

Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting #10
Notes, December 1, 6 – 8 p.m.
Hazard Rooms A and B, URI Bay Campus

Purpose of the Meeting:

1. Present the Draft Marine Transportation, Navigation, and Infrastructure Chapter
2. Update Stakeholders on Ocean SAMP research, outreach and policy activities

Welcome – Jennifer McCann, URI

McCann told the group of 40 attendees that chapter writing for the SAMP is moving at a fast pace in keeping with the influx of data and that stakeholder input has been invaluable for assisting with the process. She reviewed the chapter drafting and review process with the group, specifically the Introduction chapter and the Recreational chapter, and indicated that the CRMC has provided numerous opportunities for public input and comment on the chapters as they are drafted. McCann said that the chapters will also be up for comment as a whole document toward the end of the process.

New Ocean SAMP Developments – Grover Fugate, CRMC

Fugate told the group that the U.S. Minerals Management Service (MMS) has formed a task force to develop a process for leasing federal offshore waters and enabling developers to bid on these blocks in a fair and organized manner. He said MMS is likely to outline the process in January 2010. He also said that in the meantime, many states along the eastern seaboard are preparing plans so that they are ready to work with developers once the MMS process is ready. Rhode Island is one of the states that is leading in terms of preparing for potential wind farms in offshore and state waters. New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, and Massachusetts are also vying for opportunities with offshore renewable energy resources, including wind farms.

Draft Marine Transportation, Navigation, and Infrastructure Chapter – Tiffany Smythe and Michelle Armsby, URI

The presentation provided an overview of marine transportation, navigation, and infrastructure issues within the Ocean SAMP boundary, with a focus on offshore uses, as a regulatory program and zoning program already exist for coastal uplands. The draft chapter provides information pertaining to the status of the activities and facilities, and includes a methodology and general policy recommendations. The presentation described the history of the marine transportation in the SAMP area; the different components of the marine transportation system (waterways, operators, vessels, ports); navigation features and traffic management activities, and structures and objects (cables, unexploded ordinances). Information included data about the extensive

shipping activity that takes place in the SAMP area, and the kinds of tools used to provided safety to people and marine animals, such as right whales. To draft the chapter, the writers reviewed SAMP, Environmental Impact Statements, MMS regulations, and the Massachusetts Ocean Plan, among other documents. They also interviewed stakeholders, completed a literature and data search, and created appropriate maps to visually portray the information. The policies for the chapter will likely pertain to the value of uses in the area, to activities important for navigation and safety, and to construction related to offshore renewable energy projects, including wind farms. Some of information from the chapter will also be important for other SAMP chapters, such as the renewable energy resources chapter.

Major summary meeting points – Jennifer McCann, URI

McCann led the group in discussion about the presentation. She asked people to share their thoughts on any surprises that the chapter may have held for them. There was discussion about unexploded ordinances and why the U.S. Navy has chosen to leave them there instead of remove them (safer to leave them and monitor them). There was discussion about the placement of underwater cables. Also, CRMC board member Don Gomez asked the group to think about the roles that marine transportation and infrastructure play in the Rhode Island economy. He said the economy could likely be enhanced through improvement of these uses and activities. McCann then encouraged the group to continue coming to stakeholder meetings, reading the chapters, and interacting with the project. She said the next steps for the marine transportation chapter is for it to be reviewed by a technical advisory committee, and for people to read the chapter and submit written comments to the SAMP team. She also answered a question from a member of the R.I. Attorney General's office – the question asked where policy recommendation will be located in the SAMP document. McCann and Fugate indicated that policies will be placed in (A SEPARATE CHAPTER?)

Next Meeting – January 5, 2010, Coastal Institute, URI Bay Campus