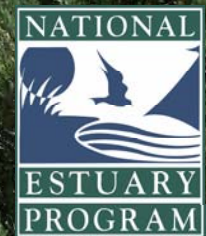
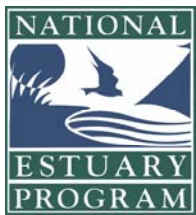


The National Estuary Program

A Network Protecting and Restoring Coastal Ecosystems





National Estuary Program Overview

Established in 1987 under the Clean Water Act Amendments, the National Estuary Program (NEP) is a successful community-based program designed to restore and maintain the water quality and ecological integrity of estuaries of national significance. The NEP uses an effective watershed-based ecosystem planning approach to connect upstream pollution sources with downstream impacts.

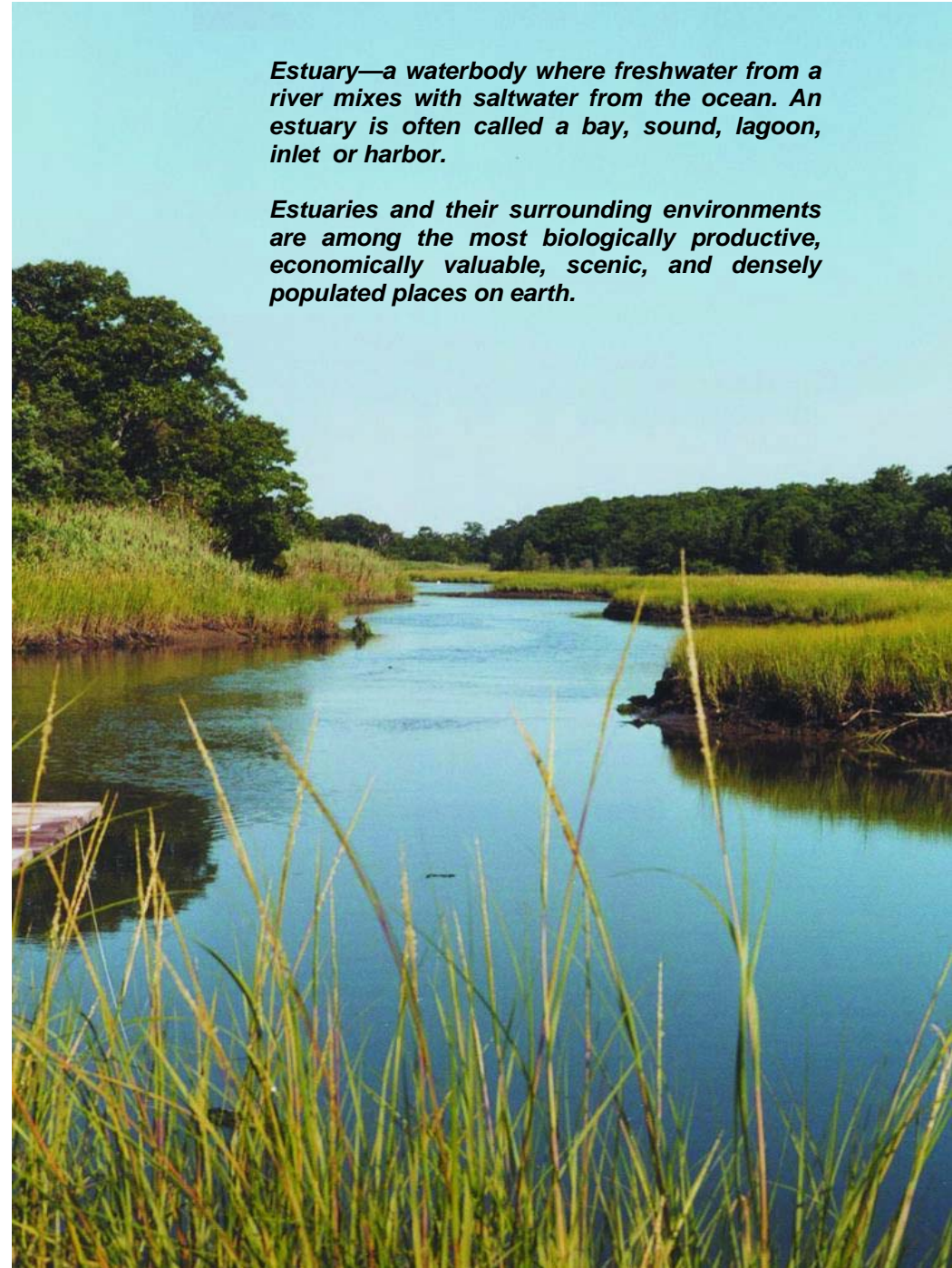
A unique voluntary program, it operates through partnerships among Federal, State, and local agencies; nonprofit organizations; industry; academia; environmental and business groups; and community residents. The EPA provides technical and financial assistance, and management guidance to these partnerships. There are 28 NEPs across the country, each led by a director and staff who work in concert with these key stakeholders.

