

Coastal Features



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The Newsletter of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

CRMC project wins Coastal America Award

CRMC's South Coast Habitat Restoration Project wins Coastal America Partnership Award

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) recently received national recognition for one of its habitat

restoration projects. Coastal America, launched in 1991 as a collaboration between federal, state and local governments and other

groups to solve coastal problems, awarded the CRMC and its partners with the 2008 Coastal America Partnership Award for its work on the South Coast Habitat Restoration Project.

Project sponsors include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the CRMC, with support from the R.I. Department of

Westerly.

In 1952 the state widened and deepened the natural tidal inlets to Ninigret, Winnapaug and Quonochontaug



A view of the eelgrass beds that are now growing in Ninigret Pond.

Environmental Management (DEM) the University of Rhode Island, the Salt Ponds Coalition, and the towns of South Kingstown, Charlestown and

Ponds, with stone jetties constructed along either side for navigation. The construction of the jetties created a natural funnel effect that deposited large amounts of sand from the ocean inside the ponds. As this continued to occur over the years, formerly plentiful eelgrass beds in the ponds were buried.

The CRMC

CRMC funds 8 habitat projects

The RI Coastal Resources Management Council has awarded funding for eight habitat restoration projects through its RI Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Trust Fund.

The Council approved the funding at the January 27 semi-monthly meeting in Providence. Projects approved for funding include four fish passage restoration projects on the Lower Pawtuxet, Blackstone, Pawcatuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers, as well as salt marsh restoration projects located in Newport and Bristol. The remainder of the funding will be used to purchase low ground pres-

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South Coast, *continued from Page 1*

and its partners began work on the South Coast project in 1997. The habitat restoration portion of the project included restoring eelgrass beds in the ponds, including 40 acres in Ninigret Pond, the largest of the project's salt ponds. The tidal delta in the pond was dredged to create a favorable environment for regrowing eelgrass. The Army Corps also constructed a sediment catch basin in the breachway inlet in order to capture sediment coming in before it emptied into the pond. Sand that was dredged from the pond was pumped just offshore of the adjacent beaches, so that the natural wave movement would deposit the sand along the shoreline, away from the breachways. Within the first year of monitoring, the eelgrass had regenerated successfully in both the seeded eelgrass beds and areas that were allowed to grow back naturally. Eelgrass growth has exceeded project expectations. The CRMC expects to perform a maintenance dredging of the catchment basin in 2009.

"The CRMC is honored to receive this prestigious award from Coastal America, and we are thrilled that the South Coast Habitat Restoration Project has received this distinction," said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. "The South Coast project is the largest habitat restoration project that the Council has taken on to-date, and we consider it an immense success. I appreciate the hard work of the CRMC staff, especially Janet Freedman and Dan Goulet, as well as our other project partners. The CRMC would also like to thank Senator Jack Reed for his efforts in Washington and his continued support of this and other restoration projects; he was instrumental in garnering appropriations for this project. The South Coast project is a shining example of the working partnerships in Rhode Island and the importance of habitat restoration."

"I congratulate CRMC on this award, and I am proud to have secured federal funding over the years for Ninigret Pond and other habitat restoration projects along Rhode Island's south coast," said Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), a member of the Appropriations Committee. "These projects benefit our coastal environment and help support our state's shellfishing industry and many other commercial fisheries that depend on coastal habitats."

The CRMC and its partners will celebrate the award with Coastal America on Monday, June 8 at 10 a.m. at the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Charlestown. Go to the CRMC web site for more details.

CRMC Events

Invasives Monitoring

The CRMC is seeking volunteers to participate in a marine aquatic invasive species monitoring initiative in Narragansett Bay and other coastal water bodies throughout the state. Volunteer monitors will receive training in aquatic invasive species identification and monitoring protocols. Those interested in volunteering will be asked to conduct five monitoring events at floating docks during the summer and fall of 2009. Training sessions are tentatively scheduled for this June.

The RI Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan (RIAIS Plan), which the Council adopted in January 2008, is the first comprehensive effort to assess the impacts and threats of aquatic invasive species in Rhode Island. It outlines a series of management strategies intended to prevent the introduction and curb the spread of aquatic invasive species. The plan, developed and implemented on the state level by the CRMC, prioritizes state agency leadership for action, continuation of current research on the risks of various transport vectors, coordination with industry to minimize invasions, development of a regional web page and database on AIS distribution and education initiatives. For more information on the volunteer initiative, contact Kevin Cute at CRMC at 783-3370 or kcute@crmc.ri.gov.

