

# **2008 Field Season at WBNERR: Information for Researchers and Guests**

The science program at the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR) continues to grow (typically 20-30 individual and group research projects are carried out annually -- See our website: [www.waquoitbayreserve.org](http://www.waquoitbayreserve.org)). The following information contains 2008 guidelines regarding the use of the Reserve's grounds and facilities. This document is distributed to help all users (scientists, technicians and students) to be informed about the proper procedures for maximizing their access to the Reserve's resources. If you have any questions, contact WBNERR's Research Coordinator, Chris Weidman, at 508-457-0495 ext. 105 (email: [chris.weidman@state.ma.us](mailto:chris.weidman@state.ma.us)) , or the Asst. Research Coordinator, MaryKay Fox at ext. 109 (email: [marykay.fox@state.ma.us](mailto:marykay.fox@state.ma.us)) or Research Technician, Liz Bonk, at ext. 128 (email: [elizabeth.bonk@state.ma.us](mailto:elizabeth.bonk@state.ma.us)) .

## **1. Registering a Research Project:**

The reserve has a research registration process to facilitate communication and coordination between visiting users of the reserve and the Reserve's research program. At the start of each field season (typically in the late spring), users must complete a WBNERR Research Registration form and return it to the Research Coordinator / Asst. Research Coordinator.

Upon approval, each user will be assigned a WBNERR Project Number that will be unique to that project for that year's field season. Users are asked to use this number and the initials "WBNERR" to label equipment used and/or stored in the laboratory or at field site(s). This will help harbormasters, shellfish wardens, and WBNERR staff to monitor the status of your equipment or experiment and to notify you in the event of an emergency. Items to be marked include buoys, flags, and other markers (e.g., sticks).

Once a project is registered, certain conforming aspects are covered by the conditions provided by the WBNERR Researcher's Permit the reserve has obtained from the towns of Falmouth and Mashpee. This permit applies to Determinations of Applicability that local authorities require to demonstrate compliance with wetlands regulations. Each research project conducted within either of these towns, whether at WBNERR or elsewhere, is required to obtain a negative determination of applicability from the local selectmen. In the past, it was the responsibility of each researcher using the Reserve to obtain this designation. This is no longer the case once a project has been registered.

The WBNERR Research Registration is an umbrella authorization that provides the needed designation to WBNERR registered projects which entail "typical" field research activities. A list of such activities within the scope and specific

conditions of this permit is contained in a copy of the permit itself, which can be requested from WBNERR or you can call to clarify.

Other licenses and permits (e.g., Scientific Collectors Permit from the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries or Migratory Bird research permit from US Fish and Wildlife) remain the responsibility of individual researchers. Copies of these must be presented to WBNERR along with the completed registration form. It is the user's responsibility to adhere to the provisions of the regulations pertinent to each of them.

**2. Safety Plan:** All registered research project applicants need to confirm that they have a safety plan in place to minimize the potential for injury or to ensure a rapid response in case of an emergency. The specifics of the plan would, of course, depend on the nature of the project and the planned activities. Waquoit Bay is a beautiful place, but, like any marine or coastal area, it can become dangerous and precautions are prudent. For example, it is best if researchers in the field have a buddy system (two is better than one), carry a cell phone for emergency communication, and notify Reserve staff (or some designated person) of your field whereabouts and your departure and estimated return times. Ask the Research Coordinator or Asst. Research Coord. for further suggestions or about your concerns regarding field safety.

**Special arrangements must be made with the Research Coordinator if you plan to handle non-aquatic vertebrates or use radioactive or highly toxic materials (See Research Registration form item # 8).**

**3. Upon project completion,** researchers using WBNERR facilities or conducting studies on WBNERR grounds (either Reserve grounds proper or on lands managed by the Reserve) are requested to send us **a project summary** that is suitable for use in the library (e.g., project final report, thesis, or journal publication).

We also request that documents, published or otherwise, containing data obtained from work done at WBNERR acknowledge the support provided by the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and our parent agencies the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

**4. Reserving use of the laboratory facilities (See Research Registration form item # 11):**

a. The laboratory in the Carriage House is sometimes available for processing field samples, etc. However, to ensure the lab's availability, researchers must make prior arrangements with the Research Coordinator or Asst. Research Coord.. The latter is responsible for the day-to-day management of laboratory

operations and will assist you with questions regarding your use of laboratory facilities. Laboratory safety is an important issue and needs to be discussed directly with the Asst. Research Coordinator when planning your use of the facilities. However, space is limited and reservations are required.

#### **5. Boat Use at WBNERR:**

WBNERR does not provide boats for general research use, other than a dingy to access moored vessels. However, in some cases, the Research Coordinator or Asst. Research Coordinator may be able to assist a project by operating a WBNERR boat. Contact either of them to see if their work load allows them to accommodate you.

The Reserve does have a limited number of moorings available for researchers. Boat trailer storage space is also available. **A project is usually limited to one mooring (depending on demand).** You must reserve a mooring during the Research Registration process. Call the Asst. Research Coordinator (MaryKay Fox: WBNERR ext. 109) for information.

Neither WBNERR, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, nor NOAA assumes any liability or responsibility for vessels using these moorings. Do not leave items of value or gas cans in an unattended boat. Users are responsible for keeping their boats bailed out. If your boat will be unused for an extended period, arrange to have someone bail it out when needed or install an automatic bilge pump. A major cause of fuel spillage into the estuarine environment is sunken boats with portable fuel tanks.

