

Coastal Features



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The Newsletter of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

CRMC Ocean SAMP development underway

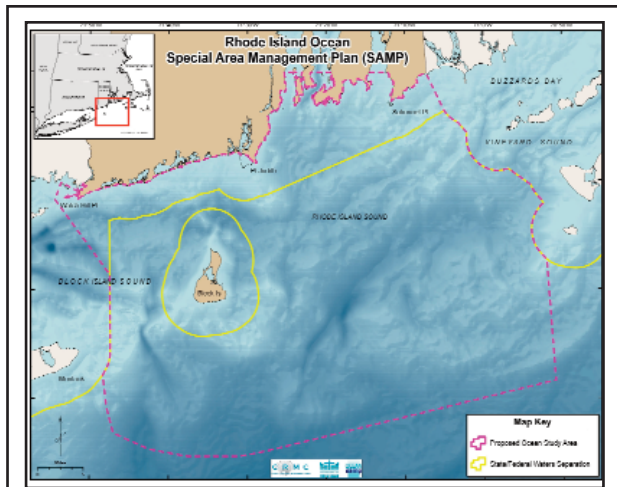
Chairman announces two-year plan that will zone Rhode Island's off-shore waters

Over the next two years, the R. I. Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) will be developing an Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), a two-year research and planning process that will zone the state's off-shore waters. Through a research and planning

process that integrates the best available science with public input and involvement, the Ocean SAMP will also protect current uses and habitats through

zones and regulations for commercial fishing; critical habitats for fish, marine animals, and birds; marine transport; geology, meteorology

sions with our neighboring states' coastal program managers on ocean management issues for several years and has seen an increase in interest from



This map shows the proposed SAMP boundary and state water boundaries.

and more. Fisheries resource management and protection of existing, related uses will be a major focus.

“The CRMC has been in discus-

a number of parties in ocean management issues and uses, the most recent of these in utilizing the ocean as a source of renewable energy,”

CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian stated in a letter to the congressional delegates. “The CRMC is a national leader in Special Area Management Planning and

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AI SAMP standards proposed

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) has proposed policy and performance standards that will provide a permitting tool for new coastal development within identified areas along the west side of Aquidneck Island, which will become part of the Aquidneck Island Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), currently under development.

The CRMC is working to develop this SAMP in collaboration with the three island communities of Portsmouth, Middletown, and Newport, the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC), Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island Sea Grant/University of Rhode

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CRMC gets funding for aquaculture study

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) recently received funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Aquaculture Initiative (NMAI) to study the impacts of aquaculture on the marine environment.

The study, "Ecological carrying capacity of Rhode Island waters for oyster culture," will be conducted by the CRMC, its Working Group on Aquaculture Regulations and the University of Rhode Island. This study, which received \$150,000 from NMAI, was a proposed action in the working group's biology subcommittee report: "Report on Biological Impacts of Aquaculture," released earlier this year. The working group has discussed the possibility of limiting the amount of aquaculture in the salt ponds to 5 percent, and the purpose of this study is to explore that suggestion.

In 2007 the working group was reconvened (it was first created in 2000) to address increasing concerns over the lack of a formal statewide aquaculture plan. The resulting fundamental question was what, if any, limits should be placed on shellfish aquaculture production in Rhode Island. The biology subcommittee, in its report, identified specific areas of necessary study before proceeding with a statewide aquaculture plan: water quality, disease, aquatic nuisance species, physical impacts of aquaculture gear, essential fish habitat, carrying capacity, and an ecosystem approach to aquaculture.

This study, which will take approximately two years to complete, will look at carrying capacity in the salt ponds, where a majority of the state's aquaculture farms are located. David Alves, aquaculture coordinator for the CRMC, is a primary investigator on the study, along with Dr. David Bengtson of URI, Carrie Byron (a URI Ph.D. candidate), Dr. Robert Rheault, an adjunct assistant professor at URI, and Dr. Rubao Ji of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

"The CRMC is very pleased to have received funding in order to conduct this study on carrying capacity with URI," said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. "As aquaculture has grown as an industry, so have concerns about its long term future and the salt ponds in which the farms are located. It is vital for the CRMC to take an active approach in planning for the future of the industry, and this study is a giant step toward that goal."

