

Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program

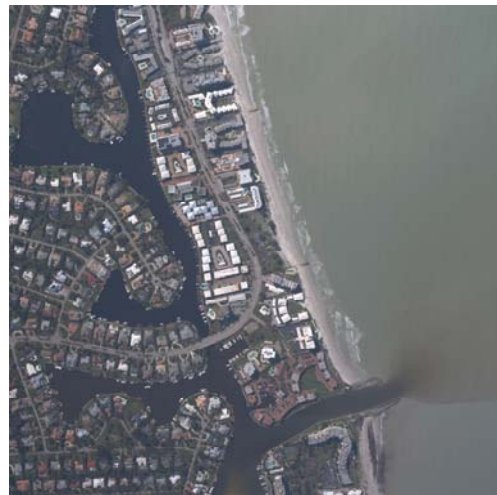
Reducing polluted runoff to coastal waters

The Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program improves coordination between state coastal managers and water quality experts to reduce polluted runoff to coastal waters.

Nonpoint Source Pollution

Coastal waters are an extremely valuable resource. They provide us with food, recreational opportunities, commerce pathways and solace. However, they are under increasing pressures from a growing coastal population—half the nation's population now lives along the coast.

Although we have significantly reduced point source pollution—pollution discharged directly from pipes, such as from a factory or a sewage treatment plant—nearly half of our coastal waters are still degraded. Today, nonpoint source pollution—diffuse sources of runoff from lawns, roadways, farms, construction sites and leaking septic tanks—poses the largest threat to coastal water quality in the United States.



The Program

The Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program was established by Congress in 1990 under Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments (CZARA) and is jointly administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Coastal Nonpoint Program represents a comprehensive approach to polluted runoff,

recognizing that all land-use activities in coastal watersheds can have impacts on estuaries, beaches, marine resources and the ocean. The Program is fundamentally about improved coordination and pollution prevention, seeking to build partnerships and networks that facilitate the implementation of appropriate methods to limit polluted runoff before problems occur.



Program Objectives

The Coastal Nonpoint Program builds upon existing state coastal zone management and water quality programs by applying a consistent set of economically achievable management measures to prevent and mitigate polluted runoff.

These measures are designed to control runoff from six main sources:

- forestry,
- agriculture,
- urban areas,
- marinas,
- hydromodification (shoreline and stream channel modification), and
- loss of wetlands and riparian areas.

State coastal nonpoint programs implement the measures and provide accountability through a variety of tools, including rules, ordinances, voluntary approaches, educational campaigns and financial incentives, all backed by enforceable policies and mechanisms. In addition, state Coastal Nonpoint Programs also have a monitoring and tracking component to assess management measure implementation.



Accomplishments

The Coastal Nonpoint Program works with state coastal zone management and water quality programs to reduce polluted runoff in a number of ways. Some highlights include:

Clean Marinas

The Coastal Nonpoint Program has supported the development and implementation of Clean Marina Programs throughout the coast. The Clean Marina Program is a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to improve marina and recreational boating facilities management while reducing polluted runoff from marina and boating activities. The program encourages practices such as environmentally sound vessel maintenance, spill prevention, and proper sewage disposal.



Over twenty coastal and Great Lakes states are now implementing some type of Clean Marina Program and others are working to develop programs.

Strengthening State, Territory, and Local Capabilities

The Coastal Nonpoint Program supports many projects to build capacity among state, territory, and local institutions to better plan for and manage growth in the coastal zone. For example, states are encouraged to invest in Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) programs to help local decision-makers better under-



stand the relationship between land use decisions and water quality impacts. Other capacity building efforts have included workshops, guidance documents, analytical tools, and direct one-on-one assistance developing local ordinances and land use plans.

State Program Successes

The Massachusetts Coastal Nonpoint Program is promoting low impact development and open space. The Program has supported several projects to curb polluted runoff from urban areas including the implementation of a newly updated Open Space Residential Design ordinance in three cities and towns in the Merrimack Valley region. The new model ordinance promotes low impact development, land planning, and site-design practices that simultaneously conserve and protect land and water resources, while reducing infrastructure costs. As a result of this project, all three towns have adopted the new Open Space ordinance.

The South Carolina Coastal Nonpoint Program is helping local governments address septic systems. The Program initiated a Capacity Building

Grant Program for Local Governments in order to provide municipalities with the incentive and financial assistance to proactively address nonpoint source pollution issues and educate the public on needed policy changes. In the pilot year of this grant, the Program funded projects that focused on the development of on-site sewage disposal system (OSDS) model ordinances, OSDS maintenance and inspection programs, and public education initiatives surrounding OSDS.

For more information

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