

CRMC, partners launch SAID program

The Rhode Island CRMC and its partners in June launched the Shoreline Adaptation Inventory and Design (SAID) program, beginning with an instructional webinar on Thursday, June 6, and field trips to different coastal locations June 12 and 13, 2019. This continues work to make Rhode Island’s shoreline and coastal habitats more resilient in the face of increased storms and sea level rise.

CRMC, the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center, Rhode Island Sea Grant, Save The Bay, and the Roger Williams University Marine Affairs Institute plan to use funds from a \$280,140 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Coastal Resilience grant CRMC received in November. The Town of Bristol and City of Providence Department of Planning and Development, and Parks are also municipal partners.



Van Zandt Avenue, Warwick, where eroded pavement was removed and a filter strip was installed in 2017. (Photo: CRMC, Save The Bay)

The SAID program aims to create an inventory of completed and potential shoreline adaptation projects. These are projects that address the impacts of coastal storms, sea level rise and storm-water such as erosion, flooding, and loss of habitats and shoreline public access. They help to improve the resilience and safety of the shoreline while increasing the benefits of natural systems such as water quality improvement and enhancement of habitat for fish and wildlife. The SAID program will both document past efforts and provide ways for cities, towns and local communities to nominate sites for future projects.



Warwick City Park, after the boardwalk was removed and the beach regraded (Photo: CRMC, Save The Bay)

“We would like this to be more than a planning exercise. The ultimate goal is to get projects in the ground,” said Caitlin Chaffee, policy analyst and project lead for the CRMC. “Rhode

Island is pretty advanced and many municipalities have completed hazard mitigation plans and vulnerability assessments. A lot of towns already have projects in mind.”

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NOAA conducts evaluation of CRMC program

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) spent a few days in Rhode Island last week to evaluate the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Program, part of a periodic review the NOAA Office for Coastal Management (OCM) performs of all US coastal programs.

A team of three representatives from NOAA, as well as a fourth representing another state’s coastal program – in this case, a member of the California Coastal Commission – evaluated the CRMC and its program Tuesday, June 18, through Thursday, June 20, 2019. The team met with a number of stakeholders with which the CRMC has working relationships, including Save The Bay, The Nature Conservancy, University of Rhode Island, other state agencies, municipal leaders, and environmental consultants. A group took the evaluation team to the Quonochontaug salt marsh in Charlestown, the site of a recent CRMC salt marsh restoration and elevation enhancement project. The team also spoke with the stakeholders CRMC staff on a variety of topics, including the Beach and Ocean Special Area Management Plans, habitat restoration, wind energy development, coastal resilience and coastal hazards, and program administration.

Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) requires these periodic evaluations of federally approved state and territorial coastal programs. Once the evaluation is completed, NOAA’s OCM will make the final report findings publically available, as will the CRMC.

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