



RHODE ISLAND BAYS, RIVERS, & WATERSHEDS COORDINATION TEAM

**RI Department of Administration
Powers Building
Conference Room B
April 29, 2009, 2-4 pm**

Approved Meeting Minutes

Coordination Team Members in Attendance: Michael Sullivan, Jane Sherman, Tom Uva (for Ray Marshall), Mike Walker (for Mike Saul), Jeff Willis (for Mike Tikoian) Jared Rhodes (for Kevin Flynn)

Other Meeting Participants: Richard Ribb, Teresa Crean, Peter August, Sue Kiernan, Jane Austin

Coordination Team Staff: Ames Colt, Melissa Stanziale

CT Administration:

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously to approve the 2/25/09 meeting minutes.

Chair Report:

Colt distributed a handout summarizing uniform septage fee revenues reported as of March 31, 2009 (appended to these meeting minutes). Overall, uniform septage fee revenues are meeting projections for FY09 and should produce a balance of about \$200,000 at the beginning of FY 2010 with all FY 2008 and FY 2009 personnel costs covered. This will put the BRWCT in a position to provide modest project funding in FY 2010.

August inquired about the status of the trans-Atlantic submarine cable fee. Colt replied that it was still under consideration by CRMC and deferred the question to others willing to address it. Sullivan replied that it had come before the Council in July 2008, but that no action had been taken and it has not been placed on a CRMC meeting agenda since. Willis replied that due to questions raised by the AT&T legal counsel at a hearing on the fees, the CRMC had requested in writing guidance on implementing the fee from the General Assembly in July 2008 and had yet to receive it. No action would be taken by CRMC until guidance had been provided.

Colt reported that he met with Senator Sosnowski and Senate Policy Office staffperson Kelly Mahoney on April 28. Their basic points and queries were as follows:

- They were interested in how coordination of agency budgeting processes was proceeding under auspices of BRW SLP implementation.
- They were also interested in seeing development of performance measures for assessing BRW SLP implementation.
- Sen. Sosnowski was very interested in the proposed mission of the RI Stormwater Collaborative, especially in how it could support the stormwater management efforts of RI cities and towns. She strongly endorsed BRWCT pursuing the work of the Stormwater Collaborative.
- They cited what they saw as “tremendous progress” made to date by the BRWCT.
- Sen. Sosnowski will talk with other GA leaders about scheduling a committee hearing on the BRWCT to review progress to date and future challenges.

Stormwater Manual

Colt reported that OWR’s Alicia Good had stated to him this week that the stormwater manual public draft should be available to the public on-line by the end of this week. Kiernan stated the public Manual would be available by Monday May 4 and that a major public workshop would take place on June 4. Given these milestones, Colt proposed that the inaugural meeting of the RI Stormwater Collaborative be scheduled for early August.

A new regional LiDAR proposal:

Colt asked Dr. Peter August to provide a brief overview to the BRWCT on a regional LiDAR proposal under development for coastal New England. (LiDAR stands for “Light detection and ranging.” In this proposal, it refers to an airborne topographic survey technology that enables precise measurements of coastal topography to be taken efficiently over large geographic areas. Data processing requirements are significant in order to produce outputs of topographic data that can be integrated into existing GIS systems.

Based upon a 3 page summary he distributed (appended to these meeting minutes), August outlined the intent and value of the proposal. Additional information on existing LiDAR data for Rhode Island can be found at the following link

http://www.ci.uri.edu/Projects/RI-Monitoring/LiDAR_RI/default.htm

Austin asked if there are multiple planes equipped to conduct the survey work for the region given the proposed scope of coverage. August answered that the USGS will handle data collection. Uva asked if this information would be useful in the future to property insurance companies. August said he didn’t know, but would find out. Insurance companies value any information that improves their ability to predict property risks such as storm and flooding hazards.

Update on FY09 Environmental Monitoring Program (Kiernan):

Colt asked Kiernan to provide an update on the environmental monitoring work funded by BRWCT in FY09.

Upper Bay Fixed Site Network: Sue wrote a lengthy report as a history of network for people wondering where data came from. The buoys have been deployed this week and will continue into next week. They received federal bay window funding solidified with federal funding for next year.

Rotating river basin program: DEM OWR just finished the fifth rotation and is confident that there is adequate funding in place to conduct field work through 2009.

Work on USGS contracts to continue these programs for FY 2010 is currently underway in OWR.

Additional monitoring: Kiernan and Sullivan discussed an undertaking an initiative to collect more fisheries biological data in order to establish better relationships between minimum streamflows and their impacts upon fish and their habitats.

NBEP Collaboration with BRWCT

WMS distributed a memo he is drafting addressed to EPA Region I Acting Administrator Ira Leighton and others requesting that the BRWCT Chair be placed on the Policy Committee that is going to be established for the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, which would function as an oversight body for the NBEP in consultation with the NBEP Management Committee.

Walker asked if Ames would be at a disadvantage in terms of voting. WMS answered that they are only looking for four to five members comprised of RI, MA, and EPA Region I representatives.

Rhodes asked who would establish the Policy Committee. WMS answered that the EPA would be responsible for convening the Policy Committee.

Colt stated that additional work needed to be done by Rhode Island to clarify its goals for the NBEP as a federal-state partnership. Ribb suggested that they examine discussions from Region I. to provide a wider context for decision-making. Willis asked how many NEP's have interstate jurisdictions. Ribb answered that there are a number of them nationally, including NEP programs in New Hampshire and Maine (*New Hampshire Estuary Program. Also the Long Island Sound Program –A. Colt*).

