



**CHAMPLIN'S MARINA EXPANSION – DENIED**

The Committee for the Great Salt Pond was pleased to learn that the RI Supreme Court had ruled in favor of The Committee, the Town, the Block Island Land Trust, and other environmental groups opposing the proposed marina expansion. This finally puts an end to any consideration of Champlin's 2003 application to Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) to nearly double the size of its marina. Through years of hearings before the RI Dept. of Environmental Management and the CRMC, the Committee for the Great Salt Pond, the Town of New Shoreham, The Land Trust, and the BI Conservancy worked together to defend the Great Salt Pond from this massive development proposal. This recent Supreme Court ruling also affirmed that the decisions of the state regulatory agencies, charged with protecting the state's fragile marine environment, cannot be easily overturned with appeals to a court system which may be friendly to developers.

Thanks go to the Town, The Land Trust, the Block Island Conservancy, our partner conservation groups, and to everyone who helped raise funds and write letters to bolster our cause. Special thanks to Dan Prentiss, our attorney who expertly handled this process from the very beginning.

The Rhode Island Supreme Court's opinion, dated October 14, 2022, can be found on our website: [cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org), under 'publications.' Additional information can also be found on our website, under 'news.'

**CRMC REFORM**

The CGSP has been actively working with the CRMC staff and has a very good relationship given our respect for their expertise and scientific data-based approach. As you undoubtedly know, the CGSP along with the Town of New Shoreham and The Land Trust was embroiled in a "20-year" battle fighting the expansion of Champlin's Marina here on Block Island. In the end, the battle was not only with Champlin's but also with the CRMC Council, as they struck a "backroom deal" with Champlin's. Finally, the RI Supreme Court ruled in favor of the CGSP, etc. in late 2022 and struck down the "behind-the-scenes" or "back room" deal as they ruled in favor of Block Island.

The CGSP has been pushing hard for CRMC reform and the topic is now front-and-center with the RI legislature. A CRMC reform committee was convened by the RI House of Representatives in 2022 and a Block Island resident and CGSP board member was appointed to that council – giving Block Island a seat at the table.

The CGSP is actively participating in the passage of legislation to change the CRMC structure to be more like a regular state organization such as the DEM. Collectively House Bills 5779, 5966, and 6034 reform CRMC by requiring a dedicated in-house legal resource, the appointment of a hearing officer and removal of the Council from the agency. We know we are in good company when the RI Attorney General stated in a letter to the chair of the House Committee hearing the bill:

*Continued on page 2*

**June 29–July 2, 2023**

**CGSP 2023 Burgees**

**Available**

For more information, visit:  
[cgsplockisland.org](http://cgsplockisland.org)

**July 15–August 7, 2023**

**Great Salt Pond**

**Photo Scavenger Hunt**

For more information, visit:  
[cgsplockisland.org](http://cgsplockisland.org)

**July 29, 2023**

**Swim the Pond–8**

Andy's Way • 11:00 am

**Register today.**

For more information, visit:  
[cgsplockisland.org/swim](http://cgsplockisland.org/swim)

**September 10, 2023**

**Annual CGSP Meeting**

The Narragansett

4:00 pm

For more information, visit:  
[cgsplockisland.org](http://cgsplockisland.org)



*“I write today to express my strong support for HB 5779, 5966, and 6034— legislation that would significantly reform the Coastal Resources Management Council (“CRMC”) to ensure more meaningful and transparent regulation and protection of Rhode Island’s treasured coastal resources.*

*More than two years ago, my Administration intervened in the legal dispute over the proposed expansion of a marina in Block Island’s Great Salt Pond because of an attempt by Champlin’s Marina and the CRMC to circumvent the public regulatory process. I’m proud to say that those efforts resulted in a decision by our Supreme Court denying that expansion—a win for all Rhode Islanders, not only because of what it meant for the protection of our environment and coastal resources, but also because it reaffirmed the principle that we were fighting for: regulatory agencies have to follow the rules and cannot engage in ad-hoc, behind-closed-door deals that ignore their own procedures and the evidence for the sake of expediency.”*

In addition to Champlin’s, the CGSP has also joined Save The Bay to highlight further infractions as the CRMC recently “went around” the state legislature when they “approved” the location of cables for a major wind farm development despite the objections from staff. As reported in the Boston Globe, Topher Hamblett of Save The Bay, stated that “We believe that this is another in a long series of problematic council actions — including the — that is a reminder of the immediate need for CRMC reform.” The CGSP agrees with Save The Bay and is proud to be working closely with them to support our coastal resources.

