

# Coastal Features

INFORMATION  
ABOUT THE  
RHODE ISLAND  
COASTAL  
RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT  
PROGRAM

FALL 1996

VOLUME V, No. 1

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

After a great deal of action and debate, the General Assembly passed two pieces of legislation of particular importance to the CRMC before recessing in July. The first, the Marine Infrastructure Maintenance Act of 1996, represents an effort to address the long-standing dredging problem facing Rhode Island. The second, entitled "An Aquaculture Act", significantly amends two existing chapters of the Rhode Island General Laws. The amendments clarify agency roles with regard to aquaculture activities and resolve problems of overlapping jurisdiction in the regulation of freshwater wetlands in coastal areas. With the enactment of each of these pieces of legislation, the General Assembly has directed the focus of much of the Council's planning work for at least the next year.

### The Marine Infrastructure Maintenance Act of 1996

The "Marine Infrastructure Maintenance Act of 1996" designates the Council as the lead agency for dredging in the state and represents an effort to address problems resulting from the lack of a general maintenance dredging policy and program in Rhode Island. In accordance with the legislation, the Council is mandated to:

coordinate the interests of the state, including those of other state agencies, with regard to dredging; formulate and adopt a state dredging policy which integrates those interests; cooperate, negotiate and enter into agreements on behalf of the state with regard to dredging; act as the primary point of contact for all dredging applications; and, develop, prepare, adopt, implement and maintain a comprehensive plan for dredge material management. The legislation establishes an advisory committee made up of representatives from government, industry and academia to assist the Council on environmental issues related to dredging activities and regulations. Upon recommendation by the advisory committee, the Council is required to issue rules and regulations for dredging including the transporting and disposal of all dredge materials. The legislation requires the Council to identify and establish one or more in-water disposal sites for dredge material disposal from marinas and yacht clubs by January of 1997, and to identify

and establish one or more additional disposal sites for dredge material disposal from other sources by January of 1998.

The legislation also directs the Department of Environmental Management to promulgate and adopt water quality standards that conform with the Environmental Protection Agency's rules, regulations and guidelines applicable to dredging, and the transportation and disposal of dredge material.

After years of no comprehensive state maintenance dredging policy and program, the General Assembly has recognized that the negative effects of inaction on both the environment and the economy of the state are increasing. While the issue of dredging has been a contentious one, the General Assembly, in its adoption of this bill, is requiring all those with an interest in the issue to work with the Council to develop a comprehensive maintenance dredging program.

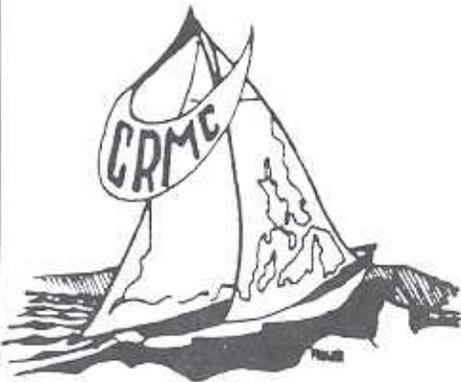
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Perhaps the greatest immediate challenge of that program will be the designation of at least one disposal site for marinas and yacht clubs by January of 1997. The Council has already begun preliminary work on this task and anticipates a very busy fall. Look for progress reports on the development and implementation of the comprehensive state dredging policy and disposal site selection in future issues of *Coastal Features*.



## Coastal Features

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This issue of *Coastal Features* was edited by Laura Miguel. To comment on any article or to make address changes, write the CRMC at the Oliver Stedman Government Center, 4808 Tower Hill Road, Wakefield, RI 02879 or contact us on-line at 104041.2601@compuserve.com.

