

**Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting #8
Notes, October 6, 2009, 6 – 9 p.m.
Corless Auditorium, URI Bay Campus**

Purpose of the Meeting:

- Discuss the public review process for the Ocean SAMP rulemaking
- Present the Ocean SAMP Avian research

Welcome and recap of the Ocean SAMP process – Ken Payne/Jennifer McCann, URI

Ken Payne, facilitator, told the audience of 50 people that the SAMP process got underway about a year ago, and that a great deal of research and interaction has taken place since for Rhode Island as a whole to understand the many issues critical to the SAMP. He said much of this is geared around common sense, such as “respecting the needs of ease of construction, avoiding edges and ledges – because you don’t want to go where things are productive.” He said the beauty of the SAMP project is that the work is mappable. He also said that “if we work together and are respectful we can make tremendous progress on SAMP issues.” Payne said the schedule between now and Summer 2010, when the project is completed, will be very busy as a substantial amount of data is collected, analyzed, and synthesized for the SAMP policy document.

New Ocean SAMP Developments – Grover Fugate, CRMC

Fugate told the group that extensive field work is taking place in the SAMP area, with research missions taking place on the research vessels Jefferson, Bold, and Endeavor. He also said that Deepwater Wind is carrying out research also, and has sent a drill ship into the area to collect cores to assist with considerations for potential wind farm design. Fugate said that the Obama administration is watching both the Massachusetts and Rhode Island ocean zoning projects and that the states are appropriately working to collaborate where possible on spatial planning. In terms of the potential wind farm, he said the Minerals Management Service is working through completing its new policies and is moving toward implementing the process of putting out a Request for Interest so the federal government can begin to assess developer interest in this ocean region.

SAMP Research Progress Report – John King, URI GSO

King, a researcher, provided a brief update to the audience on the data being collected regarding the geology and geophysics of the ocean floor within the SAMP area. He said the information has been enhanced with critical fisheries data gathered through a survey collaboration with the federal government. The surveys provided habitat information about select points within the SAMP. King was asked how the points were selected and King responded that the SAMP project piggybacked on an existing federal

project with a proven Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program methodology and gleaned information as appropriate.

The Public Review Process for the Ocean SAMP Rulemaking – Brian Goldman, CRMC and Jennifer McCann, URI

Goldman, attorney for the CRMC, provided an overview of the public review process for the Ocean SAMP policy document now being drafted (see the document at [LINK](#)). He said the CRMC constructed the schedule with an eye toward ensuring that plentiful opportunity for public comment is available for all chapters of the policy document and at stages throughout the process. McCann, SAMP outreach leader, also reviewed the timeline for the creation of the SAMP document and explained how each chapter will be advised by a team of experts for that particular topic. She said the stakeholder group will soon be able to review the draft Recreation and Tourism chapter as well as an introductory chapter.

Ocean SAMP Avian Research – Peter Paton, URI

Paton provided the audience with a presentation that: 1) Summarized impacts of wind farms on avian populations, including both onshore and offshore developments. To provide a perspective in terms of the impact that a wind farm could have on birds, Paton indicated that many more birds are impacted by other threats, such as cats, and that it seems that birds in part of Europe where there are wind farms by and large tend to steer clear of them. 2) He also described the approach used by his research team to quantify the temporal and spatial variation in birds using the study area, including systematic land-based, boat-based, and aerial surveys. In addition, both horizontal and vertical radar data are being collected by a radar unit on Block Island 24/7 from March through mid-December to assess avian movement ecology in the offshore environment. He also summarized some preliminary results on the primary species using the study area, including interspecific variation in the timing of movements, relative abundance, and their spatial distribution across the study area. Roseate terns are generally the only endangered bird species using the area, although in relatively small numbers. In contrast, large numbers of gulls, other species of terns, loon, cormorants, shearwaters, storm-petrels, and various species of seaducks traverse the area at different times of the year. Systematic surveys are planned to continue through mid-2010 (See Presentation at http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/pdf/present_paton_birds.pdf.)

Major summary meeting points – Ken Payne, URI

Payne indicated that he finds discussion surrounding the SAMP to be positive overall and productive and that the group will continue to meet with future sessions being dedicated to the draft chapters themselves.

Next Meeting – November 4, 2009, Coastal Institute, URI Bay Campus