For more information on the CRMC and its aquaculture initiatives, go to the CRMC web site at <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/projects/aquaculture.html>.

Ocean SAMP, *continued from Page 1*

Water Zoning, and I think both of these techniques would be useful in better managing conflicts and the siting of alternative energy sources in Rhode Island waters.

“SAMPs have proven to be one of CRMC’s most useful and effective regional management tools, and would be an obvious and vital tool in managing alternative energy sources in an off-shore environment,” Tikoian continued. “This SAMP will provide valuable policy work that many states and the federal government face in dealing with ocean issues and off-shore renewable energy sources.”

Among many other responsibilities, the CRMC is charged with managing the state’s submerged lands. The CRMC has been zoning the state’s waters since 1983, for uses ranging from conservation areas to industrial ports. The Ocean SAMP will be the CRMC’s seventh and largest plan. From 2008 to 2010, through a public policy process that includes scientific research and stakeholder involvement, the Ocean SAMP will re-affirm Rhode Island as the first state in the nation to zone its waters. Research projects undertaken by University of Rhode Island scientists will provide the essential scientific basis for Ocean SAMP policy development.

These projects will assess many different resource issues, as well as possible sites for renewable energy development. Along with URI, its Coastal Resources

Center and Rhode Island Sea Grant, and Roger Williams University, the CRMC will complete a draft zoning map and regulatory standards for guiding future management of these offshore waters for public review and comment.

The scientific research will provide the CRMC with a comprehensive understanding and record of what groups utilize our offshore waters, and the team will be working with many user groups, including the commercial and recreational fisheries, marine trades industry and multiple municipalities, throughout the process.

The concept for the Ocean SAMP is closely tied to the changing climate; global warming is perhaps the most critical issue of the 21st century. It is already accelerating sea level rise, leading to beach erosion, property losses, and increasing Rhode Island’s vulnerability to hurricanes and floods. Climate change may also adversely affect food supply, public health, and the economy. Rhode Island is committed to reducing its carbon footprint by using renewable energy resources, primarily offshore wind farms, to meet 15 percent of its energy needs. And a SAMP was determined to be the most effective planning tool.

The CRMC has authority to develop and implement SAMPs through the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act, and has been developing SAMPs since 1983 when it adopted the Providence

Harbor SAMP. Since then, the CRMC has adopted and implemented four more all over the state, is finishing an update of the Providence Harbor – now called Metro Bay – SAMP and is also working on an Aquidneck Island SAMP for the west side of the island. SAMPs, by design, are ecosystem-based management strategies that are consistent with the Council’s mandate to preserve and restore ecological systems.

Through the process, the CRMC coordinates with local municipalities, as well as government agencies and community organizations, to prepare and implements the SAMPs. The CRMC has been recognized as a national leader in SAMP development.

The CRMC, along with the SAMP team, will complete a draft zoning map and regulatory standards for guiding future management of these offshore waters for public review and comment.

As with all SAMPs, public involvement will help shape policy and is crucial to the success of the Ocean SAMP.

For more information on the project and stakeholder group, contact Monica Allard Cox, Ocean SAMP outreach and communications leader, at (401) 874-6015, email oceansamp@gso.uri.edu or visit

<http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp>.

For CRMC regulatory information, contact Laura Ricketson-Dwyer, CRMC public educator and information coordinator, at (401) 783-7886 or email lricketson@crmc.ri.gov.

CRMC Exec. Dir. Fugate receives Sea Grant Lifetime Achievement Award

Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council Executive Director Grover J. Fugate was honored with a lifetime achievement award from R.I. Sea Grant on October 24 at the seventh annual Marine Law Symposium at Roger Williams University. Fugate has served as the executive director of CRMC for 22 years.