The Falmouth and Mashpee harbormasters have officially designated all bay waters as a "No Wake Zone", except for an area to the east of Washburn Island that is set aside for waterskiing and Hamblin Pond. Boaters are allowed to travel at high speed in the main navigation channel that passes from the "no wake" buoy at the northern end of Washburn Island southward to the "no wake" buoy near the inlet to Nantucket Sound. Speeding regulations (less than 5 knots) are enforced in the mooring area at the head of the bay and in the various rivers and channels.

The bay is patrolled by Assistant Harbormasters who are local citizens using their personal boats. Occasionally the official markings on these boats are not conspicuous. If you exceed about 6 mph (5 knots) in areas exclusive of the navigation channel passing North/South through the "center" of the bay (e.g., Child's River, Jehu Pond, etc.), you may be stopped. You are personally responsible for any fines levied against you.

#### **6. Gasoline storage at WBNERR:**

Gasoline and oil for motorboat use are to be stored outside the Boathouse in the two yellow, lockable storage cabinets located next to the parking area adjacent to the building (near the fuel oil tank). Approved gasoline storage containers (e.g., boat gasoline tank) are the only type of container allowed. Label your containers stored in these cabinets. The key for the cabinet doors is stored in the Boathouse lower level on a nail in the support post between the two entrance doors (above the light switch). (Additional storage is available in the small shed in the maintenance compound near the Carriage House. A separate key is required for this shed.)

**Transferring gasoline into portable boat tanks is not allowed on the lower level of the Boathouse or beach.** Transferring gas into boat-type tanks is allowed near the yellow storage containers at the upper level of the Boathouse but only when the transferring occurs on the cement pad leading to the walkway and stairs to the beach.

### **7. Identification of field sites:**

Each field site identification marker (float, stake, etc.) must be labeled with your project's registration number and the initials "WBNERR". The reserve often receives calls from officials and the public about floats or markers. We cannot respond appropriately (or inform a researcher of a problem) without a means of identification.

Area harbormaster regulations stipulate that **yellow floats** be used to mark temporarily moored objects. Proper floats should be obtained from marine equipment suppliers. Researchers are to retrieve floats and equipment (including cinder block anchors, etc.) when a season's field work is done. Local authorities (e.g., harbormasters) reserve the right to remove improperly labeled field markers.

### **8. Other WBNERR buildings and facilities:**

- a. **Main house** -- Reserve headquarters offices, exhibit center, meeting room, library.
- b. **Gatehouse** -- dormitory with 12 beds, a kitchen, and two full baths. Users may reserve space in the Gatehouse by contacting the Research Coordinator (ext.105) and the Administrative Assistant (ext. 100).
- c. **Boathouse upper level** -- meeting room and resource center (i.e., GIS). The Boathouse upper level also has a kitchen and bathroom, though we prefer that visiting researchers usually use the restrooms located in the Carriage House next to the classroom and the laboratory. There is a privacy corner in the Boathouse basement for changing out of wet clothes and there is a freshwater hose on the outside of the building as well. Requests to use the upstairs bathroom and kitchen area for meal preparation must first be cleared through the Research Coordinator or the Administrative Assistant.

- d. **Boathouse lower level** -- This area is primarily for storing field gear. The left side is for WBNERR use only. The right side is for guest researchers. There are several lockable storage bins at the rear of the right side which provide a degree of security for stored gear. Users must reserve the use of a bin at the time of registration and bins are available on a first-come-first-served basis. Gear not stored in a bin should be labeled. On the outside of the building next to the right door is a hose (cold freshwater only) for rinsing gear. There are a few benches for setting up field operations and processing field samples in the lower level as well. However, this area should not be used for laboratory analytical work without first clearing it the Research Coordinator as it is not a facility that can be easily cleaned and is proximate to the sensitive estuarine environment.
- e. **Carriage House maintenance shop** -- Tools and equipment in the shop are for WBNERR staff use only.
- f. **Facility etiquette** -- Users of the WBNERR facilities are responsible for keeping them clean, particularly bathrooms and the kitchen.

## 9. Telephone use at WBNERR:

The reserve has only three telephone lines. Lines 1 and 2 are local access (508-457-0495). Line 3 is a Centrex long distance line (617-727-xxxx) and is only for staff use. A special code is required to access this line. No long distance calls are to be billed to WBNERR lines 1 and 2. Use your credit card to charge such calls to your own account.

There are phones in the Main Building, in the Gatehouse, and in the Boathouse. WBNERR business use of the telephone lines has priority, particularly in the summer. During business hours, visitors are to limit their calls to brief business and emergency purposes. Best these days is to have your own cell phone. For connecting to the internet, ask someone on the WBNERR research staff.

## 10. Resource conservation:

Practice resource conservation while using reserve facilities. Do not waste water, for example by unnecessarily leaving a hose flowing when washing gear at the Boathouse. Be aware that too much toilet paper will easily clog the "low flow" toilets at the Reserve. Turn off lights when they are not needed, except when you expect to return to a lighted work space soon (it takes about as much energy to start a florescent fixture as it does to run one for 1 hour). WBNERR recycles.

## 11. Miscellaneous:

- Smoking is prohibited in WBNERR buildings. Do not smoke while transporting or filling fuel containers.

- Alcohol is not allowed on any state property. This includes all reserve lands and all reserve buildings.
- It is also official policy of the Massachusetts Department of Recreation and Conservation that pets are prohibited from all state buildings. This includes reserve buildings (e.g., dormitories). Dogs are allowed on the grounds of the reserve headquarters during visits but they must be on a leash.

**12. Research coordination at WBNERR:**

Scientists and students are asked to contact the Research Program Coordinator (Chris Weidman) to arrange an orientation meeting at the beginning of your field season. This meeting will be an informal opportunity to get to know our staff and facilities and to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.