

Coastal Features



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CRMC Joins in Launching Industry and Government Partnership to Restore Rhode Island Wetlands

Environmental Science Services, Inc. and Narragansett Electric Company Lead First-of-its-Kind Effort

PROVIDENCE - U.S. Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) - joined by industry executives, state environmental officials, and non-profit environmental groups launched a first-of-its kind partnership on October 22, 2001 to restore Rhode Island's valuable wetlands.

The Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (RI-CWRP) will combine corporate contributions with federal and state matching funds to restore degraded coastal and freshwater wetlands and fish and wildlife habitats in the Ocean State. The program is entirely voluntary and is a joint-effort of Rhode Island corporations, government agencies and non-profit environmental groups.

At a kickoff event, held at the Citizens Bank Rotunda, Rhode Island businesses were briefed about the program's details by Sen. Chafee; senior government officials from the local, state, regional, and federal levels; business leaders; and representatives of the RI Coastal Resources Management Council, the RI Department of Environmental Management, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Save The Bay, and Coastal America, a partnership of federal agencies.

"Participation in the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership goes way beyond being a good corporate citizen," said Chafee. "You are a beacon for businesses in other states and for the private landowners who own 70 percent of the wetlands in our country. I am hopeful that your efforts will unleash a chain reaction across the nation."

The partnership will help fund priority habitat restoration projects throughout the state identified by the Rhode Island Habitat Restoration Team. Examples

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CRMC Partners in Public Benefit Aquaculture Experiment

by Kevin R. Cote

The CRMC has formed a partnership with commercial fishing groups and academic interests to conduct an experimental public benefit aquaculture project in Narragansett Bay

To that end, the CRMC issued two permits, one in the names of Dr. Tim Scott, Roger Williams University and Ken Thompson, Ocean State Fishermens Association, and the other to Dr. Scott and Mike McGivney, RI Shellfishermen's Association, to test the economic feasibility of public benefit aquaculture.

Dr. Scott said public benefit aquaculture is a common practice around the nation

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of these projects include the restoration of coastal wetlands, fish passage over dams, and the reestablishment of eelgrass beds. The RI Habitat Restoration Team is comprised of agency officials, university scientists, environmental consultants and non-profit organizations, who are collaboratively working to restore the state's coastal habitats.

"This partnership holds great promise for reversing the dramatic loss of coastal and freshwater wetlands that Rhode Island has experienced over the past century," said Robert Varney, Regional Administrator of EPA's New England Office, who pledged \$25,000 to the effort at the press conference.

Private funds contributed to the partnership will leverage federal matching dollars. The match will vary by project, but generally, every RI-CWRP dollar invested will result in up to four dollars of habitat improvement.

Environmental Science Services, Inc. (ESS), a Providence-based environmental consulting firm, and Narragansett Electric Company, the largest electricity retailer in Rhode Island, are the RI-CWRP corporate lead sponsors. Arch Chemicals, Inc., Battelle and Applied Science Associates have signed on as charter members of the partnership. Partners also include non-profit groups and academicians.

Rhode Island becomes the fourth New England state to launch a CWRP program. The program was originally launched in 1999 in Massachusetts by The Gillette Company, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. The MA-CWRP raised over \$1 million in its first year and has already supported several important restoration projects. Last year, the federal government, through the Coastal America partnership, adopted the program as a national initiative. Programs are currently active in Alaska, Maine, Connecticut, Texas, and the Gulf of Mexico. Gillette is national corporate chair of the CWRP, and the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) is the national sponsor. NAM is inviting its Rhode Island members to join the effort, as is the RI Environmental Business Council. The RICWRP will help fund priority habitat restoration projects throughout the Ocean State. Funding will be targeted toward a list of priority projects developed by the Rhode Island Habitat Restoration Team.

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At the kickoff event, John MacKenzie, director of environmental affairs for Gillette, briefed the Rhode Island partnership members about the history of CWRP and its national expansion. "Industry and government working together is the way to get the job done," MacKenzie said about the CWRP program.

