

Nantucket Sound Traditional Cultural Place (TCP)

Nantucket Sound is the first and only ocean-based TCP recognized by the Keeper of the National Register. The Sound was once exposed land where the Wampanoag people traversed, fished, cultivated, interred their ancestors, and occupied. It was home to an existing human population thousands of years ago with recent identification of numerous ancient, submerged lifeforms providing a source of crucial information about Native American Indian exploration and settlement of Cape Cod and the Islands. In 2009, the Massachusetts Historical Commission wrote in their Opinion of Eligibility:



“Prior to ca. 6,000 years ago, Nantucket Sound was exposed land. Native groups would have occupied the exposed lands, and focused their gathering and hunting and social activities near fresh water and estuarine settings that are now submerged under the waters of Nantucket Sound... The oral tradition of the Aquinnah Wampanoag that their ancestors walked to Noepe (Martha’s Vineyard) is supported by the paleogeographic reconstruction and plausible archaeological interpretations of particular routes used by Paleoindian bands... The discovery of intact submerged ancient landscape under the waters of Nantucket Sound is historically confirming to the Tribes.”

National Historic Landmark Administrative Process and Timeline

- 2022
- Briefed office of U.S. Secretary of the Interior and Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Ocean Energy Management

Briefed White House Council on Native American Affairs and House Natural Resources Committee

Met with National Park Service (NPS) to discuss NHL process and technical requirements

Hired national historic preservation consulting firm after extensive interview process

Reviewed 1,200+ pages of documents from NPS in response to FOIA request for 2010 determination
- 2023

Developed and submitted formal Letter of Inquiry (LOI) for Nantucket Sound

Secure NPS written decision of concurrence of eligibility

Prepare comprehensive NHL nomination submission for NPS review
- 2024

NPS staff reviews submission and make suggestions to revise nomination

NPS notifies stakeholders, elected officials, and Landmarks Committee

Landmarks Committee meets and makes a recommendation to full NPS Advisory Board

NPS Advisory Board meets and makes a recommendation to Interior Secretary

Secretary makes decision on Nantucket Sound NHL designation
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- Find us at: @saveoursound_ @SOS2day @saveoursound saveoursound.org
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- A Message from President & CEO, Audra Parker
- 2023 Year in Review
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- Dear Supporter:
I hope you had the opportunity to enjoy beautiful Nantucket Sound this summer. With a new year on the horizon, I want to thank you for your unwavering support and update you on our progress. Today, Nantucket Sound remains vulnerable to development and is facing diminished water quality, habitat degradation, and other environmental threats. You can help change that by supporting our mission to protect this national treasure for generations to come.
- Your generosity has allowed us to make great strides towards securing **National Historic Landmark** (NHL) designation for the Sound. In Congress, we are actively promoting legislation to designate the Sound as an NHL, prevent development, protect traditional uses such as fishing, and address environmental threats. Within the U.S. Department of the Interior, we are seeking NHL designation to leverage the Administration’s focus on preserving sacred tribal lands and Interior’s determination of eligibility for listing the Sound on the National Register of Historic Places. Both paths will protect Nantucket Sound in perpetuity. This year, we have made significant progress in many areas including:
- » Adding new supporters to our growing coalition of 80+ stakeholder groups
 - » Meeting with members of Congress, the National Park Service (NPS), and other key federal agencies to encourage and expedite legislative and administrative action
 - » Briefing Massachusetts Governor Healey and new members of the Cape and Islands delegation to gain support for the protection of Nantucket Sound
 - » Launching the administrative process with the development and submission of a Letter of Inquiry to Interior to seek designation of Nantucket Sound as an NHL
 - » Facilitating Congressional letters to the Secretary of the Interior urging finalization of the NPS Advisory Board and briefing members of the new Board on the Sound’s tribal significance
 - » Starting development of the full nomination package documenting the Sound’s tribal significance for the next step in the administrative process
- These steps forward move us closer each day to securing permanent protection for Nantucket Sound, but we need your support to succeed. As the only group dedicated to preserving Nantucket Sound, we ask that you please help protect this national treasure with a generous tax-deductible gift today. Future generations are counting on you!
- Warm regards,
- Audra Parker*

