at head-of-tide, most of which no longer serve a useful purpose, block anadromous fish passage and threaten public safety. NHCP has facilitated river restoration in estuarine environments by providing technical and financial assistance. For example, NHCP, in partnership with the River Restoration Task Force, led feasibility studies for

⁷ “Salt Marshes of the Gulf of Maine: Long-term monitoring to assess human impacts and ecological condition” by the Gulf of Maine Council Habitat Monitoring Subcommittee and the Science Translation Project.

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the Bellamy River Dam and the Winnicut Dam. The Bellamy River Dam was successfully removed in 2004. At the time of the evaluation site visit, NHCP was developing an engineering scope of services for the removal of the Winnicut Dam. River restoration and dam removal projects like the Bellamy River and Winnicut provide a unique opportunity to reestablish anadromous fish access to coastal rivers. Due to the success of these projects, NHCP has proposed a new program focusing on river restoration. Additionally, NHCP is working with NOAA as well as with state and provincial agencies' staff from the United States and Canada to develop a framework for monitoring river barrier removal projects. Once completed, the framework will provide guidance for restoration practitioners across the Gulf of Maine.

Great Bay Estuarine Restoration Compendium

During the review period, NHCP and the New Hampshire Estuaries Project provided funding for the Great Bay Estuarine Restoration Compendium,⁸ which was developed by The Nature Conservancy. The compendium is the first comprehensive look at restoration priorities in Great Bay that includes multiple habitats and species such as oyster reefs, soft-shell clam beds, salt marshes, eelgrass, shoreline buffers and diadromous fish. The project comprised: (1) a review of historic and current distributions of habitats and species; (2) an examination of results from ecological models; and (3) interviews with experts to identify target areas where restoration efforts would likely be most successful. Containing both a report and a geographic information system (GIS) database, the resulting compendium identifies the highest priorities for restoration and provides information on restoration techniques. NHCP and the New Hampshire Estuaries Project jointly released a request for proposals for restoration projects based on the compendium.

Wetland Mitigation Rules

NHCP collaborated with the DES Wetlands Bureau to develop rules and procedures for wetland mitigation. The new rules allow for land conservation as an alternative to wetland mitigation or restoration. NHCP also worked closely with DES, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the New Hampshire Estuaries Project to identify mitigation opportunities in coastal communities.

Invasive Plant Control and Monitoring

During the review period, NHCP participated in the New Hampshire Coastal Invasives Partners. The group includes the towns of Rye, Hampton, and New Castle, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rockingham County Conservation District, New Hampshire Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The partnership's goal is to leverage the technical and financial resources of each partner in order to control and monitor invasive plants on sites of high ecological value, such as coastal salt marshes. The New Hampshire Invasives Partners have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for invasive plant control. In the future, the partnership will endeavor to form a cooperative weed management area, an administrative structure commonly used in western states to manage invasive species.

⁸ http://www.nhep.unh.edu/resources/pdf/great_bay_restoration-tnc-06.pdf

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Accomplishment: NHCP implemented strong salt marsh and river restoration programs that emphasized partnerships, science-based decision making and long-term monitoring.

2. Land Acquisition

The Department of Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Act of 2002⁹ directed the Secretary of Commerce to establish a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses.” CELCP gives priority to lands that can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value. Each coastal state that submits grant applications under CELCP must develop a NOAA-approved CELCP Plan.

During the review period, NHCP prepared and submitted New Hampshire’s draft CELCP Plan to OCRM. The plan identifies priority conservation areas for New Hampshire’s coastal watershed. NHCP developed its draft CELCP Plan primarily through partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the Rockingham Regional Planning Commission and the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. NHCP contracted with these partners to develop “The Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire’s Coastal Watersheds.” This plan addresses watersheds’ ecological and conservation values and was incorporated into New Hampshire’s draft CELCP Plan.

Accomplishment: In collaboration with its partners, NHCP prepared and submitted New Hampshire’s draft CELCP Plan to OCRM.

D. WATER QUALITY

In 1990, Congress established the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (CNPCP), which works within the framework of existing Coastal Zone Management Programs developed under the CZMA and Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Programs developed under the Clean Water Act. Two of the CNPCP’s key purposes are to strengthen the links between federal and state coastal zone management and water quality programs and to enhance state and local efforts to manage land use activities that degrade coastal waters. NOAA and USEPA must approve each state’s coastal nonpoint program.

NOAA and USEPA approved the New Hampshire Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (NHCNPCP) in 2000. The NHCNPCP: (1) provides technical assistance to local governments and the public; (2) establishes mechanisms to improve coordination among state and local agencies; (3) offers opportunities for public participation in the program; and (4) implements management measures that address agriculture, forestry, urban areas, marinas, hydromodification, and wetlands and riparian areas. One of the

⁹ Public Law 107-77.

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nonpoint program's primary goals is to develop cooperative projects that promote participation of a wide range of local and regional stakeholders. In fact, NHCP provides much of the coastal nonpoint pollution control funding it receives from OCRM to communities and local groups as pass-through grants, and the majority of the NHCNPCP's implementation occurs at the local level through voluntary actions or programs. Examples of the nonpoint program's projects during the review period follow.

