National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2016

Revised: 6/2025



Nauset Light Area

Cape Cod National Seashore

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name: Nauset Light Area

Resource Classification: Cultural Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 650123

Parent Landscape: 650123

Inventory Status: Complete

Park Information

Park Name: Cape Cod National Seashore

Alpha Code: CACO

Park Organization Code: 1730

Park District: CACO

Region: Northeast

Restricted: Yes

Landscape Description:

The Nauset Light Area is part of Cape Cod National Seashore, a unit of the National Park Service that comprises over 43,000 acres of protected shoreline, salt marshes, freshwater kettle ponds, lighthouses, a life-saving station, dune shacks, and Cape Cod-style houses. The 16.6-acre property is located within Barnstable County in the Town of Eastham, Massachusetts, on the eastern shore of the Lower Cape. Its rich and unique history is represented by a trio of 1838 lighthouses known as the Three Sisters of Nauset, the 1879 Nauset Beach Light, an 1875 keeper's house and 1892 oil house, and the 1891 French Cable Hut, the last remnant of the French Cable Company's transatlantic cable station . Contemporary infrastructure provides visitor access to the historic resources and Nauset Light Beach, one of the park's most popular swimming destinations, and includes a large paved parking lot, bathhouse, pedestrian trails, and boardwalks. The property's historic and non-historic features are intimately connected to the sandy bluff at Nauset, which continues to erode westward from beach erosion and storm events.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

For centuries Cape Cod was a place of natural abundance and strategic interest, providing a barrier between the Atlantic Ocean and the protected harbor and rich estuaries of the Lower Cape. Early seventeenth century accounts describe Native Americans occupying the Lower Cape. Permanent European settlement in the Nauset Light Area began in the 1640s, although Europeans developed temporary fishing villages in the Provincetown area prior to that date.

Wooded nearly to the shoreline in the early 1600s, the first European settlers altered the landscape of the Lower Cape with grazing and small-scale agriculture, as well as tree harvesting for home construction, firewood, and shipbuilding. By the time of the American Revolution, much of this landscape had become barren, although the soils in Eastham proved more suitable for agriculture than surrounding areas. During the war the British occupied Provincetown's sheltered harbor, and raided the towns throughout the Lower Cape. Eastham's economy relied heavily on the export of agricultural goods and the fishing industry and experienced a severe decline. After the Revolution, the Lower Cape's population grew and fishing, related industries, and the maritime economy improved.

Before the establishment of the U.S. Coast Guard in 1915, navigational beacons and life-saving stations were developed by separate organizations. Construction of lighthouses became the responsibility of the federal government after an act of the First Congress in 1789 formed the Lighthouse Establishment under the Department of Treasury. The federal government built Highland Light, the first lighthouse on Cape Cod in Truro in 1797, and administered lighthouse operations until the Lighthouse Board was established in 1852. Growing concern over the number of vessels shipwrecked on the Nauset bars led to the construction of three light towers at Nauset Light Beach in Eastham in 1838, which could be distinguished from the single tower at Highland and the two towers at Chatham. The trio of lights, which became commonly known as the Three Sisters of Nauset, was originally constructed of brick but were lost to erosion in 1892 and replaced with three movable wooden towers the same year. Erosion of the bluff again required the Three Sisters to be moved inland in 1911, but only the middle tower was retained and the other two were decommissioned and sold. The Beacon, as it was called, lit Nauset Light Beach until 1923 when it was replaced by one of the cast iron light towers at Chatham, which became known as the Nauset Beach Light.

The need for an organized life-saving effort became apparent in the 1700s as the fisheries industry on the Cape expanded to rely on offshore fishing and whaling, and more trade ships passed by the tip of the Lower Cape. Increasing numbers of mariners and sailors were lost when their ships capsized off the coast. In 1787, the newly organized Humane Society of Massachusetts built shelter huts stocked with firewood and firewood and provisions in Boston Harbor and on the Lower Cape. However, the continued increase in the number of shipwrecks along the coast resulted in the formation of the U.S. Lifesaving Service (USLSS) in 1878. Over the next three decades, the USLSS built and maintained thirteen life-saving stations on the Cape between Monomoy Point in Chatham and Wood End in Provincetown, including the Nauset Life-Saving Station, constructed in 1872 a mile and a quarter south of the Three Sisters of Nauset.

The first transatlantic cable had reached the shores of the United States in 1869 when the French Atlantic Cable Company laid a telegraph cable from Brest, France to the Saint Pierre and Miquelon archipelago near Newfoundland, and on to Duxbury, Massachusetts. By 1879 there were eight transatlantic telegraph cables connecting Europe to North America, five of which connected to Newfoundland and three to the U.S., including one to Eastham. The Eastham station was referred to as the French Cable Station and stood just to the south of the Three Sisters of Nauset. Cable operations moved to Orleans in 1891, and a transitional link of cable was laid between the old and new stations. The French Cable Hut, built in c.1891 as part of the connection, is all that remains of the original cable station.

Spurred by increased tourism and commercial development, a growing interest in preserving the Lower Cape as a national treasure resulted in the authorization of Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961. The park initially encompassed more than 26,000 acres of protected land encompassing six Cape Cod towns. Today the park spans over 43,000 acres and protects much of the Lower Cape. At Nauset Light Beach, the Nauset Beach Light continues to light the coast as a private aid to navigation. The Three Sisters of Nauset, relocated inland on the north side of Cable Road, have been rehabilitated and repositioned to reflect their historic alignment.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Nauset Light Area is significant under National Register Criterion A at the state and national levels in the areas of maritime history, transportation (navigation), and commerce and communications. The lighthouses known as Three Sisters of Nauset (Twin Light North, Twin Light South, The Beacon) and Nauset Beach Light reflect the state's maritime heritage and represent the scenic qualities of the coast. The lighthouses were part of the state's larger system of navigational beacons marking dangerous obstacles and notable land and water features, including the Nauset bars. The French Cable Hut marked a critical connection point in transatlantic communication between the United States to Europe, where the cable from the archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon near Newfoundland met the cable leading to the French Cable Station in Orleans. The Nauset Light Area is also significant under Criterion C at the state level in the areas of architecture and engineering. Distinct architectural forms and advances in technology and engineering are represented in the site's four lighthouses, keeper's house, and oil house.

The primary buildings and structures at the Nauset Light Area – the four lighthouses, keeper's house, oil house, and French Cable Hut – have been all relocated inland because of coastal erosion. They satisfy National Register Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties, because they continue to convey their association with historic events and/or possess their historic design and construction characteristics. The overall period of significance for the Nauset Light Area begins in 1838 when the federal government constructed the Three Sisters of Nauset, and extends to 1965 when lands associated with the Nauset Light Area were acquired as part of Cape Cod National Seashore.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The physical integrity of the Nauset Light Area is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1838–1965) with current conditions. Despite substantial erosion of the bluff at Nauset Light Beach and the subsequent relocation of buildings and structures, the landscape retains much of its character representative of the historic period. The natural systems that define the landscape remain; a dynamic coastal bluff and wide beach exposed to intense wave action of the Atlantic Ocean. The lighthouses and supporting buildings remain atop the steep bluff, although they have been moved inland and their locations during the historic period have been lost to erosion. After the establishment of Cape Cod National Seashore, the Three Sisters of Nauset lighthouses were acquired by the National Park Service, rehabilitated to the extent possible, and repositioned in their historic formation further inland in 1989-93. The Nauset Beach Light, keeper's house, oil house, and French Cable Hut were moved inland in 1996-98 to prevent the historic structures from toppling over the eroding cliffs. The structures of the Nauset Beach Light complex retain their open unobstructed views and relationship to the shoreline, while the Three Sisters are set in a wooded area approximately one-quarter mile west on Cable Road. The extant historic features retain integrity and evidence of their original design, materials, and workmanship, which endures to this day. The association of the historic features to regional history also remains strong. However, movement of the Three Sisters lights inland has compromised the setting and feeling associated with the historic period. The park has conducted vegetation removal and management projects to perpetuate the historically open character surrounding Nauset Beach Light.

The Nauset Light Area is in fair condition. The property faces major threats from natural forces, which require immediate corrective action to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values. The current rate of erosion of the bluff is between ten and twelve feet a year. Continual wind and wave erosion has prompted the park to initiated plans to relocate the bathhouse inland. Other impacts include invasive vegetation and a continual need for vegetation management to preserve the historically open character of the site. Heavy summer visitation has resulted in overflow of the parking lot and a high volume of pedestrian traffic. Social trails cut by curious visitors who do not heed posted warning signs or fencing threatens sensitive vegetation and contributes to erosion.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

The Nauset Light Area is one of eighteen cultural landscapes that have been identified at Cape Cod National Seashore. Documentation for four of the landscapes has been completed: Atwood-Higgins Historic District, Fort Hill Rural Historic District, Truro Highlands Historic District, and Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars. The remaining undocumented landscapes include: Doane Homestead, Fresh Brook Village, Great Island, Hollows, Long Point, North Beach, North Truro Air Force Station, Pamet Cranberry Bog, Penniman House, Race Point, Salt Pond Visitor Center, Small Pox Cemetery, and Wellfleet Ponds.

Landscape Type:

Historic Designed Landscape

Other Names:

Other Name:	Nauset Beach Light	**Other Name Type:**	Both Current And Historic
Other Name:	Three Sisters of Nauset	**Other Name Type:**	Both Current And Historic
Other Name:	Twin Lights	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	Twin Sisters	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	The Beacon	**Other Name Type:**	Historic

Site Plan



Site plan for Nauset Light Area, 2016. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation--hereafter OCLP--2016)

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 09/01/2016

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Cape Cod National Seashore staff and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation identified a preliminary list of cultural landscapes within the park at a site meeting on August 16, 2000, including the landscape at Nauset Light. In October 2014, Historical Landscape Architects Margie Coffin Brown and Alexandra von Bieberstein from the Olmsted Center, student interns from the Olmsted Center, the park's Cultural Resource Program Manager Bill Burke, and archeology interns from the park conducted a site visit. Brown, von Bieberstein, and Historical Landscape Architect Jeff Killion completed the report in 2016. The park contact for the Cultural Landscape Inventory is Bill Burke. He can be reached by telephone at (508) 255-3421 or by email at Bill_Burke@nps.gov.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Nauset Light Area
Cape Cod National Seashore

Cape Cod National Seashore concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Nauset Light Area, including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Nauset Light Area is hereby approved and accepted.



9/1/16

Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore Date

Park concurrence form, September 1, 2016.

According to a letter dated May 31, 1989, your office and the National Park Service acknowledged that the "Twin Lights Cottage," a guest cottage erected by the Cummings family in the 1930s just north of the twin lights, was ineligible for listing on the National Register. The cottage was not associated with the lights when they functioned as lighthouses. The National Park Service removed the cottage shortly thereafter.

On July 8, 1996, your office concurred with the National Park Service on the itemization of contributing and noncontributing resources in the park, as part of an update to the List of Classified Structures (LCS). Contributing resources at the Nauset Light Area included the French Cable Hut, The Beacon (middle light of Three Sisters of Nauset), and Twin Lights (north and south lights of Three Sisters of Nauset). Since the 1987 National Register documentation, the Twin Lights were repositioned (along with the relocated Beacon) to recreate their historic 1892 sequencing, spacing, orientation, and alignment. Your office agreed that the three lights continued to fulfill National Register criteria A and C, as well as Criteria Consideration B (Moved Properties). Additionally, the Nauset Beach Light Oil House was identified as a contributing resource. The Nauset Beach Light and keeper's house were not included in the LCS because they were not owned by the National Park Service at the time of the inventory

The enclosed CLI for the Nauset Light Area fully evaluates the cultural landscape, particularly the associated landscape characteristics and features and finds that the site's landscape retains integrity to the areas of maritime history, transportation (navigation), communications and commerce (via cable), architecture and engineering. As noted previously, seven of the property's features compiled on the attached list have been listed in or determined as eligible for listing in the National Register. The CLI identifies four additional features related to vegetation, views and vistas, and small-scale features that also contribute to the significance and historic character of the site's landscape.

We call your particular attention to the Landscape Description, National Register Information and the Statement of Significance, and Analysis and Evaluation Summary in the enclosed CLI.

Based on the CLI, we seek to reconfirm our agreement on previously evaluated resources and your concurrence on the status of resources and features identified in this CLI:

- The Nauset Light Area is significant under National Register Criterion A at the national and state levels in the areas of maritime history, transportation (navigation), and commerce and communications. The lighthouses known as Three Sisters of Nauset (Twin Light North, Twin Light South, The Beacon) and Nauset Beach Light reflect the state's maritime heritage and represent the scenic qualities of the coast. The lighthouses were part of the state's larger system of navigational beacons marking dangerous obstacles and notable land and water features, including the Nauset bars. The French Cable Hut marked a critical connection point in transatlantic communication between the United States to Europe, where the cable from the archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon near Newfoundland met the cable leading to the French Cable Station in Orleans.
- The Nauset Light Area is significant under Criterion C at the state level in the areas of architecture and engineering. Distinct architectural forms and advances in technology and engineering are represented in the site's four lighthouses, keeper's house, and oil house.

- The primary buildings and structures at the Nauset Light Area – the four lighthouses, keeper's house, oil house, and French Cable Hut – have been all relocated inland because of coastal erosion. They satisfy National Register Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties, because they continue to convey their association with historic events and/or possess their historic design and construction characteristics.
- The overall period of significance for the Nauset Light Area begins in 1838 when the federal government constructed the Three Sisters of Nauset, and extends to 1965 when lands associated with the Nauset Light Area were acquired as part of Cape Cod National Seashore.
- The categorization of contributing, non-contributing, and undetermined landscape characteristics and features (see attached list).

If you concur with these findings, we ask that you please sign on the space provided and return this letter to Jeff Killion, CLI Coordinator (Address: National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 15 State Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02109). We would appreciate your response at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your attention to this inventory. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Killion at 617-223-5053.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Hays
Associate Regional Director
Resource Stewardship and Science

Enclosure

cc:
Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore

I concur with the National Park Service categorizations of the landscape resources and features at the Nauset Light Area, Cape Cod National Seashore, as contributing, non-contributing, and undetermined.

Brona Simon
Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer

9/28/16
Date

Trail, Nauset Beach Light to Three Sisters of Nauset
Trails at Three Sisters of Nauset

Buildings and Structures
Fee Station
Bathhouse

Small-scale Features
Portable Toilet
Split-Rail Fences and Snow Fences
Metal and Chain Gates
Wayside/Directional/Regulatory Signs
Garbage and Recycling Cans
Benches
Drinking Fountain
Bike Racks
Picnic Tables
Brick outline of Nauset Light Lantern Room

Undetermined Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Buildings and Structures
Garage

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

September 28, 2016

Frank R. Hays
Associate Regional Director
Resource Stewardship and Science
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19106

RE: Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), Nauset Light Area

Dear Mr. Hays:

I am writing in response to your letter seeking Massachusetts Historical Commission concurrence with National Park Service determinations of eligibility for the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Nauset Light Area, located at the Cape Cod National Seashore, Eastham. Pursuant to Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), we have reviewed the CLI, and I concur with your findings of Nauset Light's landscape resources and features as contributing and noncontributing.

The signed statement of concurrence is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Cc: Jeff Killion, CLI Coordinator, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
Robert Page, Director, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
George Price, Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

SHPO concurrence letter, September 28, 2016 (7 pages).

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
United States Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

RECEIVED
JUL 2 8 2016
MASS. HIST. COMM

IN REPLY REFER TO:
A.1.2. (NER-RSS)

JUL 25 2016

Ms. Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3314

Dear Ms. Simon:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) for the Nauset Light Area at Cape Cod National Seashore. We seek to reconfirm our agreement on previously evaluated resources and your concurrence on the status of previously unevaluated resources and features identified in this CLI for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The report has been prepared by a team of historical landscape architects from the National Park Service (NPS) Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. The CLI program and the enclosed report continue the NPS efforts to update our cultural resource inventories.

Through the CLI program, the NPS is currently in the midst of a nationwide effort to inventory its cultural landscapes. The CLI is conducted in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). It is an inventory of baseline information for all historically significant cultural landscapes within the national park system and it examines multiple landscape features that contribute to the significance of historic properties. The CLI process includes gathering information from existing secondary sources and conducting on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the property's overall significance. For landscapes found potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the evaluation describes their character-defining features and assesses the landscape's overall historical integrity. It also raises questions about the landscape that needs further study.

It is important to note that the CLI reports are not intended as comprehensive inventory reports for any one property, although for some properties they provide fuller documentation than for others. For example, the reports do not include a full architectural description of structures, but document structures as elements of the overall landscape, and similarly documents other characteristics such as vegetation, spatial organization, and views and vistas. The CLI is one component of the NPS inventory effort that also includes cultural resource inventories for historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum objects. For

example, the NPS List of Classified Structures inventory includes structural features of cultural landscapes, but the CLI takes a more encompassing approach to the properties, inventorying all above-ground features in each park in which the NPS has a legal or mandated interest.

Cape Cod National Seashore was authorized on August 7, 1961, and established on June 1, 1966. The entirety of the Nauset Light Area and waters a quarter mile offshore were included in the park's authorized boundary. Several resources at the Nauset Light Area have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places or determined eligible for listing in the National Register by your office.

The French Cable Hut was listed in the National Register on April 22, 1976, for its role in transatlantic telegraph communications. The documentation reported that the small cottage was all that remained of the station built here in 1891, and preceded Marconi's wireless station on Cape Cod by 24 years. The documentation also noted the direct link between this structure and the French Cable Station Museum in Orleans, MA. Significance for the one-acre site was identified in the areas of commerce and communications for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but no specific level (national, state, local) or period of significance was identified. However, the nomination form noted the building was constructed to serve as a connecting point between the cable and the station in Orleans, and that the cable line was abandoned in 1932.

The four lighthouses currently at the Nauset Beach Area – Nauset Beach Light and Three Sisters of Nauset (Twin Light North, Twin Light South, and The Beacon) – were listed on the National Register through the "Lighthouses of Massachusetts" Thematic Resource Study on June 15, 1987. The nomination stated that the state's 42 lighthouses represented the scenic qualities of the coast and reflected the state's maritime heritage, and that individual lighthouse complexes were associated with specific persons and events and reflected important advances in technology and engineering. Significance was identified at the state level under National Register criteria A, B, and C in the areas of architecture, engineering, transportation, and other (maritime history). The period of significance was identified as 1679-1940, although the reason for selection of these dates was not given; they may correspond to the possible construction of a day beacon on Great Brewster Island in Boston Harbor in 1679 and the date the U.S. Lighthouse Service merged with the U.S. Coast Guard (which was actually in 1939). The evaluation methodology developed for the nomination considered historic associations and structural integrity of the lighthouse complexes using the following criteria: architecture and technology, site characteristics, landscape setting, local interest and connections, and state/federal status. The boundary of the Nauset Beach Light (Inventory #27) was described as one acre. The 1877 tower (moved to Nauset from Chatham in 1923), 1875 keeper's house, and 1892 oil house were identified as contributing features (a garage was listed as noncontributing). The boundary of the Twin Lights (#39) of the Three Sisters of Nauset was described as five-and-a-half acres. The two 1892 towers were identified as a contributing features. The boundary of The Beacon (#3) of the Three Sisters of Nauset was described as less than one acre. The Beacon was identified as a contributing feature, however, at the time of the 1987 documentation the light had not yet been moved to its current location in relation to the other two towers.

The Nauset Archeological District was designated a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1993, for deposits dating to the Historic Contact Period. The 37.70-acre district encompasses six discontiguous properties on the northern and northwestern shores of Nauset Marsh. However, none of these sites are located in the Nauset Light Area.

NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory – Nauset Light Area
Cape Cod National Seashore
List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Landscape Features
July 2016

Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

The following landscape characteristics and associated features contribute to the property's historic character, though not all are considered countable resources according to the National Register of Historic Places. Features marked with a (*) were documented in the National Register on April 22, 1976. Features marked with a (#) were documented in the National Register on June 15, 1987. Features marked with a (+) were identified as contributing resources by the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office on July 8, 1996.

Vegetation
Trees, Shrubs, and Herbaceous Plants on Bluff

Buildings and Structures
+ Twin Lights (North)
+ The Beacon
+ Twin Lights (South)
Keeper's House
Nauset Beach Light
+ Nauset Light Oil House
* French Cable Hut

Views and Vistas
View from Lighthouse to Water
View of Lighthouse from Water

Small-Scale Features
USLHE Granite Marker

Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Vegetation
Plantings and Lawns around Keeper's House
Trees and Lawns around Three Sisters of Nauset

Circulation
Nauset Beach Parking Lot
Driveway to Lighthouse Complex
Parking Pull-off at Three Sisters of Nauset
Service Road to Bathhouse
Trails, Parking Lot and Bathhouse to Nauset Beach
Steps from Bluff to Nauset Beach
Trail, Parking Lot to Nauset Beach Light

Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Update Certification Form
2025

Cape Cod National Seashore
Long Point and Nauset Light Area

Cape Cod National Seashore concurs with the updates for the following CLIs, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Long Point
Fair – Nauset Light Area

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI Updates at Cape Cod National Seashore are hereby approved and accepted.

Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore — Date 6/2/2025

Park concurrence form, June 2, 2025.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	06/02/2025	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Nauset Light Area CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Massachusetts	Barnstable County

Size (Acres): 16.6

Land Tract Number(s)

The Nauset Light Area unit encompasses portions of portions of Tract 06-156 (5.2 of 125 acres total), 24-032 (2.3 of 56 acres total), and 23-039 (0.06 of 0.33 total). It includes the entirety of Tracts 24-034 (0.24 acres), 23-033 (4.21), 23-035A (0.44), 23-051 (0.21), and 23-034 (0.26). Additional acreage within the project area includes portions of Cable Road, Nauset Light Beach Road, the bluff, and the beach/shoreline.

