

# Fishing pier in North Kingstown moving forward

By Dotti Farrington

State officials have adopted a "one pier a year, ten piers in ten years" concept to build or improve ten fishing piers along Narragansett Bay.

Work began earlier this year on five of them, including North Kingstown's west end of the old Jamestown Bridge at Plum Point. James McGinn, acting supervising civil engineer for the Division of Planning and Development of the state Department of Environmental Management (DEM), gave an update on the projects last week.

The concept for "ten in ten" has been set as a goal by DEM Director Michael Sullivan, according to McGinn. The other piers in some stage of development or improvement are: The U.S. Navy's Midway Pier on Burma Road in Middletown. Prudence Island T Wharf, the former Stone Bridge Pier in Portsmouth and Newport's

Van Zandt Pier. The Plum Point and Portsmouth projects are being done in tandem with the state Department of Transportation (DOT), and include federal funding. The others are part of the parks and recreation authority of the DEM, according to McGinn.

DOT spokesman Charles St. Martin III reported this week that the balance of the old Jamestown Bridge demolition account is about \$6 million, to be applied to the Plum Point pier and related bikeway. The balance is what is expected to be left after the bridge demolition account is closed out at \$20 million, and about \$1.5 million is spent to remove the remaining 1,000-plus feet of the west end of the bridge.

St. Martin noted that former U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee arranged for an added \$8 million federal appropriation for the original \$15.5 million in federal funds and \$4 mil-

lion in state funds to ensure enough money for the bridge removal and pier plans.

The bridge's west section was planned as a separate contract from the main demolition because the decision to keep or remove that section had not been decided when demolition began. It was originally thought the bridge's west end could be restored, but it was determined to be too deteriorated to be salvagable.

The plan for the bridge pier, tentatively named the Plum Point Fishing Pier State Park, is being pursued via a design committee consisting of state and North Kingstown officials. The committee's goal is to have a design for a public hearing in mid-2008 and construction over two years once the design is adopted, McGinn reported.

### Public response

A major part of the design period will include work to convince Plum Point/Plum Beach residents that a properly run state park will not perpetuate the high nuisance conditions of illegal use of the former bridge for fishing. Some residents have already expressed disbelief that a beneficial operation can be established, or that the state can fund the pier park with staffing that is being promised.

McGinn said that the Plum Point pier plan was conceived as part of a 1987 state appropriation in anticipation of the abandonment of the old bridge and opening of the new bridge in 1992. The old bridge was used for unauthorized fishing for several years to the consternation of residents at both the Jamestown and North Kingstown ends of the bridge. Residents complained about lack of sanitary facilities and noise, trespassing, trash and parking by fishermen. The old bridge was barricaded for the last several years of its existence.

In 2005, the DEM conducted an intensive study and survey of the best fishing and potential pier creation or enhancement projects. The DEM, at that time, described the survey and assessment as part of a broad effort, led by Governor Donald Carcieri, to enhance public access and recreational opportunities in and around Narragansett Bay.

The survey focused on saltwater recreational fishing conducted from the shoreline. The state said it was committed to Plum Point, but needed a full inventory of bay fishing options. Twenty-three pier locations were identified.

Plum Point and Middletown dominated, both as public favorites and technically and environmentally feasible, as best fishing locations and most adaptable for piers. Their selection by the DEM for development was made officially last year.

As part of the study, an architectural drawing of a possible Plum Point pier was produced and circulated as a design. McGinn said the actual design will reflect some of the concepts, including a two-story building for staff and rest rooms for fishermen and visitors, a 990-foot pier, and on-site and off-site parking. The complex is planned to accommodate about 200 persons and up to 50 cars. It will be

located at the existing demolition work site at the old bridge, with an entrance from the eastbound lane and exit into the westbound lane via a roadway under the new bridge abutment.

The DEM officials have estimated the pier complex could cost about \$6 million. Related work, including pedestrian and bike paths to off-site parking at the nearby commuter lot on Route 1A, would cost at least \$2 million, according to the DEM.

### Related bikeway

St. Martin pointed out that DOT funds are intended to provide the related bikeway to get cyclists to, from and over the bridge. He specified that "design is not set yet. A separate bike path or protected lane segments would be used to get riders from Jamestown and North Kingstown to the bridge. The route probably would run over the bridge in the shoulder on both the eastbound and westbound sides."

He said DOT is also "working on obtaining permits for removal of the old trestle span and hopes to advertise for a contractor late this year and begin that demolition next spring. DOT would pay for design and construction of the pier, followed by construction of bicycle access to the new bridge, he said.

## Apply now for conservation grants from the state

The Rhode Island office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced a second round of requests for proposals for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) for 2007. Grants of up to \$75,000 are available to fund creative ideas and practices that will conserve soil, water and energy resources or improve air quality, grazing land and forest health in Rhode Island. The total pot from which NRCS will make awards to CIG is \$176,000.

Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. on Friday, July 6, from all eligible government or non-government organizations or individuals, including federally-recognized tribes.

"The CIG program stimulates the development and adoption of new and innovative approaches and technologies to managing our natural resources more effectively and efficiently," said Roylene Rides At The Door, NRCS State Conservationist.

"It allows applicants to create practical solutions to address conservation and resource management."

The CIG can fund pilot projects and conservation field trials up to three years in length.

To view the Announcement of Program Funding visit, [www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig](http://www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig) or [www.grants.gov/](http://www.grants.gov/). Those interested may apply on-line through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or download an application and mail it to USDA NRCS, Attention: Michael Moorman, 60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46, Warwick, RI 02886.

For questions or assistance with the application process, contact Alicia Lehrer at the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District (SRICD) at 284-1885.

### MURPHY'S LAW

Jamestown's Police Log sometimes provides interesting reading. In the past, we have had reports of our own WMD, potato launchers, wreaking havoc in our peaceful community.

More recently, a report of the theft of a vacuum cleaner inspires a vision of a very tidy kleptomaniac. Mayberry revisited. Let's get Barney Fife on the case right away!

We should not denigrate the seriousness of what could be significant criminal offenses. Use of a potato launcher, under certain circumstances, could constitute assault with a dangerous weapon, a felony. And the theft of anything worth more than \$500 is also a felony.

The Town of Exeter gets by without any local police force whatsoever. Are its citizens more law abiding than ours?

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