

Preface

The New York State Legislature passed the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve Act in 1993 at the urging of Long Islanders concerned about the future health of the South Shore estuary. The Act declared the estuary to be a resource of unparalleled biological, economic and social value, created the South Shore Estuary Reserve (Reserve) and called for its protection and prudent management.

The Act also created the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council (Council), designated the New York Secretary of State as its Chair, and provided for membership representing six South Shore towns, thirty-one villages, Nassau and Suffolk counties, the City of Long Beach, and recreation, business, academic, environmental and citizen interests. The Act also charged the Council with the preparation of a comprehensive management plan for the Reserve.

Development of the plan has followed a process in which many individuals have had opportunities to participate. In 1994, the Council held a series of scoping meetings during which public views and concerns about the estuary and its management were received. Monthly meetings, open to the public, have allowed interested parties to learn about and participate in Council activities and those of its Technical Advisory Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, and topic-based subcommittees and workgroups.

To assist the Council, the Department of State Division of Coastal Resources gathered information primarily through partnerships with local governments and federal agencies. The information addressed land and embayment uses, the estuarine economy, water quality, living resources, and other aspects of the Reserve. Much of this information was analyzed by the Department of State through geographic information system technology, and this analysis served as a basis for the implementation actions offered in the plan. All of this information is presented in the series of technical reports and working papers referenced in Appedix A to the plan.

The Council is pursuing multiple purposes in issuing this plan:

- to recommend management actions for protecting and improving the health of the South Shore estuary, and to expand such efforts;
- to sustain cooperation and commitment among all public and private interests with a stake in the estuary;
- to build public awareness and understanding about the estuary and the issues that affect its health and vitality, and to involve the public in its management; and
- to identify future research in areas where further scientific information is needed to improve management actions.

[Note to reader: An electronic version of the South Shore Estuary Reserve comprehensive management plan, with links to the technical report series and associated data sets and maps, can be accessed at: www.estuary.cog.ny.us.]

