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# Increase Public Access of the Shoreline (IPAS)

## Final Report

### Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

#### 2015 Grant Program

#### Grants for the Greater Narragansett Bay Watershed

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## DISCLAIMER

This project was funded by an agreement (CE96184201) awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission on behalf of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program. Although the information in this document has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under agreement CE96184201 to NEIWPCC, it has not undergone the Agency’s publications review process and therefore, may not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency and no official endorsement should be inferred. The viewpoints expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the NBEP, NEIWPCC, or U.S. EPA nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or causes constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

## ABSTRACT

The objective of the program was to increase public access (protect, preserve and maintain) to the shoreline of Aquidneck Island to allow for increased recreational opportunities including trail creation, boat access, fishing opportunities and a multitude of ocean activities not limited to swimming, fishing, sailing, surfing or walking along the coastline.

The methodology to be used begins with our innovative approach of solutions architecture for increasing public access to the shoreline and splits all activities into loosely coupled decentralized activities that allows for anyone in the community to participate and actively contribute in making Rhode Island a better place to live, visit and work. Our approach towards community involvement is to create some small manageable activities that are fun, easy, impactful, rewarding, and provide a clear connection to the overall mission of the program.



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The expected outputs and outcomes of the IPAS program is to increase public access (protection, preservation and maintenance) of the shoreline program on Aquidneck Island and generating momentum for adopting the coastline between all access points in the State of Rhode Island. This is composed of five defined outcomes: (1) Complete the formal adoption of the 18 rights-of-way along Newport Harbor. (2) Sign MOU for 8 rights-of-way in the Town of Middletown. (3) Start to monitor and work towards adoption of the 17 rights-of-way in Portsmouth. (4) Generate momentum for adopting the coastline between all access points, and (5) Educate the public on the importance of using and protecting shoreline access.

## PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Clean Ocean Access (COA) requested \$4,030 from the Narragansett Bay Estuary Fund to provide strategic assistance to Increase Public Access (protect, preserve and maintain) of the shoreline program (herein referred to as IPAS) into the Newport Harbor, Middletown and Portsmouth and generating significant momentum for adopting the coastline between all access points in the State of Rhode Island. The public rights-of-way and shoreline are shown in figure 1:



Figure 1: Public rights-of-way on Aquidneck Island (Map courtesy of CRMC).

Increasing recreational opportunities for ocean activities such as swimming, fishing, sailing, surfing or walking along the coastline are dependent on being able to access the coastline; therefore protecting, preserving and maintaining public access to the shoreline is critical for increasing these recreational opportunities, vital to the economy of the State of Rhode Island, and the personal well-being of everyone who has a connection to the ocean.

Our design is based on our fundamental belief that solutions for environmental issues start by connecting people with nature and inspiring actionable small steps to improve the quality of life. The COA staff will lead dozens of volunteers and provide opportunities for residents to engage in community service that will lead to long-lasting stewardship of our shoreline resources. The program strongly advocates for making sure the State of Rhode Island





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constitution (Article 1. Section 17 Fishery rights -- Shore privileges -- Preservation of natural resources)<sup>1</sup> is preserved and public access to the shoreline is available for everyone. The design of the ACCESS program is based on the memorandum of understanding (MOU) guidelines for public rights of way which is a result of the State of Rhode Island General Laws (Title 46-23 Coastal Resources Management Council Section 6: Powers and duties – Rights of Ways)<sup>2</sup>. Every person in the State of Rhode Island and/or visitors who need shoreline access on Aquidneck Island to enjoy ocean activities will benefit from this program. Public access and the public's ability to use the coastline for recreation activities has been a long-standing issue as shown by the issue at Tuckerman-west<sup>3</sup>. Stewardship of the coastline and upholding the constitutional rights of each person is essential.