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting

When: Tuesday, June 30th, 2009. 6:00pm-9:00pm

**please note date change*

Where: URI Bay Campus Coastal Institute Hazard Rooms, for directions see <http://www.gso.uri.edu/about-gso/directions>

Description: Stakeholder group meetings are a forum that engages key constituencies and the public in the development of the Ocean SAMP. Meetings are open to the public, but space is limited. Please RSVP to Amber Neville at (401) 874-6106 or amber@crc.uri.edu

For more information and news on the Ocean Special Area Management Plan, go to

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

Trust Fund, *continued from Page 1*

sure equipment for the R.I. Department of Environmental Management (DEM), which will be made available for use in habitat restoration projects statewide.

“The CRMC continues to see many quality restoration project proposals come in each year,” said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. “It is a testament to the program that we now have such a competitive selection process, which allows the project team to choose the best restoration projects in the state. Rhode Island’s coastal and estuarine habitats – and all residents – continue to reap the benefits of this program.”

The Council approved \$50,000 in funds toward the Lower Pawtuxet River Restoration project in Warwick. The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP), with the help of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE), Save The Bay, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP), and American Rivers, will restore seven miles of anadromous fish habitat by breaching or partially removing Pawtuxet Falls Dam in Warwick and Cranston. Breaching the dam will restore passage and

habitat for several fish species including American shad and river herring, as well as restoring a wide range of additional riverine ecosystem functions. The awarded funds will be used as match for federal funding of project construction activities in 2009.

The Blackstone River Watershed Council and Friends of the Blackstone received \$50,000 from the Trust Fund for continued

restoration will restore fish runs that have been obstructed for almost 200 years, as well as allow for fishing, canoeing, kayaking, historic tours and provide economic benefits to the four municipalities in the project area.

The Council also awarded \$9,879 to the NRCS and DEM for the continued restoration of the Silver Creek Salt Marsh, a 13-acre tidal estuary on the eastern shore

of Bristol Harbor. The creek is tidally restricted by an old railroad bridge, the Route 114 bridge and a town-owned foot bridge. These restrictions have impounded freshwater, diminished connectivity with the Bay and have allowed for *Phragmites australis* expansion in the salt marsh. The project will improve tidal flow and flushing, reduce the *Phragmites* population, restore the native salt marsh plant community, reduce freshwater impoundment, reduce mosquito breeding habitat and reestablish vegetation on mud flats in the lower marsh.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), USDA NRCS and the town of Richmond received \$50,000 from the Trust Fund toward additional work on the Shannock Falls Fish Passage Restoration project. This project in-



Photo courtesy of: Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
The site of the Lower Pawtuxet River Restoration Project in Warwick.

restoration of the Blackstone River Fish Passage in Pawtucket. Along with the USDA NRCS, Pawtucket Hydro, LLC and the city of Pawtucket, the groups are working to restore anadromous fish passage across the first four dams on the lower Blackstone River. The

(Continued on Next Page)

Trust Fund, *continued from Page 3*

cludes removal of the Lower Shannock Falls Dam, which was funded last year. Completion of the project will open the Pawcatuck River system to nearly 1,300 acres of upstream spawning and rearing habitat for diadromous fish. The awarded funds will be used towards construction activities including sediment analyses, construction oversight services, project management and bedrock removal.

The Council approved \$25,000 in funds for the city of Newport and the Aquidneck Island Land Trust toward its work on the Gooseneck Cove Salt Marsh Restoration project. The 63-acre salt marsh is tidally restricted by the Ocean Drive Causeway, a small dam, and a dirt road, all three of which restrict tidal salt water flow and have degraded the habitat and water quality in the marsh. The project will restore the salt marsh plants, prevent future marsh subsidence, and improve the cove's water quality by restoring tidal flushing. The project will also include public access improvements.

The USDA NRCS and USFWS also received approximately \$29,000 in Trust Fund monies toward the Manton Pond Dam Fish Passage Restoration project in Johnston. The project aims to restore fish passage to the entire length of the lower Woonasquatucket River, formerly a prime spawning habitat. Manton Pond Dam is the last of five dams in a long-term restoration for the lower part of the river. It is the final step in a project to restore spawning habitat for an estimated annual return of 40,000 adult blueback herring, alewife and shad. The focus of the project will be to plan, design and construct a fishway at Manton Dam. Awarded funds will be used for planning and design of the proposed fishway.