Boundary Description:

Encompassing approximately 16.6 acres of federal land within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore, the boundaries of the Nauset Light Area are defined by natural features and parcel lines. The boundary of the Nauset Light Area is described from a beginning point immediately to the north of Nauset Beach Light:

The CLI boundary to the north of Nauset Light parallels the south boundary of Parcel 23-030 before turning to the north to follow a portion of the east edge of the same parcel. The CLI boundary turns to the east and parallels the south boundary of Parcel 23-029 before crossing Nauset Light Beach Road. The CLI boundary then turns to the north following the west edge of Parcel 23-033. The CLI boundary follows the north boundary of Parcel 23-033 east, extending to the ocean. The CLI boundary then follows the waterline (as captured on the 2011 BING aerial photo) south to form the east boundary of the CLI. The CLI boundary turns west to form the south boundary of the CLI unit, which bisects Parcel 24-032 at a location parallel to the southern boundary of Parcel 24-034. The south portion of the CLI boundary intersects Ocean View Drive before turning north and paralleling the east side of the road. The Boundary continues north to the intersection of Cable Road, Ocean View Drive, and Nauset Light Beach Road. From the road intersection, the boundary turns to the west, following the pedestrian trail. The boundary is offset 10’ to the north and south of the centerline of the trail. The CLI boundary follows the extent of the trail westward, until it reaches the southwest corner of Parcel 23-039. The CLI boundary follows the west edge of this parcel line north and extends approximately 390 feet to the north before extending to the west for approximately 360 feet, forming the north boundary of the CLI unit (portion north of the Three Sisters). The boundary is approximately 45 feet to the north of the center of the north Sister. The boundary turns to the south and parallels the east edge of edge of Parcel 23-041 and Parcel 23-040 before returning to Cable Road. After reaching Cable Road, the CLI boundary makes a small jut to the south to encompass the parking pull-off before paralleling the north edge of the road until it rejoins the 10-foot buffer surrounding the pedestrian trail.

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
		41.85884	-69.9572	
		41.85881	-69.9572	
		41.85877	-69.9576	
		41.8588	-69.9576	
		-69.9576	-69.9575	
		41.85994	-69.9577	
		41.86006	-69.9563	
		41.85901	-69.9561	
		41.85927	-69.9535	
		41.85929	-69.9533	
		41.85975	-69.9534	
		41.85985	-69.9534	
		41.85992	-69.9534	
		41.85992	-69.9534	
		41.8603	-69.9534	
		41.86035	-69.9529	
		41.86064	-69.953	
		41.86069	-69.9525	
		41.86099	-69.9525	
		41.86108	-69.9517	
		41.86108	-69.9517	
		41.86108	-69.9517	
		41.86108	-69.9517	
		41.86108	-69.9517	
		41.86108	-69.9517	
		41.86108	-69.9517	
		41.85825	-69.9507	
		41.858	-69.9529	
		41.85831	-69.9529	
		41.85887	-69.953	
		41.85921	-69.953	
		41.85922	-69.9532	
		41.85922	-69.9534	

		41.85895	-69.9561	

Location Map:



The Nauset Light Area is located in the Town of Eastham. Depicted in green, the Cape Cod National Seashore preserves and protects much of the Lower Cape. (Cape Cod National Seashore--hereafter CACO--www.nps.gov/caco/planyourvisit/maps.htm)

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Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Cape Cod is the largest glacial peninsula in the world and the Great Beach on the Atlantic side of the Cape is the longest expanse of uninterrupted sandy shoreline on the East Coast. Natural change on the Cape is pervasive and dramatic especially along the ocean shore. The natural systems and landforms found within Cape Cod National Seashore were shaped almost entirely of material deposited by glaciers that retreated approximately 14,000 to 18,000 years ago. The area is comprised of mostly Eastham Plain deposits, with some marsh and beach deposits. The predominant soil types are Freetown and Swansea mucks, Ipswich, Pawcatuck, and Matunuck peats, and Carver coarse sand. (IP 1997: 3)

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

The Cape's prominent position in the Atlantic has long made it key landmark for human habitation. By the 1600s the Wampanoag Indians used or inhabited lands now contained within the national seashore, and in 1620 Cape Cod was the first landfall for the Pilgrims and the site of the creation of the "Mayflower Compact." With European settlement Cape Codders took to the sea, creating a dynamic whaling and fishing industry as well as long and famous tradition of shellfishing. The many lighthouses along with life-saving and Coast Guard stations that dot the Cape also reflect this heritage. Settlers also developed a unique type of dwelling that was low to the ground to withstand buffeting winds and featured steep roofs to shed the rain and snow. This design style came to be known as the Cape Cod house, recognized throughout the United States. Cape Cod has also been the site of significant technological achievements, including the first transatlantic cable was laid between Cape Cod and France in 1879 and Guglielmo Marconi's successful transmission of transatlantic wireless messages between President Theodore Roosevelt and King Edward VII in 1903. The Cape's beauty, sense of solitude, and other aesthetic values have also inspired generations of artists and writers, among them Edward Hopper, Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Henry David Thoreau, John Dos Passos, and Mary McCarthy. (IP 1997: 3-4)

Type of Context: Political

Description:

The Nauset Light Area is located within Barnstable County and the Town of Eastham, one of six towns encompassed in Cape Cod National Seashore. The town has a permanent population of approximately 5,600 and is located on the "forearm" of Cape Cod. Eastham is boarded by Wellfleet to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Orleans to the south, and Cape Cod Bay to the west. The town is approximately 25 miles east of Hyannis and 110 miles southeast of Boston by land.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/01/2016

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Nauset Light Area meets the criteria for the “Must be Preserved and Maintained” management category because the site is related to the park’s legislated significance. The 1961 enabling legislation states:
“In order that the seashore shall be permanently preserved in its present state, no development or plan for the convenience of visitors shall be undertaken therein which would be incompatible with the preservation of the unique flora and fauna or the physiographic conditions now prevailing or with the preservation of such historic sites and structures as the Secretary may designate: Provided, That the Secretary may provide for the public enjoyment and understanding of the unique natural, historic, and scientific features of Cape Cod within the sea shore by establishing such trails, observation points, and exhibits and providing such services as he may deem desirable for such public enjoyment and understanding.” (Public Law 87-126, Sec. 459b-6 (b)(1))

The park’s purpose is further defined in the 1998 General Management Plan: “to preserve the nationally significant and special cultural and natural features, distinctive patterns of human activity, and ambience that characterize the Outer Cape, along with the associated scenic, cultural, historic, scientific, and recreational values.” (GMP 1998: 8)

Management Agreements:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple Reservation

Narrative: In 1998, the owner of the keeper’s house agreed to donate the relocated building to the National Park Service with the right to live in it for 25 years.

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands are lands beyond the cultural landscape boundary, either inside or outside the park boundaries, which contribute to the significance of the site. Panoramic views from the land portions of the site to the ocean are a character-defining feature of this site. The land boundaries of the site adequately encompass the historic resources.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Inadequately Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

Cape Cod National Seashore was authorized on August 7, 1961 and established on June 1, 1966. The entirety of the Nauset Light Area and waters a quarter mile offshore were included in the park's authorized boundary. Several resources at the Nauset Light Area have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places or determined eligible for listing in the National Register by the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The French Cable Hut was listed in the National Register on April 22, 1976 for its role in transatlantic telegraph communications. The documentation reported that the small cottage was all that remained of the station built here in 1891, and preceded Marconi's wireless station on Cape Cod by 24 years. The documentation also noted the direct link between this structure and the French Cable Station Museum in Orleans, MA. Significance for the one-acre site was identified in the areas of commerce and communications for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but no specific level (national, state, local) or period of significance was identified. However, the nomination form noted the building was constructed to serve as a connecting point between the cable and the station in Orleans, and that the cable line was abandoned in 1932.

The four lighthouses currently at the Nauset Light Beach – Nauset Beach Light and Three Sisters of Nauset (Twin Light North, Twin Light South, and The Beacon) – were listed on the National Register through the "Lighthouses of Massachusetts" Thematic Resource Study on June 15, 1987. The nomination stated that state's 42 lighthouses represented the scenic qualities of the coast and reflected the state's maritime heritage, and that individual lighthouse complexes were associated with specific persons and events and reflected important advances in technology and engineering. Significance was identified at the state level under National Register criteria A, B, and C in the areas of architecture, engineering, transportation, and other (maritime history). The period of significance was identified as 1679-1940, although the reason for selection of these dates was not given; they may correspond to the possible construction of a day beacon on Great Brewster Island in Boston Harbor in 1679 and the date the U.S. Lighthouse Service merged with the U.S. Coast Guard (which was actually in 1939). The evaluation methodology developed for the nomination considered historic associations and structural integrity of the lighthouse complexes using the following criteria: architecture and technology, site characteristics, landscape setting, local interest and connections, and state/federal status. The boundary of the Nauset Beach Light (Inventory #27) was described as one acre. The 1877 tower (moved to Nauset from Chatham in 1923), 1875 keeper's house, and 1892 oil house were identified as contributing features (a garage was listed as noncontributing). The boundary of the Twin Lights (#39) of the Three Sisters of Nauset was described as five-and-a-half acres. The two 1892 towers were identified as a contributing features. The boundary of The Beacon (#3) of the Three Sisters of Nauset was described as less than one acre. The Beacon was identified as a contributing feature, however, at the time of the 1987 documentation the light had not yet been moved to its current location in relation to the other two towers.

The Nauset Archeological District was designated a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1993 for deposits dating to the Historic Contact Period. The 37.70-acre district encompasses six discontiguous properties on the northern and northwestern shores of Nauset Marsh. However, none of these sites are located in the Nauset Light Area.

According to a letter dated May 31, 1989, the Massachusetts SHPO and the National Park Service acknowledged that the "Twin Lights Cottage," a guest cottage erected by the Cummings family in the 1930s just north of the twin lights, was ineligible for listing on the National Register. The cottage was not associated with the lights when they functioned as lighthouses. The National Park Service removed the

cottage shortly thereafter.

On July 8, 1996, the Massachusetts SHPO concurred with the National Park Service on the itemization of contributing and noncontributing resources in the park, as part of an update to the List of Classified Structures (LCS). Contributing resources at the Nauset Light Area included the French Cable Hut, The Beacon (middle light of Three Sisters of Nauset), and Twin Lights (north and south lights of Three Sisters of Nauset). Since the 1987 National Register documentation, the Twin Lights were repositioned (along with the relocated Beacon) to recreate their historic 1892 sequencing, spacing, orientation, and alignment. The SHPO agreed that the three lights continued to fulfill National Register criteria A and C, as well as Criteria Consideration B (Moved Properties). Additionally, the Nauset Beach Light Oil House was identified as a contributing resource. The Nauset Beach Light and keeper's house were not included in the LCS because they were not owned by the National Park Service at the time of the inventory.

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the period of significance for the Nauset Light Area is inadequately documented in the National Register and in subsequent consultations with the Massachusetts SHPO. The existing documentation does not adequately describe the site's historic resources that contribute to its significance. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, the Nauset Light Area property is considered "Entered-Inadequately Documented."

Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 09/28/2016

Concurrence Narrative:

The SHPO concurred with the findings of this CLI on September 28, 2016. The SHPO had no review comments.

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Individual

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

The Nauset Light Area is significant under National Register Criteria A and C for its nineteenth- through twentieth-century roles in maritime history of the Lower Cape, transportation (navigation) along the Cape Cod shoreline, communications and commerce (via cable) between the U.S and Europe, and architecture and engineering associations with the lighthouse stations. The overall period of significance begins in 1838, when the federal government began construction of the Three Sisters of Nauset lighthouses, and ends in 1965 when lands associated with the Nauset Light Area were acquired as part of Cape Cod National Seashore. This period includes the construction and use of the French Cable Hut from c.1891 to 1940, and other buildings and structures associated with the areas of significance.

CRITERION A

Maritime History:
The Nauset Light Area is significant at the state level under Criterion A for its role in the state's maritime history. Federal government oversight of lighthouse beacons began in 1789 with the establishment of the Lighthouse Establishment, followed by the Lighthouse Board in 1852, Lighthouse Service in 1910, and finally the Coast Guard in 1939. The first lighthouse built on the Lower Cape was Highland Light in Truro,

constructed in 1796. Nine other lighthouses or lighthouse systems (some built in pairs) were constructed on the Cape in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

The rapidly growing fishing industry and maritime trade increased the need for navigational aids that would direct vessels along the perilous shoreline of the Lower Cape. In 1837-38 the Lighthouse Establishment oversaw the construction of three light towers known as the Three Sisters of Nauset to warn mariners of the hidden bars off Nauset Light Beach. In addition to the three brick towers, the complex included a keeper's house, privy, and a well, and in time a second keeper's house (1875), oil house, barn, and hen house. Erosion at Nauset Light Beach necessitated replacement of the Three Sisters with a new trio of wooden lights in 1892, which lit the shore until 1911 when the Lighthouse Service decommissioned the north and south towers. The middle tower (The Beacon) was retained and singularly lit the coast with a powerful Fresnel lens until 1923 when it was replaced by one of the two 1879 cast iron light towers built in Chatham. This tower became known as the Nauset Beach Light. The two unused towers (Twin Light North and Twin Light South) were later sold and moved for use as a private residence.

The Coast Guard automated Nauset Beach Light by 1955, but by 1993 considered decommissioning the tower because it was once again threatened by beach erosion. In response, the Nauset Light Preservation Society was formed and successfully moved the lighthouse and oil house inland in 1996 and the 1875 keeper's house in 1998. That same year, the Coast Guard gave the tower to the National Park Service, and the Nauset Light Preservation Society agreed to maintain it as a private aid to navigation. In 1993, the park completed a project to reunite the trio of towers that comprised the Three Sister of Nauset. Although located well inland, the restored towers now stand in their historic (1892) positions relative to each other. The Nauset Beach Light and the Three Sisters of Nauset are open to the public and summer tours.

Transportation (Navigation):
The Three Sisters of Nauset (Twin Light North, Twin Light South, and The Beacon) and Nauset Beach Light are significant at the state level under Criterion A for their roles, in conjunction with the other forty lighthouses included in the Lighthouses of Massachusetts Thematic Group Nomination, as a network of navigational beacons. The primary purpose of the lighthouses was to provide a nocturnal navigational warning by elevating a light to a height that would allow visibility over the curvature of the earth. The network of lights was positioned to mark navigational hazards including reefs, rocky shores, and sandbars, or mark the approach to an important landfall, harbor, or channel.

The lighthouses at the Nauset Light Area were constructed to aid local fishing vessels in navigation of the Nauset bars. Larger vessels navigating the extent of the Cape were guided by Highland and Chatham lights, however the curvature of the coastline obscured these lights for smaller vessels hugging the shoreline. The lights at Nauset helped alleviate this problem. The development of the Nauset lights, as part of the larger coastal lighthouse system, dramatically increased the safety of maritime navigation at night and in foul weather. The economy of Massachusetts was heavily based on maritime trade, fishing, and whaling, all of which relied on safe water passage for success. (Lighthouses of Massachusetts NR 1987, Sec.8: np)

Communications and Commerce:
The French Cable Hut at the Nauset Light Area is nationally significant under Criterion A for is role in transatlantic communications and commerce. More than two decades before construction its c.1891, the first transatlantic cable reached the shores of the United States in 1869 when the French Atlantic Cable Company laid a telegraph cable from Brest, France, to the Saint Pierre and Miquelon archipelago, and on to Duxbury, Massachusetts. Cyrus Field's Angle-American telegraph company absorbed the first French company in 1873. In 1879 a second French company laid the cable from Brest, France via Newfoundland to a station in Eastham, located just south of the Three Sisters of Nauset. By this time, eight telegraph cables extended across the Atlantic Ocean, three of which connected directly to the cable stations in the United States at Duxbury, Rye Beach, NH, and Eastham. (French Cable Hut NR 1976, Sec.8: np)

In 1891 the French Cable Station at Eastham moved to Orleans where the company operated until 1959. To relocate the station, the company constructed a relay building at Nauset Light Beach, termed a "cable hut." A new subterranean cable extended from the French Cable Hut at Nauset Light Beach underwater through Town Cove to the new station in Orleans. The cable remained active until 1940, even after a second cable was laid from Brest, France directly to Orleans in 1899. The cable lay under the floor of the

hut until the 2000s when the building was relocated inland and additions related to its later use as a summer cottage were removed. (French Cable Hut NR 1976, Sec.8: np)

The French cable system predated Marconi's wireless station in South Wellfleet (1903) by twenty-four years. The cable performed a valuable service in communications both before and after wireless. The 1891 French Cable Station in Orleans currently houses the French Cable Museum. (French Cable Hut NR, 1976: 4-6)

CRITERION C

Architecture and Engineering:
The Three Sisters of Nauset (Twin Light North, Twin Light South, and The Beacon) and Nauset Beach Light are significant at the state level under Criterion C for their unique architecture and advances in engineering. The forty-two lighthouses included in the Lighthouses of Massachusetts Thematic Group Nomination date from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. They are constructed of wood, brick, stone, and cast iron, and are located on windswept promontories, sandy points, or rocky ledges. Some lighthouses are self-contained in their configurations, while others such as the Three Sisters (during the historic period) and Nauset Beach Light serve as a locus of the complex and are surrounded by supporting structures like a keeper's house, walkways, and storage sheds. Despite small differences in appearance, the lighthouses share a distinct and consistent form and structure. Their architectural design is a reflection of the superb adaptation to their singular form, coupled with a response to changes in technology and style.

The structure of a lighthouse must be engineered to endure the most extreme weather conditions. The tower itself has to bear the tremendous weight of a clockwork (rotation mechanism), an enclosed staircase and ladders to access the light, a ventilation system to cool to the lens room, a lamp room or space to heat the fuel oil, windows for light and of course, the light itself. The tower often had to be secured in a precarious location demanded by navigation necessity. The lighthouses of Massachusetts reflect the tremendous engineering efforts to both design and construct lighthouses as well as associated engineering effort to improve the navigational beacons. (Lighthouses of Massachusetts NR 1987, Sec.8: np)

The history of the Three Sisters of Nauset and the Nauset Beach Light follows advances in lighthouse engineering and technology. Three lights were built at Nauset Light Beach so that they would be distinguished from the single light at Highland to the north and the double lights at Chatham to the south. Argand lamps initially lit the towers, but were upgraded to more efficient sixth order Fresnel lenses in 1858 and more powerful fourth order lenses in 1873. The three towers were originally constructed with brick, but after succumbing to beach erosion in 1892 were replaced with movable wood structures further inland for future relocation if needed. Such eventuality occurred in 1911, but in the process the three lights at Nauset Light Beach were reduced to one light. By this time, technological advances had improved illuminating power, and double and triple light systems in separate structures were being phased out for economic reasons. In addition, Nauset's three lights could be mistaken for one or two if a vessel sailed by them at certain angles. In 1923 the single wood tower at Nauset Light Beach was replaced with a single cast iron tower, which was automated in 1955. Despite the tower's durable construction, it too had to be moved inland ahead of the eroding shoreline in 1996. Today, the restored Three Sisters of Nauset stand in their original configuration along Cable Road, about 1,000 feet from the restored Nauset Beach Light that still lights the shoreline as a private aid to navigation.

Lighthouse operations depended on specialized ancillary buildings, and two such structures are significant at the Nauset Light Area. The one-and-a-half-story keeper's house, built in 1875, features an L-shaped plan, wood construction, steeply pitched rooflines, front porch, and wood steps, which are typical of other such light station dwellings in the state. The house was moved to its current location in 1998 due to erosion of the bluff. The oil house at Nauset, which was used to store flammable fuels for the lighthouse lamps, was specifically noted in the Lighthouses of Massachusetts Thematic Group Nomination for its rooftop cupola. The structure's brick construction, gable roof, and one-story rectangular plan is typical of other oil houses. Garages were built in the 1920s and 1930s for general storage as well as vehicles. The nomination evaluated the garage at Nauset as a non-contributing feature, but it appears in a photograph from 1923. However, the structure is in poor condition and its integrity needs to be evaluated in more detail. (Lighthouses of Massachusetts NR 1987, Sec.8: np)

CRITERIA CONSIDERATION B: MOVED PROPERTIES

The Three Sisters of Nauset (Twin Light North, Twin Light South, and The Beacon), Nauset Beach Light, the keeper's house, oil house, and the French Cable Hut meet Criteria Consideration B because they were moved from one location on the site to another location on the site during and after the period of significance. Non-historic elements added to the Three Sisters after they were replaced and sold for use as residences have been removed. Although no longer in their historic locations on the bluff, the towers were reoriented in 1989 to recreate their historic sequencing, spacing, and alignment and continue to serve as the only remaining example of a triple light system in Massachusetts. The Nauset Beach Light, keeper's house, and oil house, moved in 1996 and 1998, continue to convey their historic spatial relationships as a light station complex. The French Cable Hut was moved inland in the 2000s to protect it from the encroaching shoreline.

