

# The Power of Water

E. Bruce Berman, Jr.  
Save the Harbor / Save the Bay

20th Anniversary of the Massachusetts Environmental Trust  
College Of The Holy Cross - Worcester, Massachusetts  
November 10, 2009



**Save the Harbor Save the Bay** is a non profit, public interest, environmental advocacy organization made up of thousands of citizens, as well as civic, corporate and community leaders and scientists, whose shared mission is to restore and protect Boston Harbor, Massachusetts Bay and the Boston Harbor Islands, for everyone to enjoy.



About 75 swimmers begin a race yesterday at Carson Beach in an effort to show that Boston Harbor is cleaner now than it has been in years. Page 23.

## Boston Harbor's waters have started to heal

By Scott Allen  
GLOBE STAFF

Rick Nolan used to hate coming back from fishing trips.

As his boat rounded the Brewster Islands at the entrance to Boston Harbor, he had to cross a 3-mile-long brown

### Cleanup helping to shed 'dirtiest' label

Deer Island. Every afternoon until late last year, the agency would discharge 40 tons of sludge, the solid matter in sewage, on the outgoing tide.

looks so good you want to jump in," he said.

Four years after President Bush branded it "the dirtiest harbor in Amer-

ica campaign visit four years ago. There is far less sewage debris, such as green balls and tampon applicators, floating in the harbor's surface.

And Boston Harbor's nine beaches long plagued by sewage contamination were closed for health reasons 50 percent

“Just 20 years ago Boston Harbor was known nationally as the “Harbor of Shame” as our waste washed up on the shoreline from Cape Cod to Cape Ann. Today, after \$4.5 billion in public investment in clean water, it is a source of opportunity and civic pride.”

