

SAVE THE DATE



JULY **15**th
1:00PM - 2:30PM

WEBINAR & PANEL DISCUSSION: Wetlands and Seagrasses: Nature's Superheroes in the Fight for Coastal Resilience in Southeast New England

ABSTRACT:

Coastal wetlands are critical to the survival of hundreds of species who call them home, but they're just as critical to the well-being of the many thousands of people who live near them. Coastal communities are increasingly battered by the impacts of climate change. Healthy wetlands and seagrass beds can provide natural buffers against stronger waves and storm surges; if they remain intact. They can also naturally sequester carbon dioxide and prevent the release of methane that would come with their decomposition. These powerful benefits speak to their importance for our ecological and social survival. Protecting and restoring them is urgently needed to bolster resilience. **The goal of this webinar is to discuss the importance of these systems, their impact on local species, their role in climate change mitigation; and to highlight some of the incredible work being done throughout the region to ensure their protection.**

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Wetlands and Seagrasses: Nature's Superheroes in the Fight for Coastal Resilience in Southeast New England



Phil Colarusso, EPA Region 1

Phil Colarusso has been working as a marine biologist and diver at EPA for 30+ years. He has worked on a wide variety of coastal and ocean issues, including impact assessment of power plant operations on fish populations, dredging to benthic habitats and of excess nitrogen on seagrass. From 2012 to 2016, he was one of six US representatives on the Commission of Environmental Cooperation's Blue Carbon Steering Committee. His area of expertise is seagrass ecology/physiology. His current research focuses on carbon sequestration by seagrasses, seagrass restoration and the impact of invasive species on seagrasses.



Caitlin Chaffee, Narragansett Bay NERR

Caitlin Chaffee recently became Manager of the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve after serving as a policy analyst with the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council for 14 years. In both roles her work has focused on the preservation and management of coastal and estuarine natural systems, and protection of the benefits they provide to coastal communities. She has worked closely with state and federal agencies, municipalities, and non-governmental partners to identify, plan, fund and implement resilience-focused projects across Rhode Island.



Rachel Jakuba, Buzzards Bay Coalition

Rachel Jakuba is the Science Director for the Buzzards Bay Coalition. Rachel oversees the Coalition's science and monitoring activities. These include a water quality monitoring program that has collected data from over 200 locations for almost 30 years and the initiation of salt marsh monitoring at sites where restoration activities are occurring and those where no restoration activities are currently planned.



David Morgan, EPA Region 1

David is an ORISE fellow for the Southeast New England Program and is researching climate refugia and habitat buffer zones. He holds a master's degree in urban and environmental policy and planning from Tufts University, where his thesis focused on restoration of the Eastern oyster as a climate adaptation measure. Last year, he researched and wrote a local wetlands ordinance for the City of Boston, which was recently enacted. He lives with his wife, son, and cat near the edge of the Mystic River watershed in Cambridge.

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