National Register Significance Criteria:

A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

National Register Criteria Consideration:

B -- A building or structure removed from its original location

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1838 - CE 1965

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Developing the American Economy	Communications As Part Of Developing the American Economy	Telegraph And Telephone -- Communications/Developing The American Economy	
Developing the American Economy	Shipping and Transportation by Water	Ships, Boats, Lighthouses, And Other Structures	
Expanding Science and Technology	Technology (Engineering and Invention)	Information Processing, Transmission, And Recording	
Expanding Science and Technology	Technology (Engineering and Invention)	Transportation	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Gothic Revival (1830-1915)	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	NPS Mission 66	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Communications

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Conservation

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Engineering

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Maritime History

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Transportation

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS ID:	76000153
Primary Certification Date:	04/22/1976
NRIS ID:	87001527
Primary Certification Date:	06/15/1987
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy
Other Name:	Three Sisters of Nauset
Primary Certification Date:	06/15/1987
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy
Other Name:	Nauset Beach Light
Primary Certification Date:	06/15/1987
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy
Other Name:	Lighthouses of Massachusetts
Primary Certification Date:	06/15/1987

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	EAS.F
Name:	Nauset Beach Light
Listed Date:	06/15/1987

Identification Number:	EAS.902 and EAS.H
Name:	Twin Sisters of Nauset Lighthouse
Listed Date:	06/15/1987

Identification Number:	EAS.D
Name:	Lighthouses of Massachusetts
Listed Date:	06/15/1987

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
BCE * - 8000	Inhabited	Settlement on Cape Cod likely begins 10,000 and 12,000 years ago with the Paleoindians.
CE 1600 - 1700	Planted	The Cape Cod landscape is vegetated by red maple, tupelo, black gum and other trees and shrubs.
CE 1600	Inhabited	The primary Native American group in this region is the Wampanoag.
CE 1602	Explored	English explorer Bartholomew Gosnold names Cape Cod for the quantity of codfish caught by his crew.
CE 1605 - 1606	Explored	French explorer Samuel de Champlain visits Nauset Harbor and notes Native American populations.
CE 1614	Explored	Captain John Smith explores the coast of the New World from Maine to Cape Cod and notes the presence of “Pawmet” and “Chawrum” Native Americans, which were Wampanoag tribes.
CE 1620	Explored	Pilgrims anchor the Mayflower in the harbor at Provincetown, their first landfall in the New World.
CE 1620	Explored	English Pilgrims explore the Lower Cape in November of 1620, including Nauset, the area that will become Eastham.
CE 1621	Established	Massasoit, the sachem of the Wampanoag signs a treaty with the English at Plymouth. The sachems under him recognize same authority.
CE 1644 - 1646	Established	The first permanent European settlers on Cape Cod select present-day Eastham for a settlement. It is initially known as Nauset.
CE 1651	Established	Nauset is renamed Town of Eastham and encompasses 14.25 square miles.
CE 1652 - 1686	Established	Between 1652 and 1686 the town enacts several articles of legislation aimed at preserving and managing natural and agricultural resources.
CE 1678	Developed	Town of Eastham votes to raise money to continue the school.
CE 1692	Established	The Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies merge. Cape Cod becomes part of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.
CE 1719 - 1727	Built	The highway known as the “County Road” and “King’s Highway,” is built from Harwich to Truro, and passes through Eastham. It is extended to Provincetown in 1727.
CE 1762 - 1764	Established	The northern portion of Eastham becomes the Town of Wellfleet, reducing Eastham’s population to 1331.
CE 1762	Conserved	It is reported that much labor and expense is laid out to preserve the beaches, shores from wind and storms.
CE 1775	Developed	Growth and development in Eastham and the Lower Cape declines during the Revolutionary War.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1786	Established	The Humane Society of Massachusetts is founded in Boston to aid shipwrecked mariners, the first organization of its kind.
CE 1787	Built	The Humane Society begins to build shelter huts in Boston Harbor and on the Lower Cape.
CE 1789	Land Transfer	The federal government begins managing existing and new lighthouses through the Lighthouse Establishment within the Treasury Department.
CE 1797	Land Transfer	The southern portion of Eastham becomes the Town of Orleans, reducing the remaining portion of Eastham to 840 people.
CE 1799	Built	A canal is dug from Herring Pond into the Great Meadow River, to aid in the movement of herring.
CE 1799	Farmed/Harvested	The first evaporative salt manufacturing facility is established in Eastham.
CE 1804	Built	A canal originating from 1717 is improved between Cape Cod Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, via Town Cove in Orleans.
CE 1812	Developed	Growth and development declines in Eastham and the Lower Cape during the War of 1812.
CE 1836	Planned	Boston Marine Society recommends a light at Nauset Light Beach and petitions Congress for funds.
CE 1837	Farmed/Harvested	Salt production peaks on Cape Cod. In Eastham there are 54 plants yielding 22,370 bushels.
CE 1837	Established	An Act of Congress appropriates $10,000 for land acquisition and construction of the triple lights at Nauset Light Beach.
CE 1837	Farmed/Harvested	Cod fishing in Eastham produces 12,000 quintals and mackerel produces 4,550 barrels. Fish is dried and exchanged for other goods in cities along the coast.
CE 1837	Purchased/Sold	Benjamin H.A. Collins and Sally Collins sell land for $150 to the U.S. Government for construction of the triple lights at Nauset Light Beach.
CE 1838	Built	Three brick lighthouses, a brick keeper’s house, wood privy, and well are built by Winslow Lewis. The towers are set out in a row and spaced about 150 feet apart. Lewis spends less than the appropriation.
CE 1838	Established	Federal lighthouses districts are established with naval officers detailed to inspect the lights in each and report on their condition. Lieutenant Edward Carpenter is assigned as inspector for Massachusetts.
CE 1840 - 1841	Expanded	Massachusetts State Legislature appropriates $500 for the Humane Society of Massachusetts to purchase eleven lifeboats. By 1841 rescue boats are stationed at Race Point, Chatham, Nantucket, and the Boston Harbor area.
CE 1847	Established	The federal government begins its own program of building life-saving boats and stations along the sea coasts and the Great Lakes.
CE 1850 - 1859	Built	A barn is constructed west of the north tower of the Three Sisters, most likely the 1850s.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1852	Established	The Lighthouse Board is established on October 9, 1852 and assumes management of lighthouses.
CE 1858	Altered	The Three Sisters are upgraded to a sixth order Fresnel lenses.
CE 1858	Built	Maps show the alignment of what is now called Cable Road, from Eastham to Nauset Light Beach.
CE 1869	Built	The first transatlantic telegraph cable reaches the United States, from Brest, France, to the Saint Pierre and Miquelon archipelago southwest of Newfoundland, and on to Duxbury, Massachusetts.
CE 1869	Built	By 1869 an addition is attached to the rear of the barn and a hen house is constructed between the barn and privy.
CE 1870 - 1879	Built	The railroad reaches Eastham in 1870 and by 1879 extends to Provincetown.
CE 1872	Built	The Nauset Life-Saving Station is built 1.25 miles south of the Nauset Light Area.
CE 1873	Altered	The sixth order Fresnel lenses at the Three Sisters are upgraded to fourth order Fresnel lenses.
CE 1875	Built	A wood-frame house for the assistant keeper is completed north of the brick keeper's house, near the site of the original privy. A new privy is presumably built at this time north of the wood keeper's house.
CE 1878	Established	Congress separates the life-saving network from the Revenue Cutter Service and establishes the U.S. Lifesaving Service (USLSS) as a separate agency of the Treasury Department in 1878.
CE 1879	Built	A transatlantic cable is laid from Brest, France, to the archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon southwest of Newfoundland, to a new station in Eastham. This is the first transatlantic cable on Cape Cod.
CE 1879	Built	The "Compagnie Francaise du Telegraphe de Paris au New York" builds a two-story building located around 100 yards south of the Three Sisters south tower to serve as a cable station.
CE 1879	Built	Two cast iron lighthouses are constructed at Chatham. In 1923 one of these lights is moved to Nauset Light Beach.
CE 1889	Altered	Exterior ladders are added to each of the Three Sisters.
CE 1890	Farmed/Harvested	Fisheries and salt industries begin to decline by the 1890s, while cranberry and asparagus production increases.
CE 1891	Moved	The "Compagnie Francaise du Telegraphe" moves receiving operations from Nauset Light Beach to Orleans, where the company operates until 1959.
CE 1891 - 1901	Destroyed	The old cable station building is sold to A.W. Reed in 1891, and used as a hotel from 1893 until 1901 when it is destroyed by fire.
CE 1891	Built	A cable hut is built (known today as the French Cable Hut) as the connection point for the cable.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1892	Built	Due to erosion, the original brick lighthouses fail and are replaced with three movable wooden towers, also referred to as the Three Sisters. These structures have a fixed light. The brick foundations of the original three lights remain on the beach.
CE 1892	Built	A brick oil house with slate roof and cupola is built west of the barn.
CE 1892 - 1911	Removed	The kitchen addition on the north side of the brick keeper's house is removed between 1892 and 1911.
CE 1893	Built	A white signal mast is located southeast of the middle tower by this time.
CE 1899	Established	A second transatlantic cable reaches Cape Cod, providing a direct connection between Brest, France and Orleans. The cable station uses both cables.
CE 1903	Established	The first successful transatlantic radio transmission via the Marconi Wireless Station occurs at South Wellfleet.
CE 1910	Established	The Lighthouse Board is disestablished in favor of the Lighthouse Service, under the Department of Commerce.
CE 1911	Altered	Erosion once again brings the Nauset Light Beach cliff edge close to the three wood towers. The middle tower is relocated inland to a location near the 1875 keeper's house and becomes known as The Beacon. It is connected to the keeper's house via a short covered walkway and stabilized with four guy wires. The north and south towers are decommissioned but temporarily remain on the property.
CE 1912	Removed	As recommended by the District inspectors, the unused 1838 brick keeper's house is removed.
CE 1914	Built	The Cape Cod Canal is completed.
CE 1915	Established	The USLSS is merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to form the U.S. Coast Guard.
CE 1918	Altered	The Cummings family purchases the north and south towers of the Three Sisters. The towers are initially moved to a temporary location near the former French Cable Station site.
CE 1920	Moved	The Cummings family relocates the two light towers west on Cable Road to a small rise and incorporates them into a summer home referred to as "The Towers." The towers are joined by a one-story connecter.
CE 1923	Moved	One of Chatham's twin lights is moved to Nauset to replace The Beacon, and becomes known as the Nauset Beach Light. Due to bluff erosion, the tower is erected west of the site where the Beacon was located.
CE 1923	Moved	The 1875 wood keeper's house is moved inland (west) and placed on a newly constructed brick cellar northwest of the cast iron tower.
CE 1923	Built	A garage is built southwest of the relocated keeper's house and tower.
CE 1923	Moved	The Beacon is sold to Albert Hall and moved to a new location just south of the Cable Station complex, where it is attached to one-story cottage and used as a residence.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1923	Built	A rough trace of Nauset Light Beach Road provides access to Nauset Light Beach and the Nauset Beach Light complex.
CE 1930 - 1939	Built	In the 1930s the Cummings family constructs a guest cottage north of the two towers. It becomes known as “Twin Lights Cottage.”
CE 1932	Abandoned	The transatlantic cable through Nauset Light Beach is abandoned. Use of the French Cable Hut ends.
CE 1935	Built	Two vehicular bridges are built across the Cape Cod Canal, improving vehicular access to the Cape and increasing tourism.
CE 1939	Established	The Lighthouse Service is merged into the U.S Coast Guard, thereafter combining the management of aids to navigation with life-saving operations.
CE 1940	Abandoned	France surrenders to Germany during World War II and the French Cable Station ceases operation.
CE 1940 - 1941	Altered	The top portion of Nauset Beach Light is painted red.
CE 1946	Purchased/Sold	The French Cable Hut is sold to Dorothy LePage for nonpayment of property taxes.
CE 1950	Altered	Dorothy LePage and Edward Reed alter the French Cable Hut. The interior is finished and a kitchen and several bedrooms are added. They rent the French Cable Hut as a summer cottage to tourists.
CE 1951	Purchased/Sold	LePage and Reed sell the French Cable Hut to Joseph R. Whiting.
CE 1952 - 1955	Altered	Nauset Beach Light is automated between 1952 and 1955.
CE 1955	Purchased/Sold	The keeper’s house is purchased from the Coast Guard by the Howells family.
CE 1957	Purchased/Sold	Joseph R. Whiting sells the French Cable Hut to Fred J. Rechenberg, who moves the front door and adds a porch.
CE 1960 - 1969	Built	A garage is built at the keeper’s house.
CE 1961	Established	Cape Cod National Seashore is authorized on August 7, 1961, encompassing six Cape Cod towns, including the Nauset Light Area in Eastham.
CE 1965	Land Transfer	Nauset Light Beach is transferred from the Town of Eastham to the federal government.
CE 1965 - 1970	Built	The park constructs a comfort station just south of the town’s paved parking lot.
CE 1965	Purchased/Sold	The north and south towers of the Three Sisters are acquired by the park, as part of a 5.5-acre parcel, from the Cummings family.
CE 1966	Established	Cape Cod National Seashore is dedicated on Memorial Day weekend in 1966 and formally established on June 1, 1966.
CE 1972	Purchased/Sold	The park acquires the French Cable Hut from Fred Rechenberg.
CE 1975	Purchased/Sold	The Beacon, the former middle tower of the Three Sisters, is acquired by the park from the Hall family.
CE 1977	Altered	The garage at the keeper’s house is enlarged.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1980	Removed	In c.1980 the park removes the non-historic residential structure called “The Towers” that had incorporated the north and south towers.
CE 1982	Removed	By 1982 the park removes the remaining Cable Station buildings, except for the French Cable Hut.
CE 1983	Moved	The Beacon is temporarily relocated to the site where the north and south towers of the Three Sisters are located on the north side of Cable Road. It is moved to make way for a proposed parking lot.
CE 1985	Built	The park constructs a large parking lot and fee station at the Nauset Light Area, and reconfigures the intersection of the three roads that provide access to the area.
CE 1986 - 1988	Built	In 1986-88, the park builds a bathhouse at the southeast corner of the new parking lot. New plantings and a boardwalk to the beach are installed. The old comfort station and its associated boardwalks are removed.
CE 1989 - 1993	Rehabilitated	The Three Sisters are reoriented to their original (1892) positions relative to one another.
CE 1989 - 1993	Removed	The guest cottage erected by the Cummings family north of the twin lights in the 1930s, known as “Twin Lights Cottage,” is removed.
CE 1989 - 1993	Built	A sidewalk is built from the middle tower to the south tower, and continues east along the north side of Cable Road to the park’s paved parking lot at the beach.
CE 1993	Established	The Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society (NLPS) is formed in response to the U.S. Coast Guard’s plan to decommission Nauset Beach Light because of the erosion of the cliff.
CE 1995	Established	NLPS signs a long-term lease for management of the Nauset Beach Light.
CE 1996	Moved	NLPS relocates the lighthouse and oil house at wooded site approximately 300 feet to the southwest.
CE 1998 - 2000	Moved	The keeper’s house is moved inland to a site near the Nauset Beach Light and oil house. The attached garage is removed.
CE 2000	Restored	By 2000 the park removes the non-historic additions on the French Cable Hut to restore its historic appearance.
CE 2003 - 2005	Moved	The French Cable Hut is moved approximately 200 feet inland from the eroding bluff.
CE 2004	Established	A partnership agreement between the Nauset Light Preservation Society (NLPS) and the National Park Service is signed to lead tours and perform maintenance.
CE 2005	Rehabilitated	Nauset Beach Light is repainted.
CE 2007	Restored	Volunteers from the NLPS and Friends of Cape Cod National Seashore help the park in cutting, clearing, and removing vegetation on the grounds around the Nauset Beach Light. Dead trees, invasive shrubs and plants are cleared. This effort restores views to and from the tower.
CE 2007	Destroyed	The stairs to Nauset Light Beach are destroyed by high tides, wave-action, and erosion during a winter storm.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 2008 - 2009	Rehabilitated	The oil house is restored by the NLPS.
CE 2010	Destroyed	The stairs to Nauset Light Beach are destroyed by high tides, wave action, and erosion during a winter storm.
CE 2013	Rehabilitated	The exterior of Nauset Beach Light is repainted.
CE 2016	Destroyed	The stairs to Nauset Light Beach are destroyed by high tides, wave action, and erosion during winter storms.
CE 2016	Destroyed	The well house is lost to erosion of the bluff.

Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods.

CONTACT PERIOD (Pre-1620)

Geological History:
Some 13,000 years ago, at the end of the Wisconsin Glacial Episode, the retreat of the Laurentide Ice Sheet created the unique landform of Cape Cod consisting of rock rubble as far as High Head in present-day Truro. Meltwaters shaped the hills and hollows that drained westward from the outer costal headlands into glacial Lake Cape Cod. In the ensuing centuries, tides, wind, and currents carried sediment and sand northward, creating the present day Province Lands Hook by about 6,000 years ago. The present-day Town of Eastham area – the site of the Nauset Light Area – sits on a foundation composed of outwash plain deposits of the Lower Cape. (Holmes 1998: 17)

Native Americans and European Explorers:
As the glacial ice retreated, Paleoindians likely inhabited Cape Cod between 10,000 and 12,000 years ago, though there is no physical evidence due to sea level rise and land erosion. Indigenous settlements appear to have increased between 6,000 to 8,000 years ago during the Early and Middle Archaic Periods, evidenced by the discovery of arrowheads and pottery shards dating to 7,700 years ago. Two burial sites dating to the Late Archaic Period, between 3,000 and 6,000 years ago, were found in Eastham and the present-day Town of Orleans to the south. (Holmes 1998: 42)

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Cape Cod was predominantly wooded and likely consisted of red maple, tupelo, black gum, and other trees and shrubs. Native Americans took advantage of the region's abundant resources and developed foot trails following natural features connecting to freshwater sources and hunting and growing areas. The diversity of the local environment lent itself to fishing, hunting, and gathering by a Wampanoag federation of tribes. It is likely that small non-permanent shelters or camps were established near fresh water sources. Records from sixteenth century European explorers do not indicate a substantial Native American presence on the Cape, although encounters between the two are documented with some frequency. (CLR 2011: 14-16)

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the Eastham area was populated by the Nauset, an Algonquian tribe living in Massachusetts and affiliated with the Wampanoag. During a 1605 voyage, French explorer Samuel de Champlain visited Nauset Harbor, writing of, "a bay with wigwams bordering it all around…before reaching [the Indians] wigwams, [we] entered a field planted with Indian corn… [which] was in flower, and some five and a half feet in height…We saw Brazilian beans, edible squashes…tobacco, and roots which they cultivate." Champlain returned the following year and documented about 150 Native Americans living around the Nauset Harbor and around 600 living in the area of the present-day Town of Chatham, south of Eastham. (Kennedy 2008: 34)

European explorers also described the Cape's land mass. English explorer Bartholomew Gosnold named the land mass Cape Cod in 1602 for the quantity of codfish caught by his crew, recording that "the shore was bold and the sand very deep." English explorer John Smith described Cape Cod during a 1614 voyage as a "headland of high hills of sand overgrown with shrubby pines" with "an excellent harbor for all weathers." He described the form of the Cape as "made by the main sea on the one side and a great bay on the other in form of a sickle." Smith also noted interactions with the Native Americans, "the people of Pawmet and in the bottom of the Bay the people of Chawrum." (Hopkins 1890: 953; MHC 1985: 2-5)

Early Europeans took shelter in Cape Cod Bay, exploring the area and gathering food, fresh water, and wood for fires and ship repairs. European fishermen likely lived in temporary settlements near the shoreline and used the Native American trails throughout the Cape. Beginning in the 1620s, English settlers displaced many of the Native Americans on the Lower Cape, many of whom eventually succumbed to European introduced diseases. (Hopkins 1890: 953; MHC 1985: 2-5)

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF EASTHAM, 1620-1890s

In November 1620 the crew of the Mayflower recognized Cape Cod's unique landform on sight and adjusted their course to the south toward the Virginia Colony, their intended destination. However, high winds and waves thwarted redirection of the ship and the crew and passengers instead anchored in the protected waters of Provincetown Harbor. There, the "Mayflower Compact" was signed onboard the ship, establishing the first governing document of Plymouth Colony and the first written framework of government within the New World. (Jennings 1890: 15-16)

Documentation of the Pilgrim's arrival at the Cape and its landscape conditions at the time are found in "Mourt's Relation," a published version of the journal kept by leaders aboard the Mayflower. Written mostly by Edward Winslow who would become the third governor of the Plymouth Colony, the journal reads, "By the break of day we espied land which we deemed to be Cape Cod and so afterward it proved…And the appearance of it much comforted us, especially, seeing so goodly a land, and wooded to the brink of the sea, it caused us to rejoice together…" The entry continues, "we came to anchor in the Bay, which is a good harbor and pleasant bay, circled around, except in the entrance, which is four miles over from land to land, compassed about to the very sea with oaks, pines, juniper, sassafras, and other sweet wood." (Hopkins 1890: 954- 960)

Once anchored, the Pilgrims made plans to search for a suitable settlement site and resupply on necessities including fresh meat, water, and firewood. The initial scouting parties came ashore in the Provincetown area and during the following weeks they explored Nauset, the area that would later become the Town of Eastham. The Pilgrims reported favorably on Nauset and encountered Native Americans in the area, but decided on Plymouth as the site for early settlement. They frequently returned to the Lower Cape between 1620 and 1640 and relied on the Native Americans of the Nauset area to supplement their subsistence living. In 1621, Massasoit, the sachem of the Wampanoag, made a treaty with the English at Plymouth in which he acknowledged the King of England as his sovereign. The sachems of Nauset, Pamet (Truro) and Chammaquid (Barnstable), who were subordinate to Massasoit, submitted to the same authority. When the English colony was reduced to a state of famine in 1622, the colonists were kept alive by the willingness to trade and generosity of the Nauset people. (Pratt 1844: 5-6,8; Deyo 1890: 720; Driver 2004: 55)

The Plymouth Colony claimed jurisdiction over the Cape Cod coast, from Cohasset to Narragansett Bay through a British royal patent in 1629. This land was later deeded to establish different towns, including Eastham, with the exception of the very tip of the Cape, which was set aside as a fishing reserve—the first public land in the New World. (Pratt 1844: 5-6,8; Deyo 1890: 720; Driver 2004: 55)

Colonial Settlement on Cape Cod:
In 1644 Thomas Prence, who served several terms as governor of the colony, his family, and six other families selected present-day Eastham as a potential new site for a settlement. Having become dissatisfied with the poor soils and small land grants of the Plymouth Colony, the group of seven families, which consisted of 49 people, determined that the area was capable of supporting twenty or twenty-five families. This area had been referred to as "the Kingdome of Nawset" in "Mourt's Relation" and had been visited by the Pilgrims in 1620. Portions of the land were purchased from the Native Americans while other areas were claimed by the settlers. In 1646 the colonial government incorporated the settlement as Nauset. Town officers were elected and the following year the first deputy from Nauset appeared at the General Court. In 1651 Nauset became the Town of Eastham and encompassed 14.25 square miles. (Eastham Historical Society, web; Pratt 1844: 11,101; Deyo 1890: 721)

The population of Eastham grew steadily, from 275 in 1663 to 900 in 1684. The early economy was based largely on agriculture and fishing, especially abundant shellfish, but as homesteads expanded the need for legislation to preserve and manage natural and agricultural resources became apparent. In 1652 the town held multiple meetings regarding the division of the common lands and ear marking to indicate ownership of horses, cattle, and swine. In 1671 legislation mandated that no wood would be taken from the Town of Eastham, because its use for the construction of homes, shipbuilding, and firewood had left the landscape susceptible to blowing sand and erosion. By 1686 a bounty was

posted for wolves, which was threatening cattle and sheep and jeopardizing the livelihood of townspeople. Eastham's growing population also necessitated expansion of the school system in 1678, when historic records indicated the Town voted to raise additional funds, the earliest notice of a school in the town. In 1692 Plymouth Colony merged with the Massachusetts Bay Colony and became part of the Province of Massachusetts Bay. (CLR 2011: 21-22; Pratt 1844: 31,47,101; Deyo 1890: 727)

By 1703 the population of Eastham had reached 948. The first half of the eighteenth century also saw an expansion of the network of roads in Eastham and on Cape Cod. In 1719 a forty-foot-wide public road was constructed from Harwich to Truro, passing through Eastham. Variously known as the "County Road" and "King's Highway," the highway was extended to Provincetown in 1727. It is likely that the earliest roads on the Cape followed the foot trails once used by Native American and seasonal European who fished in the area. By mid-century, Eastham's year-round population of colonists was approximately 2,000. (Pratt, 1844: 40,50,60,68-69,101; Deyo 1890: 723)

In 1762 the northern portion of Eastham became the Town of Wellfleet, thus reducing Eastham's population to 1331. Historical records from this time note the extensive labor and expense necessary to preserve the beaches, shores, and sandy lands from injury by violent wind and storms. The network of roads within and surrounding Eastham also continued to expand through the construction of new highways and roads and the repair of existing infrastructure. (Pratt 1844: 1,72,101)

