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## National Estuarine Research Reserve System

# Economic Messaging Guidance

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## 1. About this Resource

This document was created to support consistent communications about some aspects of the economic impact of the NERRS in 2021. It is based on a [NOAA-led study with the goal of exploring the feasibility of estimating the economic contributions of Reserves in their local communities over the period 2018–2021](#). It is based on numerous consultations with Reserve Managers and staff, data analysis, and the development and testing of communications products. **NERRA has updated it over time to add more resources. Please let us know if you have a good resource to share at [info@nerra.org](mailto:info@nerra.org).**

## 2. Messaging Basics

We've organized these resources into NERRS-specific *message frames*, *messages*, and *proof points* to support their use by different messengers. The following primer may be helpful before you use them:

- **Message frame:** Framing is *how* you say something. It involves the choices you make (tone, emphasis, etc.) when crafting messages that are relevant to an audience's needs and values of audiences. Frames can, e.g., be emotional or logical, positive or negative. They can emphasize loss or gain, benefits or risk, etc. They are consistent storylines in which to deliver a message.
- **Messages:** Messages are *what* you say. They are the key points you need to communicate to support what you would like an audience to think or do. Memorable messages are simple, short, unexpected,

credible, compelling (emotional), and adaptable. They should fit the frame you have created. Primary messages are top-level, always true, and are sometimes called *pillars*. They are often accompanied by supporting messages.

- *Proof points*: Proof points are *evidence*. They are specific facts, data, and stories that prove our messages are true and make what we say real and meaningful for our audiences.

### 3. How We Say It: NERRS Economic Message Frame

*Economic Contribution* is the economic activity in an area that happens as a result of spending related to a program or project. The NERRS economic contribution message frame is logical, but reliant on an emotional context. It is positive and benefits-focused. More specifically:

- Reserve staff, programs, and partnerships are integral parts of the communities to which we make economic contributions;
- Reserves provide information to address economic issues that matter to states and communities;
- Reserve efforts to promote environmental resilience contribute to economic resilience;
- The economic benefits Reserves bring, and contributions they make, are expressed in hearts (values), actions (recreational activities), and wallets (jobs, spending etc.).

### 4. What We Say: NERRS Economic Pillars

Every Reserve is different and contributes to local and state economies in different ways, and some messages may not be appropriate for every Reserve. However, any Reserve should be able to say and back up the following:

- A. My Reserve makes positive economic contributions to local communities.
- B. My Reserve supports local jobs.
- C. My Reserve contributes to local revenues that help improve my state's economy and support its recovery.
- D. My Reserve strengthens the local economy by working with partners to protect and steward places that provide many valuable benefits to industries and communities.

### 5. What We Say: NERRS Economic Pillars, Supporting Messages, Proof Points

- A. **Pillar**: Reserves make positive economic contributions to local communities.

***Supporting messages & sample proof points:***

- My Reserve, and the places we help protect, attract visitors who contribute to the local economy.
  - Every year, the Rookery Bay Reserve attracts **285,369** visitors who contribute nearly **\$11.5M** to the local economy as they enjoy kayaking, fishing, hiking, and other activities. Their direct spending on goods and services such as food, lodging, and transportation has a ripple effect that enriches other industries and businesses.
  - The Rookery Bay Reserve partners with 20 organizations to attract 667,194 visitors whose spending contributes \$26.9 million to the local economy.

**B. Pillar:** My Reserve supports local jobs.

***Supporting messages & sample proof points:***

- Reserves support jobs directly and indirectly in their communities.
  - The South Slough Reserve supports **66** local jobs in the tourism, construction, restaurant, real estate, and retail industries.
  - Spending by Rookery Bay Reserve visitors supports **104** jobs.

**C. Pillar:** My Reserve contributes to local revenues that help improve my state's economy and its recovery.

***Supporting messages & sample proof points:***

- My Reserve contributes to local business revenues by engaging with partners and the public, running programs and projects, and building and maintaining facilities.
  - Through investments in staff salaries, facilities maintenance, operations, and partnerships, Florida's Research Reserves enhance local revenues by **\$45** million.
  - Investments in South Slough Reserve staff salaries, facilities maintenance, operations, and partnerships enhance local revenues by **\$5.3M**.

**D. Pillar:** My Reserve strengthens the local economy by working with partners to protect and steward places that provide many valuable benefits to businesses and communities.

***Sample proof points:***

- Residents of New Hampshire's Great Bay watershed place a collective value of **\$47.3M** on their ability to enjoy and experience a healthy Bay.<sup>1</sup>
- The Great Bay Reserve partners to protect and restore marshes, eelgrass meadows, and oyster beds—habitats that help make the Bay fishable, swimmable, and drinkable. Restoring these habitats could save up to **\$24 million** in annual wastewater treatment costs and increase commercial fishermen revenues by **\$1.9 million** per year.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Research Group. 2016. [How People Benefit from New Hampshire's Great Bay Estuary](#). NOAA Office of Coastal Management

- The Apalachicola Reserve supports a local fishing industry worth **\$16 million** annually.<sup>2</sup>
- Home of the Rookery Bay Reserve, Collier County supports a fishing industry that nets an average of **\$7.2 million** annually.<sup>3</sup>
- Reserve work to protect local water quality supports oyster aquaculture in South Slough, valued at over **\$500,000** in 2020.<sup>4</sup>
- The GTM Research Reserve studies and protects habitats that are essential to St. Johns and Flagler counties' white shrimp industry, valued at **\$1 million** annually.<sup>5</sup>

## 6. More Messaging Resources

### A. NERRS focused

- NERRA's posts for the **national business letter** on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [X](#) and pdfs if you want to create your own post [here](#) and [here](#).
- [SINERR economic impact brief](#)
- [GBNERR economic impact brief](#)
- [Infographics for Reserves that Participated in NOAA's Economic Contribution Study](#)
  - [National file](#) Relevant to All Reserves
- [NERRS Pillar Messages—Always True for Every Reserve.](#)
- [NERRS 2025 impact statement](#)
- NOAA's Economic Case for Reserves and Coastal Programs: [Presentation](#), [Links](#)
- [Pilot Recreation Infographics](#) / National Page Relevant to all Reserves
- [Working the Message](#)
- [Best Practices for Communicating About Economic Contribution](#)

### B. National Information About the Economy

- [Marine and Coastal Economy Two-pager](#)
- [Jobs and Dollars: Big Returns from Coastal Habitat Restoration](#)
- [NOAA Information About Coastal Economics and Demographics](#)
- [Marine Economy Report by U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#)
- [American Sportfishing Association: Economic Impact of Recreational Fishing](#)
- [Restore America's Estuaries Jobs and Dollars from Coastal Habitat Restoration Report](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Handout](#). NOAA Office of Coastal Management.

<sup>3</sup> Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. [Commercial Fisheries Landings Summaries](#) Food and Bait for Collier County averaged 2015-2020

<sup>4</sup> [2020 Shellfish Plat Production Annual Report](#)

<sup>5</sup> Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's [Commercial Fisheries Landings Summaries](#)

- [Outdoor Recreation Economy by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#)