Please know that we are doing everything in our power to support our coastal resources. In addition, we should all be proud that the years of fighting against the Champlin’s marina expansion has taken on a new life at the RI state legislature. Please write your RI state legislatures to support these important bills.

### **Proposed Legislation**

- HB 5779, introduced by Representative Jason Knight, ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION – COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (Requires the executive director of the coastal resources management council to hire a hearing officer if the position is vacant for more than sixty (60) days after the effective date of this act.)
- HB 5966, introduced by Representative Arthur Handy, ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION – COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (Creates the position of a full-time staff attorney for the CRMC.)
- HB 6034, introduced by Representative Teresa Tanzi, ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION – COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (Replaces the coastal resources management council with a state department of coastal resources and transfers all of the powers and duties between the two (2) authorities.)

### **Published Newspaper Articles**

- *A new proposal would replace R.I.’s controversial coastal regulator.* By Globe Staff, Updated March 20, 2023
- *Trio of Bills Would Restructure CRMC, Empower Its Director.* By Rob Smith, ecoRI News staff, March 20, 2023
- *‘It’s a relic’: How a slate of new laws would overhaul the controversial CRMC.* The Providence Journal, March 22, 2023
- *R.I. legislative leaders say CRMC was wrong to bypass them on wind power cable approval.* By Globe Staff, Updated March 22, 2023

### **WATER TESTING**

2023 will be the 23rd consecutive year of our participation in URI’s Watershed Watch program, which likely makes our Great Salt Pond data the longest continuous-running database in URI’s inventory. Water quality in the main body of the GSP remains good, with water from the GSP’s tributaries showing variability during the summer months and after rain events. Closure of most of the GSP to shell-fishing in the summer months remains a highly effective way of mitigating the impacts of the summer stressors on water quality.

To learn more, go to Watershed Watch’s website: <https://uriwatershedwatch-uri.hub.arcgis.com>

### **SHELLFISH/AQUACULTURE**

In 2022 the Town sold roughly 2,500 shellfish licenses. Revenues from these sales help cover the cost of: 1) transplanting quahogs into the Pond, 2) initiatives to grow seed in the upweller and to plant seed on the flats, and 3) the shellfish wardens and maintenance of the warden skiff.

In 2023 the Harbors Department and the Shellfish Commission will continue their efforts to enhance the soft-shell clam population by establishing several plots with small clams covered by predator-deterrent netting. Due to their limited population it remains unlawful to harvest soft-shell clams in the Great Salt Pond.



## COMMUNICATION/PUBLICATIONS

There are several ways we keep in touch with our members and friends of the Great Salt Pond:

### CGSP Website

Visit our website for current news/events about the Great Salt Pond, and our initiatives. [cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org)

### CGSP Newsletter

The CGSP Newsletter comes out once a year, in the spring, and is a summary of our initiatives, developments along the Pond, and important current events.

### On the Pond

This is our monthly electronic publication in which we write about the Great Salt Pond: its history, the surrounding environment and community, events, and inhabitants of the Pond. We have been issuing this publication since August 2020.

Check out our new and continuing series about the history of the Great Salt Pond which started November 2022 and began with the formation of the Pond. We are fortunate to have Ben Hruska collaborating with us on our *History of the Great Salt Pond Series*, as he writes these very informative articles.

Dr. Benjamin Hruska is the Collections Administrator of the Block Island Historical Society. Before this he served as an AP history instructor for six years at Basis Charter Schools in Arizona and in Shenzhen, China. He completed his PhD in Public History at Arizona State University in 2012 where his dissertation focused on the actions of self-commemoration by U.S. Navy veterans in World War II. After earning his PhD he served as the court historian for the Department of Defense's U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces in Washington, D.C. His latest book, *Valor and Courage: The Story of the USS Block Island Escort Carriers in World War II*, was published in 2021 by the University of Alabama Press.