Revolutionary War, Recovery, and Growth:
After fifteen years of escalating tensions between the colonies and England, the Revolutionary War erupted in 1775. British ships anchored in Provincetown Harbor, and because of its proximity to Boston made it and the Lower Cape a target for British raids. The war effectively halted growth and development of Eastham and neighboring towns because residents either enlisted to support the war effort or fled because of the fear of raids. Fishing and trade industries suffered, as boat traffic to and from the Lower Cape was nearly cut-off and communication was difficult. Fishermen and settlers who did stay were unable to fish, and relied heavily on farming, smuggling, and privateering to support their families. (Long Point NR draft 1996; MHC Provincetown 1985: 9; CLR 2011: 19-21)

After the Revolution, residents were quick to begin recovery efforts and return to their trades. Reverend Pratt described the end of the war, stating, "Soon the town of Eastham began to recover from the miserable poverty into which the war had plunged the inhabitants. The fishermen and those engaged in commerce, went forth unmolested upon the broad expanse of ocean, to gather up its riches and repair their losses." By 1790 the population of Eastham had reached 2,064, but in 1797 the southern portion of the town became the Town of Orleans. Eastham was left with an area around six miles long and two and half miles broad, bordered on the east by the Atlantic, on north by Wellfleet, on west by Barnstable Bay, and on south by Orleans. With the establishment of Orleans, the population of Eastham was adjusted to 840. (Pratt 1844: 81,86,101; Deyo 1890: 725)

Development of Industry and Transportation in Eastham:
At the turn of the nineteenth century, Eastham numbered 170 families and featured around 150 dwellings-houses. In addition to houses, there were barns, two windmills, five schoolhouses, and two meeting houses. In 1799 residents constructed a canal between Herring Pond to Great Meadow River to help herring move more freely, and in 1804 improved a canal that had developed in a natural passage known as Jeremiah's Gutter between Cape Cod Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, via Town Cove in Orleans. Townspeople owned three coasters, which in the summer were employed to bring lumber to the Cape from Maine, and in the winter made voyages to the West Indies. Many residents were also employed in the merchant service and sailed from Boston. (Pratt 1844: 5,86-87,101; Holmes 1998: 33; Deyo 1890: 725-726; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeremiah's Gutter)

Several events in the 1810s disrupted the livelihood of residents in Eastham and the Lower Cape. During the War of 1812 British ships once again anchored in Provincetown Harbor. Communication with Boston and other commercial cities was cut off with the exception of small boats running close to the shore. The improved canal was used as an escape route by local boatmen. Soon after the war, a typhoid epidemic swept through Eastham and decimated the population. Seventy-two people died within four months and by 1820 the town's population had fallen to 766. (Pratt 1844: 88,101; Deyo

1890: 724; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeremiah's Gutter)

Despite these events, the Cape's economy had begun to diversify. The first evaporative salt manufacturing facility in Eastham had been established in 1799, and in subsequent years large sums of money were invested in the Lower Cape's salt industry so that by the early 1830s there were 388 saltworks. Salt production peaked in 1837 – in Eastham alone there were 54 plants yielding 22,370 bushels and over one hundred thousand linear feet of evaporating vats. The fish industry also continued to thrive; in 1837 cod fishing in Eastham produced 12,000 quintals and mackerel produced 4,550 barrels. Fish was dried and exchanged for supplies in cities along the coast. (Pratt 1844: 5,86-88,101; Holmes 1998: 33; Deyo 1890: 724-726)

By the end of the nineteenth century the fisheries and salt industries begin to decline. Oyster propagation had also ceased, and while clams remain plentiful, they were not harvested at the same level as they had been fifty years earlier. These economic voids were filled with a new industry of growing cranberries, asparagus, and turnips, which were exported to city markets via the railroad that reached Eastham in 1870. Although the land was generally poor in quality, it was also able to support grain production. (Pratt 1844: 5,86-87,101; Holmes 1998: 33; Deyo 1890: 725-726; Town of Eastham, web)

Construction of local and through roads also continued throughout Cape Cod. By 1858 Eastham featured a network of roads that traveled around the various ponds and marshes and provided access to the wharves and coastlines. A later 1879 map shows the railroad line ran just east of Great Pond and Herring Pond and extended to Provincetown.(Figures 1 and 2). While these land-based transportation networks effectively linked the towns, the Lower Cape's long coastlines were for the most part inaccessible and remained hazardous to those involved in the maritime trades.

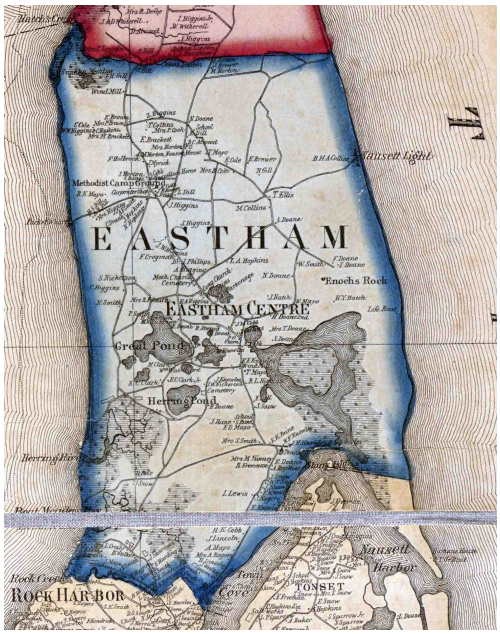


Figure 1. Detail of Eastham on map titled 'Counties of Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket, MA' based on trigonometric survey of the state, 1858 by Henry Francis Walling. Nauset Light and Cable Road are depicted. (Boston Public Library)

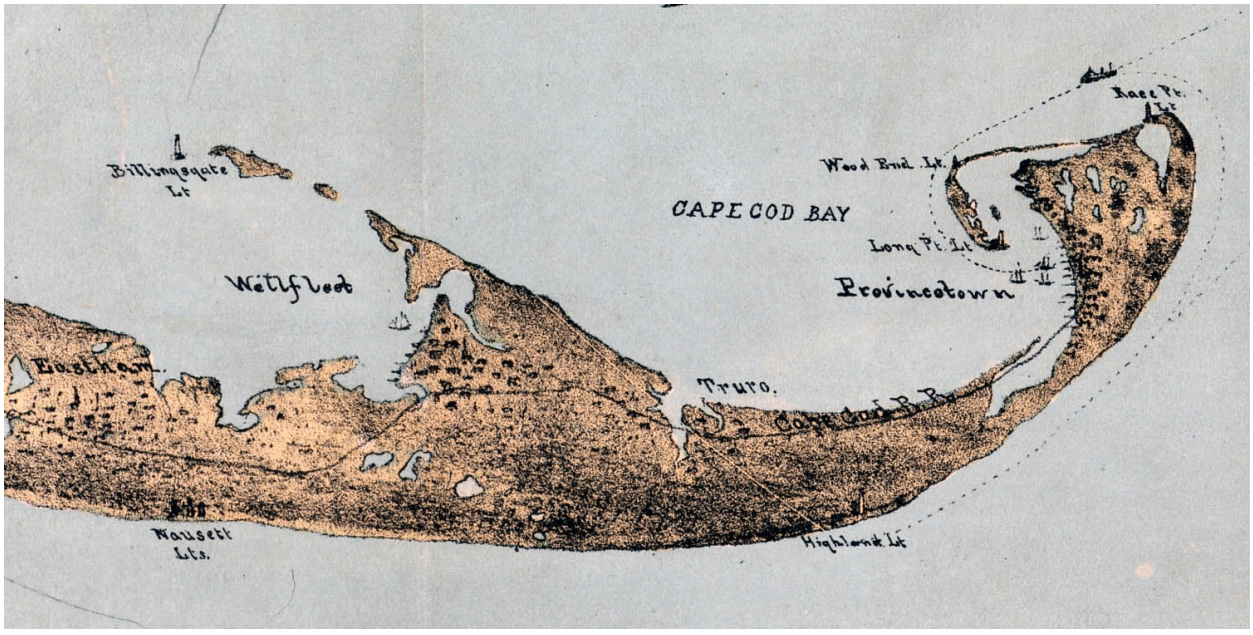


Figure 2. Detail of a map titled 'Balloon View, Provincetown to Boston, 1879,' by Kimball Rogers. The Three Sisters of Nauset Light, labeled 'Nauset Lts.'are depicted at image lower left and 'Highland Lt' at image lower right. (Boston Public Library)

NAUSET LIFE SAVING STATION, 1872-1948

Prior to the availability of navigational beacons and detailed maps, Cape Cod was particularly treacherous for sailing vessels because of the extensive sandbars just off shore. Growth of the maritime community and an increase in offshore fishing during the late eighteenth century escalated the need for life-saving efforts along the Cape's coastline. Even sailors who were able to swim to shore were likely to perish from winter exposure on the long stretches of uninhabited shoreline. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, ship owners and fishermen constructed a series of crude wooden towers in particularly dangerous spots that burned pitch, a substance generally made out of tar or resin, as signal lights. (Holmes 1998: 30; Long Point NR draft 1996, Sec.8: 3-4)

Increasingly concerned about the needless deaths resulting from shipwrecks and drownings, a group of citizens in Boston established the Humane Society of Massachusetts in 1786. The Humane Society provided the first organized relief for shipwrecked seafarers, constructing huts and other places of refuge on the Lower Cape and Boston Harbor beginning in 1787. In 1801 the Humane Society began considering the purchase of life-saving boats to be stationed along the coast. (Holmes 1998: 30; Long Point NR draft 1996, sec.8: 3-4)

By the late 1830s life-saving huts stocked with firewood and provisions dotted the sea coast and had saved numerous lives. In 1840 the state legislature appropriated funds for the Humane Society to purchase lifeboats, and by the following year there were rescue boats stationed at Race Point, Chatham, Nantucket, and the Boston Harbor area. Each rudimentary station included a boat and boathouse, measuring approximately twenty by eighteen feet. Crews were composed of ten volunteers, and crew members involved in a rescue were provided with a reward. The stations, however, were only located near the approaches to busy ports, leaving large gaps of coastline without life-saving equipment. There was also no inspection system to ensure that the men and equipment were up to standards. (Holmes 1998: 80; Long Point NR draft 1996, Sec.8: 3-4; Noble 2008: 2)

Construction of Nauset Life-Saving Station:
Despite the efforts of the Humane Society of Massachusetts, casualty rates of shipwrecks remained high and drew the attention the U.S. Government. In 1847 Congress appropriated funds to pay for life-saving equipment to be used by volunteer organizations. However, poor management of the equipment and a terrible sea disaster off the New Jersey coast led to a reorganization of the life-saving stations in 1854, which included offering salaries for the keepers of each station. Even while it was creating its own stations, the government continued to fund the Humane Society, whose stations were distinguished from the government stations by their red paint. All stations were administered by the U.S. Revenue Marine (later called the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service), within the Treasury Department. (CLR 2011: 26-27; Noble 2008: 2)

The Civil War caused the neglect of the government's shore-based life-saving network, and by 1870 both the government and Humane Society buildings had fallen into disrepair. After a particularly vicious storm hit the East Coast and many sailors died, the U.S. Revenue Marine upgraded facilities, equipment, and staff. In 1872 Congress appropriated funds for nine staffed life-saving stations to replace the houses of refuge built by the Humane Society of Massachusetts. Among them was Nauset Station, constructed one and one-fourth miles south of the Nauset Light Area. The Humane Society continued to maintain some of its old refuge huts into the 1900s, but by the late nineteenth century the government had taken primary responsibility for preventing disasters on the Cape. (CLR 2011: 26-27; Noble 2008: 2)

U.S. Lifesaving Service and U.S. Coast Guard:
To further improve the growing network of life-saving stations, Congress shifted the life-saving roles of the Revenue Cutter Service in 1878 to the U.S. Lifesaving Service (USLSS), a separate agency of the Treasury Department. From 1883-1902, the USLSS built four additional stations on Cape Cod. In order to maintain its new outposts, the USLSS began offering full-time pay to crew members. (Kasparian 2008: 18; CLR 2011: 26)

In 1915 Congress merged the USLSS and U.S. Revenue Cutter Service to create the U.S. Coast Guard. The new organization incorporated technological innovations to operate more efficiently and

reduce personnel. Larger motorized boats and helicopters led to the closure of many stations. Those that remained open were justified based on their strategic importance for military use and surveillance. The duties of the USLSS surfmen were largely negated as mariners transitioned to steam powered ships, rescue boats and recreational boats incorporated gasoline-powered motors, and navigational aids improved. (Noble 2008: 3; Long Point NR draft 1996, Sec.8: 5-6)

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, the Nauset Life-Saving Station was abandoned in 1948 but was still listed as active until it disappeared from the list of stations in July 1959. (www.uscg.mil/history/stations/NAUSET.pdf)

LIGHTHOUSES AT NAUSET, 1838-1955

While the Humane Society of Massachusetts and the USLSS focused on marine rescues, another branch of the U.S. Treasury Department focused on navigational aids. In 1789, recognizing the importance of maritime commerce to the national economy, President George Washington authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to maintain national aids to navigation, including twelve lighthouses built previously by colonial interests. Eight lights in Massachusetts were turned over to federal ownership and maintenance, and in 1797 the federal government built Highland Light, the first lighthouse on Cape Cod, near Truro. (Kasparian 2008: 16; HSR Three Sisters 1986: 9)

Lighthouse administration was managed by the Lighthouse Establishment within the Treasury Department. For the next sixty years, the location and construction of new lights typically evolved from local requests made to Congress. Each year the number of requests for new lights grew, and by 1837 Congress called for a board of naval commissioners to examine proposed sites and determine the necessity for a light at each site. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 9)

Three Sisters of Nauset:
On Cape Cod, growing concern over the number of vessels shipwrecked on the Nauset bars led members of the Eastham community to write a letter in early 1836 to the Boston Marine Society stating the need for a light in the area. The Marine Society visited the site and agreed to petition Congress for funding, which was granted on March 3, 1837 for land acquisition and construction, contingent upon an inspection of the site by a naval officer. To avoid confusion with the single Highland Light to the north and the two lights at Chatham Light to the south, the Marine Society recommended the construction of three lights at Nauset. The triple lights would become known as the “Three Sisters of Nauset” (see Figures 1 and 2). (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 9-10)

The rationale for lighting Nauset Light Beach was not one of providing top-of-the-line lighthouses. Ocean-going vessels that did not come close to shore at Nauset Light Beach could observe the Highland and Chatham lights and thus chart a course beyond the Nauset shoals. Rather, it was the coastal and fishing vessels that hugged the shore that encountered problems. The Cape’s curving ocean-facing shoreline prevented such craft from viewing either the Highland or Chatham lights when near Nauset Light Beach. Thus, without a guiding light, coastal vessels were subject to grounding on the Nauset bars. As a result, the need for lighting at Nauset served only an intermediate purpose, that of signaling ships of the local danger until they could view the Highland or Chatham lights. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 10)

The Nauset site was inspected by Captain John Percival of the Navy, who approved it as a necessary location for lights. Percival drove stakes into the ground on a line parallel with the coast at the points he selected for each of the three lighthouses. On September 14, 1837, David Henshaw, the Boston customs collector who presided over the area as Superintendent of Lights, purchased a parcel of land just over five acres in size on behalf of the federal government from Benjamin H.A. Collins for $150. Not all individuals, however, saw the need for lighthouses along the coast of Cape Cod; the construction of the Three Sisters was met with resistance by those who made substantial profit in the wrecking and salvage business. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 9-10; West 1989: np)

The Lighthouse Establishment constructed the Three Sisters in 1838 (Figure 3). Winslow Lewis, a former sea captain and inventor of the Argand lamp and parabolic reflectors for use in lighthouses, won the project contract with the lowest bid to build the lights, a keeper’s dwelling, privy, and well for $6,548.00, far below the $10,000.00 appropriated by Congress for the task. The contract called for the construction of three round brick towers plastered with cement mortar. The towers were to be spaced 150 feet apart, rise fifteen feet high, and taper from sixteen feet in diameter at the bottom to nine feet in diameter at the top. Specifications called for walls to be approximately three feet thick at the base and twenty inches thick at the top. In the interiors, a set of granite stairs lead to a platform from which an iron ladder provided access to the glass and iron lantern room. The single-story brick keeper’s house was built around 100 feet west-southwest of the middle tower and was specified to be thirty-four by twenty feet with a sixteen- by fourteen-foot kitchen addition on it north side. A four- by five-foot wood privy was constructed approximately seventy feet north of the house, and a well was

dug around 180 feet southwest of the house. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 11-12,40)

Lewis began construction in June 1838, but the work crew did not follow the construction specifications. Shortly after arrival, Lewis relocated the staked locations of the middle and south lights selected by the Navy to an area of lower ground in order to reduce the amount of building materials necessary to complete the project. Although this change increased Lewis's profits on the project, it decreased the visibility of the lights to mariners and thus reduced their effectiveness. Lewis and his crew constructed the three towers in only thirty-eight days, often cutting corners as the opportunity was presented. (West 1989: np; HSR Three Sisters 1986: 12-13)

Establishment of the Lighthouse Board:
At this time, the Lighthouse Establishment was lead by Stephen Pleasonton, an accountant by training with little knowledge of lights or their operation. Pleasonton relied on Lewis, who typically underbid contracts, to develop the project specifications rather than employing architects or engineers to design the lights. In 1838 some of Pleasonton's critics convinced Congress to create lighthouses districts and detail naval officers to inspect the lights and report on their condition. Massachusetts became part of the Second District and Lieutenant Edward Carpenter was assigned as the inspector. When Carpenter arrived at Three Sisters several months after the lights were completed, he found they had not been lit because fuel had not been delivered. Carpenter acknowledged the importance of lighting Nauset Light Beach to warn of the shoals, but opined that one light instead of three would have sufficed: "I cannot believe that the Government will consent to consume 900 gallons of oil, when 300 or 360 will answer every purpose. Accordingly, I shall recommend the conversion of these lights into a single revolving red light…" During his inspection, Carpenter noted that Lewis had installed ten lamps in each light. (West 1989: np; HSR Three Sisters 1986: 12-13, citing Carpenter quote in Johnson 1890: 16)

Pleasonton was able to weather the findings of Carpenter's report that indicated poor management, but critics continued to complain about the Lighthouse Establishment. To address continued concerns, Isaiah W.P. Lewis, a well-regarded civil engineer and nephew of the Winslow Lewis, was appointed to inspect the lighthouses of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. In his report, Isaiah Lewis criticized both the Lighthouse Establishment and his uncle's construction work, and noted severe deficiencies in the Three Sisters lights, including construction on sand without foundations, inferior lime in the mortar, and bricks laid at random without forming a bond. Isaiah Lewis supported Carpenter's recommendation to reduce the number of lights at Nauset and retrofit the remaining light with a revolving light flashing every minute-and-a-half. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 13-14)

Poor construction was not the only criticism at Nauset. The lamp and parabolic reflector lighting system developed by Winslow Lewis proved to be poorly constructed and ineffective. More powerful and visible Fresnel lenses had been introduced in France in the 1820s, but Winslow Lewis's influence with Stephen Pleasonton had kept his Argand lamp as the primary source for lighting. Beginning in 1851, Congress directed Pleasonton to import Fresnel lenses and upgrade the illuminating equipment in American lighthouses. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 13-14)

At the same time Congress directed the Treasury Secretary to assemble a board of inquiry to investigate all aspects of the Lighthouse Establishment. After a thorough study, the board confirmed the findings of Isaiah Lewis, finding nearly every phase of the Lighthouse Establishment to be faulty. The study's recommendations led to the establishment of the Lighthouse Board on October 9, 1852. The Lighthouse Board consisted of nine army engineers and naval personnel who oversaw twelve districts, each with its own competent and well-trained inspector. Lighthouses were reclassified under the French model of six orders, with one to three designated as coastal lights and four through six as harbor lights. The Lighthouse Board immediately began the process of updating each lighthouse to have a Fresnel lens. Inspection documents for the Three Sisters by the Lighthouse Board once again raised the question of the need for three lights, although no action was taken. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 14-15)

Because the Three Sisters of Nauset were primarily used by vessels near the shore and local fishermen, they were given a lower priority for conversion to a Fresnel lens than more prominent

lights on the Cape. The Three Sisters finally received Fresnel lenses in October 1858, which were sixth order, the smallest of their type at less than three feet in height. In 1873 the lenses were replaced with fourth order Fresnel lenses. Exterior ladders were added to the towers in 1889. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 16-17)

Infrastructure at the Three Sisters:
By 1858, land access from Eastham to the Three Sisters at Nauset was by a road oriented west-southwest to east-northeast, which later was named Cable Road (see Figure 1). In addition to the three towers, keeper's house, privy, and well, the Lighthouse Board authorized several other structures in the 1850s through 1870s (Figure 4). A wood frame barn was constructed around 120 feet north of the privy and 100 feet west of the north tower by 1868, although it may have been built as early as the 1850s. According to a 1869 annual report, the keeper added a nine- by fifteen-foot addition to the north side of the barn and built a shed approximately nine- by eighteen feet, likely a hen house, around twenty feet south of the barn. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 41-53,58,Maps 2 and 3)

When the fourth order lenses were installed in the towers in 1873, an assistant light keeper was assigned to Nauset Light Beach to aid in the additional work. The two keepers shared the brick dwelling until 1875 when a new two-story wood-frame house was constructed around fifty feet north of the brick house, adjacent to the privy, and about 100 feet west-northwest of the middle tower. At this time, a new privy was built next to the hen house. The assistant keeper resided in the brick house and the keeper lived in the new wood house. Nauset housed an assistant keeper until around 1883, after which the brick house was used to store paint and firewood. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 41 -53,58,Maps 2 and 3)

An annual report and a map from 1885 described the physical layout of the lighthouse complex. The map also shows a fenced animal pen near the barn and a fence enclosing the entire lighthouse property (see Figure 4). Another map from the same period indicated a bulkhead on the north and east sides of the middle tower. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 41-53,58,Map 3)

Replacement of the Three Sisters:
Despite the presence of the bulkhead, years of erosion of the bluff finally claimed the Three Sisters of Nauset in 1892, leaving only the brick foundations behind. Earlier in the year, the Lighthouse Board constructed the second trio of three lights at Nauset Light Beach, also known as the Three Sisters, west of the site of the original towers. The Lighthouse Board's annual report for 1892 stated, "three wooden movable towers were erected by hired labor, 30 feet to the westward of the old towers. This was done because of the washing away of the bank." Lighthouse architects and engineers also chose this design so that the towers that could be moved further inland if the bluff continued to erode. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 17, citing Annual Report of the Light-House Board 1892: 55)

