RI Ocean Special Area Management Plan

Overview of the Ocean SAMP Cultural and Historic Resources Chapter

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting
June 1, 2010
Chapter Contributors

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Cultural & Historic Resources Chapter Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Block Island Historical Society
- South County Museum Organization
- Westerly Historical Society
- Newport Historical Society
- Narragansett (Pettesquamsscutt) Museum
- Charlestown Historical Society
- Little Compton Historical Society
State and Federal Agencies

Federal:
- US Minerals Management Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Narragansett Indian Tribe
- US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Coast Guard
- US Navy

State:
- RI Department of Environmental Management
- RI Economic Development Corporation
- RI Statewide Planning
- RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
Chapter Overview

- Historic Contexts and Cultural Landscapes
  - Pre-Contact Geological History
  - Narragansett Tribal History
  - Landscape Contexts
    - European Exploration & Colonial Settlement
    - Post-Colonial Cultural Landscape
    - Military Landscape
    - Fisheries Landscape
    - Marine Transportation Landscape
    - Recreation and Tourism Landscape
    - Energy Landscape
### Chapter Overview

- **Submerged Archaeological Sites**
  - Potential & Known Sites
  - Spatial & Temporal Distribution Patterns
  - Cable Areas
  - Paleo-Geographic Landscape Reconstruction

- **Onshore Historic Sites Adjacent to the SAMP Area**
  - Properties Listed on National Register
  - Candidate Properties in the SAMP Area
  - Block Island Properties Eligible for the National Register
Major Findings

- Rhode Island has rich and historically significant history of human activity within and adjacent to the Ocean SAMP area.

- There are numerous sites & properties both underwater and onshore with cultural and historic significance in the Ocean SAMP area.

- Both submerged and land-based cultural & historic properties should be considered when evaluating future projects.
Methodology

- Review of key documents
- Literature and data search
- Identification of submerged & land-based sites with cultural and historical significance
Pre-Contact Geological History

- Paleo-Geographic Landscape Reconstruction
- Sea Level Rise & inundation of offshore landscapes between 11,500 yBP-10,000 yBP
Eustatic Sea-Level Rise

- Antarctic Ice Sheet?: 2-5m/100yr
- Laurentide Ice Sheet?: 2m/100yr

Eustatic Sea Level Rise
(Modified ICE5G curve from Peltier and Fairbanks, 2006)
SEA-LEVEL RISE: OSAMP AREA
- 50 m below present
11,500 yBP

Sea level data from Peltier and Fairbanks, 2006
Elevation data from P. Jordan, RI DEM
Map created by B.A. Oakley, URI Geosciences

Rhode Island Waters
Post-Glacial Lake
SAMP Boundary
Atlantic Ocean
SEA-LEVEL RISE: OSAMP AREA
- 40 m below present
11,000 yBP

Sea level data from Peltier and Fairbanks, 2006
Elevation data from P. Jordan, RI DEM
Map created by B.A. Oakley, URI Geosciences
SEA-LEVEL RISE: OSAMP AREA
- 30 m below present
10,000 yBP

Sea level data from Peltier and Fairbanks, 2006
Elevation data from P. Jordan, RI DEM
Map created by B.A. Oakley, URI Geosciences
Subsurface Geology and Preserved Cultural Material

- Present Seafloor
- Transported Artifacts Here?
- Erosional Surface
- Proximal Lacustrine Fan
- Glacial Lake Sediment
- Till?
Narragansett Tribal History

- Narragansett Indian Tribe
  Historic Preservation Office
  (NITHPO)

- Tribal Ethnohistorian,
  Dr. Ella Sekatau

- Tribal history included directly
  in RI regulatory document
Maritime History & Landscape Contexts

- European Exploration & Colonial Settlement
- Post-Colonial Cultural Landscape
- Military Landscape
- Fisheries Landscape
- Marine Transportation Landscape
- Recreation and Tourism Landscape
- Energy Landscape
Exploration and Colonial Settlement Landscape

- European settlement as a maritime enterprise
- Verrazano, Block, and Williams
- New York/Rhode Island Sound
- Agricultural Surplus
- Islands
- Trade
- Resources?
Post-Colonial Cultural Landscape

- Industrial Revolution
- Change in the Rhode Island economy
- Summer “cottages” and resorts
- Steamboat lines and facilities
- Expansion of navy facilities
- Resources?
Military Landscape

- Warfare had significant affects on the submerged cultural landscape.
- Revolutionary War, WWI and WWII
- 33+ Shipwrecks from Revolutionary War
- Conflict, navy facilities and testing grounds during WWII - including Newport Torpedo Station, Naval Underwater Warfare Center, Naval War College.
- Resources
Fisheries Landscape