**Patricia A Foley, President, Save the Harbor / Save the Bay**

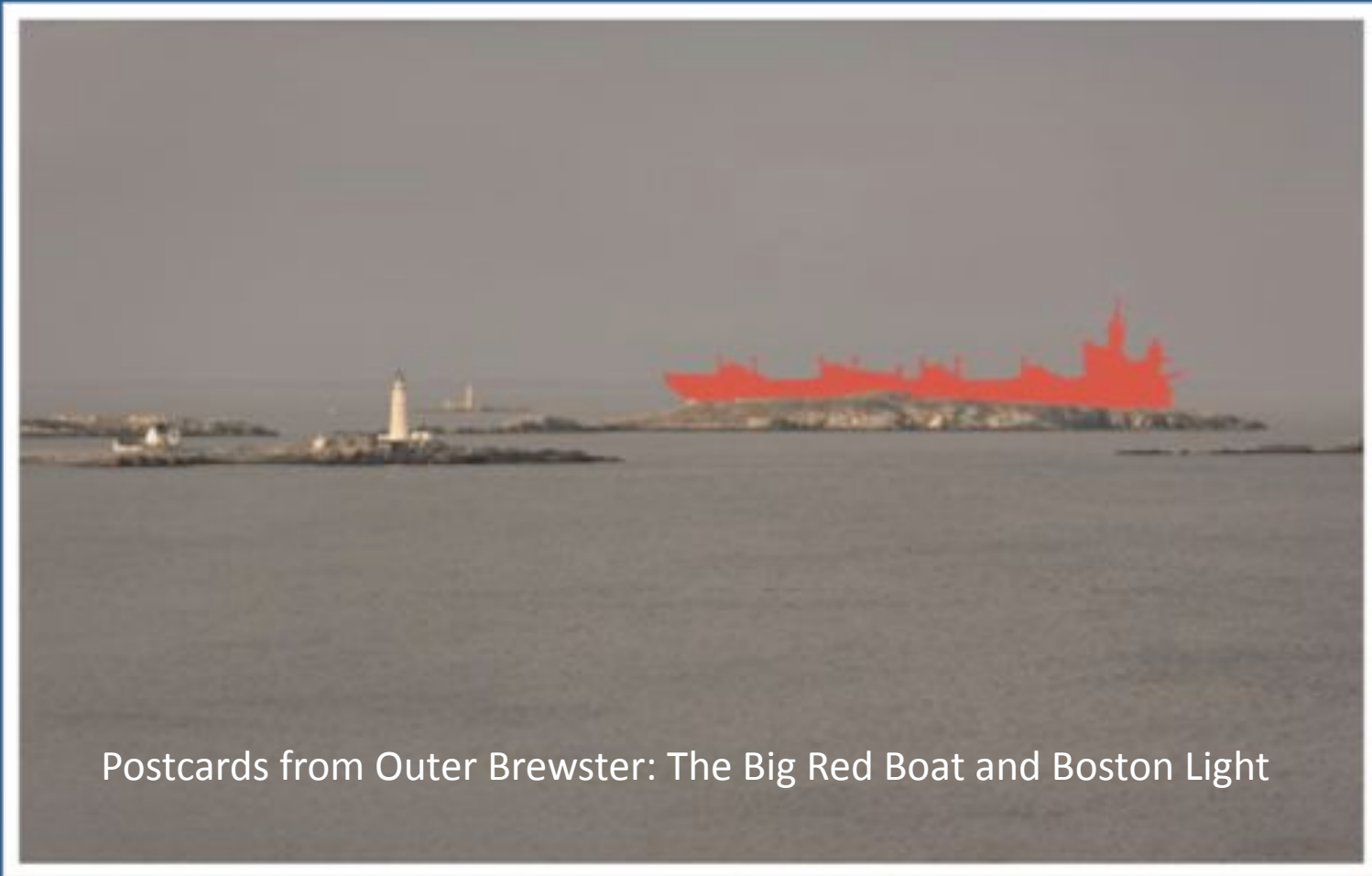


## Clean Water and Environmental Advocacy Remain at the Core of Our Mission



“Environmental battles are seldom truly won,  
they are often just postponed until another day.”

Beth Nicholson, Founding Chair  
Save the Harbor / Save the Bay



Postcards from Outer Brewster: The Big Red Boat and Boston Light



Today, much of our work focuses on connecting people and communities with the Harbor and the Bay, as we look for ways to put our \$4.5 billion dollar investment in clean water to work for all the region's residents.



**We have a special responsibility to the region's less affluent residents, who share the costs but have often been excluded from the benefits of our \$4.5 billion investment in clean water.**



**Since 2001, our free youth environmental education and recreation programs have connected more than 32,000 deserving young people with the harbor we have worked so hard to restore and protect.**



# Save the Harbor / Save the Bay For Everyone to Enjoy

## Reconnecting People and Communities With the Harbor and the Bay

**Reweave Boston** Harbor into the fabric of the region's civic, cultural, recreational, community and economic life.

**Encourage continued investment** in our City and Harbor, the region's public beaches, the harbor islands and the waterfront.

## Theory of Change

**People love the water.** The residents of the Bay State love the coast and the ocean, prefer a clean harbor to a filthy one, are proud of the Boston Harbor Success story, and continue to support additional public investment to "finish the job" even if it means higher rates.

**Success does not happen by accident.** It requires understanding, planning, and a consensus that can often be difficult to achieve, particularly in a tribal city such as Boston.

- **Properly understood, planned, managed and promoted,** Boston Harbor, our region's public beaches, the Boston Harbor Islands and our renewed waterfront have the power to improve the quality of life for Bostonians of every income and ability from every neighborhood in the city, and for the more than one million regional residents who live with 1/2 hour of the coast.

**If you can get people to understand and agree** on the problem or question, you have a better chance of creating a consensus around the solution or answer.

**Sharing the harbor creates new stewards, supporters and champions.** And we need them all. Our goals will require long-term support for continued public and private investment in clean water, the waterfront, our public beaches and the Boston Harbor Islands from the public, from government at all levels, from the corporate and philanthropic community, and from the press.





“We believe in the power of water  
to change lives and transform communities.”

Bruce Berman, Save the Harbor / Save the Bay

# Revere Beach

- America's oldest public beach
- First – failed – urban renewal site in Massachusetts
- Numerous conflicts between the City and the MDC
- By 2000 – all that remained was faded memories.



# Revere Beach Partnership

- In 2000, SH/SB and the Mayor hosted a day long community planning meeting to build consensus about how to proceed.
- At the end of the day we had a plan and an ambitious list of shared goals and first steps, including some “low hanging fruit” and a call for the creation of an inclusive “Friends” group.
- Building on their early successes, the Revere Beach Partnership now hosts a full season of free events and activities on Revere Beach – with the active support of the City, the DCR and local businesses.
- Events include kite festivals, free concerts and the region’s largest Sand Sculpting Competition, which draws more than 100,000 visitors.