The Council awarded more than \$6,000 toward the Brenton Cove Salt Marsh Restoration project in Newport. The city, along with the Brenton Cove Condo Association and the DEM Mosquito Abatement Coordination Office, plans to reopen existing mosquito ditches to reduce stormwater ponding in the back portion of the four-acre salt marsh, which opens to the seaward side to Newport Harbor. The project will also allow for control of the invasive Phragmites that has overtaken parts of the marsh.

The Trust Fund also provided \$12,500 to the DEM for the purchase of a rubber-tracked, low-ground-pressure utility vehicle that will be used to transport soil excavated from salt marsh water management projects to upland disposal sites, and to spray herbicide in Phragmites control projects.

Habitat restoration projects are funded through the RI Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Trust Fund and are selected from recommendations by the RI Habitat Restoration Team, established by CRMC, Save The Bay and the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program in 1998. Members of the team serve as a technical advisory committee for the CRMC as required by law. Funds for the program come from the state's Oil Spill Prevention Administration and Response Act (OSPAR), established by the legislature following the 1996 North Cape oil spill. Each year, the Trust Fund and CRMC receive \$225,000 from the OSPAR account to fund habitat restoration projects in the state.

To-date and including this year, the Trust Fund has awarded \$1.4 million for 48 projects, which have leveraged more than \$13 million in matching funds. This year's funding leveraged more than \$2.8 million, at a leverage ratio of more than 12 to 1. The full report will be available on CRMC's web site at <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/habitatrestoration.html>.

CRMC hires new aquaculture coordinator

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (RI CRMC) has hired former University of Rhode Island Fisheries Extension Specialist and Fisheries Operations Supervisor David Beutel as its new Aquaculture Coordinator.

Beutel began his work at CRMC on April 27.

As the CRMC's aquaculture coordinator, Beutel will oversee all of the aquaculture planning and permitting in the state and will work closely with members of the industry, the wild harvesters, state and federal regulatory agencies, and cities and towns. He will also coordinate research and applied aquaculture management and science with experts at URI and Roger Williams University.

"We welcome Dave Beutel to CRMC and are excited about the expertise he brings to our staff," said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. "Dave is a highly-respected fisheries expert in this state, and already has a great working relationship with

many members of the industry, including those involved in the Ocean Special Area Management Plan."

Beutel received two degrees from URI: an Associate

in fisheries outreach and research for Rhode Island Sea Grant since 1992.

In his research and outreach, Beutel has focused on harvesting methods, fish-

ing gear efficiency and by-catch reduction, and also helped develop educational programs on fishing techniques and fishery issues for the commercial and recreational fishing industries and the general public.

For more information about the CRMC's aquaculture program, go the web site at <http://www.crmc.ri.gov> and click on Topics and Aquaculture.



Image courtesy of RI Sea Grant

*CRMC's new Aquaculture Coordinator
Dave Beutel*

of Science degree in fisheries and marine technology in 1979 and a Bachelor of Science degree in fisheries in 1992.

He has worked in the fishing industry since 1977, including seven years as a commercial fisherman and eight years as a fishing gear manufacturer. He has worked

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This issue of Coastal Features was compiled and edited by Laura Ricketson-Dwyer. To comment on any article or to make address changes please contact the CRMC.

CRMC Photo Page

CRMC staff and other volunteers take part in the annual Narragansett Bay Commission's Earth Day cleanup at the Woonasquatucket River in Providence on April 22. Clockwise from right, CRMC staffers Amy Silva and Ryan Moore pull tires out of the river. Janet Freedman of CRMC works to rake trash along the riverbank. Below, other cleanup volunteers work to pick up trash along Promenade Street.



CRMC Photo Page

CRMC rewards RI students for winning science fair projects

The RI Coastal Resources Management Council has awarded savings bonds to six Rhode Island junior, middle and high school students for their winning projects in the 2009 Amgen Rhode Island Science and Engineering Fair.

