

Rhode Island Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan



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Rhode Island
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan
Rhode Island
Coastal Resources Management Council

Adopted by CRMC: March 3, 2008

Adopted by NOAA _____

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Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION..... 4

 A. PROGRAM BACKGROUND 4

 B. PURPOSE OF THE RI COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION PLAN (CELCP)..... 4

II. PRIORITIES FOR COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND PROTECTION 5

 A. MAP AND DESCRIPTION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT OF THE RHODE ISLAND CELCP..... 5

 B. TYPES OF LANDS/VALUES TO BE PROTECTED..... 6

 C. IDENTIFICATION OF PROJECT AREAS 11

 D. EXISTING PLANS THAT ARE INCORPORATED INTO THE RHODE ISLAND CELCP 16

III. STATE PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RICELC PLAN..... 22

 A. IDENTIFICATION OF RHODE ISLAND LEAD AGENCY..... 22

 B. AGENCIES ELIGIBLE TO HOLD TITLE OF PROPERTY ACQUIRED USING CELCP FUNDS 22

 C. RHODE ISLAND CELCP PROJECT NOMINATION PROCESS..... 23

IV. COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT 25

V. CERTIFICATION AND APPROVAL 26

 A. CERTIFICATION THAT THE PLAN IS CONSISTENT WITH THE STATE’S APPROVED COASTAL
 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM..... 26

 B. APPROVAL OF PLAN BY DESIGNATED OFFICIAL OF STATE LEAD AGENCY 26

APPENDICES..... 26

 A. PLANS AND STRATEGIES CONSIDERED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RI CELCP..... 27

 B. DRAFT EVALUATION CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE CRMC REVIEW COMMITTEE 31

 C. NATIONAL CELCP CRITERIA 35

I. Introduction

A. Program Background

The Departments of Commerce and Justice and the State Appropriations Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-77) directs the Secretary of Commerce to establish a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (Program) “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses.” The Program gives priority to lands that can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value. The Program was reauthorized in March of 2009 as part of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (Public Law 111-11).

The law further directs the Secretary to establish guidelines that would make project selection within the Program a more objective and nationally competitive process. To meet this directive, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) published Program guidelines (<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/pdf/CELCPfinal02Guidelines.pdf>) that establish the Program’s eligibility, and procedural and programmatic requirements for participation. Coastal states that submit grant applications under the Program must develop a NOAA–approved Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) Plan. The CELCP Plan provides an assessment of priority land conservation needs and clear guidance for nominating and selecting land conservation projects within the state.

In the past, significant funding for the Program was appropriated (FY 2002, \$15.8 million; FY 2003, \$36.7 million; FY 2004, \$51 million), and projects were congressionally directed. As of FY2007, the Program is nationally competitive as outlined in the NOAA guidelines.

B. Purpose of the Rhode Island Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) Plan

As the state’s lead agency for coastal management issues, the R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council (RICRMC) has developed the Rhode Island CELCP Plan in coordination with the R.I. Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), the University of Rhode Island (URI) Coastal Resources Center, and Rhode Island Sea Grant, with involvement from other state agencies and major users of the coast.

The purpose of the CELCP Plan is to assess Rhode Island’s priority land conservation needs and provide clear guidance to applicants for nominating and selecting land conservation projects within the state. A NOAA–approved CELCP Plan will allow Rhode Island to compete for federal funds from the Program for acquisition of worthy coastal and estuarine properties. As of FY2007, potential CELCP projects have been selected for submittal to NOAA through a competitive process outlined in Section III. C. of this document.

II. Priorities for Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection

A. Map and description of the geographic extent of the Rhode Island CELCP

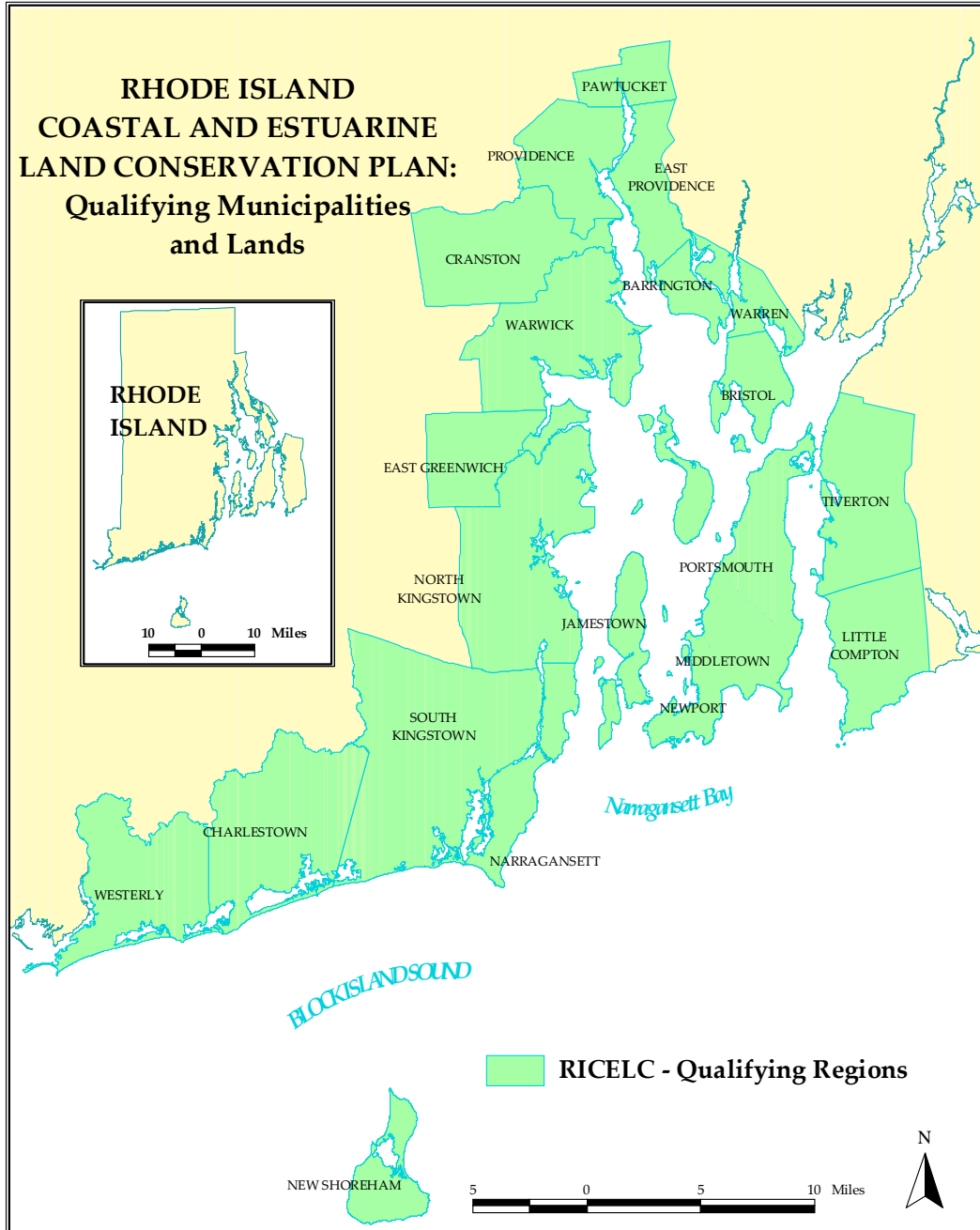


Figure 1: Rhode Island CELCP Geographic boundary

The geographic boundary for the Rhode Island CELCP includes all lands located within the 21 municipalities that abut Rhode Island's coastline along Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island and

Block Island Sounds, and the tidal rivers that flow into these water bodies (Figure 1). This geographic area encompasses 100 percent of the state's coastal zone as designated in Rhode Island's federally approved coastal management program under the Coastal Zone Management Act, as well as extends beyond the coastal zone, but not as far inland as the watershed boundary. It also represents 44 percent of the state's land area, and 54 percent of the state's municipalities. Over 70 percent of the state's population lives within this geographic boundary.¹

The goal for protecting this area is to target vital portions of contributing watersheds that directly impact the coastal and estuarine water bodies and shorelines of Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island and Block Island Sounds. This focus is critical given the amount of development occurring within the state. Increasingly, natural habitats and potential public access areas throughout the state are being developed for residential and commercial use. From 1995 to 2005, about 30 percent of undeveloped land in Rhode Island was developed. In some of the more rapidly developing communities, building activity has consumed as much as 75 percent of vacant land, with the majority of development occurring in coastal municipalities². These trends highlight the need to protect undeveloped lands to preserve our coastal and estuarine resources.

