



Strategic Plan 2019-2022

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2019

Our mission: to protect, restore, manage and promote Rhode Island's environment and natural resources to preserve and improve our quality of life. The **strategic plan** is designed to outline a clear direction for us to achieve our mission as we continue to grow, innovate, and improve as a department.

GOAL ONE

Take action to counter climate change and its effects, both locally and regionally.

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from human activities using strong local and regional partnerships.
- Promote resilience in both the natural and built environment in ways that preserve the health of our environment, strengthen our economy and ensure the safety of residents.
- Integrate climate change considerations into all levels of decision-making including policies, plans, regulations and strategies.
- Coordinate climate communication, outreach, and planning efforts across state and local partners to ensure effective implementation of the state's resilience and emissions reduction goals.
- Promote environmentally responsible siting of renewable energy resources – both land-based and marine – to help meet clean energy goals.

GOAL TWO

Protect and restore our environment to create greener, healthier communities.

- Advocate and enforce environmental compliance fairly and effectively.
- Promote clean air locally and regionally by supporting strong public policies and regional efforts.
- Ensure healthy lands through waste mitigation and brownfields reuse.
- Protect public and animal health, including coordinating our efforts with our partners to support public health policies and outreach.

GOAL THREE

Protect and improve water quality

- Improve management of stormwater by achieving better permit compliance, building state and local capacity to retrofit and properly maintain stormwater infrastructure and promoting green infrastructure.
- Improve water quality in freshwater rivers and lakes to support beneficial uses by identifying and advancing protection and restoration actions.
- Improve water quality in coastal waters, including Narragansett Bay, to support beneficial uses by identifying and advancing protection and restoration actions. Enhance monitoring capacity to support tracking changing conditions.
- Strengthen watershed management through improved statewide policy and regulation, including freshwater wetland buffer standards, and partnerships to promote water resource protection.



GOAL FOUR

Conserve, promote, and steward our natural resources

- Protect forests, farms and other open spaces in order to permanently insure the values of those lands.
- Improve understanding and appreciation of the stewardship of natural resources through education, outreach and training.
- Support healthy and sustainable fish and wildlife populations to ensure long term viability of the habitats for the species and systems.
- Support healthy and sustainable forests and trees to ensure long term viability of the habitats for the species and systems.
- Support healthy and sustainable fresh, estuarine and marine resources to ensure long term viability of the habitats for the species and systems.
- Support healthy and sustainable terrestrial landscapes (including wetlands, meadows, and more) to ensure long term viability of the habitats for the species and systems.

GOAL FIVE

Promote and increase outdoor recreation in Rhode Island

- Invest in providing superior recreation opportunities on our waters and across our lands, maintaining Narragansett Bay and our green spaces as core to quality of life and place in Rhode Island.
- Ensure the public can enjoy our parks, beaches, and other recreational areas safely.
- Work with our partners and stakeholders to provide visitors with excellent experiences at our diverse network of parks, beaches, campgrounds, and other recreational areas.
- Showcase our state recreational facilities and programs and provide opportunity for people to connect with nature.
- Ensure and enhance public benefits from our State Park System by updating management and operations.

GOAL SIX

Promote and expand local food and agricultural industries

- Support a resilient marine fishing industry to supply fresh, locally caught marine seafood to Rhode Island and abroad by focusing on fishing port infrastructure and services, sustainability through application of fisheries science and management, and adapting to challenges.
- Support a strong and sustainable aquaculture industry in Rhode Island through planning initiatives with stakeholders and working with industry partners to foster restoration efforts.
- Develop an agricultural economy that is local, viable and sustainable by enhancing opportunities for next generation farmers, expanding markets, and assuring food safety and environmental wellbeing.
- Elevate state food system planning and development efforts, incorporating the RI Food Strategy, local food development initiatives, supporting programs to eliminate food insecurity, and reducing food waste.

GOAL SEVEN

Demonstrate statewide leadership in customer service and continuous improvement

- Deliver an effective and transparent customer experience through outstanding responsiveness, clear, predictable and reliable decision making, and upholding environmental justice in all aspects of our work.
- Recruit high quality talent, encourage development, and retain employees by fostering engagement and offering a dynamic and supportive work environment.
- Fortify communication about DEM's mission, programs, and goals in order to engage employees, key constituencies, and public which we serve.
- Demonstrate a culture of continuous improvement – engaging and empowering staff, and working to modernize business practices to fully realize our mission.