## METHODOLOGY

Our innovative approach begins with a solutions architecture for increasing public access to the shoreline and splits all activities into loosely coupled decentralized activities that allows for anyone in the community to participate and actively contribute to making Rhode Island a better place to live, visit and work. Our approach towards community involvement is to create some small manageable activities that are fun, easy, impactful, rewarding, and provide a clear connection to the overall mission of the program. This is achieved by a four-step method which may occur concurrently or sequentially. Step 1 is the formal adoption of the public rights-of-way via the MOU that requires interacting with local municipalities (administration and council), CRMC staff and adopting entity. Step 2 is the monitoring (initially ad-hoc and then formally via the MOU) that involves a volunteer performing a site inspection twice monthly reporting on conditions of the access point as shown in figure 2. Step 3 is providing quarterly reports to the local municipalities, and CRMC. Step 4 happens from the inception of the program and is to promote long-lasting stewardship of public access (protect, preserve and maintain) to the shoreline.



Figure 2: Monitoring public rights-of-way.



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## RESULTS

### 1. COMPLETE THE FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE 18 RIGHTS-OF-WAY ALONG NEWPORT HARBOR

The 18 Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) designated public rights of way (ROW) were formally adopted via a memorandum of understanding with CRMC, City of Newport, Friends of the Waterfront and Clean Ocean Access (COA) during the Fall of 2015 as listed in Table 1. After formal adoption COA reached out to the community to engage volunteers in citizen science monitoring and assembled a team for the twice monthly efforts. (Note: Rights of Way Z-1 thru Z-5 are also adopted and monitored by Clean Ocean Access, and Z-24 (Marine Avenue) is monitored and in process of being adopted).

Right of way	Community	CRMC Code
Cypress Street	Newport	Z-06
Van Zandt Street	Newport	Z-07
Battery Street	Newport	Z-08
Pine Street	Newport	Z-09
Cherry Street	Newport	Z-10
Chestnut Street	Newport	Z-11
Walnut Street	Newport	Z-12
Willow Street	Newport	Z-13
Poplar Street	Newport	Z-14
Elm Street	Newport	Z-15
Goat Island Connector (28-B) East	Newport	Z-16
Goat Island Connector (28-A) West	Newport	Z-17
Brown & Howard Wharf	Newport	Z-18
Lee's Wharf	Newport	Z-19
Howards' Wharf	Newport	Z-20
Sisson's Wharf	Newport	Z-21
Waites Wharf	Newport	Z-22
Spring Wharf	Newport	Z-23

**Table 1: Newport Harbor CRMC Public rights of way.**

Signs were designed, purchased and provided to the City of Newport for installation at each right of way. The City of Newport installed the adoption signs during the early Summer of 2016. The status of each right of way is shown in Table 4. Note: The exact location of the public right of way at the west side of the Goat Island causeway (Z-17) is unknown and the determination will be included in the latter stages of the new marina project on the northern part of Goat island. The ROW is either on the north side or south side of the causeway.



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## 2. SIGN MOU FOR 8 RIGHTS-OF-WAY IN THE TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN

Significant effort was put forth to adopt the remaining eight CRMC ROW in the Town of Middletown as shown in Table 2. Formal adoption was not achieved due to a multitude of issues related to parking problems at Kingfisher Avenue, and a request from the Town administrator to hold-off on adoption until the parking issue was resolved. During this time effort was put to build a citizen science volunteer team to engage in twice monthly monitoring efforts. Additional effort was put towards building partnership with Easton's Point Association, a neighborhood group near five of the remaining eight CRMC ROW.

<b>Right of way</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>CRMC Code</b>
Shore Drive	Middletown	Y-03
Third Beach Road	Middletown	Y-04
South East Esplanade	Middletown	Y-05
Taggarts Ferry Road	Middletown	Y-06
Kingfisher Avenue	Middletown	Y-07
NorthWest Esplanade	Middletown	Y-08
West End Purgatory Road	Middletown	Y-09
Shore Drive (Lot 107)	Middletown	Y-10

**Table 2: Town of Middletown CRMC Public rights of way.**

In the Fall of 2016 the Town administrator indicated the opportunity to revisit the adoption process was near. Efforts are now underway to move forward with the remaining steps to formally adopt the remaining eight CRMC ROW in the Town of Middletown. This effort will continue as part of our long-term goals.