This article was reprinted by permission of the RI-CWRP





Photo Courtesy of RI-CWRP

Thanks and Congratulations to the Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership! The Partnership members shown above include (front row, l-r): Richard Kleiman, Environmental Science Services, Inc., Robert V. Bibbo, President, Environmental Science Services, Inc., The Honorable Lincoln D. Chafee, U.S. Senator (R-RI), and Robert Varney, Administrator, USEPA, Region 1. Also shown is Laura Ernst, former CRMC Coastal Habitat Restoration Coordinator (second row, to Mr. Kleiman's left), and Grover J. Fugate, Executive Director, CRMC (second row, directly behind Mr. Varney).

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for replenishing natural shellfish resources; many towns operate small seasonal hatcheries to produce shellfish seed for planting in adjacent coastal waters. The public benefit aspect of this practice is tied to the assumption that an economic multiplier effect occurs when a productive shellfishery makes reliable contributions to a local economy.

The first phase of the project was completed in November when experimental plots were established in Brushneck Cove and the Bristol Shellfish Management Area. Each plot covers a 300m² area subdivided into twelve 25m² sections. Seed quahogs will be planted at different size classes (small: 5-8mm and large: 12-15 mm) into the subdivided sections that will either be covered with crushed shell ("shell hatch") for predator protection, or have no protective cover.

According to the project proposal, the experiment aims to answer two questions: 1) Is seed survival related to the planting size; and, 2) does the addition of shell hatch to the bottom contribute to the survival of quahaug seed? The experiment will run for three years at which time the plots will be harvested and the results will be analyzed.

The most desired result would be to generate a good profit from the harvest of the smaller quahogs that are planted without shell hatch. The economic benefit of this scenario accrues from the cheaper cost of the smaller quahogs, and the cheaper cost of planting without shell hatch, due to the direct and labor costs associated with this method.

If successful, this project could be a first step toward incorporating public benefit aquaculture as a method to replenish natural quahog stocks in Narragansett Bay.

Coastal Resources Management Council Bids a Fond Farewell to a Longtime Employee

by Kevin R. Cute

The family, friends, and former colleagues of Barbara Simmons from the Coastal Resources Management Council gathered at Carter's 19th Hole in North Kingstown on October 17th to celebrate Ms. Simmons's retirement after 25 and a half years of service with the CRMC. The dining room was filled with dozens of people who shared in Barbara's delight as she received a commendation for her service to the state from the RI General Assembly. And the laughter and sentiments expressed by several of her former colleagues reflected Barbara's impact on the CRMC since the agency's fledgling days to the present. Many thanks to you for your contributions over the years, and heartfelt wishes for a happy retirement from all of us here at the CRMC



Barbara Simmons (center) receives a heartfelt welcome to her retirement party from some of her former CRMC colleagues. From left to right, Willie Mosunic greets Barbara who had just been led into the dinner hall by Cheryl Allan, as Joanne Storm adjusts a bouquet that she had pinned to the guest of honor.



Photo: Laura Miguel, CRMC

Grover Fugate, the CRMC's Executive Director, stops to share a warm moment with Barbara while delivering a speech in her honor at the retirement party. Standing to the left and waiting to add his own comments is Michael Tikoian, Chairman of the CRMC. To the right, Cheryl Allan, who faces the task of filling Barbara's shoes at CRMC, also awaits her turn at the microphone.



Photo: Laura Miguel, CRMC

First Rhode Island Stormwater Management Conference Outlines Problems Offers Solutions

by Kevin R. Cute

The First Rhode Island Stormwater Management Conference was held on November 14, 2001 at the Airport Radisson Hotel in Warwick, to educate government officials and others on the problem of stormwater in the state.

