

Business and Environmental Roundtable News



Workshops Set For Septic System Regulation Changes

DEM will hold three workshops this month on proposed revisions to the state's septic system regulations that would significantly affect siting and design of septic systems, as well as administrative and procedural issues. One provision would change the term for a septic system, now referred to as an individual sewage disposal system, or ISDS, to be called an onsite wastewater treatment system, or OWTS. The name change emphasizes the importance of treatment to ensure that drinking water sources remain protected from the effects of wastewater discharged to the ground and recognizes the advances made in technology to better treat wastewater before discharge.

Public workshops

Wednesday, June 20, from 4-6 pm in Room 300 at DEM Headquarters, 235 Promenade Street, Providence.

Wednesday, June 27, from 7-9 pm in the Council Chambers at the Portsmouth Town Hall, 2200 East Main Road, Portsmouth.

Thursday, June 28 from 7-9 pm in the Cafeteria at South Kingstown High School, 215 Columbia Street, Wakefield.

Among the technical changes are revised design standards to ensure optimal treatment in soil dispersal trenches, higher performance standards for OWTS in salt pond watersheds and on small lots with drinking water wells, increased setbacks between large scale or community OWTS and drinking water wells and streamlined measures for simple variance requests.

The proposed revisions were developed in conjunction with a stakeholder group that included representatives from the building community, licensed septic system professionals, environmental organizations, municipal government, the University of Rhode Island, and state and federal agencies.

DEM will consider comments at the workshop as well as written comments when drafting the final rules.

Comments will be accepted until 4 p.m. on June 29. In August, DEM will begin a formal process to adopt the Rules, which will include a public notice, public hearing, and public comment period.

The draft Rules are available for review on DEM's website, www.dem.ri.gov, by clicking on "Draft Septic System Regs" under "Timely Topics" on the homepage. Hard copies of the draft Rules are also available by contacting the Office of Water Resources at 222-4700 ext. 7205.



Rhode Island Agricultural Hall of Fame

Six individuals and one cooperative have been chosen as the first inductees into the state's Agricultural Hall of Fame. The Agricultural Hall of Fame award "recognizes and honors those who have made a significant contribution to agriculture in Rhode Island over time," said Kenneth Ayars, Chief of DEM's Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing. Awardee contributions include:

- The late **Aldo Panciera**, one of the most influential cattle breeders of his generation who is known for the Holstein bull *Ivanhoe*, the most famous bull in the history of dairy farming in the United States. Holsteins make up more than 98 percent of all dairy cows in this country, and more can be traced back to *Ivanhoe* than to any bull in the breed.
- The late **Aaron Briggs** helped initiate the Rhode Island Dairy Farms' Cooperative, which led to *Rhody Fresh Milk*.
- William Stamp, Jr.** who has grown sweet corn, pumpkins, greenhouse plants, and poultry, Stamp has been president of the Rhode Island Farm Bureau for over 33 years, the longest term in America. Stamp has been president of many organizations, including Farm Family Insurance, and the Rhode Island Poultry Association, and is a former trustee of the Eastern States Exposition.
- Ken Lagerquist** executive director of the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association (RINLA) for the past 16 years, has helped to grow that organization, which represents a segment of agriculture that accounts for over two thirds of the farm income in Rhode Island.
- Winfield Tucker** has been in the forefront of farming innovations in Rhode Island, including being the first to own a wheel row irrigation system. He is known throughout the East Coast for his production of potatoes and sod, and more recently has protected the bulk of his farm's 1300 acres by selling development rights to the Town of North Kingstown and State of Rhode Island.
- The late **Dr. C. Richard Skogley** taught and advised hundreds of students in turfgrass management program, which is recognized as the most prominent turfgrass research program in the country. He developed a turfgrass breeding program which led to production of significant varieties which have been marketed throughout the world.