This year's science and engineering fair took place on March 21 at the Community College of Rhode Island's Knight Campus in Warwick, and showcased engineering, science and environmental projects from 65 schools and students from grades 6 through 12. This year students showed a total of 445 projects, and the CRMC awarded bonds for projects ranging from seafood sustainability and biodegradability to current hot topics like coral reef peril and biofuel.

The six students were winners of the individual science fairs at their schools; teachers are allowed to send as many as 15 winners per school. The CRMC awarded prizes in the special awards category, which allows organizations and groups to set their own criteria and choose their own winners.

In the Senior Division, for students in grades 9-12, the first place prize of a \$100 savings bond from the CRMC was awarded to Katie Rockwell of St. Mary Academy Bay View for her project, "Road Salt Safety vs. the Environment." Kathleen Welch of Mount St. Charles was awarded the second place prize of a \$50 savings bond for her project, "Biodegradability." Third place and a \$50 savings bond went to John Cunha from LaSalle Academy for his project, "Saving Nemo: Seafood Sustainability and the Future of Our Oceans." Alexia Malone Oliver from Bay View received honorable mention from the division for her project, "Who's Eating My Oysters?"

The CRMC also awarded three savings bonds in the Junior Division for students in grades 6-8. The winner of the first place \$100 savings bond was Julianna Marandola from Cranston Johnston Catholic Regional School for her project, "The Coral Collapse." The second place savings bond for \$50 went to Eric Fortier from Christ the Redemmer Academy for his project, "Can Algae Be a Reliable Source of Biofuel?" Caroline Roughneen, from St. Philomena School, received third place and a \$50 savings bond for her project, "The Effects of Methoprene on the Thickness of Lobster Shells." The honorable mention award for the junior division went to Annie Vendetti and Elizabeth DaPonte from St. Philomena School for their project, "Is There Pollution in the Kickemuit River?"

The students received congratulatory letters and certificates from the CRMC, and will receive their savings bonds at the end of May. The Council has been giving out special awards for the science fair for more than 10 years.

"The CRMC is honored to continue in judging the projects at the Amgen Science and Engineering Fair," said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. "It is so important to provide education for the next generation to get excited about science and related fields, and to learn about their environment and how to manage it responsibly. Each year the students entering the fair astound us with their understanding of Rhode Island and national environmental and engineering issues and concepts."

This is the 61st year of the science fair, and the third year that Amgen has served as the title sponsor. Special awards were established as a way for local businesses and organizations to promote what they do and get students interested in science and engineering-related research.

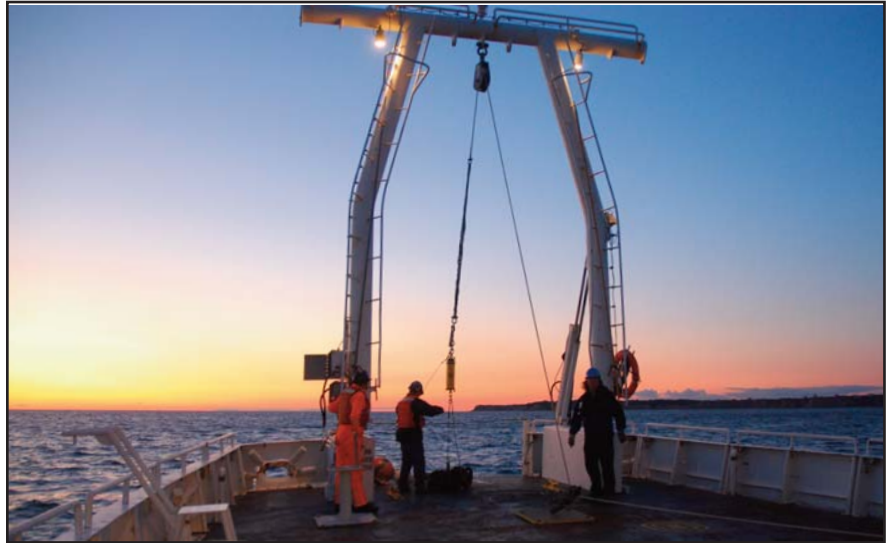
The RI Science and Engineering Fair – which is affiliated with the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair – offers 15 science and engineering-related topics for students to choose from. The top two winners of the Rhode Island fair's general awards category go on to compete in the international science fair, this year in Reno, Nevada.



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The R/V Endeavor off the coast doing research for the Ocean SAMP

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