



# Buzzards Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan 2013 Update



November 26, 2013

Prepared by the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management



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# Acknowledgments

The 2013 update to the Buzzards Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) was built upon the original 1991 Buzzards Bay CCMP, which itself was the product of dozens of individuals, including Buzzards Bay NEP staff, state, and federal agency personnel, and numerous non-governmental contributors. In that regard, a special credit is needed for Bruce Rosinoff, the lead CCMP writer of the 1991 document (and later EPA project manager to the Buzzards Bay NEP until 2004), for designing a well organized and well thought out document that lasted two decades, and which became the template for the current document.

In the new Buzzards Bay CCMP, again many individuals contributed to the update and review of the document. Buzzards Bay NEP Executive Director Dr. Joe Costa was the lead writer and managing editor for the effort. Special thanks to Buzzards Bay NEP staff Tracy Warncke and Sarah Williams, who were the principal editorial reviewers. A special recognition is also needed for the members of the Buzzards Bay Steering Committee, past and present, who defined the overall approach of the 2013 document, and guiding revisions to the goals and objectives of the plan. These individuals include Bruce Carlisle (CZM), Mel Cote (EPA), Steve Halterman and Dave Delorenzo (DEP), Vandana Rao (EEA), Steve Smith and Bill Napolitano (SRPEDD), for the Buzzards Bay Coalition, Mark Rasmussen, Tom Gidwitz, John Ross, and John Bullard, and for the Buzzards Bay Action Committee Elizabeth Leidhold, Jeff Osuch, Jennifer McKay, and Dave Pichette. Other contributors of text to the new management plan include Sarah Williams and John Rockwell of the Buzzards Bay NEP, South Coastal Regional Coordinator David Janik of the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, and Bernadette Taber of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (and detailed to the Buzzards Bay NEP as our stormwater specialist). In 2006, with financial support from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program awarded a contract to the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. to update several key sections of the management plan. These updates included the overview chapter, and action plans for stormwater management, low impact development, smart growth, waterfront management, and managing water withdrawals. Throughout this document, we utilize information and graphics contained in DEP's *Buzzards Bay Watershed 2000 Water Quality Assessment* prepared by Katie O'Brien and Andrea Langhauser at DEP<sup>1</sup>. This report provides an excellent summary of the conditions and regulatory status of resources in the Buzzards Bay watershed, and was the foundation of Chapters 2 and 3, and several action plans.

Many others provided invaluable assistance in reviewing, revising, contributing text or data, or in preparing or updating action plans in the new Buzzards Bay CCMP. Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management staff provided invaluable support in developing and refining action plans. Key participants included CZM Director, Bruce Carlisle, and CZM staffers Jay Baker, Todd Callahan, Ann Donovan, Dennis Ducsik, Rebecca Haney, and Robin Lacey. Mark Rasmussen and Buzzards Bay Coalition staffers Korrin Petersen, Brendan Annett, and Tony Williams also provided valuable input, insight, and comments. The Buzzards Bay Action Committee provided an excellent forum to develop and discuss the new and revised action plans in the updated Buzzards Bay CCMP.

The Buzzards Bay NEP would not have been possible without the visionary development and passage of Section 320 of the Clean Water Act of which the late Senator Edward Kennedy and the late Congressman Gerry Studds were key architects and supporters, along with subsequent support by Congressmen Barney Frank, William Delahunt, and Senator John Kerry. Since the inception of the program, about \$15 million of federal funds have been awarded to the Buzzards Bay NEP. These funds, together with cash and in-kind contributions from the state, Buzzards Bay Coalition, Buzzards Bay Action Committee, and municipalities have been the lifeblood for the sustained effort by municipalities and other partners, to protect and restore Buzzards Bay. All through this effort, EPA Project Officers Bruce Rosinoff, Mary Jo Feuerbach, and Ann Rodney were exceptional guides in the implementation of the program, and the update of the plan. They also helped direct millions of dollars in Section 319 and other EPA grants toward actions contained in the Buzzards Bay CCMP. This work was completed pursuant to EPA Cooperative Agreements CE98164503 and CE96144201.

Finally, thanks to all scientists, planners, town, state, federal officials, and interested residents who, over the years, contributed many new ideas and novel approaches that have made the update of the management plan a success, and more importantly, took action to implement the original management plan.

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<sup>1</sup> O'Brien, K., and A. Langhauser. 2003. Buzzards Bay 2000 Water Quality Assessment Report. Department of Environmental Protection Division of Watershed Management Report Number: 95-AC-2 DWM Control Number: 085.0 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Division of Watershed Management. Worcester, Massachusetts. November 2003.



## Foreword

Since our inception, the primary goal of the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) has been to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the estuary” (Section 320[b] of the Clean Water Act, our authorizing legislation). In 1991, we completed our original Buzzards Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), a landmark document providing a blueprint for the forthcoming efforts to protect and restore the water quality and living resources of Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed. The CCMP introduced many new concepts to local planners including the need to establish watershed limits on the discharge of nitrogen from wastewater (including septic systems and other nitrogen sources), the importance of stormwater discharges to bathing beach and shellfish bed closures, and the recognition that the climate was changing.

The Buzzards Bay NEP has now updated the CCMP to reflect the progress achieved, new problems facing the bay and its surrounding watershed, and the ongoing unresolved problems that remain since the original plan was finalized. This updated Buzzards Bay CCMP includes existing, new, and revised goals that relate to 21 key issues facing the bay and watershed. In each of the 21 “Action Plans,” we identify management strategies for government, citizens groups, and the public to employ to meet the continuing challenges we face.

