



**MVP**  
Municipal Vulnerability  
Preparedness



**WOODS HOLE GROUP**  
A CLS COMPANY

# Town of Westport

Barrier Beach Management Planning  
*Atlantic Ave, The Knubble, East Beach*

Community Meeting #1 - March 26th, 2025



**East Beach**  
Source: Maple & Main Realty

# Project Team

## Town of Westport – Project Lead

- Michael Burris
- Chris Capone
- Diya Wheeler

## Coastal Zone Management – Funder of Technical Work

- Sam Haines
- Rebecca Haney

## EEA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program – Funder of Outreach

- Courtney Rocha

## Woods Hole Group

- Conor Ofsthun – Project Manager
- Brittany Hoffnagle – Outreach and Alternatives Analysis
- Justine Rooney – Beach Management Plans
- Adam Finkle, Mitch Buck – Site Survey Leads

## Southeast Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD)

- Kevin Ham
- Maria Jones







March 2025 – The Knubble

Source: WHG

# Agenda

1. Barrier Beaches: What They Are and Why They Matter
2. A Look at Beach Management Planning: Past, Present and Future
3. Project Timeline
4. Breakout Rooms, Survey, & Future Public Engagement

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# Barrier Beaches

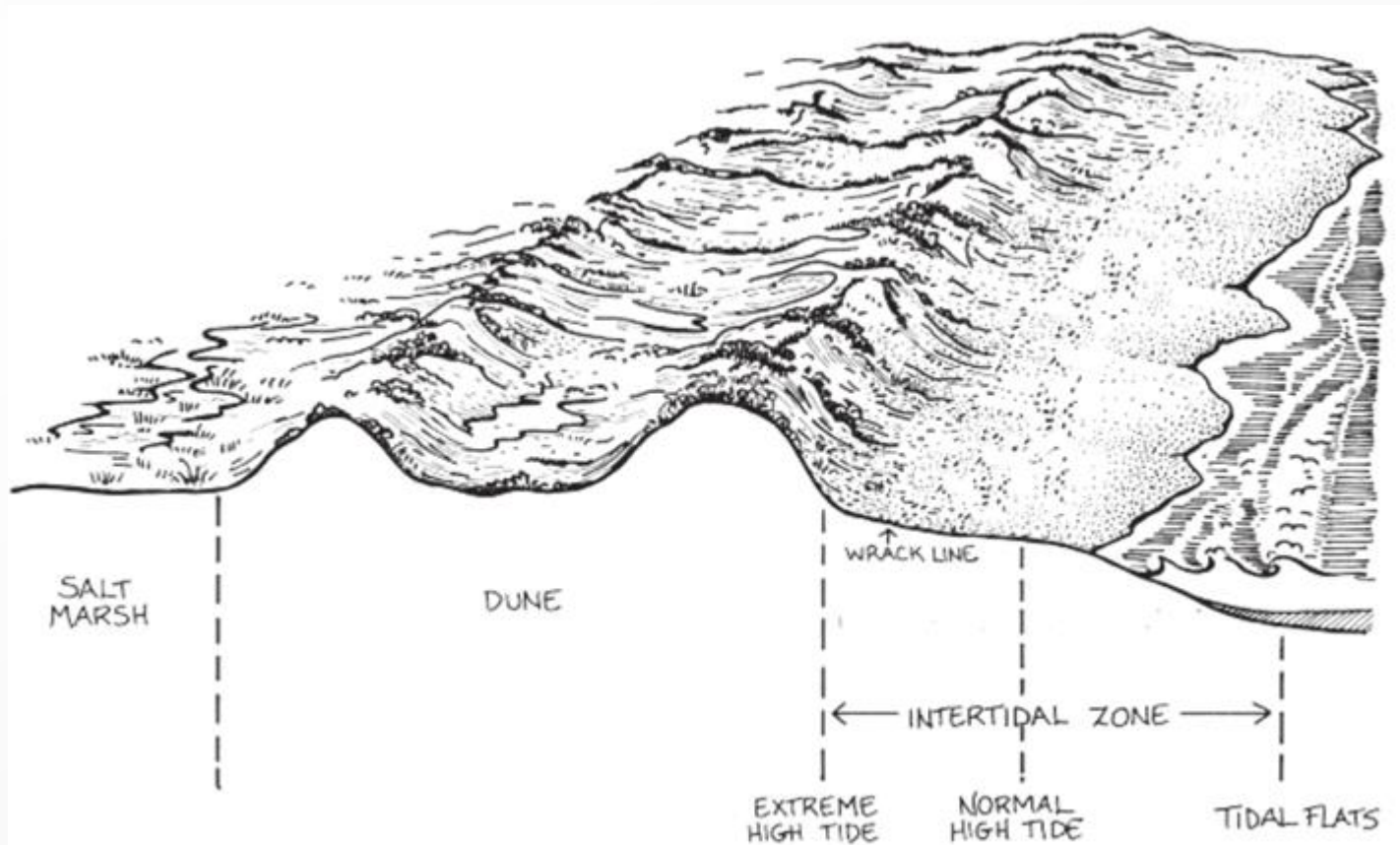


# Project Area



# What Are Barrier Beaches?

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**East Beach**

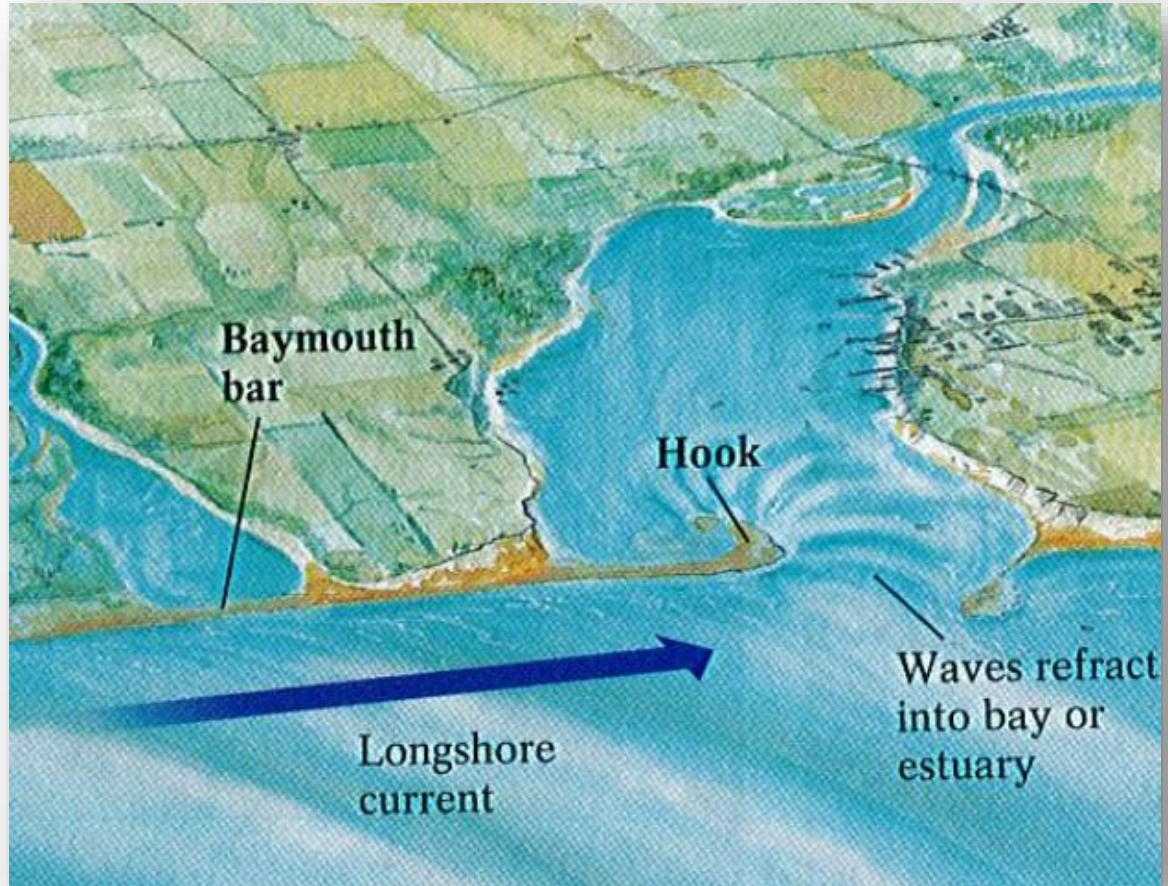
Source: Maple & Main Realty





# How Do They Form?

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# Project Area

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**Atlantic Ave**



**The Knubble – Beach Ave**



**East Beach Road**





# Atlantic Ave





# The Knubble – Beach Ave





# East Beach Road





# Why Are They Important?

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## 1. Natural Storm Buffers

They absorb wave energy and reduce the impact of storm surge, buffering coastal communities from flooding and erosion.

