

PRESENTED JANUARY 2024

Shoreline Access Needs Assessment: Results

- RI COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
- RHODE ISLAND SEA GRANT
- NARRAGANSETT BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE
- IMPACT BY DESIGN



Introduction

Recognizing increasing interest in and conflicts around shoreline access, the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and Rhode Island Sea Grant (RISG) partnered to develop a shoreline access management plan.

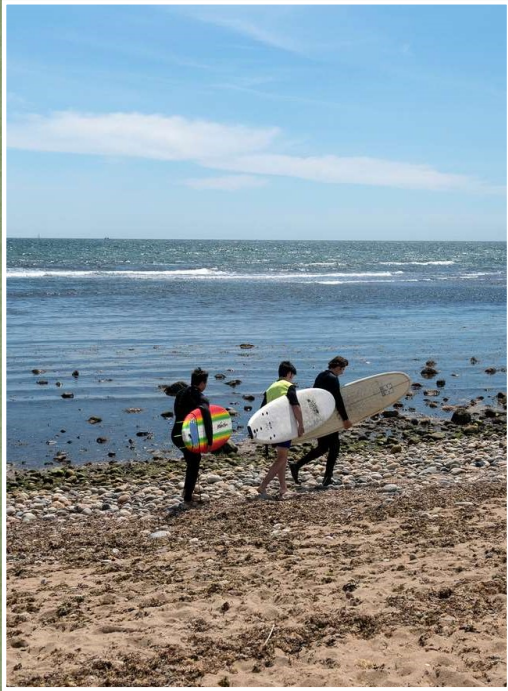


Needs Assessment

We recognized we needed to do a needs assessment rather than rely on our own perceptions of what a Public Shoreline Access Management Plan needed to include.

We brought in NBNERR and Impact by Design, and with NOAA funding, our project “Developing an Equitable and Inclusive Shoreline Access and Education Plan for Every Rhode Islander: Achieving Environmental Justice for All” began the needs assessment process.





Step 1: Questions

We wanted to understand how people used the shoreline, where they went and how often, what they wanted to see at ROWs, and what barriers prevented them from using ROWs.

The Questions

1. Where do RoW users currently seek out information about RoW access and issues? Where would they prefer to get information?
2. Where do RoW users go to report a problem, if they do? Do they experience difficulties in reporting issues and receiving support?
3. Which access points are shoreline users using, and for what activities?
4. What are people's perceptions (e.g., quality, quantity, safety, availability, function, etc.) of access points?
5. What barriers are RoWs users experiencing in accessing RoWs? (e.g., lack of info about RoW use, lack of interest in going, lack of time to go, feeling unsafe/unwelcome)?
6. How and why do people want to see access to RoWs change (e.g., adding more bike lanes, restrictions, etc.)?
7. Are people aware that various organizations manage RoW/shoreline access, that they are different, and what these organizations do?
8. Are RoW users aware of RoW policies and general info about RoW access?
9. What concerns or negative experiences are people having related to RoWs? Do RoW users actively avoid specific RoWs and if so, why? Who do people believe are responsible for issues at RoWs?
10. How do people get to RoW access points (e.g., walk, bike, drive, bus)? How far do they travel to access points?
11. Are people in favor of a "dawn to dusk prohibition"? Why/why not?

Step 2: Interviews

Impact by Design interviewed members of different communities/interests (realtor, environmental advocate, community organizer, municipal planner, shoreline access advocate) to ground-truth the questions.