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### 3. START TO MONITOR AND WORK TOWARDS ADOPTION OF THE 17 RIGHTS-OF-WAY IN PORTSMOUTH

During the Summer of 2015 we embarked on building a team of citizen science volunteers for twice monthly monitoring efforts of the 18 CRMC ROW in the Town of Portsmouth. This effort has resulted in 189 site visits and completed survey forms at the location shown in table 3.

<b>Right of way</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>CRMC Code</b>
Mountain view Road	Portsmouth	V-01
Anthony Road	Portsmouth	V-02
Narraganset Road	Portsmouth	V-03
Cedar Ave.	Portsmouth	V-04
Point St.	Portsmouth	V-05
Green St.	Portsmouth	V-06
Seaconnet Blvd. & Ivy Ave.	Portsmouth	V-07
Seaconnet Blvd.	Portsmouth	V-08
Seaconnet Blvd.& Gould Ave.	Portsmouth	V-09
Seaconnet Blvd.& Island Park Ave.	Portsmouth	V-10
Ruth Ave.	Portsmouth	V-11
Fountain Street	Portsmouth	V-12
Aquidneck Ave.	Portsmouth	V-13
Atlantic Avenue (easterly end of East Corey's Lane)	Portsmouth	V-14
Atlantic Avenue (easterly end of Tallman Avenue)	Portsmouth	V-15
Child Street	Portsmouth	V-16
Morningside Lane	Portsmouth	V-17

**Table 3: Town of Portsmouth CRMC Public rights of way.**

In partnership with the Town of Portsmouth Common Fence Point Improvement Association (CFPIA) we have reached out to the Town Administrator to explore next steps in adopting the three rights of way within this neighborhood. This effort will continue as part of our long-term goals.



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#### 4. GENERATE MOMENTUM FOR ADOPTING THE COASTLINE BETWEEN ALL ACCESS POINTS

Meetings with CRMC and Save The Bay were successful for socializing this idea and support was given for us to take the next steps. Adopting the CRMC ROW to the shoreline is a good first-step for fostering environmental stewardship, however the shoreline itself needs to be protected, free of marine debris and water that is safe for fishing and swimming. Our efforts to generate momentum for adopting the shoreline between all access points is to expand the stewardship so that these environmental efforts are done in such a way that it further strengthens the public right to use the shoreline up to the high tide line. With sea level rising slowly, this will make sure that an additional legal precedent exists to make sure access and shoreline use are not diminished due to sea level rise.

In addition to partnering with CRMC and STB, we also engaged with the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) that provides input to Newport Naval station environmental remediation efforts on the west side of the island. Although public access and adopting the shoreline between access points is not part of the remediation efforts, our efforts were meant to socialize the idea with a larger constituent base.



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## 5. EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE IMPORTANCE OF USING AND PROTECTING SHORELINE ACCESS

Throughout the duration of the project the COA staff and volunteers continued to educate the public on the importance of using and protecting shoreline access. This education and outreach mainly consisted of social media posts, blogs and weekly newsletters. In addition, during numerous local events we continued to advocate for the importance of protecting and expanding public access to the shoreline.