B. Types of lands to be protected

Within the geographic RICELCP boundary (Fig. 1), the types of lands that are priorities for protection are those that presently meet or can be restored to meet the functions and values outlined in the state and national CELCP criteria (Appendices B and C). These include lands that have significant habitat, historical, or recreational value, and lands that are important to the protection of public water supplies and groundwater recharge. In addition, lands that can be shown to be part of larger contiguous natural habitat or recreational greenway corridors will be given special consideration in the RICELCP application process. Many of these criteria have been addressed in detail within existing regional, state and municipal plans and strategies, as outlined in this section (Table 1) and in Section D. A comprehensive list of existing plans and strategies that identify the state's priority coastal and estuarine conservation needs is included in Appendix A.

¹ Rhode Island Statewide Planning. Population of Rhode Island by State, County and City & Town Rhode Island, 1990 & 2000. Information taken from U.S. Bureau of the Census.

² Rhode Island Statewide Planning. Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan, 2006.

Rhode Island Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

Table 1. Land types to be protected through the RICELCP

Land Type	Examples	Plan(s) or Document(s) Where Defined	Author Organization	Applicable State and National CELCP Criteria
<i>Important, Critical or Uncommon Habitat Types</i>	intertidal wetlands, seagrass beds, river systems	RI Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Strategy, RI Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy	CRMC, DEM	Significant conservation and ecological values
	coastal ponds and their tributaries, sand plain / pitch pine woodlands, beaches, dune systems, tributary freshwater wetlands, vernal pools, seeps and small streams, lands that support rare and endangered species or species of particular concern	CRMC Special Area Management Plans, RI Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy	CRMC, DEM	Significant conservation and ecological values
	uninhabited islands, sand and mudflats, coastal shrublands, maritime forests, Atlantic coastal pine barrens and intertidal beaches	NBNERR management Plan, RI Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy	NBNERR, DEM	Significant conservation and ecological values
	Atlantic white cedar swamps, open peatlands, floodplain forests, freshwater tidal marshes and freshwater pond shores that support coastal plain species	Natural Communities of Rhode Island, RI Wetlands Priority Plan, RI Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy	RI Natural Heritage Program, Statewide Planning, DEM	Significant conservation and ecological values
	streams, creeks, brooks, ponds and small lakes	RI Rivers Policy and Classification Plan (SGP Element 162), RI Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy	Statewide Planning, DEM	Significant conservation and ecological values
	lands that are part of regionally significant habitat complexes	Northeast Coastal Areas Study	National Fish and Wildlife Service	Significant conservation and ecological values
<i>Lands Containing Historic and Archaeologic Resources</i>	districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects and landscapes included in or eligible for inclusion in the state and national registers of historic places, or areas designated as historically or archaeologically sensitive	RICRMP	CRMC	Significant historical values
	cemeteries, gardens, parks, parkways and other public open spaces	State Historic Preservation Plan	RI Historical Preservation Commission	Significant historical values
<i>Lands Providing Public Access to or Recreational Enjoyment of the Coast</i>	salt water beaches, walking and biking trails, historical sites, picnic areas, festival sites and natural areas	Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Island's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SGP Element 152)	Statewide Planning	Significant recreational and aesthetic values, provide access to the public
	wildlife viewing areas, isolated open space within densely developed areas	CRMC Special Area Management Plans	CRMC	Significant recreational and aesthetic values, provide access to the public, threatened by conversion to other uses
<i>Lands That Protect Water Resources</i>	drinking water supplies and groundwater recharge areas	Water Supply Policy for Rhode Island (SGP Element 172)	Statewide Planning	Public benefit / resource protection
<i>Lands that Expand Existing Natural Habitat or Recreational Greenway Corridors</i>	contiguous lands that follow the state's major river systems, coastal barriers, major islands and agricultural belts and connect to larger conservation areas, bikeways and trailways	A Greener Path: Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future (SGP Element 155)	Statewide Planning	Significant conservation, ecological and recreational values

Important, Critical or Uncommon Habitat Types

Rhode Island's scientific, planning and regulatory communities have made significant headway in identifying conservation needs for the purpose of protecting the ecological resources of the state.

A major collaborative effort, the **Rhode Island Coastal and Estuary Habitat Restoration Strategy** was developed through a public process led by RICRMC, RIDEM, Save the Bay, and others. This process involved hundreds of Rhode Island scientists, citizens, and resource users who were asked to identify the habitat restoration needs of the state. The results of this process highlighted three habitat types as priorities for restoration: salt marshes, seagrass beds, and river systems, as well as the lands that support these habitats.

Rhode Island's primary seagrass is eelgrass. Eelgrass provides many ecologically valuable functions. It produces organic material that becomes part of the marine food web; helps cycle nutrients; stabilizes marine sediments; and provides important habitat. Many species of fish and wildlife depend on eelgrass. Eelgrass beds provide protection for bay scallops, quahogs, blue crabs and lobsters. Tautog and other fish lay their eggs on the surface of eelgrass leaves, and young starfish, snails, mussels, and other creatures attach themselves to the plant. Waterfowl such as brant feed on eelgrass. Studies in New England have documented the occurrence of 40 species of fish and 9 species of invertebrates in eelgrass beds. As new growth replaces older eelgrass leaves, the dead leaves decay, becoming a valuable source of organic matter for microorganisms at the base of the food chain³. Eelgrass reduces shoreline erosion caused by storms and wave energetics thus protecting adjacent coastal properties. Eelgrass meadows can stabilize sediments and filter nutrients from the water column. Eelgrass also provides a unique habitat for recreational SCUBA divers and snorklers to explore. Threats to eelgrass beds from coastal development and subsequent declines in water quality make them priority areas for conservation and restoration.

Salt marshes are found along the shores of Rhode Island salt ponds, the Narragansett Bay estuary, small embayments (such as Allin's Cove in Barrington), and estuarine rivers (such as the Narrow River). Salt marshes provide nursery grounds and foraging habitat for hundreds of species of fish, shellfish, birds, and mammals. Fish of all sizes, from mummichogs to striped bass, hunt in creeks and ponds. Quahogs and oysters live beneath the surface, while mussels, fiddler crabs, and snails occupy intertidal areas. Many kinds of birds visit the marsh to feed on the fish and invertebrates: osprey and herons, ducks of all sorts, and mosquito-eating sparrows that nest in the marsh. In addition to their habitat value, salt marshes serve as natural pollution treatment systems by filtering out pollutants before they reach our coastal waters. The location of salt marshes between our developed coastal communities and the waters of the state also provides a buffer during storms and flooding.