U.S. Senator Jack Reed presented Fugate with the award, which was given to him for his efforts in helping the CRMC fulfill its mandate to “preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore the coastal resources of the state.”

“Grover is not only an extraordinary public servant, for which I admire him greatly, but he’s one of the reasons we have so much to be pleased and proud of in this state,” Reed said of Fugate. “No one has been more instrumental in cleaning, pre-

serving and restoring Narragansett Bay and most importantly, done it right for 20 years. And he’s done it with decency, respect and integrity and that has made all the difference.”

Fugate was at the symposium as one of the panel members chosen to speak about strategies for marine renewable energy regulation. The CRMC is in the process of developing an Ocean Special Area Management Plan, along with the University of Rhode Island. Among the many areas to be studied in the offshore environment is whether or not alternative energy – namely wind power – has a place in Rhode Island’s waters.

Fugate, who said he was “immensely honored” by the award, added that “although this award is going to me, it also goes to a lot of other individuals. I do not do this alone. I have a staff that works hard and is so dedicated, and we have a Council that lets us do some weird and wonderful things.” Fugate also thanked the staff at the state’s universities for their cooperation and invaluable resources, and noted that the political leadership in the state was especially supportive of



Photo courtesy of Constance Brown (RWU-SOL)

U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) poses with CRMC Executive Director Grover Fugate after Reed presented Fugate with the Rhode Island Sea Grant Lifetime Achievement Award.

(Continued on next page)

Award, *continued from previous page*

the CRMC and its initiatives.

Representative Eileen Naughton, chairperson of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources, also presented Fugate with a proclamation from the R.I. House of Representatives, and Ken Payne, former R.I. Senate policy director, presented one from the R.I. Senate on behalf of Senator V. Susan Sosnowski.

“Twenty-two years is a long time and Grover has filled each of those years with some amazing things,” Naughton said. She cited from the proclamation the six Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs) that the Council has adopted, the CRMC’s Urban Coastal Greenway policy, part of the Metro Bay SAMP and nationally-recognized, and the development and implementation of the Marine Resources Development Plan, which the General Assembly required the CRMC to undertake in 2005 to protect and enhance the marine resources of the state.

The proclamations also credit Fugate with helping to build the state’s coastal management program “so that it is now considered one of the best in the nation and has won international respect for its abilities to manage the coast and marine resources in a manner that produces the maximum benefit for society as well as preserves

and restores the ecological systems that are so valuable to Rhode Island.”

Payne, now senior policy advisor for the URI College of Environment and Life Sciences, and an adjunct professor of marine affairs, recalled being summoned to the corner office on the third floor (of the State House), often about something Fugate and the CRMC was undertaking.

“Grover has an enormous capacity for creative thinking,” Payne said. “We measure his success not only by the good things he’s done, but also by all of the squirrely things he’s prevented from being done. Imagine what our state would be like without him.”

Reed quoted the epitaph of Christopher Wren, the great astronomer and architect, “If you seek his [monument], look around you. If you want to see Grover’s [monument], look at the Bay.”



Photo courtesy of URI/RISG

CRMC Executive Director Grover J. Fugate receives a proclamation from the R.I. House of Representatives, presented to him by Rep. Eileen Naughton.

