

Coastal Features

INFORMATION
ABOUT THE RHODE
ISLAND COASTAL
RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM

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The Clean Water Action Plan

On October 18, 1997, the 25th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, Vice President Al Gore directed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to work with other federal agencies and the public to develop a Clean Water Action Plan that addresses three major goals:

- enhanced protection from public health threats posed by water pollution;
- more effective control of polluted runoff;
- promotion of water quality protection on a watershed basis.

The Vice President called for the Plan to be developed within 120 days and that it be based on three principles. First, federal agencies are to develop cooperative approaches that promote coordination and reduce duplication; second, participation of community groups and the public is to be maximized; and third, agencies should emphasize and support innovative approaches to pollution control.

On February 19, 1998, the Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP) was announced. The CWAP is built around four key tools for achieving clean water goals: a watershed approach; strong federal and state standards; natural resource stewardship; and informed citizens and officials.

As part of the watershed approach outlined in the CWAP, states will prepare a single, Unified Watershed Assessment that assesses the health of watersheds, identifies watersheds in need of restoration or preventive action, and identifies pristine or sensitive watersheds on federal lands in need of a special measure of protection. In support of this watershed approach, funds provided through the President's FY 1999 Clean Water and Watershed Restoration Budget Initiative to federal agencies will be made available to states and local organizations for the restoration and protection of watersheds.

The CWAP proposes strengthening existing water quality programs and standards through improved monitoring, implementation of Phase II stormwater permitting, the promotion of enforceable approaches to preventing and minimizing nonpoint source pollution, the establishment of standards for nutrients (phosphorous and nitrogen) based on region and type of water body, and the development of a strategy for regulating animal feeding operations.

Under natural resource stewardship, the CWAP commits all federal natural resource conservation and environmental agencies to support the watershed approach and to work with states, tribes, and others to enhance critical natural resources essential to clean water. The CWAP directs the USDA and the Department of the Interior to take the lead in developing a Unified Federal Policy to enhance watershed management and sets a goal of a net annual gain of 100,000 acres of wetlands by the year 2005. With respect to coastal waters, NOAA will take the lead on

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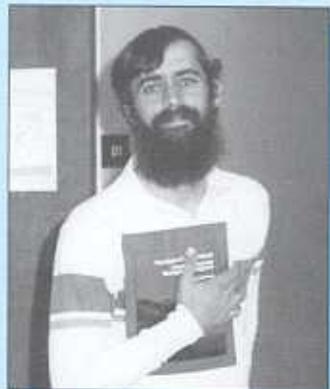
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In Memoriam



John "Skinny" Sposato, CRMC Environmental Scientist, passed away on May 18 after a yearlong fight against leukemia. Born on December 9, 1951, John was the husband of Nadine and father to Carl and Krysten. He is also survived by his father, John, Sr, his sister, a nephew, and several aunts and uncles.

John was a lifelong resident of the Westerly/Ashaway area. He graduated from Westerly High School in 1968 and the University of Rhode Island in 1981. John also served in the Army's ceremonial infantry where he received several commendations including a Medal of Commendation.

John began his career with the state in 1981 working with the DEM Division of Parks and Recreation at Burlingame State Park in Charlestown. John joined the staff at CRMC in 1987.

Those who were fortunate to work with John will remember him as an intelligent and thoughtful person who

rarely drew attention to himself. In this manner, when John had something to contribute, you knew it was worth listening to. John, although soft-spoken, took great pride in his relationships with people. Rather than pay his bills by mail, John "made the rounds" each payday, paying all his bills in person, with cash.

John measured his worth in friendships. Around town he was known by just about everybody, and everybody knew him as "Skinny": some just called him "Skin." We will sorely miss Skinny who, when life and work seemed overwhelming, would smile and say, "One day at a time". Skinny left an impression on people which will not be forgotten. As his colleagues, we will miss his professional knowledge and contributions. As his friends, we will miss his sense of humor, companionship, and much more. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family and many, many friends.



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 ricrmc@ricconnect.com.

Coastal Nonpoint Program Workshop Held

Staff from the CRMC and other partners working on Rhode Island's Coastal Nonpoint Program (CNP) participated in a national workshop entitled "The Future of State Coastal Nonpoint Programs" held on April 27-30 in Airlie, VA. The workshop was hosted by NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The workshop provided an opportunity for state coastal nonpoint program coordinators and water quality agency staff to meet with representatives from a variety of federal agencies and programs, as well as counterparts from other coastal states and territories, to discuss a number of issues related to implementation of state CNPs. Among the information presented at the workshop was: a discussion of the President's Clean Water Action Plan

and how it relates to existing statutory requirements; an overview of proposed administrative changes to CNP implementation guidance; and, descriptions of technical and financial assistance tools that can be utilized by states in implementing state CNPs.