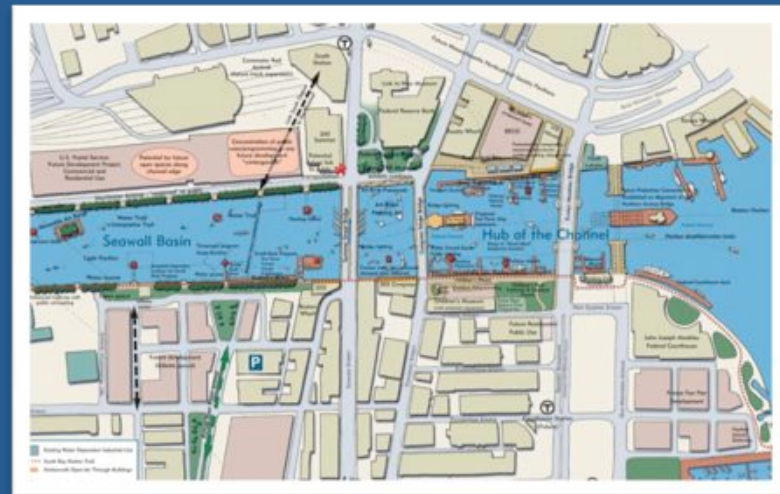
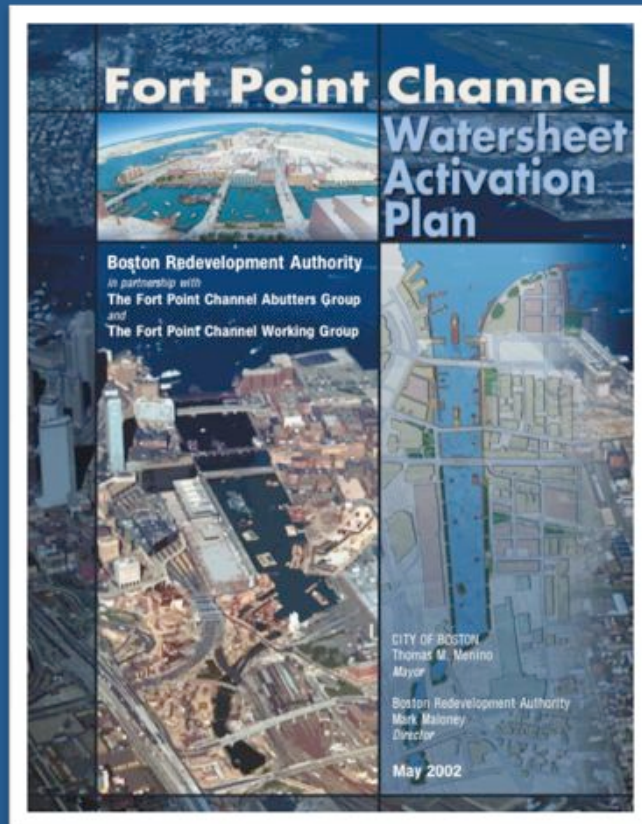
# Fort Point Channel

- Formerly the industrial heart of the city.
- Located between the South Boston Waterfront and the Financial District, it was left out of other renewal and planning efforts
- Conflicts between landowners, local artists and community and with elected officials.
- Decaying infrastructure and bridges
- Further cut off by the big dig
- Plagued by ongoing water quality problems



# Fort Point Channel

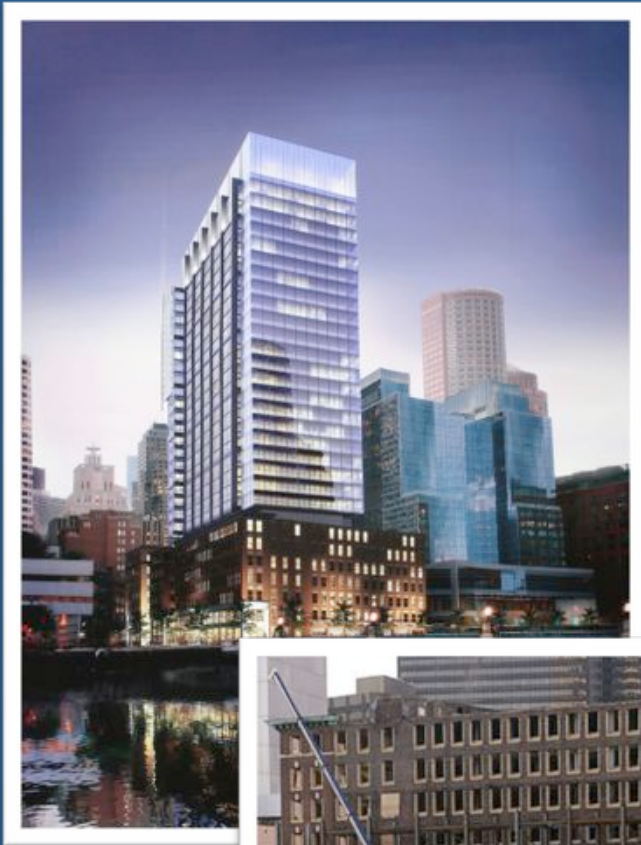
- A Shared Vision: The Next Great Place In Boston
- Cooperative planning resulted in an award-winning plan