The second trio of the Three Sisters was situated about seventy feet from the two keeper's houses and barn complex, and sat on the bluff approximately seventy-five feet above sea level overlooking Nauset Light Beach (Figures 5, 6, and 7). The towers were built of wooden lapstrake construction and clad in wooden shingles painted white, and at twenty-two feet in height were taller than the previous brick towers. The base diameter was fourteen feet and tapered to eleven feet at the top. The iron lanterns and the fourth order Fresnel lenses from the brick towers were moved to the new lights on April 1892, which flashed alternately. Vestibules, called "storm porches" in historic documents, were added to the towers shortly after construction was completed (Figures 8 and 9). The Lighthouse Board also built an oil house in 1892, around 150 feet west of the barn (see Figure 5). The brick structure measured approximately eleven by nine feet and featured a slate roof, cupola, wood trim, and a unique three light transom window above the central front door. Historic photographs indicate the kitchen addition on the north side of the brick keeper's house was removed between 1892 and 1911. (MHC, EAS.F: 2-5; HSR Three Sisters 1986: 26,53,64,Map 4)

Another prominent feature at the Nauset Light Area was a white signal mast. The pole was sixty-five feet high, and according to a 1910 description of the site was located around eighty feet southeast of the middle tower. The mast was installed c.1893 (see Figures 7 and 9). (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 53)

Separation of the Three Sisters (The Beacon and the Twin Sisters):
By 1911, erosion once again threatened the Three Sisters of Nauset; the edge of the bluff was within twenty-four feet of the north tower and within fifty-four feet of the south tower. That same year, the Lighthouse Board, by this time known as the Lighthouse Service under the Department of Commerce, decided to move the middle tower back from the bluff and retain it as the only lighthouse into which a flashing light would be placed. Although technology had advanced to the point that a new, single flashing light could produce twenty times the brilliance as compared to that of the three lights combined, illuminating power was not the only reason to reduce the lighthouse number to one. The three lights could be mistaken for one or two if a vessel sailed by them at certain angles. In addition, the double and triple light systems in separate structures were being phased out for economic reasons. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 27)

The middle tower was moved to near the southeast corner of the 1875 wood-frame keeper's house and attached to it by a short covered walkway (Figure 10). On June 1, 1911 the tower was lit with a triple flash every ten seconds as a tribute to the former "Three Sisters." Within a few days the tower had to be stabilized with four galvanized guy wires to prevent shaking in the wind. District inspectors recommended removing the unneeded 1838 brick keeper's house, which occurred in late 1912, and razing the unused north and south towers. However, after several individuals expressed interest in buying the two towers, the Commissioner of Lighthouses decided to sell them at public auction. The auction did not occur until 1918, at which time the two towers were sold to Helen M. Cummings, for $3.50 each. After the Three Sisters were separated, the middle light became known as "The Beacon" while the north and south lights were variously referred to as the "Twin Sisters," "Twin Lights." (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 28; MHC, EAS.902: 4-6)

Mrs. Cummings and her husband initially relocated the Twin Sisters to a level spot near the site of the Cable Station complex just south of the Nauset Light Area, using them as cottages for several years. In 1920 the family moved the two towers to a wooded area on Cable Road approximately 1000 feet to the west, where they were incorporated into summer home referred to as "The Towers." The two former lighthouses were modified to serve as corner bays of the home, and were connected by a one-story central structure topped by a deck and fronted by a circular driveway (Figure 11). By 1932 the lanterns atop the two towers were removed, and sometime in the 1930s a guest cottage later known as the "Twin Lights Cottage" was built just to the north of "The Towers." The Cummings property was used as a residence for many years, and for a time as a gift shop, before it was sold and used by a drama and dance troupe. (MHC, EAS.902: 6; HSR Three Sisters 1986: 26-29; Letter, Friedburg to Cables, 31 August 1988; NETR aerials, 1938,1971,1991)

Nauset Beach Light:
The Beacon's characteristic three blinks aided navigation of Eastham's shores until 1923 when the Lighthouse Service replaced it with one of the two cast-iron light towers built in 1877 at Chatham, fifteen miles south of Eastham. With bluff erosion still advancing, the Chatham tower was placed on a concrete foundation around 200 feet west of the location of The Beacon and became known as the Nauset Beach Light (Figures 12 and 13). The fourth order lens in The Beacon was presumably transferred to the cast iron tower at this time. The 1875 wood-frame keeper's house was also moved approximately 150 feet west-northwest and set on top of a newly constructed brick cellar situated sixty feet northwest of the cast-iron tower. The new arrangement preserved the relationship between the tower and keeper's house that had been established in 1911. The Lighthouse Service also constructed a one-story garage located around 225 feet south-southwest of the relocated keeper's house. A plan from 1924 shows the lighthouse, keeper's house, oil shed, and garage, but does not show the barn, privy, or hen house, suggesting they had been removed by this time (Figure 14). In 1939 the Lighthouse Service was transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 26-29,32,53,Map 4; MHC, EAS.902, 3-6; LCS, Twin Lights (north))

The decommissioned Beacon light was sold at auction to Albert Hall in 1923 and moved to a new location just south of the Cable Station complex, where it was attached to one-story cottage and used as a residence. The keeper's house was purchased in 1955 by the Howells family as a private residence. The top portion of Nauset Beach Light was painted red between 1940 and 1941, and the light was automated between 1952 and 1955. (HSR Three Sisters 1986: 26-29,32,53,Map 4; MHC, EAS.902, 3-6; LCS, Twin Lights (north); MHC, EAS.F: 2-5; USCG Historic Light Stations, web)

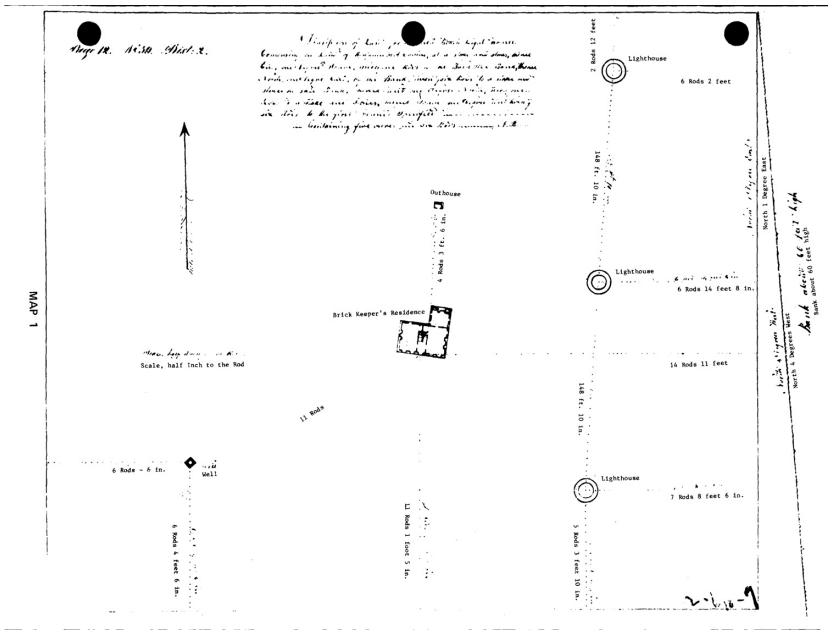


Figure 3. Early site plan, possibly c.1840s, of the lighthouse complex at Nauset Light Beach. (Clemensen et.al. 1986: Map 1)

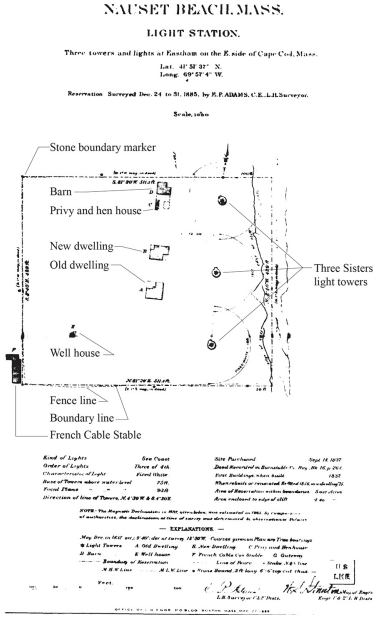


Figure 4. Survey of Nauset Beach Light Station by Lighthouse Board, 1885, depicting three light towers, two keeper's houses, privy, hen house, barn, well house, stable for French Cable Station, and fences. (Clemensen et.al. 1986: Map 2, annotated by OCLP)



Figure 5. Postcard, c.1892, showing (l. to r.) the French Cable Station, French Cable Hut, Three Sisters (south), old keeper's house, Three Sisters (center), new keeper's house, oil house, and Three Sisters (north)/barn. (CACO archives, H14-22)



Figure 6. View looking north-northwest at the original Three Sisters, c.1892. North tower (image right) is about 18 feet from the bluff edge. To the west are (l. to r.) 1838 keeper's house and addition, 1875 keeper's house, and barn. (CACO archives, H-6)



Figure 7. The Three Sisters of Nauset and the keeper's houses stand high on the bluffs in the background of this view looking north, c.1910. (CACO archives, H14-49)

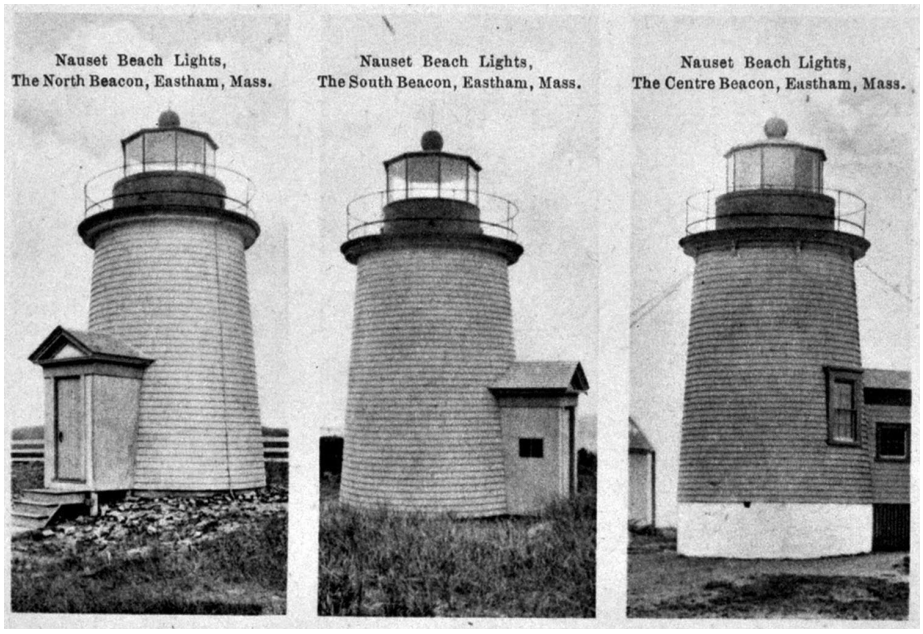


Figure 8. The wood-constructed Three Sisters, 1892 shortly after construction. The movable towers replaced the first set of masonry towers, which were lost to the eroding coastline. (CACO archives, 136)



Figure 9. View looking north c.1893, soon after three wooden "movable" towers replaced the original masonry Three Sisters. Note the brick rubble next to the south tower and the bulkhead in the foreground. (CACO archives, H14-20)

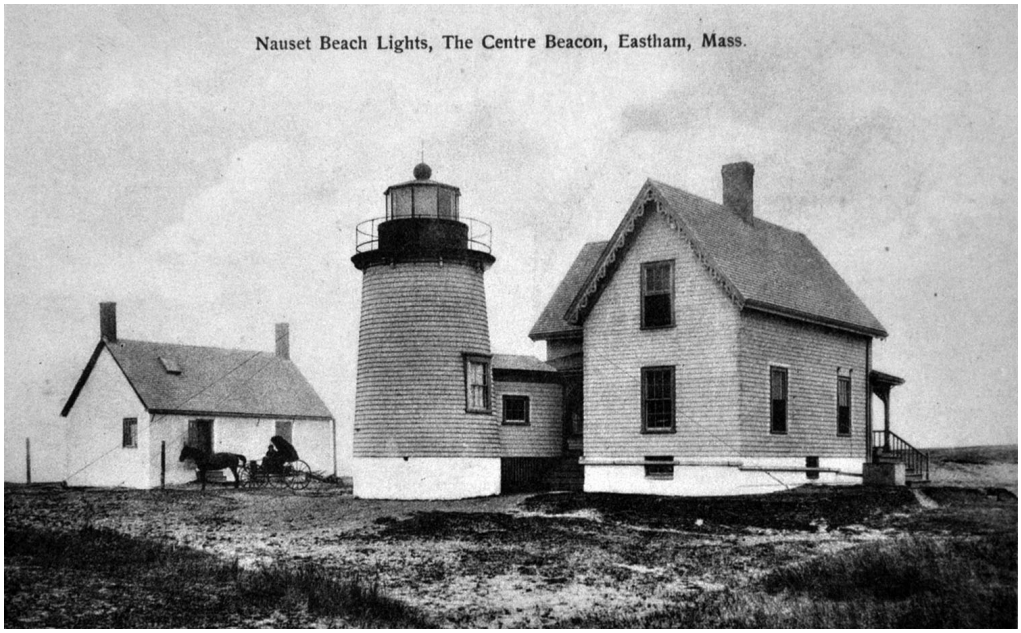


Figure 10. View from 1911 looking southwest at The Beacon (the relocated middle light of the Three Sisters) attached to the 1875 wood-frame keeper's house. The 1838 brick keeper's house (without kitchen addition) is at image left. (CACO archives, H14-137)



Figure 11. View from 1932. After being sold at auction, the north and south towers of the Three Sisters were relocated to a summer residence known as The Towers. The owners removed the lanterns and added several windows. (CACO archives, H14-144)



Figure 12. Postcard from 1923 looking north at Nauset Beach Light (formerly one of the twin lights at Chatham) and the moved 1875 wood-frame keeper's house. The road fronting the fence and garage is now Nauset Beach Light Road. (CACO archives, H14-138)



Figure 13. View looking north at the relocated lighthouse, keeper's house, garage, and at image right, the well house. (CACO archives, no #)

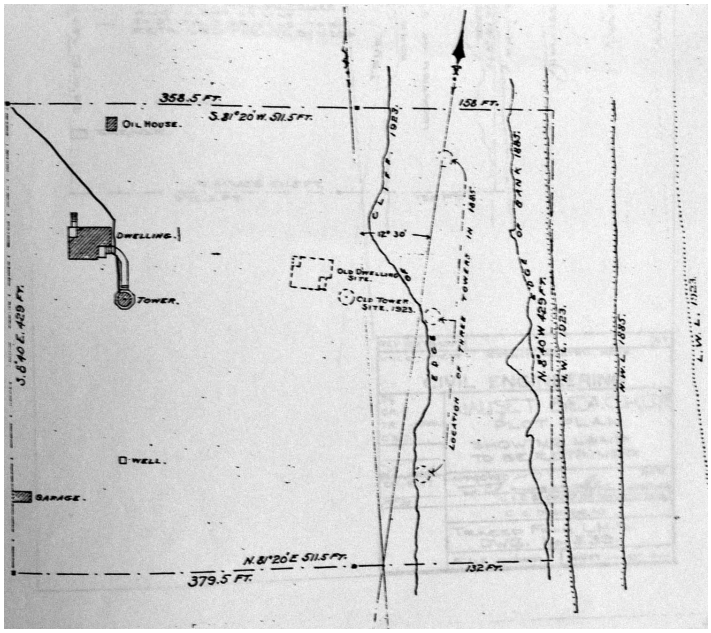


Figure 14. Map from 1924 of the old location of The Beacon and keeper's house and new location of the Nauset Beach Light and relocated keeper's house. Except for the oil house and well, other structures have been removed. (Clemensen et.al. 1986: Map 3)

FRENCH CABLE STATION AT NAUSET, 1879-1932

In the 1840s and 1850s, there was a growing interest in constructing an undersea telegraph cable to improve communication between North America and Europe, which up to this point was possible only by ship. In 1858, Cyrus W. Field and the Atlantic Telegraph Company constructed the first

transatlantic telegraph cable between Ireland and Newfoundland, reducing the communication time from ten days – the time it took to deliver a message by ship – to a much shorter time. Although the cable failed within three weeks, Field laid a more durable cable in 1866 that provided almost instant communication across the Atlantic. The first transatlantic cable reached the shores of the United States in 1869 when a telegraph cable was constructed from Brest, France, to the Saint Pierre and Miquelon archipelago south of Newfoundland, and on to Duxbury, Massachusetts. However, the cable became vulnerable to fishing and shipping operations in Duxbury's shallow harbor. (http://www.frenchcablestationmuseum.org/museum-history.htm; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transatlantic_telegraph_cable)

Construction of the French Cable Station and Hut:
In the 1870s several communication corporations were formed as speculative ventures related to telegraph cables. One such organization, the Compagnie Francaise du Telegraphe de Paris au New York, constructed a new cable from France, to Newfoundland, to Cape Cod in 1879. Built in England by the Siemens Brothers, the cable was laid in four months and stretched 2,242 nautical miles across the Atlantic to Saint Pierre and Miquelon archipelago near Newfoundland and 827 nautical miles from there to Eastham. At Nauset Light Beach, approximately 100 yards south of the Three Sisters south tower, the company constructed a two-story frame building to serve as a cable station (see Figure 5). Here, messages were received in international code and then transmitted via an overland telegraph line to New York. The building included offices, staff quarters, and a gathering place for functions and events. Because the cable arrived approximately two weeks before the structure was completed, office space was temporarily provided in the basement of the keeper's dwelling (it is not known if it was the 1838 house or 1875 house). When the cable station was completed the cable was transferred from the keeper's house to the new building. (http://atlantic-cable.com//Article/FrenchCableStation; HSR French Cable Hut 1986: 9)

Some of the station's workers built homes near Nauset Light Beach, but in time complained about the station's isolated location and difficult access in the winter. In March 1891 the company relocated its Cape Cod operations to a new facility in Orleans, just south of Eastham. A connecting cable was installed from the old station building at Nauset, across Nauset Marsh, and to the foot of Town Cove at Orleans and the new cable station house. Rather than maintaining the old cable station building merely as a connection point, the company sold it to A.W. Reed in 1891, who used the building as a hotel from 1893 until it was destroyed by fire in 1901. At the same time a small building near the old station, either an existing building or a new structure, served as the connecting point for the cable. Now known as the French Cable Hut, the structure measured around ten by fifteen feet and featured shingle siding and cedar roof shingles on the roof. Except for a connection box where the cable entered the structure, the interior was unfinished. (HSR French Cable Hut 1986: 10-11; HSR Three Sisters Light 1986: 24; http://atlantic-cable.com//Article/FrenchCableStation; French Cable Hut NR 1976, Sec.8: 1-6,11)

The cable configuration continued even after another cable was laid from Brest directly to Orleans in 1899, meaning Orleans had two cables feeding it for several years. A few years later, in 1903, the first successful transatlantic radio transmission via the Marconi Wireless Station occurred at South Wellfleet. The Orleans cable station operated until it was dismantled by the U.S. Signal Corps during World War II. It was placed back into operation in 1952 and finally closed in November 1959. The 1879 cable running through the French Cable Hut at Nauset remained in operation until 1932. The hut stood vacant until it was sold to Dorothy LePage in 1946 due to non-payment of taxes, although apparently the cable company had never been notified of such action. (http://atlantic-cable.com//Article/FrenchCableStation; French Cable Hut NR 1976, Sec.8: 1-6,11; HSR French Cable Hut 1986: 11)

Dorothy LePage and Edward Reed held the French Cable Hut in the name of the Cape Cod Land Company, and in 1950 modified the structure for use as a summer rental to tourists. The hut's unfinished interior was transformed into a living room while bedrooms and a kitchen were added. The property was sold to Joseph R. Whiting in 1951 and to Fred J. Rechenberg in 1957. Rechenberg modified some of LePage and Reed's changes, moving the front door and adding a porch.