Seventy-five percent of commercial fish species depend on estuaries for their primary habitat, spawning grounds, and nursery areas. In Rhode Island, the role that salt marshes play in our economy is evidenced by our 75 million dollar commercial fishery and a recreational fishery valued at 150 million dollars. The sweeping vistas afforded by the low lying salt marsh

³ NOAA Damage Assessment and Restoration Program, 2001. (www.darrp.noaa.gov)

landscape contribute immeasurably to the beauty and serenity of Rhode Island's coastline, as well as our tourism and outdoor recreation industry, which is valued at 2 billion dollars on Narragansett Bay alone. Salt marshes have historically been degraded through practices such as diking, ditching and filling, and are now considered a state priority for conservation and restoration.

Anadromous fish runs occur in rivers, streams, and adjacent areas that drain into coastal ponds, Narragansett Bay, and Block Island Sound. These systems are used by migratory fish to feed and reproduce. River herring, Atlantic salmon, rainbow smelt, sturgeon, and American shad depend on passage upstream for survival. These anadromous fish spawn in fresh water, and mature and spend most of their lives in salt water. Conversely, American eels are catadromous fish, living in lakes and ponds as adults. They migrate downstream and eventually far out into the Atlantic, where they spawn and die in the Sargasso Sea. Their newly born young, less than an inch long, travel on ocean currents back to Rhode Island's rivers and streams. Many of Rhode Island's rivers are blocked or obstructed by dams, weirs, tide gates, and other water-control structures. In addition to unobstructed passage through the water, migratory fish need healthy riparian areas whose vegetation provides cover, bank stabilization, and temperature regulation. Riparian vegetation also provides detritus (leaf litter, wood, etc.), which forms the base of the riverine food chain. Recreational and commercial fisheries benefit when river corridors remain healthy and passable to migratory fish.

In addition to these three habitat types, other habitat types have been identified as conservation priorities by various regional and statewide plans and strategies. Some of the more common habitat types include estuarine intertidal wetlands such as those along the Narrow River, coastal ponds and their tributaries, beaches, dune systems, and tributary freshwater wetlands such as those associated with Baker's and Mary's Creeks in Greenwich Bay.

Examples of critical and uncommon habitat types to be preserved include Atlantic white cedar swamps, open peatlands (bogs and fens), maritime and floodplain forests, coastal shrublands, freshwater tidal marshes, freshwater pond shores that support coastal plain species, sea level fens, pitch pine / scrub oak barrens and morainal grasslands. These habitat types are considered ecologically fragile or represent unique ecological communities in the state or region. Lands that support rare and endangered species or species of particular concern, such as the winter flounder spawning grounds and black duck habitat along the Narrow River are also a conservation priority. Freshwater habitats of importance include streams, creeks, brooks, ponds, and small lakes as well as estuaries, or the tidal portions of rivers and the coastal ponds.

State conservation priorities also include areas of habitat that are important when considered at a regional scale. These regionally important habitats include areas that are vital to one or more life history stages or seasonal use periods of coastal species⁴. Other factors contributing to an areas regional importance include the presence of a population, regardless of size, of a U.S. Endangered or Threatened species, the occurrence of an exemplary and undisturbed stand of a regionally scarce community type, a large wintering concentration of waterfowl in numbers or densities considerably greater than what is generally encountered in the region, high diversity of

⁴ For a listing of Coastal Species of Special Emphasis for the Southern New England / New York region, see http://training.fws.gov/library/pubs5/necas/web_link/appendix%20B.htm

rare species, or the presence of highly vulnerable breeding or spawning area of a fish or bird species that has been substantially reduced or qualitatively degraded from historical times⁵.

Lands Containing Historic or Archaeological Resources

Beginning with the first Europeans under Giovanni da Verrazano, who visited the site of Newport in the early 1500s, the Rhode Island coastal zone has been the location of important historic and architectural development. The Rhode Island coastal region is nationally recognized for its outstanding historic architecture, and the majority of all the sites and districts currently on the state and national registers of historic places are located in the coastal zone. This region has a rich and long history, and possesses many well-preserved examples of prehistoric and historic sites. The coastal zone contains an abundant and diverse number of Native American Indian settlements, some dating back at least 3,000 years. The bulk of the information still to be obtained concerning Rhode Island's prehistory is associated with sites in the coastal zone.

Significant historic and archaeological sites are extremely valuable cultural, educational, economic, and recreational resources to the state's citizens and visitors alike, and they are part of the essential character of the coastal zone. Historic properties are a key element in defining the state's quality of life, and hence its attractiveness to a growing tourist industry and as a location for new investment. Historic sites and districts provide access to and enjoyment of scenic coastal areas, both in terms of the sites themselves and in the traditional land-use patterns which define many scenic qualities in the coastal zone.

Historic and archaeological resources in the coastal zone are under great pressure from a variety of forces which threaten their outright destruction or the degradation of their historic qualities and setting. Unsympathetic new development, erosion, artifact collectors, and rising sea levels are major factors in reducing the number and quality of these irreplaceable resources.⁶

The preservation of historic and archaeological properties has been identified by the CRMC as a high priority. The CRMC defines historic and archaeological resources as “districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes included in or eligible for inclusion in the state and national registers of historic places, or areas designated as historically or archaeologically sensitive.” Specific cultural and historical assets include archeological sights, historic buildings, cemeteries, gardens, parks, parkways, and public open spaces. If acquired through the Program, sites containing historical resources must be managed in a manner consistent with the CELCP guidelines.

Lands Providing Public Access to or Recreational Enjoyment of the Coast

Providing for the public's enjoyment of Rhode Island's outdoor environment has been identified as an important responsibility of state government. Increasingly, Rhode Islanders turn to the outdoors to relax, to have fun, to maintain their health and vigor, to understand their natural and

⁵ *Northeast Coastal Areas Study: Significant Coastal Habitats of Southern New England and portions of Long Island, New York*. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1991

⁶ State of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Program, As Amended, 1996.

cultural heritage, and to bring added meaning to their lives. Visitors to the state have also sought the pleasures of Rhode Island's natural environment in growing multitudes. Tourism contributes an estimated \$4.8 billion annually to the state's economy.⁷

Ensuring public access to the coast is a priority for the CRMC and has been identified as a priority by Rhode Island coastal communities. The state has identified salt water beaches, walking and biking trails, historical sites, picnic areas, festival sites and natural areas as priority areas that have recreational value for Rhode Islanders. Lands with significant recreational or scenic value in the urban areas of the state are particularly important as they provide open space within densely developed areas. These lands may not have high habitat value, but have safe public access and contribute to the character or identity of a neighborhood. If acquired through the Program, recreational and public access sites must be managed in a manner consistent with the CELCP guidelines.

Lands that Protect Water Resources

The Rhode Island General Assembly has recognized that the state's water resources are among its most valuable natural resources.⁸ Thus, areas important to protecting water resources, including reservoirs, aquifers, pristine rivers and groundwater recharge areas have been identified in several state plans as conservation priorities.

Lands that Expand Existing Natural Habitat or Recreational Greenway Corridors

Large blocks of contiguous habitat preserve wildlife diversity by performing three main functions: 1) providing sufficient ranging area to support populations of large native animals such as deer, coyotes, mink, otter, and raptors; 2) creating separation between sensitive wildlife species and human activities, insulating these species from human impacts; and 3) providing a diversity of habitat types, which in turn increases the suite of available resources. Natural habitat greenways are contiguous lands that follow the state's major river systems, coastal barriers, major islands, and agricultural belts, and connect larger conservation areas.

