

How you can help restore and protect Ipswich coastal resource areas

There are multiple ways that the Town of Ipswich, through both municipal and citizen efforts, can help to reduce erosion and restore the coastal wetland resource areas:



This section of the river bank and salt marsh is impacted by boat storage, which can damage or even kill vegetation that holds soil in place, leading to erosion.

- **Do not store boats or seasonal docks on a vegetated resource area.** State regulations prohibit the storage of boats and floats on salt marsh, coastal dunes, coastal banks, and other vegetated resource areas. The Town began enforcing this prohibition in March of 2017.
- **Make sure your dock and mooring location are properly permitted** with the Conservation Commission and/or the Harbor Master.
- **Access the water for boating at a public boat launching area *only*.** Carry, do not drag, your boat over wetlands and banks. Step on rocks, not plants.
- **Use designated public access areas to reach the water.** Do not step on fragile wetland plants or tree roots.

(continued on back page)

- Seek permission from the Conservation Commission to build a seasonal canoe or kayak rack to store your boat off of fragile vegetated areas. *(continued from inside page)*



Other ways to restore and protect coastal wetlands

- **Prevent stormwater runoff from rain and snowmelt** by reducing pavement and other impervious surfaces on your property. Establish vegetated areas that help water soak in the ground.
- **Pick up your dog's waste and dispose of it properly.**
- **Support the Ipswich Department of Public Works' projects** for improved stormwater management.
- **Get involved in invasive plant removal projects** undertaken by the Ipswich Open Space Program and by conservation groups such as Mass Audubon.

For more information:

Alicia Geilen

Ipswich Conservation Agent

Aliciag@ipswich-ma.gov

978-356-6661

Brian Murphy

Ipswich Patrol Officer – Harbor Division

bmurphy@ipswichpolice.org

978-356-4343

Visit www.pie-rivers.org/ipswichriverbankproject

Funding provided in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management.



Enjoying, Restoring and Protecting Ipswich's Coastal Resource Areas





Facts about Ipswich coast:

- “Coastal Wetlands” include tidal flats, beaches, salt marsh areas, freshwater wetlands, sand dunes, coastal bank, tidal rivers and streams, and the ocean. They are sometimes referred to as “resource areas”.
- The Ipswich River - which is tidal below the dam downtown - provides drinking water for 350,000 people and businesses in northeastern Massachusetts.
- The Great Marsh estuary, which includes the lower Ipswich River, is a state-designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern.
- Coastal wetlands support many native plant, animal, and fish species, including dune and salt marsh grasses, seaside goldenrod, whitetail deer, river otters, ospreys, saltmarsh sparrows, American eel, and river herring, to name a few.
- There are several public access points for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, birding, swimming, sunbathing, or just walking.
- Supporting and protecting wetlands helps keep our water clean for its many diverse uses (e.g., drinking, boating, wildlife habitat).

Why are coastal wetlands so important?

Coastal resource areas act as buffers to upland areas, helping to protect our homes, businesses, roads, and utilities from flooding, erosion, and other storm damage. When these natural defenses erode, they become less effective buffers to important community assets. It’s crucial that we continuously work to protect and improve our coastal wetlands.

Vegetated areas within coastal resources are critically important. According to the MA Office of Coastal Zone Management, “Plants can help control erosion by stabilizing soil and sediments with their roots, breaking the impact of raindrops and wave splash, and trapping sand to build dunes.” To learn more about how you can reduce coastal erosion and storm damage, visit their StormSmart Properties website:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/stormsmart-properties>

For information on landscaping options to help control coastal erosion and prevent storm damage, visit:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/stormsmart-coasts-coastal-landscaping-in-massachusetts>



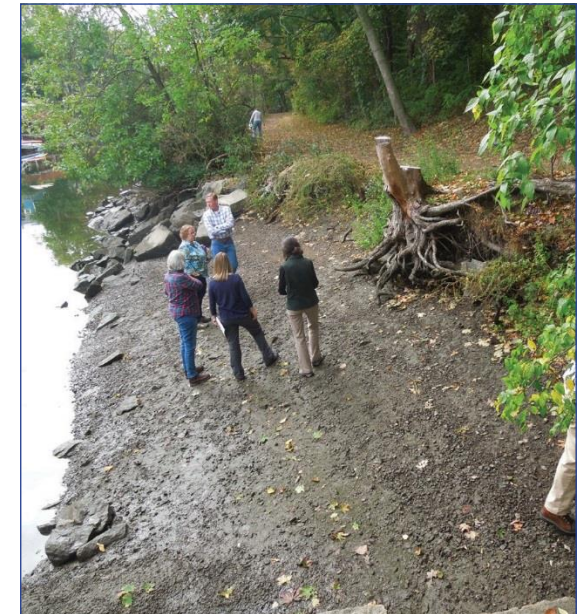
Significant erosion of river bank from failed stormwater culvert near County Street and Shurcliff Riverwalk.

Erosion of coastal wetlands is a serious concern for Ipswich. Roads, drinking water lines, sanitary sewer and stormwater pipes, and utility poles, are located immediately alongside the Ipswich River and other coastal resource areas, as are dense residential neighborhoods.

Causes of coastal erosion

Coastal geologists, engineers, and wetland scientists have identified the following causes of coastal resource wetland area erosion in Ipswich:

- Increased flooding (coastal and inland) and damage from more frequent and stronger storms;
- Inadequately-managed rainwater and snowmelt (called stormwater) running off of buildings and paved surfaces;
- Walking over fragile wetland vegetation (e.g., coastal bank, dune, salt marsh, etc.) to reach the water;
- Launching and storing boats on coastal bank and other vegetated wetlands;
- Storing seasonal docks and floats in the off-season on vegetated wetlands;
- Not respecting “No Wake” areas, and excessive boat speeds.



*Severe coastal bank erosion **along the Shurcliff Riverwalk** is assessed near Green Street and Town Hall. A municipal sewer main is under the walk.*