



# 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.

## National Fishing Law Under The Microscope

“We had a great discussion about the Magnuson-Steven Act (MSA), the fishing law of this nation, and how to improve it for recreational fishing. Our aim now is to process Symposium input and develop recommendations we can share with U.S. congressional delegations in Southern New England.” said **Steve Medeiros**, President of the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA).

Medeiros opened the 2018 Southern New England Recreational Fishing Symposium which was held Friday, January 26 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, RI. The Magnuson Stevens Act will likely go before congress for reauthorization this year. Several House and Senate bills have been sponsored over the past three years.

### Why focus on MSA at the Symposium

Recreational saltwater fishing plays an important role in Southern New England’s ecology and economy as well as throughout the United States.

According to NOAA, recreational fishing in Rhode Island and Massachusetts has an economic impact that surpasses commercial fishing. Commercial fishers provide a nutritious food source for people who have no access to fish, however, both recreational and commercial fishing are important to our economy.

The “[Fisheries Economics of the United States](#)” report published by the Department of Commerce and NOAA relates that **recreational fishing in Rhode Island had sales of \$332 million** in 2015. The report says commercial fishing had sales of \$290 million in Rhode Island and a total of \$338 million once imported fish were added. Massachusetts’ situation is similar. **Recreational sales were at \$986 million** and commercial sales at \$861 million with sales of \$1,129 million once imports are added.

But what most people do not realize is that according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), that although recreational fishing accounts for only 2% of the landings nationwide it has a far reaching and sustainable impact on our society. Nationally, recreational fishing represents over \$89.5 billion in sales and value added to the economy and 439,242 jobs.

With this economic impact it is vitally important that the nation and Southern New England manage this resource to abundance so recreational fishing can continue to thrive in a highly sustainable way and continue to serve as a primary economic engine of growth. To continue economic growth in the recreational fishing sector our national fishing law, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, needs to better address recreational fishing.

“Recreational fishing community leaders from thirty member clubs and organizations attended the day-long seminar along with conservation groups, political leaders and fish managers from Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.” said Medeiros

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Symposium panelists (l-r) Charles Witek, Esq. (W.Babylon, NY), Russell Dunn (NOAA Fisheries), Ben Buli (American Fly Fishing Trade Assoc, Bozeman, MT), John McMurray (Charter Captain, Oceanside, NY), Chris Macaluso (Director, Center for Marine Fisheries for Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Louisiana) and moderator Dennis Nixon (RI Sea Grant)

### Key points from panelists

Key points from speaker presentations appear below. Full presentations will appear at [www.risaa.org](http://www.risaa.org) once the 2018 Symposium section of the website is completed. Here are ten highlights from panelist presentations:

1. MSA is working because a) it is rooted in best available science; b) it requires accountability for everyone who fishes to stay within sustainable quotas, and c) it drives recovery of depleted stocks in a timely manner. **(to page 10)**