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STATUS UPDATE ON ALL AQUIDNECK ISLAND RIGHTS OF WAY

Right of way	Community	CRMC Code	ROW defined	No Obstructions	Water Access
Webster Street	Newport	Z-01	●	●	●
Narragansett Avenue	Newport	Z-02	●	●	●
Ledge Road	Newport	Z-03	●	●	●
Ruggles Avenue	Newport	Z-04	●	●	●
Sea View Avenue	Newport	Z-05	●	●	●
Cypress Street	Newport	Z-06	●	●	●
Van Zandt Street	Newport	Z-07	●	●	●
Battery Street	Newport	Z-08	●	●	●
Pine Street	Newport	Z-09	●	●	●
Cherry Street	Newport	Z-10	●	●	●
Chestnut Street	Newport	Z-11	●	●	●
Walnut Street	Newport	Z-12	●	●	●
Willow Street	Newport	Z-13	●	●	●
Poplar Street	Newport	Z-14	●	●	●
Elm Street	Newport	Z-15	●	●	●
Goat Island Connector (28-B) East	Newport	Z-16	●	●	●
Goat Island Connector (28-A) West	Newport	Z-17	●	●	●
Brown & Howard Wharf	Newport	Z-18	●	●	●
Lee's Wharf	Newport	Z-19	●	●	●
Howards' Wharf	Newport	Z-20	●	●	●
Sisson's Wharf	Newport	Z-21	●	●	●
Waites Wharf	Newport	Z-22	●	●	●
Spring Wharf	Newport	Z-23	●	●	●
Marine Avenue	Newpotr	Z-24	●	●	●
Tuckerman - West	Middletown	Y-01	●	●	●
Shore Drive	Middletown	Y-03	●	●	●
Third Beach Road	Middletown	Y-04	●	●	●
South East Esplanade	Middletown	Y-05	●	●	●
Taggarts Ferry Road	Middletown	Y-06	●	●	●
Kingfisher Avenue	Middletown	Y-07	●	●	●
NorthWest Esplanade	Middletown	Y-08	●	●	●
West End Purgatory Road	Middletown	Y-09	●	●	●
Shore Drive (Lot 107)	Middletown	Y-10	●	●	●
Tuckerman - East	Middletown	Y-11	●	●	●
Mountain view Road	Portsmouth	V-01	●	●	●
Anthony Road	Portsmouth	V-02	●	●	●
Narraganset Road	Portsmouth	V-03	●	●	●
Cedar Ave.	Portsmouth	V-04	●	●	●
Point St.	Portsmouth	V-05	●	●	●
Green St.	Portsmouth	V-06	●	●	●
Seaconnet Blvd. & Ivy Ave.	Portsmouth	V-07	●	●	●
Seaconnet Blvd.	Portsmouth	V-08	●	●	●
Seaconnet Blvd.& Gould Ave.	Portsmouth	V-09	●	●	●
Seaconnet Blvd.& Island Park Ave.	Portsmouth	V-10	●	●	●
Ruth Ave.	Portsmouth	V-11	●	●	●
Fountain Street	Portsmouth	V-12	●	●	●
Aquidneck Ave.	Portsmouth	V-13	●	●	●
Atlantic Avenue (easterly end of East Corey's Lane)	Portsmouth	V-14	●	●	●
Atlantic Avenue (easterly end of Tallman Avenue)	Portsmouth	V-15	●	●	●
Child Street	Portsmouth	V-16	●	●	●
Morningside Lane	Portsmouth	V-17	●	●	●

Table 4: CRMC ROW Status Update.



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PICTURES OF RIGHTS OF WAY – CITY OF NEWPORT



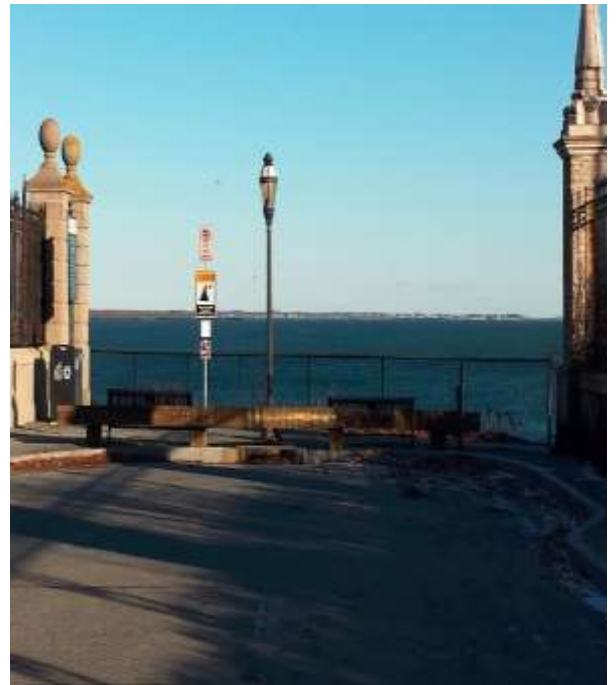
Z-01 Webster Street



Z-02 Narragansett Avenue



Z-03 Ledge Road



Z-04 Ruggles Avenue





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Z-05 Sea View Avenue



Z-06 Cypress Street



Z-07 Van Zandt Street



Z-08 Battery Street



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Z-09 Pine Street



Z-10 Cherry Street



Z-11 Chestnut Street



Z-12 Walnut Street



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Z-13 Willow Street



Z-14 Poplar Street



Z-15 Elm Street



Z-16 Goat Island Connector (28-B East)



