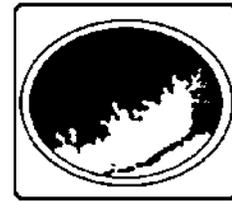




The Coalition for Buzzards Bay



*Buzzards Bay Project
National Estuary Program*



Buzzards Bay Action Committee

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between the Buzzards Bay Project National Estuary Program, the Buzzards Bay Action Committee, and The Coalition for Buzzards Bay

In 1991, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and US EPA approved the Buzzards Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), a blueprint to protect and restore water quality, habitat, and living resources of Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed. This watershed management plan was developed by the Buzzards Bay Project National Estuary Program as part of a collaborative effort of state, federal, and regional agencies working with the municipalities and citizens of Buzzards Bay. A special milestone that led to the approval of the CCMP, was the creation of the Buzzards Bay Action Compact, signed in January 1991 by 12 Buzzards Bay municipalities in support of the draft CCMP. For the first time, these communities united in officially recognizing that “the future of the Bay depended on the ability of neighboring communities to control the quality of their environment through regional communication and cooperation among municipal, state, and federal agencies responsible for managing the Bay and its watershed.” This achievement helped ensure the long-term success of efforts to protect and restore the invaluable water quality and shared resources of Buzzards Bay and its watershed.

After the completion of the Buzzards Bay CCMP, three organizations dedicated themselves toward implementing the goals and recommendations contained in that document. These organizations were the Buzzards Bay Action Committee, a nonprofit organization composed of municipal officials seeking regional strategies for protecting the environment; the Coalition for Buzzards Bay, a nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to the restoration, protection and sustainable use and enjoyment of Buzzards Bay and its watershed; and the Buzzards Bay Project National Estuary Program, a planning and advisory unit within the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management whose mission is to facilitate implementation of the CCMP.

In order to continue our success, these three Buzzards Bay organizations wish to formally recommit our energies to those basic goals contained in the CCMP. These goals included:

- Control stormwater runoff from existing and new sources
- Better management of individual septic systems
- Protect coastal and inland wetlands and marine habitats
- Reduce and eliminate toxic pollution
- Protect and enhance shellfish resources
- Prevent oil pollution
- Protect, enhance, and restore natural ecosystems and habitats such as state mapped core habitats, vernal pools, watershed biodiversity, impaired marine and freshwater wetlands, and anadromous fish runs
- Protect marine and freshwater quality and quantity to ensure plentiful and clean water for people and wildlife.

We agree that our number one environmental priority as a region is to continue to implement the goals of the CCMP. In order to achieve a better exchange of information and ideas to expedite the region’s ability to implement sound and consistent environmental regulations and bylaws, and to assist future planning strategies to protect and enhance the mutual resources of Buzzards Bay and its watershed, we wish to clearly state our collective and individual responsibilities.

Specifically, the Buzzards Bay Action Committee will:

- Act as a liaison between the towns and the Buzzards Bay Project National Estuary Program to facilitate coordination of grant applications based on town needs;
- Work with Planning Boards, Public Works Departments, and Conservation Commissions to more effectively address stormwater management and remediation through improved consistency in developing regional regulations and zoning by-laws and implementation of Phase II stormwater programs;
- Work with Shellfish Departments and Boards of Health to increase shellfish resources for recreation and commercial use;
- Work with municipalities to pursue Clean Vessel Act funds to protect Buzzards Bay water quality;
- Work cooperatively with the Coalition for Buzzards Bay and the Buzzards Bay Project, to review ongoing municipal efforts to address regional goals to implement recommendations in the CCMP;
- Work with municipalities to minimize oil pollution in Buzzards Bay;
- Work with municipalities to address the continued need for household hazardous waste collections.

Specifically, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay will:

- Maintain comprehensive water quality and natural resource monitoring programs, to better understand the Buzzards Bay ecosystem and its response to human-related impacts in order to help identify restoration and protection needs, and to provide up-to-date, accurate information to the Buzzards Bay Project National Estuary Program, Buzzards Bay Action Committee, federal, state and local agencies and the public about the environmental health of Buzzards Bay;
- Increase the rate of land protection and the amount of protected land in the Bay watershed by pursuing a Bay-focused watershed land protection strategy and educating private landowners about land conservation;
- Actively participate in the formation of public policy and pursue the restoration and protection of the Bay ecosystem through direct citizen advocacy and through the regulatory and legal process at the local, state and federal levels;
- Restore bay water quality, habitats and living resources through active programs which identify degraded areas and involve the public in their restoration;
- Provide public education to create an informed public today and a generation of future bay stewards who will understand the Buzzards Bay ecosystem and support its restoration and protection.

Specifically, the Buzzards Bay Project will:

- Provide technical assistance to municipalities, businesses, nonprofits, and other interested parties in their efforts to implement the recommendations contained in the CCMP;
- Help municipalities develop and implement nitrogen management plans, open space plans, environmental regulations and bylaws, and other watershed planning efforts to protect water quality, habitat, and living resources;
- Help towns and land trusts acquire valuable wetlands, habitat, and other open space;
- Assist municipalities with the writing of grant proposals and identifying funding sources for project that help further the implementation of the CCMP;
- Assist the Coalition for Buzzards Bay and the Buzzards Bay municipalities use and interpret the results of the Citizens' Water Quality Monitoring Program and other data;
- Help municipalities and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection evaluate and promote wastewater disposal strategies including the use of alternative onsite systems and community wastewater systems where appropriate;
- Help municipalities and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection identify and implement nitrogen management strategies to meet nitrogen loading limits recommended by the Massachusetts Estuary Program and comparable efforts;
- Assist and train Conservation Commissions in the protection and delineation of inland and coastal wetlands, update wetland bylaws, and identify impaired wetlands for restoration;
- Assist municipal boards acquire and use Geographic Information Systems and other data tracking techniques to assist in local planning and decision-making;
- Help Planning Boards, Boards of Health, and Conservation Commissions address existing and future potential stormwater issues including site plan review, remediation design, implementation of stormwater remediation projects, and to help them adopt Low Impact Development strategies, and effective stormwater regulations and non-regulatory approaches;
- Help municipalities upgrade and restore anadromous fish runs;
- Assist municipalities in their efforts to have adequate oil spill containment equipment and training as a first response until state and federal coordinators are on scene;
- Track and monitor the implementation of the CCMP, and identify new needs and recommend changes to meet CCMP goals.

Mark Rasmussen
Executive Director
Coalition for Buzzards Bay

Joseph E. Costa, PhD
Executive Director
Buzzards Bay Project
National Estuary Program

Leonard Gonsalves
Executive Director
Buzzards Bay Action Committee

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