FY18 - FY22
strategic goals & key objectives
our mission

To protect, restore, manage and promote Rhode Island’s environment and natural resources to preserve and improve our quality of life.
what happens if we don’t...

Old mill “brownfields” sites remain abandoned vestiges of Rhode Island’s industrial past instead of contributors to our economic vitality and quality of place.

Facilities at ports and state recreational areas are limited and in a state of disrepair; this impacts tourism, Rhode Islanders’ quality of life, and our ability to sustain and grow Rhode Island’s water-based and outdoor recreation economies.

The impacts of climate change - sea-level rise and increased storm frequency, intensity - continue to threaten our economy, families, and infrastructure.

Stormwater and other pollutants continue to degrade water quality, threatening wildlife, drinking water supplies, recreational activities, and the industries supported by Narragansett Bay.

☑ TOXIC AIR  ☑ CONTAMINATED LANDS
☑ POLLUTED WATERS  ☑ UNHEALTHY HABITATS
☑ POOR QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE
guiding priorities

As we continue to grow, innovate, and improve as a department, we remain focused on:

- Delivering quality service
- Promoting a healthy bay & communities
- Growing Rhode Island’s green economy
- Connecting people with nature
- Acting on climate change
Continue leadership as a transparent, customer-driven agency

Support a healthier, greener environment

Protect & improve water quality

Conserve, protect & manage natural resources

Promote & increase outdoor recreation

Promote & expand local food and agricultural industries

Continue to act on climate change
small wins

By developing and acting on “small,” concrete goals within immediate reach, we ensure DEM makes meaningful progress toward its strategic goals & objectives each year.

“A small win is a concrete, complete, implemented outcome of moderate importance. By itself, one small win may seem unimportant. A series of wins at small but significant tasks, however, reveals a pattern that may attract allies, deter opponents, and lower resistance to subsequent proposals. Small wins are controllable opportunities that produce visible results.” – Karl Weick
strategic goal 1: Continue leadership as a transparent, customer-driven agency

1. Invest in our people
Our greatest strength is our workforce. We aim to be a fun, effective workplace where our people have access to the tools, training, and resources they need to get the job done.

2. Strengthen communication
Our work is vast, involving diverse people and organizations. We aim to be responsive to all customers and provide the information people need in a timely manner, utilizing a variety of media and modern tools.

3. Improve business practices
Every day, we strive to improve the function of state government through the Lean Government Initiative. We continue to lead, empowering staff to innovate and improve how we do business.
strategic goal 1: Continue leadership as a transparent, customer-driven agency

objective 1: Invest in our workforce

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Integrate strategic planning into State’s performance development initiative.
- Continue to host employee service days.
- Develop career-advancement opportunities & initiate succession planning.
- Improve internal communications & increase feedback channels.
- Host regular employee forums & social events to foster cross-section relationships & engagement.
strategic goal 1: Continue leadership as a transparent, customer-driven agency

objective 2: Strengthen communication

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Develop an integrated, “social” communications plan that promotes growth of the DEM brand.
- Conduct communications training for content experts across department.
- Launch phase two of website redesign to consolidate content & improve functionality.
- Identify & use listserves & other existing communications tools.
- Explore & pursue opportunities to engage key constituencies.
**strategic goal 1:** Continue leadership as a transparent, customer-driven agency

**objective 3:** Improve business practices

**Key Actions/Small Wins:**

- Implement Lean “Kaizen Clearinghouse” to promote participation in process improvement.
- Implement actions identified in Lean process improvements.
- Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) for all offices.
- Conduct 4 process reviews annually.
- Expand services of the Office of Customer & Technical Assistance.
- Invest in modern tools, technology to support programs & improve customer experience.
- Implement Lean training for all staff to foster a culture of continuous improvement.
strategic goal 2: Support a healthier, greener environment

objectives

1. Promote & enforce environmental compliance
Promoting public health and the vibrancy of our communities is paramount. We aim to promote and monitor environmental compliance while addressing violations fairly and effectively.

