

RI Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team

Meeting – January 19, 2005, 10:00 AM – Noon

Narragansett Bay Commission, Conference Room, One Service Road, Providence

Meeting Summary

1. Greeting – Peter August representing J. Joseph Garrahy, *Interim* Chair
 - The RI Rivers Council recently filed their January 2005 Riparian and Shoreline Buffer report to the Governor and General Assembly. The work contained in this report will be helpful to the Coordination Team in addressing buffer issues. It has been posted on the Coordination Team website at: <http://www.ci.uri.edu/RIBayTeam/Resources.htm>
 - After receiving a few brief reports this morning, the Coordination Team will review the draft scope of work and make recommendations on any changes so that it can be finalized, adopted by the Coordination team, and sent to the Governor and General Assembly.

2. Update on Economic Monitoring Collaborative strategy and activities – Kip Bergstrom
 - There are two groups named in statute that are part of the Economic Monitoring Collaborative; RI Economic Policy Office, represented by me; and URI Environmental and Natural Resource Economic, represented by Tim Tyrrell. We are awaiting other appointments from the Governor's office. In the interim we have been operating as an ad work group to get tasks completed.
 - To date we have reviewed the work done by Charles Colgan for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on coastal and ocean cluster networks, and the 2002 RI Senate Policy office marine cluster report in an effort to build on existing efforts. We have also assembled an annotated bibliography of economic studies and related publications on Narragansett Bay and RI marine-related industries. It has been posted at: <http://www.ci.uri.edu/RIBayTeam/Resources.htm>
 - The one element missing from all of the data we have reviewed from these sources is statistics on fishing effort and value to the region. We have contacted some folks in the RI fishing industry, both from the harvesting and processing sectors, to help us in that area.
 - The collaborative has engaged Larry Quick for a number of half-day sessions to help us analyze the interrelationships and capabilities of water-related industries. The outcome would be a process for developing competitive advantages for these industries.
 - We could also engage folks at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to provide a systems dynamics work session to help the Coordination Team better understand systems-level planning.

3. Governor's Office update – Mark Adelman
 - The Governor in his State of the State last evening announced \$1 million in his budget to DEM and Department of Health for monitoring efforts as a result of recommendations from the Governor's Narragansett Bay and Watershed Planning Commission.
 - Approximately \$300,000 has been budgeted for the remaining of the '05 and the '06 fiscal years for the Coordination Team chair position and an assistant.
 - The Governor is presently interviewing candidates for the chair position. The selected individual will need confirmation by the Senate.
 - Appointments for committees are moving forward with an emphasis on first selecting previous Governor's commission members.

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Question: Will the proposed monies make it possible for a Chair to be hired immediately if the Governor makes a selection and the Senate approves?

Response: Yes, money will be available for the remainder of the '05 budget (until June 30, 2005).

Question: If the Coordination Team has recommendations for the Chair position, whom should they be sent to?

Response: They can be sent directly to me in the Governor's office.

4. Update on Environmental Monitoring Collaborative strategy and activities – Peter August

- The Environmental Monitoring Collaborative report will be completed by the end of the month to be reviewed by the Coordination Team. A draft is presently being reviewed by the collaborative members and will be forwarded to the Coordination Team upon completion.
- The collaborative established some important core principles – the framework and context in which our monitoring programs will occur. All, data, tasks, work products have been posted on the collaborative web site: <http://www.ci.uri.edu/Projects/RI-monitoring/OnlineResources.html>
- A big portion of the proposed monitoring strategy is based on the DEM draft water monitoring strategy for the state. The collaborative has reviewed the report and made recommendations to fill in some gaps to cover other needed areas, especially those explicitly identified in the legislation. These supplemental monitoring plans (e.g., submerged aquatic habitat, benthic conditions, coastal buffer assessment, etc.) will be provided in the collaborative report.
- The report will also include some recommendations for institutionalizing the monitoring collaborative (i.e., roles and responsibilities and how it interacts with the Coordination Team). It will be up to the Coordination Team to review and forward the report to the Governor and General Assembly.
- The work of the monitoring collaborative will continue by working with DEM and supplemental monitoring teams to refine and revise the proposed monitoring efforts. We'll work to ensure rapid assessment of data and effective communication of the results to a wide variety of people.

Comment: The Coordination Team needs a clear plan for the expenditure of the \$1 million proposed in the Governor's budget for monitoring.

Response: Agreed. The DEM monitoring plan report contains a \$1.7 million budget request for all of the DEM monitoring needs. But, I'm confident that there will be lots of review and discussion on budget numbers before Finance Committee meetings.

Comment: I want to be able to represent to the Finance Committee that the Coordination Team supports the DEM proposed monitoring budget.

Comment: This is a perfect segue to discuss how this Coordination Team is going to reviewing, commenting, and endorsing any proposals that comes before it. We need to have a procedure in place so that the Team gets materials in a timely manner for review and comment.

No questions from the audience. Next agenda item.

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5. Discussion and finalization of the draft systems-level plan outline and the scope of work
- The Ad hoc work group assembled the elements of the scope of work as requested by the Coordination Team.
 - The document is in three parts. The first section outlines what a systems-level plan could look like. The second part is an outline of the scope of work that details the organization and structure of the Coordination Team, and the necessary steps to develop a systems-level plan. The last page is a timeline chart for the proposed work in 2005.
 - The document can be revised immediately with any changes the Coordination Team deems necessary. It will then be forwarded to Chair Garrahy for his signature and conveyance to the Governor and General Assembly by the end of the month.

Comment: Request that we define the Narragansett Bay watershed to include the rivers that may not be within the watershed. Also, would like to see the scope of work include a meeting schedule of the Coordination Team for 2005 on a monthly basis.

