

Coastal Features



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The Newsletter of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

RI gets \$3 million for restoration projects

NOAA awards the CRMC \$3 million in stimulus funds toward habitat restoration projects in RI

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and its project partners in June received more than \$3 million in federal competitive stimulus funding for six fish passage restoration projects on the Pawcatuck River and the Ten Mile River system.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awarded the funding through the American Recovery and Investment Act of 2009,

with the intent that only “shovel-ready” projects are eligible for the stimulus monies. The funds will be used by the CRMC, along with its partners,



Photo courtesy of: WPWA

A an upstream view of Lower Shannock Falls, where dam obstructions will be removed to restore fish passage.

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the R.I. Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM), and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Associa-

tion, to complete high-priority restoration projects already underway. Work on the six projects in Rhode Island began in July 2009. The Rhode Is-

land River Ecosystem Restoration project will restore and improve riverine habitat for migratory fish species, as well as associated riverine wetlands, upland ri-

parian areas and ecological connections with upstream open water spawning grounds and downstream estuarine systems. Species that will

CRMC debuts Hazards chapter

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) recently proposed a new chapter for the Metro Bay Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), which addresses natural hazards – hurricanes, floods and sea level rise – within the Metro Bay region.

The CRMC held a public workshop back in March and has incorporated suggested changes in the document as provided by

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South Coast, *continued from Page 1*

benefit from the restoration include Atlantic salmon, American shad, blueback alewife, sea lamprey, American eel and brook trout, as well as striped bass, bluefish and birds including black crowned night heron and hooded merganser.

“NOAA is investing in green jobs for Americans to restore habitat for valuable fish and wildlife and strengthen coastal communities, making them more resilient to storms, sea-level rise and other effects of climate change,” Commerce under secretary of oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator Jane Lubchenco said. “In addition to the immediate jobs created by the projects, stronger and healthier coastal communities will boost our nation’s long-term economic health.”

Four of the projects – Horseshoe Falls, Omega Pond, Hunts Mills and Turner Reservoir Dams – require construction of Denil fish ladders, and eel passages will be constructed for the projects on the Ten Mile River. The other two projects – Lower Shannock Falls and Kenyon Mills – will require complete or partial removal of dam obstructions. DEM and the other project partners will monitor the fish ladders and fish passage at each location during the summer migration and spring-through-fall out-migration.

“These funds will assure success in our efforts to restore fisheries into the Ten Mile, Woonasquatucket, Pawtuxet and Pawcatuck Rivers,” said DEM Director W. Michael Sullivan. “These rivers once teemed with herring, alewives, eels and other migratory species that began to decline as Samuel Slater began the harnessing of rivers for the Industrial Revolution. I am thrilled with the opportunity to restore thousands of acres of breeding habitat for these important fisheries and their role in both sport and commercial fishing in Rhode Island.”

The projects will restore access to approximately 13 stream miles and 1,640 acres of spawning habitat, and will also improve habitat and biodiversity in the long-term to Narragansett and Little Narragansett Bays. It will also enhance the state’s fresh and salt water fisheries valued at more than \$700 million, and will generate more than 15,000 jobs and improve

(Continued on Next Page)

Events Calendar

JANUARY 2010

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting

When: Tuesday, January 5, 2010. 6pm-9pm
Where: URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Hazard A & B

FEBRUARY 2010

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting

When: Tuesday, February 2, 2010. 6pm-9pm
Where: URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Hazard A & B Rooms

MARCH 2010

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting

When: Tuesday, March 2, 2010. 6pm-9pm
Where: URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Hazard A & B Rooms

APRIL 2010

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting

When: Tuesday, April 6, 2010. 6-9 p.m.
Where: URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Hazard A & B Rooms

MAY 2010

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting

When: Tuesday, May 4, 2010. 6-9 p.m.
Where: URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Hazard A & B Rooms

Stimulus Award, *continued from Previous Page*

recreational and educational opportunities for the communities associated with these river systems. Work began on the Lower Shannock removal and at the Turner Reservoir and Hunt's Mills Denil fish ladder in July. Construction will begin by July 2010 and end by December 2010 on the Horseshoe Falls and Omega Pond Dam Denil fish ladders and Kenyon Mills Dam removal.

"This was a very competitive process and I applaud CRMC for putting together a successful grant proposal to restore coastal areas and fish habitat," said U.S. Senator Jack Reed, a member of the Appropriations subcommittee which oversees NOAA funding. "These projects are shovel-ready and will quickly generate 18 jobs. These grants will also benefit the local economy by supporting the growth of Rhode Island's fresh and saltwater fisheries." Reed wrote a letter to NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco supporting the CRMC's application for the funding. In February 2009, NOAA received \$167 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to restore coastal habitat and help stimulate the nation's economy. The agency received a total of 814 proposals from 34 states and five territories, totaling more than \$3 billion in requests. NOAA

selected 50 proposals from those submitted representing "high quality, high priority projects to restore U.S. coasts on a grand scale."

