NOAA’s National Coastal Zone Management Program

Our coastal communities are home to over 126 million people, support 58.8 million jobs, and contribute $8.3 trillion to the U.S. economy. This accounts for 46 percent of the nation’s economic output. Recognizing the importance of our coasts, Congress created the National Coastal Zone Management Program in 1972. This program consists of voluntary partnerships between NOAA and coastal states and territories in which a state or university program takes the lead to manage these special places with assistance from NOAA.

In fiscal year 2017, NOAA invested nearly $70 million, allocated through the Coastal Zone Management Act, to implement coastal management programs in the 34 participating states and territories. Federal funding was matched by nearly $57 million from state and local governments and others. These funds are being used to improve public access, enhance hazard resilience, and fuel the nation’s vibrant coastal economy. Over 20 percent of the funding ($12 million) is passed on to local governments and other academic and nongovernmental organizations to carry out projects that benefit coastal communities.

- Protecting and Restoring Coastal Habitat ($18.2 million federal; $16.4 million matching)
  Coastal habitats buffer communities from storms and are needed to maintain sustainable fisheries, robust recreation and tourism industries, and thriving wildlife populations.

- Mitigating Coastal Hazards ($13.5 million federal; $6.9 million matching)
  Minimizing risks from coastal hazards such as storms, flooding, erosion, and sea level rise makes communities more resilient.

- Planning for Our Ocean and Coastal Waters ($1.9 million federal; $2.1 million matching)
  Comprehensive ocean planning ensures that ocean uses are balanced to support jobs, reduce use conflicts, and sustain natural resources.

- Expanding Public Engagement ($9.6 million federal; $6.5 million matching)
  Where there is good coordination among agencies and the public, better decision-making results.

- Protecting Coastal Water Quality ($7.5 million federal; $7.3 million matching)
  Preventing and reducing polluted runoff and marine debris results in coastal waters that are safe for drinking, swimming, and fishing.

- Implementing State Program Management ($4.2 million federal; $2.6 million matching)
  State coastal management programs provide the framework needed to carry out national and state coastal priorities.

- Enhancing Public Access ($4.7 million federal; $4.6 million matching)
  Providing public access to the coast delivers substantial economic benefits to coastal communities.

- Promoting Coastal Community Development ($10.0 million federal; $8.7 million matching)
  Wise development protects coastal community character and health and promotes appropriate coastal-dependent uses and industries.
Flood Reduction
Following Hurricane Ike, the Texas Coastal Management Program developed guidelines focused on dune protection and the recovery of public access points. This work paid off after Harvey. Local residents in Port Aransas reported that homes and businesses located close to the dune complex experienced little to no flooding, while areas farther away from the dunes were more impacted.

Another example can be found in Clear Lake, Texas. Here, an urban wetland, transformed from an abandoned golf course, performed exactly as it should—acting as a sponge, keeping floodwaters away from area homes. This 200-acre wetland and green space provides recreation, flood protection, beautification, and water quality enhancement.

Economic Stimulator
The National Coastal Zone Management Program fosters wise development to revitalize waterfronts, while protecting coastal character and industries. The New York Coastal Management Program provided technical and financial assistance to help Clayton, New York develop a waterfront revitalization program and harbor management plan. The initial investment enabled the community to successfully compete for over $2 million in additional funds and sparked a $20 million private investment that included the remediation and redevelopment of an eight-acre brownfield that was formerly a snowplow factory.

See more stories at coast.noaa.gov/states/stories/index.