



WAQUOIT BAY
NATIONAL
ESTUARINE
RESEARCH
RESERVE

2026 CAPE COASTAL CONFERENCE

Training & Engagement Program

SHARED SOLUTIONS FOR STRONGER COASTS & COMMUNITIES

APRIL 13 -14, 2026

AGENDA

Planning Partners



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Linking Science with Local Solutions & Decision-Making

DAY ONE

MONDAY
APRIL 13, 2026

9:00AM-9:10AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Kristen Weir, Ph.D., Training & Engagement Coordinator
Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

OPENING KEYNOTE

9:10AM-10:05AM

RESTORING BALANCE: MASHPEE WAMPANOAG VISION FOR LAND AND WATER

With a focus on cultural stewardship and practical insight, this panel will explore how the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's work turns restoration into a living practice, guiding more effective approaches to environmental decision-making.

Panel Discussion: Chief Earl Mills, Chief Sagamore Vernon "Buddy" Pocknett, Jason Steiding, Talia Landry
Department of Natural Resources, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

10:05AM- 10:25AM - BREAK & EXHIBITS

MORNING CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION | 10:25AM - 11:40AM

SESSION A - MAIN BALLROOM

FROM VISION TO IMPACT: METRICS FOR TRACKING PROJECT SUCCESS

Resilience Metrics Workshop for Decision-Makers

Susanne Moser, Ph.D., Director & Principal Researcher
Susanne Moser Research & Consulting

SESSION B - SOUTH BALLROOM

ADVANCING BIODIVERSITY: BUILDING STRONG, RESILIENT COASTS

Biodiversity Goals for the Commonwealth

Beth Lambert, Director, Division of Ecological Restoration,
MA Department of Fish and Game

Shorebird Habitat Use on Cape Cod

Alan Kneidel, Senior Conservation Biologist,
Manomet Conservation Sciences

Sesarma Crab Herbivory in Cape Cod Salt Marshes, Vegetation Management through Sediment Manipulation, and the Future of these Coastal Resources - Stephen Smith, Ph.D., Plant Ecologist,
Cape Cod National Seashore, National Park Service

Returning Fire to the Land: Indigenous Stewardship for Biodiversity and Resilience - Diana Ruiz, Ph.D.,
Executive Director, Native Land Conservancy, Inc.

11:40AM - 12:40PM - LUNCH (PROVIDED)

AFTERNOON CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION ONE | 12:40PM - 1:55PM

SESSION C - MAIN BALLROOM

SALT MARSHES IN BALANCE: A HOLISTIC RESTORATION APPROACH

Hydrologic Management of Salt Marshes: Historic Activity and Modern Day Impacts - Hillary Sullivan, Ph.D., Cape Cod Restoration Coordinator, Friends of Herring River

Making the Path to Salt Marsh Restoration Less Muddy from Prioritization to Implementation

Sara Grady, Ph.D., Senior Coastal Ecologist, Mass Audubon

Restoring Marsh Tidal Hydrology Impacted By Legacy Agricultural Activities

Wenley Ferguson, Director of Restoration, Save the Bay

Decision-Maker Tools for Coastal Management

Brian Yellen, Ph.D., MA State Geologist, Mass Geo Survey/UMass Amherst

SESSION D - SOUTH BALLROOM

GROWING THE OCEAN'S FUTURE: EELGRASS RESTORATION & KELP CULTIVATION

What's the Story with Kelp Cultivation? A Discussion of the MA Experience Thus Far - Josh Reitsma, Fisheries & Aquaculture Specialist, WHOI Sea Grant Program

The Why and How of Eelgrass Restoration - Agnes Mittermayr, Ph.D., Benthic Ecologist, Center for Coastal Studies

Testing Seed-Based Methods for Plant Propagation to Overcome Challenges in Seagrass Recovery and Restoration in West Falmouth Harbor - Mirta Teichberg, Ph.D., Associate Scientist, Marine Biological Laboratory

Engineering Around Eutrophication to Restore Eelgrass with the Seagrass Meadow Underwater Restoration Platform
Matthew Long, Ph.D., Associate Scientist, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

1:55PM - 2:10PM - BREAK & EXHIBITS

SESSION E - MAIN BALLROOM

ENHANCING HABITAT & RESILIENCE THROUGH DREDGED MATERIAL REUSE

Barnstable County's Dredge Program - Improving Navigation, Enhancing Habitat and Water Quality, and Improving the Cape's Coastal Infrastructure

Kenneth Cirillo, Director, Barnstable County Dredge

Increasing Marsh Elevation as a Strategy to Restore Marsh Health and Increase Resilience to Sea Level Rise: Lessons Learned from Rhode Island

Wenley Ferguson, Director of Restoration, Save the Bay

Increasing Marsh Elevation as a Strategy to Restore Marsh Health and Increase Resilience to Sea Level Rise: Lessons Learned from Rhode Island (Sachuest Point NWR & John H. Chafee NWR) - Ben Gaspar, Restoration Ecologist, Save the Bay

Q & A Panel - David Wong, Ph.D., Environmental Analyst, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

PLENARY SESSION - Main Ballroom

3:25PM-3:55PM - FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION – APPLYING TODAY'S RESTORATION SCIENCE

Panel Discussion: Martha Craig, Program Manager, Cape Cod Conservation District

April Wobst, Restoration Program Manager & MassBays Regional Coordinator, Association to Preserve Cape Cod

Chris Miller, Director, Natural Resources, Town of Brewster

Thomas Andrade, P.E., Town Engineer, Town of Dennis

CLOSING KEYNOTE

3:55PM-4:35PM - IS HOPE ENOUGH? TRANSFORMATIVE RESILIENCE BUILDING IN AN INCREASINGLY CHALLENGING WORLD

The times for easy hope and dependable government support for climate adaptation are over. Something deeper is asked of us now. This keynote will offer an honest but uplifting perspective on what it takes to build resilience when “hope for the best” isn't good enough anymore.