- Rhode Island Fisheries (hook and line, seining, fish traps, menhaden, diesel, trawling, regulation, squid)
- Block Island Fisheries (Indian subsistence, seaweed, cod, proprietary rights, fish traps and pound nets)
- Resources
- Infrastructure
Marine Transportation and Commercial Landscape

• 17th century Dutch and English Commercial Traffic
• Agricultural exports
• Quaker influence
• Development of Rhode Island shipbuilding
• Newport and Providence
• Sugar, molasses, whale oil, spermaceti candles, livestock, fish, lumber, wheat, and slaves
Marine Transportation and Commercial Landscape

- Rhode Island ports vis-a-vis New York and Boston in the 19th century
- Steam navigation and steamship lines
- Lighthouses, life saving stations and navigation corridors
- Prohibition
- Resources
Recreation and Tourism Landscape

- 19th century resorts at Block Island, Narragansett, Rocky Point, Riverside
- Newport summer vacationing
- Rhode Island as a center for yachting and recreational boating
- Resources
Energy Landscape

- Indian use of timber resources
- Colonial use of peat resources
- Coal resources (1870s)
- Industrialization (steam engines for textiles, metal manufacturing, coal for industrial energy)
- Significant increase in shipping.
- Resources
Energy Landscape
Submerged Archaeological Sites

- Published sources & databases
- Historic research
- Cartographic research
- Geophysical survey
- Geo-spatial database construction
Potential Historic Shipwreck Locations
Submerged Archaeological Sites - Temporal Distribution

Rhode Island Shipwrecks by Decade (n=517)

Decades

Number of Shipwrecks


0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140
Grecian

- Freighter/passenger steamer
- Built in 1900
- Lost after collision with City of Chattanooga, in fog in 1932
U-853

- German Submarine
- Built 1943
- Sunk by USS Atherton, USS Moberly and USS John D. Ericsson in May 1945
Lightburne

- Tanker
- Built in 1919
- Lost in Fog, 1939
Essex

• First passenger liner converted to freighter (1940)
• Built in 1890
• Ran aground 1941
USS Leyden

- Navy tug
- Built in 1866
- Stranded in Fog, 1903
USS Bass

- US Submarine
- Built in 1924
- Sunk using Torpex depth charges in March 1945
USS Bass

Submarine USS Bass
Commissioned 1924
Decommissioned and sunk 1945.
Multi Beam Imagery by NOAA ship
Thomas Jefferson, 2008
Telecommunication Cables and Corridors - SW Cable Area
Block Island - 1884
First Submarine Cable
WWII Cable Easements
Submarine Cables and De-Accession
Onshore Historic Sites
Adjacent to SAMP Area

- Properties Listed on National Register = 33
  (# on Block Island = 7)
- Candidate Properties = 23
  (# on Block Island = 5)
- Block Island Database - 117 properties identified as “contributing” & “eligible”
Historic farms - one part of the larger cultural landscape of Block Island and coastal Rhode Island
Seaside hotels, built to capture the ocean view
Summer cottages from the era of steamboat tourism
Historic aids to navigation

North Light (1867), Sandy Point. View from southeast showing lighthouse and setting. Fourth structure on site, it was manned until 1955 and lighted until 1970.

The West Side Life Saving Station (1872), Conanicut Road. Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society. 1890 photograph. Original appearance before renovation for a residence.

Fresnel Lens, South East Light (1874). Photograph by Gerald F. Abbott, M.D. This rotating lens was made in Paris in 1858.

Southeast Light (1874), South East Light Road. Courtesy of Rhode Island Historical Society. Starlight view. Built for $75,000, this landmark rises over 200 feet above the Atlantic, and needs to be moved to preserve it from severe cliff erosion.
National Historic Landmark (NHL) Adjacent to SAMP Area

- Southeast Light, Block Island
- NHL status in 1997
- Statement of Significance: “...outstanding as one of the finest lighthouses constructed by the U.S. Light House Board in the 19th century.”
Cultural & Historic Resource Policies

- Recognize importance of cultural, historic & tribal resources
- Engage federal / state agencies, and NITHPO
- Follow policies in CRMC “Red Book” & Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Archaeological surveys will be required per RIHPHC’s “Performance Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects”
Where We Are

- June 1<sup>st</sup> - Stakeholder Meeting
- June 18<sup>th</sup> - Public Workshop
- June 26<sup>th</sup> - Public Comment Deadline
- July 13<sup>th</sup> - CRMC Full Council, Public Hearing
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