## 2. Wildlife Habitat

Barrier beaches provide crucial nesting sites for shorebirds, while also supporting diverse marine and coastal ecosystems.

## 3. Economic and Recreational Benefits

These beaches attract tourism, support fisheries, and provide spaces for recreational activities.



**March 2025 - The Knubble**

Source: WHG





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# Beach Management Planning

# What is Barrier Beach Management Planning?

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## Project Goals:

1. Understand existing conditions and natural resources
2. Examine vulnerabilities to erosion, flooding, and storms
3. Assess past and present management of Atlantic Ave, the Knubble, and East Beach barrier beaches
4. Evaluate a range of management and adaptation strategies to enhance resilience
5. Incorporate community feedback into planning mechanisms within Town



**January 2024 – East Beach**

Source: MyCoast





August 2020 – East Beach

Source: MyCoast

# What is Coastal Resilience?

*“The ability to adapt to changing conditions and withstand - and rapidly recover from - disruption due to emergencies.” (NOAA)*

- Efforts seeking to balance natural and built environments
- Can include:
  - Adapting infrastructure,
  - Ecosystem restoration, and
  - Community coordination (communication, emergency response)
- End goal to reduce vulnerability to erosion, flooding, and storms

# Beach Management – Past

## Natural Conditions & Evolution:

How has the coastline changed over time due to natural processes (e.g., erosion, sediment transport, sea level rise)?

**Human Impacts:** How have land use, tourism, development, and policies affected the beach environment?

## Previous Management Strategies:

What measures were taken in the past (e.g., dune restoration and beach nourishment)?



**Post-1938 Hurricane – East Beach**

Source: Westport Historical Society



