

# Coastal Features



Volume 16 Issue 4

**SUMMER 2011**

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The Newsletter of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

## CRMC, NOAA celebrate OSAMP

*The two agencies celebrate the Ocean SAMP's federal adoption*

Governor Lincoln Chafee and NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D. joined the

tion. "Today is a landmark event for the State of Rhode Island and for the

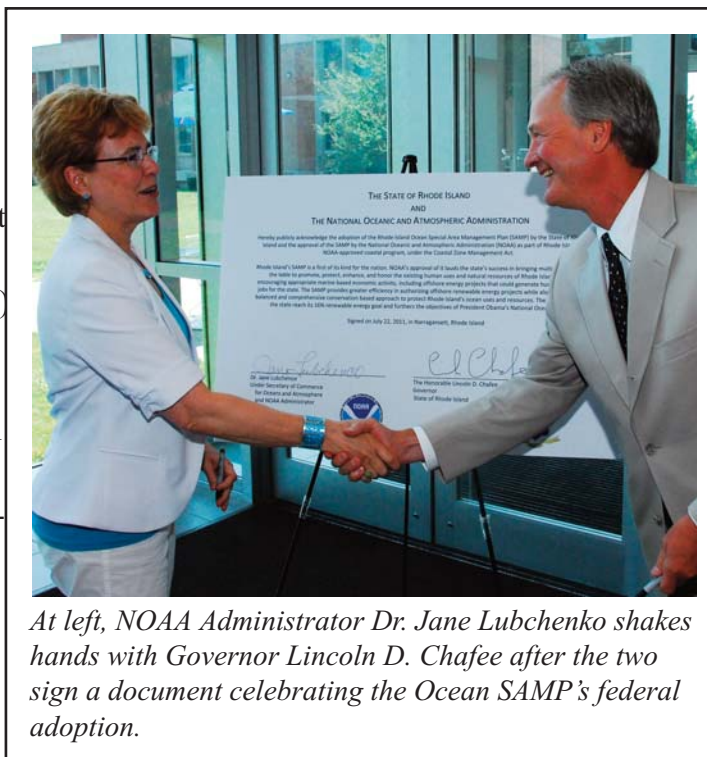
tive Order establishing the first ever National Ocean Policy. The Rhode Island plan is what

R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and other national and state officials on July 22 to recognize the Rhode

Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan (Ocean SAMP) and its recent federal adop-

Nation," said Lubchenco. "One year ago this week, President Obama signed the Execu-

NOAA officials, members of the Ocean SAMP team and others gathered at the University of



*At left, NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco shakes hands with Governor Lincoln D. Chafee after the two sign a document celebrating the Ocean SAMP's federal adoption.*

## Council oks Trust Fund projects

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

The Council approved the funding at the March 8 semi-monthly meeting in Providence. Projects approved for funding include two marsh restoration projects, five fish passage restoration projects, one eelgrass project, and one shellfish

President Obama envisioned in the National Ocean Policy. It sets a great example for other coastal states." The CRMC,

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**Ocean SAMP**, *continued from Page 1*

Rhode Island to celebrate with a signing of a SAMP approval document. NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) on May 11, 2011 approved the incorporation of the Ocean SAMP into the state's federally approved coastal management program. The Ocean SAMP, the largest ever developed by the CRMC and University of Rhode Island, was approved in late 2010 by the Council for state waters adoption.

The CRMC sought approval from NOAA for formal inclusion of the SAMP into the federally-approved R.I. Coastal Resources Management Program (RICRMP). Securing this adoption – something the CRMC does with all applicable SAMPs – allows the CRMC to exercise federal consistency within state waters, as provided for in the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA).

The Ocean SAMP spans approximately 1,467 square miles over portions of Block Island Sound, Rhode Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. The CRMC, together with the URI Graduate School of Oceanography and Coastal Resources Center, Rhode Island Sea Grant, Roger Williams University and numerous stakeholders, organizations, federal and state agencies, de-

veloped the nearly 1,000-page document in two years.

A team of 260 scientists, policy makers, educators, lawyers and students at URI and Roger Williams University School of Law worked on the SAMP's creation with CRMC staff and others. Using the best available science and working with well-informed and committed resource users, researchers, environmental and civic organizations, and local, state and federal government agencies, the SAMP provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex and rich ecosystem of Rhode Island's offshore waters. The document covers topics including ecology, global climate change, cultural and historic resources, fisheries, recreation and tourism, marine transportation, navigation and infrastructure, renewable energy and other offshore development, future uses, existing statutes, regulations and policies, and policies of the Ocean SAMP.