## An Aquaculture Act

Signed by Governor Almond on August 6th, "An Aquaculture Act" amended two sections of the Rhode Island General Laws in a manner that significantly effects the powers and duties of the Council. The Act modifies Chapter 20-10, entitled Aquaculture, and Chapter 46-23, the Council's enabling legislation. As would be expected, the amendments affect the CRMC's role in regulating aquaculture activities. The second area addressed in the amendments concerns the protection of freshwater wetlands in close proximity to or within the Council's jurisdictional areas.

While the CRMC has, since its creation, been responsible for the management and regulation of aquaculture activities in Rhode Island's coastal waters, the amendments to R.I.G.L. 20-10 designate the CRMC as the lead state agency for all aquaculture activities within the state regardless of their location. This means that land-based aquaculture activities, whether within or outside the coastal zone, will require Council approval. Additionally, approvals required from other state and federal agencies will be coordinated through the CRMC in order to facilitate the permit process.

The amendments to Chapter 20-10 do not remove existing requirements for proposed aquaculture projects to obtain any other necessary state or federal approvals. Rather, the amendments recognize that there are a variety of aquaculture methods and establishes a consistent regulatory framework and lead agency for all types of aquaculture activities.

Amendments to the Council's enabling legislation (R.I.G.L. 46-23) contained in the Act attempt to address the issue of overlapping jurisdiction between the CRMC and RIDEM as it relates to freshwater wetlands. In the past applicants proposing work within the Council's jurisdiction which had the potential to impact freshwater wetlands were required to obtain the approval of both the CRMC and RIDEM, Division of Freshwater Wetlands. With the adoption of amendments to the Council's enabling legislation, the General Assembly has directed the CRMC and RIDEM to designate a jurisdictional line within three months for the purposes of regulating freshwater wetlands in the state. Those freshwater wetlands seaward of the line would fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Council and therefore, would not require any RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands review or approval. The amendments further mandate the CRMC to develop rules and regulations for the management and protection of freshwater wetlands under the Council's jurisdiction.

The General Assembly's action will result in a clearer and more efficient permit process while providing a more comprehensive program for the protection of Rhode Island's coastal zone. The Council has already begun working with RIDEM to determine the jurisdictional line. Once completed, the Council will then focus its efforts on developing rules and regulations for the protection and management of freshwater wetlands within its jurisdiction.

## Federal Coastal Zone Management Activities

### Council Initiates Assessment of Priority Enhancement Needs

The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) is currently in the process of revising an assessment of Rhode Island's priority coastal management needs based on the recently reauthorized Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and new federal requirements and guidance associated with section 309.

Section 309 of the CZMA establishes a voluntary coastal zone enhancements program to encourage states and territories to develop program changes in one or more coastal zone enhancement areas. These areas include: wetlands; public access; coastal hazards; cumulative and secondary impacts; energy and government facility siting; marine debris; ocean resources; and special area management plans. Also, as a result of the recent reauthorization of the CZMA, aquaculture has been added as the ninth enhancement area.

In order to be eligible for grants, states must submit to NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) an assessment of the need for improvement in each of the nine areas and a strategy to address the priority area(s) identified in the assessment. While final determination of the state's priority enhancement areas rests with OCRM, this determination is made in full consultation with the state and with due consideration of public comment. Assessments and strategies are due to OCRM in January of 1997.

Rhode Island's last assessment,

completed in 1992 and revised in 1993, identified wetlands, public access, special area management planning and cumulative and secondary impacts as priority enhancement areas for the state. Based on this assessment, a strategy for improvement was developed. Most of the work tasks associated with this strategy have been completed or are in their final stages. Examples of such tasks include revisions to the Salt Ponds and Narrow River special area management plans and the development and adoption of coastal wetlands mitigation policies.

Recently, an informal survey of Council members, staff and participants in the Council's previous section 309 assessment was conducted. The results of this survey will be used as a starting point for determining the Council's priority enhancement areas for the next three years.