As previously reported in *Coastal Features*, Rhode Island's CNP has received conditional approval from NOAA and EPA. In consideration of administrative changes to program requirements, the President's Clean Water Action Plan, and the many innovative implementation approaches highlighted at the workshop, Rhode Island's CNP will now be reviewed to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to controlling Rhode Island's most serious nonpoint source pollution problems that meets federal program requirements.

Dredged Material Disposal Site Update

The Rhode Island General Assembly, as detailed in the Marine Infrastructure Maintenance Act of 1996 (the Act), has mandated that the CRMC locate and designate at least one in-water disposal site for dredged material from the state's marinas and yacht clubs and, following this, locate and designate at least one in-water disposal site for dredged materials from all other sources. This task has been the focus of the CRMC's efforts under the Act since its enactment.

To meet this charge, the CRMC solicited Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from qualified firms to undertake the specific scientific data collection necessary to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) for the designation of at least one in-water disposal site for dredged material from marinas and yacht clubs. The announcement of the successful vendor is expected early this summer.

The Council has identified 5 potential disposal sites that will be studied under this RFP. Among the criteria for site consideration, sites were selected with the assumption that they will be used to dispose of clean dredged material and that they can support the volume necessary to address current needs (estimated to be 750,000 cubic yards) as well as long term maintenance needs. Four of the sites to be studied are dispersive - e.g., sediment will be gradually reintroduced into the littoral system and serve as a source of

beach replenishment. The fifth site is a deep water dispersive site. The rationale for site selection was developed by the Council's Coastal Resources Advisory Committee (the Dredging Advisory Committee) which consists of university scientists, coastal zone managers, marine trade representatives, environmental advocacy representatives, and state and federal resource manager partners.

The primary focus of the work outlined in the RFP is to gather data, both existing and new, necessary to assess the use of one or more of the sites for disposal of dredged material from marinas and yacht clubs. Specifically, the work proposed in the RFP is threefold: (1) gather and assess all existing data and information on identified sites with regard to each site's appropriateness for in-water dredged material disposal; (2) assimilate, review and assess the data gathered in (1) against all applicable state and federal dredging and dredged materials disposal regulations, and (3) develop a document which contains the required information and which can be readily used by the state as its EIS or EA for one or more of the sites' use as a dredged material disposal site.

More information on the CRMC's efforts in designating an in-water dredged material disposal site will be reported in future issues of *Coastal Features*.

Rhode Island Rivers Council

The Rhode Island Rivers Council is currently distributing information on applying for official designation as a Watershed Council (also called local watershed associations) to interested parties. The Rivers Council will recognize one local watershed council for each of the 18 Rhode Island watersheds described in the Rivers Policy and Classification Plan, adopted as RI State Guide Plan Element 162.

To be eligible for recognition, a watershed council must take responsibility for and represent the entire watershed area. The watershed council must include in its membership at least one representative from each municipality within the watershed area. Applicants should be able to demonstrate participation and support from grassroots, business and governmental interests in the watershed. Public education as well as involvement in municipal decision making should be important activities of each watershed council's mission.

Once designated, watershed councils become "bodies corporate and politic, having distinct legal existence from the state and any municipality within the watershed area in which the watershed is located" (RIGL 46-28). They will have legal standing to present testimony in all state and local administrative proceedings which impact on rivers and water quality.

A workshop on the application process will be held in mid-September and applications will be due to the Rivers Council in mid-November. For more information on applying for designation as a watershed council, contact Meg Kerr at 874-6522 or Ken Payne at 222-6655.

Essential Fish Habitat

The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) Public Hearing Document for the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) requirements of the 1996 Magnuson-Stevens Act will be released July 1. The Document will include the description and identification of EFH for the 18 species managed by the NEFMC. Comments on the public hearing draft will be accepted until July 25th. The NEFMC will be holding six public hearings throughout the region, including one in Rhode Island on July 22 from 6-10pm at the Radison Airport Hotel. Copies of the document can be obtained by contacting the NEFMC at 781-231-0422, and a copy will be available for review at the CRMC offices at the Oliver Stedment Government Center, located at 4808 Tower Hill Road, Wakefield, RI.

