

Greenwich Bay SAMP: Summary of Cultural Assets and Public Access Chapter

Full chapter available at: http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/G_Bay/Management/SAMP/draft.html

Those who live and work in Greenwich Bay have depended on the Bay for a variety of assets over time. The *Cultural Assets and Public Access* chapter identifies significant cultural resources of the Greenwich Bay watershed and corresponding policies. Also included in the chapter are recommendations for preservation and protection of Greenwich Bay's cultural resources for current and future generations.

Findings of Fact

Historic and Archaeological Assets:

Approximately 3,000 years ago, Native Americans established semi-permanent settlements around the Greenwich Bay watershed and its submerged lands (due to sea level rise). Adopting a subsistence lifestyle, the people of Greenwich Bay prospered from the incredible variety and abundance of wild plants and animals.

Today, Greenwich Bay is home to archaeological remains, on land and underwater, historic buildings and districts, and numerous other cultural resources that contribute to the heritage of Greenwich Bay. Unique to Greenwich Bay area are two historic districts.

Maritime Culture

- ? Warwick and East Greenwich are maritime communities that identify themselves as a culture of multiple uses of the bay including commercial shellfishing, marine trades, recreational boating and fishing, and beachgoing.
- ? This identity with long term water dependent uses is important to provide for future generations.

Public Access

All Rhode Islanders have the right to access the shoreline. Those who live within the Greenwich Bay watershed love to swim, clam, boat, and engage in other water-dependent activities; many work in the area and depend on the Bay for their livelihoods. Public access to Greenwich Bay is an important cultural and economic resource that must be protected.

- ? Greenwich Bay offers three types of public access to tidal waters: publicly owned lands (i.e. state and municipal parks), CRMC designated rights-of-way (i.e. the town boat ramp in East Greenwich) and access identified in harbor management plans (i.e. street ends).
- ? Current public access issues in Greenwich Bay include: Lack of parking, illegal posting of "no parking" and "no trespassing" signs by property owners, poor maintenance of access ways by responsible parties, and access ways not yet designated.

Aesthetic value

The people of Greenwich Bay cherish their "sense of place." The aesthetic value of Greenwich Bay is invaluable and exists in the memories and traditions of those who call Greenwich Bay "home" and should be protected.

Selected Potential Recommendations

- ? Increase public education (specifically shoreline property owners) about public access in Greenwich Bay (brochures, etc.)
- ? Maintained list of public rights-of-way posted at city and town hall
- ? All rights-of-way should be designated by the CRMC, which will offer the CRMC added public access enforcement, will require the CRMC to maintain all access ways, and allows the creation of limited liability clause.
- ? Money spent by FEMA will require the creation and maintenance of public access
- ? More funding to defend existing public access and designate (with signs) all access ways
- ? Removal of all no parking signs at city and town designated sites