During the next few months, staff will be closely assessing the status of each of the enhancement areas in an effort to determine priority needs. Based on this assessment, a strategy will then be developed. Public input is welcomed at all points during this process. Therefore, if you are aware of a particular problem or opportunity for coastal enhancement that would fit in one or more of the nine enhancement areas, please call or write the CRMC. Your efforts in this regard will not only contribute to the value and validity of this project, but will also help the Council better protect Rhode Island's coastal resources.

### Rhode Island Coastal Program Undergoes Federal Review

During the week of September 9th, the Rhode Island coastal program was evaluated by representatives from NOAA's Office of Oceans and Coastal Resources Management (OCRM) and the Massachusetts coastal program. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act which requires the periodic review of the performance of states with respect to coastal management. The primary goal of the evaluation was to identify the program's major accomplishments since last being evaluated in June of 1992 and those areas where the program could be improved.

The evaluation included meetings with Council staff, representatives from the RIDEM, several private interest groups, municipal officials, and members of the General Assembly. During the meetings, evaluators had an opportunity to question participants on perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Rhode Island coastal program. In addition, a public meeting was held on the evening of the 11th to allow individuals an opportunity to comment on the performance of the Council and the Rhode Island coastal program.

Following the review, the OCRM will make a report to the Council detailing the evaluation team's findings. For areas where a need for improvement is identified,

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# Governor Almond "Coastal Resources"

## State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

### GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION

Whereas, the leaders of the State of Rhode Island, in 1971, had the foresight to enact legislation creating the Coastal Resources Management Council; and

Whereas, for the past twenty-five years, the Coastal Resources Management Council has been managing the coastal resources of Rhode Island with distinction; and

Whereas, the CRMC has faithfully followed its stated policy "...to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore the coastal resources of the state for this and succeeding generations.."; and

Whereas, the late Governor Frank Licht, following passage of the legislation creating the CRMC, established by Executive Order the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island to assist and aid the Council in carrying out its charge; and

Whereas, through the dedicated efforts of the staff of both the CRMC and the CRC continue its leadership role in coastal management and have gained national as well as international recognition; and

Whereas, in the month of July 1996, the Council and CRC celebrate their twenty-fifth year as protectors of the coastal environment.

NOW THEREFORE, I LINCOLN ALMOND, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM,

THE MONTH OF JULY, 1996

As

RHODE ISLAND COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MONTH

in the State of Rhode Island.

### Revised "Redbook" Now Available

The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Program, more commonly known as the "Redbook", has been reprinted to include all of the program changes made since its last printing in 1990. Because of amendments adopted since 1990, the document and its addendum had become increasingly difficult to follow. Now in a three-ring binder format, any revisions to the RICRMP can be easily inserted into the appropriate section.

The revised document is available for \$20.00 (check or money order only) at the Council's offices located at the Stedman Government Center in Wakefield and at 40 Fountain St. in Providence.

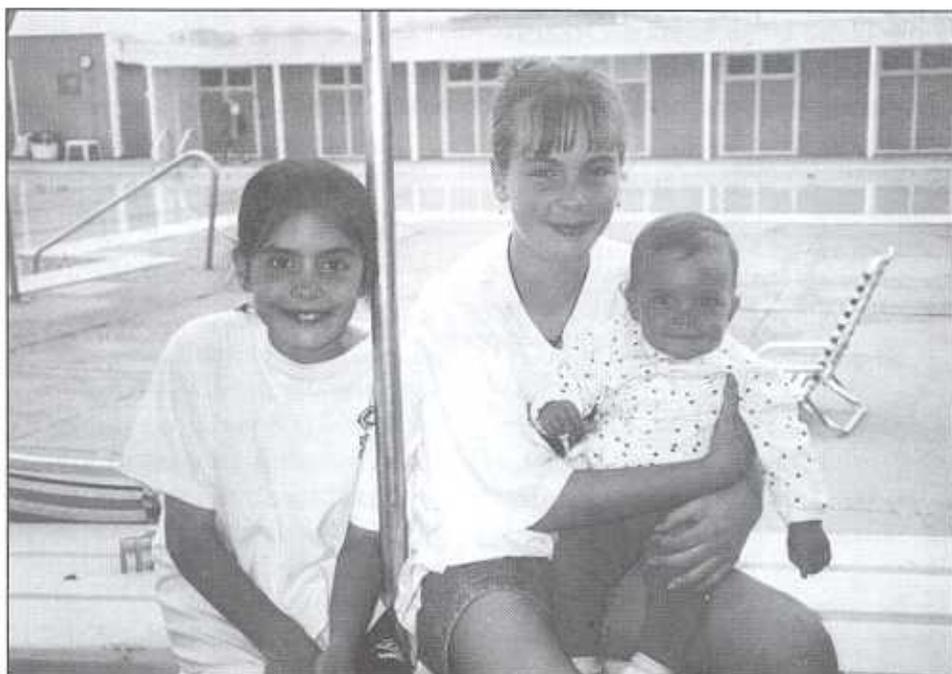
# and Proclaims July Management Month"