Preserving contiguous greenway corridors to enhance recreational opportunities and provide access to the coast in rural, suburban, and urban communities is also a state priority. In some cases these lands are at the highest risk for developmental conversion. Bikeways and trailways are two important types of recreational greenway corridors.

C. Identification of project areas

For the purposes of this plan, "Project Areas" are discrete areas to be identified within a CELCP plan that describe the state's priority areas for conservation. The Rhode Island CELCP project areas (Fig. 2) are properties that are 1) located within a RICELCP qualifying municipality (Fig. 1) and 2) meet the state (Appendix B) and national (Appendix C) CELCP criteria. Project areas were mapped using data from previous resource mapping efforts, including the Rhode Island

⁷ Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Islands Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2003.

⁸ RI General Law §46-15

Resource Protection Project. Land use and U.S. Census data from the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) were used to identify undeveloped lands with significant conservation, ecological, historical, recreational or resource protection values. These data layers were then “clipped” to the RICELC Program jurisdictional boundary. Lands identified as project areas that are also located within a federally approved SAMP boundary (Fig. 3) will be given special consideration in the RICELCP application process.

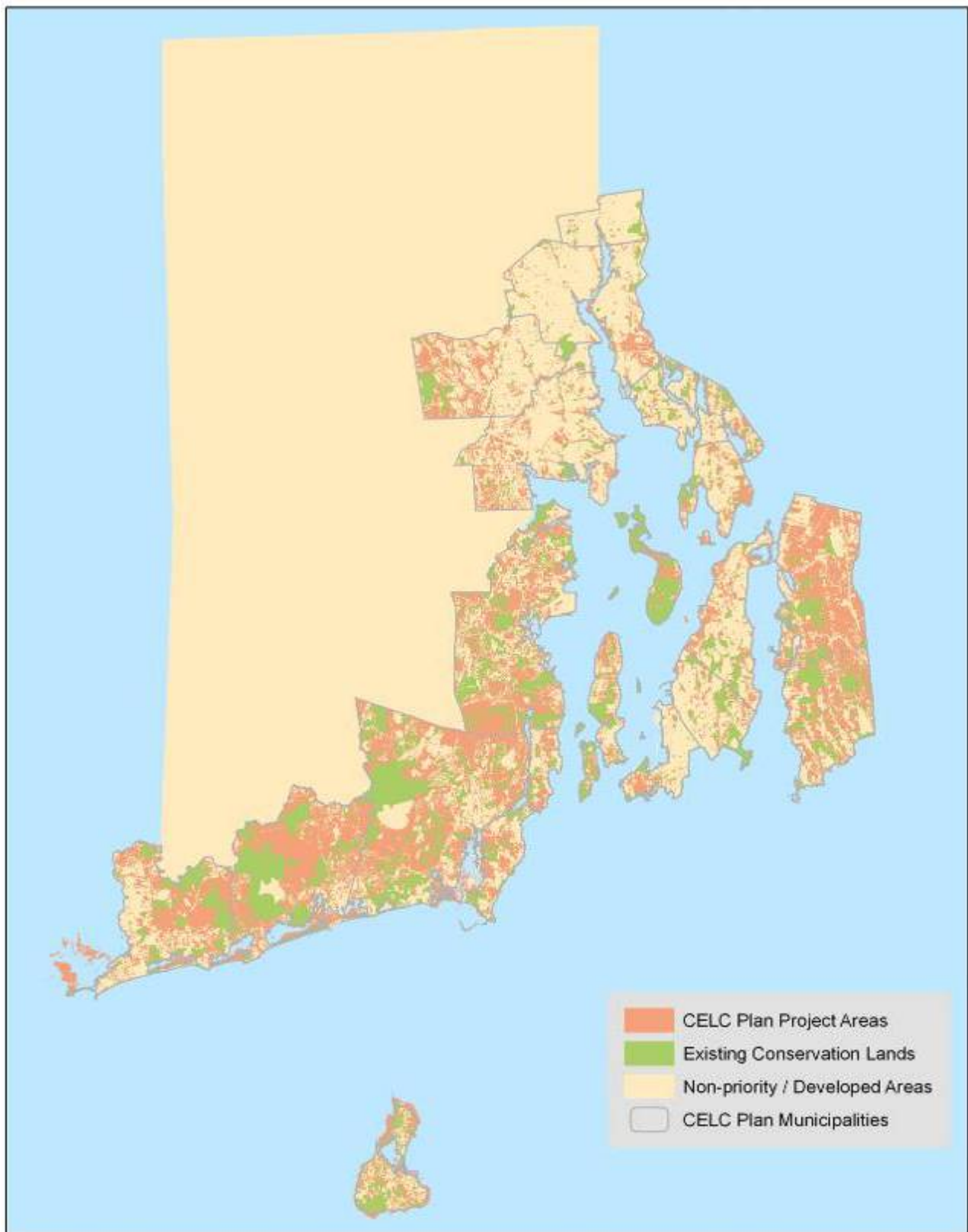


Figure 2. CELC Plan Project Areas (a larger version of this map can be found at: www.crmc.ri.gov/celcp.html)

This section also summarizes recent management and mapping efforts that will further assist applicants in identifying lands that meet RICELCP requirements.



Figure 3. Special Area Management Plan Boundaries

The goal of **Rhode Island Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs)** is to preserve, protect, and restore coastal resources while addressing a diversity of complex and interconnected issues on a watershed scale in a geographic region of special sensitivity that is under intense development pressure. These comprehensive and complex efforts require the participation of multiple local, state, and federal agencies. In addition, public and stakeholder involvement is an essential part of a successful SAMP. SAMPs are recognized in Rhode Island law as effective tools for ecosystem management of the state's coastal resources.

Using the best available science, a state and federally approved SAMP develops policy and management recommendations to guide the actions of private citizens, municipalities, and state agencies within a geographic region that protect the natural system and encourage human activities that do not impair the health of the coastal resources. A SAMP also establishes a decision-making process appropriate to the management of the watershed as an ecosystem, specifically insuring consideration of long term cumulative impacts.

Rhode Island has developed five SAMPs to answer the individual needs of varied urban, suburban, and rural environments and communities. SAMPs for the Metro Bay Region, Narrow River, Rhode Island Salt Ponds Region, the Rhode Island/Connecticut Pawcatuck River Estuary, and Greenwich Bay are being actively implemented. A SAMP for the west side of Aquidneck Island is in development. Within each SAMP document are maps identifying important resource areas. An example is the Metro Bay SAMP, which focuses on the upper reaches of Narragansett Bay. The natural systems of these watersheds have been recognized by the state and the local communities as critical coastal systems threatened by development and deserving of special management. Within the Metro Bay SAMP boundary, a ranking system was used to identify High Priority Conservation Areas and High Priority Restoration Areas, as well as areas of significant recreational value. The SAMP documents and their associated maps can be found on the CRMC website at www.crmc.ri.gov/samps.html.

The **Rhode Island Resource Protection Project** identifies healthy natural ecosystems and uses GIS to target the state's most important natural resources. The Resource Protection Project also includes maps that detail the location of specific categories of resources, activities and environmental threats. Mapped resource categories include habitat, water supply and watershed areas, wetlands and floodplains, open space, recreational and cultural resources. To view resource category maps, go to: www.edc.uri.edu/rirpp.

The **Critical Lands Project** is an analysis that uses GIS data to identify lands critical for conservation. Analyses include Cultural, Recreational and Aesthetic Resources, Biodiversity Resources and Groundwater Resources. Maps of these resource categories for several Rhode Island communities can be found at: www.edc.uri.edu/criticallands/.