# Fort Point Channel

- A Shared Vision: The Next Great Place In Boston
- Nearly 2 billion in private investment





# Fort Point Channel

Resident  
and  
Visitor  
Guide

2009

*f* Friends of  
FORT POINT CHANNEL

## Friends of the Fort Point Channel

- Created a truly collegial and inclusive “Friends” group
- Raised and invested nearly \$1 million in free programs over the past 5 years
- Hosts four seasons of events, including festivals, concerts, boat tours and the “Taste of the Channel.”



On dry days the water is now safe for fishing, kayaking and even floating art!







# South Bay Harbor Trail

A 3.5 mile long pedestrian friendly bicycle trail that connects Roxbury, the South End, and Chinatown with **The Fort Point Channel** and Boston Harbor at Fan Pier.

- A partnership between Save the Harbor, the South Bay Harbor Trail Coalition, the City of Boston, Mass Highway, 24 private and public land owners, and the residents of 5 neighborhoods.
- Assembled a largely volunteer team of engineers, designers and architects who joined together and took the trail from the back of an envelope to 75% design.
- Secured \$3.9 million in Federal funds to construct the public portions of the trail.
- Construction, way finding, and public art installation is already underway.
- Expected to be complete by early 2011.

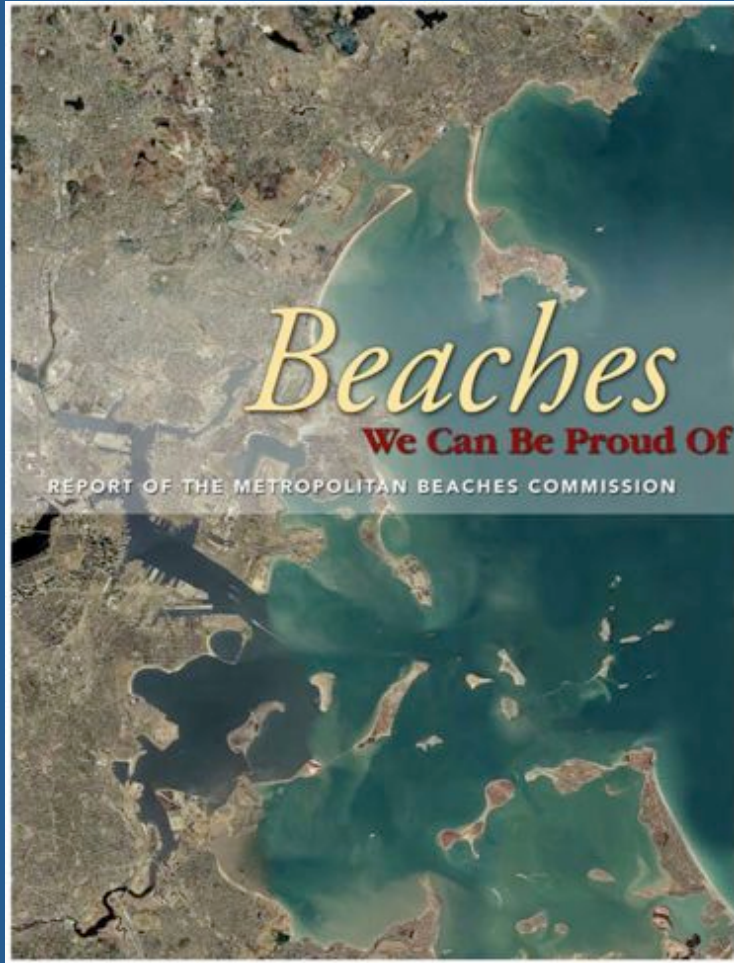




South Bay Harbor Trail  
Public Art and Signage  
Gillette Campus  
November 2008



# Metropolitan Beaches Commission



## The Challenge

The transformation of Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay over the last 20 years is one of the nation's great environmental and economic success stories. Today, we are well on our way to enjoying some of the cleanest water in the nation, unlocking the potential of the waterfront to enhance our quality of life and strengthen our region's economic competitiveness.

At the same time, our region's public beaches have not kept pace with improvements along the waterfront as a whole. Despite important capital investments in several communities, the beaches remain a work in progress, leaving residents and beachgoers alike unable to fully enjoy the environment we have worked so hard to restore.

