

Business and Environmental Roundtable News



NEXT PHASE OF NARRAGANSETT BAY DEBRIS CLEAN UP LAUNCHED

Governor Donald Carcieri, Department of Environmental Management officials, Rhode Island's Congressional delegation, and officials of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration joined with Clean the Bay on October 1 at Colt State Park in Bristol to celebrate the removal of some 1,000 tons of marine debris from Narragansett Bay and to launch *Clean Sweep II*, the second phase of a comprehensive marine debris clean up initiative.

Timothy R.E. Keeney, NOAA's deputy assistant secretary for oceans and atmosphere, presented DEM and Clean the Bay with a grant to fund the next phase of *Project Clean Sweep*. The \$170,000 grant, the second largest community-based marine debris prevention and removal grant in the nation, is a tribute to the monumental work that this public-private partnership has already accomplished. Following on the success of its first year, *Clean Sweep II* will expand the cleanup of large, medium, and small debris from an additional 86 miles of shoreline. The project will begin this month in Barrington, Bristol and Warren, and then move to areas off Warwick, East Providence, Jamestown, Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth over the next year.

Following the speaking program, Clean the Bay took Governor Carcieri and other dignitaries aboard its 58-foot mechanized landing craft to demonstrate how large debris is plucked by the craft's crane from the shoreline. *Project Clean Sweep* involves a growing list of partners from the public and private sectors. Those partners include the towns and cities along the bay where cleanups take place, the RI Resource Recovery Corporation, which waives tipping fees for debris, the Coastal Resources Management Council, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard, Dominion Gas, local universities and youth groups.



Above, from left to right, Senator Jack Reed, Governor Donald Carcieri and Tim Keeney from NOAA lend a hand with Project Clean Sweep.

TIDAL WATERS FLOW INTO TOWN POND FOR FIRST TIME IN 57 YEARS

On September 21, DEM and the US Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, excavated the last plug of soil blocking Mount Hope Bay from the Town Pond salt marsh restoration project in Portsmouth.

Flooding of the salt pond is part of the ongoing work being performed at Town Pond, and is a benchmark in the construction of the project. Completion of the restoration project is expected this winter.

The \$4.6 million restoration project is a joint effort between DEM, the Corps, and numerous state, local and non-governmental agencies to help restore 23 acres of salt pond and salt marsh habitat in the wildlife sanctuary at Town Pond. The restored salt pond will provide habitat for coastal fish and wildlife, such as shellfish, flounder and other finfish, herons, egrets, and waterfowl, restoring the productivity and ecological value of the area.

Located next to Mount Hope Bay, Town Pond was a tidally influenced salt pond and salt marsh prior to a Corps navigation improvement project placing dredged material in this area in the early 1950s. At the time, the low-lying pond was considered a good place to dispose of dredged material. Filling the pond with dredged material increased its elevation above that of regular tidal flooding, and turned it into a lower value, non-tidal habitat dominated by the reed species *Phragmites australis*.

The restored pond will resemble the historic condition at Town Pond in the 1930s. About 125,000 cubic yards of dredged material has been excavated to elevations that will support about half salt marsh and half mudflat and salt pond. There will be approximately 2.5 acres of high marsh, 8.9 acres of low marsh, 3.2 acres of mudflats, and 8.2 acres of permanent open water. Approximately 18 acres of *Phragmites* reed, which is above the elevation of tidal influence, was removed to restore salt marsh and salt pond estuarine habitats. Once the new elevations are established and are flooded by frequent tides, estuarine habitats and vegetation communities will establish.



Above, a 1939 aerial photo of Town Pond showing the natural condition of the pond. At right, a 2004 photo showing the former pond filled with *Phragmites*.



A berm was constructed to separate Founder’s Brook, which runs along the west side of the site, from the restored salt pond. A new 42-inch diameter culvert with a flap gate has replaced the antiquated culvert at the end of the brook, located southwest of the railroad bridge. A concrete weir 36 feet long was installed to regulate a permanent pool where the entrance channel meets the interior marsh. The channel connecting Town Pond to Mount Hope Bay has been partially relocated.

Excavated material not used to construct the berm was placed on a site on the east side of the marsh extending from the edge of the access road across to the edge of the Montaup Country Club. This area will be planted with coastal grasses.

In addition to DEM and the Corps, project partners include the US Environmental Protection Agency, RI Coastal Resources Management Council, Roger Williams University, Aquidneck Land Trust, RI Department of Transportation, RI Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, Ducks Unlimited, Town of Portsmouth, and the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program. The RI Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, through the generosity of Arch Chemicals and Metals Recycling, LLC, contributed \$15,000 toward the project. National Grid also donated their services for installation of the Osprey Nest platforms.

Land Protection Efforts Continue

DEM and partners continued efforts to preserve Rhode Island’s natural and cultural resources with the two major initiatives this fall.

Salisbury Farm, Johnston

DEM and the US Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced the acquisition of farmland development rights to the 30-acre Salisbury Farm in Johnston, bringing the total number of farmland acres protected in the “farm loop” of western Cranston, Johnston, and Scituate to over 540 acres.