Staff member Jim Boyd, Council Chair Sandra Thornton-Whitehouse, and Executive Director Grover Fugate share a laugh at the Council's twenty-fifth anniversary celebration.

In honor of the Council's twenty-fifth anniversary, Governor Lincoln Almond issued a proclamation naming July, 1996 as Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Month. The proclamation was read at an anniversary celebration hosted by Council Chair, Sandra Thornton-Whitehouse at Spouting Rock Beach Association in Newport. Together with their families, staff and Council members had an opportunity to take off their work hats and enjoy the afternoon at the beach, a pastime that reminds us all of the importance of Rhode Island's coastal resources and the need for their careful management. Council members and staff would like to thank Ms. Thornton-Whitehouse for her kind hospitality.

Heather Fugate, Amy Fugate and Kelley Rose Miguel join in the fun at the Council's twenty-fifth anniversary celebration.



## COASTWEEKS '96

For the ninth consecutive year, Rhode Island will be participating in the international COASTWEEKS celebration scheduled to take place from September 21st through October 14th. This three week celebration includes beach clean ups, nature walks, boat races, lectures, and other fun activities for the entire family, many of which are free or low-cost.

A cornerstone of the COASTWEEKS celebration is the International Coastal Cleanup which kicks-off the COASTWEEKS celebration on Saturday, September 21st. This international event is coordinated by the Center for Marine Conservation in partnership with hundreds of state, local and non-profit groups. In Rhode Island, the "Bag It" beach clean up and plastic litter survey is organized by the Audubon Society and has attracted scores of sponsors, ranging from scout troops to sport fishermen groups, and thousands of volunteers.

Among the many events scheduled in addition to the "Bag It" beach clean up, the Rhode Island COASTWEEKS celebration will include the first annual Salt Ponds Coalition benefit auction, a lecture series on coastal issues at the Cross' Mills Public Library in Charlestown, and the fourth annual "Taste of Rhode Island" at the Newport Yachting Center.

Look for the free COASTWEEKS calendar of events at tourists information desks and libraries throughout the state. For more information on the Rhode Island COASTWEEKS celebration, contact the CRMC at 277-2476.

### The U.S. 1995 Dirty Dozen

The following are the twelve most frequent debris items collected on U.S. shorelines, waterways and under water during the 1995 coastal cleanup.

Rank	Debris Item Collected	Total Number Reported	Percent of Total Total Debris
1.	Cigarette butts	800,358	19.72
2.	Plastic pieces	247,103	6.09
3.	Foamed plastic pieces	218,972	5.40
4.	Plastic food bags/wrappers	215,901	5.32
5.	Plastic caps/lids	173,183	4.29
6.	Paper pieces	172,750	4.26
7.	Glass pieces	141,491	3.49
8.	Glass beverage bottles	135,982	3.35
9.	Metal beverage cans	135,613	3.34
10.	Plastic straws	131,625	3.24
11.	Plastic beverage bottles	121,852	3.00
12.	Foamed plastic cups	99,437	2.45
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2,595,267</b>	<b>63.95</b>



## Rhode Island's 1995 Dirty Dozen

The following are the twelve most frequent debris items collected in Rhode Island at 44 sites (including four river sites) during the 1995 coastal cleanup.