National Clean Boating Campaign

The Marine Environmental Education Foundation (MEEF) has launched the first annual National Clean Boating Campaign, a year round program to promote good stewardship of our water resources by boating families, marina operators, boat dealers and manufacturers. The goal of this campaign is to improve water quality from boating and boat industry activities through a national outreach educational program. Through the National Clean Boating Campaign, over 400 private and public organizations have formed a partnership to promote clean boating practices and to foster positive attitudes towards clean water and good boating.

A highlight of the campaign is the first "National Clean Boating Week" celebration of good boating and clean water from July 11 through July 19. This national program will include hundreds of events and activities throughout the country, including Rhode Island. A list of events for Rhode Island had not been finalized at the time this issue of *Coastal Features* was printed. However, many events and activities are being planned and will be announced.

The following is an abbreviated version of fact sheets produced as part of the campaign on some simple things boaters can do to promote clean water and good boating. For more information on these issues or the National Clean Boating Campaign visit their website at: www.cleanboating.org or call the MEEF at (401) 792-9025.

*Boating is good clean fun.
Let's keep it that way.*

Boating Litter and Fish Waste

Boating Litter

- Remove unnecessary packages and wrappings and bring reusable containers to the boat.
- Always bring back what you take out; this means everything solid.
- Keep litter bags on board and discard full ones at the marina dumpster or at home.
- Don't throw cigarette butts over board; use an ash tray and bring butts ashore.
- When trash accidentally falls over board, go back and get it.
- Recycle when possible and encourage marinas to recycle.
- Make a daily practice of picking up floating trash wherever you dock or anchor; ask your neighbors to do the same.

Fish Waste

- Use fish cleaning stations.
- When offshore, clean fish as they are caught and toss fish waste only in open unrestricted waters, never in a marina basin.
- Recycle fish parts by composting with eat moss, or burying in the garden as fertilizer.
- Freeze and then reuse fish parts as bait and/or chum on your next fishing trip.
- When no other option exists, bag fish parts and place in the trash container.
- Avoid releasing bait, either dead or alive, into the water.

Fueling and Bilge Care

Outboard Boats

- Fill tanks carefully to avoid spillage; wipe any fuel drops immediately with an absorption pad.
- Mix oil in fuel according to manufacturers specifications.
- Close portable tank fuel vent when boat is not in use to save fuel from vapor loss.
- Store fuel only in approved marine containers.

Boats with Built-In Fuel Tanks

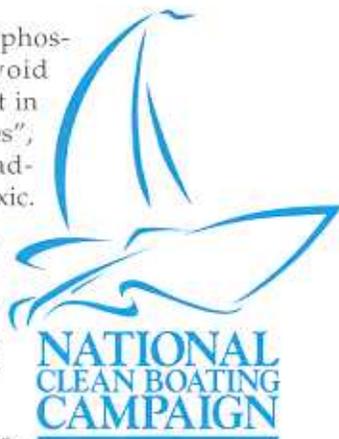
- Install a fuel/air separator in air vent line from tank to prevent vent spills during and after fill up.
- Routinely check for and fix fuel leaks; use a drip pan under your engine.
- Use a bilge oil absorbent pillow; dispose of it before fully saturated according to manufacturer's suggestion; recycle.
- Use a bilge maintenance bioremediation pad with natural oil eating bacteria.
- Display a US Coast Guard oil discharge placard if your boat is 26 feet or more in length; it's the law.

Bilge Care

- Avoid pumping any bilge water that is oily or has a sheen.
- Avoid use of bilge cleaners which are detergents or emulsifiers.

Boat Cleaning

- Choose “non-toxic” and “phosphate-free” cleaners. Avoid those that warn “do not get in eyes” or “always wear gloves”, and remember, “biodegradable” does not mean non-toxic.
- Use alternative cleaners, such as baking soda, lemon juice, vinegar, and elbow grease. Avoid those with bleach, ammonia, lye or petroleum distillates.
- Wash decks and hulls frequently with fresh water.
- Buy only as much cleaner as you need to avoid the need to dispose of leftover cleaning supplies.
- Clean boat bottoms ashore, over hard surfaces or a tarp, where all debris can be contained.
- Keep caps on bottles while cleaning, an open container might spill into the water.
- Follow label recommendations and local regulations for proper disposal.
- Recycle product containers.