The Salisbury property is just over the Cranston line from the DEM-owned and protected Ringrose (Urban Edge) Farm operated by the Southside Community Land Trust, and is in close proximity to a number of other protected farms in the area, including DiMuccio Farm, Confreda Farm, Holscher Farm (Good Earth), Domenicone Farm, and the Knight Farms in Cranston and Scituate. Protection of Ringrose and the others was made possible by a number of partners, including, in the case of Ringrose, the Champlin Foundations.

The farm is located in an area where land preservation began over 50 years ago in order to save important natural resources. The nearby 267-acre Curran State Park was acquired by the Kent County Water Authority in the 1950s to provide a public drinking water supply. The undeveloped park was transferred to DEM in 1967 and became the cornerstone of open space preservation in the area. Salisbury farm operates as a small fruit and vegetable farm, growing strawberries, rasp-



Salisbury Farms offers a variety of activities, products and services. Visit their website at www.salisburyfarm.com. Photo courtesy of website.

berries, corn, and pumpkins. A corn maze, currently open to the public, is also located at the farm. The property was originally operated as a dairy farm and has been farmed by the Salisbury family since the 1860s.

Funding for the \$1 million acquisition includes \$365,000 from Rhode Island's Agricultural Land Preservation Commission's state farmland bond funds, and \$635,000 from the USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.

The agriculture industry has always been important to Rhode Island, both in economic value and in contributing to the livability of Rhode Island communities. Farming is an integral part of the state's economy and provides a valuable contribution to Rhode Island's open space and quality of life. Currently, Rhode Island has 858 farms, mostly family run, which occupy 61,000 acres. To date, 72 farms, totaling 5,095 acres, have been protected through Rhode Island's farmland bond funds in partnership with other organizations.

Rocky Point

The U.S. Small Business Administration, as the court appointed receiver for Moneta Capital Corporation, reached agreement with a Rhode Island developer and the City of Warwick to purchase the 124-acre site of the former Rocky Point Amusement Park in Warwick. The total purchase price is \$20 million.

Rocky Point Partners, LLC agreed to purchase approximately 83 acres and the City of Warwick will buy the remaining 41 acres. Rocky Point Partners, will pay \$15.6 million for its component of the overall sale, and the City of Warwick purchase price is \$4.4 million. A portion of the City of Warwick's payment will come from a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and DEM. The purchase and sale agreement has been submitted to the U.S. District Court for Rhode Island for review and disposition. Under the terms of the purchase and sale agreement, final closing of the transaction is to take place on or before March 28, 2008.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management will provide \$1.4 million dollars to the City of Warwick toward the purchase of the property. DEM Director W. Michael Sullivan called the Rocky Point land purchase a once in a lifetime opportunity and praised the efforts of all who have been working so hard to preserve it.

"We now have within our grasp a mile of shoreline ... that the citizens of this city and the citizens of this state would have the opportunity to walk, to stroll, to view, to fish and to continue to enjoy the bounty of the Bay and the view of what was once Rocky Point Park but now will be an enduring asset to all of us," Sullivan said.

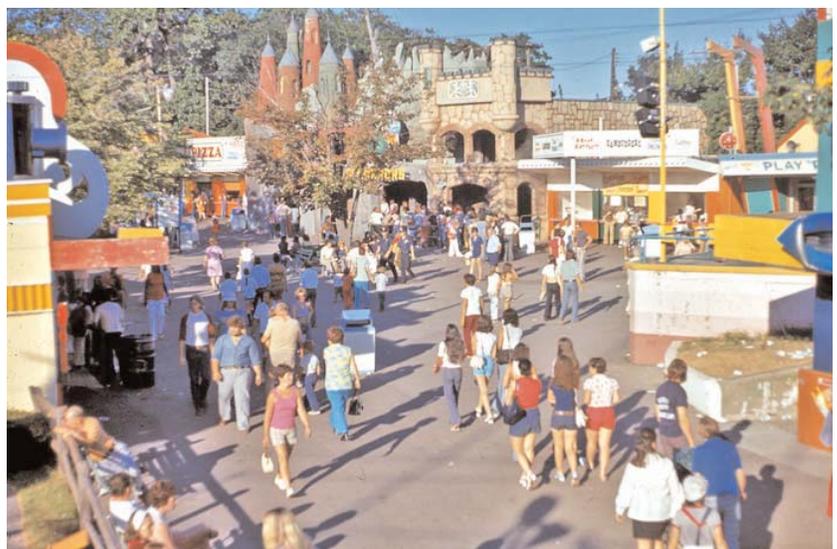


Photo by Mark Thompson.

DEM Holds Wastewater Management Boot Camp

More than a dozen wastewater treatment operators attended a new industry-driven training program, or Wastewater Management Boot Camp, sponsored by DEM. The Boot camp is providing intensive training, networking, and skill-development to help groom the next generation of wastewater management leaders. The aim is that, as the wastewater profession in Rhode Island ages and wastewater managers retire, these trained individuals will be available to continue the necessary work of managing the state's critical wastewater treatment infrastructure.