GROWTH OF TOURISM, 1915–1961

Early twentieth century innovations in transportation, communication, and industry dramatically changed the Cape Cod landscape. Small communities strung along the remote sand spit became more accessible, yet at the same time were perceived as offering an escape from the negative aspects of industrialization and urbanization. Eastham's resort industry began as early as 1830 when the Methodist Church established a summer camp meeting ground in town. During the early to mid-1900s the Cape saw a rise in the number of summer cottages and residences that dotted the shoreline. As discussed previously in this chapter, even deaccessioned lighthouses and other structures were transformed into summer cottages. (Pratt 1844: 95; Deyo 1890: 726; Town of Eastham, web)

Between the 1870s and the 1930s large resorts developed primarily on the Upper Cape, while on the Lower Cape summer visitors often stayed in smaller houses and cottages. This development pattern was closely linked to the construction of the railroad, but in time the popularity of automobiles led to the decline of the railroad and Victorian resort hotels and expanded tourism on the Lower Cape. By the mid-1930s railroads on Cape Cod fell into bankruptcy and reduced services, although government subsidies kept limited service running through 1959. The rise of automobile-based vacations led to shorter vacations and negatively impacted the large hotels which were accustomed to hosting guests for weeks at a time. The Great Depression caused many of the grand hotels of Cape Cod to close their doors. (O'Connell 2005: 47-53)

Rather than the grand hotels, tourists began to stay at the growing number of cottage colonies, motels, campgrounds, and private vacation homes. Throughout the 1930s campground developed across the Cape, appealing to budget-minded vacationers. Cottages, rustic in form and amenities, also grew in popularity. Over time cottages remained fairly sparse in form but began to include features such as plumbing and decorative elements. (O'Connell 2005: 55-56)

The change in how visitors traveled through Cape Cod coincided with the hardening of existing road surfaces and construction of new roads. The Old King's Highway spanning the Cape's north side was surfaced in macadam by the late 1890s and ran from Bourne to Provincetown. During the same decade Route 28 was laid out along the south side of the Cape. The state surfaced the King's Highway (Route 6A today) and the Route 6 portion from Orleans to Provincetown with tar blacktop in the mid-1910s. By the early 1920s the network of roads on Cape Cod had expanded to include 136 miles of state highways and over 1,000 miles of paved roads. Concurrent with the widening of the 1914 Cape Cod Canal, the Bourne and Sagamore bridges opened to traffic across the canal in 1935 and greatly improved vehicular access from the mainland. By 1923 access to the Nauset Light Area was by way of Cable Road from the west and Nauset Light Beach Road from the north (see Figure 12). (O'Connell 2005: 47; NETR aerials, 1938,1971)

Beginning in the 1950s, Cape Cod, like most of the United States, experienced a surge in growth and development following the end of World War II. The rising widespread popularity of automobiles and growth in suburban areas began to change what had been a relatively undeveloped Lower Cape. Expanding development fed a growing long-term debate regarding regional planning and protection of the Cape Cod landscape. Barnstable and Falmouth were the first Cape towns with zoning regulations aimed at managing growth, but by 1950 Eastham, along with nearly a dozen other Cape towns, had created zoning boards. (O'Connell 2005: 112-113)

The rapid land use changes occurring on Cape Cod in the 1950s reinvigorated an earlier discussion regarding the preservation and protection of Cape Cod through the development of a national park. In 1939, the National Park Service had made a preliminary investigation of designating the area between Duxbury and Provincetown a National Seashore, but the outbreak of World War II derailed the effort. The idea was set aside until 1956 when the National Park Service advocated for the preservation of Cape Cod's Great Beach in the report "The Vanishing Shoreline," which designated protection of the beach as a top priority. The reports stated, "This surging tide of modern progress has rolled over vast areas of our national pristine coastal country, wiping out, one after another, the natural open spaces long cherished as an American birthright…it is time to set aside, preserve, and protect the last of the "old" Cape so that the inspiration of its surpassing beauty can be kept intact and handed down to future generations of Americans." (O'Connell 2005: 112-113)

CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE, 1961-2016

Spurred by increased tourism and commercial development, a growing interest in preserving the Lower Cape as a national treasure resulted in the authorization of Cape Cod National Seashore on August 7, 1961 (Public Law 87-126). The purpose of park, identified in the 1998 General Management Plan, is to "preserve the nationally significant and special cultural and natural features, distinctive patterns of human activity, and ambience that characterize the Outer Cape, along with the associated scenic, cultural, historic, scientific, and recreational values," and to "provide opportunities for current and future generations to experience, enjoy, and understand these features and values." The park was formally established on June 1, 1966 and encompassed over 26,000 acres across portions of six Cape Cod towns, including the Nauset Light Area in Eastham. (GMP 1998: 8-9; CLR 2011: 77-78)

Cape Cod National Seashore was envisioned as a new type of national park, and National Park Service leadership took a new approach, developing relationships with local governments and private landowners regarding zoning, ownerships, and land uses such as hunting, fishing, and shellfishing within the park boundaries. Establishment of the park and development of facilities, including the visitor center and beach access areas, was overseen by high-ranking National Park Service leadership. Many later development projects within the national park system were compared to the 'Cap Cod Model' of park development. (CLR 2011: 77-78; HSR Salt Pond Visitor Center, draft 1999: 6)

The park was established during the Mission 66 period, a decade long program to expand visitor services within national parks to meet growing demand and visitation aligning with the agency's 50th Anniversary. In 1940, approximately 17 million people visited National Parks annually, and by 1955 the visitation rate more than doubled to 50 million visitors. In 1966, the year that Mission 66 was completed, there were over 130 million visits to the national park system. The park's Salt Pond Visitor Center and other structures were designed in the modern Mission 66 design style, including the first comfort station at Nauset Light Beach. Later, a larger bathhouse similar in style to Mission 66 buildings elsewhere in the park replaced the comfort station. (DOI/NPS 1958: 14-17; Dwg.609-41003A, 1970)

The Town of Eastham owned the beaches along the Atlantic shoreline until 1963 when the Coast Guard Beach was transferred to the federal government, followed by Nauset Beach in 1965. With the transfer of ownership, certain reservations were retained by the town. The town reserved to the taxpayers of Eastham and their families, the right to use the described beaches, parking areas, and adjacent waters without charge. It also provided that whenever the park does not use these areas as stated in the deeds, the beaches and land are to revert to the inhabitants of the town of Eastham. (GMP 1998: 14)

Construction of the Parking Lot and Bathhouse, and Restoration of the Bluff:
Park plans and aerials from the 1960s and early 1970s show conditions in the Nauset Light Area around the time of the park's authorization and establishment. At this time, three roads provided access to the area: Cable Road from the west, Nauset Light Beach Road from the north, and Ocean View Drive, a new road built sometime after 1938 from the south. The town's large paved parking lot occupied the bluff at the east end of Cable Road, and an unpaved parking area and a house were located at the northwest corner of Cable Road and Nauset Light Beach Road. In 1965-70, the park constructed a comfort station just south of the paved parking lot. Boardwalks connected the building to the parking lot and to steps leading down to the beach. Park drawings from this time also indicate a refreshment stand in the parking lot, which may have been town-owned. (Dwg.609-3002A, 1963; Dwg.609-3204, 1965; Dwg.609-41003A, 1970; NETR aerials, 1938,1971)

In the first half of the 1970s the park prepared plans to restore natural conditions on the bluff by relocating the town's paved parking lot and the recently built comfort station further inland, at the site of the remaining cable station buildings and The Beacon. Numerous alternatives explored the location and size of the parking lot and bathhouse, in conjunction with similar facilities proposed at the Coast Guard Beach to the south. No action was taken at Nauset Light Beach until 1982-83 when

the cable station buildings were razed (except for the French Cable Hut) and The Beacon was moved to a temporary site on Cable Road next to the Twin Sisters. This cleared area was then used as a temporary parking area defined by stacked logs. (Dwg.609-60006, 1972; Dwgs.609-40011 to -40024, 1975; Dwg.609-41038, 1982; Dwg.609-41905, 1984)

In c.1985 the park constructed a paved parking lot for 150 cars and four buses on the south side of Cable Road, between Ocean View Drive and the restored bluff. The lot was accessed from the north and required a reconfiguration of the intersection of Cable Road, Nauset Light Beach Road, and Ocean View Drive with a new curved road. Construction of the road removed the town's unpaved parking lot and a house. The new road included a dedicated lane that served as a queue to the lot's fee station, and provided access to a private home just north of the town's former paved lot (Figure 15). At this time, the park constructed a temporary sidewalk from the new parking lot to the comfort station. (Dwg.#609-41038, 1982; Dwg.609-41905, 1984; Dwg.609-41046, 1986; NETR aerials, 1938,1971,1991)

In 1986-88 the park built a one-story hexagonal-shaped bathhouse at the southeast corner of the new parking lot, which included restrooms, showers, and a first aid/storage room. Concrete patios surrounded the structure, and a boardwalks and wood stairs connected the building to the parking lot and the beach. The park installed new plantings of white oak, red pine, juniper, bayberry, beach rose, beach plum, and beach grass at the bathhouse and parking lot, and erected sections of split rail fencing to direct pedestrian traffic through the restored beach grasses throughout the bluff. The town parking lot and the old comfort station and its associated boardwalks were removed upon completion of the new parking lot and bathhouse. (Dwg.609-41905, 1984; Dwg.609-41046, 1986)

Reuniting the Three Sisters (Twin Sisters and The Beacon):
In 1965 the park acquired the north and south Twin Lights located along Cable Road from the Cummings family and in 1975 purchased The Beacon situated near the former Cable Station buildings from Harold Hall, the son of Albert Hall. As the only known example of triple lights in the United States, the National Park Service sought to preserve the structures, but not return them to their precarious location along the bluff (Figure 16). By the early 1980s the park had prepared plans to reunite the Three Sisters at a new location on the east side of Ocean View Drive, approximately 2000 feet south of Cable Road. In the plan, the three towers were to be placed 150 feet apart and connected by trail that led to a fifteen-car parking lot (see Figure 15). (Dwg.609-41038, 1982; HSR Three Sisters 1986: 40; MHC, EAS.F: 2-5; MHC, Lighthouse Nom. Form: 3)

The residence built by the Cummings family that incorporated the two towers was removed in 1980, leaving the north and south light towers free standing, although they were still missing their original lanterns and entry porches. However, the "Twin Lights Cottage" to the north was retained at this time. At The Beacon, the one-story additions were removed during the summer of 1983, returning that tower to its historic freestanding form. To make way for a proposed parking lot, the park moved The Beacon to the southeast side of the driveway loop fronting the Twin Sisters. (LCS, Twin Lights (north); LCS, Twin Lights (south); MHC, EAS.902: 4-6; HSR Three Sisters 1986: 40; Dwg.609-25002, 1985)

The relocation of The Beacon was intended to be temporary until the proposed Ocean View Drive site was ready for development, but by the late 1980s the park decided to restore the three lights at the Cable Road location. Between 1989 and 1993 the Three Sisters were restored to their historic (1892) positions relative to each other (Figure 17). A sidewalk was built from the middle tower the south tower, and continued east along the north side of Cable Road to the paved parking lot. The park also installed benches and split rail fences. The "Twin Lights Cottage" north of the relocated towers was razed, and the driveway loop was removed except for its entrance at Cable Road that was retained as a small parking area. (Dwg.609-41048, 1988; Dwg.609-25003A, 1989)

French Cable Station and Hut:
Aerial photographs and park plans from the 1960s and early 1970s indicate several buildings associated with the station remained on the south side of Cable Road within the bluff. In 1972 the park acquired the French Cable Hut from Fred J. Rechenberg and used it to house summer employees, but by 1982 the park removed the other remaining buildings associated with the cable

station. Plans from 1982 also indicated the need to move the hut inland due to the continued erosion of the bluff (see Figure 15). By 2000 the park removed the hut's non-historic additions and restored its exterior appearance, and between 2003-05 relocated it approximately 200 feet west, adjacent to the parking lot access road. (HSR French Cable Hut, 1986: 11-12: NETR aerials, 1971,2003,2005; Dwg.609-3204, 1965; Dwg.609-41038, 1982)

Nauset Beach Light Complex:
In the early 1990s the U.S. Coast Guard announced plans to decommission the Nauset Beach Light due to the continued erosion of the cliff that threatened the structural integrity of the lighthouse, which was only around fifty feet from the edge of the seventy-foot high bluff (Figures 18 and 19). In response, a group of Eastham residents established the Nauset Light Preservation Society (NLPS) in 1993, and in 1995 signed a long-term lease agreement to operate the tower as a private aid to navigation and maintain all utilities and repairs on the tower and oil house. The following year, with over $80,000 in private donations and over $200,000 in federal grants, the NLPS was able to relocate and restore the lighthouse and oil house inland at a wooded area approximately 300 feet to the southwest. The move was accomplished successfully by International Chimney Corporation, which had moved the larger Highland Light a similar distance earlier that year. (Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society, web; USCG Historic Light Stations, web; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nauset_Light)

Soon after the lighthouse and oil house were moved, plans were made to relocate the keeper's house, which by 1998 was only twenty-three feet from the cliff edge. In 1998, the building's owner, Mary Daubenspeck, agreed to donate the relocated keeper's house to the National Park Service with the right to live in it for 25 years. In the fall of that year, the NLPS relocated the keeper's house to just northwest of the Nauset Light Beach Light, restoring its historic relationship to the tower. The attached garage at the keeper's house added in the 1960s was removed prior to the move. (Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society, web; USCG Historic Light Stations, web; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nauset_Light)

In 2004 the National Park Service and NLPS signed a partnership agreement to allow the Society to provide tours of the light and maintain the structure. The NLPS repainted the tower in 2005, the first time it had been painted since 1981, and in 2007 with the Friends of Cape Cod National Seashore assisted the park's fire crew in cutting and removing dead and invasive vegetation surrounding and obscuring the tower. This effort created open views to and from the tower. In 2013 the exterior of Nauset Light was repainted. (Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society, web; USCG Historic Light Stations, web)

The Society restored the oil house between 2008 and 2009. Work included replacement of the slate roof, repointing the brick, and installing replicas of the original cupola and doors. Today the interior contains interpretive displays that inform visitors about erosion at Nauset Light Beach, light keepers and their families, and the relocation of the tower and oil house. The keeper's house is maintained as a private residence under a series of special use permit. (Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society, web; USCG Historic Light Stations, web; Cape Cod National Seashore)

Recent Issues:
The Nauset Light Area is a highly visited facility at Cape Cod National Seashore, and the parking lot is often full in the summer. The wood boardwalks leading from the parking lot are exposed to the elements, and were most recently replaced in 2008-10. Management concerns are primarily related to erosion control and intermittent vegetation clearing near Nauset Beach Light. Park visitor facilities continue to be at risk from continued erosion of the bluff. During a 2007 Nor'easter, the stairs leading to Nauset Light Beach were destroyed by wave action and storms. They were again heavily damaged in 2010, 2014, 2015, and most recently in the winter of 2016. As of 2016, the parking lot is approximately forty to sixty feet from the edge of the bluff, a change of around 200 feet since it was built in 1985. Because of the bluff's ongoing erosion, it is likely that the bathhouse will be removed in late 2016 and parking spaces closest to the bluff will be abandoned. A new bathhouse facility is planned on the westerns portion of the parking lot. (PMIS #109967, #211495, #220849,#231465, #191603)

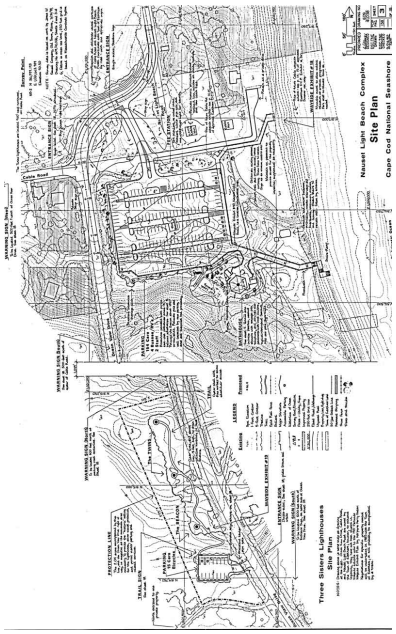


Figure 15. Plan on the right from 1982 shows proposed parking lot and bathhouse, and reconfigured roads accessing it. Plan on the left shows proposed locations of Three Sisters on Ocean View Drive. (Denver Service Center, eTIC, Dwg.609-41038_[id51128])



Figure 16. The masonry foundation of one of the original Three Sisters Lights at Nauset Light Beach at low tide, 1992. (CACO archives--clipping from Cape Cod Times, 1992)

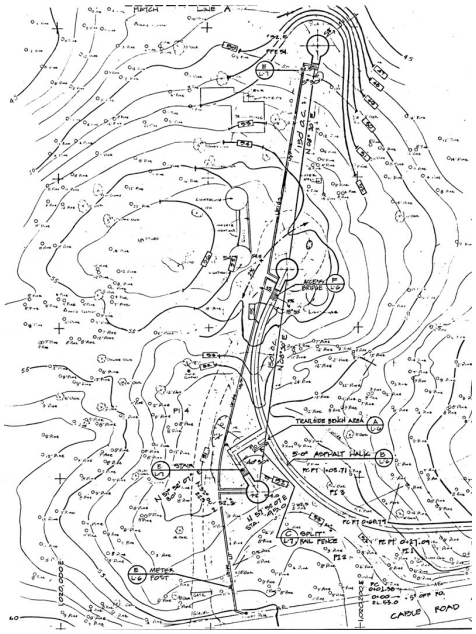


Figure 17. Plan from 1989 showing reconfiguration of the Three Sisters lights. (Denver Service Center, eTIC, Dwg.#609-25003A_[id185077])

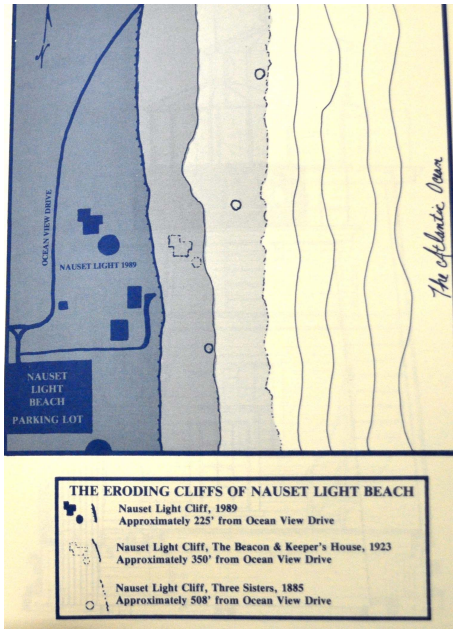


Figure 18. Diagram created in 1989 by J. Brian West, illustrating the erosion of the Nauset Light Beach cliffs. The Nauset Beach Light, oil house, and keeper's house were moved inland in 1996-98. (West, 23).



Figure 19. Postcard of Nauset Beach Light, c.1990. The keeper's house is visible to the left of the light. Note the steep and eroded bluffs. (CACO archives, H14-22)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Defense	Coast Guard Facility	Coast Guard Facility	Yes	No	No
Domestic (Residential)	Hotel (Boarding House)	Lodge (Inn, Cabin)	Yes	No	No
Domestic (Residential)	Secondary Structure (Garage)	Secondary Structure (Garage)	Yes	No	No
Domestic (Residential)	Single Family Dwelling	Single Family House	Yes	Yes	No
General Storage	Equipment/Vehicle Storage	Equipment/Vehicle Storage	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Natural Area	Beach	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Natural Area	Dune	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Scenic Landscape	View	Yes	Yes	No
Recreation/Culture	Museum (Exhibition Hall)	Museum (Exhibition Hall)-Other	No	Yes	No
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Recreation	No	Yes	Yes
Transportation	Water-Related	Lighthouse	Yes	No	Yes

Public Access:

Public Access: Other Restrictions

Public Access Narrative:

The beach, grounds, and trails at the Nauset Light Area are accessible to the public 24 hours/day, 7 days/ week. The bathhouse facility is open seasonally, but the staircase between the parking lot and beach is occasionally closed due to storm damage. Vehicular access to beach parking in the summer is limited by parking lot capacity. Access to the interior of the Three Sisters Lights is available via scheduled tours or special arrangement. Nauset Beach Light is owned by the National Park Service and managed by a cooperative agreement with the Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society, which offers tours of the structure every Sunday from mid-May through the end of October, as well as Wednesday in July and August.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Landscape characteristics identified for the Nauset Light Area are natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, views and visas, and small-scale features. Of these, the most important landscape characteristics are natural features, land use, buildings and structures, and views. The features that contribute were either present during the period of significance or are in-kind replacements of historic features.

INTEGRITY

The National Register of Historic Places identifies seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association). Retention of these qualities is essential for a property to convey its significance; however, not all seven qualities of integrity need to be present to suggest a sense of past time and place. The cultural landscape of the Nauset Light Area retains overall integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and association. Setting and feeling have been compromised, and erosion of the bluff has caused substantial loss of integrity of location. Erosion of the bluff has necessitated moving all of the site's historic structures inland since the historic period, altering their location and leading to the complete loss of their original location. Despite relocation, Nauset Beach Light, oil house, keeper's house, and the French Cable Hut still convey the historic relationship between each other and their orientation to the ocean and the beach bluff. The setting and feeling present during the historic period was compromised when the Three Sisters of Nauset were relocated nearly 1000 feet inland to a wooded area. The National Park Service rehabilitated and repositioned to reflect their historic alignment during the historic period in the late 1980s.

Location:
Location is defined by the National Register as the place where the historic property was constructed, or the place where the historic event occurred. The edge of the bluff has continued to shift inland (to the west) since the end of the historic period, prompting the park to also locate or move the Three Sisters of Nauset, the Nauset Beach Light complex, and the French Cable Hut inland. Two to three feet of shoreline erosion annually is typical, however storm events can result in the loss of up to fifteen feet of erosion in a single episode. Between 2014 and 2016 the bluff eroded approximately twenty to thirty feet. Overall the landscape has lost integrity of location.

Design:
Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The historic design of the Nauset Light Area and its features remains intact. The bluff continues to convey its original design, including its form and structure as a changeable sand feature. The park's rehabilitation and realignment of the Three Sister of Nauset light towers reflects their historic relationships and helps to convey their historic design intent, despite the lack of integrity to location. The Three Sisters lights also retain many of their historic architectural elements. The design of Nauset Beach Light and the surrounding complex of buildings remains evident, including the majority of the elements of plan, space, structure, and style characteristic of the historic period. The intended relationship between Nauset Beach Light, the ocean, and the role of the light as a navigational beacon in a larger network remains evident, despite the inland relocation of the tower. The design of the French Cable Hut remains evident and the historic form was restored when contemporary additions were removed in the early 2000s. While the specific form of recreational facilities has evolved since the close of the historic period, the design intent of supporting infrastructure including parking facilities and bathhouses remains evident. The beach continues to be a widely popular area for swimming, although access to the beach is regularly limited by storm damage to the staircase that descends from the top of the bluff to the beach. Overall the site retains integrity of design.

Setting:
Setting is the physical environment of a property and the general character of the place. The Three Sisters of Nauset, located in a clearing in a wooded area away from the beach, have lost integrity of setting. The historic setting of the Nauset Beach Light and associated buildings remains intact as they still stand atop a steep bluff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The strategic setting of Nauset Beach Light for coastal navigation was recognized by fishermen, and the light played a crucial role in maritime navigation. The French Cable Hut also

remains atop the steep bluff near the ocean, and retains its historic setting. The coastal setting and width of Nauset Light Beach make the area a popular for swimming and recreation as it was during toward the end of the historic period. Designation of Cape Cod National Seashore has protected much of the Lower Cape, preserving the character of the historic setting and views from Nauset Beach Light. Overall the site retains integrity of setting.

Materials:
Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during the period of significance in a particular pattern or configuration to give form to the property. The Nauset Light Area landscape retains integrity of materials. The sandy bluff remains intact and the characteristic erosion of sand and shoreline due to wave action continues. The Three Sisters of Nauset, the Nauset Beach Light complex, French Cable Hut, have been restored and rehabilitated. Native vegetation in the form of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous grasses is still present on the property.

Workmanship:
Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts and methods of construction used during the specified historic period of significance. Workmanship is reflected in the extant lighthouses, keeper's house, oil house, and French Cable Hut. Intermittent maintenance and repairs in-kind have been beneficial in preserving workmanship. Overall the site retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling:
Feeling is the expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time resulting from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey a property's historic character. The Three Sisters lighthouses partially retain the feeling characteristic of the historic period, but the feeling is compromised by their wooded location. The Nauset Beach Light landscape partially retains the feeling consistent with the historic period and continues to operate as an aid to navigation. The steep bluff continues to drop to the wide beach below. The landscape retains its open character and sweeping views to the ocean despite ongoing growth of small trees and shrubs atop the bluff. The French Cable Hut retains the feeling characteristic of the historic period. The beach itself retains the feeling of a recreational landscape characteristic of the historic period, although development of the parking lot, configuration of roads, and construction of the bathhouse necessary to accommodate visitors during peak season, has impacted the feeling of isolation characteristic of the first half of the historic period.

Association:
Association is the direct link between the property and an important historic event or person. The Nauset Light Area continues to be associated with the region's history of life saving and navigation, remains in operation as an aid to navigation, and remains a popular area for recreation. The Three Sisters of Nauset and the Nauset Beach Light complex also illustrate the evolution of architectural styles and construction methods in lighthouses. The French Cable Hut continues to reflect its association with communication and commerce and is interpreted with wayside panels. The bluff remains intact, although it is slowly eroding westward, and the beach retains a strong association with recreation and remains a popular swimming area.