2. Promote clean air locally & regionally
Fresh, healthy air is a basic need. We aim to work with our partners to promote clean air by supporting strong public policies and regional efforts.

3. Promote healthy lands through waste mitigation and brownfields reuse
Our economic vitality depends on vibrant communities. We aim to support the clean up and reuse of abandoned industrial properties and protect people and places from contamination and waste.

4. Protect public & animal health
The health of our people, places and animals is our highest priority. We aim to work with our partners to support strong public health policies and outreach.
strategic goal 2: Support a healthier, greener environment
objective 1: Promote compliance

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Expand the use of the Expedited Citation tool.
- Develop, measure key performance indicators to track citation issuance, return to compliance.
- Continue to prioritize efforts to address violations that pose significant threat to public health & environment and/or are mandated by EPA.
- Regularly publicize enforcement actions.
- Improve business processes & reallocate efforts to increase DEM’s field presence.
- Seek resources to increase compliance monitoring & to address violations.
strategic goal 2: Support a healthier, greener environment

objective 2: Promote clean air

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Continue to participate in regional efforts to reduce ozone precursor emissions.
- Seek resources to support timely response to permit applications.
- Develop, implement RI Clean Diesel Grant Program.
- Work with partners to encourage EPA adoption of regulations that address interstate pollutant transport.
- Continue to monitor, assess & publicize air quality throughout Rhode Island.
strategic goal 2: Support a healthier, greener environment

objective 3: Promote healthy lands

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Actively promote programs to reduce waste. Implement new composting law.
- Establish brownfields revolving loan fund program via RI Infrastructure Bank.
- Improve systems to more efficiently collect, recycle electronic waste.
- Direct removal of single-walled underground storage tanks, per State-mandated 2017 deadline.
- Work with RIRRC on e-waste, commercial recycling & extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs.
- Continue EPA & State-funded brownfields grant programs to facilitate clean up of ~860 sites statewide.
**strategic goal 2:** Support a healthier, greener environment

**objective 4:** Protect public & animal health

**Key Actions/Small Wins:**

- Reinforce ‘One Health’ philosophy to promote relationship: public, animal & environmental health.
- Support efforts to address food insecurity in Rhode Island as part of broader food-planning work.
- Support key recommendations of Rhode Island Outdoor Recreation Council (RI ORC) to promote physical activity for all Rhode Islanders.
- Develop coordinated approach and communications strategy for DEM/DOH for emergency management.
- Explore opportunities for dedicated enforcement personnel to work on animal welfare cases.
- Increase collaboration with DOH on relevant policy initiatives, such as harmful algal blooms & infectious disease response (e.g., Zika).
Polluted water continues to flow from our streets to our rivers and bays, impacting use and enjoyment of our waters. We aim to work with state and local partners to better manage this pollution source.

We continue to make strides in addressing pollution from homes, businesses, and communities to our waterways. We aim to work with land owners to phase out antiquated onsite wastewater treatment systems.

Our Bay is at the heart of our economy and culture. We aim to support the continued improvement of water quality by working with our partners to address wastewater and stormwater pollution and to monitor improvements in the Bay.

Protecting our waters takes a village. We aim to work with our partners to strengthen stewardship and create a system of watershed plans that prioritize water quality and habitat protection, needed actions, and resource alignment.
strategic goal 3: Protect & improve water quality

objective 1: Improve stormwater management

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Direct available funding to priority retrofitting projects. Encourage use of green infrastructure.
- Track compliance & work with municipalities and RIDOT to improve stormwater management through effective implementation of municipal stormwater program (MS4).
- Work with interested municipalities to build capacity & sustainable funding mechanisms.
- Issue new MS4 enforcement actions.
**strategic goal 3:** Protect & improve water quality

**objective 2:** Reduce nutrient, bacterial pollution

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- **Continue oversight of required wastewater treatment system upgrades** to reduce pollutant loadings to rivers.