Each NEP creates and carries out a plan, called a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The plan has specific actions designed to improve water quality, habitat, and living resources. The NEP stakeholders are fully involved in the development of the CCMP and implementation of its actions. Actions in each plan may be of a regulatory nature, or employ innovative management approaches which are transferable to other coastal watersheds.

The NEPs target a broad range of issues in their CCMPs, such as loss of wetlands, leaking septic systems, stormwater runoff, and introduction of invasive species. To determine the effectiveness of actions, NEPs are required to conduct monitoring and analysis of environmental data collected. The NEPs can then modify their actions if they are not achieving the desired results. The NEPs also fully engage the public through outreach and education efforts, including the dissemination of these results to the public.

Estuary—a waterbody where freshwater from a river mixes with saltwater from the ocean. An estuary is often called a bay, sound, lagoon, inlet or harbor.

Estuaries and their surrounding environments are among the most biologically productive, economically valuable, scenic, and densely populated places on earth.





NEP 20th Anniversary!

The NEP has made significant achievements in implementing effective and innovative management solutions for the benefit and protection of water quality and living resources in some of our Nation's most important estuaries over the last 20 years.

This success is a result of the strong partnerships formed within each NEP, and the critical efforts made by these local stakeholders. EPA recognizes and applauds these partners, and the many citizen volunteers who have worked so diligently over the years.

The following principles have guided and will continue to guide the work of the NEP:

- *Build on traditional water quality control measures and tailor them to specific places and communities*
- *Use the watershed as a geographic unit for management decisions*
- *All stakeholders participate as equal partners—employ a collaborative approach to problem-solving (consensus-building)*
- *Include the public in every stage of the decision-making process*
- *Make decisions on sound science but take early action where feasible*
- *Set measurable goals and objectives and monitor effectiveness of actions taken*
- *Use adaptive management—the process of monitoring and adjusting if goals and objectives are not being met*
- *Transfer lessons learned to others*

Join us in celebrating the success of our National Estuary Program! EPA looks forward to continuing our effective partnership for years to come!

Benjamin H. Grumbles
EPA Assistant Administrator for Water

NEPs make a difference by...

- Achieving on-the-ground environmental results
- Implementing the Clean Water Act and tackling complex water quality issues
- Informing the local community and fully engaging the public in priority-setting and problem-solving
- Obtaining significant funding by leveraging resources
- Identifying national emerging contaminants, issues and trends
- Improving coastal science and integrating findings into management decisions
- Serving as the state-of-the-art national coastal watershed model

A recent study found the networks in NEP areas span more levels of government, integrate more experts into policy discussions, nurture stronger interpersonal ties between stakeholders, and create greater faith in the procedural fairness of local policy than other comparable estuaries.*

**Building Consensual Institutions: Networks and the National Estuary Program, M. Schneider et. al., American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 47. No 1, January 2003*



