

Rhode Island Environmental Monitoring Collaborative

Meeting Minutes

17 May 2005

117 Coastal Institute in Kingston

Present: P. August, J. Stachelhaus, C. LaBash, J. Willis, J. Campbell, D. Gregg, L. Green, T. Uva, M. Larkin, D. Burnett, D. Pryor, N. Rubinstein, S. Kiernan

1) P. August provided updates on the following:

- ❖ The Coordination team's (CT) Science Advisory Committee (SAC) has made a preliminary review of the January Report ([copy on RIEMC web site](#)). A full review will be completed by 1 July.
- ❖ DEM has developed a wetland monitoring framework. A copy is on the [RIEMC web site](#). Send Deb Pelton comments
- ❖ Biodiversity Monitoring by TNC, RINHS, and DEM-SWG is gaining traction. The RIEMC agreed to invite The Nature Conservancy to join the collaborative and assist in developing a biodiversity monitoring plan.
- ❖ Macroalgae monitoring funds have been secured for the summer 2005
- ❖ Impervious surface mapping prototype project has been funded by a Bay Watershed Action Grant
- ❖ SAV mapping this summer will get underway this summer with support from a diversity of sponsors.

2) The monitoring recommendations in the [Kleinschmidt report](#) were reviewed and the following comments were noted.

Recommendations in Table 1a

Shoreline Buffers

- ❖ "Adequate" is hard to define, varies in urban and rural coastal settings
- ❖ CRMC is lead agency and considers this an important theme
- ❖ Very important to understand coastal habitats
- ❖ Is an existing gap in overall system of monitoring
- ❖ Needs better coordination

Impervious Surface

- ❖ Very important theme, well understood.
- ❖ Needed for water quality modeling
- ❖ Hard to measure because low impact development is putting in effective pervious surfaces and water conservation
- ❖ At local scale, impervious surface may not be the best thing to measure; direct water quality metrics might be more effective. We need to identify exact sources
- ❖ Has interesting value at broad scale and for regional planning applications. Locally, might not be important.
- ❖ Need statewide policy for developers in stormwater management issues.

Riparian Buffers

- ❖ Important at DEM and in the broader community (see Rivers Council Report)
- ❖ Interesting link to restoration
- ❖ Needs better coordination

Protected Undeveloped Land

- ❖ Has value to conservation community
- ❖ Can be a single measure of overall ecosystem health
- ❖ Important to know what kinds of habitats are included in portfolio of protected lands

Population Density

- ❖ Economic monitoring collaborative might want to work on this

Recommendations in Table 1b

Coastal Wetlands

- ❖ Need baseline data and know how we are fragmenting coastal wetlands
- ❖ DEM and CRMC are lead on this topic

Benthic Habitats

- ❖ Very important, especially as we reduce nutrients to Bay
- ❖ Encourage MapCoast Partnership to continue its work

Anadromous Fish Habitat

- ❖ DEM Fish and Wildlife are lead here
- ❖ Can be included in biological indicators

Freshwater Wetlands

- ❖ DEM is developing a wetland monitoring framework
- ❖ Must include wetland condition as well as extent
- ❖ Consider remapping FW wetlands statewide

Forested Lands

- ❖ DEM Forest division tracks many aspects of this
- ❖ Big issue for SWG, especially core habitat availability
- ❖ Data access from DEM Forest division might be improved

Recommendations in Table 1c

- ❖ A major gap is better meteorological info
- ❖ Sedimentation rates important. Need to know this for filling of dredged sites and natural capping of CAD cells
- ❖ Not sure what toxic concentration of suspended solids refers to
- ❖ Need better data on extent of shoreline hydrocarbons and metals for use in damage assessment
- ❖ Does water body meet standards for pollutants
- ❖ Need more temporal resolution on streamflow data
- ❖ Need total phosphorous (not phosphate) and all forms of N
- ❖ Groundwater flow (and quality) a big question. USGS doing a lot in South Shore

Recommendations in Table 1d

- ❖ Benthic indicators can be important indicators of ecosystem health
- ❖ Indicators in the list are extremely general
- ❖ DEM collecting good data for their management decisions
- ❖ SWG should be involved in bird/mammal monitoring

3) We will convene smaller subcommittees over the summer to discuss monitoring for (a) biodiversity/habitats and (b) land use.