Agricultural Hall of Fame Awards ceremony from left to right: William Stamp Jr., Carolyn Briggs, wife of Aaron Briggs; Dawson Hodson and Linda Tucker, son and wife of Winfield Tucker; Ken Lagerquist; Jane Skogley, wife of Dr. C. Richard Skogley; Donald Carcieri, Governor; W. Michael Sullivan, DEM Director; Mary Panciera, wife of Aldo Panciera; Julie Bodeur, Jessie Dutra, Louis Escobar, Jim Hines, members of RI Dairy Farms Cooperative.

•**Rhode Island Dairy Farms Cooperative, Inc.**, a cooperative of five Rhode Island dairy farmers formed in 2002, led to the development of *Rhody Fresh* milk. *Rhody Fresh*, first on the market in 2003 is carried in over 100 RI outlets.. More than 350,000 pounds or 10,000 cases of milk are sold each month, close to 75 percent of the milk capacity of the five farms. The cooperative, with Jim Hines as executive director, includes Tomaquag Valley Farm in Bradford, Meadowburg Farm in Richmond, Escobar's Highland Farm in Portsmouth, Cottrell Homestead in West Kingston and Dutra Farm in Jamestown.

2007 With Alfred L. Hawkes Award

West Greenwich Town Manager and Senator Kevin Breene and the people of West Greenwich received the Department of Environmental Management's Alfred L. Hawkes Environmental Achievement Award on Friday, June 15th, the first time that an entire community has been cited.

In announcing the award DEM Director W. Michael Sullivan said the people of West Greenwich voted to borrow a precedent setting \$8 million to protect 1,600 acres of forest and farmland. Senator Breene was a driving force in support of the acquisition.

The 1,600 acres to be preserved are located in the Borderlands, a 136,000 acre critical forest and watershed area that encompasses parts of 10 communities along the southeastern and southwestern Connecticut and Rhode Island border, the largest unfragmented greenspace between Boston and New York. The acreage in West Greenwich includes three properties to be known as the Tillinghast Pond Management Area, which will be jointly managed by the town, The Nature Conservancy, and DEM for public access, wildlife management, and watershed protection. All three properties — the 968-acre Shepard property on which DEM will be buying a conservation easement, the 471-acre Cioe property, and the 127-acre Bates property — have been secured by The Nature Conservancy through purchase or pending contract.



Senator Kevin Breene

The Alfred L. Hawkes Award for Conservation and Environmental Accomplishment acknowledges those who have “with uncommon effort, immeasurably advanced the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the natural resources of our state.” DEM has presented The Hawkes Award annually for the past 15 years.

Regulatory News

Agricultural Lands Preservation

The Agricultural Land Preservation Commission will hold a hearing on June 20, 2007 from 3:30 - 5:00 pm on proposed amendments to the Rules and Regulations Governing the Procedures for The Operation of the Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission and the Purchase of Farmland Development Rights. The regulations have been revised to clarify language with no substantive changes. The hearing will take place at the United States Department of Agriculture, second floor conference room, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI. Copies of the proposed regulations are available on DEM's website.

Mercury

DEM is preparing responses to comments on draft amendments to The Rules & Regulations Governing the Administration and Enforcement of the Rhode Island Mercury Education and Reduction Act to reduce mercury releases to the environment from dental offices and vehicle light switches.

Changes in Section 12 of the regulations require manufacturers of motor vehicles sold in Rhode Island that contain mercury switches to establish and implement a collection program for mercury switches from end-of-life vehicles with a system for payment of a minimum five-dollar (\$5.00) fee per mercury switch.

The new Section 15 on Dental Amalgam Separators requires dental offices that place or remove dental amalgam (e.g. mercury from fillings) to install an amalgam separator no later than July 1, 2008. The language largely mirrors the language of the RI General Assembly in 2006 Public Law Chapter 556

For more information contact: Elizabeth Stone Ph: 401-222-4700 x2422; Fax: 401-222-6802
Email: elizabeth.stone@dem.ri.gov or visit the RI DEM web site at www.dem.ri.gov and click on 'Regulations'.

Freshwater Wetlands Regulations

Revisions to the Freshwater Wetlands Regulations took effect on June first. The changes clarify and improve the organization of the regulations and include provisions to streamline applications through flat fees. The regulations also make two revisions to the DEM-Coastal Resources Management Council freshwater wetland jurisdictional boundary in Providence and Cranston.

