

Rhode Island Shellfish Management Plan

UPDATE ON CREATING

“USE MAPS”

PURPOSE

At the request of stakeholders, the SMP Team is working to develop a comprehensive and accessible set of current “use maps” for Narragansett Bay and the coastal ponds in Rhode Island state waters to help address user-conflict concerns.

GOALS

The information collected will be used to:

- Document the myriad uses and activities in Narragansett Bay and the coastal ponds to better understand utilization patterns and highlight the importance of our waters to a diverse user base;
- Add to and enhance the existing resources and tools available to managers to inform decisions about water related uses; and
- Provide necessary information on uses to inform the discussion about how best to minimize use conflicts—perceived, current, and projected.

DATA USE

The intention is to include existing information from other projects or efforts, as well as new information collected as part of the SMP. To compile existing data, we will examine the RIGIS website (<http://www.edc.uri.edu/rigis/>), which houses a public database containing a wealth of spatial data about Rhode Island. In addition, information previously



PHOTO BY POSSUMGIRLZ

gathered, such as charts from past use mapping exercises, will be reviewed and updated. The collection of new data will also be undertaken, particularly with respect to documenting human activities. Data to be incorporated into the SMP includes:

HUMAN-USE DATA:

- Rhode Island DEM data: shellfish closure areas, management areas, spawner sanctuaries
- Updated commercial and recreational fishing areas for shellfish, finfish and lobster
- Current aquaculture lease locations
- Restoration sites and activities
- Popular areas for recreational activities: sailing, regattas, kayaking, diving, etc.
- Areas of historic significance



PHOTO BY MIKE BAIRD

- Infrastructure: marinas, moorings, docks, yacht clubs, etc.
- Transit and navigation routes

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA:

- Habitat types preferred by shellfish
- Environmental data: soil types, temperature, water depth, etc.
- Observations of species distributions

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

DATA COLLECTION

Information is needed about areas of Narragansett Bay and the coastal ponds that are critical to people's businesses, livelihoods, recreation, and cultural fabric. While proprietary information is respected and not being sought, any general information about key and valued activities that occur in a given area is welcome and appreciated. Stakeholders have provided the SMP a great deal of data already since this effort began in January 2013.

ACCESSING MAPS

The maps produced through this process will be made publicly available for review and comment. The maps and associated data will be posted on the SMP website.

SMP PRINCIPLES

The SMP is focused on ensuring a fair and transparent process for all participants:

- All information provided will be incorporated
- Information will be treated as valued reflections of people's interests and uses;
- Information will be evaluated subject to the SMP public review process;
- Information will be gathered to document and identify generally how users value certain areas and what activities users engage in; and
- Information will not be used in any way to assign value of one activity over another or to restrict users or activities.

CONTACT

To provide data for the SMP Use Maps, for more information, or if you have any questions or comments, please visit our website at www.RISMP.org or contact:

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