The Narragansett Water Pollution Control Association and the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission assisted DEM with the program, which includes about 100 hours over the next year of management courses, technical courses such as engineering basics and process control, skill training in the areas of media relations, working with regulatory agencies, and budget preparation. The program is funded with federal training grants, so participation in this program comes at no cost to the individuals or their communities.

Participants included Jared Doyle and Mark Healy of the Narragansett Bay Commission's Fields Point facility in Providence; Thomas Ciolfi and Harry Clifford of the Narragansett Bay Commission's Bucklin Point facility in East Providence; Janine Burke, Peter Eldridge, James DiCaprio, and Robert Sheriden of the West Warwick facility; Ed Soltys of the Cranston facility; Gwin Cox of the Warwick facility; David Perrotta of the East Greenwich facility; David Gee of the Narragansett facility; and Jim Locke, Jr. of the Woonsocket facility.



Wastewater treatment operators participate in a boot camp exercise.

The first training segment, on Thursday, September 27 was a full-day introduction to wastewater treatment management, and will be followed on October 25 by a performance management course, both taught by Jon Jewett and Chuck Conway of the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, based in Lowell, MA. Both courses have received excellent reviews from wastewater operators throughout New England. Additional courses will be scheduled through the year.

Septic System Regulations

The Department held three workshops in June and a public hearing in September on proposed changes to the state's septic system regulations. DEM is making minor clarifications to the regulations based on feedback and comments from the workshops and public hearing and hopes to file final regulations with the Secretary of State by the end of October. For more information on the regulations contact Jonathan Zwarg at 222-4700, extension 7205.

DEM AWARDS GRANTS FOR RIPARIAN RESTORATION

The Department of Environmental Management awarded \$169,200 in grants for seven projects that will restore riparian buffers to improve water quality for Narragansett Bay and its watersheds. The funds come from the 2004 \$70 million Open Space, Recreation, Bay and Watershed Protection Bond.

Middletown will receive two grants: \$20,000 to remove invasive plants and establish native trees and shrubs on a newly acquired parcel adjacent to Bailey Brook; \$39,000 to help implement the Bailey Brook Watershed plan by restoring three parcels in the northern portion of the watershed.

East Greenwich will receive \$32,000 to establish a 50-foot wide vegetated buffer on either side of the peninsula at the confluence of Maskerchugg Creek and Greenwich Cove.

Johnson and Wales University will receive \$26,000 to establish a vegetated buffer along its urban coastal greenway on the Providence/Cranston line. The riparian restoration involves about 2 acres of a 4.7-acre project.

Two grants will be used for restoration projects at DEM's Arcadia Management Area: \$7,700 to restore vegetation at Brook trail, adjacent to the Wood River; \$34,500 to restore vegetation to an area at Beach Pond, where heavy recreational use has led to erosion. The Beach Pond project will restore vegetation to an area previously used as a parking lot, and filter runoff from Route 165 before it enters the pond.

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council will receive \$10,000 to restore the riparian area owned by the RI Department of Transportation adjacent to Cutler Brook in Glocester.

Upcoming DEM Events/Meetings

October 19

DEM Director Michael Sullivan, Ph.D. to Deliver Welcoming Remarks at the 2007 New England Association of Resource Conservation and Development Area Councils' Fall Conference. 8:30 a.m. at the Village Inn Resort and Conference Center in Narragansett. For information, call Gail Mastrati at 222-4700 ext. 2402.

October 24

Public Hearing on Proposed Changes to State Commercial Fishing License Regulations. Sponsored by DEM. 6 p.m., Corless Auditorium at the University of Rhode Island's Bay Campus on South Ferry Road, Narragansett. For information, call Jason McNamee at 423-1943.

October 25

Health, Environmental and Pesticide Safety Education Training. First part of two-day core II training for pesticide applicators and dealers. Co-sponsored by DEM. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island's East Farm. Second part to be held on November 8. For information, call Robin Mooney at 222-2781 ext. 4513.

October 31

DEM Director Michael Sullivan, Ph.D. to Address the RI Chapter of the Environmental Business Council. 7:30 a.m. at the Marriott Hotel in Providence. For information, call Gail Mastrati at 222-4700 ext. 2402.

October 31

Health, Environmental and Pesticide Safety Education Training. Specialty category 7A "Household" training for pesticide applicators and dealers. Co-sponsored by DEM. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island's East Farm. For information, call Robin Mooney at 222-2781 ext. 4513.

October 31

Health, Environmental and Pesticide Safety Education Training. Specialty category 7D "Vertebrate" training for pesticide applicators and dealers. Co-sponsored by DEM. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island's East Farm. For information, call Robin Mooney at 222-2781 ext. 4513

Visit DEM's website for an up-to-date listing of meetings and events. www.dem.ri.gov