This regional network of 15 miles of sandy public swimming beaches is a remarkable—and largely untapped—resource.

Our beaches have the power to link the more than one million people who live within a half hour of the water's edge to a resurgent harbor and bay, the result of our \$4.5 billion investment in the Boston Harbor Clean-up.



# Metropolitan Beaches Commission



## THE BEACHES: Key Facts

- 14 beaches in 9 communities
- 15 miles of free public swimming beaches
- Within 1/2 hour of more than 1,000,000 residents
- Inexpensive parking and broad accessibility by public transportation
- More than \$4.5 billion invested in clean water

1. King's Beach, Lynn
2. Nahant Beach, Nahant
3. Revere Beach, Revere
4. Short Beach, Revere
5. Winthrop Beach, Winthrop
6. Constitution Beach, East Boston
7. Pleasure Bay and Castle Island, South Boston
8. L and M Street beaches, South Boston
9. Carson Beach, South Boston
- 10,11. Malibu/Savin Hill beaches, Dorchester
12. Tenney Beach, Dorchester
13. Wollaston Beach, Quincy
14. Nantasket Beach, Hull

In 2006 the Massachusetts Legislature established the Metropolitan Beaches Commission to take an in-depth look at the public beaches owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and to make recommendations to bring them to their fullest potential. The Commission is made up of elected officials and community, civic, nonprofit, and business leaders from across the region.

Beginning in June 2006, the Commission held public hearings in each beachfront community and heard from hundreds of residents and beachgoers. The Commission heard from residents of seaside towns like Nahant, Winthrop and Hull, from older cities like Lynn, Quincy and Revere, and from the Boston neighborhoods of East Boston, South Boston and Dorchester.

# Metropolitan Beaches Commission Findings and Recommendations

## SOUTH BOSTON PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY



### Carson Beach, L and M Street Beaches, Pleasure Bay and Castle Island

*"This beach is a precious jewel, but some of the conditions on this beach have become a disgrace over the years."* – Francis Collins, South Boston resident

*"I think we need a remedial crash course in civics as our citizens are making a lot of trash."* – Jim Donovan, Friends of South Boston Harbor

*"How do we get people back to the beach? A couple of years ago my daughter asked 'can we go to the lake?' because she's spent so little time here. We need kayaks, swimming lessons, sand castles... and people here to use them."* – Senator and Commission Co-Chair Jack Nath

#### PUBLIC HEARING HIGHLIGHTS:

The Commission hosted a public hearing in South Boston on August 3, 2006. Over 40 residents attended.

#### WHAT'S WORKING WELL:

- Capital improvements such as the McCormack Bathhouse and the boardwalk
- Cleaner water
- Beaches are a gathering place for community
- Easy accessibility by foot, car, and public transportation
- Great views of Harbor and Islands

#### WHAT'S NOT WORKING:

- Poor maintenance and infrequent trash removal
- Need for programming such as swim lessons, entertainment, and boating rentals
- Need for more parking spaces
- Boardwalks need more entry/exit points for strollers and wheelchairs
- Need more beach patrols and lifeguards to ensure public safety



#### BEACH INFORMATION

##### PLEASURE BAY

Bathhouse: no  
Bathrooms: yes  
Snack Bar/Food: yes  
Shade: yes  
Water: yes  
Parking: yes  
Transportation: yes (LF/10 boat)

##### L/M STREET BEACHES

Bathhouse: 1 Street Bathhouse  
Bathrooms: yes (at bathhouse)  
Snack Bar/Food: no  
Shade: yes  
Water: yes  
Parking: yes  
Transportation: yes (LF/UMass T stop)

##### CARSON BEACH

Bathhouse: McCormack Bathhouse  
Bathrooms: yes  
Snack Bar/Food: yes (July/August only)  
Shade: yes  
Water: yes  
Parking: yes  
Transportation: yes (LF/UMass T stop)

## WINTHROP PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY



### Winthrop Beach

*"I remember years ago how we testified about the need for our waters to be clean... people couldn't go to the beach because of the poor water quality. Well, we've addressed that issue... Now, I think it's time for us to address the quality of the beaches that water is on. We have a problem now because of the poor condition of the beaches, not poor water quality."* – Representative Robert DeLoe

*"We have the money. We have the knowledge. It's time to stop talking and get some action. We've been waiting for our sand while improvements happen at all the other beaches—I want to see sand here this year. It's deplorable."* – Irvin Goldstein, Winthrop resident

*"I think what we've done over the years... is let the beaches deteriorate because of the water quality. There was no need to spend money on those things... I think that the kinds of issues we have and the kinds of problems we have are similar to other beach communities."* – Winthrop Town Councilor Thomas Reilly

*"The area between the breakers and the beach is deteriorating. We're always getting complaints from constituents about the filth, trash, and lack of trash barrels. Winthrop Beach has truly been forgotten."* – Winthrop Town Councilor Joe Ferris

#### PUBLIC HEARING HIGHLIGHTS:

The Commission hosted a public hearing in Winthrop on August 7, 2006. Over 30 people attended, and the Commission heard from elected officials, community leaders, public safety officials, and residents.

