

# Kayak trail launched here

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By Jill Rodrigues/East Bay RI

PORTSMOUTH- Experienced kayakers have already tested out the waters on the new blue trail on Narragansett Bay.

Aquidneck Island Planning Commission Executive Director Tina Dolen, her former assistant Teresa Crean and Frank Matta of the Rhode Island Kayak/Canoe Association put in their kayaks last year from the Weaver's Cove public boat launch. They paddled south to Greene Lane in Middletown, turned to travel around the uninhabited Dyer Island off Portsmouth's coast, kept north until they reached the shore at Cory's Lane, and then headed back to Weaver's Cove. The trip took them about two hours.

"We explored the area and found it was great for kayaking," Ms. Dolen said.

With that trip, the AIPC had identified locations for its Narragansett Bay Blue Trail. The first two kayak put-ins, provided by the town of Portsmouth, will be dedicated on Monday, July 28 at 10 a. m. at the Weaver's Cove public boat ramp on Burma Road.

For the first phase of the blue trail, the AIPC planned and mapped out the route along Narragansett Bay. The AIPC received a \$15,000 grant from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation and part of a larger grant from the Prince Charitable Trust funded work on the blue trail and signs for each launch site that explains the trail and historical significance of the sites.

This is the first project implemented from the AIPC's West Side Master Plan, a vision document for developmental and recreational planning along the west side of Aquidneck Island.

"It really has been a grass-roots public input project and this is an exciting first step," said Dr. Robert Quigley, vice-chairman of the AIPC and an adviser to the blue trail project. He said that almost 1,000 people were involved in the formation of the West Side Master Plan where a main issue expressed was the desire for more public access to the shore.

Launching in

The put-in sites in Portsmouth were chosen as the central point for the blue trail. One location is at the end of Cory's Lane, past the railroad tracks, and down by the water. And the main launching point is at the Weaver's Cove public boating area, where there is ample parking. The Portsmouth Department of Public Works has cleared up brush and debris in Weaver's Cove.

"Weaver's Cove is really the hub. From there you can reach Greene Lane and go north to Cory's Lane," Ms. Dolen said.

From the bay, there are views of the Melville boat basin, the Portsmouth Abbey School and its wind turbine, luxury residences and golf course at Carnegie Abbey, or pull up on shore at Prudence Island or on Dyer Island where there are a variety of shorebirds (but don't disturb them during nesting season).

The AIPC will add six more launching spots to the blue trail. Proposed sites are on Dyer Island, at

the end of Willow Lane, in Portsmouth; on Rose Island, at the former Navy hospital site across from the marina, on Long Wharf at Perrotti Park, and at the Elm Street pier and boat ramp in Newport; as well as in Middletown, where Aquidneck Island officials and the state are looking into building a fishing pier and waterside park on Burma Road across from Greene Lane in Middletown.

In the next phase of the blue trail, the AIPC plans to construct a pedestrian and bike path, following the railroad tracks. Ms. Dolen said a feasibility study has been completed and the AIPC is waiting for funding from the state to start the project. It would also require the state take ownership of Burma Road, which the Navy is turning over from a federal designation.