

Conservation panel ready for island shoreline clean-up

By Michaela Kennedy

The Conservation Commission ran through a final list in preparation for this Saturday's Earth Day Shoreline Cleanup. Extra gloves and trucks are needed, Commission Chairman Christopher Powell said.

"I hope to see you all there," Patrick Driscoll said to fellow commissioners at their April 15 meeting. The board plans to have morning snacks at the Recreation Center, at 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 26. After the cleanup, lunch will be served by the Conanicut Island Land Trust.

Clean-up volunteers, walkers, and other passers-by at Mackerel Cove may notice new plantings along the town beach. Commissioner Jennifer Talancy reported that dune grass was planted, with the help of the Girl Scouts and other volunteers. "The town will put a snow fence along the roadway or string rope to protect new plantings from people walking," she added. The commission approved a reimbursement bill for lunch provided that day.

In a review of a preliminary draft of a landscape design to erect

a fence around the water treatment plant, the commission rejected the plan because it did not account for accessibility to a nearby nature trail. Powell noted that the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, a grant provider for the water treatment project located in the wetlands, stipulated that a trailhead and parking be included in the landscape design. Members of the board agreed to meet the following day for a site visit to review options for a path and parking facility. Commission members also agreed to urge the town to work together with the commission, "to develop an acceptable plan."

In a wind energy committee liaison report, Commissioner Cathy Roheim gave highlights from the winning bid proposal submitted by Applied Technology and Management. The consultant team, chosen to initiate a wind power feasibility study, said it would take into consideration wildlife impact, Roheim said. She expressed concern that no one at ATM specialized in wildlife, and hoped the consultants would reach out to the Conservation Commission when looking

for wildlife experts for help.

Carol Trocki mentioned that raptors were "a big concern," in the wind turbine development project. Powell said that the commission's collection of satellite tracking of the ospreys since their first fledging may offer insight useful to the wind energy consultants, adding, "Bird counts may be useful to consider."

The wind committee rescheduled its kick-off meeting for April 22 at the library, Roheim added.

In an update on the Round Marsh restoration project, vegetation plots are slated to be temporarily planted at the site, providing a means to monitor the marsh before, during and after restoration, said Trocki, who is the project manager. Powell suggested checking with the Coastal Resources Management Council in case a permit was required for the testing.

In a planning liaison report, Commissioner Kate Smith brought a preliminary development plan for a house construction on Seaside Avenue and Bark Street to the attention of the board. Smith noted that an application triggered

by a variance request concerning a wetlands setback and high groundwater district should be closely watched.

She presented pictures of runoff water from Frigate and Bark Streets, and suggested that consideration must be given to cumulative impact of ground water in the area.

In other business, the commission:

- Received a copy of a letter from Michael and Tricia Foster concerning a request from Edward Carroll for zoning relief from a wetlands setback for an individual sewer disposal system on Neptune Street. The commission agreed to send a memorandum to the town clerk asking to receive copies of any correspondence that might trigger conservation issues.

- Authorized Greg Clark to maintain grass at properties managed by the conservation commission, on an as-needed basis up to 10 cuts.

- Rescheduled next month's regular meeting to May 20 at the town hall.

Commissioner Mark Baker was absent.

Choristers to perform May 9

The Newport Navy Choristers, under the direction of JoAnn Loewenthal, will present a concert, "Proudly We Sing" on Friday, May 9, at 7:30 p.m. at St Lucy's Church, 909 West Main Rd. in Middletown.

All proceeds from this concert will benefit Looking Upwards, a non-profit agency celebrating 30 years of providing support for people with disabilities to live fulfilling lives.

Tickets may be purchased in advance by contacting Looking Upwards at 847-0960, ext. 30, by any Chorister member or at the door. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors and those under 12 years old. A \$20 family ticket is available for 4 or more. Visit the Chorister website at www.newportnavychoristers.org.

Band to perform salute concert

The theme of the May 10 concert to be performed by the Lafayette Band is "An Armed Forces Salute—Past, Present and Future," and it will celebrate Armed Forces Day, which is May 17.

The Lafayette Band will perform a concert of American popular and patriotic music and the event will include military-related ceremonies to salute the Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard Members, Veterans and their families.

The Lafayette Band of North Kingstown is a non-profit community concert band. Some 126 years old, it is one of the oldest bands in continuous existence in Rhode Island. The band's mission is to celebrate community through music.

Soil

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for the land based on its soil. The student's soil descriptions are scored and the team that comes closest to the descriptions of the judges wins the competition.

University of Rhode Island professor Mark Stoltz from the Department of Natural Resources Sciences was the man behind getting this competition to Jamestown this year; but unfortunately, the Rhody Rams couldn't compete, as they are the hosting university, however, they did place third in this year's regional event. Jamestown's Community Farm was the host site

for the competition, and the town went the extra mile and made a backhoe available to dig the pits, but, "They will be filled back in. I'll see to that," said Bob Sutton, the farm's manager.

Jamestown was chosen due to the unique soils located in town. Gardeners may notice how black Jamestown's soil is due to its high carbon level, which makes it extremely fertile and perfect for raising crops. "It's some of the best agricultural soil in the state," said Jim Turenne, assistant state soil scientist.

Turenne, a Jamestown native, works for the United States Department of Agriculture, who also helped sponsor the competition.

So the hundreds of students take the week off school to travel and compete. They place a heavy burden on themselves though, since the event takes place during the college session and not during spring break. Students have to check with their professors and inform them they will not be attending classes that week and so have a week's worth of catching up, which is a good indication of their dedication. When asked what they felt was the main reason they were here, California Polytech students said in unison, "Winning the competition!" But they do come for more experience as many wish to pursue careers as soil scientists, and, "the US Department of Ag-

riculture is hiring on the spot," Turenne said.

Soil science is crucial because before soil can be used efficiently, it needs to be identified and characterized so one can either run a farm or set up a septic system. The end goal of the competition is classifying soils so the landscape can be used effectively.

Kansas State won the competition, Virginia Tech took second place, and University of Maryland finished in third place.



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