

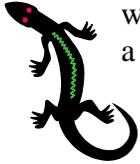


DEM Environmental Roundtable Newsletter

February 13, 2002

Wetland Year End Report

DEM recently released its 2001 year-end report that catalogs work accomplished in the wetland program. Part of this report is a follow-up on the status of the recommendations that were a result of the DEM Wetland Task Force. Implementation of the Task Force recommendations was a high priority for DEM in 2001. Highlights of the report include:



- Two wetland rule amendments were completed. The first amendment, effective January 2001, established uniform appeal periods. The second amendment effective in September clarified DEM and Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) regulation of freshwater wetlands among other things. Phase 2 rules under development include a revised fee schedule and a reorganized rule structure.
- Wetland permitting and compliance statistics for 1999 and 2000 were compiled in 2001. DEM granted 593 permits during the 2-year period with the majority of the permits being for residential development. A net loss of 2.6 acres of biological wetland was permitted.
- DEM stepped up permit compliance inspections in 2001 and found that approximately 17% of permittees were in noncompliance of some sort. In the year 2000, the Office of Compliance (OCI) received 551 wetland-related complaints and issued 99 enforcement actions. OCI determined that there were 17.4 acres of unauthorized wetland, river, and stream alteration, and 10.8 acres of unauthorized alteration of the perimeter, riverbank and floodplain wetlands.
- DEM and EPA Region 1 supported and worked closely with scientists at URI who completed a survey of wetland map users and experts; developed a proactive freshwater wetland restoration method, and developed a vernal pool website.
- DEM also worked with partners to acquire valuable wetlands such as those at the Toste Farm in Tiverton and Little Compton.
- The Office of Water Resources expanded its wetland outreach efforts in 2001. New guidance materials were developed and several successful training workshops were conducted.
- DEM and EPA Region 1 also supported several local wetland protection projects.

For more information about this the [2001 Wetlands Year-End Report](#), visit the DEM website and click on programs. The file is located in the wetland section.

Save the Date – Earth Day

The 32nd Anniversary of Earth Day is April 22, 2002. Plans are well underway for this year's events.



The Department will once again coordinate statewide volunteer cleanup efforts, offer mini-grants to enhance cleanups and provide paper trash bags. Anyone interested in the cleanup/grant program may download the information and an application form at www.state.ri.us/dem. Click on the Topics button. Or, call [Melinda Hopkins](#) at 222-3434, extension 4426.

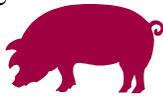
Also, the Earth Day Committee and the Department have teamed up with Roger Williams Park Zoo on a weeklong event to celebrate Earth Day. Conservation Week is a weeklong celebration to teach about the environment and the importance of the Earth's diverse habitat. Visitors can roam the zoo and learn about the unique conservation issues facing various regions of the world. International entertainers, activity stations, as well as the Zoo's theatre troupe will add to the excitement and learning. Conservation Week activities take place Monday through Friday, April 15 – 19, from 11am to 3pm each day.

Environmental organizations interested in conducting interactive education activities are invited to participate.

The week wraps up on Saturday, April 20, with the Earth Day celebration. Visitors learn how to practice environmental stewardship in their own backyard to positively impact the earth. Activities and theatre performances will be held throughout the day. Also, area environmentally conscious companies, non-profit organizations, and individuals are invited to participate in an environmental fair to show what they are doing to protect our planet. The celebration takes place from 11am to 3pm. Exhibitor packages will be mailed out soon.

Moniz Farm Clean-up Update

On September 11, 2001, the Moniz family executed a Consent Order with the DEM in which the family agreed to remove the clamshells and clam meat from their property and to restore a wetland. The removal was to be accomplished in four phases with the last phase to be completed on March of 2002.



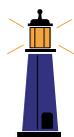
Inspections of the property by the Department in October and November indicated that the removal of the clamshells was complete. The cleanup that the Department requested for four years was accomplished in thirty days. As of mid-January, only an emergency spillway on one of the waste lagoons and the hydroseeding of the wetland remained to be completed.

Within sixty days of the completion of the remediation, the Moniz family will deed over to the DEM the development rights to eighteen acres of farmland in lieu of paying an administrative penalty.

