



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Coastal Program

Success on the New England Coast



Caring for Our Coastal Habitats



*Moonstone Beach, protected as part of the South Shore Phase II project.
Photo by Andrew Milliken/USFWS*

Rhode Island South Shore Phase II

The South Shore of Rhode Island, part of the Atlantic flyway, is a critical area for migratory birds and coastal fishes due to the mix of freshwater wetlands, uplands, salt ponds, and tidal habitats. It is also an area that is undergoing tremendous development pressure and change. On September 28, 1998, Jamie Rappaport Clark, Director of the USFWS, hosted by U.S. Senator from

Rhode Island, John Chafee, came to Viall Farm, in North Kingston, Rhode Island, near the headwaters of the Narrow River, to announce the approval of a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. This grant gives the go-ahead for acquiring land in, or adjacent to,

Rhode Island's focus sites in the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The South Shore Phase II project, along with the grants for 3 other related habitat protection projects, will make available \$7,052,000 to protect, in perpetuity, over 1,450 acres of crucial coastal habitat in Rhode Island. These wetlands and associated upland habitats will provide habitat for 66 priority waterfowl and other bird species.

The grant application was developed by many partners, including the Narrow River Land Trust, the Rhode Island Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and the town of North Kingstown, with lots of support and technical assistance from the Service's Southern New England-New York Bight Coastal Program office.

USFWS Director Jamie Rappaport Clark and U.S. Senator John Chafee announce NAWCA grant to protect coastal habitat in Rhode Island. USFWS photo



These coastal places are home to: pied-billed grebe, American bittern, least bittern, black-crowned night-heron, little blue heron, snowy egret, great egret, great blue heron, glossy ibis, king rail, sora, American oystercatcher, *piping plover, upland sandpiper, *roseate tern, least tern, *bald eagle, northern harrier, *peregrine falcon, marsh wren, New England bluet, bog copper, Hessel's hairstreak, Eastern pond mussel, lampmussel, coastal swamp amphipod, New England thoroughwort, bushy rockrose, creeping St. John's-wort, northern blazing-star, Long's bitter-cress, salt-marsh pink, swamp pink, slender arrowhead, umbrella grass, long-beaked bald sedge, swamp bulrush, tiny-flowered sedge, tall beaked sedge, reticulated nut-rush, Smith's bulrush, pink tickseed, water lobelia, horsetail spikerush, small-beaked spikerush, dwarf huckleberry, Plymouth marsh pink, Carolina redroot, weak rush, northern gamma-grass, wild rice, swamp cottonwood, mudwort.

**Federally listed species protected under the Endangered Species Act*



Viall Farm, protected through the efforts of local landowners in partnership with the Service's Coastal Program. Photo by Andrew MacLachlan/USFWS

"It was like fireworks going off." Motivated by the rising pressures of suburban sprawl, a handful of families who owned land along streams emptying into the Narrow River began to express interest in preserving their property from development. They approached the local chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for help. TNC advised them to talk with their neighbors and show them, by example, how preservation—in concert with others on adjoining properties—could make a significant contribution to the Narrow River and its inhabitants.

As neighbors spoke to one another, they formed groups interested in preserving open space—not otherwise planned for, or protected, by the existing county plan. These groups worked together to write what turned out to be a very successful grant proposal. "It was like fireworks going off," related Marci Caplis, of the Service's Southern New England Coastal Program office, "...initiated by the people themselves."

Once in a Lifetime Opportunity
The South Shore of Rhode Island is an area of great importance to migratory and rare birds, plants, and other species. The Service's Coastal Program was thrilled to apply its habitat data, analytical and GIS capabilities, and partner contacts, to the efforts of the South Shore residents in providing for the future of this area.

As seen in the photos and captions, this is a truly rich landscape full of wild species that enhance both the environmental and cultural quality of human life. The Service is proud to have been—and continues to be—a part of the local citizenry's commitment to protecting these resources for future generations of people and wildlife.



Trustom Pond, a coastal pond that supports numerous bird species, including the black-crowned night heron, marsh wren, and snowy egret. Photo by Andrew Milliken/USFWS