Colt expressed concern that, while DEM has a major role in the NBEP given their shared water quality protection mandate, the Division of Planning and CRMC should be actively engaged as well in NBEP oversight and role definition as they were when the Narr. Bay Project was originally established in the late 1980's. He stated that he wanted to be sure that CRMC, if it so chose, be given the opportunity to participate in the Policy Committee. Relatedly, he would seek guidance from the BRWCT in the future regarding how he should represent it on the Policy Committee.

Ports and Harbors Inventory Project

Colt requested the BRWCT consider funding an additional work task under the ongoing Ports and Harbors Inventory. He stated that it would support the marine economic development and baseline monitoring mission of the BRWCT and that valuable data on the harbor and marine facilities in RI's Type III waters (waters zoned predominantly for recreational boating activities). Colt distributed a draft cooperative agreement (copy appended to these meeting minutes) between DEM (as administrator of the BRWCT restricted receipt account) and URI's Coastal Resources Center to provide \$12,000 (copy appended to these meeting minutes) to support an assessment of shoreline properties along selected Type III waters.

Colt asked Rhodes to summarize the Ports and Harbor inventory project for Type V and VI waters and its value for marine economic development. Rhodes stated that the project originated out of a need for better information on commercial and industrial zoned coastal parcels abutting Rhode Island Type V and VI waters. A robust database has been developed regarding these parcels. However only portions of Type III waters were captured and therefore a complete picture of commercial recreational boating assets still can not be presented.

Crean added that the Ports & Harbor Inventory will be used to establish a baseline understanding of economic activities along Newport's waterfront.

Walker asked if it took \$12,000 to have all type 3 water shorelines surveyed. Crean said yes. She reported that they have a graduate student named Angela Wilson, who is in the budget to continue with this project. Rhodes added that the cost is very low, but it's backed by an investment they have already made. Walker asked if it was 120 hours for two students. Crean answered that she believed it was two student positions. Walker expressed concern about the \$2,700 cost of the computer to be purchased. Rhodes said that GIS database would most likely overload a lower cost PC. Colt suggested that perhaps an agreement should be worked out with URI Coastal Resources Center to ensure that the workstation be made available for future agency-approved uses. Kiernan advised that there would be a standard clause in any agreement which specifies that the BRWCT will retain ownership of the computer.

Kiernan stated that DEM cannot contract directly with URI. August suggested that they use BART (Bay Assessment Response Team) agreement to facilitate the grant.

Colt asked for a motion to endorse the Cooperative Agreement in principle for funding from the remaining FY 09 BRWCT monitoring funds. Kiernan stated that there isn't enough time to spend the funds out of the FY09 OSPAR allocation. Colt acknowledged this and committed to working this out with DEM CFO Terry Maguire for payment out of the FY 2010 OSPAR allocation.

Kiernan moved to endorse the Cooperative Agreement and to request that the BRWCT Chair finalize unresolved details regarding funding and budgeting for executing the Cooperative Agreement, with input from DEM, CRC, and Planning. Motion was passed unanimously.

BRWCT Committee Update:

Colt stated that there is a need to re-engage the BRWCT committees, particularly in relation to SLP implementation.

Environmental Monitoring Committee: Colt reported that the leadership of the Env. MC (August, Uva, and Kiernan) had been deeply involved in producing NBEP's Status and Trends Report, that they had sponsored in March 2009 a LiDAR workshop for Rhode Island, and that in general it was continuing to fulfill its basic mandate.

Economic Monitoring Committee will re-convene under renewed leadership from the EDC with a focus first on application of the Ports and Harbor Inventory project to port and harbor development recommendations that build upon recommendations already contained in the BRW SLP.

Science Advisory Committee

Two projects proposed by the SAC had been discussed by the BRWCT last fall regarding the implementation of Ecosystem-Based Management principles to RI water resources management and future impacts of Climate Change on RI's waters and watersheds. Little action seems to have been taken subsequently by the SAC. Willis asked if the SAC will only undertake tasks that they are confident will be utilized by the BRWCT? Do they wish to guide the BRWCT agencies on what to do with relevant scientific findings? Colt said that they seek a greater sense of appreciation from the BRWCT for the utility of the hard work that they have proposed.

BRWCT agreed to request that the SAC work with the BRWCT Chair to organize a workshop between agency managers and scientists to address the full suite of environmental and socio-economic impacts generated by climate change that Rhode Island will have to address in the future.

Public Advisory Committee Colt reported concerns on the part of Chip Young regarding engagement on the part of PAC members with the BRWCT because of the lack of clear evidence that the BRWCT agencies are publicly committing to SLP implementation.

Austin commented that part of what the PAC is supposed to do is to evaluate the work of the BRWCT, but PAC members still don't understand fully their responsibilities. What work products should they be assessing? Are they to take a lead in BRWCT communications? It is also not clear what the PAC can do in relation to the other BRWCT committees.

Uva advised that the BRWCT needs to do a better job of communicating broadly its accomplishments with help from the PAC.

Walker reminded all that they should not forget some of the gaps the BRWCT has filled in monitoring, assessment, and planning. There are lots of things happening that don't

necessarily excite people, but they wouldn't be where they are today without the efforts of the BRWCT.

Meeting Adjourned at 4 pm. Next meeting scheduled for May 27, 2009.