# Beach Management – Present

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**August 2020 – The Knubble**

Source: Mycoast

**Existing Conditions:** What are the current issues affecting the beach (e.g., erosion, flooding, pollution, overcrowding, habitat loss)?

**Public Interests:** What are the concerns and priorities of different groups (e.g., Westport residents, businesses, env. organizations, gov. agencies)?

**Current Practices:** How does the Town manage its beaches today?



# What are the outcomes of the project?

## 1. Establishment of Existing Conditions

- Wetland resources
- Sediment analysis
- Topographic survey

## 2. *Draft* Near-Term Management Plan for current conditions

- Balancing conservation & human use
- Reduce storm damage
- Increase resiliency

## 3. Data to support mid- to long-term options

- How will changing weather impact the beach in coming decades
- How can the Town work together to create adaptive plans



**March 2025 - The Knubble**

Source: WHG



# Project Timeline:



2025



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- # Public Engagement and Input



# Public Engagement

The project will actively engage the community throughout the process using a transparent and inclusive approach. This includes:

- **Community Meeting / Workshop Events:** Providing background on coastal processes, vulnerability, beach management planning, data collection, and adaptation approaches. The project will prioritize gathering insights from the community. These workshops will be held in community spaces or on-site (at the beach) to reach a diverse audience.
- **Informational displays:** Placed in public locations like beaches, Town Hall, and the library to keep the community informed.
- **Pop-up events:** Such as on-site tabling, community meeting presentations, and stakeholder interviews to gather feedback and ensure broad participation.





