

# Winter Island Park Pathway and Bank Restoration Project



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A resilience project focused on  
coastal bank and trail erosion  
around Fort Pickering and  
Waikiki Beach, Salem, MA

# ACCELERATING EROSION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

The project will help address the severe and ongoing issue of erosion of the Winter Island Park pathways and coastal banks. It will focus on managing path access and assessing how best to stabilize the eroding banks and trails.



*Erosion of the coastal bank from storm surge and increased sea level associated with climate change*

Winter Island's eroding banks and trails are a visible impact of recreational use in a changing climate. Local sea level has risen over 8 inches since 1950 and the rate of rise is accelerating. Warmer air and ocean water fuel stronger coastal storms with damaging storm surge and waves. Warmer air also holds more moisture, which falls as heavy rain and contributes to trail erosion.

## WHY IS THIS AREA SPECIAL?

Winter Island Park contains a deep and rich history dating back more than 6,000 years. Throughout the 1620s-1740s, the area was the center of Salem's fishing trade. The masonry and earthworks of Fort Pickering, Salem's most historical military base, were established in 1643. In the 1930s, Winter Island became home for the United States Coast Guard and Sea Rescue Station. Today, the park is an important recreational area for nature-lovers, campers, boaters, and beachgoers.



*Fort Pickering's original earthworks circa 1930s.  
Image courtesy of: Streets of Salem*

Protecting Winter Island's history is an important component of this project. The shallow roots of invasive plants do not help to stabilize the shoreline, but instead, exacerbate erosion. This threatens the coastal banks and the Fort's earthworks, and our ability to preserve this historic resource.



## WINTER ISLAND PARK PATHWAYS

Managing the year-round pedestrian use of the park is a critical first step of this project. Over 4 feet of the pathway up to the lighthouse was lost due to severe winter storms in 2024 (photos to right). Winter Island Park staff closed the trail to prevent further damage to the coastal bank and for public safety.

Do your part to reduce pathway erosion -- please stay on the mapped trails!



Pathway closed due to severe erosion



# THE PROCESS

A topographic and wetland survey have been completed in preparation for ecological restoration. Archaeological and historical assessments will be reviewed to inform the preservation of vulnerable historic assets.

The City of Salem continues to take actionable steps to preserve Winter Island and the park's public access. You, too, can be part of the solution! Please remember to stay on the designated paths.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

...and to view language translations of this pamphlet, please visit Salem's Public Input webpage:

[publicinput.com/d3486](https://publicinput.com/d3486)



**This project is supported by:**

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