For federal waters adoption, the CRMC has requested a geographical boundary expansion to its federal consistency boundary by documenting in advance that certain licenses, permits, leases, etc., will have a foreseeable effect on the state's coastal zone. The CRMC will also establish formal agree-

ments with key federal agencies by obtaining the geographical boundary extension approval from NOAA; continuing close coordination with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE, formerly MMS) through the Atlantic Governor's Consortium; and establishing a formal working relationship with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

"Prior to this plan, individual proposals for new ocean uses generated conflict that wasted time and energy," Lubchenco said. "Now, with this plan, there is overarching guidance about balancing different uses. A healthy economy and a healthy ocean go hand in hand. This plan enables both. This plan will create jobs, while helping to meet the White House's energy goal of reducing the nation's use of oil by one-third by a little more than a decade from now."

The full Ocean SAMP document is available online at [www.crmc.ri.gov](http://www.crmc.ri.gov), under Regulations and SAMPs, or on the official SAMP web site: <http://sea-grant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/>.

**Trust Fund, continued from Page 1**

restoration project.

The Council awarded \$55,000 to Save The Bay and the Rhode Island Eelgrass Mapping Task Force for the acquisition of aerial imagery and performance of field work to update the inventory of eelgrass beds in Narragansett Bay. Save The Bay will collaborate with other members of the task force to acquire and interpret new aerial photos, and to ground-truth eelgrass information. This work is critical to many town planners, state environmental agencies, federal resource agencies and even coastal develop-

ers. Mapping eelgrass is a first step toward its management and restoration.

The Council also awarded \$27,089 to The Nature Conservancy for the Goosewing Beach Salt Marsh Restoration project, which will restore the ecology of the salt marsh at Quicksand Pond in Little Compton by managing the

colonization and spread of the invasive plant, *Phragmites australis*. The restoration will improve the habitat quality of mudflats and maintain native shoreline plant communities for shorebirds and



*Photo courtesy of the Mill at Shady Lea*

*A view of Shady Lea Mill Dam, where partners plan to study the feasibility of dam removal and restoration that would restore two acres of the Mattatuxet River and open up a half mile of stream for fish passage.*

other wildlife.

The town of South Kingstown received \$25,000 in funding for the Factory Pond Bypass Fishway in South Kingstown. The project will restore more than 35 acres of alewife spawning and nursery habitat, as well as American eel rearing habitat in Green Hill Pond.

Both the dam and outflow channel at the site were heavily damaged during the floods in 2010. The town plans to repair and reconstruct the dam in 2011, and as part of this work, the bypass stream outlet will

be stabilized while also providing diadromous fish passage.

The RIDEM Division of Fish & Wildlife received \$20,000 for fish passage improvements to the Palisades fishway in Peace Dale. The department also received \$45,000 in partial funding for similar improvements to the Main Street

Dam and Fishway in Wakefield. These projects will rehabilitate river herring and American eel access to approximately 300 spawning and rearing acres of the Saugatucket River.

The Council also approved \$8,000 in funds toward the Shady Lea Mill Fish Passage and Dam Assessment in North

*(Continued on Page 5)*

# CRMC releases annual ROW report

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) has released its 2009-2010 annual report on rights-of-way in the state, "Designation of Public Rights-of-Way to The Tidal Areas of The State." The report is available online at <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/publicaccess/row2010.pdf>.

From July 2009 through June 2010, the CRMC continued its ongoing efforts to discover and designate public rights-of-way to the tidal areas of Rhode Island, under its legislative mandate (RIGL 46-23-17). Beginning in 1978, this mandate tasked the Council with identifying and designating all public rights-of-way to the shore. To meet this charge, the CRMC created a Rights-of-Way Subcommittee. The report details actions of the subcommittee, as well as legal proceedings stemming from these activities and subsequent actions of the Council.

Significant actions during the reporting period include the continued tracking of legal cases that have resulted from the Subcommittee's activities and actions regarding the proposed construction of a public boat launch ramp and parking facility at a CRMC-designated right-of-way.

While no new rights-of-way were designated during this time period, the Subcommittee was advised on the status and proceedings of issues pertaining to three currently designated ROWs: ongoing litigation between the City of Newport and the use of a portion of the Howard Wharf ROW by a liquor licensee; the proposed boat launch ramp at the East Transit Street ROW in Providence; and an apparent encroachment on the Rocky Hollow Road ROW in East Greenwich. Legal counsel has also been working with the Rhode Island Attorney General's office on legal research regarding public beach access and CRMC ROWs located along Atlantic Avenue in Westerly.

According to the report, the goal of the CRMC is to designate at least one public right-of-way

for each mile of shoreline. With 224 sites designated along 420 miles of Rhode Island shoreline, the Council is more than halfway to its goal.

Under its mandate, the CRMC has accomplished a number of tasks to provide outreach and education, as well as cooperation with cities, towns and other state agencies. The CRMC addressed public access to the shore in Narragansett Bay's urban areas when it created the Urban Coastal Greenway (UCG) regulations as part of the Metro Bay Special Area Management Plan. The UCG offers development projects within the SAMP area the option to create an easement for public access to the shore as compensation for allowing a more compact vegetated coastal buffer zone than required by Section 150 of the RI Coastal Resources Management Program (RICRMP or Red Book). The goal of offering this option is to create the Urban Coastal Greenway, a public access pathway along the shores of Cranston, East Providence, Pawtucket and Providence that includes parking and access from the street side of a coastal property to the shore.