Susanne Moser, Ph.D., Director & Principal Researcher, Susanne Moser Research & Consulting

STUDENT/EARLY CAREER & NETWORKING - POSTER SESSION - Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar available.

4:35PM - 6:00PM

Share your expertise and experience with students and early career professionals working on coastal restoration and adaptation issues.

Proactive Coastal Relocation in Massachusetts

Lexi Lafferty, Tufts University

Andrew Laquerre, Urban Harbors Institute (UHI) and UMass Boston

Community-Defined Climate Risk in Coastal Tanzania

Clare Scheib-Feeley, Yale University

A Tale of Two Marshes

Jisun Reiner, Nantucket Conservation Foundation

Mill Pond Salt Marsh Restoration

Marina Chiafullo, Woods Hole Group

The Massachusetts Salt Marsh Framework

Tiare Sierra Rivera, Mass Audubon

Salt Marsh Zones for Pre- and Post-Restoration Assessment

Molly Autrery, Association to Preserve Cape Cod

SESSION F - SOUTH BALLROOM

RESTORATION IN ACTION: HEALTHY WATERWAYS AND WETLANDS

River and Wetland Restoration: Strategies for Addressing Challenges

Beth Lambert, Director, Division of Ecological Restoration, MA Department of Fish and Game

Bogs to Brook Trout: Rebuilding Coldwater Habitat on the Childs River - Michael Palmer, Restoration Ecologist,

Association to Preserve Cape Cod

Coonamessett River Restoration and Greenway Heritage Trail: Honoring Ecological Integrity and Human Connections

Elizabeth “Betsy” Gladfelter, Ph.D., Coastal Scientist, Coonamessett River Restoration Project Coordinator

Harwich Eco-Restorations: Lessons Learned in Planning, Construction & Maintenance

Michael Lach, Executive Director, Harwich Conservation Trust

Salt Marsh Hydraulic Restoration

Hillary Sullivan, Friends of Herring River

Optimizing Early Establishment of Zostera Marina Seedlings

Abigail Skena, Marine Biological Laboratory

Enhancing American Beach Grass Success with Dredged Material

Olivia Beane, Grounded Dunes Resources LLC

Comparing N Loads of Two Rivers in the Waquoit Bay watershed against TMDLs - Theophilos Collins, Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Linking Hypoxia and Nutrient Trends in Waquoit Bay

Rachel Gao, Smith College

Bioindicator Species on Cape Cod

Colby Firnrohr, Cape Cod Community College

DAY TWO

TUESDAY
APRIL 14, 2026

9:00AM-9:05AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Kristen Weir, Ph.D., Training & Engagement Coordinator
Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

9:05AM-9:45AM

Municipal Resilience in Action: From Challenges to Solutions through Projects and Partnerships Surf Drive: Perspectives in Coastal Resilience Planning

Joshua Wrigley, Coastal Resilience Specialist, Town of Falmouth

Panel Discussion: This session will highlight key challenges coastal communities are facing, including flooding, infrastructure stress, and fiscal and community impacts, providing a practical foundation for the day's discussions on adaptation and resilience.

Moderator: Stephen McKenna, Cape & Islands Regional Coordinator, Coastal Zone Management
Timothy Famulare, Community Development Director, Town of Provincetown
Nina Coleman, Director of Natural Resources, Sandy Neck Park Manager, Town of Barnstable
Catherine Ricks, Coastal Resilience Director, Town of Chatham

9:45AM - 10:00AM - BREAK & EXHIBITS

MORNING CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION ONE | 10:00AM - 11:15AM

SESSION G - MAIN BALLROOM

PLANNING FOR COASTAL CHANGE: VOLUNTARY RELOCATION

Proactive Coastal Relocation: Understanding the Benefits and Barriers

Emma Gildesgame, Climate Adaptation Director, The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts
Kristin Uiterwyk, Director, Urban Harbors Institute, UMass Boston

A Comprehensive, Island-Wide Strategic Retreat and Relocation Program in Nantucket, MA

Leah Hill, Coastal Resilience Coordinator, Town of Nantucket, Natural Resources Department

11:15AM - SESSIONS ADJORN

12:00PM-1:00PM - Field Trips (For participants who have previously signed up and received an email confirmation.)

Sandy Neck Beach Long-Term Coastal Resilience Project, West Barnstable
The Coonamessett River Wetlands Restoration Project, Falmouth
Hinckley's Pond-Herring River Headwaters Eco-Restoration Project, Harwich

SESSION H - SOUTH BALLROOM

PROTECTING THE FUTURE: RESILIENCE & INSURANCE

Reimagining Insurance Markets that Work for Everyone in the Face of Climate Change

Charlie Sidoti, Executive Director, InnSure

Protecting Coastal Communities from the Effects of Sea-Level Rise: A Complex Investment Decision- Michael Weir, Ph.D., Research Specialist, Marine Policy Center, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Regulatory Tools for Coastal Floodplain Resiliency

Heather McElroy, Natural Resources Manager, Cape Cod Commission
Shannon Hulst, Floodplain Specialist/Deputy Director, Cape Cod Cooperative Extension /Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Sea Grant

Exhibitors

