

APPENDIX C

About the National Estuary Program

Public alarm over deteriorating environmental conditions in estuaries nationwide prompted formation of the National Estuary Program in 1987. Part of the Clean Water Act, the program protects significant estuaries threatened by pollution, development, or overuse. Estuaries are particularly at risk because almost half the nation's population lives in coastal areas, and these communities are growing three times faster than anywhere else. While supporting economic and recreational activities, the National Estuary Program (which is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) seeks to protect and restore the health of estuaries. To date, 28 estuaries nationwide have been admitted to the program and are demonstrating practical and innovative ways to revitalize and protect estuary ecosystems.

Estuary Programs as of July 1996:

- New York-New Jersey Harbor, New York and New Jersey
- Long Island Sound, Connecticut and New York
- Peconic Bay, New York
- Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island
- Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts
- San Juan Bay Estuary System, Puerto Rico
- Casco Bay, Maine
- Mobile Bay, Alabama
- Morro Bay, California
- Charlotte Harbor, Florida
- Maryland Coastal Bays, Maryland
- New Hampshire Estuaries, New Hampshire
- Puget Sound, Washington
- Tillamook Bay, Oregon
- San Francisco Estuary, California
- Santa Monica Bay, California
- Corpus Christi Bay, Texas
- Galveston Bay, Texas
- Barataria-Terrebonne Estuarine Complex, Louisiana
- Tampa Bay, Florida
- Sarasota Bay, Florida
- Indian River Lagoon, Florida
- Albemarle-Pamlico Sounds, North Carolina
- Delaware Inland Bays, Delaware
- Delaware Estuary, Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania
- Barnegat Bay, New Jersey
- Columbia River, Oregon and Washington
- Massachusetts Bays, Massachusetts

A major benefit of the program is that it brings communities together to decide the future of their own estuaries. Each project includes representation by citizens, town officials, business leaders, educators, researchers, and government agencies. Each program identifies its estuary's problems, recommends solutions, and makes financial commitments in a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (called, in this case, the *Casco Bay Plan*). The plan is a blueprint for revitalizing the estuary and ensuring its future health.