The conference was the brainchild of State Representative Eileen S. Naughton (House District 32, RI General Assembly), who saw the need to "inform and inspire those who can make a difference in reducing the impact of stormwater generated nonpoint source pollution on Rhode Island's environment and economy." To that goal, Representative Naughton worked with the Partners in Resource Protection* to make the conference a reality.

Approximately 150 conference attendees from government, non-governmental organizations, academic, and the private sector, heard presentations from experts whose topics ranged from the environmental impacts of stormwater to the EPA's Phase II Program, which addresses stormwater management planning. After Representative Naughton delivered the opening remarks, the audience heard from Chet Arnold, Director, Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO), a University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System project. Mr. Arnold presented stormwater management in a watershed context, linking water quality to land-use, and explaining an integrated stormwater management approach where nonpoint source control methods, or, "best management practices" are incorporated into sustainable development projects on a watershed-wide basis.

Eric Beck, Supervising Engineer, RIDEM Stormwater Program, outlined the EPA Phase II Stormwater



Photo Courtesy of NBEP

Thanks to the Partners in Resource Protection Stormwater Management Committee for their hard work in planning the conference (l-r): Jim Riordan, RI Department of Environmental Management, Richard Ribb, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, The Honorable Eileen S. Naughton, RI House of Representatives, Margherita Pryor, US Environmental Protection Agency, Kevin R. Cute, Coastal Resources Management Council, Kris Stuart, Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, Eugenia Marks, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and Alicia Lehrer, Southern RI Conservation District.

Management Program, which will be administered in the state by RIDEM. Mr. Beck said the goal of the Phase II program is to prevent nonpoint source pollution (NPS) generated by small construction projects and certain small municipalities with separate storm-sewer systems. Regulated municipalities will be required to develop stormwater management plans that address preventing stormwater NPS through the following six minimum control measures:

- 1) Public education and outreach;
- 2) Public participation/ Involvement;
- 3) Illicit discharge detection and elimination;
- 4) Construction

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CRMC Approves Project to Improve Navigation on the Seekonk River

by Kevin R. Cute

Navigation along a narrow stretch of the Seekonk River that bends sharply past India Point is being restored to the unobstructed conditions that existed 100 years ago before the India Point Railroad Bridge was built at this site in 1902.

Built to serve the transportation needs of its time, the bridge linked the cities of Providence and East Providence by rail. Abandoned in 1974, the badly deteriorated structure is being dismantled by Great Northern Site Corporation of Everett MA, through a contract with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The CRMC worked with the ACOE and Great Northern to develop the project permit.

A site description submitted to the CRMC during the permitting process gave a history lesson on the damage caused by the infamous Hurricane of '38. As a result, the removal of the wreck of the 83 foot long steam tugboat *Gaspey* from the riverbed near the bridge, became a permit stipulation to maximize improvements to navigation at the site.

Although this project aims to improve navigation, the historical value of the bridge itself was also considered. A public notice was published several months prior to project approval which offered the bridge for sale. It was hoped that someone might purchase the bridge for historic preservation, but there were no takers.

With practical considerations accounted for, the dismantling of the India Point Railroad Bridge tends to reflect that change, a definitive constant of our culture, can perhaps be added to life's list of inevitabilities, death and taxes. And though the loss of a tangible, and arguably beautiful piece of history is lamentable, the loss is perhaps balanced by the gain of a significant public benefit. A public resource, the river, that is intended for the enjoyment of all citizens, will now be more safe and accessible for both recreational and commercial navigation. Whether by a walk along its banks or a boat ride upon its waters, take the time to go enjoy the river and appreciate its history.



Photo: Kevin R. Cute, CRMC

A tugboat and crane barge are tied to the bridge, shown as it looked during mid-October, as workers were cutting the steel superstructure into pieces. Looking upriver, the Washington Bridge (Route 195) is in the background.