Pet Waste Reduction Project

In 2004, the NHCNPCP funded a microbial source tracking study that identified dogs as a potential source of contamination at several stream sites with persistently high bacteria counts. As a result of the study, the nonpoint program and the DES Watershed Assistance Section launched a "scoop the poop" pilot outreach campaign targeted at residents of a neighborhood located upstream of one of the sampling sites. A local "Dog Waste Action Committee" used community-based social marketing to develop pet waste management activities such as storm drain stenciling, youth education programs, an art contest, a "scoop the poop" pledge for dog owners and media outreach.

In 2006, the nonpoint program and USEPA provided funding to the City of Dover for a city-wide "scoop the poop" project. Many of the activities conducted during the 2004 pilot outreach campaign were included in the project. Additionally, the city's Parks and Recreation Department placed plastic bag dispensers and disposal containers in areas where local residents noted persistent pet waste problems. As a result of the success of Dover's pilot and city-wide outreach campaigns, the NHCNPCP and DES Watershed Assistance Section developed a guidance manual for implementing a pet waste reduction campaign.

Coastal Biological Monitoring

The nonpoint program collaborated with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to launch a multi-year urbanization and stream quality study in 2001. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of urbanization on small streams in the coastal watershed. The NHCNPCP and USGS conducted water quality and biological indicator sampling between 2001 and 2003. A report summarizing the study results was published and distributed to local decision-makers in 2005. The following year, the nonpoint program worked with USGS and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to present the results to local citizens and community planners. The goal of the public workshop was to provide individuals with the rationale, science and tools needed to protect small streams. A follow-up stream buffer workshop is planned for 2007.

During the review period, the NHCNPCP and the DES Biology Section began piloting a Volunteer Biological Assessment Program. Starting with the Cochecho River Watershed Coalition in 2005, the program expanded in 2006 to include the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee and the Oyster River Watershed Association. More than 40 volunteers were trained in sampling methods. At the time of the evaluation site visit, staff anticipated that each of the three watershed groups would receive a final report and public presentation with sampling results and recommendations in late 2006.

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Natural Resources Outreach Coalition

Most land use decisions are made at the local level, typically by volunteer board members whose expertise in natural resource management ranges from novice to expert. The Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC) is a collaborative among several state, regional and non-profit organizations¹⁰ that provides guidance and technical assistance to help communities address the impacts of growth on natural resources. NROC offers education to community decision makers and interested residents about land use decisions and their effects as well as facilitation skills to help them identify how they might manage growth in the future. Communities apply for NROC assistance annually and, if selected, they and NROC commit to working together for at least one year. NROC's support is tailored to each community's specific needs.

The NHCNPCP provides funding for and administers NROC's Local Implementation Grants Program. Nonpoint program staff work closely with towns and NROC's partners to develop grant proposals. Grant-funded communities have conducted educational outreach campaigns, developed open-space plans, compiled natural resource inventories, identified criteria for conservation priorities, and raised funds for land conservation.

In 2005, the NHCNPCP funded researchers from Plymouth State University to assess NROC's effectiveness. The researchers' evaluation found NROC to be a valuable and cost-effective program that provides many benefits to communities. One of NROC's major strengths cited in the evaluation is the coalition's ability to connect people with the resources and guidance they need. Another strength of the program is its emphasis on project follow-through with municipalities. At the time of OCRM's evaluation site visit, NROC was addressing recommendations from its evaluation by improving its programmatic structure, marketing and fundraising.

Coastal Watershed Technology Enhancements

During the review period, the NHCNPCP determined that municipalities and transportation agencies in the coastal watershed needed assistance with development of technology-based infrastructure mapping and management programs. In response, the nonpoint program initiated two projects:

- NHCNPCP funding and technical assistance enabled the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish and administer a GIS-based system for mapping and tracking DOT drainage infrastructure in the coastal watershed. Using the new electronic system, DOT can map the location of infrastructure and record information such as condition, type, outfall and direction of flow. The data will be available through New Hampshire's GIS system. The nonpoint program worked in partnership with USFWS GIS and cartography staff to provide global positioning system and GIS training to DOT field staff.

¹⁰ NROC comprises representatives of the following agencies and organizations: UNH Cooperative Extension, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, NHCP, DES, New Hampshire Estuaries Project, New Hampshire Sea Grant, Rockingham Planning Commission, Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission and Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

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- The NHCNPCP provided funding to the UNH Technology Transfer Center to develop a GIS-based infrastructure mapping and data management system for municipalities. The Town of Epping piloted the product, which will be refined and made available state-wide. The Technology Transfer Center also offered training in how to use the software and data collection tools.

Technical Assistance

Because the majority of nonpoint management measures are implemented at the local level, providing timely and relevant technical assistance to local governments and other stakeholders is critical to the NHCNPCP's effectiveness. During the review period, the nonpoint program emphasized technical assistance in two primary areas: (1) erosion and sediment control; and (2) project planning and proposal development.