Overall Health of the NEPs

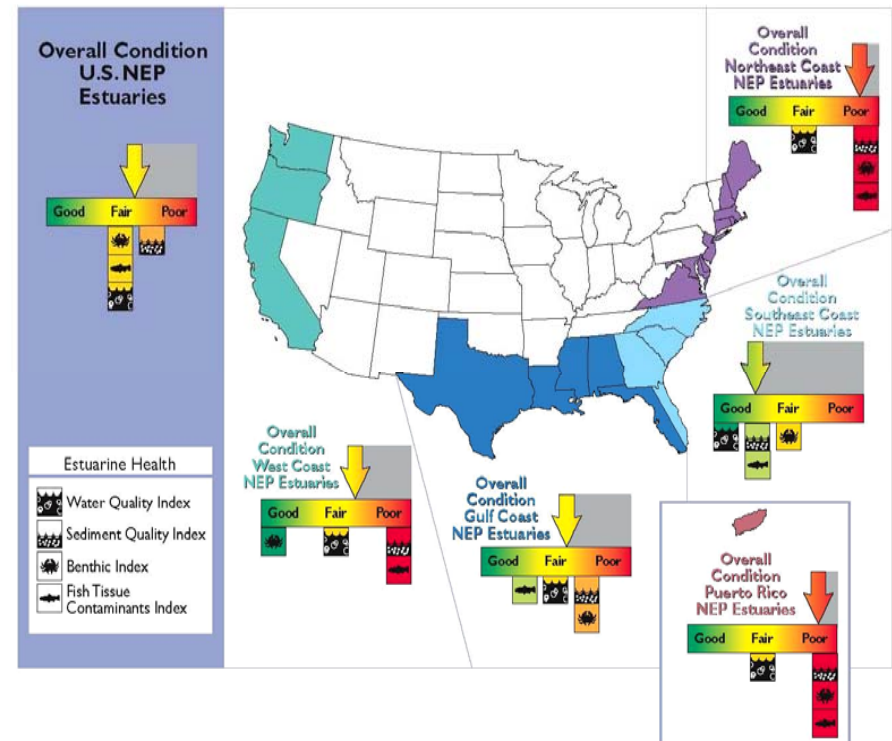
According to the NEP Coastal Condition Report,* an assessment of conditions in the NEP estuaries, population pressures in the NEPs were greater than those in non-NEP estuaries from 1990-2000.

Yet, the NEP estuaries showed the same or better estuarine conditions than our coastal waters overall. The overall condition of the nation's NEPs is fair. This rating is based on four key indicators of ecological health: water quality, sediment quality, benthic community condition, and fish tissue contaminants.

For each of these four key indicators, a score of good, fair, or poor was assigned to each NEP. These ratings were then averaged to create overall regional and national scores, illustrated in the adjacent map, using "traffic light" color scoring.

These estuarine monitoring data were collected as part of EPA's National Coastal Condition Assessment and provide a "snapshot" of conditions in the NEPs. The ratings developed in the report are based solely on the National Coastal Condition Assessment data.

The individual NEPs collect other monitoring data over a longer time period and at more sampling stations that further enhance the picture of conditions in their estuaries.



*2007 NEP Coastal Condition Report EPA-842-B-06-001



NEP Environmental Results

Habitat Protection and Restoration



The increasing concentration of people living along the coast is placing stress on estuaries and their surrounding areas. This results in a loss in the quantity and quality of those habitats. The NEPs have implemented wide-ranging actions to address habitat

loss and degradation, as well as to permanently protect and restore these valuable areas. These actions are carried out by the NEPs and their many Federal, State and local agency partners. **Since 2000 alone, NEPs and their partners have protected and restored over 1 million acres of habitat.**

Examples of Protection efforts:

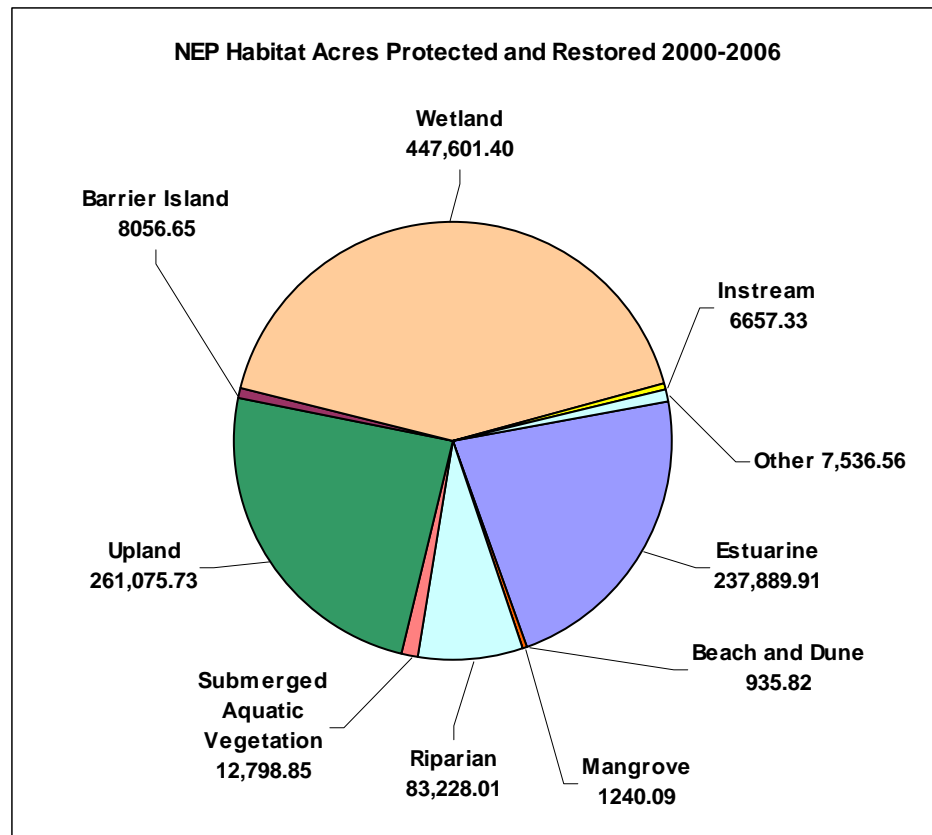
- land acquisition or purchase
- conservation easements