*Stone marker noting the site of a Manissean village over two thousand years ago.*



*Excavated settlement site.*

### Great Salt Pond Directory for Boaters

The purpose of the Directory is to create awareness among boaters that there is a lot to “see” and “do” around the Pond. Therefore, listings are restricted to organizations that are physically located “on” or are providing services “to” the Pond. There are over 45 listings including website addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and a brief description of what services they provide. This also includes “safety” and “emergency” numbers and includes a welcome from our Harbor Master Kate McConville. The Directory is free for listings. It is also free to all Boaters and is distributed by our CGSP Directors, the Harbormaster, and the Harbormaster’s staff at the Dinghy Dock, the Marinas, the Harbormaster’s Office, and when collecting Town Mooring fees from boaters. You can also access the Directory on our website: [cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org) under “publications”.

### Email

Via email we stay in touch with our members and keep them informed about important issues that need immediate attention. Questions can be sent to: [cgsp02807@gmail.com](mailto:cgsp02807@gmail.com)

## GREAT SALT POND CLEAN UP

Check our website under ‘Events’ for more information about the date and time for this year’s clean up.





## THE OVERLOOK PROPERTY

May 3, 2022

### Voters Approve Purchase of Overlook Property near Champlin's at the Financial Town Meeting

On May 3rd, the voters of Block Island approved the chance to preserve the last available commercial-zoned property on the Great Salt Pond, the Overlook Property. This would provide the Harbors Department with its own municipal boating facility. The purchase of this property forever protects it from the type of commercial overdevelopment that CGSP fought for decades against the Champlin's Marina expansion. This 4.5-acre grassy field off West Side Road, abuts Champlin's driveway to the NW and the Salt Pond Settlement and the Ball O'Brien Playground to the SE. This property was owned by Stephen Filippi of Ballard's, and was offered to the Town and participating conservation groups for \$10.5 million with \$6 million coming from the conservation groups and \$4.5 million coming from the Town. Speakers in favor of the acquisition spoke of protecting the property against overdevelopment and providing public access to the Pond with a boat ramp and a dinghy dock as well as a Town dock for the Harbormaster's boats and resident small craft, a welcome center with showers, offices, and some employee housing. The long-discussed Harbors Department facility could now become a reality.

### Block Island Maritime Welcome Center – A work in progress

The next step was to raise the money to design and build the facility with the associated Town dock and boat ramp. The Committee for the Great Salt Pond led the effort to assist the Town in applying for some of the millions of dollars available to RI municipalities for community benefit infrastructure projects.

In order to apply for available funds, it was necessary to determine the scope of the project (Phase 1), to determine how the site could be configured, and provide drawings (Phase 2) that could be submitted along with the request for funding. On October 17, 2022, CGSP signed a contract with Newport Collaborative Architects (NCA) of Newport, RI to do a feasibility study (Phase 1) to define the scope for a Maritime Welcome Center and determine the site configuration. The Town, CGSP, and NCA worked together to complete Phase 1, which included a written program describing the facility spaces with estimated square footage requirements, related priorities and needs, site considerations, and site constraints.

Since we would like to gain access to both state and federal funding for this project, it was decided that after the completion of Phase 1, NCA would contact the Mayforth Group – a government relations, advocacy, and strategic planning firm headquartered in Providence, RI that is currently working with the Town – to gain information about what would be required, from an architectural perspective. With this information, NCA was able to give CGSP a proposal for Phase 2, and a contract was signed between CGSP and NCA on January 10, 2023. The Town, CGSP, and NCA worked together to complete Phase 2, which included taking the information gathered in Phase 1, creating pre-schematic plans and elevations of the new Harbors Facility and associated site development, including docks, vehicular and pedestrian access. A pre-schematic cost estimate was developed using current construction pricing, for the building based on the agreed upon square footages from the Phase 1 Study. A presentation site plan and 3D renderings of the facility were also developed for the Mayforth Group's use in applying for state and federal funding.



