



## **RHODE ISLAND BAYS, RIVERS, & WATERSHEDS COORDINATION TEAM**

March 26, 2008

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Narragansett Bay Commission Boardroom  
Providence, Rhode Island

### **Meeting Minutes**

Coordination Team Members in Attendance: Guy Lefebvre, Ray Marshall, W. Michael Sullivan, Kevin Flynn, Jeff Willis (for Mike Tikoian), Kathy Crawley (for Juan Mariscal)

Other Meeting Participants: Jane Austin, Barry Costa-Pierce, Alan Desbonnet, Lynne Harris, Tim Hennessey, John Motta, Malia Schwartz, Richard Ribb, Curt Spalding, Tom Uva, Sandra Whitehouse

Coordination Team Staff: Ames Colt, Melissa Stanziale

#### **Pre-Meeting Presentation:**

Dr. Barry A. Costa-Pierce and Alan Desbonnet of Rhode Island Sea Grant made a 30 minute presentation on the newly published book entitled: “Science for Ecosystem-Based Management: Narragansett Bay in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (Springer-Verlag, 2007). The purpose and contents of the book is summarized as follows:

*Science for Ecosystem-Based Management: Narragansett Bay in the 21st Century addresses the broad problem of coastal nutrient pollution. In the United States, approximately two-thirds of the coastal rivers and bays are moderately to severely degraded from nutrient pollution. However, debates continue about how large a problem nutrient pollution is and what actions to take, and since effective management requires decisions at a local scale, an in-depth case study can provide valuable guidance.*

*Narragansett Bay is one of the best-studied estuaries in the world. Rhode Island has been developing regulatory and management actions to reduce nutrient inputs, particularly those of nitrogen, to the waters of Narragansett Bay. This book was developed in response to a symposium addressing this mandate with coastal/estuarine scientists and environmental management agency personnel. The contributors use long-term data sets to discuss the interactions among biological, ecological, chemical, and physical processes, and discuss what is known about nutrient inputs to the bay ecosystem, the impacts related to nutrient inputs, and how the ecosystem might respond to a sudden reduction in these inputs.*

**BRWCT Administration:**

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

Colt requested approval of draft minutes for February 20, 2008 meeting.

*Motion passed unanimously to approve the 2/20/08 meeting minutes.*

Colt reminded all that the BRWCT would not meet in April and that the next meeting was scheduled for May 28.

**BRWCT Budget Update:**

DEM Office of Water Resources has completed the rule promulgation to implement the septage disposal fee created by FY08's Budget Article 30. The fee will go into effect on April 1, 2008, and Municipal WWTF's will be invoiced for the first quarter (April, May, June).

The transatlantic submarine cable fee proposal submitted by Colt at the Feb 12, 2008 meeting of CRMC was approved by the Council. The Council requested that public notice of the \$38,000 annual fee be made and that final approval of the fee be made at a forthcoming Council meeting subsequent to the public notice period. Colt hopes that the fee schedule will be approved by the Council at the March 26 meeting, or in April at the latest and that invoicing of the fee could occur by May 1. Hence, Colt projected the following budget for the BRWCT restricted receipt account:

Cable Fee: By July 1, 2008: \$152,000 – 15,200\* = \$136,800

Septage Disposal

Fee: By Sept 1, 2008: \$125,000 – 12,500\* = \$112,500

TOTAL BY SEPT 1: **\$249,300**

\*10% of restricted receipts allocated to RI general revenues.

In addition, Colt anticipates that another \$250,000 will be available in FY 2009 from the OSPAR account to support BRWCT-endorsed monitoring programs. However, due to the uncertainties and challenges surrounding Rhode Island's FY 2009 budget, he recommends that the BRWCT refrain from establishing spending priorities for monitoring and SLP implementation until after July 1, 2008.

**Presentation by Colt on SLP Public Review Draft**

Colt reviewed the ongoing process of SLP development and the intent of the Public Review Draft, which was distributed to BRWCT members on Friday, March 21.