#### WHAT'S WORKING WELL:

- Beach is easily accessible to neighborhood and residents
- Water is clean
- Great place to experience nature—sunrises, sunsets, and waves
- Brings community together as a neighborhood meeting place

#### WHAT'S NOT WORKING:

- Sand has eroded—the beach is a public safety hazard
- Poor maintenance, need better snow removal and sidewalk repair
- Lack of facilities including shade, water, and seating
- Lack of programming and activities
- Poor access for people with disabilities
- Need better enforcement for dogs and dog waste

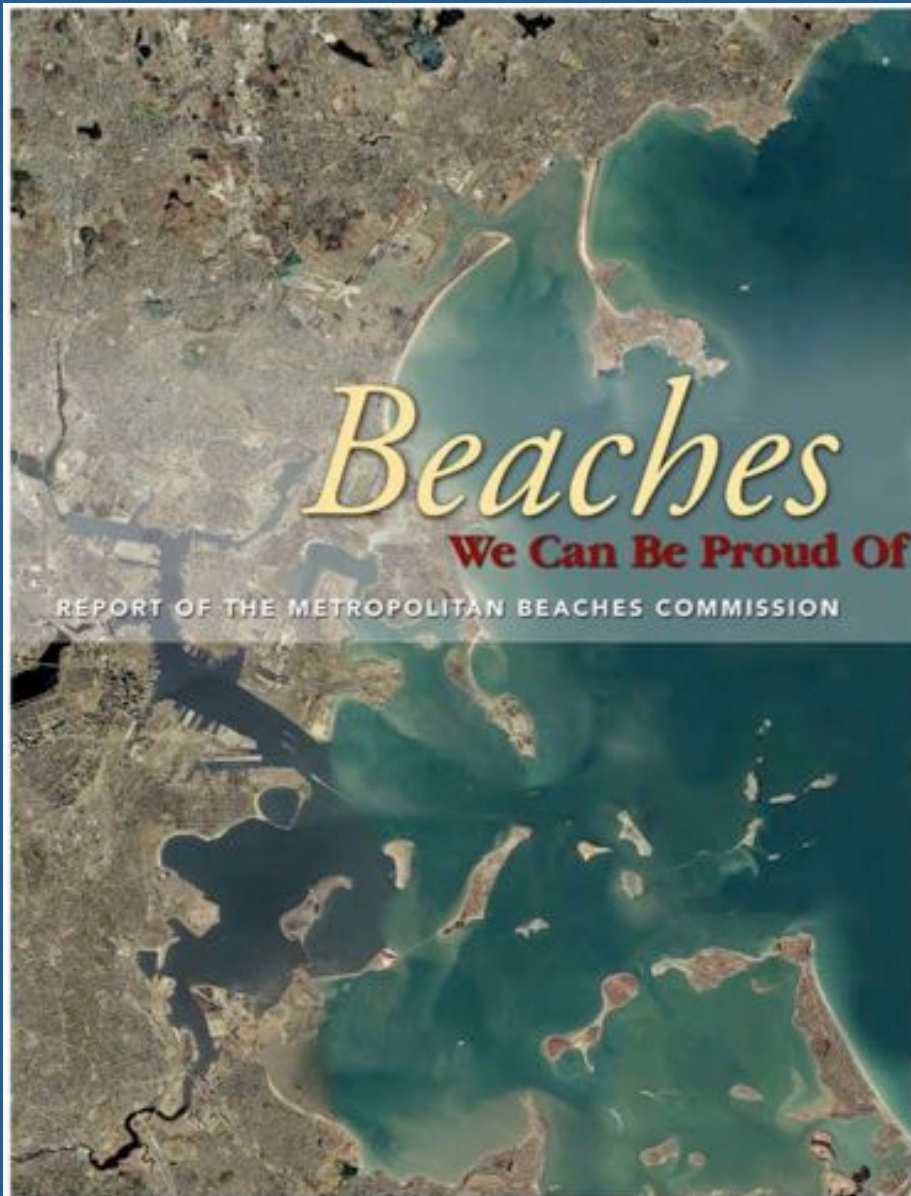


#### BEACH INFORMATION

Miles: 1.5 miles  
Bathhouse: no  
Bathrooms: yes (seasonal on old MDC ramp station)  
Water: no  
Snack Bar/Food: no (at in RESTAURANT BEYOND BEACH)  
Shade: no  
Parking: limited on street  
Public Transportation: yes (LF/10 boat)



