

CHRIS VAN BUSKIRK, STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE | JUNE 13, 2021

BEACH PROGRAMS, EVENTS GETTING BOOST FOR SUMMER OF '21



A SURFER WALKS BACK TO THE BEACH ON NANTASKET BEACH IN HULL. (JESSE COSTA/WBUR)

Free concerts and movie nights, yoga and fitness classes, circus performances, and wheelchairs to help those with disabilities access beaches are all getting a boost as part of a \$300,000 grant program Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Department of Conservation and Recreation announced Saturday morning.

The Better Beach Program grants are heading to 67 organizations to support 150 free beach events and programs this year in nine communities from Nahant to Nantasket, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay said. This year's grants represent a \$100,000 increase compared to 2020 when the non-profit group doled out about \$200,000 to 22 organizations.

Get the editor's top five stories of the week, and tips for navigating life – and weekends too. Sign up now.

"It is exciting to have so many new organizations on board this year," Maya Smith, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's community engagement manager, said in a statement. "I am certain that they will bring new visions, new voices, more food choices, more accessibility, and a more diverse audience to the beach."

The funds stem from a DCR appropriation and also include \$50,000 in proceeds from the Virtual Harpoon Shamrock Splash, "which will be awarded to organizations and creatives who empower, amplify and invest in community members of color and improve beach access for people with disabilities," the non-profit said.

Communities with organizations receiving grant money include Lynn, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South

Boston, Dorchester, and Quincy, among others. South Boston Neighborhood House, for example, is set to receive \$10,000 to hold "family fun nights."

Quincy's Department of Natural Resources will receive \$10,000 to host youth beach programs on Wollaston Beach in partnership with Friends of Wollaston Beach. In Dorchester, the organization HipStory will use \$5,000 for DJ sets, live music and MC's. And Save the Harbor is also allocating \$7,500 to purchase mobility mats and beach wheelchairs to increase accessibility for people with disabilities at metropolitan-area beaches.

"Save the Harbor is committed to increased equity and improved access in all our programs and on our beaches," Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Executive Director Chris Mancini said.

In 2020, grant recipients used the funds to run socially distanced summer programs and to provide safety equipment and support as organizations adjusted to keep beaches safe and open during the pandemic.

"It is going to be a great summer, with terrific free events and programs that celebrate our diversity and resilience," said Bruce Berman, director of strategy and communications at Save the Harbor. "After a very difficult year like no other, we are looking forward to seeing you all face-to-face on the beach."

Sen. Brendan Crighton, who co-chairs the Metropolitan Beaches Commission with East Boston Rep. Adrian Madaro, said the Better Beach programs bring communities together to enjoy the region's public beaches.

"The Better Beaches Program events are as diverse as the communities that host them," the Lynn Democrat said in a statement.

Save the Harbor's program partners and event sponsors include Harpoon Brewery, JetBlue, Mix 104.1, The Blue Sky Collaborative, The Boston Foundation, The Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation, Beacon Capital Partners, P&G Gillette, National Grid, the Daily Catch, and Comcast.