

The Rhode Island Shoreline Change Special Area Management Plan (Beach SAMP)



FACING WEST at what's left of South Kingstown's Browning cottages historical district post Superstorm Sandy.

CREDIT: MELISSA DEVINE

Shorelines are constantly changing, and Rhode Island coastal communities are increasingly experiencing the impacts. Storm waves can erode beaches and flood developed areas, while rising sea levels subsume land. Communities are asking how they can protect people and property, as well as vital infrastructure such as drinking water supplies, utilities, and roadways.

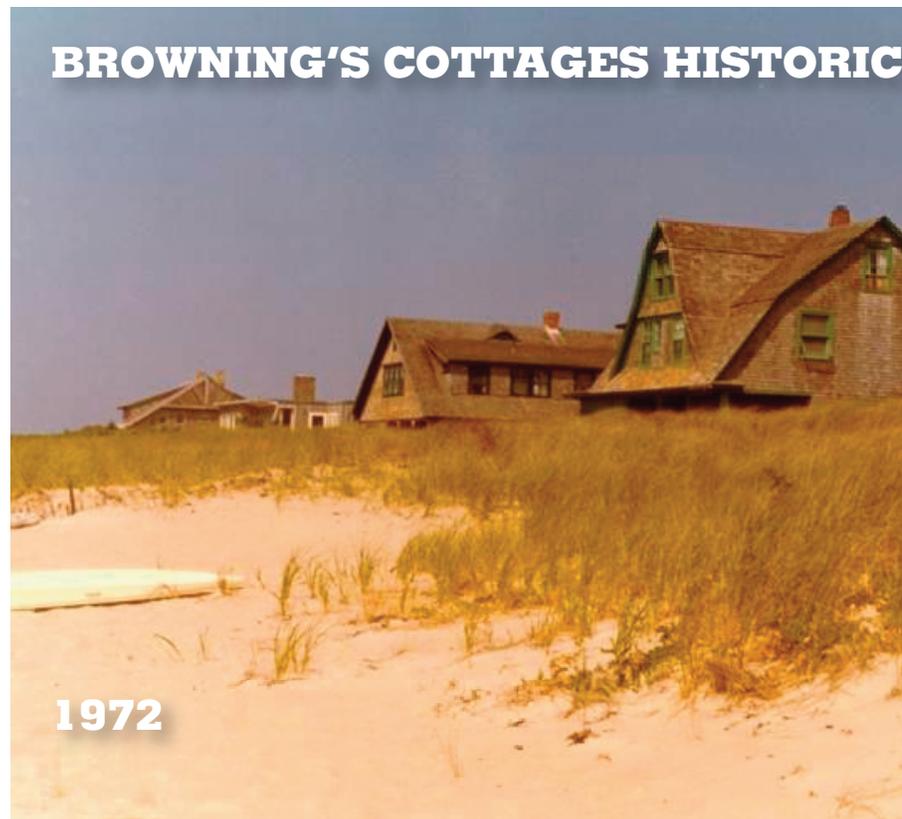
Rhode Island is preparing a plan to address these problems, which are threatening communities in many areas along the state's coast. The Beach Special Area Management Plan (Beach SAMP) is being designed to improve coastal resiliency to the threats of erosion and flooding caused by storms events or sea level rise through the collection of new data and the development of effective policies.

TAILORED POLICIES FOR AREAS FACING SHORELINE CHANGE

Rhode Island has long had policies to help communities avoid the worst effects of erosion. For instance, the state purchased coastal land where properties were destroyed by the hurricanes in 1938 and 1954 to prevent redevelopment of vulnerable areas, and development of barrier beaches is prohibited. As sea level rise and erosion rates increase, new measures are needed. The Beach SAMP is working to identify where and how the shoreline is changing, and will develop new—and improve existing—state shoreline erosion and inundation policies, as well as provide practical guidance for communities adapting to short-term and long-term shoreline change.

The Beach SAMP is a collaborative effort between the R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)—the state’s coastal regulatory agency—the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center/Rhode Island Sea Grant, and the URI College of the Environment and Life Sciences (CELS).

The Beach SAMP is supported by funding from the Rhode Island Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team, URI Coastal Resources Center, Rhode Island Sea Grant and the URI Coastal Institute.

