

**Ocean SAMP Stakeholder Meeting #13**  
**Notes, March 2, 2010, 6:00 – 8:15 p.m.**  
**Hazard Rooms A and B, URI Bay Campus**

**Purpose of the Meeting:**

1. Present a summary of the Ocean SAMP Renewable Energy draft chapter for discussion.
2. Present a summary of the Ocean SAMP Ecology draft chapter for discussion.
3. Update stakeholders on Ocean SAMP research, outreach and policy activities.

**New Ocean SAMP Developments – Grover Fugate, CRMC**

After Meeting Chair and Facilitator Ken Payne welcomed the group of approximately 60 attendees, Fugate provided a SAMP update. He indicated that the process remains on track with both timing and with chapter progression. He said the transportation chapter received its public workshop and full hearing in February, and the public can expect a much more exhaustive review process for other SAMP chapters, such as the fisheries and renewable energy chapters. Fugate said that Rhode Island remains as a national leader in marine spatial planning and offshore renewable energy planning. He said that he continues to meet with state and federal officials concerning the negotiation of an offshore boundary dispute between Rhode Island and Massachusetts, but that he fully believes that Rhode Island, through the SAMP process, has both the science and the policy to emerge with the advantage.

**Update on Ocean SAMP Chapters – Jennifer McCann, URI**

McCann told the group that there are four chapters being prepared for stakeholder review between March and May and that with this kind of activity, stakeholder engagement with the material is critical and welcome. She also reminded attendees about the “Ocean in Motion” SAMP-related public lecture series and said that the Ocean SAMP team has recorded podcasts so audio information about SAMP chapters can be downloaded for stakeholder listening. Stakeholders are also welcome to ask for bundles of SAMP brochures to hand out at their own events.

**Renewable Energy Draft Chapter – Michelle Armsby, URI**

Armsby provided an overview of the Ocean SAMP Renewable Energy chapter, explaining the objectives, the methodology, the preliminary findings, and next steps for completing the chapter. She said that the chapter specifically provides background information on renewable energy and offshore wind, and describes processes and tools, summarizes effects and recommends policies. In general, she said, the chapter provides a broad

perspective on why data indicates that offshore wind holds the greatest potential of all the ocean-based renewable resources for addressing Rhode Island's energy needs. The chapter also sheds light on what a utility-scale offshore renewable energy structure(s) look like, and what the positive and negative impacts on the marine ecosystem surrounding infrastructure may be. Finally, Armsby indicated that the goal of the chapter is to encourage the development of supportive policies and standards for CRMC to adopt that will aid with the monitoring of offshore renewable energy projects. This information is being looked to by the nation as a model, so the chapter was scheduled for a March presentation by the Ocean SAMP team to the National Academies Marine Board.

After the presentation, discussion took place about why the chapter focused specifically on wind farms and not other forms of offshore renewable energy. Fugate said that while other possibilities for offshore renewable energy may exist, none hold as much promise as wind power, and that scientific data supports this. He said that an ideal situation would have been to be able to explore all forms for as long as it takes to come to a conclusion, but that the reality is that the world market is dictating how fast exploration takes place, and that in order for Rhode Island to have the most say in the process, the Ocean SAMP must be prepared and ready to go come August 2010. Payne also indicated that the SAMP process is underscoring the integrity of ocean spatial planning and adaptive management techniques, and that he is confident that the SAMP is providing a responsible and responsive foundation for dialogue about Rhode Island's energy needs.

### **Ecology – Alan Desbonnet, URI**

Desbonnet provided an overview of the SAMP Ecology chapter and gave general information about the SAMP area geology, wind patterns, air and water temperatures, salinity, water currents and circulation, chemical oceanography, phytoplankton, zooplankton, ichthyoplankton, the benthos, fish, megafauna (whales, seals, turtles) and avifauna (birds). He said that climate change is a key emerging issue impacting all ecological facets of Rhode Island's ocean waters, and that much research needs to take place to fill significant data gaps present for many of the above topics. He said that because he tried whenever possible to focus data gathering to the SAMP area itself, there are holes in the data, with most modern research targeting either Narragansett Bay or much wider sections of Rhode Island ocean waters. He said the SAMP is serving an important role in highlighting the major need for research so we can obtain a true data picture of areas of Rhode Island's ocean waters. Fugate indicated the SAMP places Rhode Island in the forefront of states which are trying to gather and analyze data to better understand ocean ecosystems.

### **Next Steps – K. Payne**

Next meeting: April 6, 2010