The **Rhode Island Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy** includes information on the distribution and abundance of species of wildlife, including low and declining populations as well as descriptions of locations and relative condition of key habitats and community types essential to conservation of species. This document includes statewide maps of key habitat types and habitat resources. To view this document, go to: www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/pdf/swgplan.pdf.

The **Northeast Coastal Areas Study** identifies species of regional importance and describes regionally significant habitat complexes, including the areas north and east of Trustum Pond and Green Hill Swamp in Charlestown, Hundred Acre Cove in East Providence, Barrington and Warren, the Rhode Island Sound / Buzzards Bay beach complex, which includes parts of Little Compton and Bristol, Block Island (New Shoreham), Chapman Swamp and the Pawcatuck River in Westerly, Maschaug Pond and Beach in Westerly, and the Fishers Island Sound complex in Westerly. For detailed maps of these areas, go to: http://training.fws.gov/library/pubs5/necas/web_link/table%20of%20contents.htm.

The **State of Rhode Island Greenways Map** identifies greenway corridors and trails, river and heritage corridors, bike paths and on-road bike routes, major parks, management areas and refuges, nature and outdoor features and points of interest. To view this map, go to: www.planning.state.ri.us/greenways/greencouncil/rigwm2026.pdf.

D. Existing plans that are incorporated into the Rhode Island CELCP

Elements of existing plans and strategies were evaluated and incorporated in the CELCP. The most influential plans and their relevant sections are described below; a full list is included in Appendix A. Most of these plans were developed with an extensive amount of public involvement. In addition to reviewing established plans and strategies, RICRMC met with state and municipal agencies, coastal resource users, environmental organizations, and scientists to ensure these plans are current and accurately reflect Rhode Island's conservation needs. See Section IV (Coordination and Public Involvement) for a complete description of this public process.

Based on this extensive document review and meetings with major stakeholders, RICECP project areas were identified and draft evaluation criteria (Appendix B) were created to reflect Rhode Island's existing conservation needs.

1) *Special Area Management Plans (SAMP)* (RICRMC) (www.crmc.ri.gov/samps.html)

The CRMC has been authorized by Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) §46-23 to develop management programs for the protection and enhancement of the state's coastal resources. It has also been given authority to implement the federal Coastal Zone Management Program under RIGL §46-23-15. The SAMP process is part of the CRMC's ongoing responsibility under both RIGL §46-23 et. seq. and the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA 16 U.S.C. 1451). SAMPs are ecosystem-based management strategies prepared in coordination with local municipalities, government agencies and community organizations, identify critical habitat types and critical resources found within each SAMP boundary. The Rhode Island SAMPs are:

- a) Metro Bay SAMP and Urban Coastal Greenways Policy – The CRMC's policies and proposals for Providence Harbor are designed to achieve five major goals: balanced and compatible shoreline use, improved water quality (including pollution abatement programs, water quality monitoring, and estuarine research), port development, increased recreational opportunities and public access, and coordination and consultation among those involved in developing, using, enjoying, regulating, and managing the urban waterfront in order to achieve a successful balance among new and old uses of the harbor.

The Urban Coastal Greenway policy identifies areas for protection and conservation, named High Priority Conservation and Restoration Areas. HPCAs are those sites with high habitat conservation quality rankings based on the composition (native vs. non-native) and maturity of vegetation, use of the area by resident or migrant wildlife, especially state or federally listed species, and the geographic linkage of the area to other parcels of habitat or protected lands. Likewise, HPRAs are sites suitable for restoration, with high habitat restoration quality rankings. High priority habitat areas are to be preserved and enhanced to the greatest extent possible, and are also to be afforded a higher level of protection. Fragmentation of the Urban Coastal Greenway corridor (specifically the alongshore component) is to be avoided wherever possible and the development of contiguous habitats will be required wherever possible.

Relevant Section(s): *Section 130, Metro Bay Region Policies; Appendices 1 – 4*

- b) Narrow River SAMP (1999) – The Narrow River SAMP describes the present status of the river, characterizes its watershed, identifies sources of pollution, and recommends specific actions to restore, protect and preserve this highly regarded natural resource. The Narrow River SAMP was developed with recognition of how water quality, land use, habitat, storm hazards, and geology interact to impact the health of the Narrow River.

Relevant Sections: *Chapter 5, Living Resources and Critical Habitats; Chapter 7, Cultural and Historical Resources; Chapter 10, Land Preservation and Acquisition*

- c) Rhode Island’s Salt Pond Region SAMP: Maschaug to Point Judith Ponds (1999) – The Salt Pond SAMP was designed to consider how water quality, land use, habitat, storm hazards, and geology all interact to impact the health of the salt ponds. The Salt Pond SAMP also implements recommendations of the Narragansett Bay Project by developing the following: statewide critical resource protection policies, including objective criteria for designating critical resources; a geographic information systems (GIS)-based inventory of identified resources; regulatory and non-regulatory controls to protect identified resources; and an assessment of cumulative impacts through the Coastal Resources Management Program. Finally, the SAMP implements Rhode Island’s Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (CNPCP). Beyond fulfilling program requirements and recommendations, the revisions to the SAMP address the challenge of a growing population and the need for innovative land-use controls to address the impacts of existing and proposed development on the salt ponds.

Relevant Sections: *Chapter 5, Living Resources and Critical Habitats; Chapter 7, Cultural and Historical Resources; Chapter 10, Land Preservation and Acquisition*

- d) The Pawcatuck River Estuary and Little Narragansett Bay: An Interstate Management Plan (1992) – This plan describes the current status of the resources within the estuary, characterizes its watershed, identifies estuary resources of concern, and recommends management strategies and other initiatives concerning the use and protection of this highly regarded estuary. Accomplishing this involved the enlistment of a citizen’s advisory committee to assist in developing an issues list that reflected public concerns about the estuary. Development and research of these issues involved the collection of data regarding past and current land-use and development trends, water quality status, critical wildlife habitats, recreational patterns of use, and the development of new investigations conducted by the project’s staff. The Interstate Management Plan has put forth management regulations and initiatives, programs, and strategies that are focused on coordination of government agencies and bodies, identification and restoration of sources of pollution, identification and protection of critical wildlife habitats, guidance and management measures for various uses of the estuary, and provision of a consistent, ecologically based policy framework for decisions involving the use of the estuary’s resources.

Relevant Sections: *Chapter 4, Habitat Protection and Restoration; Chapter 5, Recreational Uses; Chapter 6, Public Access, Open Space and Protection of Scenic Value*

- e) Greenwich Bay SAMP – Public access to the bay is essential so that residents and visitors can take advantage of the many coastal recreational opportunities it offers. The Greenwich Bay watershed provides areas to swim, clam, boat, and engage in other water-dependent activities. Many residents work in the area and depend on access to the water for their livelihoods. The goals of the SAMP are to maintain existing public access and increase future access to Greenwich Bay.

