

Aquidneck Island Watershed Plan:

RIDEM Nonpoint Source Pollution Program is currently drafting a watershed plan to help restore and protect water quality and aquatic habitats on Aquidneck Island.

The Aquidneck Island Watershed Plan is being developed as a separate, complementary project from the [Newport Water Supply Reservoirs TMDL](#) (Total Maximum Daily Load) Study. The difference is that the watershed plan will cover multiple priority water quality and aquatic habitat concerns across the entire Island.

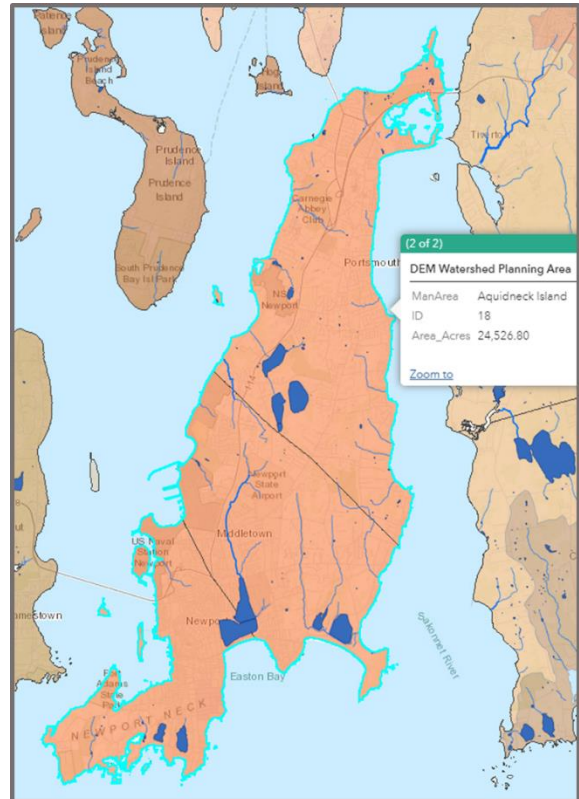
Proposed Goals for the Aquidneck Island Watershed Plan to address:

- Improve water quality for drinking water and for fish and wildlife habitat in all of the drinking water reservoirs on the Island (and their tributaries) which are impaired by excess phosphorus and total organic carbon
- Improve coastal water quality for swimming at areas frequently closed due to bacteria after storm events
- Eliminate the public health threat of contamination from untreated wastewater to shellfishing areas, which has caused permanent closures of this resource around Portsmouth
- Improve water quality for fish and wildlife habitat in the non-drinking water freshwater ponds, which are impaired by excess phosphorus
- Protect and restore freshwater wetlands, streams, and their buffers and floodplains for fish and wildlife habitat and drinking water quality, and as a resiliency strategy for riverine flooding and climate change impacts
- Protect and restore coastal wetlands and marsh migration areas for fish and wildlife habitat and as a resiliency strategy for coastal flooding, sea level rise, and climate change

For more information on these goals, please see narrative descriptions in the Aquidneck Island Goal Statements document, [here](#).

Please note that no new research or extensive public outreach is being done to put this plan together. This watershed plan will consult existing documents and key stakeholders to:

- describe the watershed and the conditions of its water resources -surface water and groundwater; freshwater and salt water,
- document the major management activities that have been going on by all parties,
- compile the relevant action items from the various existing plans,
- identify any additional recommendations needed to adequately protect and restore water quality and aquatic habitats in the watershed, and



- prioritize the issues and action items in order to make efficient use of limited resources and optimize progress in the watershed.

The watershed plan is meant to be a resource. There is no requirement for it to be formally adopted by any of the municipalities, however, local government involvement in developing the plan is important since many of the implementation actions would come under the role of local governments.

The plan is intended to fulfill US EPA's requirement that any project applying for funding from DEM under the Nonpoint Source Pollution Program authorized under Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act must be consistent with an approved watershed plan.

For more information about the watershed plan, please contact Jenny Paquet, Senior Environmental Planner at jenny.paquet@dem.ri.gov or 222-4700 ext. 77263.