



Fact Sheet

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Department of Environmental Protection

The Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management Program

The coastal zone is the place where land meets sea. It includes both coastal waters and adjacent shorelands -- areas that strongly influence each other. Nationally, coastal zones include open oceans, tidal flats, estuaries, bays, inlets, wetlands, lagoons, beaches, dunes, bluffs, the Great Lakes and the uplands draining into these waters. Coastal boundaries extend as far inland as necessary to include shorelands that have a direct and significant impact on coastal waters.

Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management (CZM), a program of the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Office for River Basin Cooperation, seeks to protect and enhance these fragile natural resources, while reducing conflict between competing land and water uses.

Using the criteria of frontage on tidally influenced waters and the Great Lakes, the Commonwealth has two widely separated coastal areas. The 63-mile Lake Erie coastline is located in Erie County, and includes the shorelines of major tributaries. The coastal zone extends inland 900 feet within the City of Erie, more than three miles in Harborcreek and North East Townships, and contains a lake-effect microclimate ideally suited to vineyards. It also extends to the middle of the lake and the boundary with Canada, encompassing a total area of more than 800 square miles. Presque Isle State Park, a seven-mile peninsula of sandy beaches, rare ecosystems and spectacular sunsets, is a major feature of Pennsylvania's north coast. Lake Erie itself is part of the largest freshwater reserve in the world and provides one of the state's ports for international shipping through connections with the other Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The 57-mile stretch of coastline along the Delaware Estuary lies within three counties: Bucks, Philadelphia and Delaware. The coastal zone varies from one-eighth mile wide in urban areas like Philadelphia to over three and one-half miles in Bucks County and extends to the boundary with New Jersey in the middle of the Delaware. The zone contains some environmentally important islands, as well as the marshes and shorelands of

tributary streams that are tidally influenced. The head of tide for the Delaware Estuary is located at the falls near Morrisville, PA. The degree of salinity from mixing fresh river water with tidal ocean water gradually increases toward the mouth of Delaware Bay, depending on rainfall and the strength of tidal forces. The combined facilities of the Delaware Estuary comprise the largest fresh water port in the world.

CZM receives funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, for the purpose of implementing program policies of sound coastal management.

The U.S. Department of Commerce approved Pennsylvania's Coastal Zone Management Plan in September 1980, under authority of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. This plan, based on a network of regulatory and non-regulatory policies, requires specific coastal activities to comply with performance standards defined in the plan and in the regulations of other Commonwealth authorities. These policies and performance standards address the following issues and activities:

- **Coastal Hazard Areas:** Pennsylvania's coastal hazards are defined as bluff recession along Lake Erie and coastal flooding in both coastal zones. Their impact is monitored for the protection of public health and safety.
- **Dredging and Spoil Disposal:** This vital economic activity must be carefully managed to avoid adverse effects on navigation, flood flow capacity, public trust interests and environmental quality.
- **Fisheries Management:** The strong demand for recreational fishing in both zones requires efforts to protect and increase stocks of popular game species. The improvement of water quality is included to support the health and diversity of aquatic life.

- **Wetlands:** This policy involves the protection, enhancement and creation of coastal wetlands in order to maintain benefits of wildlife habitat, flood control, water quality, flow stabilization and biological diversity.
- **Public Access for Recreation:** Efforts are required to meet the public need for boating, fishing, walking, picnicking, sight-seeing and other recreational pursuits associated with the waterfront.
- **Historic Sites and Structures:** This policy supports preservation, restoration and enhancement of historic sites and structures of coastal significance within the coastal zones.
- **Port Activities:** The development and enhancement of coastal port infrastructure is an important aspect of sustaining the economic vitality of the waterfront.
- **Energy Facilities Siting:** Energy producing facilities are vital to our society, but improper siting can be damaging to fragile coastal ecosystems.
- **Intergovernmental Coordination:** This policy includes intergovernmental efforts to protect Pennsylvania's coastal resources, especially the quality of air and water.
- **Public Involvement:** Efforts are required to increase awareness of coastal issues by providing information and creating opportunities for public participation.