Chris Fox, executive director of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) said, "The association is excited to be awarded this funding from NOAA. It will allow us to restore 1,300 acres associated with Worden's Pond much faster than we pro-

The association has made it a priority to restore fish passage on the Wood-Pawcatuck River – for example, our work to upgrade the fish ladder at Bradford Dam in 2008 – but that work is only a small portion of what we do, and will continue to do, to protect the watershed."

"The CRMC is thrilled to receive \$3 million in much-needed funding from NOAA for six very

worthy fish passage restoration projects," said CRMC Chairman Michael M Tikoian. "These funds will restore miles of river and many acres of fish spawning habitat, and greatly enhance these riverine environments for fish and avian species, as well as for all Rhode Islanders. We cannot put a value on restoring these rivers to their natural state, but there is an immense



Photo courtesy of: WPWA

Horseshoe Falls, where a Denil fish ladder will be constructed to restore fish passage.

jected – 2011 instead of 2018 – giving us seven extra spawning seasons. We have high expectations of the projects' success and know they will greatly help Rhode Island's fishing industry. This funding, only 2.3 percent of which will go toward WPWA project oversight – will also allow us to initiate all three Pawcatuck River projects concurrently. Thank you also to NOAA's Rhode Island Restoration Team, without which this work would not be possible.

benefit to the environment and to the Rhode Island economy in completing these restoration projects. We look forward to working with our project partners to complete this work, and thank them for their efforts."

For more information on the CRMC's habitat restoration projects, go to the web site at www.crmc.ri.gov and click on Habitat Restoration under Topics.

Hazards Chapter, *continued from Page 1*

many stakeholders. Additionally, the CRMC issued a 30-day public notice in July and solicited public comment. The chapter was adopted by the full Council at the September 8, 2009 meeting, and became effective in late September.

The objective of the new SAMP chapter, Natural Hazards, is to inform communities, state and local government, and the public on the relevant coastal hazard issues within the Metro Bay region – the cities of Cranston, East Providence, Providence and Pawtucket. It also proposes recommendations to address and mitigate those hazards. The Metro Bay region is an economic engine, and it faces the challenges of proactive planning for anticipated sea level rise and damage associated with hurricanes and other storm events. The cities are acting to make this region of Narragansett Bay a more appealing place to live and work by improving the economic, social and environmental resources of the working waterfront; attracting major developers with more predictable and efficient permitting; and providing recreation and access to the water.

“With billions of dollars at stake and a potentially greater population moving into these waterfront areas, the need for this chapter was clear,” said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. “The Natural Hazards chapter will educate the communities and the state, and help to provide proactive recommendations so that the revitalization of these cities can take into account the natural hazards that could potentially threaten residents, infrastructure and commerce.”

Complementing the newly adopted SAMP chapter, the CRMC also amended its coastal program in early 2008 with the addition of Section 145 – Climate Change and Sea Level Rise, which projects sea level to rise 3 to 5 feet by 2100. The higher projected mean sea level will have dramatic impacts on Rhode Island’s shoreline, physically affecting coastal infrastructure, residential and commercial buildings and coastal habitats. Increased risk of flooding and storm damage is expected to impact areas farther inland. Flood and storm damage associated with hurricanes and sea level rise will also negatively impact the local and state economies. The last two significant hurricanes to make landfall in Rhode Island were in 1938 and 1954. Since that time significant coastal development has taken place and many new projects are planned within the flood hazard areas of the Metro Bay SAMP region. This chapter defines the hazards of concern and provides recommendations to minimize the risk from hurricane damage and flooding.

The Metro Bay Region SAMP is the fifth to be adopted by the CRMC. For the complete chapter, go to http://www.crmc.ri.gov/regulations_adopted/090809_MB-SAMP_Hazards.pdf and for more information on the Metro Bay SAMP, go to the CRMC web site, www.crmc.ri.gov and click on SAMPs under Topics.

OREC calls Rhode Island, CRMC leaders in marine spatial planning

The Ocean Renewable Energy Coalition, a national trade association, recently recognized the State of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council as a leader in developing Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs), particularly the Ocean SAMP, which is currently underway.

On September 10 the Coalition (OREC) filed comments on a framework for ocean policy coordination and marine

spatial planning in response to President Obama's Ocean Management Task Force. OREC represents the marine renewable energy industry, including wave, tidal, hydrokinetic, current, ocean thermal energy conversion and, along with other trade associations, offshore wind, solar and biomass.

"Rhode Island is involved in an extensive ocean planning effort which can be considered in the vanguard of [Marine Spatial Planning] initiatives," the comments stated. "The state's Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs),

many of which have been in place for 30 years, are now being updated to create a more unified system of ocean zones."

being developed will zone Rhode Island's offshore waters by assigning specific use designations for current and potential future uses,

including renewable energy. The SAMP study area covers an area of approximately 1,547 square miles (1,168 square nautical miles). Beyond state waters, the SAMP will be developed with federal agencies that have jurisdiction in federal waters.