Rank	Debris Item Collected	Total Number Reported	Percent of Total Debris
1.	Cigarette butts	20,061	120.42
2.	Plastic pieces	7,199	7.33
3.	Plastic food bags/wrappers	5,933	6.04
4.	Plastic caps/lids	4,893	4.98
5.	Plastic straws	4,052	4.12
6.	Foamed plastic pieces	3,880	3.95
7.	Glass pieces	3,292	3.35
8.	Paper pieces	3,261	3.32
9.	Metal beverage cans	3,191	3.25
10.	Plastic beverage bottles	2,514	2.56
11.	Foamed plastic cups	2,383	2.46
12.	Glass beverage bottles	2,383	2.43
<b>Totals</b>		<b>63,074</b>	<b>64.21</b>

## 1995 Coastal Cleanup Results

*The following article and accompanying data have been provided by the Center for Marine Conservation and the Rhode Island Audubon Society.*

Last year more than 134,900 citizens armed with trash bags, pencils and data cards hit America's beaches, waterways, and underwater areas to rid them of trash and document the types and quantities of the debris they collected as part of the 10th Annual International Coastal Cleanup.

Volunteers in 43 U.S. states and territories covered more than 5,800 miles at almost 3,000 shoreline and underwater cleanup sites, removing 2,544,000 pounds of debris. On average, each volunteer in the 1995 Cleanup collected 18.9 pounds of debris and recorded every individual item on a detailed card for analysis by the Center for Marine Conservation. In all, more than 4 million pieces of debris were collected and catalogued by volunteers in the 1995 Cleanup in the U.S. In Rhode Island, 1,650 volunteers

collected over 8 tons of debris at 44 sites. Sponsored by the Rhode Island Audubon Society, the eighth annual "Bag It" coastal cleanup was held on September 16, 1995 and for the first time included both river and underwater sites.

Nationally, plastic was the most abundant form of debris collected in the 1995 Cleanup, comprising 61 percent of all the debris gathered during the event. In Rhode Island, plastic comprised 64 percent of the total volume of debris collected.

In terms of numbers, the most abundant debris items collected in the 1995 Cleanup were cigarette butts. Over 800,300 cigarette butts were removed and counted by the cleanup volunteers throughout the U.S. Cigarette butts were the top debris item in 29 states including Rhode Island where over 20,000 were

reported. The number one debris item in other states included metal beverage cans in Arkansas, Idaho, Tennessee, South Dakota, and Guam; glass beverage bottles in Puerto Rico and New Mexico; and foamed plastic packing in Missouri.

Among the more unusual items found by cleanup volunteers were two bowling balls, a plastic eyeball, a human skull, a winning lottery ticket, and a nuclear waste tag. The 1995 Cleanup also produced enough materials to furnish several houses and outfit a few dozen cars.

Copies of the final U.S. Coastal Cleanup results report and individual state/territory cleanup analyses can be obtained through CMC's Atlantic Regional Office, 306A Buckroe Avenue, Hampton, Virginia 23664.

## Coastal Resources Management Council Members

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and depending on the perceived severity of the identified need, OCRM will either recommend a range of actions or require specific necessary actions. The evaluation team will also make findings on those areas where the Council has made significant progress in its efforts and major accomplishments. The team's conclusions will be reported in a future issue of *Coastal Features*. For more information on the section 309 program or the Council's recent section 312 evaluation, contact Jeff Willis at 277-2476.



## Coastal Features

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