

Wave-Sensor Buoy Deployed in Cape Cod Bay

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A new high-tech wave-monitoring buoy, supported by state and federal agencies, was recently deployed in Cape Cod Bay approximately 6 nautical miles north of Sandy Neck in Sandwich. The buoy will provide sea-state information in Cape Cod Bay to improve safety and efficiency of marine transportation as mariners approach or exit the Cape Cod Canal.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) funded the \$446,000 cost of the buoy through the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Trust Fund, and has partnered with the Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to support the long-term operation of the buoy.

“The Oil Spill Trust Fund has helped coastal communities protect their shorelines in the event of a spill, but this wave-sensor buoy is a significant step forward in preventing spills in the first place,” said **MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg**. “With more than a billion gallons of petroleum products moving through the Cape Cod Canal and Cape Cod Bay every year, this buoy will provide mariners with critical environmental and safety information.”

“Ninety-five percent of loaded tugs and barges pass eastbound through the Cape Cod Canal and it is critical that we know what the sea-state is in Cape Cod Bay before we enter the canal,” said **Captain Clint Walker of the Northeast Marine Pilots Association**.

The buoy will become part of the NERACOOS buoy network and establish a NOAA [PORTS](#) (Physical Oceanographic Real Time System) site for Cape Cod Bay.

“Marine commerce has tripled in the last 50 years and continues to grow,” said **W. Russell Callender, assistant administrator for NOAA’s National Ocean Service**. “We appreciate this partnership, which will make the wave information available to mariners in Cape Cod Bay, improving their ability to operate safely and efficiently.”

The buoy measures wave height, wave period, wave direction and surface water temperature every 30 minutes. These observations will be used by the National Weather Service to help improve marine forecasts and by the U.S. Coast Guard for planning and conducting critical missions like search-and-rescue efforts. The information from the buoy will also help improve boater safety by providing observations of present wave conditions.

“This aid-to-navigation will further improve navigation safety through a waterway that is critical to our region,” said **U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Richard J. Schultz, Captain of the Port**,

Southeastern New England. “The Coast Guard is particularly pleased to join with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, other federal agencies, and local mariners to facilitate the deployment of this new wave-sensor buoy in Cape Cod Bay.”

Real-time observations from the buoy are available on several websites, including www.neracoos.org, the [Cape Cod PORTS](http://www.capecodports.com) page, at <https://cdip.ucsd.edu>, and <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/> and it will eventually be available on many boating and buoy websites and apps. Scientists from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center provided and deployed the buoy.

Mariners are cautioned not to moor or tie their vessels to this buoy for any reason, as doing so may ruin the data transmitted by the buoy or damage the buoy or the buoy’s mooring.

Following the April 2003 grounding of the B-120 barge and subsequent oil spill into Buzzards Bay, the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act established the trust fund to increase the Commonwealth’s ability to prevent and respond to marine oil spills. The Act allows the trust funds to be used for vessel navigational safety improvements, such as buoys.

For more information on the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act, go to: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/marine/>.

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About MassDEP: MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

About NERACOOS: NERACOOS is the Northeastern component of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®). The mission of NERACOOS is to produce, integrate and deliver high quality information that helps ensure safety, economic and environmental resilience, and sustainable use of the coastal ocean. NERACOOS and its partner organizations operate a system of data buoys, ocean sensors and ocean forecast systems that deliver real-time observations and predictions of ocean conditions at www.neracoos.org

About NOAA: NOAA’s mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth’s environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources.

A Datawell Waverider buoy similar to this one has been deployed in Cape Cod Bay to help mariners with data on wave height and direction, as well as water temperature.

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