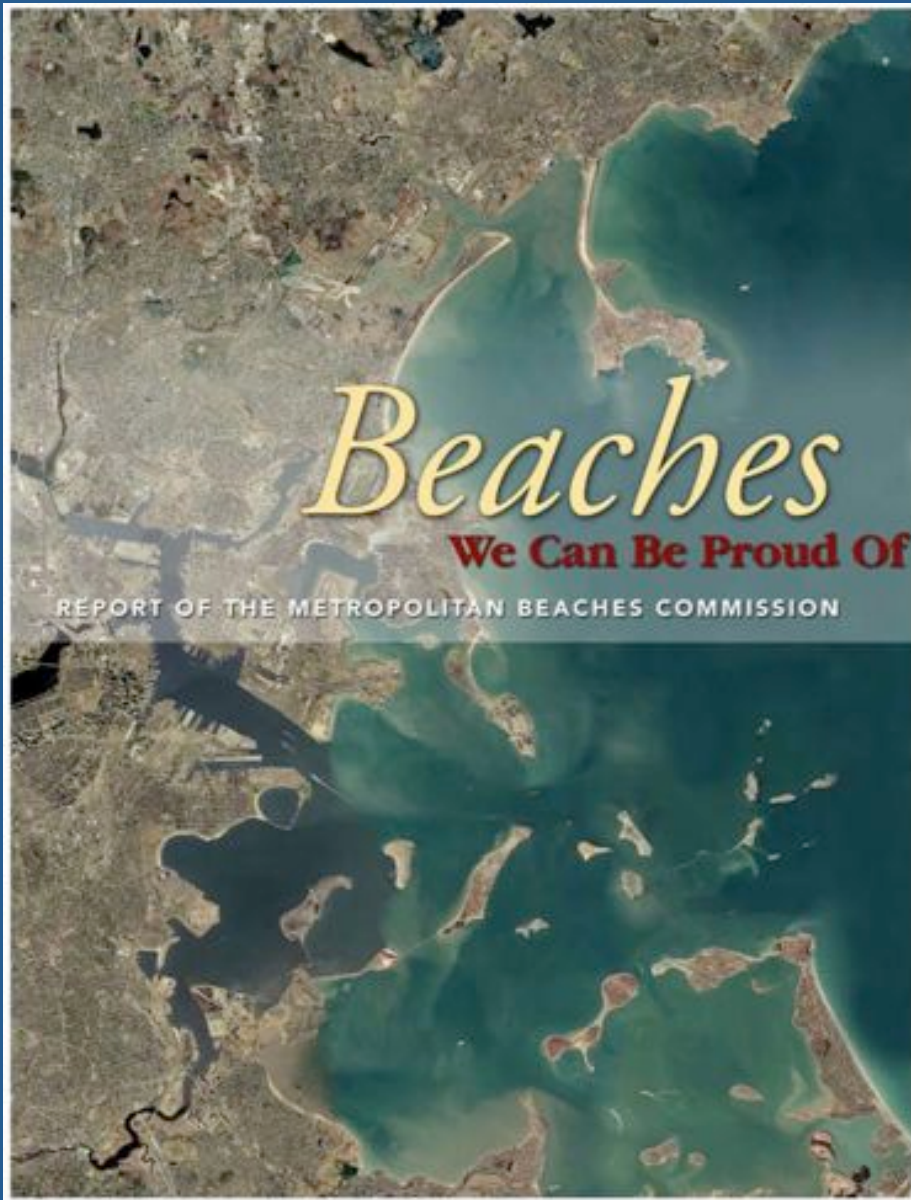
# Metropolitan Beaches Commission



The Commission's findings and recommendations were embraced by the Patrick Administration, endorsed by the Boston Globe, and have been largely implemented by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

- The public beaches represent an extraordinary asset for the people of the Commonwealth, and have benefited from significant capital improvements over the last fifteen years. However, needed capital improvements have not yet been implemented on several beaches, so that amenities and conditions still vary greatly from one community to the next.
- Inadequate state resources dedicated to beach maintenance and operations, including recreational and educational programming, have created conditions that keep the public away or diminish the quality of their experience when they visit. These conditions have persisted and in many cases worsened over the last fifteen years as staffing levels have decreased and the equipment needed to improve productivity has fallen into disrepair.
- Both the communities and DCR officials share a common understanding of the problems we face in taking full advantage of the beaches' potential.