Management authority is primarily based on seven Commonwealth statutes: the Dam Safety and Encroachment Act, the Floodplain Management Act, the Bluff Recession and Setback Act, the Clean Streams Act, the Air Pollution Control Act, the Solid Waste Management Act and the Soil Conservation Law Act. Implementation is based on executive orders, memoranda of understanding with Commonwealth agencies and the Environmental Rights Amendment of the Pennsylvania Constitution. Executive Order 1980-20 directs all Pennsylvania administrative departments and independent boards and commissions, to the maximum extent permitted by law, to act consistently with the goals, policies and objectives of the Coastal Zone Management Program. The memoranda of understanding are

agreements with other Commonwealth agencies and commissions administering programs and authorities that implement the non-regulatory policies of the plan. The Pennsylvania Constitution establishes personal environmental rights that citizens can assert in court. It imposes duties on the Commonwealth to act as a trustee to conserve and maintain Pennsylvania's natural resources. Resource stewardship responsibilities also derive from public ownership of submerged lands that extend from the mean low water mark to boundaries with other states and nations.

Within the coastal zones, the Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management Program focuses on locations deserving special management attention by nominating them as geographic areas of particular concern (GAPC). Four types are designated: areas of significant natural value; development opportunity areas; areas of significant recreational, historic or cultural value; and overlap areas that combine elements of any of the other three.

To carry out its policies, the program utilizes monitoring techniques, coordination mechanisms and technical assistance programs. It also uses a portion of the federal funds received to provide sub-grants to county and local governments, nonprofit organizations and other state agencies to undertake projects advancing program goals.

Steering committees in each coastal zone provide input to CZM from a local perspective. One of their major contributions is to review, rank and select local projects for recommended CZM funding. These committees are composed of county and local officials or their appointees, with additional representation from authorities and environmental, economic and nonprofit coastal interests.

Program activities are reviewed and advice is given by the Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Advisory Committee. Membership is drawn from state agencies and commissions with policy interests parallel to CZM's, from regional and county planning groups and from the federal Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. This advisory committee is authorized by Executive Order 1980-20.

The program's diverse policies require a wide variety of work activities. The Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management Program:

- Works closely with other organizations and agencies that have similar policy goals;
- Provides financial assistance for coastal improvement projects in the Lake Erie and Delaware Estuary coastal zones;
- Supports public outreach, education and public input strategies;
- Monitors coastal wetland activities and investigates changes in coastal wetland acreage;
- Assists local administration and enforcement of the Bluff Recession and Setback Act, which protects public health and safety by requiring local zoning permits for development within bluff recession hazard areas along unstable Lake Erie bluffs;
- Evaluates federal, state and local activities in coastal areas to ensure consistency with coastal program policies;
- Provides technical assistance to Lake Erie property owners affected by shoreline erosion and bluff recession;

- Measures rates of shoreline erosion and bluff recession and works with other agencies in monitoring coastal activities; and
- Works with other states and federal agencies on coastal issues of regional or national importance.