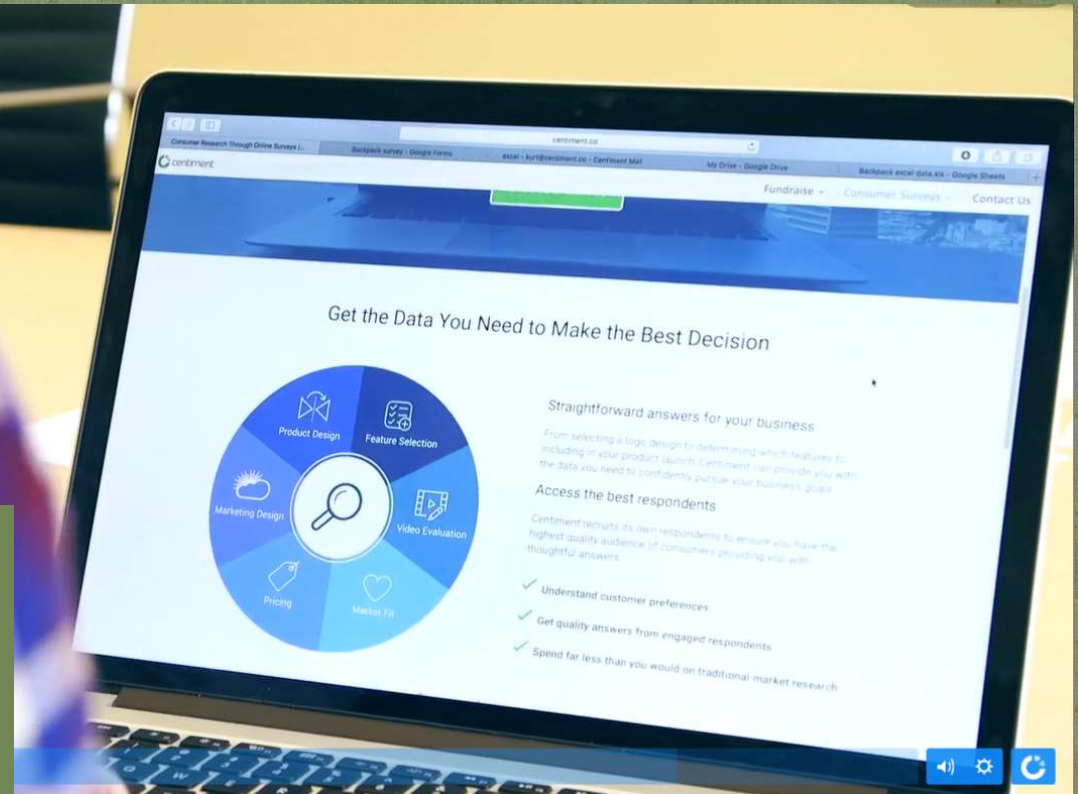
Step 3: Surveys

We developed a community (Q&A) survey and a map-based (Maptionnaire) survey. People who received the community survey could click through to answer the Maptionnaire questions.



Step 4: Dissemination

Surveys were disseminated through online tools Centiment (RI residents) and Pollfish (tourists), emails to listservs and organizations, social media outreach, and in-person data collection at shoreline rights-of-way in three municipalities around the state.



Results Highlights





SOURCES OF INFO

The top 3 **sources of information** to learn more about general shoreline access and related issues are:

- Word of mouth
- Online searches
- The DEM website



RECOMMENDATION

The top 3 ways to **make getting information on general shoreline access easier** are:

- Dedicated social media OR website where RoW users can get all of their info in one place
- A detailed map, app, or guide
- Identifying parking spot locations + their costs



DETERRENTS TO ACCESS

41% of locals said that there are **access points they avoid or use less** than they used to. The reasons for that include:

- There is no parking near these access points
- They are unsure if they're allowed to use these access points
- They feel unsafe or unwelcomed there
- Sometimes guards are blocking these access points
- These access points have a lot of litter or are poorly maintained



Six Suggestions

To make visiting RoWs easier:

- More/better parking and related information
- Better signage
- Access points that are more accessible to all
- An updated map / information on access points
- Better maintenance of access points
- Stopping locals from blocking public access points

Are There Enough?

When asked if there were enough access points for RoW users to access the shoreline in areas they like to visit, respondents from:

- Washington County were more likely to **Strongly Disagree**
- Bristol County were more likely to **Disagree**
- Kent County were more likely to feel **Neutral**
- Providence County were more likely to **Agree**
- Newport County were more likely to **Strongly Agree**





