

PAVING THE WAY (from page 1)

The grant amount is \$126,000 with matching funds of \$127,186 for a total project amount of \$253,186.

The project will apply electronic technologies (ET) to improve the timeliness and quality of fisheries data available to Rhode Island fisheries management personnel, increase knowledge of fisheries for management, industry and science purposes, and empower fishermen and other citizens to become more actively involved in the data collection process.

Francine Karp, CEO and co-founder of Harbor Lights Software, said, “The data processing aspects of this project consists of a mobile application compatible with Android and iOS phones and tablets, which will report data to a cloud-hosted software service which will manage the storage of the data.”

The data base created by the software is being developed to provide secure access to the data by Rhode Island Division of Marine Fisheries to enhance their fisheries management activities.

Francine Karp said, “Supplemental capabilities will be developed, based on feedback from the recreational fishing community for the purposes of encouraging continued usage of the application, which provide information to anglers based on their fishing efforts, the efforts of the community at-large, or supplemental information of value such as weather and tide data, fishing regulations, species identification guides and more.”

Steve Medeiros said, “This is where we need angler participation and input. To determine what software features would first entice an angler to sign up to use the software and second what features would engage anglers to continue to use the software on a regular basis in year two.”



Francine Karp



John Lake

John Lake, Supervising Biologist from the RI Division of Marine Fisheries, is the pilot project coordinator. The project is expected to help fish managers get a better idea of recreational fishing discards as well as the length of fish caught and discarded.

John Lake said, “Discard data collected by MRIPAP AIS interviews on the shore or at the dock is based on angler recall, currently there is no way to evaluate the accuracy of these angler-reported discards. The data collected from this application will provide an additional source of data on these unobserved discards for comparison.”

Discard size measurements of recreational angling are now collected by direct observation on head/party boats. It is unknown if these samples represent the discards in the other modes of the recreational fishery.

“Data collected by this application will allow managers to compare the discards from other modes of recreational fishing to the head boat discard data.” said Lake.

What RISAA is doing

RISAA is providing the project with participants to both help design the software to make it appealing to use in the short and long term. Additionally, RISAA is helping to cultivate and recruit recreational anglers that will actually use the software as a pilot project participant.

RISAA is in the process of implementing its support of the pilot grant program as a major RISAA program for members and affiliates.

RISAA engagement will include:

- **Market scan of what software has already been developed.**

The idea is to identify features that are working and those that do not seem to be working so we learn from what has already been developed.

- **Electronic recording panel.** Develop a panel of RISAA members and affiliates to serve as a sounding board through the software’s development and implementation. **(to page 30)**

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