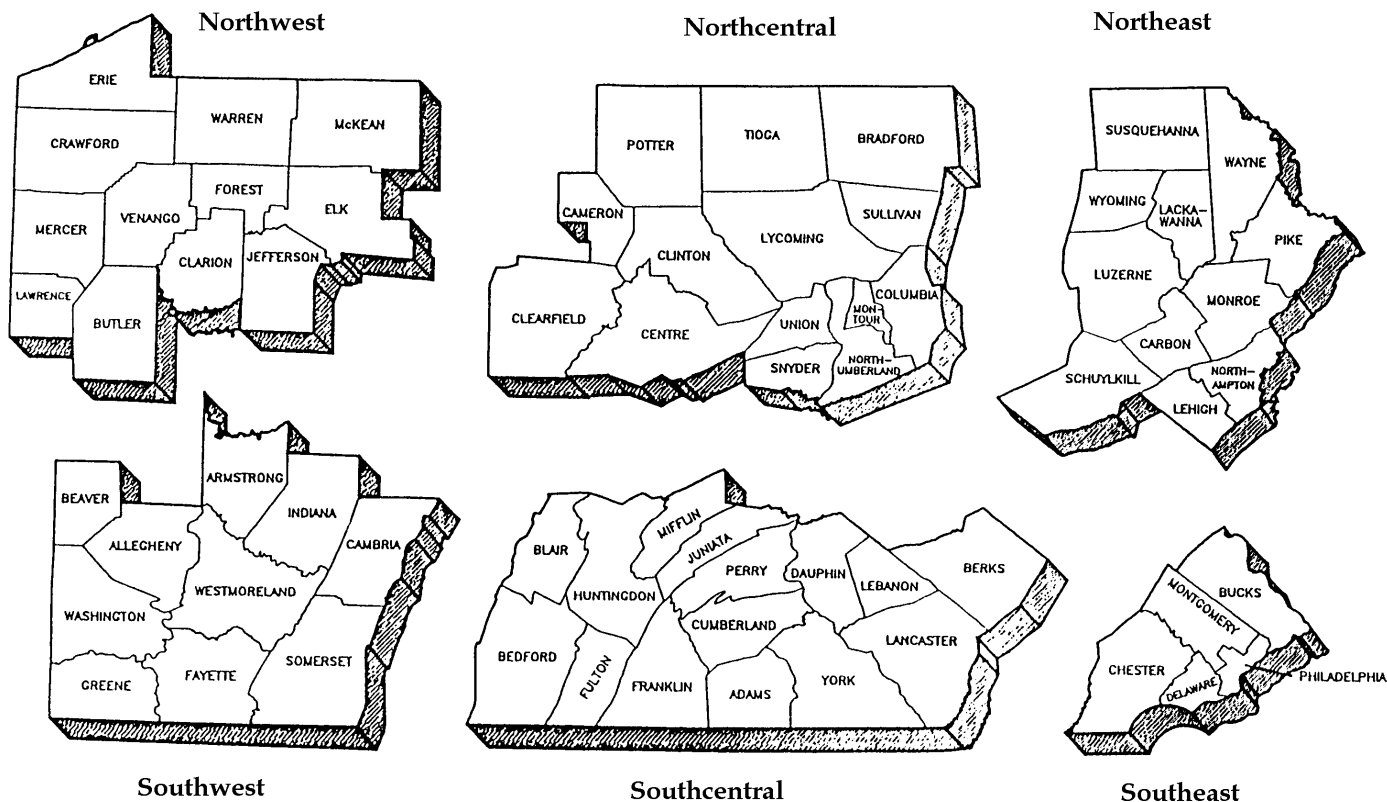
In the years ahead, CZM will continue its stewardship efforts to ensure that Pennsylvania's coastal resources are protected and preserved for all to use and enjoy. As an integral part of DEP's Office for River Basin Cooperation, CZM is the downstream place for testing the effectiveness of watershed planning. CZM's Grant Programs help provide pilot projects to develop watershed protection tools and supplement Growing Greener efforts. The action plans developed through the environmental futures planning process will help target CZM investments in the future.

The program will follow DEP's lead in meeting the environmental commitment established in Pennsylvania's Constitution: "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural environment. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all people including generations to come."

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This fact sheet and related environmental information are available electronically via Internet. For more information, visit us through the PA PowerPort at <http://www.state.pa.us> or visit DEP directly at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us> (directLINK "River Basins").



www.GreenWorks.tv - A web space dedicated to helping you learn how to protect and improve the environment. The site features the largest collection of environmental videos available on the Internet and is produced by the nonprofit Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania, with financial support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 877-PA-GREEN.