

HARBOR WATCH

BOX 934

LITTLE COMPTON, RI 02837

February 9, 1983

City Council
City Hall
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Councillors;

Rhode Island's barrier beaches are enjoyed by all the people of the state. These beaches are endangered, as the enclosures will detail.

I hope that you will join us as sponsors of "Conserve Our Barrier Beaches," with its seven recommendations to the CRMC.

Should you have any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to call me at 1-635-8662.

Respectfully,



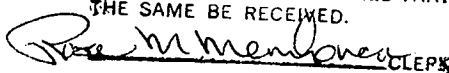
Karl Haffenreffer
Chairman

Enc.

IN CITY COUNCIL
MAR 3 1983

READ:

WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED.



CLERK

URGENT!

TO: RI Town and City Councils, Conservation Commissions,
civic and environmental organizations.

FROM: Trudy Cox, Executive Director, Save The Bay
Alfred Hawkes, Executive Director, Audubon Society of RI
Anne Burns, President, Easton's Point Assoc., Middletown
Karl Haffenreffer, Chairman, Harbor Watch, Little Compton

SUBJECT: Saving Rhode Island's Barrier Beaches.

DATE: February 9, 1983

The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) will very soon decide the fate of Rhode Island's 58 barrier beaches. The CRMC's present criteria exclude too many barriers and portions of barriers from protection against destructive and inappropriate development.

We invite you to read the enclosed statement, "Conserve Our Barrier Beaches," with its seven recommendations.

Join us and other concerned Rhode Island organizations in urging the CRMC to adopt these seven recommendations.

Your letters should be sent as soon as possible to:

Mr John A. Lyons
Chairman
CRMC
60 Davis Street
Providence, RI 02908

with a copy to the Governor:

Hon. J. Joseph Garrahy
State House
Providence, RI 02903

and a copy to us:

Conserve Our Barrier Beaches
Box 55
Middletown, RI 02840

Thank you.

CONSERVE OUR BARRIER BEACHES

Rhode Island's 58 barrier beaches are endangered--endangered by destructive development, but endangered more seriously still by inadequate protection. Unless the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) revises its criteria for barrier beaches, these fragile resources will be spoiled and destroyed. A few people will profit, while most of us will lose a natural heritage which enhances our state and our lives.

"Barrier beaches are narrow strips of land made of unconsolidated material usually extending parallel to the coast and separated from the mainland by a coastal pond, tidal waterbody or coastal wetland," according to the preliminary draft of the revised Coastal Resources Management Program (Section 220.2.1). The CRMC table attached hereto lists 15 barriers as Undeveloped (relatively protected), 18 barriers as Developed (relatively unprotected), and 25 barriers as being under consideration.

In 1972 a fledgeling CRMC made a geologic compromise for administrative convenience: it confined a barrier's lateral limits to that portion lying directly in front of a coastal pond or wetland, thereby leaving unprotected the edges most subject to development. Second, the CRMC deemed a barrier developed--thereby affording little protection against further development--when it contained merely a road or other minimal development. Nor was adequate protection conferred upon a barrier's intertidal and subtidal sand, which constitutes an integral, vital part.

Last year there were indications that the CRMC's criteria would improve. The preliminary draft Program defined a beach by its geologic limits (Section 220.2.1). As for development criteria, George Seavey of the Coastal Resources Center at URI stated in a November 4 memorandum to the CRMC Policy and Planning Committee:

Since houses may be built on barriers classified by the CRMC as developed, the Council should consider whether such altered barriers as [Tunipus (South Shore) Beach, Sakonnet Harbor Beach, Mackerel Cove Beach, Wesquage (Bonnet) Beach, East Matunuck Beach, etc.] should be reclassified as undeveloped to forestall development for residential/commercial uses. Existing facilities such as roads could be maintained but not expanded.

Then came the reaction. Through a series of public statements and actions, the CRMC's Chairman/Executive Director and certain other members are insisting on retaining the unprotective criteria. Their only stated rationale: "We've always done it this way," as if age hallowed error, as if ten years were an eon, as if typed paper were graven stone, as if full protection of these precious resources weren't paramount.

The CRMC is taking a fresh look at every other section of its Program, and improving it accordingly. Why exclude barrier beaches?

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act, recently enacted by Congress, contains excellent criteria for determining development status and administrative boundaries. The Act bans Federal flood insurance for new development and Federal aid for most forms of development, but does not ban development itself.

We respectfully request that the Coastal Resources Management Council adopt the following criteria and prohibitions, to protect Rhode Island's 58 barrier beaches:

- 1) Delineation. "The lateral limits of barrier beaches are defined by the area where unconsolidated sand or cobble abut rock, glacial till or other sediments unrelated to deposits made by the forces of the wind and waves" (preliminary draft Program, Section 220.2.1).
- 2) Delineation. "The delineation of the 'associated aquatic habitat' should incorporate the entire pond in all cases, rather than the chopped up pond approach. . . . The inland boundary has been suggested as encompassing all associated adjoining wetlands. This makes sense, both administratively and ecologically" (John A. Lyons, Chairman, CRMC, to Ric Davidge, Chairman, Coastal Barriers Task Force, Department of the Interior, March 12, 1982).
- 3) Delineation. "On the ocean (i.e., seaward) side, the boundary is sufficiently seaward of low water to encompass the entire sand-sharing system of the coastal barrier" (Department of the Interior, Federal Register, August 16, 1982, pg. 35708).
- 4) Date for establishing development status. "We support the DOI [Department of the Interior] classification according to development status as of March 15, 1982 and that only actual structures built by that date be considered in the designation of undeveloped barriers. . . . Houses that presently exist on the barriers that are more than 50% destroyed by storm damage should not be rebuilt" (Stephen Olsen, Director, Coastal Resources Center, URI, to Davidge, March 19, 1982).
- 5) Development criteria. "Only a full complement of infrastructure (i.e., water supply, sewers, roads, electric lines) describes an area fully prepared for development. A single road or electric line crossing a portion of an otherwise undeveloped barrier does not make that portion developed. The existence of beach stabilization structures, groins, jetties, and riprap should not designate an area as developed" (Olsen, to Davidge, March 19, 1982).
- 6) Development criterion. A developed barrier beach will be a beach with more than one structure per acre of fastland (Olsen, to Davidge, March 19, 1982).
- 7) Protection. Prohibitions of alteration and development should be at least as stringent as those contained in the preliminary draft Program.

We endorse this plea to preserve our barrier beaches:

In their undeveloped status, these beaches are considered . . . to be "a public asset of the greatest value," yet they are continuously subject to development pressure. These beaches, developed or undeveloped, are highly hazardous areas and it is reckless to pursue residential or commercial development on them.
[John A. Lyons, to Davidge, March 12, 1982]

We strongly urge Chairman Lyons and the sixteen other members of the CRMC to adopt the seven recommendations listed above and thus fulfill the CRMC's legislative mandate that "preservation and protection of ecological systems shall be the primary guiding principle upon which environmental alteration of coastal resources will be measured, judged, and regulated."

SPONSORS

Trudy Cox
Executive Director
Save The Bay

Alfred Hawkes
Executive Director
Audubon Society of RI

Anne Burns
President
Easton's Point Association
Middletown

Karl Haffenreffer
Chairman
Harbor Watch
Little Compton

(list in formation)

WE HEREBY ENDORSE THE STATEMENT ENTITLED "CONSERVE OUR BARRIER BEACHES,"
AND WE STRONGLY URGE THAT THE COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ADOPT
ITS SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS.

*Alfred L. Hawkes, Executive Director
Auction Society of R.I.*

TRUDY CCKE
SAVE THE BAY, INC.

Ann P. Burns
MASTON'S POINT ASSOCIATION
MIDDLETOWN

Karl Haffner
KARL HAFFENREFFER
CHAIRMAN
HARBOR WATCH
LITTLE COMPTON

TABLE 4. DEVELOPED AND UNDEVELOPED BARRIER BEACHES

Developed

Atlantic Beach, Westerly
 Central Beach, Charlestown
 East Beach (west of Ninigret Conservation Area) Charlestown
 Charlestown Beach, Charlestown
 Green Hill Beach, South Kingstown
 East Matunuck-Jerusalem Beach, South Kingstown-Narragansett
 Roger Wheeler Beach (Sand Hill Cove), Narragansett
 Narragansett Beach, Narragansett
 Bonnett Shores Beach, Narragansett
 Mackerel Cove Beach, Jamestown
 Hazard's Beach, Newport
 Bailey's Beach, Newport
 First (Easton's) Beach, Newport
 Second (Sachuest) Beach, Middletown
 Third Beach, Middletown
 Tunipus (South Shore) Beach, Little Compton
 Crescent Beach, New Shoreham
 Coast Guard Beach, New Shoreham

Undeveloped

Napatree Beach, Westerly
 Maschaug Beach, Westerly
 Quonochontaug Beach, Westerly-Charlestown
 East Beach (Ninigret Conservation Area to Breachway
 Charlestown
 Moonstone Beach, South Kingstown
 Browning Beach, South Kingstown
 Watchhouse Pond Beach, Little Compton
 Long Pond Beach, Little Compton
 Round Pond Beach, Little Compton
 Briggs Beach, Little Compton
 Ship Pond Cove, Little Compton
 Round Meadow Pond Beach, Little Compton
 Quicksand Pond Beach, Little Compton
 Sandy Point, New Shoreham
 West Beach, New Shoreham

Comment

A number of small barrier beaches and physically similar features (cusped beaches and recurved spits) are present in Narragansett Bay. The Council is considering assigning these features to a Developed and Undeveloped Barrier Beach category and applying the same policies and regulations to proposals to alter them.

Casey Point, North Kingstown
 Bissill Cove, North Kingstown*

Greene Point, North Kingstown
 Tibbitts Creek, North Kingstown

Mary's Creek, Warwick
 Baker's Creek, Warwick
 Buttonwoods Cove, Warwick
 Conimicut Point, Warwick
 Gaspee Point, Warwick
 Nayatt Point, Barrington*
 Mussachuk Creek, Barrington
 Rumstick Point, Barrington
 Hog Island, Bristol (2)*
 Musselbed shoals, Portsmouth
 Nag Pond, Portsmouth
 Jenny Pond, Portsmouth*

Gull Point, Portsmouth
 Coggeshall/Sheep Pen Coves, Portsmouth
 McCarry Point, Portsmouth
 High Hill Marsh Barrier, Little Compton*
 Fogland Point, Tiverton*
 Sapowet Point Barrier, Tiverton*
 Sakonnet Inner Harbor Barrier, Little Compton*
 Fox Hill Pond, Jamestown

*According to Dr. Jon Boothroyd (URI Geology Department) these features are
 barrier beaches formed by the longshore drift of sediments.