

# Strategic Plan 2019–2024

The Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve developed and adopted a revised strategic plan in conjunction with the development of this Management Plan. Below are the Vision, Mission, five core goals, three supporting principles, and strategic objectives of the Reserve’s 2019–2024 Management Plan. All the strategic objectives and their strategies are incorporated into each relevant chapter.






## Vision

Resilient estuaries and coastal watersheds where human and natural communities thrive.

## Mission

To understand, protect, and restore coastal ecosystems of the Gulf of Maine through integrated research, stewardship, environmental learning, and community partnerships.

## Core Goals

-  Goal I: People appreciate and understand natural environments, make informed decisions, and take responsible actions to sustain coastal communities and ecosystems.
-  Goal II: Reserve research and monitoring promote better understanding of coastal ecosystems and this science is conveyed to decision-makers to meet coastal management.
-  Goal III: Coastal communities have the capacity to better protect, manage, and restore coastal habitats.
-  Goal IV: People understand the causes and effects of climate change and have the knowledge and tools needed to make informed decisions and adapt.
-  Goal V: The Wells Reserve is a model site and resource for exemplary coastal stewardship that fosters an understanding of the ecological connections among land, water, climate, and people.


## Supporting Principles


1. Staff and volunteers maintain a collaborative and collegial environment. The values and contributions of each individual are recognized as enriching the organization.
2. The organization has a strong financial foundation that builds capacity and enriches programs.
3. People understand, and are inspired to remember, the Reserve’s role in advancing coastal stewardship through science, education, and conservation.

## Strategic Objectives


For each objective, the colored Roman numerals to the left illustrate its most direct contribution to one or more of our Core Goals.


## Interpretive Education


 Objective 1: Field-based science education programs are designed and delivered to promote stewardship of the Gulf of Maine watershed and coastal environments through understanding and appreciation of ecosystems.


 Objective 2: Educational use of the site is optimized and public awareness of its ecological and cultural significance is increased.

## Coastal Training Program

 Objective 1: Training participants will indicate intent to apply natural- and social-science-based information in coastal decision-making.

 Objective 2: An annual forum will be provided for elected and appointed decision-makers to share coastal resilience strategies to advance the region’s resilience in a changing climate.

 Objective 3: Collaborative watershed efforts are supported in the region to sustain watershed ecosystem services including safe drinking water, flood protection, and pollution filtration.

 Objective 4: Trainings, workshops, and technical assistance are designed to address partner and stakeholder needs identified each year through needs assessments, evaluations, and consultations with the CTP Advisory Committee.

## Research and Monitoring

Objective 1: Coastal food webs and habitats are investigated to gain a better understanding of their underlying physical and biological processes and their response to natural changes, climate-driven changes, and human activities.

Objective 2: Visiting investigators and staff are provided with opportunities and resources to conduct independent or collaborative research at the Reserve and in the Gulf of Maine region.

Objective 3: The development and implementation of regionally coordinated ecological monitoring of coastal habitats is promoted, and staff continue to maintain and expand upon the System-wide Monitoring Program.

## Resource Management and Stewardship

Objective 1: Habitats within the Reserve are managed to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem functions while providing opportunities for research, education, and public enjoyment.

Objective 2: A watershed approach to stewardship and land use planning enhances the quality of water resources in south coastal Maine.

Objective 3: Assistance and expertise are provided to communities and organizations to conserve, restore, and manage coastal habitats.

## Public Access

Objective: Access for scientific research, environmental education, appropriate outdoor recreation, nature appreciation, and public events is provided while ensuring the protection of the Reserve's natural resources and its historic buildings and grounds.

## Volunteers

Objective: A dedicated and productive volunteer corps is recruited, supported,

and retained, thus augmenting all aspects of Reserve programs.

## Administration

Objective: An administrative structure is in place so the Reserve's mission is fulfilled and it conforms to federal and state law and agency agreements.

## Boundary and Acquisition

Objective: Lands are conserved to protect diverse natural resources and to ensure a stable environment for research, education, and nature appreciation.

## Facility Development and Improvement

Objective 1: Ongoing and evolving program needs of research, education, stewardship, and assembly activities are maintained and improved; safe and comfortable buildings for staff and partners are provided; and visitors are provided with facilities in which to learn about coastal ecosystems and the landscape history of the site.

Objective 2: Carbon emissions and resource consumption are reduced through conservation measures and the use of renewable energy.

**Resilient estuaries and coastal watersheds where human and natural communities thrive.**