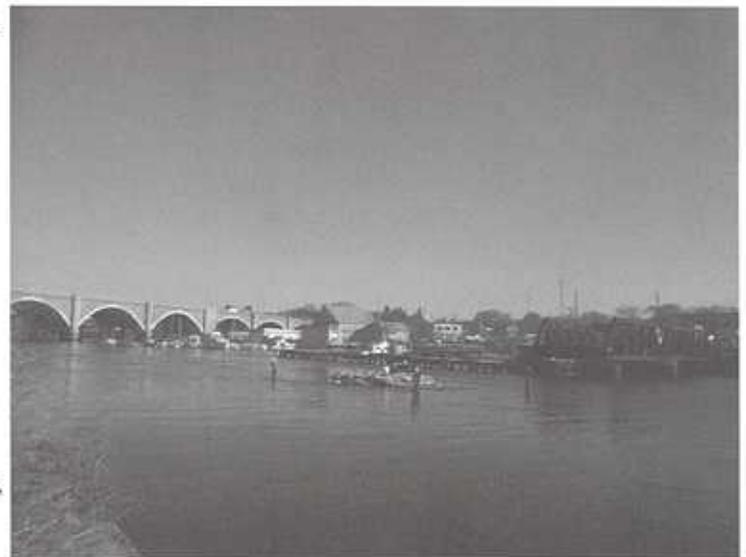


Photo: Kevin R. Cute, CRMC

The concrete and granite center pile and a few scattered wooden pilings were all that remained of the bridge on December 7. The final tasks included removing these structures and any accumulated debris from the river bed.

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site run-off control; 5) Post-construction run-off control; 6) Pollution prevention/good housekeeping. (See EPA website for further information). Jim Riordan, NPS Coordinator, RIDEM, presented information on grant funding for stormwater planning, and provided valuable point-by-point explanations of the criteria to follow when preparing a grant proposal. Mr. Riordan and Kris Stuart, Stormwater Specialist, Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, prepared a stormwater capacity analysis for Rhode Island that focused on the combined resources of government agencies and other organizations to address the problem of stormwater in the state. To add some "real-life" examples to the municipal stormwater planning scenario, Mr. Riordan moderated a panel discussion by municipal planning experts, Mark Jaffee (West Warwick), Dan Geagan (Warwick), and Ken Burke (Cranston) who related their recent experiences.

The preceding discussions set the stage for Katherine Early's presentation on the successful implementation of a municipal stormwater management plan in a watershed context. While Ms. Early, a Managing Engineer with the Department of Public Works in Portland, Maine, provided excellent technical information on issues such as the BMPs that were used to achieve NPS reduction goals, her emphasis on public education was perhaps of greatest value to Rhode Island as it incorporates Phase II measures and other strategies to prevent stormwater NPS. Ms. Early noted repeatedly that support for investing in stormwater management planning and practices increased markedly as local citizens were educated on the problems and solutions of stormwater-generated NPS.

Elizabeth Treadway, a Senior Consultant with AMEC, a North Carolina based Environmental Consulting firm, gave an animated presentation on the cost of compliance with Phase II. Ms. Treadway turned a potential disaster into a great show, when she proved more than equal to the task of continuing an excellent presentation as her microphone repeatedly failed. Finally abandoning the faulty mike altogether, Ms. Treadway continued with a detailed analysis of the costs and tasks involved in implementing a Phase II plan in a municipality not unlike many of the ones in Rhode Island that will soon be facing this issue.

Finally, weaving a tale fraught with bureaucratic sparring, Peter Ditto, Director of Engineering and Transportation with the Brookline, Massachusetts Department of Public Works, shared the long and difficult road faced by his town in responding to the need to resolve water quality problems in the face of lawsuits. Mr. Ditto was both funny and pragmatic as he advised the audience on the wisdom of recognizing when the time has arrived to invest in the infrastructure needed to not only resolve stormwater problems, but to improve water quality as a result

Policy News and Notes...

The following changes have been made to Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Program:

Section 300.4.D.4 (Prohibitions) has been amended to include wave fences among the types of structures that may not be constructed as part of a residential boating facility.