The Department made the following changes in response to comments:

- Eliminated a proposed exempt activity for clearing at airports pursuant to a vegetation management plan
- Added a new definition of invasive species
- Clarified the exemption for planting projects
- Clarified a wetlands rule regarding the Department's water quality regulations to explain that applications for wetland permits must also meet the state's water quality standards.

The amended regulations can be found on the DEM website, www.dem.ri.gov, under "Timely Topics" on the homepage. For additional information please contact Carolyn Murphy at DEM's Office of Water Resources at carol.murphy@dem.ri.gov or 222-4700, ext. 7208.

Quahog Transplants

In May, DEM and local shell fishermen transplanted between 600,000 to 800,000 pounds of quahogs from high shellfish density areas in Narragansett Bay to shellfish management areas and the Potowomut Spawner Sanctuary.

In addition to possession limits and seasonal closures, DEM uses management areas and a rotating transplant/harvest system to ensure the viability of the industry by moving quahogs from polluted waters of the Bay to spawner sanctuar-



Rhode Island shell fishermen assist in a quahog transplants in May.

ies where they rid themselves of pollutants and release their spawn. Transplanted shellfish will be unavailable for harvest until December 2007, allowing the shellfish to spawn, and help replenish nearby areas.

Since the transplant program began in the 1970's, adult quahogs from past shellfish transplants have spawned, and the resultant sets of juvenile clams have helped to replenish depleted areas of the bay and provide a bountiful winter fishery. Previous efforts have enhanced the stock of shellfish in Greenwich Bay and waters in the vicinity of Quonset Point, Pine Hill, Hope Island, and in the Potowomut and High Banks Shellfish Management Areas.

Project Clean Sweep Cleanup Effort Continues; Volunteers and Support Needed

DEM and Clean the Bay (CTB) continue in their mission this summer to rid Narragansett Bay and its coastlines of marine debris. *Project Clean Sweep* began last year in Greenwich Bay and Narragansett Bay Research Reserve (NBRR) sites in Portsmouth and Jamestown. The initiative has removed 800 tons of debris and cleaned over 40 shoreline miles. The second phase of the project will focus on cleaning a 40 foot wide swath of the coast over 25 miles long, from Gaspee to Fields Point, Nayatt to Bullocks Point and the East Providence shoreline.

Project Clean Sweep involves three major components. Captains Ed and AL will remove large debris, such as abandoned boats, docks, pilings and derelict fishing gear using a specially-designed 56' landing craft. Volunteers clean up smaller debris on land. The group also set up a report-response program to retrieve and remove large floating objects before they create a navigational hazard to mariners. To report an object needing removal call 741-8749.



A group of Exeter-West Greenwich High School students help in Project Clean Sweep effort with clean up of Goddard Memorial State Park in Warwick.

The project is partially funded by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Project partners and supporters play a key role with a number of municipalities and businesses contributing resources and equipment. **Partner and municipal support is still needed to encourage local volunteer participation and to help with the project.**

For more information about the project, to contribute, or to volunteer, please visit Clean the Bay's website at www.cleanthebay.org or call/email Vanessa Venturini, Community Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator at 222-3434, extension 4401 or vanessa.venturini.dem.ri.gov. Schedule a cleanup for your group/company today!

Safe Pesticide Use

DEM is encouraging homeowners to practice safe pesticide use or to hire a trained and licensed professional this summer, stressing the importance of following all safety precautions, particularly regarding children and pets as their curious nature can sometimes result in their ingesting toxic substances like pesticides.

According to data collected from the American Association of Poison Control Centers, in 2004 alone, an estimated 71,000 children were involved in common household pesticide-related poisonings or exposures in the United States.

RIDEM also encourages homeowners who hire pesticide applicators to make sure that they are licensed to do so. Pesticide applicators obtain their licenses from the RIDEM after taking a mandatory training course at the University of Rhode Island that reviews topics from proper application techniques to legal issues surrounding pesticide use. The DEM uses both random and scheduled inspections to ensure that licensed pesticide applicators are applying products properly. DEM can fine pesticide applicators who fail to demonstrate correct application procedures or have committed other pesticide use violations. DEM provides information to licensed applicators on new and safer pesticides and the effects of pesticides on the environment, resulting in applicators converting to safer and low-level residual pesticides.