Examples of Restoration actions:

- creating wetlands
- removing or replacing culverts
- constructing artificial reefs
- repairing or replacing tidegates
- installing fish ladders or weirs
- restoring beach nesting areas
- removing invasive vegetation, or planting native vegetation



Habitat Types and Acreage Protected and Restored by the NEPs 2000-2006





NEP Leveraged Funds

Leveraging Resources

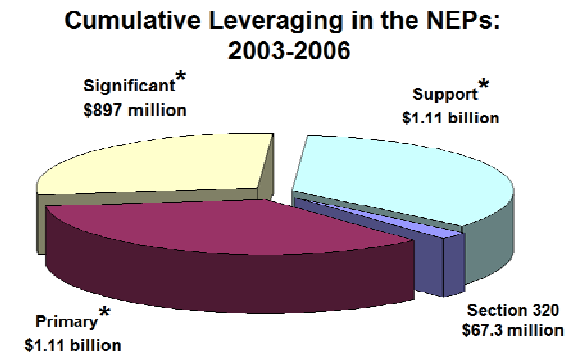
EPA encourages and promotes the adoption of sustainable financing strategies by each of the 28 NEPs. The NEPs receive Federal funding each year authorized under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act. These core funds enable the NEPs to raise additional dollars and to obtain additional in-kind resources from other government agencies, private entities, nonprofit organizations, and individuals.

The funds raised are used to implement the NEPs' CCMPs. By leveraging EPA money into additional funds, the NEPs are able to accomplish much more and give their organizations a more stable financial foundation.

By developing strategic alliances with implementing partners, the **NEPs have leveraged approximately \$16.50 for every \$1 of EPA funding** (where NEPs played a primary role in obtaining the funding). As a result, nearly \$1.11 billion has been generated through individual, private, local, State and Federal partnerships to support implementation of CCMPs since 2003. This money is raised from annual membership appeals, grants, license plate revenues, fines and penalties, taxes, and intergovernmental agreements.