For additional information concerning this case, contact [John Langlois](#) at 222-6607 ext. 2303.

Ft. Wetherill Update

Within the next couple of weeks the Marine Section of the Division of Fish and Wildlife will be moving into its new office and laboratory at Fort Wetherill, Jamestown. Three abandoned military buildings on the pier at Fort Wetherill have been completely restored as office space, wet and dry labs and a small boat marine maintenance and repair facility. This project was actually initiated by the Department, in 1991 as a cooperative effort with the Town of



Jamestown, to restore and reuse the early 1900's military buildings consistent and compatible with the mission of the Department, the historical significance of the buildings, and the residential neighborhood surrounding the facility.

The facility, actually three separate buildings in close proximity to each other, is located on a granite bulkhead on the very eastern side of Fort Wetherill State Park on the East Passage of Narragansett Bay. The largest of the three buildings will provide office, laboratory and marine repair work space for sixteen employees of the DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife, Marine Section. The second building will be completely dedicated to a seawater wet-lab which will provide Fish and Wildlife marine biologists a constant circulation of ocean water (200 gallons a minute) from Narragansett Bay. This circulated seawater will be channeled throughout the building to large specimen open top holding tanks for marine life observation and research. The third building will house a small conference room, public restrooms, and a small office and storage space for DEM Parks and Recreation employees. The granite pier will also provide a location for the several Fish and Wildlife boats, with easy access to Narragansett Bay.

At the project groundbreaking approximately 14 months ago the Director stated that this project represented a true rebirth of the facility. These military buildings, constructed almost 100 years ago to protect Narragansett Bay, would once again be used, now in the Department's mission, to protect the resources of Narragansett Bay.

Parks and Management Area Rule Revision

In January 2002, DEM filed new regulations concerning the state parks and management areas. These regulations will:

- Allow rock climbing at parks and management areas except Ft. Wetherill,
- Prohibit the use of motorcycles on hiking trails and single track trails,
- Adds fossils and minerals to the list of features that cannot be removed from state property without a special permit,
- Restrict the use of motorcycles in these areas by limiting the number of participants in special events from 300 to 150. The number of special events in Arcadia and the George Washington areas have been reduced to two special events.

Greenhouse Gas Action Plan Project Update

In addition, special event sponsors will be required to provide a liability insurance policy and post a bond to repair damage that has not been repaired within seven days of the event. For more information about these rules, contact [Mal Grant](#) at 222-6605 extension 2412.

Wetland Workshops

DEM sponsored two wetland workshops in the last two months. The workshops are a result of suggestions from a Wetland Task Force that met during 2000.



In November 2001, DEM hosted a *Wetlands Permit Training Workshop* for 55 consultants. RI Association of Wetland Scientists, along with the City of Cranston and the Department of Administration all helped in planning the event. The purpose of this informative workshop was to improve the quality of application submittals and reduce the number of repeat deficiencies.

DEM hosted another Wetlands Permit Training workshop for Municipal Officials in January 2002. This workshop included a Town/City & DEM Coordination panel discussion. Nearly 50 participants from 21 different cities and towns attended this workshop.

Sample workshop topics included site plan requirements, exempt activities, avoidance and minimization techniques, and a permitting process overview. For the second workshop there was also a panel discussion on ways to improve wetland protection.

Program supervisors and staff, as well as wetland biologists and engineers gave presentations. Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, EPA, Region I, and Army Corps of Engineers representatives were present to help answer questions. The workshops were held at DEM's main office in Providence.

DEM received many favorable evaluations on the both workshops. Participants recommended that these workshops become annual events.

DEM has begun the process of developing a Greenhouse Gas Action Plan. The action plan is being developed using three work groups, i.e., Buildings and Facilities, Transportation and Land Use, and Energy Supply and Solid Waste. Each group has held their first round of meetings.



