It’s Friday. Six at night. You have just wrapped up dinner with the family, and the kids are getting into their bedtime routine. You have waited two weeks (due to family responsibilities) to fish. As the house settles, you load up the car knowing that you will be tip-toeing out of the house at 4 am.

As you fall asleep, you map out your morning. You will park in that spot that no one knows about, launch down that path that is overgrown and forgotten.

Parking has always been an issue in Rhode Island, but - hey, you have a few parking spots up your sleeve.

The paddle out is uneventful. A serenity hits as the pre-dawn light breaks. It’s only with the first cast that you realize that you have snagged onto something. As you paddle over you see that you are in an oyster farm. Popped up unbeknownst to you. Your spot is now cultivating a growing system to aid scallops and two other shellfish. The scallops need a lot of space. Their own space, away from other scallops, for they don’t seem to get along with others.

Don’t recreational users of our salt ponds need space too? There are 72 aquaculture farms in RI. 200 employees. How many recreational users of our salt ponds exist?

Don’t we have “riparian” rights, not to mention out of state users who come to RI to fish and recreationally shellfish and spend their money all along the journey.

It’s time to let your voice be heard. Don’t think larger groups will assist you to elevate your voice. Many organizations have been beaten down with the, “Hey, it’s RI - what do you expect?” Let your state representative and state senator know that recreational use of the salt ponds matter. You might even say, “Hey it’s in the Coastal Resources Management Red Book as important too - help me advocate for this at the legislative level.”

Act as if no one else will.

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Phil Capaldi has been recreationally fishing and shellfishing since 1978. He is advocating for proper management and balance in our salt ponds - knowing that with a 15 year lease these locations will be gone for generations. He is currently concerned about Quonochontaug Pond. 20 percent of Quonnie Pond is suitable for recreational shellfishing, and currently over 95 percent of the aquaculture leases are within this 20 percent. He is hoping for better management from CRMC.