# Public Survey



Survey Link

<https://arcg.is/qW41L>



# Breakout Rooms

23

1

**Breakout Room #1 –  
Atlantic Ave**

2

**Breakout Room #2 –  
The Knubble – Beach Ave**

3

**Breakout Room #3 –  
East Beach**



**August 2011 – East Beach**

Source: MyCoast



# Thank You

## Contact Information:

Michael Burris -

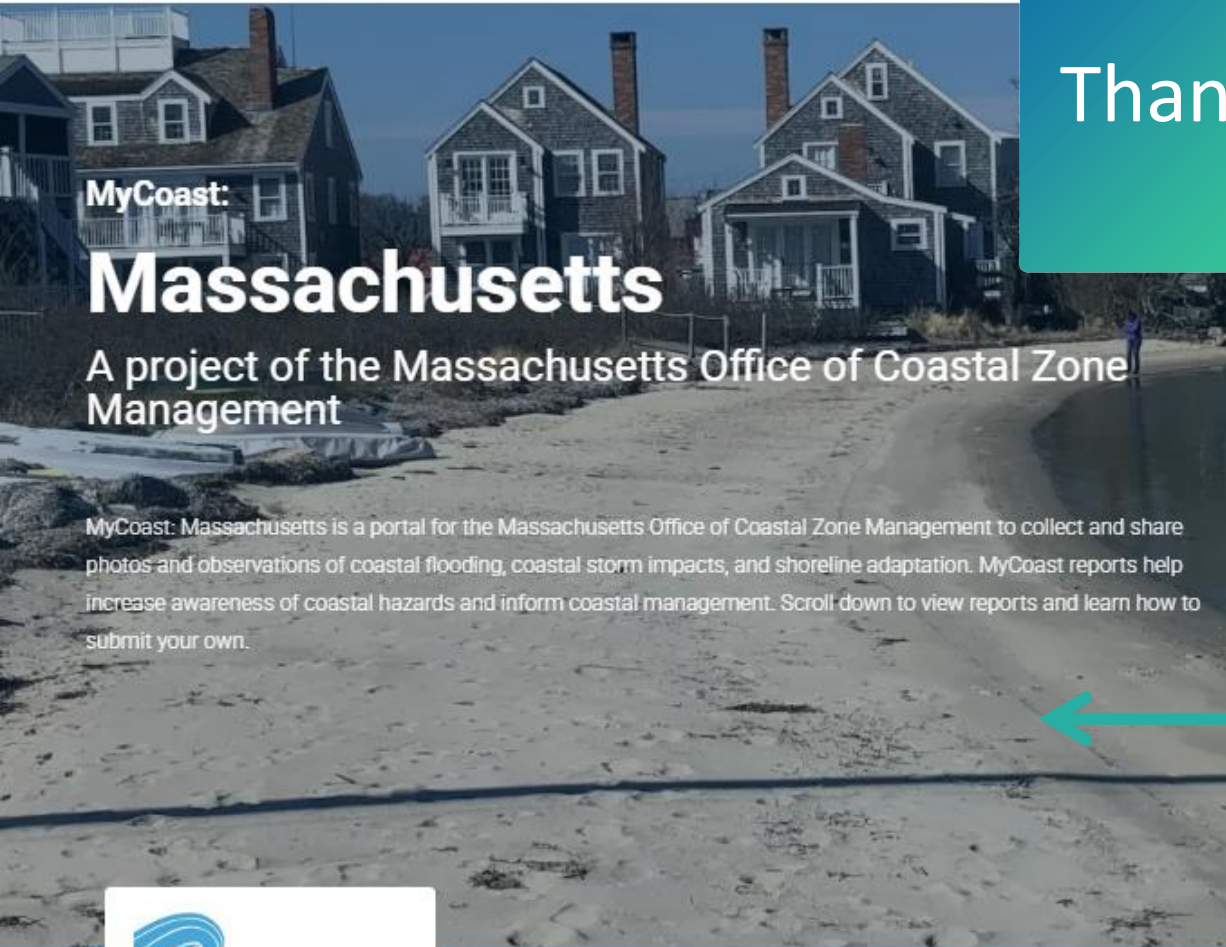
[burrism@westport-ma.gov](mailto:burrism@westport-ma.gov)

Upload your photos of flooding and storm impacts to: <https://mycoast.org/ma>

Feel free to send historic photos to:

Conor Ofsthun -

[cofsthun@woodsholegroup.com](mailto:cofsthun@woodsholegroup.com)



## How it Works