In New Hampshire's seacoast region, stormwater management authority resides with municipalities. Unfortunately, minimal comprehensive, standardized training is available for town officials, many of whom have little experience with the key planning, approval and enforcement issues relevant to erosion and sediment control. Additionally, volunteer town officials and town board members change frequently and require continuing training. During the review period, the nonpoint program began working with the UNH Technology Transfer Center, DES and USEPA to develop erosion and sediment control training for local decision-makers. The goal of the training is to improve understanding of stormwater runoff and erosion and sediment control among coastal community officials, landowners, professional engineers, land surveyors and others that provide site design and inspection services. Once initial workshops are held, the training will be offered annually state-wide.

The NHCNPCP also began collaborating with Sea Grant and DES Watershed Assistance staff to offer a two-day workshop in project planning and proposal development in order to address the need to improve these skills among stakeholders. The training will follow a performance-based decision-making approach to project development. If the initial workshop's evaluations are positive, additional workshops will be offered.

Accomplishment: NHCP significantly contributed to the execution of the NHCNPCP by providing funding and staff resources for efforts such as the pet waste reduction project, coastal biological monitoring, NROC, coastal watershed technical enhancements and technical assistance workshops.

E. COASTAL HAZARDS

In its 2006 Enhance Grants Program Assessment and Strategy, NHCP identified coastal hazards as a medium-level priority for the program. While certain parts of the New Hampshire coast¹¹ are susceptible to coastal flooding, storm surge and erosion, these hazards are episodic and do not cause significant problems in the coastal area. New Hampshire's primary coastal hazards are the result of the built environment, such as

¹¹ Particularly the Hampton and Seabrook beach areas.

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houses, sewage infrastructure and roads, intersecting with low-lying coastal areas. Development has filled or encroached on what used to be coastal wetlands and salt marshes, rendering them unable to absorb stormwater runoff from greater numbers of roads, roofs and driveways. As a result, flooding of low-lying roads occurs more frequently.

New Hampshire manages coastal hazards through the Office of Emergency Management and DES with tools such as the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, Alteration of Terrain permits and wetlands permits. However, the majority of impacts are incurred in individual housing developments or lots. While these developments are too small to qualify individually for much DES oversight, the cumulative impact of all the developments' impervious surfaces on wetlands is large. The Office of Emergency Management and Regional Planning Commissions assist communities with identification of hazards and development of hazard mitigation plans. Although many coastal communities have developed hazard mitigation plans, gaps remain. For example, there is a need for communities to adopt land-use ordinances that meet or exceed state standards. Additionally, a lack of public understanding of the costs of inappropriate development persists. NHCP plans to continue seeking opportunities to address coastal hazards issues.

F. COASTAL DEPENDENT USES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

One of NHCP's key initiatives is its grants program, which provides financial opportunities for local communities, nonprofit organizations, state agencies, public school districts and research institutions. The program offers both competitive grants and technical assistance grants. NHCP awards competitive grants each year directly to coastal communities and locally based non-governmental organizations for projects in the areas of resource planning and management, education and outreach, and construction and acquisition. Most projects address multiple issues, such as public access and nonpoint source pollution. Examples of projects funded through NHCP's Competitive Grants Program are described below.

The Tides of Change, University of New Hampshire

The UNH Center for Integrative Regional Problem Solving and the Complex Systems Research Center partnered to integrate information collected from historical aerial photographs and data sets from Strafford and Rockingham Counties. The data supports a model that predicts future development patterns.

What Goes Down Comes Around, LifeWise Community Projects, Inc.

In 2005, LifeWise volunteers taught 63 water resources education classes to approximately 1,380 students and members of the public. The program, "Future Water Guardians of New Hampshire," targeted those with little prior knowledge of the water cycle and watersheds. The curriculum included nonpoint source pollution and groundwater model demonstrations.

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Down by the River, Town of Newmarket

During the review period, construction continued on a downtown riverfront walkway along the Lamprey River in Newmarket. The riverwalk will connect the boat landing and Waterfront Park to Water Street, providing public access to downtown shops and restaurants.

Educational Cargo, Gundalow Company

Between 1650 and 1900, flat-bottomed sailing barges known as gundalows carried freight to the riverfront towns of Great Bay. In 2005, the *Captain Edward Adams*, a gundalow that serves as an educational platform throughout the Piscataqua Region, hosted guest speakers that addressed regional coastal issues. More than 400 individuals participated in the educational series during the gundalow's stops in Portsmouth, Exeter, Newfields, Rye, Dover, Durham and Stratham. Additionally, more than 350 students attended onboard programs.

Restoration Planning by Computer, Ducks Unlimited

During the review period, a new restoration planning tool that allows officials from the Town of Rye to access data relevant to salt marsh restoration and management was developed. The tool can be used to view historic restoration project areas in conjunction with considerations such as tidal restrictions superimposed on aerial photography of Rye. The information is useful for prioritization of potential restoration areas.

In addition to competitive grants, NHCP also awards annual technical assistance grants to the Rockingham Regional Planning Commission in Exeter and the Strafford Regional Planning Commission in Dover. The grants allow the planning commissions' professional staff to provide technical assistance to communities for specific projects associated with community master plans and local development ordinances. During the evaluation site visit, regional planning commission and local government officials gratefully acknowledged NHCP's technical and financial support. The program's technical assistance grants improve local capacity to make appropriate and qualified decisions about land use and enhance the level of planning designed to protect and preserve New Hampshire's coastal resources. It was clear to the evaluation team that NHCP's Competitive and Technical Assistance Grants Programs are well-run and address priority issues such as public access and nonpoint source pollution. During the site visit, the evaluation team heard positive comments about the grants programs and the work they have facilitated.