Safe Pesticide Tips

- Select the appropriate pesticide for the pest or weeds you want to eliminate. Not all pesticides are effective against all pests.
- Choose the least toxic product available. Often baits and traps are safer options.
- Read product labels carefully and use only the amounts stated on the pesticide label to do the job. More is not better.
- Buy ready-to-use products instead of concentrates. Undiluted pesticides that require mixing are more hazardous than ones already diluted.
- Wear protective gear as directed on the label. The use of appropriate gear such as gloves, long sleeves and pants will protect against the chemicals entering the blood stream through the skin.
- Remove toys and related items from the area.
- Keep adults, children, and pets away from treatment area during application and for a period after as directed on the label.
- Wash hands with soap and water and remove clothing after use.
- Store pesticides in their original containers in a locked, dry area and keep out of reach of children and pets.
- Dispose of pesticides according to manufacturer's specifications and never dispose on the ground or down a drain.



DEM's Jenny Austrella teaching festival goers about groundwater protection.

Earth Day 2007 a Tremendous Success

Earth Day 2007 drew over 10,500 children and adults to Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence for Conservation Week and reached over 10,000 people at the Earth Day Family Festival held at the Warwick Mall Saturday, April 21, who enjoyed music, fun, and environmental education exhibits. .

Throughout April 7000 volunteers took part in over 90 cleanups around the state. DEM awarded 36 grants of \$200 each to cities and towns and non-profit organizations to help enhance their clean ups.

Farmers' Markets in DEM-Operated Parks Now Open

Farmers' Markets in DEM-Operated Parks opened in May. Hours of operation are:

- Haines Memorial State Park Farmers' Market, Route 103 on the East Providence/Barrington line, Wednesdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Goddard Memorial State Park Farmers' Market, Warwick, Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Colt State Park Farmers' Market, Bristol, Fridays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Fishermens' Memorial State Park Farmers' Market, Narragansett, Sundays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



For a complete list of state farmers' markets visit the Department's website (www.dem.ri.gov).

Upcoming Events/Meetings

June is Rivers Month

Events to celebrate RI's rivers are scheduled all month long. Go to the Rivers Month Calendar, at www.ririvers.org.

June 20

Public Hearing re: Amendments to the Farmland Development Rights Regulations, 3:30 P.M., at the US Department of Agriculture, 60 Quaker Lane, 2nd floor conference room. For information contact, Steve Volpe at 222-4700 x 4501.

June 20

Public Workshop re: Amended ISDS (Septic System) Rules., 4 P.M. DEM Headquarters, 235 Promenade St, Room 300. For information contact Jonathan Zwarg at 222-4700 x7205

June 21

Combined Environmental and Business Roundtable Meeting. DEM Headquarters, 235 Promenade St, Room 300, 3 P.M. For information contact Terri Bisson at 222-3434 x 4426.

June 26

Public Hearing re: Amendments to the Rules and Regulations

for Underground Storage Tank Facilities Used for Petroleum Products and Hazardous Materials. 5 P.M., Room 300, DEM Headquarters, 235 Promenade Street.. For information, call Michaela Brockmann at 222-4700 ext. 7104.

June 27

Public Workshop re: Amended ISDS Rules, 7 P.M., in the Council Chambers at the Portsmouth Town Hall, 2200 East Main Road, Portsmouth. For information, call Jonathan Zwarg at 222-4700 ext. 7205.

June 28

Public Workshop re: Amended ISDS Rule., 7 P.M., in the Cafeteria at the South Kingstown High School, 215 Columbia Street, Wakefield. For information, call Jonathan Zwarg at 222-4700 ext. 7205.

June 29

Non-Surf Lifeguard Testing. 9 A.M.-2 PM, Prossner Grove Picnic Area, Burlingame State Park, Charlestown. Pre-qualification requirements. For information, call John Faltus at 222-2632..