



Rhode Island

Department of Environmental Management

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News Release

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CONDITIONAL SHELLFISH AREAS IN UPPER NARRAGANSETT BAY TO RE-OPEN THREE DAYS EARLY AS A RESULT OF ACCEPTABLE POST-STORM MONITORING DATA

Conditional Area A & Conimicut Triangle Will Reopen at Sunrise on Friday, June 26

PROVIDENCE - The Department of Environmental Management announces that Conditional Area A and Conimicut Triangle in Upper Narragansett Bay will re-open to shellfishing beginning at sunrise on Friday, June 26 - three days earlier than the scheduled June 29th opening.

The early opening is possible due to operation of Narragansett Bay Commission's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) tunnel, and related improvements completed under Phase II which went on line in December 2014. An agreement reached between DEM and US Food and Drug Administration allows DEM to re-open the Upper Bay conditional areas to shellfish harvesting as soon as post-storm monitoring data demonstrates it is safe to do so. DEM developed this plan to expedite the benefits associated with the tremendous investment in construction of NBC's CSO Abatement Project.

Under this plan, DEM continues to enact a seven-day closure of the shellfish conditional areas in the Upper Bay: Conimicut Triangle after half-inch (0.5") of rainfall, Area A after eight-tenths of an inch (0.8") of rainfall, and Area B after an inch and a half (1.5") of rainfall. As conditions allow, DEM uses post-storm monitoring data and operational information to determine whether these areas can be opened earlier. The data used to determine acceptability of this early opening – five days after the 1.27" rainfall recorded at T.F. Green Airport on Sunday, June 21 - was collected by DEM staff on June 23 and June 24.

At this time, the conditional area of the Greenwich Bay and Mt. Hope Bay are closed and will remain closed until sunrise on Monday, June 29. DEM maintains a 24-hour shellfishing hotline with recorded updated information on shellfish closure areas. Rainfall is predicted for Friday morning; if required, additional closures will be posted on the DEM hotline at 222-2900.