Z-17 Goat Island Connector (28-A West)



Z-18 Brown & Howard Wharf

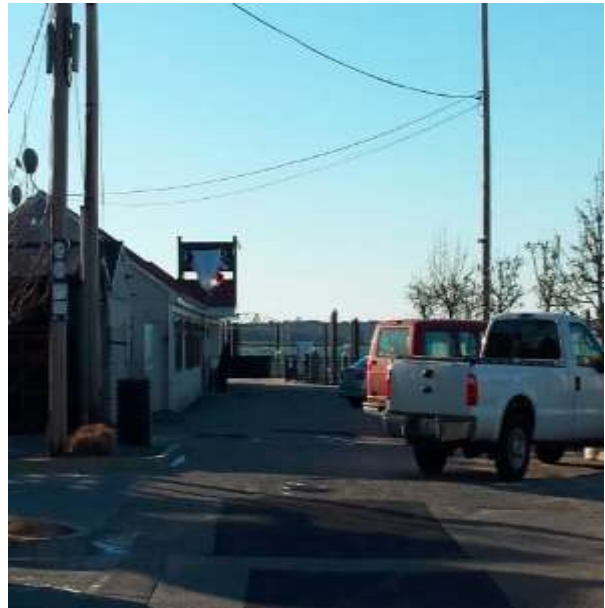




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Z-19 Lee's Wharf



Z-20 Howards' Wharf



Z-21 Sisson's Wharf



Z-22 Waites Wharf



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**Z-23 Spring Wharf**



**Z-24 Marine Avenue**



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PICTURES OF RIGHTS OF WAY – TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN



Y-01 Tuckerman West



Y-03 Shore Drive



Y-04 Third Beach Road



Y-05 South East Esplanade





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Y-06 Taggarts Ferry Road



Y-07 Kingfisher Avenue



Y-08 Northwest Esplanade



Y-09 West End Purgatory Road



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Y-10 Shore Drive (Lot 107)



Y-11 Tuckerman East





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PICTURES OF RIGHTS OF WAY – TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH



V-01 Mountain View Road



V-02 Anthony Road



V-03 Narragansett Road



V-04 Cedar Avenue



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V-05 Point Street



V-06 Green Street



V-07 Seaconnet Blvd. & Ivy Ave.



V-08 Seaconnet Blvd.





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V-09 Seaconnet Blvd. & Gould Ave.



V-10 Seaconnet Blvd. & Island Park Ave.



V-11 Ruth Avenue



V-12 Fountain Street



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V-13 Aquidneck Avenue



V-14 Atlantic Ave. (easterly end of East Cory's Lane)



V-15 Atlantic Ave. (easterly end of Tallman Avenue)



V-16 Child Street



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V-17 Morningside Lane



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## NEXT STEPS

**Clean Ocean Access is committed to protecting and expanding shoreline access on Aquidneck Island.**

Our overall plan remains the same:

1. To protect public access to the shoreline at all rights-of-way
2. To adopt all 50 CRMC ROW on Aquidneck Island
3. To perform twice monthly monitoring of all CRMC ROW
4. To establish coastline adoption within CRMC regulations
5. To adopt shoreline between multi-continuous (bounded) access points
6. To integrate marine debris removal, water quality monitoring into all shoreline access activities

In addition to these stated goals, our efforts also include the following:

1. Active in the Newport Cliff Walk Commission to protect public access to the shoreline
2. Active in the Restoration Advisory Board to establish rights of way with land transition
3. Active in the BEACH SAMP process to make sure shoreline access is defined within sea level rise



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## REFERENCES

- 1 <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/RiConstitution/ConstFull.html>
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- 3 [http://www.crmc.ri.gov/news/2008\\_0522\\_tuckerman.html](http://www.crmc.ri.gov/news/2008_0522_tuckerman.html)