While the updated Buzzards Bay CCMP is not a regulatory document, it lays out a vision that we hope will continue to guide municipalities in their ongoing efforts to protect and restore the environment. It will also help state and federal agencies direct grants and technical assistance programs, and update policies and regulations, to benefit the bay and watershed for years to come.

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



# Steering Committee Approval

Buzzards Bay  
Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan  
2013 Update

The Buzzards Bay Project began in 1985 as an initiative to characterize and understand pollution threats to water quality and living resources in Buzzards Bay. Within a few years, the Buzzards Bay Project became part of the National Estuary Program (NEP). Under the guidance of a Management Committee, the program completed its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Buzzards Bay.

The citizens advisory committee to the project evolved into two separate non-profit organizations, the Buzzards Bay Coalition, and the Buzzards Bay Action Committee. These two organizations, together with other core agencies that participated in oversight of the program formed the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program Steering Committee. The Steering Committee continues to provide oversight and guidance to the Buzzards Bay Program in its efforts to implement the recommendations in the CCMP document.

In the ensuing years, the Buzzards Bay NEP has had many successes and faced new challenges. Throughout this period, the original 1991 management plan proved to be accurate in assessing the problems of Buzzards Bay and had remarkable foresight in identifying solutions to those problems. Nonetheless, it was clear the management plan needed to be updated to address new information and the evolving regulatory framework of environmental management. Therefore, the Steering Committee directed the Buzzards Bay NEP staff to work with its partners to reevaluate the threats to the bay and watershed, and reexamine the potential solutions to these problems. The culmination of this effort is the *Buzzards Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan 2013 Update*.

It is our hope that this current document refocuses program activities and renews interest and enthusiasm for ongoing and future efforts to protect and restore Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed.

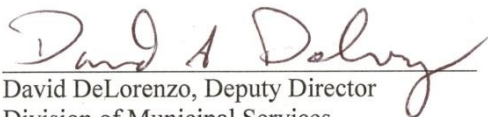
**The *Buzzards Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan 2013 Update* was approved by the Steering Committee of the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program on November 26, 2013.**



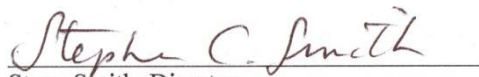
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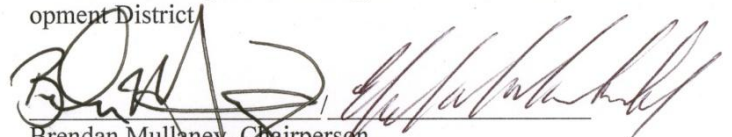
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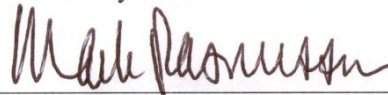
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Brendan Mullaney, Chairperson  
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Buzzards Bay Action Committee



Mark Rasmussen, President  
The Buzzards Bay Coalition





## Buzzards Bay Action Committee Resolution

*Whereas the member municipalities of the Buzzards Bay Action Committee recognize the importance of good water quality and healthy living resources in Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed, and that these values are important to the residents of the Buzzards Bay watershed, and vital to the region's economic vitality,*

*Whereas we recognize the serious threats to Buzzards Bay and its watershed from deteriorating water quality, habitat loss, declining natural resources, storms, sea level rise and future climate change, and the associated threats to public and environmental health, the local economy, and the quality of life,*

*Whereas we further recognize that the drainage basin of Buzzards Bay crosses municipal boundaries; that the future of the Bay depends 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,*

*Be it therefore resolved that the membership of the Buzzards Bay Action Committee unanimously agree to continue to support the voluntary, regional organization of local governments known as the Buzzards Bay Action Committee. The BBAC members agree to exchange information and ideas that will expedite the region's ability to implement sound environmental policies, regulations, and by-laws to protect and enhance our mutual resource of the Buzzards Bay and its watershed. We further agree to review and update our individual town by-laws and regulations so as to voluntarily:*

- reduce nitrogen pollution to sensitive embayments
- protect and enhance shellfish resources
- control stormwater runoff and promote low impact development
- improve land use management and promote smart growth
- manage on-site wastewater disposal systems
- manage impacts from boating, marinas and moorings
- protect and restore wetlands
- restore migratory fish passages
- protect bio-diversity and rare and endangered species habitat
- manage water withdrawals to protect wetlands, habitat, and water supplies
- manage invasive and nuisance species
- protect open space
- protect ponds and streams
- reduce beach debris, marine floatables, and litter
- manage coastal watersheds and the water front
- reduce toxic pollution
- prevent oil pollution
- plan for a shifting shoreline and coastal storms
- protect public health at swimming beaches
- monitor management actions, and the status and trends of water quality and living resources
- promote public education and participation in these activities
- encourage other organizations and agencies to take action in support of the goals and objectives of the CCMP.

*These goals are contained in the Buzzards Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan 2013 Update.*

Acushnet *Heather Kelly*  
 Bourne *[Signature]*  
 Dartmouth *[Signature]*  
 Fairhaven *Jeffrey W. Church*  
 Falmouth *[Signature]*  
 Gosnold *[Signature]*  
 Marion *Paul J. Sampson*  
 Mattapoisett *[Signature]*  
 New Bedford *[Signature]*  
 Rochester *[Signature]*  
 Wareham *Claudio Pichetto*  
 Westport *[Signature]*

*Approved by a vote of the BBAC this 21st day of November, 2013*