- **Develop a water quality restoration study (TMDL)** for Aquidneck Island’s drinking water supply reservoirs to address nutrient enrichment.

- **Improve oversight of existing onsite wastewater treatment technology** to safeguard public health & environmental quality.

- **Continue implementation of cesspool phase-out law & point-of-sale requirements for replacement of cesspools.**
strategic goal 3: Protect & improve water quality

objective 3: Improve water quality of Narragansett Bay

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Work with Narragansett Bay Commission to implement Phase 3 of the CSO abatement program.
- Work with partners on continued development of water quality models.
- Work with Narragansett Bay Estuary Program to complete its Status & Trends Report for the Bay and watershed.
- Continue to monitor & assess water quality to track changes resulting from key wastewater control investments; seek additional funding to sustain, expand monitoring programs.
Strategic goal 3: Protect & improve water quality

Objective 4: Strengthen watershed management

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Develop plans for Aquidneck Island & Wood-Pawcatuck River Watersheds.
- Seek additional resources to develop a State Lake Management Program.
- Continue work with municipalities & property owners in Aquidneck Island’s water supply watersheds to implement best practices for reducing nutrient discharges to reservoirs.
- Revise freshwater wetland regulations to strengthen resource protection & streamline permitting.
- Collaborate with EPA, MA on development of Southeast NE coastal watershed restoration program.
- Seek resources to sustain, enhance state water monitoring programs.
Conserve, protect & manage natural resources

### Strategic Goal 4:

#### 1. Support healthy forests, community trees

Forests and trees are not only beautiful, we depend on them for survival – from the air we breathe to the wood we use. We aim to promote the value of forests and community tree programs through conservation, outreach and education.

#### 2. Promote stewardship

Fostering a love of nature in our children ensures the work we do today to improve our environment will continue for generations to come. We aim to expand our outreach programs and continue to offer quality educational experiences to the public.

#### 3. Protect farms & open space

Green space supports our food system, our enjoyment, our wildlife, and our health. We aim to promote and invest in the preservation of open space and help communities accomplish the same.

#### 4. Support sustainable fish & wildlife populations and habitats

Rhode Island wouldn’t be the same without its rich diversity of fish and wildlife populations and natural habitats. We aim to continue work with our partners to sustain and restore these populations and to protect important places.
Conserve, protect & manage natural resources

Support healthy forests, Community trees

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Monitor & provide assistance to landowners on forest health.
- Monitor fire weather & work with partners to minimize, fight forest fires.
- Work with partners to reduce invasive species.
- Continue Energy-Savings Tree Program to engage landowners in increasing tree canopies.
- Work with partners to promote production, development & use of nursery, forest products.
- Continue America The Beautiful grants to communities.
**strategic goal 4:** Conserve, protect & manage natural resources

**objective 2:** Promote stewardship

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- **Continue to develop, grow partnerships** with communities, NGOs & land trusts.
- **Develop volunteer** program to expand stewardship of natural areas.
- **Continue to educate** teachers, students about nature via outreach programs (e.g., Aquatic Resource Education Program, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve).

23
Conserve, protect & manage natural resources

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- **Acquire lands** that link to or infill major state land holdings, protect water quality & promote resilience.

- **Provide funding to communities**, non-profits to protect locally significant lands.

- **Work with partners, foundations** on new tools & strategies for climate adaptation.

- **Continue to protect** most vulnerable, strategic private farmland from development.
strategic goal 4: Support sustainable fish & wildlife populations & habitat

objective 4: Conserve, protect & manage natural resources

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Evaluate priority species through Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE).
- Continue fish survey & stocking programs.
- Protect fish & game resources through adequate patrol, enforcement.
- Continue priority habitat restoration & improvement projects.
- Continue to track & manage invasive species.
strategic goal 5: Promote & increase outdoor recreation in Rhode Island

Objectives

1. Improve recreational boating, fishing & hunting opportunities

Narragansett Bay and our green spaces are core to quality of life and place in Rhode Island. We aim to continue to invest in providing superior opportunities to recreate on our waters and across our lands.