The yellow box in the photo above indicates the proposed facility.







This project is a work in progress. Located in the watershed of The Great Salt Pond and with climate change and sea level rise upon us, we will be very diligent about making sure this project responds intelligently to the forecasts and risks that the past few decades have shown to be realistic for the entire watershed.

We now need your support. The application has been filed for funding and we are anxiously awaiting the results. If the Town does not receive funding this year, the application can be re-submitted next year. **Please write your Senators and Congressional delegates, asking them to support this very important project.**

The yellow box in the photo to the right indicates the proposed facility.



### CGSP KIOSKS

You will find news about what is happening on the Pond in addition to information about our initiatives in progress and a tide clock in each kiosk.

Our initiatives include:

- Our water testing program
- Shellfish and Aquaculture on the Pond
- The Great Salt Pond Swim
- CGSP Burgees
- *On the Pond* (our monthly, electronic publication)
- *CGSP Newsletter* (our yearly publication)
- The Great Salt Pond Photo Scavenger Hunt
- Great Salt Pond Directory for Boaters

We have three kiosks around the Pond located at:

- Mosquito Beach
- Coast Guard Beach
- Andy's Way







### GREAT SALT POND SWIM - 8

The 2023 Great Salt Pond Swim this year will take place on **Saturday July 29, 2023**. This is a (1) mile swim, starting at Andy’s Way, turning around near Beane Point and returning back to Andy’s Way. The registration fee is \$60, and will be limited to 150 swimmers. This swim is an annual fundraiser, serving to support our efforts to protect The Great Salt Pond, and provide funds for additional water testing in the recreational swim areas. Not able to make it to Block Island on July 29th – try our Virtual Swim listed on our website.

On-line registration opened **October 1, 2022 and will close on July 28, 2023, 2:00 p.m.** On-site registration will be available the morning of the swim, July 29th, until 10:15 am, if space is available. Please read over our swim packet for this swim which can be found on our website: [cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org). If you have any questions please send them to: [cgsp02807@gmail.com](mailto:cgsp02807@gmail.com)  
We look forward to a great, safe swim!



### CGSP BURGEES

For 17 years, CGSP Directors have been designing a special burgee each year that has the familiar “gold star” and “red stripe” Island design. The background of the burgee always changes but the Island logo remains the same. This logo was originally designed for a hat that became very popular. From there the Island logo became the centerpiece of the Island burgee.

This year, the Island’s historic Rebecca statue has been added from a photo by local artist Malcolm Greenaway. As a fundraiser for CGSP, you can get one of this year’s 300 burgees between June 29th and July 2nd at the marinas and the Dinghy Dock for a donation of \$20. The number of burgees is limited to 300, and we always run out before the anticipated end date, so get yours early!





## CGSP PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

**Contest Dates: July 15 – August 7, 2023**

What's FREE, FUN, EASY and had 62 WINNERS last summer? The Great Salt Pond Photo Scavenger Hunt. What did they win? The popular CGSP hat (*see photo to the right*). If you have a cell phone or digital camera you too can play in 2023 because the HUNT IS ON AGAIN. The oldest winner has been 72 and the youngest was 10.



### Instructions

- Take photos with your iPhone or digital camera of 9 objects whose first letter spells out the **phrase** that will be used this year. The **phrase** will be released on July 8th, one week prior to the start of the Scavenger Hunt, on posters in the CGSP kiosks, and at the Block Island Grocery, Washington Trust, marinas, the Chamber of Commerce and on [cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org) under Events. An article in the *Block Island Times* will also feature the Scavenger Hunt. Then prepare your email by attaching your 9 photos and include an explanation of how each photo represents each letter. Send your email to [cdm-architect-pc@verizon.net](mailto:cdm-architect-pc@verizon.net) where photos will be judged. If you have met all of the rules and qualifications you become a winner and will receive the popular CGSP HAT.