Landscape Characteristic:

This section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures (LCS) and Facility Maintenance Software System (FMSS) names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the primary historic period (1838-1965) is noncontributing "compatible" (visually congruent with the historic character of the landscape) or "incompatible" (visually incongruent with the historic character of the landscape); is undetermined; or is managed as a cultural resource.

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

Historic Condition (to 1965):
Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the bay at Nauset Light Beach was occupied by the Nauset, a group of Native Americans. The Nauset community was documented in 1605 by explorer Samuel de Champlain, who described a "bay with wigwams bordering it." Champlain also documented fields planted with corn, beans, squash, and tobacco that thrived in soils that were richer than those found in other areas of Cape Cod. The area that would become the Nauset Light Area, like the majority of Cape Cod, was primarily wooded when early European explorers and the Pilgrims first arrived. As the area was settled by colonists in the 1640s, the landscape was cleared for shipbuilding, firewood, construction, and agriculture. By the mid-1700s the landscape of the Lower Cape consisted primarily of scrubby, low-laying vegetation. (Kennedy 2008: 34)

The bars off of Nauset Light Beach on the eastern side of the Cape's "forearm" were a navigational hazard to nineteenth century mariners, in part because the Cape's curving shoreline made it difficult to see either the Highland or Chatham lighthouses, causing many vessels to become grounded. In 1838 the lighthouses known as the Three Sisters of Nauset were built at Nauset Light Beach, part of a larger system of lights to improve navigation along the Cape's coastline. To maximize visibility, the lights were constructed atop the east-facing steep bluff overlooking the beach. However, the bluff continually shifted and eroded due to wave action and storm events. Beginning with the loss of the first Three Sisters trio in 1892, Nauset Light Area has endured a reoccurring cycle of construction, loss, and movement of lighthouses and supporting structures (see Figure 18).

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
The dynamic processes of natural systems and features at the Nauset Light Area continued after the historic period. Nauset Beach Light, the oil house, keeper's house, and French Cable Hut were moved inland (west) in the mid-1990s to prevent the structures from being lost over the side of the receding bluff. Erosion, especially during storm events, continues to be an ongoing problem today, as the edge of the bluff slowly creeps inland (Figure 20). Erosion is also threatening contemporary structures, including the parking lot, bathhouse, and access stairs to the beach. Today the bluff at Nauset Light Beach erodes at a rate of 2-3 feet a year, although storm events can result in the loss of 10-15 feet in a single storm.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 20. View looking north in 2014 from the top of the Nauset Light Beach bluff. A wooden stake at image center marks the location of Nauset Beach Light before it was moved in 1996. As of 2016 the stake is no longer extant. (OCLP 2014)

Landscape Characteristic: **Spatial Organization**

Historic Condition (to 1965):
During the historic period, the defining element of spatial organization was the relationship between the lighthouses and the shoreline. The Three Sisters of Nauset were set approximately 150 feet apart on the bluff above Nauset Light Beach to provide navigational aid to local vessels. The structures were constructed as part of a larger navigation system to aid mariners traveling near the coast. The constantly changing shoreline continued to influence physical development, as Nauset's lights had to be moved or replaced multiple times. Within the lighthouse complex at Nauset, the light(s) served as the primary organizational feature. A cluster of support buildings surrounding it included a brick keeper's house (1838), privy (1838), barn (possibly c.1850), hen house (1869), wood frame keeper's house (1875), oil house (1892), and garage (1923). Due to Nauset Light Beach's isolated location, such supporting structures were necessary to support the lightkeeper and his family. Structures associated with lighthouse operations were purposely located close by to make maintenance of the lantern easier in inclement weather.

Cable Road, running perpendicular to the shoreline, provided access to the lighthouse complex and the adjacent French Cable Station complex. In the latter half of the historic period, this road was connected to two roads paralleling the shoreline: Nauset Light Beach Road and Ocean View Drive. Collectively, the three roads shaped the Town of Eastham's development of several parking areas at Nauset Light Beach.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
The relationship between the lighthouse complex and the shoreline continues to be the defining organizational element of the Nauset Light Area. Relocated inland in 1996-98 to escape the eroding bluff, the complex retains its historic relationships (Figure 21). The Three Sisters of Nauset are now located off of Cable Road around one-quarter mile from the shoreline. Although they no longer maintain their historic visual connection to the water, the park has restored their north-south alignment and physical relationship to one another (Figure 22). The intersection of the three roads at Nauset Light Beach was reconfigured in the 1980s for construction of a visitor parking lot. A bathhouse was built adjacent to the parking lot, but will soon be removed and rebuilt inland because of the advancing shoreline.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 21. View looking southwest at Nauset Beach Light, oil house, and keeper's house. (OCLP 2014, DSC_0522)



Figure 22. View looking northwest at the Three Sisters of Nauset. (OCLP 2014, DSC_0574)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Historic Condition (to 1965):
During the historic period the Nauset Light Area functioned in a variety of capacities. Its primary use was for navigation, while life-saving stations stood north and south of Nauset Light Beach. The federal government purchased land to build three lights at Nauset Light Beach in 1837 to guide local fishermen and other shore-hugging vessels. Completed in 1838, the Three Sisters of Nauset lit the coast until 1911 when the operation of three lights was deemed unnecessary. At this time two of three towers were sold at auction and incorporated into a private dwelling west of the beach. The two towers and dwelling later housed a gift shop and then a dance/drama company. The remaining middle tower, named The Beacon, lit the shoreline until it was replaced by the Nauset Beach Light in 1923. The Beacon was sold and transformed into a summer cottage south of the lighthouse. The lighthouse complex also included a residence for the lighthouse keeper, and for a time featured two keeper's houses. Additional ancillary structures were built to aid lighthouse operations and support the keeper and his family, but with the automation of the lighthouse in 1955, many were removed or repurposed.

The Nauset Light Area was also home to transatlantic communication beginning in 1879 when a transatlantic cable was laid from France to Cape Cod, via the islands off Newfoundland. The cable station¬ operated in a building just south of the lighthouse until 1892 when operations were relocated to a new station in Orleans. At this time a transitional link of cable was laid between the two stations, by way of a building named the French Cable Hut, while the old station building was used as a hotel until it burned in 1901. The transatlantic cable was abandoned in 1932, and in 1946 the French Cable Hut was sold and was converted to a summer cottage. The development of summer cottages in the area coincided with an increase in recreational uses at Nauset Light Beach. Such activities were formalized when the Town of Eastham built parking areas at the beach, as well as restrooms and refreshment stands.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Nauset Light Beach was transferred from the Town of Eastham to the National Park Service in 1965, as part of Cape Cod National Seashore. That same year, the park acquired the north and south towers of the Three Sisters of Nauset, and in 1975 acquired The Beacon, the middle tower. The Beacon was moved to the location of the north and south towers in the mid-1980s to make way for the park's new visitor parking lot and bathhouse project, and in 1989 the three towers were repositioned to reflect their historic alignments. The French Cable Hut served a summer cottage until it was acquired by the National Park Service in 1972. It was used as seasonal park housing through the late 1980s, and then moved inland and rehabilitated in the 2000s. The structure is currently vacant. The Nauset Beach Light, keeper's house, and oil house were also moved inland in 1996-98. The lighthouse is now operated as a private aid to navigation, while the keeper's house is a private residence.

Nauset Beach has become one of the most popular visitor destinations for passive recreation and swimming. The Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society offers tours of Nauset Beach Light and the park leads scheduled tours of the Three Sisters of Nauset. In addition, wayside signs throughout the Nauset Light Area provide historical information to visitors.

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Historic Condition (to 1965):
Settlement of the Lower Cape by colonists between 1640 and the 1700s quickly changed the vegetation pattern of the Lower Cape, from forests to open lands. Although not ideal for large-scale farming, the soils of the Eastham area were able to support more intensive agriculture than sandier areas like Provincetown. In 1671, less than thirty years after the arrival of the first European settlement, town records indicate that legislation mandated no wood would be taken from the Town of Eastham. By the 1800s lumber was imported to the Lower Cape from Maine, indicating the scarcity of trees throughout the Cape.

Photographs of the Nauset Light Area from the late 1800s and early 1900s show a landscape devoid of trees, an indication that the trees had been removed to ensure visibility around the lighthouses or to make way for agricultural land uses. At this time the top of the bluff and spaces around the lighthouse complex featured sand interspersed with patches of grasses and low shrubs. Aerial photographs show that such conditions persisted through the late 1930s, but by this time there were scattered patches of trees on the bluff.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Aerial photographs from the early 1970s show that much of the landscape that was previously sand, grasses, and low shrubs had become filled with taller and denser vegetation, including trees. This character continues today, as vegetation at the Nauset Light Area continues to mature and thicken, resulting in a mix of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Vegetation along the edge of the bluff is encouraged in hopes that its roots will hold the top of the bluff in place. However, lower portions of the bluff continue to erode, which creates dangerous undercuts and slumps. When the Nauset Beach Light complex was related inland to the southwest in 1996-98, trees and other vegetation were removed. Vegetation in the vicinity of the lighthouse is currently managed through a partnership between the Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society (NLPS) and the National Park Service. The park's fire crew cuts vegetation around the lighthouse structures at periodic intervals to maintain the open visual connection between the lighthouse and the shoreline. A grass lawns occupies spaces around the lighthouse complex, while a limited number of contemporary residential-style plantings are located near the keeper's house. The landscape at the Three Sisters of Nauset features maintained lawn areas interspersed with a few trees, which is surrounded by forest growth.

Common plant species at the Nauset Light Area include beach grass, yucca, scotch broom, buckwheat, inkberry, shadblow, arrowwood, salt spray rose, oak, cedar, sumac, and pitch pines. The park periodically plants beach grass throughout the bluff, especially near the parking lot and access stairs to help slow erosion rates.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Trees, Shrubs, and Herbaceous Plants on Bluff	176470	Contributing					No
Plantings and Lawns around Keeper's House	176472	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trees and Lawns around Three Sisters of Nauset	176474	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Historic Condition (to 1965):
The earliest circulation routes on the Lower Cape were established by Native Americans, who established a network of coastal foot trails. These trails were used and expanded by seasonal Europeans who fished in the area. During the first half of the eighteenth century the network of roads on Cape Cod, including in Eastham, expanded. In 1719 the colony constructed a forty-foot-wide public county road, called the "County Road" and "King's Highway," from Harwich through Eastham to Truro. Additional roads were built in the Eastham area, including a road oriented west-southwest to east-northeast from the town center to Nauset Light Beach, later named Cable Road, by 1853. Development of the railroad on Cape Cod also expedited trade and travel throughout the Cape.

In the early 1900s the network of roads continued to expand in correlation with population growth and the increasing number of tourists visiting Cape Cod during the summer months, especially after vehicular bridges were opened across the Cape Cod Canal in 1935. Roads were improved with macadam, oil, hardeners, and sometimes with oyster shells. Within the Nauset Beach landscape, two roads were developed parallel to the shoreline and intersected with Cable Road. Nauset Light Beach Road entered the area from the north by the early 1920s and provided access into the lighthouse complex. By the 1960s Ocean View Drive entered from the south. At this time, the Town of Eastham built a paved parking lot on the bluff at the end of Cable Road and an unpaved lot at the intersection of Cable Road and Nauset Light Beach Road.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
After taking ownership of Nauset Light Beach in 1965, the National Park Service retained the town's paved and unpaved parking lots. However, ongoing erosion of the bluff prompted the park to remove the paved lot and rebuild it further inland, at the site of the former French Cable Station and relocated Beacon lighthouse. Completed in 1985, the vast parking lot held 150 cars and four buses on the south side of Cable Road, between Ocean View Drive and the bluff. To improve traffic flow at Nauset Light Beach, the intersection of Cable Road, Nauset Light Beach Road, and Ocean View Drive was rebuilt to provide access into the new parking lot. The new intersection was located at the site of the town's former unpaved parking lot. The park also built a gravel road to provide access from Ocean View Drive to the bathhouse at the southeast corner of the parking lot.

Before realignment of the Three Sisters of Nauset towers in the late 1980s, access to their present site was by a driveway associated with its use as a residence. The driveway began at Cable Road and terminated as a circular driveway near the current location of The Beacon (middle tower). The driveway was removed except for a short section at the road that was retained for parking. At the Nauset Beach Light, a short road that was built to move the lighthouse, oil house, and keeper's house to its present location in 1996-98 was retained for access to the complex. The road began at Nauset Light Beach Road and ended near the tower and house.

The park current manages several vehicular circulation features, the largest of which is the asphalt-paved parking lot that measures approximately 265 feet north to south and 300 feet east to west (Figure 23). As of 2016 the facility is approximately forty to sixty feet from the edge of the bluff, and it is likely spaces closest to the bluff will be abandoned in the near future because of erosion. A curved access road on the north side of the lot connects to the curved road connecting Cable Road, Nauset Light Beach Road, and Ocean View Drive. The access road also connects to an abandoned and partially buried segment of Cable Road that once lead to the town's former parking lot. A 175-foot long gravel driveway and a 275-foot long gravel service road provide access to the lighthouse complex and the bathhouse, respectively. A small gravel parking pullout approximately seventy-five feet in length is located at the Three Sisters of Nauset, on the north side of Cable Road.

The park also maintains several pedestrian trails at the Nauset Light Area. The busiest are a series of interconnected trails that provide beach access from the parking lot and bathhouse. A trail on the east side of the lot, partially constructed of composite lumber decking, heads southeast approximately 125 feet before connecting to a set of wooden stairs that descend to Nauset Light Beach. However, this trail is currently closed due to erosion and damage to vegetation (Figure 24).

Another trail begins at the southeast corner of the parking lot and connects to the bathhouse before heading northeast and connecting to the direct access trail. The wooden stairs have been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, most recently in 2016 (Figure 25).

Other trails include earthen and gravel routes connecting the parking lot to the lighthouses. One trail begins on the north side of the parking lot and heads north for approximately 275 feet, passing by the French Cable Hut. The trail parallels Nauset Light Beach Road for 100 feet and passes by the garage, and then turns west where it climbs a series of check steps for approximately 125 feet to the base of Nauset Beach Light. Another trail heads south from Nauset Beach Light for around 315 feet to Cable Road, where it meets a segment heading east for 150 feet to the parking lot and another segment heading west for nearly 1,000 feet parallel to Cable Road (Figure 26). At the Three Sisters, the trail surface changes to asphalt and passes by the south tower before ending at The Beacon (see Figure 22). A short trail segment also stretches 225 feet from the south tower to the parking pulloff. There is currently no trail to the north tower, although visitors can walk across the lawn to see it.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Nauset Light Beach Parking Lot	176476	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	32595	No
Driveway to Lighthouse Complex	176478	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Parking Pull-off at Three Sisters of Nauset	176480	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Service Road to Bathhouse	176482	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trails, Parking Lot and Bathhouse to Nauset Light Beach	176484	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	37985	No
Steps from Bluff to Nauset Light Beach	176486	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, Parking Lot to Nauset Beach Light	176488	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail, Nauset Beach Light to Three Sisters of Nauset	176490	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trails at Three Sisters of Nauset	176492	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	37990	No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 23. View looking northwest at the Nauset Light Beach parking lot toward the lighthouse complex. The parking lot fee hut is visible at left image center. (OCLP 2014, DSC_7029)



Figure 24. View looking south at the trail from the east side of the parking lot to the beach. The bathhouse is visible in the background. (OCLP 2016, IMG_9316)



Figure 25. View looking west-southwest in 2014 at the stairs that provide beach access from the parking lot and bathhouse. The stairs were destroyed in a storm in early 2016 and are currently being rebuilt. (OCLP 2014, DSC_7053)

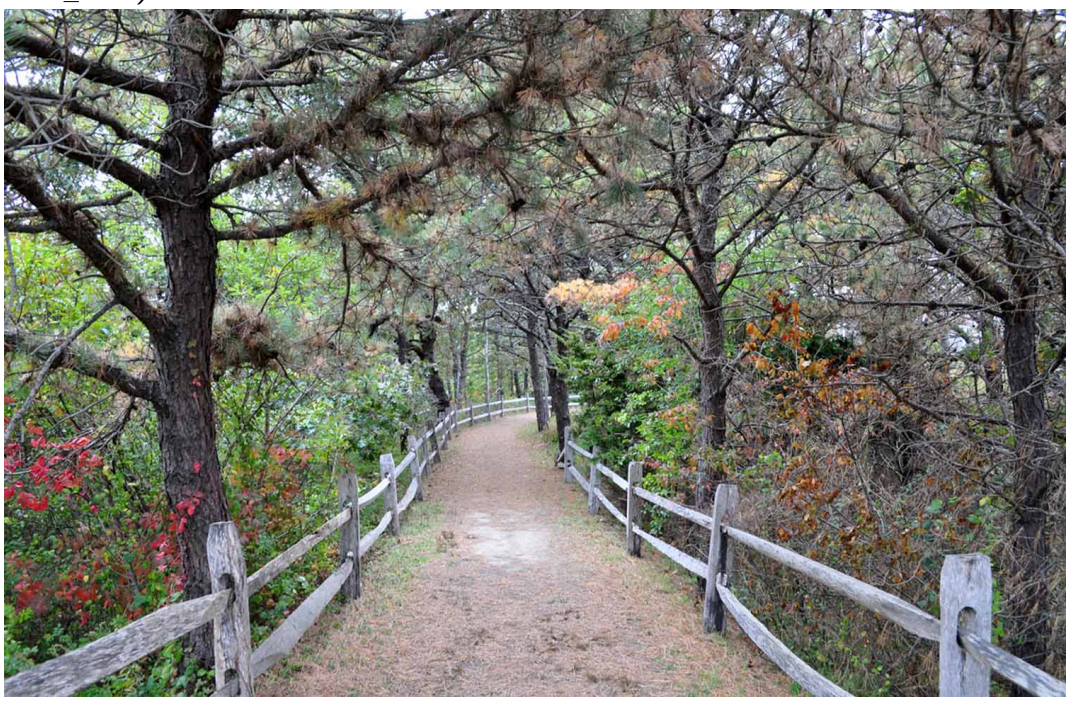


Figure 26. View from the trail leading to the Three Sisters of Nauset. (OCLP 2016, DSC_7157)

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Historic Condition (to 1965):
The Three Sisters (The Beacon & Twin Lights).
In the early 1800s, the single lighthouse at Highland and the two lighthouses at Chatham helped larger ocean-going vessels navigate away from the dangerous shoals off Nauset Light Beach. However, for boats closer to the shoreline, the curved shape of Cape Cod shoreline made it difficult to see the Highland and Chatham lights and avoid the bars. A solution came in 1838 when the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment constructed three brick cylindrical lighthouses on the bluff at Nauset Beach. The trio of lights was spaced approximately 150 feet apart and stood fifteen feet tall, and became known as the "Three Sisters of Nauset" because they resembled three women in white dresses and black bonnets standing on the shoreline. Vestibules, called "storm porches" were added to the towers shortly after construction was completed. The towers were lit with Argand lamps until they were replaced by sixth-order Fresnel lamps in 1858. Even more powerful fourth-order Fresnel lenses were installed in 1873.

The three brick towers stood until 1892 when they succumbed to erosion of the bluff. Under the supervision of the U.S Lighthouse Board, which replaced the Lighthouse Establishment in 1852, a second trio of lights also known as the Three Sisters was constructed inland, thirty feet west of the original towers. Perhaps recognizing the likelihood of future erosion, the towers were designed to be movable. Each tower was twenty-two feet high and built of wooden lapstrake construction. The exteriors were clad in painted wooden shingles, and the Fresnel lamps from the brick towers were reinstalled in the new towers.

By 1911, the stability of the Three Sisters was once again threatened by the eroding bluff. At this time the Lighthouse Board determined that only one light was needed at Nauset Light Beach and decommissioned two of the three lighthouses. The middle tower was moved inland and placed on a brick foundation adjacent to the 1875 keeper's house, and outfitted with a revolving fourth-order Fresnel lens with a flashing apparatus. In response to a report from the lighthouse inspector that described the tower as shaking during even the slightest of winds, four galvanized guy wires were installed for stabilization. The north and south towers stood unused until they were sold to the Cummings family at auction in 1918 and temporarily moved to the site of the former French Cable Station. In 1920 they were moved again and incorporated into a private residence on a parcel around one-quarter mile west of Nauset Light Beach. The two towers became known as the Twin Sisters/Lights, while the still active middle tower at the beach was called The Beacon.

The Lighthouse Board became the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1911, and in 1923 replaced The Beacon with one of the two lighthouses at Chatham (see below). The Beacon tower was sold at auction to Albert Hall and moved to near the site of the former French Cable Hut building, where it was attached to a one-story cottage and used as a residence.

Nauset Beach Light.
The unused cast-iron north tower of the Chatham Twin Lights was moved approximately fifteen miles north to Nauset Light Beach in Eastham in 1923 to replace The Beacon, the last remaining light of the Three Sisters of Nauset still in use. The cylindrical cast iron tower was originally constructed in 1877, and once moved it was fitted with the Fresnel lens from The Beacon. The tower was placed inland 200 feet west of the location of The Beacon and sixty feet southeast of the 1875 wood keeper's house (see below), which was also moved inland at this time. The Lighthouse Service merged with the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939, and in 1940-41 the Coast Guard painted the top portion of tower red. The Nauset Beach Light was automated between 1952 and 1955.

Keeper's Houses.
The original keeper's house at Nauset Light Beach was built in 1838 around 100 feet west-southwest of the middle brick lighthouse as a dwelling for the keeper and his family. The one-story brick structure measured around thirty-four- by twenty-feet with a sixteen- by fourteen-foot kitchen addition on its north facade. In 1873, when the fourth order lenses were installed at the Three Sisters, an assistant light keeper was assigned to Nauset Light Beach. The two keepers lived in the brick house until a new two-story wood-frame house was constructed in 1875, approximately fifty feet north of the brick house and adjacent to the original privy, and about 100 feet west-northwest of

the middle tower. The assistant keeper resided in the older brick house and the keeper lived in the newer wood house. Nauset staffed an assistant keeper until around 1883, after which the brick house was used to store paint and firewood. It was razed in 1912 upon recommendation of the Lighthouse Service.

Coinciding with the movement of one of the Chatham's twin lights to Nauset Light Beach in 1923, the wood keeper's house was moved inland approximately 150 feet west-northwest and placed on a newly constructed brick cellar. Around this time a garage was added to the north side of the house. The covered walkway that had connected the keeper's house to The Beacon was not reinstalled to connect the house to the Chatham tower. After automation of the light in the 1950s, the keeper's house was sold in 1955 to the Howell family for use as a private residence.

