Legislative Committee

The Watch

Capt. Dave Monti, Chairman

The RISAA Legislative Committee's mission is to provide, in partnership with the Affiliated Clubs, a forum for improving the knowledge and understanding of fishery-related and government issues that affect recreational anglers. An informed membership encourages involvement and advocacy. The Legislative Committee will strive to advocate responsible fishery decision.

The Committee is comprised of RISAA Members and delegates from the Affiliated Clubs. The Committee meets two or three times a year, depending on the number of fishery and/or legislative issues that develop.

Narragansett Bay Report

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The discouraging news was that accelerating impact climate change will have on our salt marshes, the sea grass, fish populations, Narragansett Bay and surrounding communities. Air, Water temperature and sea level are rising.

"The water quality in Narragansett Bay and its reivers has improved through significant infrastructure improvements to reduce excess nutrients, toxic contaminants, and pathogens," said **Dr. John King** at *The State of Narragansett Bay and Its Watershed Report* workshop. "However, climate change is impacting us at an accelerated rate, so much so that the quality of our environment and the social and economic vitality of the cities and towns in Narragansett Bay and its watershed are at substantial risk."

Dr. John King

Dr. King is Science Advisory Committee Chair of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (developers of the report) and a professor of Oceanography at the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island. King and colleagues from partner organizations that contributed to the report, highlighted key report findings at the workshop after a media briefing.

Lessons from Narragansett Bay will serve as a model

The keynote address was given by **Robinson (Wally) Fulweiler**, an Associate Professor in the Department of Earth and Environment and the Department of Biology at Boston University. Fulweiler said, Narragansett Bay is an ideal natural laboratory to test the impact of human activities on ecosystem function on both local (e.g., nutrient loading and now nutrient mitigation) and regional/global (e.g., warming water temperatures) scales... Lessons learned from Narragansett Bay are widely applicable and provide an opportunity for better management, protection and restoration of coastal ecosystems."

Robinson (Wally) Fulweiler

"This report shows we are making progress and that Narragansett Bay and the rivers that feed it are cleaner," said **U.S. Senator Jack Reed**. "I commend everyone who has worked hard to reduce excess nutrients in the Bay and its rivers. This report also affirms that the federal Clean Water Act is working to reduce the discharge of pollutants to important waterways such as the Narragansett Bay estuary. I will continue working to secure federal support to research, monitor and help advance additional projects to protect and restore the Bay and its watershed."

Tom Kutcher, workshop guest panelist with the Rhode Island National History Survey (and former Baykeeper for Save The Bay) said, "The salt marshes are disappearing. You might say they are drowning with climate change sea level rise."

From the 1800s to 1970 we lost over 50 percent of Narragansett Bay salt marshes due to development and other factors.

"These salt marshes act as filters for the Bay," said Kutcher. "Water flows into them from the rivers and then into the Bay. Without them we have no filters."

Barrington, RI high tide. NOAA says the water level in Newport could rise 9 to 11 feet by 2100.

A recent analysis found that we have about 3,321 acres of salt marsh left in the bay and about one-third of it in the Warren, Palmer and Barrington Rivers. Recent observations and future projections suggest that a large percentage of existing marshes will be lost with accelerating sea level rise affecting the fish and wildlife of Narragansett Bay.

Climate change impact

The report relates that more needs to be done to combat the effects of climate change as it is accelerating at a faster pace and the data is unquestionable. From 1960 to 2015 air temperature increased by approximately 2.7 degrees F and water temperature rose 2.9 degrees F. Projections call for air temperatures in the region to increase another 5 to 10 degrees by 2100.

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