2. Promote public safety

Our parks, beaches, and other recreational areas are popular places. We aim to ensure that people have an enjoyable, safe time while at our facilities.

3. Develop a network of well-maintained recreational facilities

Rhode Island’s network of parks, beaches, campgrounds, and other recreational areas attract millions of visitors each year. We aim to work with our partners to provide visitors with excellent experiences and an assortment of recreational facilities to enjoy.

4. Sponsor high-profile, special events

Our state facilities continue to attract popular special events – from concerts to sailing races. We aim to continue work with our partners to host prominent events that spur economic activity.

5. Support RI Outdoor Recreation Council efforts & recommendations

A vision for promoting physical activity among Rhode Islanders and expanding the state’s outdoor recreation economy is under development. We aim to be a partner in this effort and continue to steward the state’s recreational facilities.
strategic goal 5: Promote & increase outdoor recreation in Rhode Island

objective 1: Improve recreational boating, fishing & hunting

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Expand on education & training programs that encourage fishing, hunting.
- Improve access to boating, hunting & fishing opportunities for diverse populations.
- Continue to streamline fishing & hunting licensing and regulations.
- Continue to monitor & educate people on boating safety.
- Launch an online portal for hunting & fishing licensing.
strategic goal 5: Promote & increase outdoor recreation in Rhode Island

objective 2: Protect public safety

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Target enforcement resources to high priority areas; partner with local, state police.
- Prevent drownings & related incidents through education, swimming facility inspections, lifeguard certification, and ice safety programs.
- Add full-time parks staff to improve visitor safety & adequate supervision of seasonal staff.
- Increase enforcement staff to handle growing usage of parks & local waters.
strategic goal 5: Promote & increase outdoor recreation in Rhode Island

objective 3: Develop network of recreational facilities

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Work with DOA to assess state recreation infrastructure & develop list of priority projects.
- Complete assessment of staffing resources required for state parks.
- Continue to explore opportunities to incorporate “green” designs into state facilities.
- Complete current capital projects on time and on budget.
- Distribute & administer grants to local communities to improve local recreation facilities.
strategic goal 5: Promote & increase outdoor recreation in Rhode Island

objective 4: Sponsor high-profile, special events

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Work with partners to **expand international events** at Fort Adams (e.g., Volvo Ocean Race).
- Explore partnership opportunities to **increase environmental education & interpretative programs** at state facilities.
- Continue programs designed to **connect people with nature** (e.g., Great Outdoors Pursuit).
strategic goal 5: Promote & increase outdoor recreation in Rhode Island

objective 5: Support RI ORC efforts, recommendations

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Develop new opportunities at state facilities to connect Rhode Islanders with nature.
- Support key RI ORC recommendations, including creating sustainable funding options for outdoor recreation.
- Work with partners to launch a “go-to” online resource for outdoor recreation in Rhode Island.
- Support the state’s tourism campaign efforts.
- Develop merchandise to promote natural resources, recreational facilities - with proceeds supporting enhanced facilities & programming.
strategic goal 6: Promote & expand local food and agricultural industries

1. Support a strong commercial fishing industry

We take pride in our fishing heritage and our Rhode Island seafood. We aim to continue to make investments that support sustainable management of marine resources and a thriving commercial fishing industry.