Nantucket Sound – The Heart and Soul of the Cape and Islands

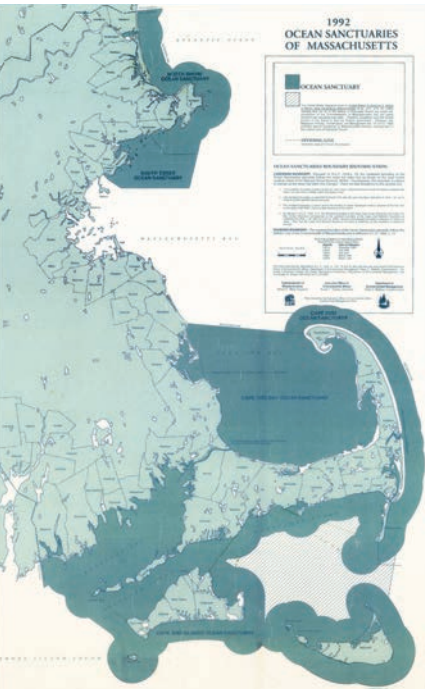
Nantucket Sound is famous for its natural beauty and abundant wildlife. The Sound is situated at a confluence of the cold Labrador Currents and the warm Gulf Stream which creates a unique coastal habitat, representing the southern range for Northern Atlantic species and the northern range for Mid-Atlantic species. The Sound is characterized by remarkable richness of biological diversity, with habitats ranging from open sea to tidal flats, salt marshes, and estuaries. It is also renowned for recreational boating and fishing and contributes to drawing over six million visitors annually to the region.



Nantucket Sound from Osterville (Stuart Cooperrider Photography)

Nantucket Sound – One Ecosystem Split between State and Federal Jurisdiction

The waters of Nantucket Sound extending three miles from the shores of the Cape and Islands belong to the Commonwealth and are protected by state law. The center of the Sound, however, is under federal jurisdiction and remains vulnerable to development.



The Sound’s jurisdictional boundaries were delineated by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1975. In *United States v. Maine*, states were ruled to have jurisdiction over all submerged lands within the three mile zone, and the U.S. to the seabed more than three miles from shore. This jurisdictional delineation, however, does not apply to bodies of water such as Cape Cod Bay because the Bay has only one outlet to a single larger body of water and a borderline can be drawn between two points on either side of the opening.

Thus, all of Cape Cod Bay is protected under state law while the center of Nantucket Sound, under federal jurisdiction, remains open to development. This single and vital ecosystem, with its rich tribal and maritime history, unique habitat, and critical importance to the regional economy, lacks the meaningful protections that apply to other bodies of water in the state.

2023 Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound Events



Guests and volunteers at Nauticus Marina



Alliance partnership with The Black Dog for Earth Day beach cleanup



Staff and Board members at Nauticus Marina

A Celebration of Nantucket Sound (ACONS) Educational Program

Launched in September 2020, the ACONS series is an educational initiative designed to celebrate and spread awareness of Nantucket Sound’s exceptional environment, rich history, and economic importance. Topics covered by experts in past webinars include shipwrecks, lighthouses, sea turtles, fishing, wildlife, and many more. To date, the Alliance has hosted over twenty webinars, and has welcomed over 3,500 registrants.



After three years of virtual programming, the Alliance hosted its first ACONS LIVE! event in September. Attendees were treated to live panel discussions and presentations from local experts.

Guest speakers included: former State Senator Rob O’ Leary, Karen Moore Dourdeville (*Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Animal Life Sanctuary*), Seth Engelbourg (*Linda Loring Nature Foundation*), Captain Greg Ketchen (*Coast Guard Heritage Museum*), Zak Mertz (*Cape Wildlife Center*), Wendy Northcross (*JFK Hyannis Museum*), Bettina Washington (*Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah*), and Elizabeth York (*Cape Cod Maritime Museum*). Photography was provided by Stuart Cooperrider, with live music performed by singer-songwriters Mark Alan Lovewell and Molly Conole. The event was sponsored by Akin, Beacon Marine Construction, The Black Dog, Cape Cod 5, Crosby Yacht Yard, Hy-Line Cruises, Hyannis Marina, Keller Company, KON Limousine, and Lune.



Elizabeth York, Wendy Northcross, and Captain Greg Ketchen



Bettina Washington, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head



Karen Dourdeville, Zak Mertz, and Seth Engelbourg



Molly Conole and Mark Alan Lovewell perform