



Coastal Zone Management



The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 provides the basis for protecting, restoring, and responsibly developing our nation’s diverse coastal communities and resources. The New Jersey coastal community pictured here is adjacent to the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, a protected estuary and land used for researching how estuaries respond to human influences and climate change. (Photo credit: Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve).

America's coasts, including those along the Great Lakes, stretch more than [95,000 miles](#). The CZMA provides each state and territory the opportunity to identify their unique management priorities and develop programs to support and advance them. Because we rely on coastal areas as places to live (more than half of us live along the coast), visit, get food from, and transport goods through, we need to manage and protect these areas. That’s a pretty big job.

Did you know?

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) was passed in 1972 and provided a formal structure to help coastal states and territories balance the conservation and restoration of their natural resources with community development in order to support both vibrant economies and healthy ecosystems. Administered by NOAA, and



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NOS's Role

When it comes to managing our nation's coasts, it's a team effort. NOAA works closely with federal, state, and local partners to address a variety of coastal issues. Within the National Ocean Service (NOS), the [Office for Coastal Management](#) (OCM) plays a key role, administering and coordinating a range of federal-state programs while also providing financial and technical assistance and training to partners responsible for decision-making and management in coastal areas.

NOS offices are also involved in activities such as coastal and marine spatial planning, and the development and delivery of tools to help coastal communities address challenges such as [sea level rise](#).

The Coastal Zone Management Program

The [National Coastal Zone Management Program](#) (CZMP) is a voluntary federal-state partnership created by the CZMA to protect, restore, and responsibly develop our nation's coastal communities and resources. The CZMP takes a comprehensive approach to problem solving by balancing the often competing and occasionally conflicting demands of coastal resource use, economic development, and conservation.

All 35 eligible [coastal and Great Lakes states, territories, and commonwealths](#) (with the exception of Alaska) participate in the CZMP.

Tackling Issues

State and territory coastal management programs address a wide range of issues, including:

Climate change: As the Earth's climate warms, sea levels are rising, having a significant impact on coastal populations, economies, and natural resources. Coastal zone management can help coastal communities prepare for and adapt to a changing climate. NOS is creating sea level rise inundation models and supporting the development of climate change adaptation plans, regulations, and policies at the state and local levels.

Energy facility siting: Whether it is for oil and gas or renewable sources, such as wind or wave power, a great deal of energy exploration, production, and transport takes place along the coast. Coastal zone

the coastal states and territories, the [CZMA](#) provides a framework, funding, and technical assistance to address coastal issues including wetland management, public access, coastal hazards, and water quality.

More Information

[Office for Coastal Management](#)

[Coastal Zone Management Program](#)

[National Estuarine Research Reserves](#)

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management helps ensure that energy facilities are constructed in places and ways that protect the national interest in energy production and coastal resources, while minimizing conflicts with other coastal uses, such as fishing and navigation.

Public access: More than 180 million Americans annually visit coastal areas to swim, boat, fish, or just relax. However, sometimes getting to the beach isn't so easy. Coastal zone management can help provide public access to coastal areas. In addition to creating new access opportunities and enhancing existing sites, the program helps provide public education and outreach to make sure the public knows where and how they can access the coast.

Habitat protection: Our coasts have habitats that are economically and ecologically valuable. Unfortunately, many coastal habitat areas face intensified pressure from human activities. Coastal management encourages habitat protection through land-use planning, habitat restoration, and state and local permitting programs that regulate development impacts to coastal habitats.

Water quality: Nonpoint source pollution, such as runoff from streets or lawns, poses the largest threat to the nation's coastal water quality today. To help combat nonpoint source pollution, OCM administers the [Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program](#). Jointly run by NOAA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the program's role includes establishing and encouraging states to use management measures to control polluted runoff.

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