Relevant Sections: *Chapter 3, Habitat and Environmental Assets; Chapter 5, Cultural and Historical Assets; Chapter 7, Recreational Use*

- 2) ***Northeast Coastal Areas Study: Significant Coastal Habitats of Southern New England and Portions of Long Island, New York*** (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1991) (http://training.fws.gov/library/pubs5/necas/web_link/table%20of%20contents.htm)
In 1990, Congress funded a study to identify coastal areas in southern New England and Long Island in which fish and wildlife habitat and natural diversity needed protection or preservation. The Northeast Coastal Area Study identifies species of regional importance, and describes regionally significant habitat complexes. It specifically describes significant or unique habitats, threats to sustaining habitat complexes, and considerations for conserving and protecting them.
- 3) ***Rhode Island State Coastal and Estuary Habitat Restoration Strategy*** (RICRMC, RIDEM, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, Save The Bay, Natural Resources Conservation Service) (www.crmc.ri.gov/habitatrestoration.html)
With assistance from hundreds of Rhode Island scientists, citizens, and resource users, this strategy identifies restoration needs for the purpose of protecting the state’s coastal and estuarine resources, primarily salt marshes, seagrass beds, and fishways. The strategy, developed by the Rhode Island Habitat Restoration Team, which serves as a Technical Advisory Committee to CRMC, has been adopted and implemented by CRMC. According to the strategy, habitat restoration grant monies are dispersed in accordance with the Coastal and Estuary Habitat Restoration Program and Trust Fund (RIGL §46-23.1-5(2)), which allocates funding for design, planning, construction, or monitoring. Eligible applicants include cities and towns; any committee, board, or commission chartered by a city or town; nonprofit corporations; civic groups, educational institutions; and state agencies.
- 4) ***Critical Lands Project*** (Natural Resources Conservation Service, EPA, and the URI Environmental Data Center) (www.edc.uri.edu/criticallands/)
The Critical Lands Project was designed to develop a statewide inventory of critical data for land conservation prioritization and conduct co-occurrence analyses for the communities in Washington County and West Greenwich, R.I. Resource themes and constituent RIGIS data used in the critical lands analysis include:
Cultural, Recreational, and Aesthetic Resources
 Scenic Inventory (RIDEM)
 Historical Regions (1998 RIGIS version)
 Greenway Corridors (RIGIS, DOP)
Biodiversity Resources
 Wetlands (1995 RIGIS LULC)
 Land within 100m of wetlands, rivers/streams, estuaries, shore

Forests (1995 RIGIS LULC)
Lands within 100m of already protected land (TNC dataset)
RIDEM heritage dataset on critical/unique habitats

Groundwater Resources

Aquifers (RIGIS, RIDEM)
Aquifer Recharge Areas (RIGIS, RIDEM)
Wellhead Protection Areas (RIGIS, RIDEM)

Protected Lands

RIDEM Management Areas (RIGIS)
Audubon Land (TNC, RIGIS)
Nature Conservancy Land (TNC)
Land Trust Properties (TNC)

- 5) ***Rhode Island Resource Protection Project*** (EPA, URI Environmental Data Center)
(www.edc.uri.edu/rirpp/)

The Rhode Island Resource Protection Project is part of a New England-wide effort, initiated in 1995 by EPA-Region 1, the state environmental regulatory agencies, and the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission to identify the region's most ecologically healthy areas. Recognizing that human health and welfare are dependent on healthy, functioning, natural ecosystems, and that there is a limited amount of time and money to spend on protecting the natural resources that together comprise ecosystems, this process was developed to target the state's most important natural resources requiring attention. The Rhode Island Resource Protection Project developed a series of 17 GIS data layers that detail statewide resources.

- 6) ***Rhode Island Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy*** (RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife) (www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/pdf/swgplan.pdf)

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy includes information on the distribution and abundance of species of wildlife, including low and declining populations as well as descriptions of locations and relative condition of key habitats and community types essential to conservation of species.

- 7) ***North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)***
(www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/index.shtml)

In 2003, the U.S. Congress recognized the importance of conserving habitat for migratory birds by passing the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. section § 4401 et. seq.). The act encourages partnerships to conserve North American wetland ecosystems for waterfowl, other migratory birds, fish, and wildlife. It encourages the formation of public-private partnerships to develop and implement wetland conservation projects consistent with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. It creates the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund to help support projects through grants and lists proposal evaluation factors to be considered by the Council.

- 8) ***Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR)*** The NBNERR is part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System that protects over 1 million acres of estuarine waters and adjacent upland habitats. The NBNERR's draft 2007 – 2012 management plan highlights several important habitat types (see www.nbnerr.org/plan/draft.html).

9) ***Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program*** The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program (NHP) is a comprehensive statewide inventory of Rhode Island's rarest and most vulnerable natural features (see <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/heritage/>).

10) ***Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program Database*** (RIDEM, Rhode Island Natural History Survey) – (www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/heritage/) Initially developed at RIDEM, the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program database of state and federally listed rare species and critical habitats is currently managed by the Rhode Island Natural History Survey (URI). A natural communities database is currently under development.

11) ***Rhode Island State Guide Plan*** (www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/sgp.htm) The Statewide Planning Program of the Rhode Island Department of Administration has the responsibility to prepare and coordinate strategic plans for the comprehensive management of the state's social, economic, and physical resources. The State Planning Council guides the Program's staff in preparing plans and in coordinating planning and development activities of governmental agencies at all levels and the private sector. The Council approves all statements of goals and policies and all elements of the State Guide Plan. A State Guide Plan is mandated as a means for centralizing and integrating long-range goals, policies and plans with short-range project plans and implementing programs prepared on a decentralized basis by the agency or agencies responsible in each functional area. The guide plan is not a single document but a collection of elements that have been adopted since the 1960's.

a) **Element 140: *Rhode Island State Historical Preservation Plan (1998)***

(www.planning.ri.gov/sgp/pdf/140.pdf)

the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission implemented a consultative public process to create a plan to guide community activities related to prioritizing historic preservation projects and developing a system to manage the data from these projects. The goals for this plan are to: 1) locate, identify, and evaluate all of Rhode Island's historic resources; 2) insure that those who own, care for, and invest in historic buildings, areas, and archeological sites have the technical and financial assistance they need; 3) strengthen the protection of historic buildings, areas, and archeological sites from inappropriate alteration, neglect, and demolition; 4) build better communities through historic preservation; 5) increase public understanding of the values of historic buildings, areas, and archeological sites.

b) **Element 152: *Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Island's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (Ocean State Outdoors) (2003)*** –

(www.planning.ri.gov/sgp/sgp.htm)

This document was completed in 2002 with the help of a study that involved over 1,400 Rhode Island residents. Adopted by the State Planning Council on March 13, 2003, it serves as Rhode Island's comprehensive plan for outdoor recreation, conservation, and open space. This plan, the seventh edition, reaffirms the overarching goals established in the 1992 plan, reassesses the present situation, and establishes the objectives and the implementation strategies for strengthening outdoor recreation, conservation, and open space in Rhode Island over the next five years. *Ocean State Outdoors* is also submitted by Rhode Island to meet the National Park Service's planning eligibility requirements for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program. While resources of this program

have diminished, it remains a valuable source of support for protecting resources and providing facilities for public recreational use. Appendix B of this element, the Wetlands Priority Plan, provides an update to the state wetlands plan as required by the federal Emergency Wetlands Conservation Act. Updates to the original 1988 plan are submitted to the National Park Service periodically as part of SCORP updates.

c) **Element 155: *A Greener Path ... Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future*** (www.planning.state.ri.us/sgp/pdf/155.pdf) This plan addresses the requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration's National Recreational Trails Program that provides funds to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities.

d) **Element 162: *Rivers Policy and Classification Plan (1998)***– (www.planning.ri.gov/sgp/pdf/162.pdf)

Adopted by the State Planning Council as an element of the State Guide Plan in 1998, this plan is intended to provide clear, integrated, affirmative guidance for the management and protection of Rhode Island's rivers and freshwater resources at the state, local, and watershed level. Its broad objectives are to protect drinking water supplies and pristine rivers, to encourage recreational use of rivers, to foster the creation of greenways, and to provide for the clean-up of rivers. The plan states that the focus should be to: 1) preserve open space, natural resources, and features; 2) preserve cultural and historic landscapes and features; 3) preserve opportunities for recreational use of rivers; 3) encourage the establishment of greenways that link open spaces together; and 4) continue the regional and comprehensive planning activities for rivers, water quality, and land use conducted by RIDEM and the R.I. Department of Administration.