# Metropolitan Beaches Commission



Free Public Events and Activities on the region's public beaches.

## Finding:

Some of the greatest success stories on the beaches over the last five years are the result of partnerships among the state, local government, and communities to develop programs and events that draw people to beaches and create memorable experiences that keep them coming back.

## Recommendation:

Strengthen the capabilities of local friends groups and community-based partnerships to work with the state to provide beach programming, support beautification, and sponsor special events that bring the beaches to life. Funding to support these activities should be sought from multiple sources, including the Commonwealth, but also including local fundraising, foundations, and revenues generated at the beaches.



# Better Beaches 2009

- This year our “Better Beaches” program supported 13 organizations and a total of 31 events, including beach reading nights, festivals and concerts, sand castle competitions and beach-side puppet shows that drew hundreds of thousands of regional residents and visitors back to our public beaches.
- Working in partnership with local “Friends” groups and community organizations, and with local businesses, the region’s philanthropic and corporate community, and government at all levels, we helped these organizations leverage our initial investment of \$30,500 into more than \$112,000 in free beach programming in 2009.



## Better Beaches Small Grants Program Recipients 2009



“It's remarkable what people who love their beach and their community can accomplish with just a little bit of help.”

Patricia Foley, President  
Save the Harbor/ Save the Bay





## Save the Harbor / Save the Bay For Everyone to Enjoy

### Lessons Learned

- Understand the resource and your community's needs
- Plan together
- Be truly inclusive
- Work to create consensus but face conflicts directly
- Set ambitious goals
- Look for "Low Hanging Fruit"
- Remember that this is a marathon, not a sprint
- Be collegial and try to have some fun
- Remember that people love the water

# The Leading Edge:

BOSTON HARBOR'S NEW ROLE IN THE CITY'S ECONOMY

## Do The Math

What is the value of the public's investment in the resource?

What sort of private investment can it attract and leverage?

Will it create new jobs, or increase property values?

Will it attract visitors?

How much tax revenue will it generate for your community and for the Commonwealth?

How can you put the resource to work for your community?



# Get The Word Out



**Share the Harbor**  
Remember how much fun you had as a kid at the shore in the summer?  
[Click here](#) to sponsor a child.

- The Boats**
- [Water Taxis](#)
  - [Commuter Boats](#)
  - [Harbor Islands](#)
  - [Seasonal Ferries](#)
  - [Harbor Tours](#)
  - [Whale Watches](#)
  - [Charter Boats](#)
  - [Charter Brokers](#)
  - [Fishing Boats](#)
  - [Sailing Centers](#)
  - [Marinas](#)
  - [Home](#)

## A special project of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay

This website is designed to provide information about ways to enjoy Boston by boat to everyone. While the list is extensive, it is by no means complete. It will continue to grow as we learn of other ways to experience Boston Harbor the best way we know: by boat.

Looking for ways to get to the South Shore, Cape Cod, or the Islands? Check out the [Massachusetts Cultural Coast](#) and [SMARTGuide](#).

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay is a public interest, non-profit harbor advocacy organization whose mission is to restore and protect Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay for everyone to enjoy. For more information about the work we do, please visit our website today at: [www.savetheharbor.org](http://www.savetheharbor.org)

For more information on Boston Harbor events and activities, visit our [Boston Harbor page](#) on Facebook!

Know of another way to experience Boston by Boat?  
Email us at [bostonbyboat@savetheharbor.org](mailto:bostonbyboat@savetheharbor.org) and we'll add it to the list.

“The law secures unto the people the right to a clean harbor...  
What you do with it next is up to you.”

U.S. District Court Judge A. David Mazzone





See you on Boston Harbor.



Jasper White's Summer Shack on Spectacle Island in the Boston Harbor Islands



## Save the Harbor / Save the Bay For Everyone to Enjoy

To Download a Copy of This Presentation,  
Visit us Online Today at  
[www.savetheharbor.org](http://www.savetheharbor.org)

### Special Thanks to:

- The Revere Beach Partnership
- The Friends of the Fort Point Channel
- The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- The Department of Conservation and Recreation
- The Boston Redevelopment Authority
- The Metropolitan Beaches Commission
- Our Community and Program Partners
- Our Philanthropic and Corporate Supporters

Congratulations to The Massachusetts Environmental Trust