

RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative  
Meeting Minutes

6 May 2010

Ocean Science and Exploration Center, Narragansett

Present: *M. Berman, M. Cole Ekberg, A. Colt, C. Deacutis, W. Galloway, L. Green, D. Gregg, Q Kellogg, J. Kelly, M. Kerr, S. Kiernan, J. King, C. LaBash, S. McCormick, C. Melrose, J. Motta, C. Oviatt, A. Parris, D. Pryor, M. Pryor, R. Ribb, E. Shumchenia, R. Stankelis, T. Uva*

Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM

1. Chuck LaBash gave an update on the status of the LiDAR project. Phase I (to acquire LiDAR for coastal areas) of the multi-phased project to develop region-wide high resolution topo data proposed by the consortium of Northeastern states has been awarded the full \$1.4 M from ARRA (Am. Recovery and Reinvestment Act). The purpose of the funding opportunity is to maximize the revision of existing national elevation and imagery databases while stimulating local economies through the creation and retention of jobs. These funds are to be coupled with \$1.3M in contributing funds from NGO, State, and Federal partners. LiDAR acquisition is expected to take place either late fall 2010 or spring 2011. Products are expected as early as summer 2011. Digital data products are expected to be available through RIGIS and USGS. J. King pointed out that we are lacking monitoring of SLR and coastal erosion, especially with the expected retirement of Dr. Boothroyd. LiDAR may be able to help us fill in some of the data gaps.
2. The legislation forming the BRWCT and the RIEMC were reviewed. Colt discussed funding sources (OSPAR allocation, possibly septic tank pump-out fees). Others suggested other potential funding strategies that have worked in other states, e.g., saltwater fishing licenses, marine gasoline fee. Colt asked that suggestions be sent to the BRW Coordination Team.
3. The 2010 RIEMC Report to the BRWCT was discussed. Kiernan noted that the tone of this year's report should reflect the negative change in monitoring support and activities. This report is currently one that describes the activities of the previous year, with respect to the identified monitoring priorities. There is a need for the State's monitoring strategy to be revisited, and this need should be added to the report. There was discussion about a change in the format of the report. It was agreed that a one page summary of each activity/monitoring need/data need (an example was distributed) is helpful, but that it is also useful to have the detailed information provided in the report's current format. It was suggested that funding sources should be identified and that the portion that is covered by the State should be made clear, perhaps using a pie chart. Funding sources that are "one time only" should also be identified because they represent a high risk for interruption to data collection. The legislature needs to see 1) a State monitoring strategy (i.e., looking forward); 2) annual report of monitoring activities and funding, both sources and needs (i.e., look back); and 3) appendices with supporting information. Stankelis suggested that a Monitoring Strategy Workgroup be formed, and this idea was supported by the group. This

workgroup would identify the critical needs, what is currently being done, and what needs to be done in the future. Included in this analysis would be statements for why a critical need has been identified (e.g., emergency response, protection of valuable resources, etc.). The Logic Model was suggested as one tool that could be used to help achieve these goals. The annual report to the BRWCT should be submitted every January, therefore it was proposed that we submit the 2010 report in its current format by the end of May, and immediately begin work on the 2011 report to be submitted January 2011. It was also requested that we establish regular meeting times. It was agreed the RIEMC would meet every May and November.

4. M. Kerr and Q Kellogg described Phase II of indicator development for the Narragansett Bay Region. They distributed a workplan and a list of organizations with whom they have visited to date, along with the indicators each had identified as most useful to their work. They asked the group to consider recommending the first three indicators to be developed through workshops. Kellogg agreed to send out an e-mail to members soliciting their opinions. Discussion followed regarding the value of “simple” metrics (e.g., dissolved oxygen) vs. more complex integrative indicators (e.g., fishery characterization).
5. Funding shortfalls with the loss of Bay Window and other sources was discussed. S. Kiernan circulated a table describing the implementation status of RIEMC Monitoring Priorities, along with the risk of funding disruption for FY2011. It was suggested that we should describe what won't be known as a result of disruption in those monitoring activities that have previously been identified as highest priority.
6. The RIEMC Online Resources is being migrated to the BRWCT's RIEMC website.
7. Meeting adjourned at 3 pm.