What's Next

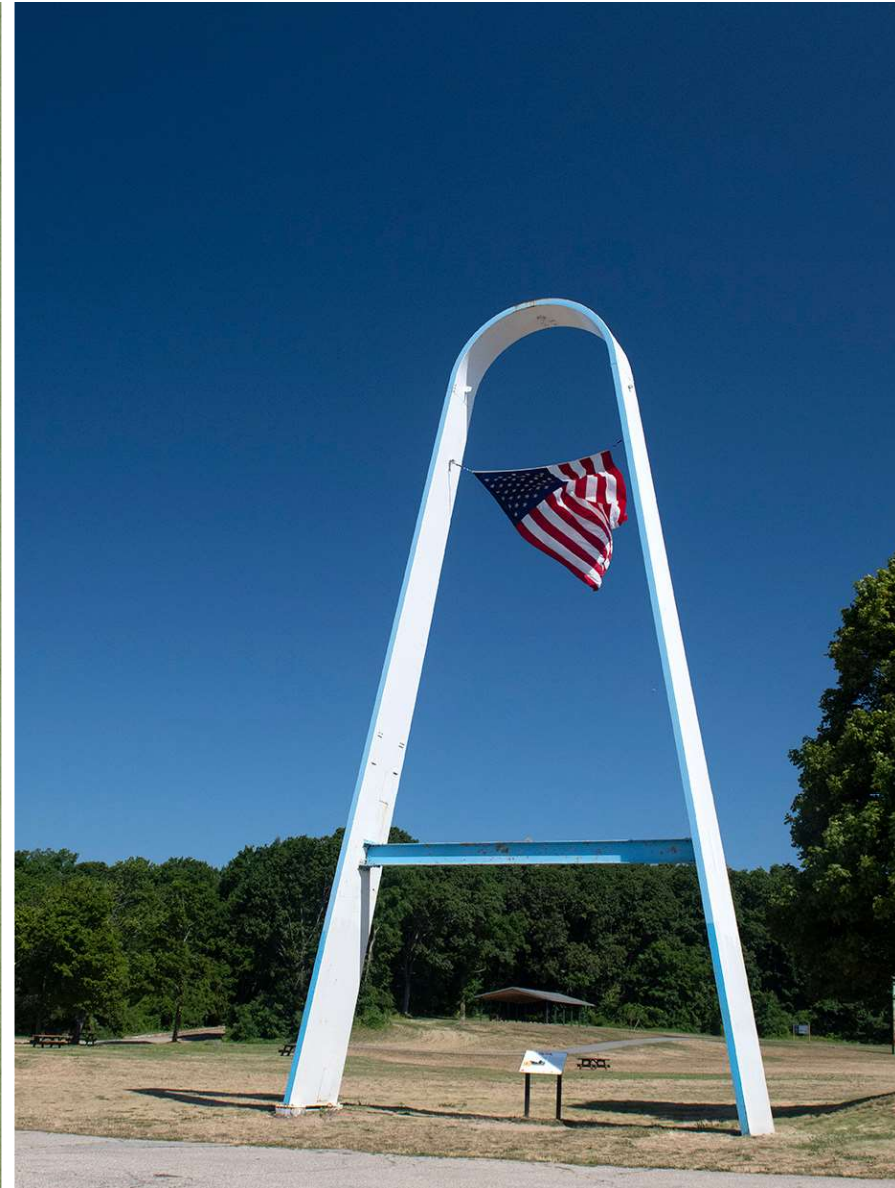
Forming Recommendations

The Community Leader Advisory Group will review needs assessment results, provide feedback, and share experiences and insights that will help identify and prioritize policies and actions that should be included in the Public Shoreline Access Management Plan.



Future Steps

- CRMC, RISG, and NBNERR will invite staff of agencies (e.g., DEM), organizations (e.g., Save The Bay), and municipalities to help identify how to incorporate the recommendations into a plan.
- CRMC will fundraise for:
 - Hiring a municipal liaison to aid cities and towns in working with CRMC and addressing municipal-level right-of-way issues (e.g., parking, maintenance).
 - Other implementation activities (e.g., communications tools, signage, other needs identified by Community Leader Advisory Group)



Resources

[CRMC: Rights of Way & Public Access page](#)

shoreline-ri.com



Shoreline Access Bill S-0417 Sub A – The Development & Implementation of the Expanded Shoreline Access Law

2023 -- S 0417 SUBSTITUTE A

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LC001241/SUB A/2
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

**RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

Introduced By: Senators McKenney, Sosnowski, Euer, Pearson, Miller, DiMario, Gallo,
DiPalma, Gu, and Kallman

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

Overview of Presentation

- Review of Shoreline Access Bill S-0147 & Pertinent Language
- CRMC Programmatic Impacts
- CRMC & Partners education & outreach



18 Private property shall not be taken for public uses, without just compensation. The powers
19 of the state and of its municipalities to regulate and control the use of land and waters in the
20 furtherance of the preservation, regeneration, and restoration of the natural environment, and in
21 furtherance of the protection of the rights of the people to enjoy and freely exercise the rights of
22 fishery and the privileges of the shore, as those rights and duties are set forth in Article I, Section
23 17, shall be an exercise of the police powers of the state, shall be liberally construed, and shall not
24 be deemed to be a public use of private property.

25 "Section 17. The people shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all the rights of fishery,
26 and the privileges of the shore, to which they have been heretofore entitled under the charter and
27 usages of this state, including but not limited to fishing from the shore, the gathering of seaweed,
28 leaving the shore to swim in the sea and passage along the shore; and they shall be secure in their
29 rights to use and enjoyment of the natural resources of the state with due regard for the preservation
30 of their values; and it is the duty of the general assembly to provide for the conservation of the air,
31 land, water, plant, animal, mineral and other natural resources of the state, and to adopt all means
32 necessary and proper by law to protect the natural environment of the people of the state by
33 providing adequate resource planning for the control and regulation of the use of the natural
34 resources of the state and for the preservation, regeneration, and restoration of the natural

15 (b) For purposes of this chapter, the "recognizable high tide line" means a line or mark left
16 upon tidal flats, beaches, or along shore objects that indicates the intersection of the land with the
17 water's surface level at the maximum height reached by a rising tide. The recognizable high tide
18 line may be determined by a line of seaweed, oil or scum along shore objects, a more or less
19 continuous deposit of fine shell or debris on the foreshore or berm, other physical markings or
20 characteristics, or other suitable means that delineate the general height reached by the water's
21 surface level at a rising tide. If there is more than one line of seaweed, oil, scum, fine shell, or
22 debris, then the recognizable high tide line means the most seaward line. In the absence of residue
23 seaweed or other evidence, the recognizable high tide line means the wet line on a sandy or rocky
24 beach. The line encompasses the water's surface level at spring high tides and other high tides that
25 occur with periodic frequency, but does not include the water's surface level at storm surges in
26 which there is a departure from the normal or predicted reach of the water's surface level due to
27 the piling up of water against a coast by strong winds, such as those accompanying a hurricane or
28 other intense storms.

29 (c) Notwithstanding any provision of the general laws to the contrary, the public's rights
30 and privileges of the shore may be exercised, where shore exists, on wet sand or dry sand or rocky
31 beach, up to ten feet (10') landward of the recognizable high tide line; provided, however, that the
32 public's rights and privileges of the shore shall not be afforded where no passable shore exists, nor
33 on land above the vegetation line, or on lawns, rocky cliffs, sea walls, or other legally constructed
34 shoreline infrastructure. Further, no entitlement is hereby created for the public to use amenities
1 privately owned by other persons or entities, including, but not limited to: cabanas, decks, and
2 beach chairs.

Title 46
Waters and Navigation

Chapter 23
Coastal Resources Management Council

R.I. Gen. Laws § 46-23-7

(3) Conservation officers within the department of environmental management, council staff, and state and municipal police shall have the authority to apply to a court of competent jurisdiction for a warrant to enter on private land to investigate possible violations of this chapter; provided, that they have reasonable grounds to believe that a violation has been committed, is being committed, or is about to be committed.

Outreach & Education Throughout Rhode Island

Training session for South County RI (Westerly, South Kingstown, Narragansett and Charlestown)

9 Aug. 2023

Spring 2024

Aquidneck Island (Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth), currently being scheduled



New QR Codes to be added to ROW Signs with Link-Tree

Click Below to Learn More About:

[New Shoreline Access Bill S 0417 Sub A](#)

[CRMC Rights-of-Way Throughout the State](#)

[The Coastal Resources Management Council](#)

Thank you!

Coastal Resources Management Council

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