<p>Accomplishment: NHCP runs Competitive and Technical Assistance Grants Programs that provide money at the local level for projects such as public access, land-use planning, acquisition and restoration.</p>
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The evaluation team and NHCP also discussed ways that the Competitive and Technical Assistance Grants Programs could be further improved. For example, while recipients of competitive grants are required to submit a final report to NHCP following completion of their projects, currently there are no reporting guidelines regarding the format or content of final reports. Reporting guidelines would provide NHCP with final project

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information that is standardized and more easily comparable. Additionally, because NHCP awards technical assistance grants to the Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commissions every year, the evaluation team agreed that it would be appropriate for NHCP to explore slightly more predictable and efficient funding mechanisms for providing technical assistance to the regional planning commissions.

3. Program Suggestion: NHCP should develop reporting guidelines for recipients of its Competitive Grants Program. Final project reports should contain standard information such as total project cost. NHCP should also explore mechanisms other than the grants process for providing annual technical assistance funds to the Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commissions.

G. GOVERNMENT COORDINATION AND DECISION-MAKING

1. Federal Consistency

The CZMA’s federal consistency provision is a major incentive for states to join the National Coastal Zone Management Program. It is also a powerful tool that states use to manage coastal uses and resources and to facilitate cooperation and coordination with federal agencies. The provision imposes a requirement on federal agencies conducting, licensing, or funding activities that have reasonably foreseeable effects on any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of a state’s federally-approved coastal management program.

Federal consistency reviews are the responsibility of the lead state agency that implements or coordinates the state’s federally-approved coastal management program. NHCP is responsible for finalizing all federal consistency decisions in New Hampshire. The program is required to “uniformly and comprehensively apply the enforceable policies of the state’s management program, efficiently coordinate all state coastal management requirements, and to provide a single point of contact for federal agencies and the public to discuss consistency issues.”¹² To fulfill these obligations, NHCP is networked with other state agencies that help implement the program’s enforceable policies and conduct reviews of federal activities occurring in the coastal zone. The program also coordinates the review of federal activities with local governments, regional planning commissions, non-governmental organizations and the public.

NHCP implemented its federal consistency authority in accordance with program procedures and the requirements of CZMA §307 during the review period. Additionally, NHCP undertook several initiatives to strengthen application of the federal consistency process:

¹² In accordance with 15 CFR §930.6.

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New Federal Consistency Public Participation Procedures

Federal consistency regulations require coastal management programs to provide for public participation during the review of consistency determinations and certifications. Historically, NHCP relied exclusively on the public notices and meetings of its partner agencies to meet its public participation obligations. However, in 2006, NHCP began placing monthly consistency public notices in the *Portsmouth Herald* and on its website to ensure that the requirements of federal consistency regulations are met.

Federal Consistency Guide Updates

In 1998, NHCP produced its first Federal Consistency Guide describing the process for submission of federal consistency determinations to the program. NHCP successfully completed a major update of its Federal Consistency Guide in 2005. The program also revised the guide again in August 2006 to incorporate federal consistency regulation changes that took effect earlier in the year.

Federal Consistency Webpage Improvements

NHCP significantly improved its federal consistency webpages¹³ during the review period. The program updated the federal consistency page by adding links to the NHCP Federal Consistency Guide, the New Hampshire Coastal Zone Map, and NHCP's list of enforceable policies. NHCP also updated the Dredge Management Task Force page by providing links to meeting agendas and minutes. The program created a new page that describes recent program amendments and routine program changes. The page also includes a link to NHCP's 1988 Final Environmental Impact Statement. NHCP developed a public notices page that provides detailed information about activities requiring federal consistency review. Additionally, the program created a coastal and ocean policy page that includes information about NHCP's 2005 Coastal and Ocean Wind Energy Meeting. The page will also serve as a primary location for information regarding the program's future coastal and ocean policy endeavors.

New England Federal Consistency Workshop

During the review period, NHCP hosted a New England Federal Consistency Workshop that was facilitated by OCRM. Approximately 60 staff members from state and federal agencies attended the meeting. The workshop provided an overview of: (1) the CZMA's federal consistency provision; (2) recent changes to federal consistency regulations; and (3) current federal consistency issues particularly relevant to New England's coastal programs.