12) *Rhode Island Habitat Restoration Portal* (RICRMC, NOAA, RIDEM, URI Environmental Data Center) – (www.edc.uri.edu/restoration/)

The purpose of this site is to provide data and information about habitat restoration in Rhode Island to the public, federal and state agencies, and nonprofit groups. The focus is on seagrass, riverine (fish runs), and salt marsh habitats. The objective is to create an information system that can help users to apply for grants, select potential projects, educate the public, and to assist the state in restoration planning.

13) *Atlas of Narragansett Bay Coastal Habitats* (EPA, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program) – (www.nbep.org/)

This 2001 coastal habitat inventory provides baseline information to support studies on habitat changes over time as well as to identify and prioritize potential habitat restoration projects. The purpose of the atlas is to inform the general public, municipalities, and resource managers of the findings of the Narragansett Bay coastal habitat inventory study.

14) *Rhode Island Critical Resource Atlas* (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station, URI Department of Natural Resources Science, The Rhode Island Natural History Survey, and the URI Environmental Data Center) – (www.edc.uri.edu/riatlas/)

The Rhode Island Critical Resource Atlas designates 12 watersheds that lie within and cover most of the state as critical resources: Blackstone River, Hunt River, Moshassuck River,

Narragansett Bay (including the Providence and Seekonk rivers), Pawcatuck River, Pawtuxet River, Saugatucket River, Taunton River, Ten Mile River, Warren River, Westport River, and Woonasquatucket River watersheds.

15) *Groundwater Classification and Wellhead Protection Area Maps* (RIDEM)

The DEM "Rules and Regulations for Groundwater Quality" classify the state's groundwaters into four classes and establish groundwater quality standards for each class. The classifications provide a system for setting priorities in the state's regulatory and enforcement programs. Groundwater classified GAA and GA is to be protected to maintain drinking water quality, and underlies approximately 20% and 70% of the state, respectively. Groundwaters classified GB and GC are known or presumed unsuitable for drinking water. A wellhead protection area (WHPA) is the portion of an aquifer through which groundwater moves to a well. Under the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Wellhead Protection (WHP) Program approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency in 1990, DEM is responsible for delineating a WHPA for each of the public wells in the state. Maps of DEM groundwater designations and wellhead protection areas can be found at:

www.dem.ri.gov/maps/gw.htm.

III. State Process for Implementing the RICELC Plan

A. Identification of Rhode Island lead agency

The RICRMC is the lead state agency within Rhode Island responsible for the development of the state's CELCP. In 1971, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation that created the RICRMC and charged it to "...preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore the coastal resources of the state for this and succeeding generations through comprehensive and coordinated long-range planning and management designed to produce the maximum benefit for society from such coastal resources; and that the preservation and restoration of ecological systems shall be the primary guiding principal upon which environmental alteration of coastal resources shall be measured, judged and regulated."⁹

The RICRMC is authorized to formulate policies and plans, to adopt regulations necessary to implement its various management programs; coordinate its functions with local, state, and federal governments on coastal resources issues (including advising the Governor, the General Assembly, and the public on coastal matters), and act as binding arbitrator in any dispute involving both the resources of the state's coastal region and the interests of two or more municipalities or state agencies. It is also responsible for the designation of all public rights-of-way to the tidal water areas of the state, and carrying on a continued discovery of appropriate public rights-of-way.

B. Agencies Eligible to Hold Title of Property Acquired Using CELCP Funds

⁹ R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council. 2004. <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/>.

NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program will award funds for projects that are selected and funded as a result of the competitive process. CELCP funds may be used to purchase 1) lands or 2) conservation easements. The following state or local governmental agencies are eligible to receive CELCP funds and hold title to purchased lands:

- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
- Any of the 21 coastal communities within the Rhode Island CELCP boundary: Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Narragansett, North Kingstown, East Greenwich, Warwick, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence, East Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol, Tiverton, Little Compton, Jamestown, Portsmouth, Middletown, Newport, and New Shoreham

Other government and non-government entities, including non-profit organizations, may partner in the acquisition project. Pursuant to CELCP's 2009 authorization (P.L. 111-11), qualified nongovernmental organizations (such as land trusts) may hold title to match properties.

C. Rhode Island CELCP Project Nomination Process

Upon publication of the CELCP Federal Funding Opportunity notice by NOAA in the Federal Register, and following review of any specific NOAA selection criteria different from, or in addition to, what is already discussed in the CELCP guidelines, the RICRMC will prepare and distribute a CELCP Request for Applications (RFA). This initial RFA will be the primary mechanism through which potential acquisition projects would be solicited. The RFA will be sent to all state agencies with an interest in using CELCP funds, regional planning agencies with jurisdiction in the coastal zone, land trusts, watershed associations, the 21 coastal communities within the Rhode Island CELCP geographic boundary, and other interested parties. The RFA will also be posted on both the RICRMC and the Department of Administration web pages.

The RFA will include eligibility criteria that must be met for a project to be considered by the state and NOAA for CELCP funding. These criteria are 1) the project meets the national CELCP criteria established by NOAA (Appendix C) and 2) the project is within a RICELCP project area, as described in section II. C. of this document. The RFA will also include the specific evaluation criteria that will be used by RICRMC and other members of a review committee to rank and prioritize prospective projects. Appendix B provides draft evaluation criteria and ranking that should be considered at the time of submitting the RFA. These draft criteria will likely be modified to address any priorities requested by RICRMC that also meet the revised national criteria. These RICRMC priorities could include a particular regional focus, natural resource focus, enhanced non-federal match, or other priorities.

Following the application submittal deadline, a CELCP proposal review committee will be established by RICRMC to help review and rank proposals. Possible members may include both state and federal agencies including RICRMC (chair), RIDEM (including the Narragansett Bay Estuarine Research Reserve), R.I. Statewide Planning, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, National Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Involvement at an advisory capacity by nonprofit organizations and coastal users may be considered.

Projects will be ranked primarily by the extent to which they satisfy the evaluation criteria contained in the RFA. Once the prioritization is complete, RICRMC and other state agencies will work with the selected project proponents to ensure that each of the selected applications are as competitive as possible before they are included in the Rhode Island comprehensive CELCP proposal package to NOAA. Rhode Island will be looking to NOAA to provide guidance on the number of acquisition priorities that may be acceptable and appropriate to be included within the comprehensive state application package that is submitted to NOAA.

IV. Coordination and Public Involvement

In Phase I of Rhode Island CELCP plan development, the RICRMC gathered information for a draft plan by convening a core group consisting of the following representatives.

Federal:

1. Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of the Interior)

State:

1. RICRMC
 - Habitat Restoration Team – Technical Advisory Committee
2. RIDEM
 - Land Acquisition Program
 - Natural Heritage Program
 - Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
 - Rhode Island Trails Advisory Committee
3. R.I. Statewide Planning
 - Land Use (Greenways Program)
4. State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
5. URI
 - Coastal Institute
 - Coastal Resources Center
 - Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
 - Rhode Island Sea Grant

Municipal:

1. Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
2. City of Cranston
3. City of East Providence
4. City of Pawtucket
5. City of Providence

Private:

1. American Planning Association: Rhode Island Chapter
2. Rhode Island Appalachian Mountain Club
3. Rhode Island Association of Conservation Commissions
4. Rhode Island Audubon Society
5. Rhode Island Conservation Summit
6. Rhode Island Canoe/Kayak Association

7. Rhode Island Land Trust Summit (included representatives from land trusts, watershed associations, and conservation commissions)
8. Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association
9. South County Bridle Lanes Association
10. The Aquidneck Island Land Trust
11. The Nature Conservancy
12. The Rhode Island Chapter of Surfrider Foundation

During Phase II of the development of this plan, RICRMC circulated a draft CELCP to the above organizations and all of the 21 municipalities for review, and held a public meeting in October 2004 to collect final comments. Comments were then incorporated into the CELCP as appropriate and then submitted to the full RICRMC in November 2004 for formal approval.