Response: Third Wednesday of every month for the next 12 months.

Comment: Any reason why aquatic nuisance species issue is only addressed under fish and wildlife habitat? Most restoration efforts for the most part are to address nuisance species. Also, there may be elements of the forthcoming Marine Development Plan that may be applicable to each one of these elements

Response: Yes, there are habitat and fish and wildlife issues that cross over. We can note aquatic nuisance species under restoration efforts.

Question: Why are the operation elements being addressed in the scope of work?

Response: The operational issues need to be addressed immediately and it was felt that they should be incorporated into the scope of work.

Question: What recommendation for incorporating this systems-level plan as a state guide plan element?

Response: There needs to be discussion with the Coordination Team as the plan progresses to see what elements may be adopted as state guide plan.

Comment: Recommended language should specify that the Coordination Team will evaluate the systems-level plan with the State Guide Plan.

Comment: Local watershed plans are broader than land conservation and development issues.

Response: The intent was to show that these watershed plans need to be integrated and coordinated with the systems-level plan.

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Comment: Not clear on the level of effort necessary to develop goals and objectives. Assume that we're not going to recreate goals, but rather will build upon the previous work of the Governor's Commission for example.

Response: Yes, we will build upon previous work and segregate out objectives from goals. We plan to consolidate the existing goals for discussion purposes, then refine and prioritize goals.

Comment: I would hope that under element #6 there would a broader discussion of public access than just the transportation and access issues noted.

Response: We only included the specific issues listed in the legislation, but certainly intend that there will be many other issues include within the systems-level plan document.

Comment: Under the operational element of the scope of work I would recommend that the Coordination Team review the Environmental Protection Agency assessment to ensure consistency with other state environmental infrastructure financing. We need to be clear on a process that prioritizes spending needs.

Response: We only included the specific issues listed in the legislation, but certainly intend that there will be many other issues include within the systems-level plan document.

6. Discussion and agreement on the next steps for the Coordination Team

- Proposal to submit any changes to Jim within the next 2 days, so that a final version can be circulated to the Coordination Team by the end of the week. By the close of business next Wednesday (January 26th) we'll consider the document final, assuming there are no further proposed changes. Then we'll forward to Chair Garrahy for signature and conveyance to the Governor and General Assembly.
- Need to determine a process for the Coordination Team to review and approve the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative report.

Comment: It is important for the Coordination Team to carefully review and consider the annual report.

Response: There is some confusion because of the timing of the legislation that created the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative and the legislation creating the Coordination Team. The collaborative is required to submit a proposed environmental monitoring strategy to the Coordination Team for adoption. The collaborative also needs to prepare an annual report on activities of the preceding year and forward it to the Governor and General Assembly. However, the collaborative will forward the annual report and defer to the Coordination Team when and in what form to transfer the report to the Governor and General Assembly. It is clear that the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative reports directly to the Coordination Team.

The Coordination Team agrees that the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative shall forward the annual report and proposed monitoring strategy framework to the Coordination Team for review and comment. The Coordination Team will then forward the annual report to the Governor and General Assembly.

Question: Will the Coordination Team weigh in on the Environmental Monitoring Collaborative budget requests, or will they rely upon review and approval by the General Assembly?

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Response: The Coordination Team should decide whether the proposed environmental monitoring budget is reasonable.

Comment: The Narragansett Bay Commission monitoring report may be a model for assessing previous monitoring efforts.

Comment: The sponsors of the bay legislation and the House and Senate Finance Committees will be reviewing the work products of the Coordination Team and its committees as part of exercising their oversight responsibilities in this separation of powers era.

Comment: It will be important to establish a hierarchical structure of monitoring needs and articulate those needs to the General Assembly.

Comment: The scope of work details what needs to be done to develop the systems-level plan. Very soon we'll need to determine who is going to be working on the issues, preferably immediately following the submittal of the scope of work.

Comment: Suggest that the Coordination Team do the following:

1. Engage in a systems dynamics exercise with the Hines – MIT group
2. Establish a goals setting process with upfront document development
3. Immediately develop draft “rules of business”

The Coordination Team requested the Ad hoc work group to begin work immediately on synthesizing existing goals and objectives, and to develop draft “rules of business” for review by the Coordination Team at its next meetings

The Coordination Team set two meeting dates and agendas as follows:

February 9th

1. Review Environmental Monitoring collaborative report
2. Review Economic Monitoring Collaborative report

February 16th

1. Review draft “rules of business” for the Coordination Team
2. Review draft goals and objectives document

Comment: Now that the Coordination Team officially oversees the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, we should consider a meeting in March or April to discuss the oversight role.

The meeting was adjourned at Noon.

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Please visit the Collaborative website at: www.ci.uri.edu/ribayteam/ for additional information.

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January 19, 2005 Meeting Attendees

Coordination Team

Grover Fugate	RICRMC
Fred Vincent	RIDEM
Mike Walker	Economic Development Corporation
Dan Varin	Water Resources Board
John O'Brien	RI Dept. of Administration
Meg Kerr	RI Rivers Council
Paul Pinault	Narragansett Bay Commission

Other Attendees

Mark Adelman	Governor's Office
Peter August	URI Coastal Institute
Bob Ballou	RIDEM
Kip Bergstrom	RIEPC
James Boyd	URI Coastal Institute
Kathleen Crawley	Water Resources Board
Ariana Johnson	RIEPC
Janet Keller	RIDEM
Sue Kiernan	RIDEM
Don Pryor	Brown University
Richard Ribb	NBEP
Thomas Uva	NBC
Sandra Whitehouse	RI House Policy
Chip Young	Coastal Resources Center