



LOCAL

Everything you need to know about Governor's Bay Day

Patrick Anderson
The Providence Journal

Published 5:03 a.m. ET July 28, 2022 | Updated 11:17 a.m. ET July 28, 2022

[View Comments](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [r](#)



Photos: Weather puts a damper on Governor's Bay Day
7.25.2021: Sunday's weather kept beaches clear and puts a damper on Governor's Bay Day activities. [The Providence Journal / Kelsy Craig]

It's not an official holiday, but Governor's Bay Day has become a [Rhode Island beach-season](#) tradition and it is coming up again this Sunday.

On Bay Day, parking in the lots at eight [Rhode Island state beaches](#) is free, as areRIPTA bus rides to Narragansett. And for one day you can fish in saltwater without a license.

"Governor's Bay Day is one of the summer's best traditions and a chance for Rhode Islanders to get out and enjoy our beautiful state surf beaches at no cost," Gov. Dan McKee said in a news release. "We're also lucky to live in a place with some of the best fishing anywhere. I invite experienced anglers to consider taking a beginner out and helping them cast their first line in Narragansett Bay this weekend."

RI Best: [22 can't miss food and drink adventures for summer 2022](#)



During the 2016 Governor's Bay Day at Roger Wheeler State Beach in Narragansett, Gov. Gina Raimondo looks over a sandcastle on the beach. Glenn Dumont/Providence Journal, File

What is Bay Day?

Governor's Bay Day is intended to draw attention to the importance of Rhode Island's ocean environment and to encourage people to go to the beach or a shoreline park to have fun.

It is almost always the last Sunday in July.

Be cool: [5 acts not to miss at the 2022 Newport Jazz Festival](#)

Who held the first Bay Day and why?

The first governor to hold a Bay Day was Republican Ed DiPrete in the summer of 1989, shortly after the Greek oil tanker World Prodigy ran aground on Brenton Reef off Newport.

The tanker spilled 300,000 gallons of home heating oil into the water, some of which drifted on an east wind into the mouth of Narragansett Bay.

The World Prodigy spill happened just a few months after the much larger Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska triggered weeks of horrific scenes of marine wildlife covered in black ooze.

The Rhode Island tourism industry and elected officials worried the spill would frighten visitors away, and they dreamed up Governor's Bay Day as a kind of beach carnival to convince people it was safe to go back in the water.

Blueberry bliss: [Where to pick your own in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts](#)

Four new restaurants [make Jamestown a dining destination you have to check out this summer](#)

In addition to free parking, the early Bay Days featured concerts at state parks and a sand sculpture contest.

The first winner of the sand sculpture contest was a Cranston man who, according to Journal archives, "created a dinosaur devouring five nude maidens."

The headline act at the 1990 Bay Day at Scarborough State Beach was [The Buckingham](#).

Where can I park?

You might have to get there early to get a spot, but parking on Sunday will be free at:

- Charlestown Breachway in Charlestown
- East Beach in Charlestown
- East Matunuck State Beach in South Kingstown
- Misquamicut State Beach in Westerly
- Roger W. Wheeler State Beach in Narragansett
- Salty Brine State Beach in Narragansett
- Scarborough North State Beach in Narragansett
- Scarborough South State Beach in Narragansett

Where do I catch the bus?

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority [Route 66 \(URI/Galilee\) Express Beach Bus](#) will go fare-free on Sunday for trips to and from South County beaches.

Three buses make the trip from the northern part of the state to Scarborough, Salty Brine and Roger Wheeler on summer Sundays around 9 a.m. One starts from Central Falls, another from Woonsocket (stopping at Exchange Terrace in Providence) and a third from North Providence stopping at Cranston City Hall and Exchange Terrace in Providence.

The R-Line: [RI's most popular bus route will be free starting in September. Here's why.](#)

McKee and Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos will be getting on one of the buses in Providence and taking it down to Roger Wheeler Sunday.

Is the permit-free fishing new?

Yes. McKee, for the first time last year, made Bay Day a one-day window where you can fish without a saltwater permit.

Since the \$7 permits are good for a whole year, the upshot of this is mostly to draw attention to the fact you do need a permit every other day.

What does Bay Day cost?

It depends on the weather — last year's Bay Day was gloomy — but the Department of Environmental Management estimates on a sunny day like Sunday it will lose \$897,800 in beach parking fees that would be collected on a normal Sunday, according to agency spokesman Michael Healey.RIPTA anticipates forgoing \$216 in bus fares to provide free beach service on Bay Day.

Political Scene: [Here's where you can find state lawmakers at the beach this summer](#)

Were there any years with no Bay Day?

Like almost everything else, Bay Day was canceled in 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID.

Is there a hashtag?

Yes. It's #GovBayDay

— pdanderson@providencejournal.com
(401) 277-7384

On Twitter: [@PatrickAnderson](#)

[View Comments](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [r](#)

Taboola Food

More Local Stories



Gov. Dan McKee pauses plan to replace RI's ailing child advocate
NEWS

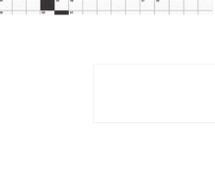


RI Governor Dan McKee's favorability declines again in new poll
NEWS



A college freshman for governor? See who made and missed the RI ballot
NEWS

Recommended For You



Play USA TODAY's daily crossword puzzle
CROSSWORDS