Oil House.
The oil house was constructed in 1892 around 150 feet west of the barn to serve the second set of the Three Sisters of Nauset. The brick structure measured approximately eleven by nine feet and featured a slate roof, wood cupola, and wood trim. The building had a unique three light transom window above the central front door. The building also served the cast-iron Nauset Beach Light beginning in 1923, but its use declined as lighthouse technology changed.

Garage.
The wood frame garage with a hip roof was built around 1923, which is when the lighthouse from Chatham replaced The Beacon and the 1875 keeper's house was moved inland. The garage had a set of double doors on the west façade that provided access from Nauset Light Beach Road, and a small window on the south façade. It appears in a c.1923 photograph.

Well House.
The wood frame well house with a gable roof was likely built c.1923. It presumably covers the well structure built in 1838 and shown on a 1840 map. The structure was clad with cedar shingles and featured an access door on the west side and a window on the south side.

Privies, Barn, and Hen House.
A wood outhouse was built seventy feet north of the brick keeper's house in 1838, and was moved or replaced in 1875 by a new structure located around seventy-five feet north because of construction of the wood keeper's house at that time. The new privy was incorporated into a small complex of existing buildings situated around 100 feet west of the north light tower, which included a wood-frame barn constructed by 1868, but possibly dating to the 1850s, and a hen house measuring nine- by eighteen feet. A map from 1924 does not show any of these structures; by this time they would have been less than 100 feet from the edge of the bluff.

French Cable Station and French Cable Hut.
The French Cable Station was constructed in 1879 at Nauset Light Beach by the French Cable Company. The station included a two-story frame building to serve as a cable station, located approximately 100 yards south of the Three Sisters south tower. Some of the station's workers built homes near Nauset Light Beach, but their locations are no known. In early 1891 the company relocated operations to a new facility in Orleans and installed a connecting cable between the two stations. As the old cable station building was serving only as a connection point, the company sold the building and erected a small structure, now known as the French Cable Hut, to serve as the connection point. The old cable station building was used as a hotel from 1893 until it was lost to fire in 1901. The single-room French Cable Hut measured around ten by fifteen feet and featured shingle siding and cedar roof shingles on the roof. Except for a connection box where the cable entered the structure, the interior was unfinished.

The French Cable Company operated the cable until June 1940 when France surrendered to Germany during World War II. The cable hut stood vacant throughout the remainder of war, and in 1946 was sold to a private owner who added bedroom and kitchen additions to the structure and rented it as a summer tourist cottage beginning in 1950. Subsequent owners added a porch and moved the front entrance.

Bulkheads.
Several bulkhead structures appear on plans and photographs from the historic period, which were likely an attempt to slow erosion in the vicinity of the lighthouses. A plan from 1885 indicates a bulkhead on the north and east sides of the middle brick tower, while a photograph from c.1893 shows a bulkhead southeast of the south wooden tower. However, these or similar structures do not appear in subsequent maps, plans, or photographs.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
The Three Sisters (The Beacon & Twin Lights).
The National Park Service purchased The Beacon in 1965 from Harold Hall, the son of Albert Hall who had originally purchased the light at auction in 1923. That same year, the park obtained the Twin Lights, the north and south towers of the Three Sisters, from the Cummings family. In 1980 the additions on the two towers were removed, leaving them free standing. In 1983 the cottage addition on The Beacon was removed, leaving it freestanding, and then moved to the site of the north and south towers on Cable Road. The park originally planned to reunite the Three Sisters at a location off of Ocean View Drive, but abandoned that plan in favor of the Cable Road site. Between 1989 and 1993 the three towers were reoriented to their historic (1892) positions relative to each other, where they stand today (see Figure 22). The Three Sisters of Nauset are the only known example of triple lights in the United States. The three circular foundations of the original Three Sisters masonry towers can occasionally be seen on Nauset Light Beach.

Nauset Beach Light and Oil House.
The U.S. Coast Guard maintained the Nauset Beach Light, periodically painting the tower and performing other maintenance. However, with the edge of the bluff annually creeping closer to the tower, the Coast Guard announced plans in 1993 to decommission the lighthouse. That same year local citizens established the Nauset Light Preservation Society (NLPS) and secured private donations and federal grants to fund the relocation and restoration of the lighthouse and oil house. In 1996, the tower and oil house were moved to a wooded site approximately 300 feet to the southwest. Through an agreement with the National Park Service, NLPS operates the lighthouse as a private aid to navigation and is responsible for all utilities, repair, and maintenance of the tower and oil house (Figure 27, see also Figure 21).

The tower was repainted in 2005 and 2013, and in 2007 vegetation around the tower was cut to improve the view to the ocean. The Society also provides tours of the light. The oil house was restored in 2008-09, and included replacement of the slate roof, repointing of the brick, repainting the structure, and installation of replicas of the original cupola and doors. The NLPS has developed a series of interpretive displays inside the structure to interpret erosion at Nauset Light Beach, light keepers and their families, and the relocation of the tower and oil house in 1996.

Keeper's House.
Soon after the light tower and oil house were moved, plans were made to relocate the 1875 keeper's house, which by 1998 was only twenty-three feet from the cliff edge. That same year the NLPS relocated the keeper's house to a new concrete foundation just northwest of the Nauset Beach Light, restoring its historic relationship to the light tower. The building's owner, Mary Daubenspeck, agreed to donate the building to the National Park Service with the right to live in it for 25 years. The National Park Service currently owns the building. The attached garage at the keeper's house added in the 1960s was removed prior to the move.

Garage.
The c.1923 garage is extant although it is in very poor condition. Vegetation is infringing on the structure, and signs of rot and decay are evident. The edge of the bluff is now only about sixty feet from the unused structure (Figure 28). The park is developing plans to document the structure and evaluate its integrity. As such, the structure is evaluated as "Undetermined" in this report. The 1987 "Lighthouses of Massachusetts" Thematic Resource Study" evaluated the structure as "Non-Contributing."

Well House.
The well house was lost to erosion of the bluff edge in 2016 (Figure 29). A portion of the brick-lined

well is visible and is partially emerged from the cliff but is likely to be lost in the near future. In 2014 the structure was surrounded by overgrown vegetation and there was substantial damage to the roof and walls.

French Cable Hut.
The National Park Service acquired the French Cable Hut from Fred J. Rechenberg in 1972. The park removed the remaining Cable Station buildings at Nauset Light Beach in the early 2000s, except for the French Cable Hut, retaining it through the late 1980s to house summer employees. The non-historic additions were removed in 2000, in 2003-05 the structure was moved 200 feet west to escape the bluff erosion. The hut is in good condition (Figure 30).

Fee Station.
The fee station was constructed in 1985, around the same time as the parking lot. It is located at the entrance to parking area to collect day-use fees (see Figure 23). The structure is wood framed, measures approximately four by four feet, and has a shingled hip roof.

Bathhouse.
The Nauset Light Beach bathhouse was constructed in 1986-88 soon after completion of the parking lot, replacing the previous bathhouse serving Nauset Light Beach. The current bathhouse is comprised of three wood-framed structures clad in cedar shingles: the center restroom facility is hexagon shaped with a diameter of approximately forty feet, while the two flanking rectangular-shaped bathhouses are approximately twelve feet by twenty feet (Figure 31). Due to ongoing bluff erosion, the park is planning to close the building and rebuild a similar structure further west.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Twin Lights (North)	176494	Contributing	23516		Location	37992	Yes
The Beacon	176496	Contributing	23517		Location	37991	Yes
Twin Lights (South)	176498	Contributing	23515		Location	37994	Yes
Keeper’s House	176500	Contributing			Location	37999	Yes
Nauset Beach Light	176502	Contributing			Location	37998	No
Nauset Light Oil House	176504	Contributing	41457				No
Garage	176506	Undetermined					No
French Cable Hut	176508	Contributing	7497				No
Fee Station	176510	Noncontributing – Compatible			Asset	22508	Yes
Bathhouse	176512	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	37983	Yes

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 27. View looking north at the keeper's house, oil house, and Nauset Beach Light. (OCLP 2014, DSC_0508)



Figure 28. View looking east at the garage from Nauset Light Beach Road. The garage was constructed c.1923 and is currently unused. It is located about 60 feet from the edge of the bluff. (OCLP 2014, DSC_0421)



Figure 29. View looking northeast at well house in 2014 before it was lost to erosion in 2016. (OCLP 2014, DSC_0397)



Figure 30. View looking northeast at the French Cable Hut. (OCLP 2014, DSC_0436)



Figure 31. View looking south-southeast at the bathhouse. (OCLP 2016, DSC_7032)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Historic Conditions (to 1965):
The Three Sisters of Nauset and later the Nauset Beach Light were situated on top of the bluff overlooking Nauset Light Beach and the Atlantic Ocean. The location of the lighthouses that marked the Nauset bars was carefully calculated for maximum visibility from the water, so that they would help local fishermen and other shore-hugging vessels to navigate the offshore bars. At the time of initial construction in the 1830s, the landscape had been cleared by trees and views to the water from the lighthouse complex were uninterrupted. Due to western migration of the bluff, the lighthouses were rebuilt or moved further inland in 1892, 1911, 1923, but always remained visible to mariners. Although some taller trees and shrubs became established on the bluff towards the end of the historic period, views primarily remained open.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
View from Lighthouse to Water.
Despite being moved again in 1996, the sweeping views from the lighthouse to the ocean at Nauset Light Beach remain relatively unchanged since the historic period, with a few exceptions. Authorization of Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961 has preserved and protected the majority of the shoreline within the Lower Cape, but the impact of contemporary residential development north and south of the property remains a factor. The park's development of a parking lot consisting of approximately 80,000 square feet of asphalt south of the lighthouse has altered the historic view looking southeast from the lighthouse, while continued growth of small trees on the bluff is beginning to impact the view looking northeast. In 2007 volunteers from the Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society and Friends of Cape Cod National Seashore assisted the National Park Service fire crew in the cutting, clearing, and removal of vegetation surrounding Nauset Beach Light. Periodic vegetation management around Nauset Beach Light is necessary to maintain this visual connection.

View of Lighthouse from Water.
The view of the lighthouse from the water remains relatively unaltered from the historic period. Relocation of the lighthouse complex inland in 1996 was necessary to prevent the structures from toppling over the bluff, which was (and continues to be) undermined by erosive wave action. The Nauset Beach Light continues to provide navigation aid to ships.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
View from Lighthouse to Water	176514	Contributing					No
View of Lighthouse from Water	176516	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

Historic Condition (to 1965):
There were a few small-scale features associated with the historic period. One of the most prominent was a signal mast that stood around eighty feet southeast of the middle tower by 1893. The mast was sixty-five feet tall and painted white. It was still present in 1910, but was likely removed soon after when the middle light was moved inland and the north and south lights were decommissioned.

A 1885 survey of the lighthouse complex at Nauset Light Beach noted two granite markers inscribed with the letters USLHE (United States Lighthouse Establishment). The six by six-inch markers were three feet tall and identified the corners of the lighthouse property. They were likely installed between 1837, when the property was acquired, and 1852 when the Lighthouse Establishment became the U.S. Lighthouse Board.

The 1885 survey as well as several historic photographs indicate the property line was also defined with a three-rail wood rail fence, painted white, while a vertical board fence enclosed some or all of the area between the barn and hen house. A photograph from 1923 shows the property line fence was replaced by a post and wire fence, which included a wood gate on the west side for access into the property from Nauset Light Beach Road. Around this time, the barn, privy and hen house were removed. The property line fence was removed at an unknown date.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
No fencing from the historic period exists today. However, one of the USLHE granite markers lies on its side in close proximity to the oil house (Figure 32). It was placed here after the Nauset Beach Light, keeper's house, and oil house were moved inland in 1996-98.

The other small-scale features at Nauset Light Area are not historic. Sections of split rail fence are located at the end of the driveway to the lighthouse complex next to the keeper's house, along the trail to the Three Sisters of Nauset, around most of the parking lot and bathhouse, along portions of Nauset Light Beach Road, on a portion of the northern property line, and north of south light tower. Snow fencing is used in some areas, including next to a portable toilet at the northwest corner of the parking lot to prevent visitors from climbing over the split rail fence. There are two metal swing gates, one at the entrance to the parking lot and one at the entrance to the abandoned section of Cable Road. A metal chain gate supported by two wood posts blocks the driveway leading to the lighthouse complex. Wayside signs are located at the south tower of the Three Sisters, at the north side of parking lot on the path leading to the lighthouse, between the Nauset Beach Light and oil house, and west of the fee station. Directional and regulatory signs are located throughout the site, while information signs can be found at the northeast corner of the parking lot and at the staircase to the beach. There are also several cell phone tour stop signs. Garbage and recycling cans are located in the parking lot and at the bathhouse. Wooden benches can be found at the bathhouse and the south side of parking lot, while a decorative wood bench is positioned next to the Nauset Beach Light. Other visitor amenities include a drinking fountain at the bathhouse, bike racks next to the bathhouse and just south of the Nauset Beach Light, and picnic tables near the south Three Sisters tower. There are also bricks flush with the ground next to the Nauset Beach Light, which outline the size and shape of the tower's lantern room.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
USLHE Granite Marker	176518	Contributing					No
Portable Toilet	176520	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Split-Rail Fences and Snow Fences	176522	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Metal and Chain Gates	176524	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wayside/Directional/Regulatory Signs	176526	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Garbage and Recycling Cans	176528	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Benches	176530	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Drinking Fountain	176532	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Bike Racks	176534	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Picnic Tables	176536	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Brick outline of Nauset Beach Light Lantern Room	176538	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 32. View looking north at one of the historic USLHE markers. (OCLP 2014, DSC_0438)

Landscape Characteristic: **Archeological Sites**

During rare circumstances involving low tides and severe beach erosion, the foundations of the original Three Sisters brick towers emerge from the sand on Nauset Light Beach. At the bluff continues to erode, miscellaneous pipes, conduits, and other features are exposed, the most recent of which is the brick-lined well associated with the lighthouse complex. The original site of the French Cable Station has been lost in large part to erosion, and any remaining portion of the original footprint of the building is at risk to be completely eroded away in the near future.

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 9

Next Assessment Due Date: 06/02/2034

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 06/02/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The current rate of erosion of the bluff is between ten and twelve feet a year. Continual wind and wave erosion has necessitated the relocation of the bathhouse and parking area further inland. Invasive vegetation requires a continual need for vegetation management to preserve the historically open character of the site. Heavy summer visitation has resulted in overflow of the parking lot and a high volume of pedestrian traffic. Social trails threaten sensitive vegetation and contributes to erosion.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/01/2016

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The Nauset Light Area is in fair condition. The property faces major threats from natural forces, which require immediate corrective action to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values. The current rate of erosion of the bluff is between ten and twelve feet a year. Continual wind and wave erosion will in time necessitate the relocation of the bathhouse and parking area further inland. The park has already initiated the planning process for the bathhouse.

Secondary impacts to the landscape include invasive vegetation, and a continual need for vegetation management to preserve the historically open character of the site. Heavy summer visitation at Nauset Light Area has resulted in overflow of the parking lot and a high volume of pedestrian traffic. Social trails cut by curious visitors who do not heed posted warning signs or fencing threatens sensitive vegetation and contributes to erosion.

A “fair” condition assessment indicates the property shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the property to degrade to a poor condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Deferred maintenance has resulted in deterioration and rot in the Three Sisters Lights, which has led to the presence of carpenter ants. Ancillary structures near the Nauset Beach Light including a wood garage and well house are in need of maintenance and exhibit signs of neglect.

Date Identified: 09/07/2016

Type of Impact: Erosion

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: The oceanfront cliffs at the Nauset Light Area have been eroding at an average rate of ten to twelve feet per year. The exposed nature of the cliffs, combined with high winds, heavy rains, and powerful wave action has resulted in extensive coastal erosion. The site has a long history of relocating buildings inland, while features such as boardwalks and staircases across the bluff are frequently rebuilt and rerouted. Foot traffic off designated pedestrian routes has also led to the development of social trails that damages or kills fragile vegetation. Loss of vegetation exposes soils to natural elements, increasing the effect of erosion from water runoff and wind.

Date Identified: 09/07/2016

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Historically the landscape in the Nauset Light Area was open and windswept. Since the period of significance, invasive species such as bittersweet have developed. Poison ivy is also prevalent throughout the landscape. Today, vegetation is managed to maintain the historic open condition representative of the landscape as it was in the 1950s. The majority of vegetation management is conducted by the National Park Service fire crew, especially near Nauset Beach Light. Vegetation and mature trees impact the view from the roadway to the Three Sisters. The pull-off for the Three Sisters is a popular spot for photography, but several pitch pines restrict the view.

Date Identified: 09/07/2016

Type of Impact: Visitation

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Visitors straying from designated areas have led to the development of a variety of social trails through sensitive vegetation. These paths are located primarily along heavily used roadways such as Nauset Light Beach Road, where evidence indicates that visitors climb over a wooden fence, pass ‘do not enter signs’ and walk toward the heavily eroded cliffs to peer over the edge toward the water below. Inadequate parking at the Three Sisters Lights results in heavy pedestrian traffic along Cable Road in peak season. The heavy use of Nauset Light Beach in the summer means that the parking lot typically fills by 10:00am each morning. Park rangers direct traffic, but the queue of vehicles often backs up on Cable Road. A “residents-only” parking area was established c.2012 to mediate parking conflicts between locals and visitors. High visitation at Nauset Light Area also conflicts with tours of the Nauset Beach Light, so the Nauset Lighthouse Preservation Society has shifted tour times to late afternoon, evening, and a special full moon tour.

Date Identified: 09/07/2016

Type of Impact: Inundation/Sea Level Rise

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Erosion of the bluff is advanced by sea level rise.

Date Identified: 06/02/2025

Type of Impact: Inundation/Storm Surge

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Deterioration from water temporarily covering land along coasts that are seasonally or traditionally dry-land, as a result of amplified tides during severe low pressure weather systems.

Date Identified: 06/02/2025

Type of Impact: Impending Development

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Nauset Light Keepers House is now under a one-year SUP with the Nauset Light Preservation Society, which also operates and maintains the Light and Oil House. This potentially will result in overnight stays at the Keepers House

Date Identified: 06/02/2025

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type:	Rehabilitation
Treatment Completed:	No
Document Type:	General Management Plan
Document Date:	1998-04-07
Title:	
IRMA Link:	
Narrative:	

As outlined in the park's 1998 General Management Plan (GMP), the purposes of Cape Cod National Seashore are to "preserve the national significant and special cultural and natural features, distinctive patterns of human activity, and ambience that characterize the Outer Cape, along with the associated scenic, cultural, historic, scientific, and recreational values" and to "provide opportunities for current and future generations to experience, enjoy, and understand these features and values." The GMP outlined management goals and objectives for cultural resources, including cultural heritage and ethnographic resources, museum collections, archeological resources (including submerged resources), cultural landscapes, and historic architecture. (GMP 1998: 8,42-59)

For cultural landscapes, the stated goal in the GMP was to "identify, manage, and maintain cultural landscapes that are on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places." Plans would be prepared to preserve or maintain significant landscapes, to maintain site integrity, and to support interpretive and resource management programs. For historic architecture, the stated goal was to "manage and maintain buildings and structures on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places." Treatments for historic buildings included preservation and rehabilitation. The Three Sisters Lights and the Nauset Beach Light were identified as priorities for treatment and interpretive use, while the French Cable Hut was designated for administrative purposes. (GMP 1998: 46-50)

The GMP does not prescribe a specific treatment approach for the Nauset Light Area, although the document provides general guidance through the delineation of management zones, which are based on the park's purpose, significance, management philosophy and objectives, and natural and cultural resources. Three management zones overlay the Nauset Light Area: Natural Zone, Historic Zone, and Developed Zone.

Natural Zone: Includes most of the national seashore where the primary experience is one of being in natural surroundings, such as in the woods or along a beach. This zone extends along the entire coast. Where natural coastal processes erode or accrete the coastline, the natural zone will continue to occupy the coastal area within national seashore boundaries.

Historic Zone: Includes areas with archeological remains, historically significant districts, sites, and cultural landscapes.

Developed Zone: Includes highly developed areas for public use or information dispersal, such as visitor centers, roads, bicycle trails, staging areas, parking lots, and changing rooms or comfort stations. (GMP 1998: 109,113)

As stated in the GMP, within the Historic Zone intensive management, characterized as rehabilitation in this inventory, will often be necessary to protect resources and ensure public safety. Management of resources within the Historic Zone may require designated paths, construction of fences, and restrictions on group sizes. Regarding the management of cultural landscapes, the GMP states:
"cultural landscapes will be managed to perpetuate a particular historical, cultural, or agricultural scene. Modifications in these areas will have to be in harmony with the period of significance and will be confined to those necessary to protect the historic resources and manage the appropriate levels of public use at each site…management strategies will be consistent with the reason for historic designation." (GMP 1998: 109,113)

The Nauset Light Area does not have a Cultural Landscape Report or Treatment Plan with in-depth information regarding landscape treatment philosophy, strategies, or tasks. The growing availability of digital geospatial data, including LIDAR point-cloud data and aerial photo data, has assisted in the documentation of the cultural landscape's physical attributes over the past several years. Several Historic Structure Reports provide context, history, and recommendations for structures within the Nauset Light Area including documentation for the Three Sisters, Nauset Beach Light, and the French Cable Hut.

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Cape Cod National Seashore has several projects related to the future management of several landscape features at the Nauset Light Area (exclusive of historic buildings).

PMIS #221172, “Construct Removable Stairs at Nauset Light Beach.” This Project will build modular stair structures at Nauset Light Beach, which is one of Cape Cod National Seashore’s most popular beaches. Stair components will be modular, light weight and portable for easy installation, removal and storage. Stair structures will be designed to be assembled and or dismantled and stored off-site by a crew of no more than four staff in less than three normal work days and with equipment and tools readily available on Cape Cod. In coordination with the park’s rare species monitoring staff, the stair structures will be installed every Spring and removed every Fall. (Funding of $344,454.60 requested in FY 2015).

PMIS #191603, “Remove and Rebuild Nauset Light Beach Bathhouse at CACO as Coastal Adaptation.” This project involves relocation and reconfiguration of user facilities in response to coastal erosion. The current bathhouse will be demolished and a smaller, green facility with solar PV electric panels that provide net-zero energy will be constructed at the west end of the parking area at Ocean View Drive. There will be men’s and women’s restrooms with integrated small changing areas, and a lifeguard storage room with a first aid station. Existing walkways, outdoor showers, and the shade trellis will be relocated inland. New septic and water systems to serve the bathhouse will be installed further inland. By providing visitor facilities at the west end of the parking area we will have a 50+ year sustainable coastal resilience solution. (Funding of $1,659,660.81 requested for FY2017)

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Landscape Documents:

File Name	Date	Attachment Type
CACO_Long Point-Nauset Light Area_CLI Updates Notes_2025.pdf		

Source