<p>Accomplishment: NHCP strengthened its application of the federal consistency process by: (1) instituting new federal consistency public notification procedures; (2) updating the program's Federal Consistency Guide; (3) improving the federal consistency webpages; and (4) hosting a New England Federal Consistency Workshop.</p>
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¹³ http://www.des.state.nh.us/Coastal/Federal_Consistency.html

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During the site visit, the evaluation team and NHCP also discussed ways that federal consistency implementation could be further improved. For example, staff noted that while approximately 90 percent of all direct federal activities requiring consistency review are related to fisheries, NHCP has only one broad fisheries enforceable policy.¹⁴ Given that fisheries regulations have the potential to adversely impact New Hampshire's commercial fishing fleet, NHCP has questioned whether it should create a fisheries enforceable policy based on economic impacts. Additionally, while NHCP has emphasized early coordination in federal consistency implementation, some agencies' determinations routinely lack the level of information necessary to allow for an adequate and timely consistency review. For example, certain agencies' determinations often fail to relate probable coastal effects to the program's enforceable policies. At the time of the site visit, NHCP indicated that it was working with other New England states to explore approaches to addressing this issue. Although NHCP has ultimately been successful in resolving incomplete determinations on a case-by-case basis, improved cooperation would greatly facilitate the consistency review process.

4. Program Suggestion: NHCP and OCRM should work together to identify options, including a regional approach, for improving cooperation among federal agencies regarding federal consistency implementation.

2. Regional Ocean Governance

NHCP places great emphasis on regional approaches to ocean issues and continues to be a leader in regional ocean governance. During the review period, NHCP participated extensively in several significant regional efforts, including those described below.

Northeast Regional Ocean Council

As the result of an initiative by the Governor of Rhode Island, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers signed a resolution to create a Northeast Regional Ocean Council in August 2005. The Council's purpose is to: (1) facilitate the development of more coordinated and collaborative regional goals and priorities and to improve responses to regional issues; and (2) work directly with the President's Council of Advisors on Ocean Policy to communicate regional needs at the national level and better address issues of national importance in the Northeast on the implementation of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan.

Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment

The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment is a U.S.-Canadian partnership of government and non-government organizations working to maintain and enhance environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine to allow for sustainable resource use by existing and future generations. The Council: (1) organizes conferences and workshops; (2) offers grants and recognition awards; (3) conducts environmental monitoring; (4) translates science to management; (5) raises public awareness about the Gulf; and (6) connects people, organizations and information.

¹⁴ Manage, conserve and, where appropriate, undertake measures to maintain, restore and enhance fish and wildlife resources.

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Northeast Regional Coastal Zone Management Meeting

NHCP hosted the 2006 Northeast Regional Coastal Zone Management Meeting. Coastal managers from Maine to Virginia attended the meeting to discuss pressing regional coastal management issues. The group shared approaches to addressing coastal hazards, vulnerability assessments, and tools available to help coastal communities become more resilient. States discussed different strategies for addressing cumulative and secondary impacts of development, and how they may learn from each other when developing approaches over the next five years. The Cooperative Institute of Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology shared results from its Stormwater Center and discussed barriers to improving the implementation of stormwater control technologies. The meeting wrapped up with a kickoff visioning session to gather thoughts from the Northeast on the future direction of the CZMA. Specifically, the group considered priorities within the Coastal Zone Management Program, the merits of increased interstate collaboration, and how best to work with local governments.

Accomplishment: NHCP is a leader in regional ocean governance. The program played a key role in several significant regional efforts, including the Northeast Regional Ocean Council, Gulf of Maine Council and the 2006 Northeast Regional Coastal Zone Management Meeting.

3. Program Visibility and Communications

Recognizing that citizen involvement is critical to the protection of New Hampshire's coastal resources, NHCP has developed a strong program visibility and communications component. The philosophy behind NHCP's approach to visibility and communications is that outreach is an integral part of each of NHCP's projects and initiatives. The program uses a wide variety of methods to foster increased public participation through heightened awareness of coastal issues. Several examples of NHCP's communications work follow.

NHCP Electronic Newsletter, The Rip Tide

NHCP is the only program at DES with an electronic newsletter. *The Rip Tide*, the program's bi-monthly e-newsletter, has been well received since the first issue was published in March 2005. *The Rip Tide* reports on locally-relevant information such as grant announcements, new resources and planning tools, and upcoming workshops and events. NHCP's e-newsletter is unique because it features stories written in a journalistic style. Each issue includes a story on a direct NHCP activity, one on a NHCP partner activity, and one on a coastal issue. For example, topics for stories have included NHCP's Trash to Art Event, the New Hampshire Marsh Monitors and red tides. At the time of the evaluation site visit, *The Rip Tide* had approximately 340 subscribers.

NHCP Print Newsletter, Tidelines

During the review period, NHCP published three issues of its print newsletter, *Tidelines*, and a fourth issue was scheduled for release in the fall. *Tidelines* is published twice a year and is also posted on NHCP's website. The newsletter has a distribution list of approximately 900, and it is available at a variety of events and workshops, as well as at

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DES' information kiosks in Concord and Portsmouth. At the time of the evaluation site visit, NHCP was working to shift *Tidelines'* focus from news articles to thematic pieces that provide in-depth explorations of key topics. NHCP also plans to make *Tidelines* a more visually engaging piece by including more photographs and design elements and printing it on magazine paper.

“Carry It, Don't Bury It” Campaign

The “Carry It, Don't Bury It” Campaign focused on the proper disposal of cigarette butts. The campaign included distribution of cigarette butt disposal stations at area beaches and development of a campaign website with links to more information. The campaign resulted in television, radio and newspaper coverage. NHCP staff noted that one of the key aspects of the campaign was building relationships with non-traditional partners from DES and outside organizations.