### Rules

- Photo must be taken 25 yards or less from the Great Salt Pond and must include the Pond. You may bring objects to the Pond.
- Photos of the same object may not be used to achieve letters by members of the same family.
- Send a Separate Photo for each letter; no duplicates.
- Color may not be used as the first word in an object. Example: Red Apple is still an Apple and thus the letter "R" is not acceptable. The "O" in Orange would be acceptable because an orange is an object.

Don't forget to include your name, address, phone number, plus your willingness to pick up your hat on the Island when we send you the directions. Any questions, email: [cdm-architect-pc@verizon.net](mailto:cdm-architect-pc@verizon.net)

CGSP hats may also be purchased separately for \$25.00

## WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT THE POND

Protecting the Great Salt Pond: Why does it matter? Why should we care? What, exactly, are we defending?

There is no place quite like the Great Salt Pond anywhere on the East coast. A land-locked harbor, open to the Block Island Sound by a channel less than 100 feet wide, and 12 miles off the coast of Rhode Island, the Pond makes up almost 10% of the total area of Block Island, 630 acres or approximately one square mile. When the watershed is added there are 2,120 acres or approximately 3.3 square miles, nearly one-third of the total area of Block Island.

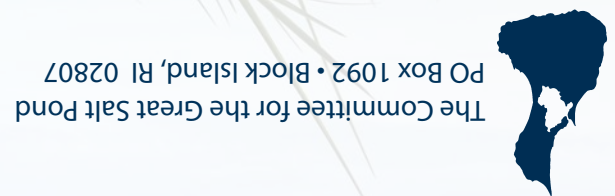
In addition to being a safe harbor and a haven for wildlife and recreational boating and swimming, the Pond provides a rich, diverse, but fragile ecosystem that could be destroyed by over-development. This ecosystem and its biodiversity are essential for human well-being. The Pond is a nursery and refuge habitat for fish and shellfish, providing food for sea birds, shore birds, and people. It aids in water filtration, and shoreline stabilization, not to mention its importance as Block Island's main industry, tourism, through its marinas, educational field trips, scenic vistas, water sports, walking and bird watching.

**The trick is to balance today's development needs with the desires of future generations.**

The activities of The Committee for the Great Salt Pond range from advocacy and legal defense to research and education. These activities cannot be done solely on a volunteer basis; they require money and your support. Our greatest strength is our growing membership. Those who use and enjoy the Pond have in common a firm belief that it is worth fighting for the preservation of The Great Salt Pond and its surrounding shorelines. Ours is an ongoing campaign to protect our shorelines, beaches, water quality, wetlands, marine habitats, and scenic vistas which are all in jeopardy.

As we determine the future of The Great Salt Pond, please join us by becoming a partner in preserving one of New England's most special places. We ask for your help by becoming a member and even considering an extra gift. We appreciate whatever you can do to aid in protecting this most priceless resource. **It's now up to you!**





## OUR MISSION

To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Great Salt Pond, including its shorelines and wetlands, and to promote appropriate and productive uses of the Pond's resources by residents, visitors and local businesses.

## OUR WEBSITE

[cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org)

Visit our website where you can catch up on activities for the coming season, pay your annual dues or make a donation. There is a page dedicated to the 8th Swim the Pond event on July 29, 2023. You will be able to read all the details about the event, including registration for the swim.

## FUNDING

Individual contributions, membership dues, special events, program grants. IRS 501(c)3 non-profit.

Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you for your support of the Committee for the Great Salt Pond. We are happy to report that the pond remains healthy, our water quality-monitoring program is active and our annual Swim the Pond continues to grow as a demonstration of how great the pond truly is.

## ABOUT US

### Directors

Cheryl Moore, President  
Cindy Pappas, Vice President  
Ed Hayde, Treasurer  
Trudy O'Toole, Secretary  
George Davis  
Henry duPont  
Bob Greenlee  
Bruce Johnson  
Andy Korfin  
Eric Reimer  
Sven Risom  
Mitchel Silberbush  
Lara Andrea Taber

### Members

Approximately 450

### Governance

Up to 16 Directors

### Committee for the Great Salt Pond

PO Box 1092, Block Island, RI 02807  
[cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org)