2. Support growth of food & farming businesses

Our diverse food cultures are part of our identity as a state. And the local food and agriculture sector is an area ripe for growth. We aim to continue work with our partners to support the viability of local agriculture and the development of a sustainable, equitable food system in Rhode Island.
strategic goal 6: Promote & expand local food and agricultural industries
objective 1: Support commercial fisheries

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Continue to survey marine fisheries & monitor commercial landings.
- Work with marine fisheries councils to restore depleted species.
- Lead cooperative research efforts as part of R.I. Marine Fisheries Institute.
- Expand & rehabilitate commercial fishing assets in Port of Galilee & Pier 9.
- Continue to improve efficiency through implementation of Lean.
- Implement Shellfish Management Plan; launch shellfish initiative to support restoration, harvest & aquaculture; improve protocols for screening, responding to harmful algal blooms.
**strategic goal 6:**

**objective 2:**

**Promote & expand local food and agricultural industries**

**Support the growth of food & farming businesses**

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Secure sustainable funding stream for Local Agriculture & Seafood Act (LASA) grants.
- Increase access to agricultural land for new, beginning farmers.
- Support state food-system planning efforts & Relish Rhody campaign to promote local food.
- Continue to grow seafood marketing programs & awareness, use of RI Seafood brand.
- Work with partners (e.g., CRMC) to develop spatial mapping plan for aquaculture.
- Support growth of farmers’ markets statewide.
- Explore ways to increase capacity for Div. of Ag.
strategic goal 7: Continue to act on climate change

objectives

1. Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are a leading cause of global warming. We aim to work locally and regionally with our partners to address these emissions.

2. Prioritize adaptation

Rhode Islanders remember SuperStorm Sandy, the Floods of 2010, and our resulting savaged southern coastline and flooded communities. We aim to support efforts that promote strong, resilient natural resources across the state.

3. Institutionalize climate considerations

Climate change is happening, and Rhode Island is vulnerable. We aim to consider climate impacts in our daily work to safeguard our facilities, promote resilience, and advance good public policy.

4. Continue EC4 efforts & leadership

The effects of climate change are far reaching, requiring a coordinated approach. We aim to work with our partners on the Rhode Island Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) to proactively confront the challenges of a changing climate.
strategic goal 7: Continue to act on climate change

objective 1: Reduce GHG emissions

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Continue to participate in & improve the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.
- Finalize & implement key actions under RI Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan.
- Continue work with Transportation Climate Initiative to address transportation-related emissions.
- Continue to expand electric vehicle fleet & charging stations across facilities.
- Implement eight-state Zero Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding.
Continue to act on climate change

objective 2: Prioritize adaptation

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Develop new programs to promote urban forestry.
- Work to control, mitigate invasive species.
- Work with agricultural community to promote clean energy, water conservation & native species.
- Partner with Narragansett Bay Estuary Program to restore habitat & improve tracking, reporting tools.
- Promote green infrastructure & conservation of floodplains, wetlands & undeveloped coastal areas through grant programs.
- Work with research, industry partners to understand & adapt to changes affecting fish and wildlife.
strategic goal 7: Continue to act on climate change
objective 3: Institutionalize climate considerations

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Develop a **climate change review** as part of all new regulations.
- Assist partners with implementing actions identified in wastewater treatment facility climate study.
- Assess **vulnerability** of dams, emergency generators, above-ground storage tanks & chemical/ petroleum facilities to climate impacts.
- Work with CRMC on the Shoreline Change SAMP & Narragansett Bay SAMP; apply principles to DEM facilities, regulated activities.
- Develop “**green standards**” & promote mitigation, pollution prevention & sustainable practices.
- Continue to identify & make facility upgrades as part of Governor’s “**Lead By Example in Energy Efficiency & Clean Energy**” Executive Order.
strategic goal 7: Continue to act on climate change

objective 4: Continue EC4 efforts

Key Actions/Small Wins:

- Lead cabinet-level coordination to implement RI Resilient Act.
- Collaborate with the Office of Energy Resources (OER) to implement the State Energy Plan.
- Assist in developing Rhode Island’s statewide adaptation plan.
- Partner with RIDOT, OER & Statewide Planning to reduce in-state transportation-related GHG emissions.