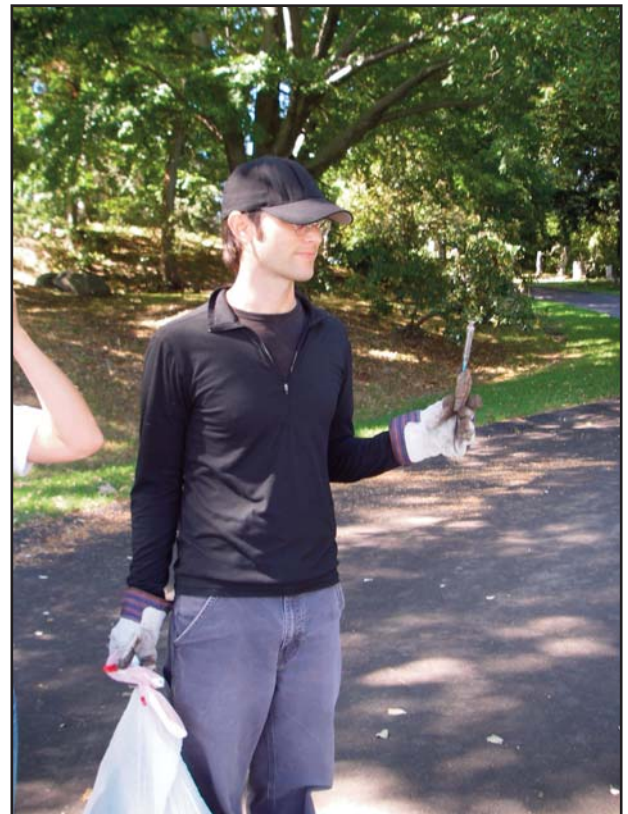
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CRMC Photo Page

CRMC staff and other volunteers take part in the annual Audubon Society International Coastal Cleanup as part of Coastweeks 2008, which the CRMC sponsors with Rhode Island Sea Grant.

Clockwise from right, CRMC and other volunteers show the trash collected at the cleanup sit - Swan Point Cemetery in Providence. A volunteer holds a syringe found during the cleanup. And a volunteer works to document each piece of trash she found during the cleanup.



CRMC Photo Page

AI SAMP, *continued from Page 1*

Island Coastal Resources Center, and other partners. The SAMP will help implement critical portions of the West Side Master Plan, developed by the AIPC as the three communities' vision for future development along Aquidneck Island's western shore. The SAMP will address specific policy and development standards for this region and include public access requirements, open space and habitat preservation, potential CRMC water type designation changes, and natural hazard resilience, among other issues. Working with the SAMP partners,



the CRMC will develop draft chapters for public review and comment.

The proposed CRMC Aquidneck Island Coastal Development (ACD) Regulations, provide a permitting option for new coastal development within identified growth centers along the west side of the island. The policy also aims to preserve the valuable natural and recreational corridors and aspects within this region. The SAMP boundary is based on the Aquidneck Island West Side Master Plan boundary area, and the ACD regulations support the Aquidneck Island West Side Master Plan, other local plans, and all state and federal CRMC requirements.

The draft ACD regulations, provide flexibility for the management and protection of the coastal resources along the west side of the island. The communities and CRMC hope to encourage sustainable and responsible redevelopment within specified zones of the west side shoreline to utilize former navy lands and brownfield sites. Just as important is the protection of the West Side's natural coastal habitats and recreational areas, unique to Aquidneck Island. The ACD regulations aim to satisfy all of the

goals and balance these objectives.

The Aquidneck Island SAMP will be the sixth plan adopted by the Council. As with all SAMP development, public input and comment is crucial to success. The CRMC has held three public workshops on the SAMP, and is planning a fourth on December 16 on the island. Check the CRMC web site often for more details on upcoming events. Go to www.crmc.ri.gov and click on Special Area Management Plans.

"The Aquidneck Island SAMP is a wonderful mix of redevelopment and preservation, and something that a special area management plan works particularly well in achieving," said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. "Each SAMP the Council adopts is unique, and with the Aquidneck Island SAMP we have the opportunity to preserve natural habitats, provide standards for the best reuse of former navy lands, and provide a stronger regulatory framework for the implementation of the island's West Side Master Plan. We look forward to getting valuable input from the island's residents."



Council Members

Michael M. Tikoian, Chairman
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 W. Michael Sullivan, RIDEM
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 Donald Gomez
 Neill Gray
 Thomas Ricci
 K. Joseph Shekarchi
 Gerald P. Zarrella

Grover J. Fugate, Executive Director
 Brian A. Goldman, Legal Counsel



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Contact Us!

Coastal Resources Manage-
 ment Council
 Stedman Government Center
 4808 Tower Hill Road
 Wakefield, RI 02879
 Phone: 401-783-3370
 Fax: 401-783-3767

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