Engine Maintenance

- Tune your engine regularly to help your engine operate cleanly and efficiently.
- Frequently inspect fuel lines for leaks, cracks and loose connections. Repair as necessary.
- Change oil and transmission fluids with a spill-proof pump or vacuum tank. Slip a plastic bag over the oil filter before removing and wipe oil drops immediately with an absorption pad.
- Use orange-pink colored propylene antifreeze/coolant which is less toxic than blue-green colored ethylene glycol.
- Minimize the use of engine cleaning solvents; frequently wipe the engine to keep it clean. Engine parts should be cleaned on land over a leak-free container, not over the water.
- Keep separate and recycle used oil, solvents and antifreeze; follow label instructions local regulations for disposal.

Sanding and Painting

- Perform all hull scraping, sanding and chemical stripping ashore over a drop cloth to catch debris.
- Prepare the surface with dustless sanders and vacuum to keep you, the air, the ground and other boats clean.

- Use only legal bottom paint; depending on boat use, consider a hard, nonablativ paint which may be longer lasting.
- Leave paint cans open to thoroughly dry before throwing away.

Boat Sewage Control and Pumpout Use

- Always use onshore restrooms when docked, and encourage everyone to use the shoreside facilities before casting off.
- Plan for onshore restroom stops while buying fuel or eating at waterfront restaurants.
- Prevent dumping any untreated sewage inside the three mile limit; it's illegal.
- Keep fats, solvents, oil, emulsifiers, paints, poisons, phosphates, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins out of toilets.
- Take dogs to marina's posted pet walk area (or use a pooper scooper).
- If your boat does not have a toilet, take a portable one on board and only empty it at a shoreside dumpstation or at home.

If your boat has a **MSD Type 1 or 2** toilet which pretreats sewage before discharge overboard:

- Make sure your equipment is Coast Guard certified - it's the law.
- Keep your MSD in proper working order, follow the manufacturer's suggested maintenance program.
- If your MSD uses a biodegradable disinfectant, keep the liquid container full.
- Use marine toilet tissue made for MSD use.
- Post MSD use instructions near the toilet.
- When in "No Discharge Waters", lock or secure the toilet closed so it cannot empty overboard.

If your boat has a **MSD Type 3** toilet with holding tank:

- If your boat has a y-valve and through hull, always keep them closed when inside the three mile limit or consider removing them all together so no sewage can ever go over.
- Use only environmentally compatible holding tank deodorants.
- Use marine toilet tissue made for MSD use.
- Use a pumpout facility at the end of each boating day. For more information on available pumpout facilities call the national hotline at 1-800-ASK-FISH.

The Year of the Ocean

The United Nations has declared 1998 as the International Year of the Ocean. This declaration represents an opportunity to raise public awareness about the value of the ocean to all Americans, to celebrate our considerable accomplishments in understanding the ocean, and to learn from our experiences in managing ocean resources to assure that our children have a healthy and productive ocean to enjoy.

In recognition of 1998 as the Year of the Ocean, President Clinton released Proclamation 7065, the text of which follows:



More than 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water, and more than half the world's population lives within 50 miles of a coastline. We rely on the ocean as both a source and sustenance of life on our planet. It contains a wondrous abundance and diversity of life, from the smallest microorganism to the mammoth blue whale. It is a key source of food, medicine, energy, commerce, and recreation for the peoples of the world, and the more we learn about its influence on climate and weather, the more we realize its impact on our safety and quality of life.

We are only beginning to understand the depths of the ocean's mysteries, but we are quickly learning one crucial lesson: the ocean's resources are limited, and we must work together to preserve them. Many areas are already overfished; decades of pollution, including industrial waste, sewage, and toxic runoff, has taken its toll on the health of the ocean and its living creatures. Many species of fish are threatened with extinction, even our precious coral reefs, once a safe haven for an amazing variety of animal and plant life, have suffered greatly.

Because the ocean is a treasure that all nations of the world share in common, we must work in partnership to become wiser stewards of its many riches. We must strive together—at local, national, and international levels—to preserve the ocean's health, to protect the marine environment, and to ensure the sustainable management of the myriad resources the ocean contains.

