



# Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Federal Evaluation for July 2016 to September 2023

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) conducts periodic evaluations of state programs participating in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. This document pertains to the evaluation of the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and covers the period from July 2016 to September 2023.

## Background

The Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is part of a national network of 30 reserves protected for long-term research, water quality monitoring, education, and coastal stewardship. The national program was established by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, and is a partnership program between NOAA and the coastal states. NOAA provides funding, national guidance, and technical assistance, while lead state agencies or universities manage the reserves, with input from local partners.

## Purpose of the Evaluation

The Coastal Zone Management Act calls for the periodic evaluation of all federally approved estuarine research reserves. The evaluations assess operations and management and how the lead state agency and reserve are addressing the issues identified in the reserve's management plan, NOAA regulations governing the reserve system, and the terms of federal financial assistance awards.

The evaluation team prepares a set of findings that identifies successes and areas needing improvement. Recommendations from the findings are used to negotiate future Coastal Zone Management Act financial assistance awards to the state. Copies of the findings from this evaluation will be available in 2024, and will be sent to evaluation participants upon request. Members of the public may receive copies by *emailing* the evaluation team lead at [Pam.Kylstra@noaa.gov](mailto:Pam.Kylstra@noaa.gov). The most recent evaluation findings are available at [coast.noaa.gov/czm/evaluations/evaluation\\_findings/index.html](https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/evaluations/evaluation_findings/index.html).

## Public Participation

Public participation is a valued part of the evaluation process, and the evaluation team would like to hear the views of all interested parties. For this evaluation, the team is particularly interested in these areas:

- Program administration
- Protecting habitat and increasing coastal resilience

(continued)

The Coastal Zone Management Act provides three mechanisms for public participation in the evaluation process.

- Meeting with the evaluation team
- Attending a public meeting
- Submitting written comments

A **virtual** public meeting will be held to solicit public comments on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. Eastern time. To participate in the **virtual** public meeting, registration information can be found at [coast.noaa.gov/czm/evaluations](https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/evaluations). Written comments may be submitted to Pam Kylstra, the evaluation team leader, at [Pam.Kylstra@noaa.gov](mailto:Pam.Kylstra@noaa.gov) no later than Friday, October 20, 2023.

### **Evaluation Team**

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