The CRMC also established an Adopt-an-Access Program to form partnerships between the Council, municipalities and private groups or individuals to improve CRMC ROWs. The program works through a memorandum of understanding that establishes each partner's role. To-date, 13 CRMC rights-of-way have been adopted under the program by a variety of groups.

"Our annual report shows that the CRMC continues to work hard to fulfill its mandate and provide valuable public access to all areas of the state," said CRMC Chairman Michael M. Tikoian. "The ongoing legal proceedings are proof positive that public access continues to be at the forefront of many communities and the State. It is vital to the public's right to utilize the shore for recreational purposes, as is the CRMC's role in discovering and designating these areas."

**Trust Fund**, *continued from Page 3*

Kingstown. Save The Bay, RIDEM and the Mill at Shady Lea plan to study dam removal options and begin design on a river restoration project to enhance riverine and anadromous fish habitat. A project there would restore two acres of the Mattatuxet River and open up a half mile of stream habitat for fish passage.

Hog Island Incorporated was awarded \$2,300 in funds toward the Hog Island Salt Marsh Restoration project in Portsmouth. The project will restore tidal flushing to the southeastern salt marsh complex on Hog Island. The barrier beach there has migrated inland over the last several decades, blocking a tidal creek that led to the western side of the marsh. The creek blockage has resulted in restricted tidal flow to half of the complex and impounded water in the high marsh, which has allowed Phragmites to grow.

The Trust Fund also provided \$1,580 to the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace

and Museum for the Gilbert Stuart Fish Ladder and Eelway Adjustments project. The museum plans to remove the fish ladder on-site and construct customized modifications to the dam to accommodate a redesigned fish ladder, which will improve the passage of river herring. The project will rehabilitate river access to approximately 60 acres of spawning habitat in the Narrow River, as well as American eel rearing habitat.

The Nature Conservancy was awarded \$41,031 in partial funding for a shellfish restoration project in Ninigret Pond. This is a pilot project that will test the effect of enhancing substrate (material to which oyster seed must adhere in order to grow) in the pond on oyster recruitment and growth.

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 \$1.87 million for 67 projects, which have leveraged more than \$18 million in matching funds.

Coastal Features is published by the RI Coastal Resources Management Council. It is financed in part by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act, as amended.

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



*Above: Volunteers including Janet Freedman, coastal geologist at CRMC, take part in the Narragansett Bay Commission's annual Earth Day cleanup of the Woonasquatucket River in Providence. Though the NBC was forced to cancel the 2010 cleanup because of the flooding last March, the 2009 cleanup had more than 225 volunteers helping to remove 105 cubic yards of debris from the river banks. Below: Kevin Cute of CRMC speaks to the public about aquatic invasive species at Boating Safety Day while Mittzilla, the Chinese Mitten Crab, stands in the background.*



*Above: Two volunteers carry bags of debris along the cleanup site, as part of the NBC 2011 River Cleanup. Below: Kevin Cute of CRMC speaks to the public about marine aquatic invasive species as part of Boating Safety Day,*



# CRMC Photo Page

# CRMC rewards students in science fair

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 2011 Rhode Island Science and Engineering Fair.

This year's science and engineering fair took place on March 26 at the Community College of Rhode Island's Knight Campus in Warwick, and showcased engineering, science and environmental projects from 50 schools and more than 360 students from grades 6 through 12. This year students showed a total of 336 projects, and the CRMC awarded bonds for projects ranging from acid salt water impacts on mussel shell mass, tidal turbines and garden rooftops to oil spill remediation, hurricanes and tsunami protection barriers.

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 Fiona Paine of Barrington High School for her project, "Sustainable Solution to Oil Spill Remediation." Olivia Phillips of Mount Hope High School was awarded the second place prize of a \$50 savings bond for her project, "Warmer Sea Temperatures and the Effects on Hurricane Strength." Third place and a \$50 savings bond went to Nick Murgo of Mount Hope High School for his project, "The Crude Killer."

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 Emily Gleason from Saint Philomena School for her project, "The Effects of Acidified Salt Water on the Mass of Mussel Shells." The second place savings bond for \$50 went to Jennifer Yates, also from Saint Philomena School, for her project, "Is the area underneath the Sakonnet River Bridge in Tiverton, RI a good place for a tidal turbine?" Thomas Pawlitschek of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Academy received third place and a \$50 savings bond for his project, "Gardens on Rooftops: How cool are they?"

The students received 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 a decade.

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

This is the 63rd year of the science fair. 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.



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Photo courtesy of: Nat Rea

*An aerial view of Goosewing Beach and its salt marsh. The CRMC awarded funds to The Nature Conservancy to restore the salt marsh at Quicksand Pond in Little Compton, as part of the annual RI Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Trust Fund awards. The restoration will improve the habitat quality of mudflats and maintain native shoreline plant communities for shorebirds and other wildlife.*

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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