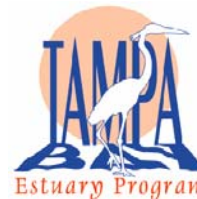
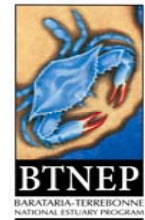
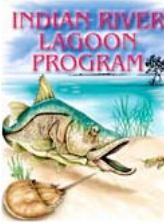
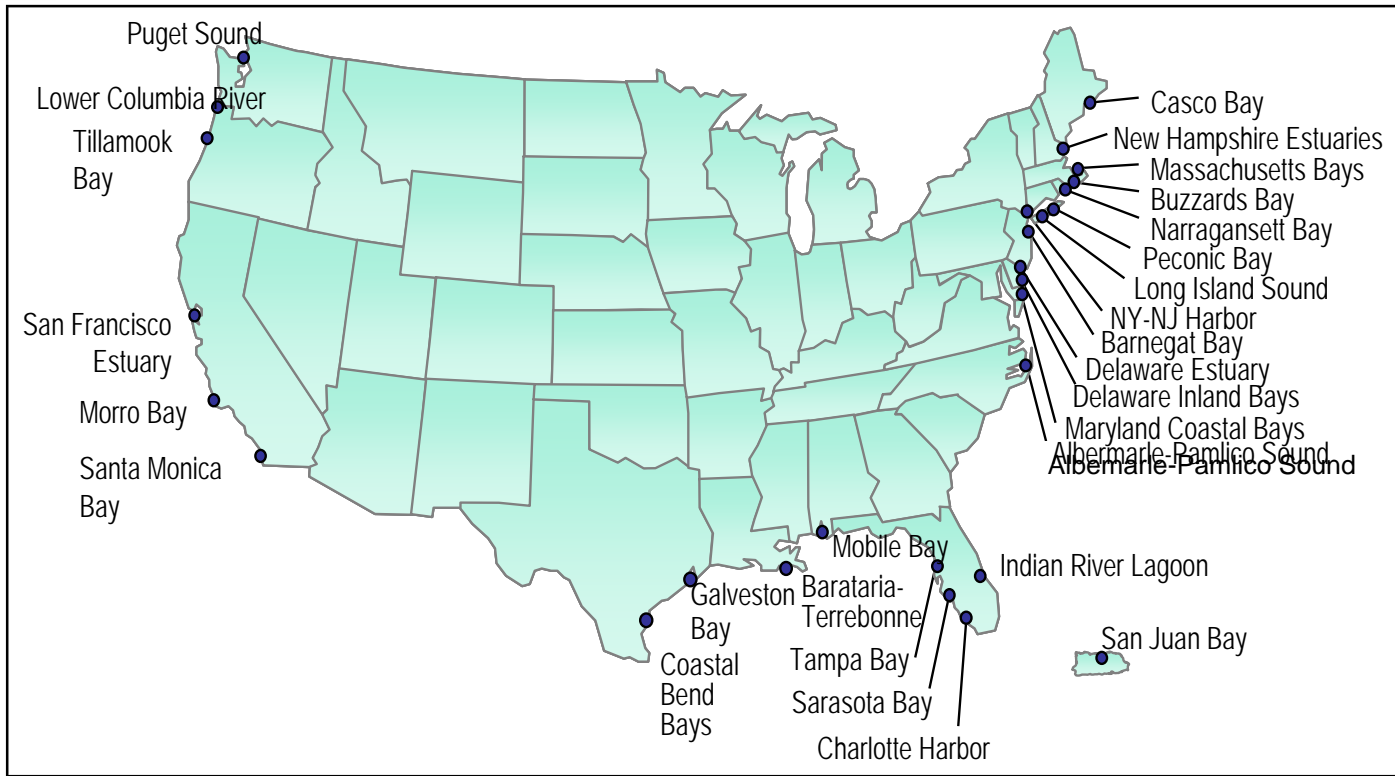
The NEPs successfully leverage federal seed money by:

- developing finance plans that identify and evaluate funding sources and financing strategies to implement their priority actions
- building strategic alliances with implementing partners to obtain their financial support
- demonstrating environmental results that convince stakeholders that the NEPs are effective, can be trusted with their resources, and will give them credit for their contributions
- providing seed money or staff to initiate and develop new funding sources



*Describes role of NEP (rather than NEP partners) in obtaining the resources

Locations and logos of the 28 NEPs



A PROGRAM OF THE TREP



***For more information
contact:***

*US EPA
Coastal Management Branch
Oceans and Coastal Protection Division
Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds
Mail Code 4504T
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460*

*Phone: 202-566-1260
Fax: 202-566-1336
Log onto www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries*

EPA 842F07002



Photographs courtesy of:

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Delaware Center for the Inland Bays Program
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Galveston Bay Estuary Program
Indian River Lagoon Program
Maryland Coastal Bays Program
Massachusetts Bays Program
Morro Bay National Estuary Program
New Hampshire Estuaries Project
Santa Monica Restoration Commission
Tampa Bay Estuary Program
Tillamook Estuaries Partnership
Texas Parks and Wildlife
Aerographics
Byron Chamberlin
Donna Bollenbach
Malcolm Brenner

Don Best
Lisa Nash
Joe Costa
John McShane
Chris Solloway
Nanette O'Hara
Maran Hilgendorf
Sally Boswell
Dave Wilson
Cheryl Lesinski
Scott Jones
Dave Kellam
Karen Young
Ed Garland
Gary Raulerson
Rick Balla
Nancy Laurson