V. Certification and Approval

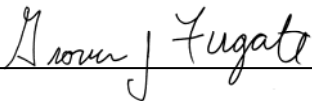
A. Certification that the plan is consistent with the state's/territory's approved coastal management program

The Rhode Island CELCP was prepared by the lead agency for administering the Coastal Zone Management Program, and is consistent with the state's approved coastal management program.

B. Approval of plan by designated official of state lead agency

Grover J. Fugate, Executive Director RI CRMC

Designated state lead agency official



May 19, 2010

Signature

Date

Appendices:

- A. Plans and strategies considered in the development of the Rhode Island CELCP**
- B. Draft evaluation criteria to be considered by the RICRMC review committee**
- C. National CELCP criteria**

Appendix A: Plans and Strategies Considered in the RICELC Plan

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APPENDIX B: RICELCP Project Evaluation Criteria

The Rhode Island Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan (RICELC Plan) project areas are identified in Figure 2, and are defined as properties that are located within the RICELC geographic boundary (RICELC Plan Section II.A.) that meet the national and state CELCP criteria. Lands that are also within federally approved SAMP boundaries will be given special consideration.

The RICELC Plan Review Committee shall evaluate grant applications based on the extent to which project areas meet or may be restored to meet the following scoring criteria (100 points total).

(A) HABITAT PROTECTION (35 points)

1. **Critical and/or Uncommon Habitat:** The property supports and/or buffers critical and/or uncommon, ecologically fragile habitat, or is a unique ecological community in the state or region.
2. **Habitat Restoration:** The habitat value of the property has been degraded by human activity, and the property has the potential to be restored to a valuable natural habitat or community type.
3. **Habitat That Enhances the Value of Existing Conservation Areas:** The property is adjacent to an existing habitat conservation area, and will enhance the habitat value of that area.
4. **Urban Habitat Protection:** The property is located in an urban or densely developed area where habitat and open space, are limited. Preservation of the property would provide educational opportunities within an urban or densely developed area.
5. **Common Community Type:** The property is representative of typical ecological communities in Rhode Island. This criterion seeks to preserve high-quality examples of common communities that support productive and diverse biological systems or common community types that are valuable because they are known to have extraordinary qualities (e.g. serve as a significant migratory bird stopover, freshwater wetlands and/or their tributaries, contain champion trees).
6. **Habitat Diversity:** The property includes managed early successional habitat (e.g. such as fields or shrublands) that provide necessary support for native resident or migrant species.
7. **Rare/Endangered Species:** The property supports or is capable of supporting rare/endangered species. The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program current lists of rare/endangered species are the references used under this criterion.

Descriptions of Rhode Island's current lists of rare/endangered species, can be found at: www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/heritage/

(B) RECREATIONAL RESOURCE (20 points)

1. The property fulfills a recreational need(s) in a geographic region (e.g. activity does not exist or there is a demand for more). Recreational need(s) could include hiking, hunting, nature walking, birding, equestrian, fishing, access for swimming or shellfishing, canoeing, kayaking, surfing, diving or research and educational activities.
2. The property enhances existing recreational infrastructure. This could include establishing or expanding trail corridors, or increasing the number of recreational activities in a particular area (e.g. acquire property for a kayak access point that abuts a property designated for hunting or fishing).
3. The property provides public access to the coast.
4. The property serves the subsistence needs of low income and/or minority residents (e.g. fishing access points).
5. Acquisition of the property would enhance access for urban community to protected lands or parks.
6. The property is accessible by public transportation (e.g., bike trails, ferries, trains or bus) or is located within 100 yards of a public parking facility.

(C) HISTORICAL, CULTURAL OR AESTHETIC RESOURCE (10 points)

1. The property has cultural, geological, or scenic value.
2. Acquisition of the property enhances community character and quality of life.
3. The property adds aesthetic value to a designated Rhode Island Blueway paddle route (for maps of RI Blueways, go to www.exploreri.org).

(D) PLANNING CONSISTENCY (15 points)

1. The property is within or contiguous to lands already identified as priority acquisitions or permanently protected by a State, or Municipal entity.
2. Acquisition of the property is consistent with one or more of the following plans. The application must reference in detail the elements of each plan that relate to the acquisition proposal:
 - Local Comprehensive Plan
 - Local Open Space Plan
 - Rhode Island CRMC Special Area Management Plans
 - Regional or Watershed Plan.
 - Rhode Island Estuary and Coastal Habitat Restoration Strategy

- Rhode Island coastal non- point pollution control plan
- Rhode Island Fish & Wildlife Conservation Strategy
- Rhode Island Anadromous Fish Restoration Plan
- Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Program and the Department of Environmental Management regulations
- Rhode Island Greenways/Greenspace Element of the State Guide Plan.
- Rhode Island Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and its elements in the Ocean State Outdoors component of the Statewide Plan.
- Designated on Flood Insurance Rate Maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as Special Flood Hazard Areas (V and A Zones)
- Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Land Use Plan
- Narragansett Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan

(E) WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION (10 points)

- ***Water Supply or Groundwater Recharge Area.*** The land is identified on the DEM groundwater and drinking water supply maps (available at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/maps/gw.htm>) as a water supply or groundwater recharge area having a classification of GA or GAA, or to be within the watershed of these features. Size of the property and percentage of land located within the watershed of the public water supply or groundwater recharge area will be considered.

(F) STEWARDSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (5 points)

1. The organization that will hold title to the property shows that it has the capacity to:
 - A. Implement a comprehensive management plan that identifies the organization's goals for the property and how it plans to achieve them.
 - B. Provide effective enforcement to manage trespass or overuse, vandalism, and safety hazards--and takes action to rectify such problems.
 - C. Undertake regular monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the management plan.
 - D. Secure adequate funding for liability insurance, maintenance, improvements, property taxes, monitoring, and enforcement.
 - E. Perform administrative duties in a timely and responsible manner. (This includes establishing policies, keeping records, filing forms, paying taxes and insurance, budgeting, and maintaining correspondence files.)

(G) MULTI-COMMUNITY AND/OR PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION (5 points)

1. The property to be acquired or preserved is located in two or more communities or states.
2. A diverse number of organizations support acquisition of property.

APPENDIX C: Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program National Criteria

All candidate applications submitted by Rhode Island to NOAA for competition must comply with the following national criteria:

1. The property is located in one or more of the municipalities identified in the RICELCP map (figure 1).
2. Acquisition of the property would directly advance the goals, objectives, or implementation of state, regional or local land use or management plans.
3. Acquisition of the property would protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, ecological, historical, aesthetic, or recreation values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses.
4. Acquisition of the property would provide for access to the general public, or other public benefit, as appropriate and consistent with resource protection.
5. The applicant has secured a 1:1 non-federal match for the federal CELCP funds.
6. The property would be held in public ownership (fee simple or conservation easements) and provide conservation in perpetuity.
7. There is a commitment to stewardship and a satisfactory plan for meeting the long-term management and/or restoration needs of the property.