



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Water Resources Board
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MEETING SUMMARY
Joint Meeting of the Legislative and Policy and Technical Committee
Wednesday, February 6, 2013
9:00 AM

RI Department of Administration
One Capital Hill, Providence RI
Conference Room A, 2nd Floor

Members Present

Pamela Marchand – Chair
Harold Ward - Chair
Kevin Flynn
Alicia Good
June Swallow
Henry Meyer

Members Absent

Ronnie Gibson
William Stamp, III
Thomas Boving
Michael DeFrancesco

Guests

Alisa Richardson, RIDEM
Eugenia Marks, Audubon
Nancy Hess, Statewide Planning
Jon Schock, South Kingstown Public Services
Peter Pallozzi, Providence Water

WRB Staff Present

Kenneth J. Burke, P.E., General Manager
Kathy Crawley, Staff Director
Romeo Mendes, Supervising Engineer

The meeting commenced at 9:05 with a summary of efforts to date related to the water availability estimates statewide and the subsequent detailed efforts for the Chipuxet. The more detailed work is consistent with the regional assessment from the WRB Strategic Plan and indicates deficiencies during the low flow months (July- September) when compared to the low flow resource protection goal. The group then discussed the list of possible management options that was distributed with the following work items resulting:

- Revise the list of management options to include
 - Rebate program for water efficient appliances
 - Public Education for summer water use (for example, at the tap in public places)
 - Pawcatuck model runs to assess potential withdrawal management options and benefits
 - Sewer/wastewater reuse opportunities
 - Stormwater management
 - Opportunities to move direct agricultural withdrawals to groundwater
 - Cisterns
- Revise the wording related to farm ponds and eliminate the word *emergency*.
- Prioritize options, provide more detail, develop costs and benefits, and potential funding sources.
 - The Factory Pond well appears to be a practical short term option that needs to be explored.
- Move forward with the Board effort to recognize areas that exceed/threaten to exceed safe yield of the source.

Highlights of the discussion follow:

- High efficiency appliances: One thought was that the high efficiency appliances would phase in over time as technology and subsequent code changes occur. Another suggestion was to establish a water efficiency rebate program similar to the National Grid program. This effort would require further exploration of funding sources.
- Implement a public relations campaign targeted in the summer to this area and the tourism industry similar to the WRB “Slow the Flow” campaign.
- Land use, septic systems (sizing and technology) and the need to recognize the relationships to water use and demand. Topics included larger lot zoning and evaluating the state’s policies for onsite and community septic systems.
- Comprehensive planning. How would board adopted policies serve as a filter for review of local community comprehensive plans and invoke action on the part of municipalities? The overall goal is to not exceed the safe yield of the resource.
- The need for a thoughtful, deliberative process led by WRB to engage suppliers, agencies, municipalities and the agricultural community that will identify actions that have the most impact and are feasible (time and money).
- Explore opportunities for wastewater reuse in the basin (URI in particular) and in Narragansett.
- The Pawcatuck model is a good resource for evaluating management scenarios in this area but requires expertise that the state does not currently have at the agency staff level.
- Coordinating the efforts of suppliers for demand and withdrawals
- Demand management as an incremental process that will continue to improve slowly over time as technology improves and codes change.
- Recognize that the problems occur over a small period of time
- New sources
 - Apply the Stream Depletion Methodology to the Beaver-Pasquisset to assess the potential amount of water that might be available.
 - KWD Well 4 is valuable because it is so close to existing infrastructure
 - Cisterns- support farm bill to exempt from sales tax
 - Explore storage possibilities
- Since 40% of the peak water demands support agriculture, the group discussed the need to reach out to the agricultural community, RIDEM/AG and NRCS to explore options for:
 - Farm ponds- where do they make sense?
 - Process to partner with NRCS and others. Explore possibilities for funding assistance
 - Engage the agricultural community
 - Prioritize-which ones would have the most benefit during times of low flow
 - Conservation plans
 - Consider options for assisting, funding the development of plans
- Engage United Water
- Explore opportunities to partner with URI for model projects and programs.