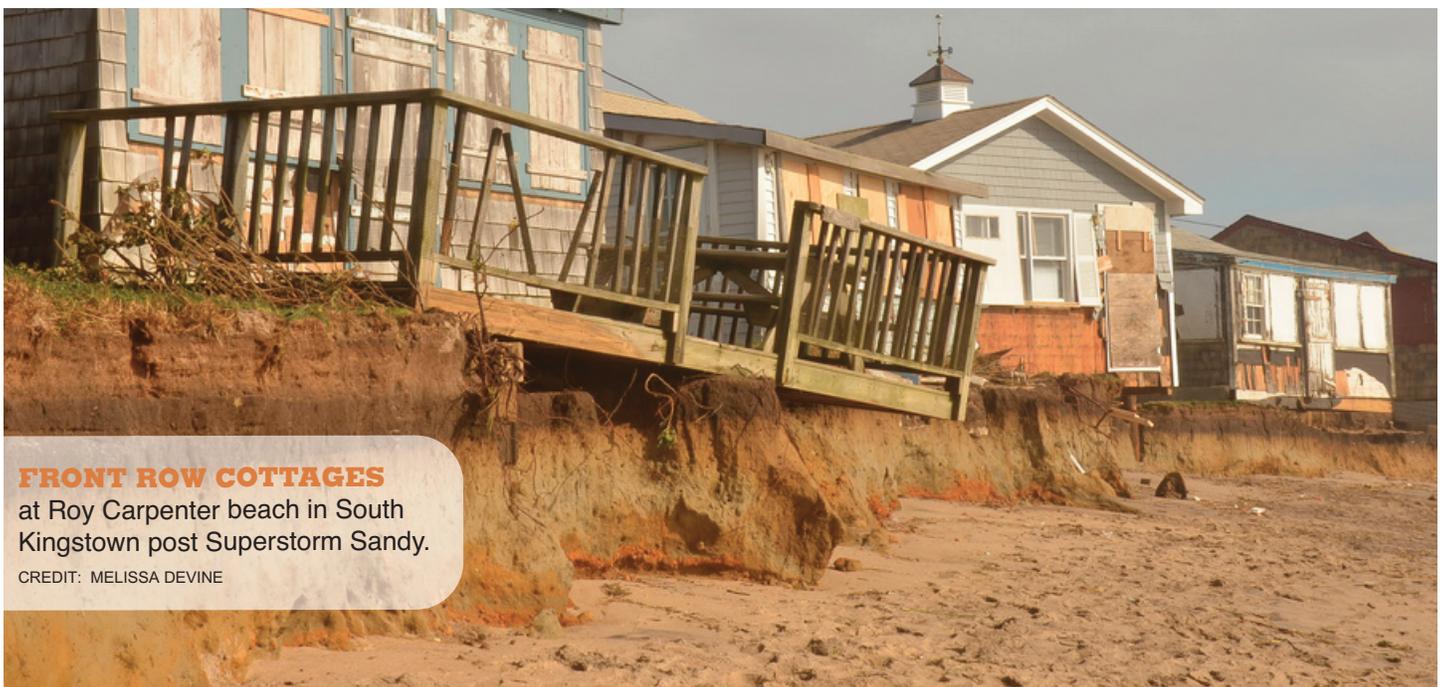




SCIENCE + PUBLIC PROCESS = POLICY

The Beach SAMP is bringing university research together with input and expertise from state, federal, municipal, academic, civic and private sector interests. It involves:

- + Gathering and analyzing data. URI researchers are studying the project areas to understand how the coast has changed, what it may look like in the future, and what infrastructure is at risk.
- + Policymaking through a public process. URI outreach and policy specialists are bringing the scientific findings to state and local decision-makers, sharing it with the public, and encouraging as many community members as possible to take part in shaping solutions so they make sense for Rhode Island.



FRONT ROW COTTAGES
at Roy Carpenter beach in South
Kingstown post Superstorm Sandy.

CREDIT: MELISSA DEVINE

LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED

The Beach SAMP project is seeking public input to help craft a plan that addresses the problems facing communities around the state. Join us by:

PARTICIPATE in stakeholder meetings or public events

STAY INFORMED via the web: <http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/coast/beachsamp.html>

JOIN the Beach SAMP ListServ for updates by sending a request to beachsamp@etal.uri.edu

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