The BRWCT's ad hoc strategic planning work group, met 13 times since May 2007 to assemble the public review draft for the BRWCT's Systems-Level Plan. Responsibility for producing individual sections was assigned to individual ad hoc group members and Colt edited them into a single document. The ad hoc group members are as follows:

Sue Kiernan, Scott Millar, DEM OWR  
 Caitlin Chafee, Jeff Willis CRMC  
 Kevin Nelson, Jared Rhodes Statewide Planning  
 Mike Walker, EDC  
 Kathleen Crawley, WRB  
 Tom Uva, NBC  
 Guy Lefebvre, Rivers Council  
 Richard Ribb, NB Estuary Program  
 Kip Bergstrom, Ariana McBride, Economic Policy Council  
 Chip Young, Chair, BRWCT Public Advisory Committee  
 Don Pryor, Chair, BRWCT Science Advisory Committee  
 Walt Galloway, US Environmental Protection Agency

Other contributors included:

Jennifer West, NBNERR  
 DEM Div. of Marine Fisheries  
 David Depetrillo, Katherine Flynn, EDC  
 Chris Deacutis, NB Estuary Program  
 Don Robadue, URI Coastal Resources Center  
 Pete August, URI Coastal Institute  
 David Gregg, RI Natural History Survey  
 Tom Getz, DEM  
 Melissa Stanziale, DEM  
 Bob Ballou, DEM  
 Dave Alves, CRMC  
 Jane Austin, Save the Bay

The SLP Public Review Draft addresses statutory mandates for Systems-Level Planning Found in RIGL 46-31-5. It seeks to develop a platform and means for state agencies to present and communicate a concise statement of vision and strategy regarding the protection, management, and sustainable development of RI's water resources. Finally, it seeks to focus on issues of salience to Rhode Islanders. Ultimately, the strength and value of the plan is that it will be a distillation of separate planning efforts into an overview.

The SLP Public Review Draft is thus organized by issue or "issue domain" with each section sketching out the issues of concern and their key attributes. The goals, objectives, strategies, and actions have been distilled from previous consensus-building efforts and agency-based strategic planning. This draft is prescriptive, but only with regard to what has been collaboratively agreed to. Finally, the SLP Public Review Draft seeks to "capture, frame, and interpret" the policies and programs already developed to deal with important issues.

Review of the SLP Public Review Draft will take place from April to May with the comment deadline set for May 30, 2008. Colt will incorporate any immediate comments of CT and Ad Hoc group members into the March 21 version of the SLP Public Review Draft over the next 48 hours and post the amended draft on the BRWCT web site on

Friday March 28. Additionally, he will email a copy of the Draft directly to anyone who requests it.

With regard to what would be most helpful to comment upon Colt proposed the following:

- Help to refine Goals, objectives, and strategies for each issue domain
- Recommendations on a “top-ten actions list” that would be distributed to the General Assembly and the Rhode Island public.
- Recommendations on how to conduct the BRWCT annual work (implementation) planning process
- Recommendations on how BRWCT monitoring collaboratives, and PAC and SAC should function in relation to SLP
- Fleshing out linkages between issue domains

**Comments/Questions on the SLP Public Review Draft:**

- Are they seeking Actions or Outcomes in the top ten list? It is easier to for policy makers to focus on desired outcomes and whether or not they are being achieved. (Colt responded by saying that he meant actions in a broad sense. He is leaning toward “What should we be doing to reach the goals we have now?”)
- Time frame – how much time do we actually have to work on this document? Colt replied that the public review process and draft finalization will be completed by the end of June. The SLP Public Review Draft will be available widely by Friday March 28. If the SLP Public Review Draft is made available to the general public for comment, and then changes are made to the SLP Public Review Draft during the review period, there could be confusion about which version of the document should be reviewed.
- Kathy Crawley commented that the Water Supply Section of the SLP Public Review Draft is a “good start”, and requested that Water Resources Board staff meet with Colt to discuss further. WRB feels that drought should be included in the “Natural Hazards” section of the plan. (Colt concurred on both requests).
- Is Colt certain about the end of June as the deadline for finishing the BRWCT SLP? Could it possibly be ready earlier than that? It would be highly beneficial to have it put out there while the legislature is still in session. Colt replied that the SLP Public Review Draft is available now to the General Assembly and already contains many useful recommendations that the final version will contain. He felt that we should stick with the two-month public review process which is not long

enough as it is, and undertake final revisions in June in order to meet the deadline set in the Coordination Team statute.

- In reference to the recent Providence Journal story on the Providence Water Supply Board's consideration of selling the Scituate Reservoir, Lefebvre recommended that the BRWCT should pay special attention to resource economics and that the BRWCT SLP should address somewhere the issue of privatizing public infrastructure in order plug state and municipal budgets. It should not be an easy consensus to let the city of Providence undersell this resource (water).

*A motion was passed at 3:30 to adjourn.*