Communications Goals and Central Messages

During the review period, NHCP developed a marketing and communications strategy that introduces and reiterates the program's mission to serve coastal communities by providing direct services, funding and information. The key message focuses on NHCP as a resource. The program's communications goals include: (1) increasing awareness of NHCP's projects and coastal issues in the communities it serves; (2) increasing communities' use of the program's services; (3) further defining and expanding target audiences; (4) customizing publications and website content and organization; (5) developing outreach programs that meet constituents' needs; (6) increasing collaboration with project partners on outreach campaigns; and (7) ensuring that NHCP retains its program visibility both internally and externally.

Exhibits, Events and Educational Activities

Discover Wild New Hampshire Day: In April 2006, NHCP set up a collaborative exhibit with the DES Beach Program to educate people about keeping beaches clean. Staff talked with members of the public about the importance of picking up pet waste and handed out dog treats with tags describing how to properly dispose of pet waste.

Coastal Cleanups: Through several NHCP-supported programs, volunteers regularly clean up trash and other marine debris along New Hampshire's coastline. The volunteers also record their findings, which helps coastal decision-makers to determine which pollution laws are working and whether additional outreach is needed.

Trashformation: As part of the 2005 Annual Coastal Cleanup, NHCP hosted a trash-to-art event to highlight the issue of marine debris. A professional artist worked with approximately 50 participants to create a community-built sculpture from some of the trash that was collected during the cleanup. The trash sculpture, or “trashformation,” was displayed with accompanying pictures and an explanation of the event at DES' main office in Concord for three weeks.

The Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation: The Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation conducts educational programming with funding support from NHCP.

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During the first half of 2006, Blue Ocean Society staff spoke to more than 4,000 students and families through field trips aboard the *M/V Thomas Leighton* and presentations at venues and events such as the Portsmouth Farmer's Market and Portsmouth Children's Day.

Accomplishment: NHCP has developed a thoughtful and strategic approach to communications that has improved program visibility. Outreach is an integral component of each of NHCP's projects and initiatives. NHCP uses a variety of media as well as personal contact to educate and inform the public about New Hampshire's coastal resources.

4. Partnerships

The evaluation team was very impressed with NHCP's successful coordination with other programs both within DES as well as with external state, local, academic, industrial and private agencies and organizations. Evaluation participants uniformly praised the program's expertise and collaborative approach as well as the work achieved as a result of NHCP's assistance. These findings contain many examples that highlight NHCP's coordination with its partners. Through partnerships with other agencies and organizations, NHCP is strengthened by pooling the resources and expertise of many different groups. The program's proactive approach to coordination by involving partners early in processes and projects improves efficiency and allows potential problems to be addressed before they escalate. The emphasis that NHCP places on collaboration with its partners is clearly one of the strengths of the program.

Accomplishment: NHCP regularly engages in many diverse partnerships. The program successfully coordinates with other programs both within DES as well as with external state, local, academic, industrial and private agencies and organizations.

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V. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated herein, I find that New Hampshire is adhering to the programmatic requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act and its implementing regulations in the operation of its federally-approved New Hampshire Coastal Program (NHCP).

NHCP has made notable progress in the following areas: staffing, program boundary expansion, program planning, grants management, habitat restoration, land acquisition, water quality, coastal dependent uses and community development, federal consistency, regional ocean governance, program visibility and communications, and partnerships.

These evaluation findings also contain four recommendations. The recommendations are all in the form of Program Suggestions. The evaluation team did not identify any Necessary Actions. The Program Suggestions should be addressed before the next regularly-scheduled program evaluation, but they are not mandatory at this time. Program Suggestions that must be repeated in subsequent evaluations may be elevated to Necessary Actions. Summary tables of program accomplishments and recommendations are provided in Appendix A.

This is a programmatic evaluation of NHCP that may have implications regarding the state's financial assistance awards. However, it does not make any judgment on or replace any financial audits.

/s/ David M. Kennedy
David M. Kennedy
Director, Office of Ocean and
Coastal Resource Management

April 16, 2007
Date

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VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A. Summary of Accomplishments and Recommendations

The evaluation team documented a number of NHCP’s accomplishments during the review period. These include:

Issue Area	Accomplishment
Staff	NHCP made significant progress in staffing by filling several positions with highly-qualified individuals. The staff is committed and enthusiastic and has a strong vision for the future of the coastal program.
Program Boundary Expansion	NHCP received approval to expand its inland boundary to include the jurisdictional borders of New Hampshire’s 17 tidal municipalities. The expansion has resulted in several significant benefits for the program.
Program Planning	NHCP undertook a timely and comprehensive strategic planning process that incorporated the revision of its Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy. As a result, the program’s new strategic plan and Enhancement Grants Program Assessment and Strategy are well-integrated and complementary. The strategic plan clearly defines the program’s priorities, goals and objectives, while the assessment and strategy describes specific actions and projects that will address NHCP’s identified priorities.
Grants Management	NHCP worked extensively with DES and OCRM to resolve confusion surrounding its internal and external financial records. The program also established strong grants tracking and management protocols.
Habitat Restoration	NHCP implemented strong salt marsh and river restoration programs that emphasized partnerships, science-based decision making and long-term monitoring.
Land Acquisition	In collaboration with its partners, NHCP prepared and submitted New Hampshire’s draft Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan to OCRM.
Water Quality	NHCP significantly contributed to the execution of the New Hampshire Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program by providing funding and staff resources for efforts such as the pet waste reduction project, coastal biological monitoring, the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition, coastal watershed technical enhancements and technical assistance workshops.
Coastal Dependent Uses and Community Development	NHCP runs Competitive and Technical Assistance Grants Programs that provide money at the local level for projects such as public access, land-use planning, acquisition and restoration.

