

2007 Aquatics Envirothon Pertinent Laws

Federal Laws

Federal Clean Water Act

- 1972, amended in 1977, 1981, and 1987
- Objective: Restore and maintain chemical, physical, and biological integrity of nation's waters.
- Gave EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) authority to implement pollution control programs, ex. Setting wastewater standards for industry.
- Establish basic structure for regulating discharge of pollutants in US waters.
- Continued requirements to set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters.
- Made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless permitted.
- Funded construction of sewage treatment plants and recognized need for planning to address critical problems posed by NPS (non-point source) pollution.
- In Rhode Island, the DEM (Department of Environmental Management) is in charge of implementing rules and regulations of Clean Water Act.

More information can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/r5water/cwa.htm>

Federal Safe Drinking Water Act

- Passed in 1974, amended in 1986, 1988, and 1996
- Authorizes EPA to set national health based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally occurring and man water contaminants in public drinking water.
- Passed to protect public health by regulating nation's public drinking water supply
- Does not regulate private wells that serve fewer than 25 individuals
- In Rhode Island, the DOH (Department of Health) is in charge of implementing the rules and regulations of the Safe Water Drinking Act.

More information can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/sdwa/index.html>

State Laws

DEM Freshwater Wetlands Act

- Passed April 1999, amended in 2001
- Purpose: Preserve, protect, and/or restore purify and integrity of all freshwater wetlands so that they shall be able for all beneficial uses and thus protect the health, welfare and general well being of the population and environment.
- Limits cutting and clearing of vegetation
- Limits maintenance and repair activities
- Limits demolition, additions, or repairs to existing structures
- Maintains authority over any activity that could be held inside the boundaries of freshwater wetlands

Coastal Resource Management Council Jurisdiction

- Created in 1971 by the Rhode Island General Assembly
- Environmental regulatory and management agency
- Responsible for preservation, protection, development, and restoration of coastal areas
- Has regulatory authority over area extending from territorial sea limit, three miles offshore, to 200 feet inland from any coastal feature
- Natural features such as coastal beaches and dunes, barrier beaches, coastal wetlands, cliffs, shorelines all have an extended contiguous area of 200 feet from all their inland borders under authority of Council.
- Cultural features of historical or archeological significance are within jurisdiction of Council.

More information can be found at: <http://www.crmc.state.ri.us/index.html>

Rhode Island- Private Well Act

- Law passed during summer 2002 session
- Requires drinking water standards/guidelines for private well water
- Requires testing of new wells beginning July 2003
- Requires testing upon a sale of an existing home beginning July 2006
- Delays in implementation of regulation are expected
- Testing for eight parameters required- coliform bacteria, nitrate, nitrite, iron, manganese, lead, fluoride, and turbidity
- Town may require more analyses
- HEALTH will create web age showing known areas of contamination

Regulating Local Land and Water Resource Use

Cities and Towns can develop more stringent permanent or temporary rules to protect water quality and quantity

- Wetlands
 - o South Kingstown
- Septic System Management
 - o Charlestown
 - o South Kingstown
 - o Gloucester
- Aquifer Protection Overlay Districts
 - o South Kingstown
 - o North Kingstown
- Zoning Ordinances
- Water bans (for example during a drought in the summer towns can ban outdoor water use)

More information on Rhode Island Laws can be found at:

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/>

More information on Federal Laws can be found at:

http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Reference_Shelf/Laws.shtml

Excerpted from the materials of Alyson McCann