For more information on the Ocean SAMP, go to [*The Ocean SAMP boundary*](http://sea-</p>
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The CRMC instituted water type classifications in 1983, effectively zoning all coastal waters of the state, to determine what types of development, if any, would be allowed in certain areas. There are six water types ranging from Type 1, the highest level of protection, to Type 6, which is designated for industrial waterfronts. The CRMC's coastal program and, in particular, its SAMP development process, is nationally recognized as one of the best in the U.S. and has also be touted as groundbreaking internationally. The Ocean SAMP

grant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/ and for more information on the CRMC's other SAMPs, go to <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/> and click on Topics and then SAMPs.

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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

The CRMC and Army Corps of Engineers, the towns of South Kingstown, Charlestown and Westerly, and other partners were honored in June with a Coastal America Partnership Award for work done on the South Coast Habitat Restoration Project. Pictured from left to right are CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, Laura Ernst, Janet Freedman of CRMC, NOAA Assistant Administrator Laura Furgione, CRMC Executive Director Grover Fugate, Dan Goulet of CRMC, and Colonel Philip T. Feir of the USACE. At right, CRMC staff, former CRMC staff person Laura Ernst, CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian and Executive Director Grover Fugate hold their Coastal America awards.



At left, all of the award recipients and sponsors gather at Ninigret Park, including NOAA, the USACE, CRMC, towns of Westerly, Charlestown and South Kingstown, URI faculty and staff, and the dredging contractors.

Profile: Council member Robert G. Driscoll

Newest CRMC Council member Robert G. Driscoll knows a thing or two about keeping busy. The 60-year-old Portsmouth native has been deeply involved in the affairs of his home state for more than 30 years.

Driscoll graduated from Portsmouth High School in 1967, from Brown University in 1971 – with a concentration in American civilization – and then graduated from the University of Maine School of Law in 1976. While in high school and college, he spent his summers working at the Portsmouth Town Beach – Sandy Point – on the Sakonnet River.

During college, Driscoll also interned at Rhode Island Legal Services for two summers, and subsequently at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Maine in 1975 and 1976. While attending the University of Maine, Driscoll lived at Pine Point in Scarborough, Maine.

"I am one of those people who could never live very far away from salt water and happily, I never have," he said.

Driscoll practiced law in Newport County from 1976 to 1990, much of his work involving zoning and land use issues. He was the Portsmouth town solicitor from 1978 to 1980 and served on the town council from 1982 to 1986. While serving on the town council, Driscoll played a role in establishing the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission; he focused on developing an island-wide perspective on a variety of issues, particularly transportation and the communities' relationship with the Navy.

The town council during that time also established the Prudence Island Planning Commission to ensure, Driscoll said, "that the interests of this important part of Narragansett Bay and the Town of Portsmouth were properly brought into debate." He became the town administrator of Portsmouth in

1990. Since then the town has worked to develop an increasing number of island-wide initiatives, including founding the Aquidneck Island Partnership. The partnership later played a vital role in the creation of Aquidneck Island's West Side Master Plan, under the direction of the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission. The town has worked closely with the Aquidneck Land Trust to develop an effective open space program centered on the Greenway concept; it also developed the town-owned Glen Farm into the northern point of the Sakonnet and Cross-Island Greenways.

"Two of my favorite projects as administrator have been the salt marsh restoration projects completed in northern Portsmouth at Taylor's Point and Town Pond – also known as Boyd's Marsh," Driscoll said. He is also a member of the Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training and a member of the executive boards of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns and the Rhode Island Rural Development Commission.

When he's not working, Driscoll said he enjoys outdoor activities like biking, golf, tennis, gardening and landscaping and reading. Driscoll also ad-

mits to being a rabid college football and basketball fan.

Although he's still fairly new to the Council – Driscoll was appointed by Governor Carcieri in June 2009 – he said his experience has been positive and eye-opening.

"In many respects it is a chance to return to my roots and a welcomed mental stretch from the administrative work I have been doing for the past 19-plus years," he said. "So far I have truly enjoyed being on the Council. Working with CRMC staff has been a great experience. Narragansett Bay and the ocean are what make Rhode Island unique and it's a privilege to play a part in managing these precious resources."



Newest CRMC Council Member Robert Driscoll



Council Members

Michael M. Tikoian, Chairman
Paul E. Lemont, Vice Chair
David Abedon
W. Michael Sullivan, RIDEM
Raymond C. Coia
Bruce Dawson
Donald Gomez
Robert Driscoll

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



Photo courtesy of: WPWA

A view of the Lower Shannock Fall spillway, where dam obstructions will be removed to restore fish passage.

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