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Federal Consistency	NHCP strengthened its application of the federal consistency process by: (1) instituting new federal consistency public notification procedures; (2) updating the program’s Federal Consistency Guide; (3) improving the federal consistency webpages; and (4) hosting a New England Federal Consistency Workshop.
Regional Ocean Governance	NHCP is a leader in regional ocean governance. The program played a key role in several significant regional efforts, including the Northeast Regional Ocean Council, Gulf of Maine Council and the 2006 Northeast Regional Coastal Zone Management Meeting.
Program Visibility and Communications	NHCP has developed a thoughtful and strategic approach to communications that has improved program visibility. All outreach is developed as the communications component of each of NHCP’s projects and initiatives. NHCP uses a variety of media as well as personal contact to educate and inform the public about New Hampshire’s coastal resources.
Partnerships	NHCP regularly engages in many diverse partnerships. The program successfully coordinates with other programs both within DES as well as with external state, local, academic, industrial and private agencies and organizations.

In addition to the accomplishments listed above, the evaluation team identified several areas where NHCP could be strengthened. Recommendations are in the form of Program Suggestions. The evaluation team did not identify any Necessary Actions. Areas for improvement include:

Issue Area	Program Suggestion
Program Location and Structure	1. OCRM strongly recommends that NHCP and DES work together to ensure that NHCP continues to maintain its structure, distinct identity, visibility and ability to coordinate among other programs throughout DES.
Program Boundary Expansion	2. NHCP and OCRM should cooperatively explore options for addressing the program’s desire to provide funding to projects that it views as relevant and valuable to coastal management, but that fall outside the program boundary. Options should include potential expansion of the program boundary.
Coastal Dependent Uses and Community Development	3. NHCP should develop reporting guidelines for recipients of its Competitive Grants Program. Final project reports should contain standard information such as total project cost. NHCP should also explore mechanisms other than the grants process for providing annual technical assistance funds to the Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commissions.
Federal Consistency	4. NHCP and OCRM should work together to identify options, including a regional approach, for improving cooperation among federal agencies regarding federal consistency implementation.

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Appendix B. NHCP's Response to 2004 Evaluation Findings

#1. Necessary Action: Within six months of the date of these evaluation findings, the lead coastal agency must hire or otherwise appoint a full-time coastal program manager who has access to state and lead agency administration on behalf of NHCP, managerial responsibility for the coastal program, and supervisory responsibility for NHCP staff. This Necessary Action does not, in any way, identify or impose any conditions with regard to the position level or classification or any salary requirements.

Ted Diers was appointed as Acting Coastal Program Manager in February 2004. He was promoted to full-time Coastal Program Manager in September 2004.

#2. Program Suggestion: NHCP should continue its efforts to maintain and increase program visibility through its outreach and other activities. Such efforts could investigate new or different mechanisms to produce and print hard copy documents and materials that are made available to the public and need to continue to be distributed in that format (including ways to continue paper production of *Tidelines*) and could produce a shorter, more frequently published electronic newsletter. NHCP should have a direct link from the Office of Environmental Planning website to provide and maintain program visibility.

Staff developed a bimonthly e-newsletter, *The Rip Tide*, in March 2005. At the time of the evaluation site visit, seven issues had been published. A short e-mail "tease" is sent out to a distribution list of more than 340 subscribers with a link to the PDF of the newsletter and a link to the resources and publications page of the NHCP website.

Each issue connects readers to timely information specific to coastal planning in New Hampshire, including grant announcements, new resources and planning tools, and upcoming workshops and events. In each issue, *The Rip Tide* also covers three stories written in a journalistic style. Past stories have included NHCP's "Trash to Art Event," the New Hampshire Marsh Monitor Program and red tides.

The Rip Tide's targeted audience is coastal decision-makers and nongovernmental organizations that deal with coastal issues. Press is also on the distribution list, and several of the newsletter's stories have been picked up by area newspapers, further increasing program visibility.

At the time of the evaluation site visit, NHCP had also published three issues of the *Tidelines* newsletter. A fourth issue was slated for release in September 2006. The newsletter is published twice a year in hardcopy form. It is also posted on NHCP's website.

In addition to a distribution list of approximately 900, the newsletter is distributed at events and workshops and is available at the Department of Environmental Service's

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kiosks in Concord and Portsmouth. At the time of the evaluation site visit, *Tidelines* was shifting from covering news stories to thematic issues that explore one topic of interest in depth. The thematic issues will contribute to program visibility while providing collateral for other outreach efforts. The first thematic issue was about performance measures and was scheduled for release in late September 2006.