Dedicating 1998 as the Year of the Ocean is an important first step in this worldwide endeavor. Throughout the year, individuals, organizations, and governments will participate in activities designed to raise public awareness of the vital role the ocean plays in human life and of the equally vital role that human beings must play in the life of the ocean. The Year of the Ocean provides us with an extraordinary opportunity to learn more about the ocean's unique environment and to collaborate on protecting and preserving its invaluable resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim 1998 as the Year of the Ocean. I encourage the Governors of the States and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to participate in the observance of this year. I invite all Americans to learn more about the ocean and its vast biodiversity and to become involved in keeping our coastal waters safe and clean.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

For more information on the Year of the Ocean call 1-888-4yoto98 or visit the Year of the Ocean website at www.yoto.com

Top Ten Things You Can Do To Help Our Ocean

- 1) Get educated and share your knowledge. Read, surf the web and experience the ocean directly.
- 2) Be a smart shopper. Know the source and quality of your seafood.
- 3) Conserve water. Be careful when washing your car or watering your lawn. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk.
- 4) Reduce household pollutants. Cut down on and properly dispose of herbicides, pesticides and cleaning products.
- 5) Reduce waste. Dispose of trash properly. Where possible, recycle, re-use and compost.
- 6) Reduce automobile pollution. Use fuel efficient vehicles or carpool. Recycle motor oil and repair oil and air conditioning leaks.
- 7) Protect ocean wildlife. Don't dispose of fishing lines, nets or plastic items in or near the water.
- 8) Be considerate of sea life habitats. Don't feed sea birds, mammals and turtles or disturb their nesting grounds. Support marine protected areas.
- 9) Get involved. Take part in a beach clean-up or other ocean-oriented activities.
- 10) Care! Pass on your knowledge.

For more information on the Year of the Ocean call the Year of the Ocean Information Line at 1-888-4YOTO98 or on the Internet at: www.yoto98.noaa.gov

The Clean Water Action Plan (continued)

improving the monitoring of coastal waters, expanding research on emerging problems like Pfiesteria, amending Fishery Management Plans to address water quality issues, and ensuring the implementation of coastal nonpoint programs.

Finally, the CWAP recognizes the importance of reliable information for decision makers and the public. To that end, the CWAP proposes improvements in monitoring, water quality assessments and data access to assist government agencies and empower citizens.

To support the actions outlined in the CWAP, the President's FY 1999 budget includes a Clean Water and Watershed Restoration Budget Initiative which proposes \$568 million in new resources for FY 1999. As proposed, the Clean Water and Watershed Restoration Initiative will:

- increase direct support to states and tribes to carry out a watershed approach to clean water;
- increase technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and foresters to reduce polluted runoff and enhance natural resources on their lands;
- fund watershed assistance pro-

grams and grants to engage local communities and citizens in leadership roles in restoring their watersheds;

- accelerate progress in addressing critical water quality problems on federal lands;
- expand and coordinate water quality monitoring programs; and
- increase efforts to restore nationally significant watersheds, such as the Florida Everglades and San Francisco Bay-Delta.

While the CWAP offers a blueprint for the restoration and protection of our nation's water resources, ultimately its fate will depend on adequate funding to support the many initiatives proposed. Regardless, the CWAP represents a significant policy directive in that it recognizes watersheds as the appropriate planning unit for water quality management, requires better interagency coordination on the federal level, and relies upon and supports local actions. Also, the CWAP calls for the establishment of water quality standards for nitrogen and phosphorous - two nutrients essential to plant life which can be disastrous to aquatic ecosystems when introduced in excessive amounts. Nitrogen has been identified as a significant problem in the salt ponds and Narrow River watersheds. The most common sources of nitrogen and phosphorous to coastal waters are fertilizers, sewage and animal waste.

Coastweeks '98

Planning for Coastweeks '98, scheduled for September 19 - October 11, is currently underway. Coastweeks was first started in 1982 in an effort to focus attention on the value of our coast and its natural resources and has since become an annual nationwide event. Rhode Island first began participating in Coastweeks in 1987, through Rhode Island Sea Grant. The CRMC has been a partner in the celebration since 1981.

The CRMC is encouraging organizations to include Coastweeks in their events planning. Previous Coastweeks events have included the "Get the Drift and Bag It" coastal cleanup and survey, URI's lunchtime oceanography lecture series, and the Taste of Rhode Island festival. Events related to the Coastweeks theme and which are scheduled to take place during or around Coastweeks will be included in the Coastweeks calendar for distribution throughout the state. Forms for sponsors of Coastweeks events will be mailed soon. Meanwhile, please contact the CRMC with any questions regarding Coastweeks at 222-2476.



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