Section 300.4.E.3(r) (Standards) is a new section that reads as follows: "As part of a residential boating facility, the terminal float may be designed such that it facilitates the access of small vessels such as kayaks, dinghies, personal water craft, etc., onto the float, provided that all other programmatic requirements are adhered to. Mechanical apparatus to accomplish this shall not exceed 24 inches in height from the top of the float."

Section 300.16.F.2 (Standards) has been amended to allow the winch portion of a boat or float lift system to be affixed to the top of a piling that is used to construct the dock to which the lift system is affixed

** The Partners in Resource Protection was established in 1997 to provide a statewide forum in which to collaborate on natural resource issues such as sharing information and coordinating initiatives. The group is comprised of private nonprofits, for-profit businesses, municipal entities, state agencies and universities.*

CRMC

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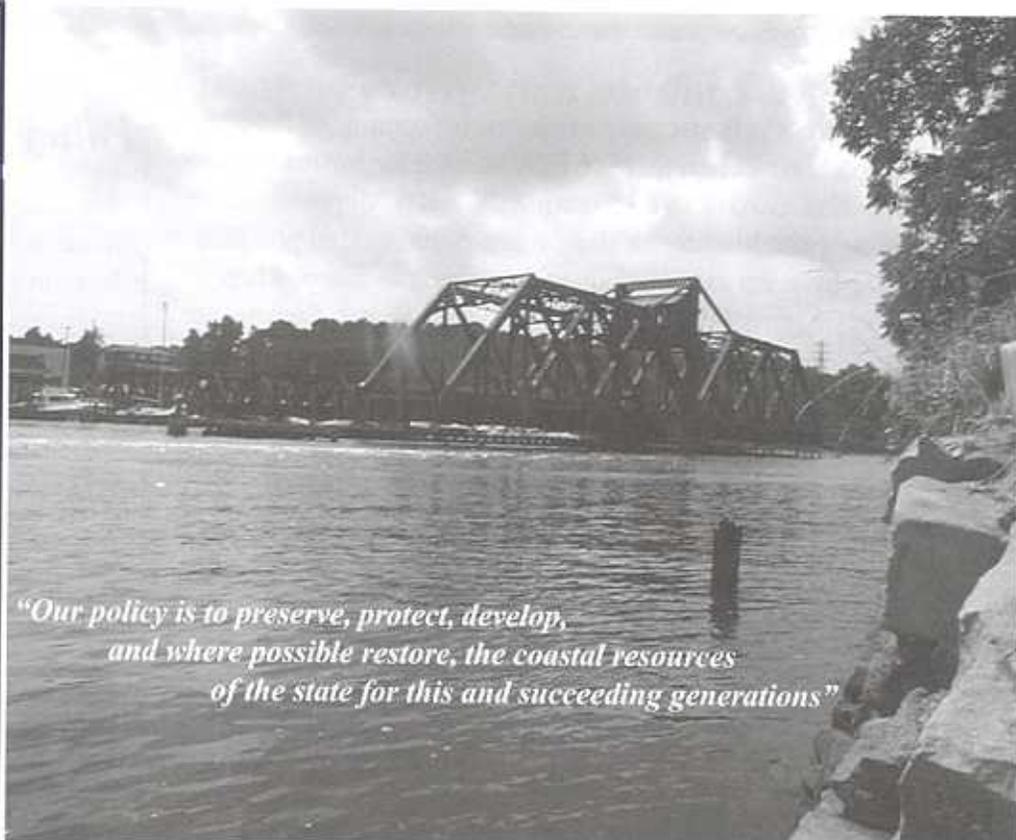
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*"Our policy is to preserve, protect, develop,
and where possible restore, the coastal resources
of the state for this and succeeding generations"*

Photo: Kevin R. Cute, CRMC

The abandoned India Point Railroad Bridge, located in the Seekonk River between Providence and East Providence, as it appeared during the summer of 2000.

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