#3. Program Suggestion: With regard to program visibility and outreach as it relates to the planning commissions and coastal municipalities, the NHCP should consider contract requirements for press releases and news notes that acknowledge the role of NHCP in a funded project. NHCP should also consider hosting or working with the regional commissions to host a conference, event, or information exchange about the grant work and projects being undertaken in the region, with grant recipients providing information about their ongoing or completed projects and the coastal program providing general and specific information, brochures, publications, etc.

As of fiscal year 2006, grant contracts with planning commissions, municipalities and others require grantees to provide a press release on the funded project and to recognize NHCP's contribution. Staff is available to assist the grantees in the development and distribution of these press releases. The advantage of staff assistance results in professionally-written press releases more likely to be picked up by the press. In addition, as a result of NHCP staff assistance, the press releases will include a NHCP staff quote, making a NHCP mention both more likely to be kept than omitted by an editor and more engaging than relying on a "this program funded this" approach. Lastly, staff developed a program description to be used at the bottom of all press releases, helping to brand the program both internally and in the public eye.

#4. Program Suggestion: NHCP should continually evaluate the coastal zone management funds it annually awards to the Department of Environmental Services, particularly in the areas of basic staff and program support that the state of New Hampshire has an expectation or obligation to fund, regardless of the Department of Environmental Services' role as a member of the networked coastal program.

Since moving to the Department of Environmental Services, NHCP has witnessed a true respect for OCRM funds and the positions that they support. The requests for positions at the department were reduced by one in 2005, and will drop by two more in 2007. In addition, the way that the department budgets for these positions has changed significantly. NHCP now pays for each position directly rather than through the other sections, bureaus and accounts. NHCP's Program Manager has direct access to all the accounting information at the department and can approve all charges to that account. As a result, the amount of OCRM funds being used to support Department of Environmental Services' personnel has dropped even though the cost of each position has increased significantly (primarily related to rising benefits expenses).

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Appendix C. People and Institutions Contacted

State of New Hampshire Representatives

Name	Title	Affiliation
Catherine Coletti	Communications Coordinator	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Ted Diers	Program Manager	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Liz Durfee	Intern	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
George Fields	NOAA Coastal Management Fellow	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Beth Lambert	Coastal Restoration Coordinator	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Dave Murphy	Grants Coordinator	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Mary Power	Executive Secretary	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Sally Soule	Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program Coordinator	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Miles Waniga	Intern	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Chris Williams	Federal Consistency Coordinator	DES New Hampshire Coastal Program
Rick Chormann		DES Geological Unit
Paul Currier	Watershed Administrator	DES Watershed Bureau
Evan Lewis		DES Wetlands Bureau
Deb Loiselle	Dam Removal Coordinator	DES Dam Bureau
Pamela Matott	Account Manager	DES
Dave Price		DES Wetlands Bureau
Frank Richardson		DES Wetlands Bureau
Carolyn Russell	Environmental Quality Impact Planner	DES Commissioner's Office
Mike Walls	Assistant Commissioner	DES
Dori Wiggin		DES Wetlands Bureau
Eric Williams		DES
Peter Wellenberger	Reserve Manager	NH Department of Fish and Game – Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

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Local Government Representatives

Name	Title	Affiliation
Glenn Greenwood		Rockingham Regional Planning Commission
Cliff Sinnott		Rockingham Regional Planning Commission
Cynthia Copeland	Executive Director	Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Linda Osburn	Bookkeeper	Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Laurel Cox		Town of Lee
Bob Cushman	Assistant Planner	Town of Greenland
Julie Lund		Town of Exeter
Theodore Tocci	Selectman	Town of Hampton Falls

Federal Agency Representatives

Name	Title	Affiliation
Eric Hutchins		National Marine Fisheries Service
Mark Kern		U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Rich Roach		U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Keith Robinson		U.S. Geological Survey
Dwight Trueblood	NOAA Co-Director	Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology

Academic Representatives

Name	Title	Affiliation
Dave Burdick	Research Associate Professor	UNH Department of Natural Resources
Troy Hartley	Research Assistant Professor	UNH Department of Resource Economics and Development
Steve Jones	Director	UNH Center for Marine Biology
Dave Kellam	Project Coordinator	UNH New Hampshire Estuaries Project

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Rich Langan	Director	Cooperative Institute of New England Mariculture and Fisheries
Jon Pennock	Director	New Hampshire Sea Grant

Nongovernmental Organization Representatives

Name	Title	Affiliation
Amanda Stone	Coordinator	Natural Resources Outreach Coalition
Mark Zankel		The Nature Conservancy

Others

Name	Title	Affiliation
Grant Bosse	Staff Director	National Ocean Policy Study, Senate Commerce Committee
Kelle MacKenzie	Education Coordinator	Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Rachel Stevens	Stewardship Coordinator	Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

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Appendix D. People Attending the Public Meeting

No one attended the public meeting.

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Appendix E. OCRM's Response to Written Comments

OCRM did not receive any written comments regarding the New Hampshire Coastal Program during the course of the evaluation.