



## CRMC's Aquaculture Coordinator David Beutel retires

In June 2020 the CRMC said goodbye to its Aquaculture Coordinator David Beutel, who served in the role for more than a decade, and did much to change the face of aquaculture in Rhode Island. Here's a look at his work.



Dave was a seasoned fisheries expert who added much to the CRMC's aquaculture program. (Photo courtesy of D. Beutel)

### Streamlining the process

Beutel worked with members of the industry, the wild harvesters, the cities and towns, and worked with the University of Rhode Island and Roger Williams University to coordinate aquaculture research and management with the institutions. He also streamlined the CRMC's aquaculture permitting process, developed and implemented the "Five Percent Rule" capping the percentage of aquaculture farms in the state's salt ponds, and educated the public on the environmental benefits of aquaculture, as well as aquaculturists on shellfish diseases, best practices, and new gear technology. Beutel spent time meeting with aquaculture growers, objectors, interested members of the press, and anyone who was eager to learn more.



**"Balancing user conflicts, abutters' concerns, the needs and requests of applicants, and the regulations of the CRMC was a skill not many exhibit, and we'll miss Dave for his ability to be the voice of reason,"** said CRMC Chair Jennifer Cervenka. **"The Council wishes him well on this next chapter, and thanks him for his service."**

### More than oysters

David Beutel retired at the end of June after serving for more than a decade as the CRMC's fisheries and aquaculture expert, as well as its liaison between the fishing industry and the wind farm projects in process in Rhode Island and surrounding waters.

As a former University of Rhode Island Fisheries Extension Specialist and Fisheries Operations Supervisor, Beutel offered the CRMC a specialized skill set when he began his work in April 2009, managing the state's aquaculture industry, all lease applications, CRMC aquaculture regulations, and all of the personalities and politics that came with the job.

#### Five per cent Rule

- In the coastal ponds the area occupied by aquaculture shall not exceed five per cent (5%) of the total open water surface area of the coastal pond below MLW: Section 1.3.1(K)4.f
- The maximum area occupied by aquaculture leases in the coastal salt ponds is five per cent (5%) of the total open water surface area of the salt pond below MLW. This limit is established based upon the current knowledge of ecological carrying capacity models. See: Salt Pond SAMP Section 100.B.1 and Figure 1-1 for salt pond areas. Section 1.3.1(K)5.a.(14)



Dave worked with other experts to develop the Five Percent Rule, explained in the slide above. He was also always up for getting into the water or the field. (Photo by Ayla Fox)

### Other pursuits

Beutel received both an Associate of Science degree in fisheries and marine technology from URI in 1979, and a Bachelor of Science degree in fisheries in 1992. He had worked in the fishing industry since 1977, including seven years as a commercial fisherman and eight years as a fishing gear manufacturer. He worked in fisheries outreach and research for Rhode Island Sea Grant from 1992 until he began at the CRMC.

He worked closely with Rhode Island's commercial fishing industry during the development of the Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), which provided a regulatory and policy framework for the CRMC to permit the nation's first offshore wind farm off Block Island. Beutel maintained that working relationship with the members of the Ocean SAMP's Fisherman's Advisory Board (FAB) which heard subsequent wind development projects, some of which have been contentious and complicated.

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