The first series of meetings discussed the following issues:

- Overview of Process, Goals, Schedule, Ground-rules, and Summary of Research and Work to Date
- Sector Background and Baseline Forecast in RI
- Overview and Discussion of Potential Technologies, Programs and Policies for Reducing GHG in each sector

In response to the comments and input of work group members during the first work group meetings, Tellus Institute and Jonathan Raab produced:

- Action Table - detailing the questions/requests members posed and their responses as to how each issue will be addressed in the next work group meeting and in the revision of the Scoping Reports.
- Redlined Scoping Reports - revised reports in accordance to the changes suggested in the Action Tables
- Prioritization Memo - detailing the process by which prioritization of options can begin according to a combination of factors including; the cost of saved carbon, the amount of carbon saved and any co-benefits.
- Prioritization Tables & Scatter Plot - Tables include all the options presented in the Scoping Report in order of priority based on the cost of saved carbon; amount of carbon saved and co-benefits. The Scatter Plot represents the list of prioritized options broken out into three categories of "High" - "Medium" - "Low" priority based on the tables.

The second round of work group meetings will begin in early February with the Buildings & Facilities work group. For further information concerning this topic, contact [Ana Baptista](#) at 222-3434 extension 4440, or visit the web site at: <http://rihgh.raabassociates.org/>

DEM is a busy agency and things will be getting more hectic with the onset of warmer weather. In order to inform the public on the breadth of these activities, DEM has developed a Calendar of Events for the year. If you are interested in taking advantage of these events, visit the DEM website located at: www.dem.state.ri.us to view these activities. If you would like additional information about an event, contact the person listed in the calendar.



The major events for the next several months include the following activities:

February

21-24 Rhode Island Flower and Garden Show, RI Convention Center
Contact: Steve Wright, Parks & Recreation, 222-2632

March

9-11 Kids First Nutrition Expo 2002, RI Convention Center
Contact: Steve Volpe, Agriculture, 222-2781

17-24 National Agriculture Week
Contact: Steve Volpe, Agriculture, 222-2781

April

1 Goddard Park Golf Course Opens
Contact: Steve Wright, Parks & Recreation, 222-2632

13 Opening Day of Trout Season
Contact: Mike Lapisky, Fish & Wildlife, 789-3094

15 Campgrounds Open
Contact: Steve Wright, Parks & Recreation, 222-2632

20 Earth Day Festival, Roger Williams Park, Providence
Contact: Melinda Hopkins, Strategic Planning & Policy, 222-3434

26 Arbor Day
Contact: Paul Dolan, Forestry, 647-4389

May

1 Ozone Alert Kick-Off Event
Contact: Len Giuliano, Air Resources, 222-2808 ext. 7041

3 Farmers' Markets Open
Contact: Pete Susi, Agriculture, 222-2781 ext. 4517

25 State Beaches Open
Contact: Steve Wright, Parks & Recreation, 222-2632

26 Safe Boating Week Begins
Contact: Mike Scanlon, Enforcement, 222-2284

DEM's 2001 Annual Report is in its final stages of development and should be ready to be released in March. This document will be posted DEM homepage. This report will highlight the major challenges and developments that DEM faced in 2001 along with progress reached in accomplishing the department's goals.

Major legislative developments include:

- ◆ A new approach that will allow much needed dredging projects to move forward
- ◆ The development of a new commercial fisheries licensing system
- ◆ Advances made with respect to boating safety
- ◆ The phasing out of mercury in various products
- ◆ Lower tax rates for open space protection, and
- ◆ Significant tax incentives for historic preservation

Regulatory highlights include:

- ◆ The strengthening of air quality rules for low emission and heavy duty diesel vehicles
- ◆ Amendments of our wetland rules to improve consistency with the Coastal Resources Management Council
- ◆ New storm water management regulations that control non-point sources of pollution in our watersheds
- ◆ Permit streamlining task forces that completed their work on wetlands, septic systems and waste management, while others started on air quality and dredging

Other achievements include:

- ◆ Publishing DEM's second two-year work plan, that was coordinated with EPA
- ◆ Publishing the wetlands program 2001 Year End Report, which documents DEM's successful efforts to reduce delays in the permitting process and evaluates our performance in tracking wetland losses and gains
- ◆ A record-setting year for open space protection

Challenges include:

- ◆ Working to find a solution to Pascoag's drinking water supply problems
- ◆ Supporting the state's efforts that that were put into place after the September 11th Tragedy, and,
- ◆ Impacts of the budget crisis, where DEM has been unable to fill vacancies that are critical to our programs, let alone develop new initiatives.