



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

## **Special Meeting of July 25, 2014**

Director's Office, Conference Room A  
RI Department of Environmental Management  
235 Promenade St.  
Providence, RI 02908

### **DRAFT Minutes**

**Coordination Team Members in Attendance:** Depart. Of Environmental Management: Sue Kiernan; Statewide Planning: Jared Rhodes; Coastal Resources Management Council: Jeff Willis; Commerce RI: Mike Walker; RI Water Resources Board: Kathy Crawley

**Coordination Team Members Absent:** RI Rivers Council, Narragansett Bay Commission

**BRWCT Staff:** Ames Colt, Melissa Deciantis

*Meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm.*

Colt reported that since he had not finished the draft BRWCT meeting minutes for June 11, 2014, they would defer review and approval of those minutes to the September quarterly meeting.

Colt distributed to the BRWCT copies of the final statement of FY 2014 BRWCT expenditures; and a draft FY 2015 BRWCT budget. He summarized briefly final project spending and revenues for FY 2014 and reviewed project budget projections for FY 2015.

Colt stated that the primary purpose of this special meeting of the BRWCT was to review and act upon the final proposal from DEM and WRB for the BRWCT to fund in a portion of the FY 2015 Joint Funding Agreement with the US Geological Survey, New England Office, for stream gages, large river monitoring, and groundwater monitoring in Rhode Island. (Final Proposal appended to these minutes.)

Kiernan summarized the proposal:

In FY 2013 and FY 2014, the USGS increased the percentage of monitoring program costs that Rhode Island is required to fund in the annual Joint Funding Agreements (JFA) for state water monitoring. USGS has provided RI with FY 2015 cost estimates which require a larger state contribution in order to sustain the current level of monitoring. USGS is offering a 30% federal/70% state match ratio, the same percentage of program costs that all other New England states pay. In addition, USGS increased total annual program costs because national USGS funds

for water monitoring have declined. Kiernan noted that in April 2014 Colt had requested that BRWCT funding for the FY 2015 FA be capped at about \$282,000.

Colt explained that he calculated this amount based upon revenue projections for FY 2015 and other BRWCT project funding commitments. He noted that all of BRWCT's OSPAR funds and about \$32,000 of BRWCT revenue funds would be allocated to the FY 2015 JFA, representing about 31% of BRWCT's FY 2015 Project Budget, the largest single project expenditure for FY 2015.

To reduce annual program costs, DEM, WRB, and USGS agreed to redesign the Ground Water Monitoring Network, which will now continuously monitor a smaller number of wells. No reductions will be made in the Stream Gage Network.

Monthly monitoring on the Pawcatuck River will be reduced from 12 to 9 months (eliminating 3 winter months). DEM's technical review indicated that this reduction in data collection would jeopardize management applications of the flow data. USGS continues to explore whether the USGS Connecticut Office and the Long Island Sound Program would provide additional support for Pawcatuck River monitoring.

The total cost to Rhode Island of the FY 2015 JFA is \$345,805. The WRB has \$55,000 in state general revenues in its original FY15 budget submittal to allocate to the FY 2015 JFA, bringing total funding needed from the BRWCT equaling \$282,475.

The fourth quarter of the agreement entered into with USGS by RIDEM for FY15 would be expected to be paid in FY 2016. As part of developing the JFA or JFAs, DEM and WRB will work out the allocation of funding between the agencies as deemed necessary.

Kiernan noted that Rhode Island may need to establish a work group to review where additional program cuts would have to be made if funding remains flat and USGS program costs increase.

Walker noted that in the future a BRWCT member agency director could request that BRWCT's funding for the USGS JFAs be capped at an even lower level.

Walker proposed a motion to fund the DEM/WRB proposal for a maximum of \$282,475 in BRWCT support for the FY 2015 USGS JFA. Rhodes seconded the motion.

Colt noted that there was a quorum established for the meeting and that successful approval of the motion only required a majority of voting members present and not abstaining.

There was no further discussion of the motion

*The motion passed with Commerce RI, CRMC, and Statewide Planning voting to approve, and with DEM and WRB abstaining.*

# Discretionary Project Funding Application Cover Sheet

I. Applicant Information		
Organization	RI Department of Environmental Management	Date 6/24/14
Street Address	235 Promenade Street	
City	Providence	State RI
ZIP	02908	
Phone	401-222-4700 ext. 7600	E-mail Address Sue.kiernan@dem.ri.gov
Project Lead Contact & Title	Susan Kiernan, Deputy Chief, RIDEM	
Project Start Date	July 1, 2014	Project End Date June 30, 2015
Project Title	Renewal of Joint Funding Agreement with United States Geological Survey (USGS) for operation of stream gages, groundwater observation wells and sampling of large rivers – FY15	
II. Project summary		
<p>Renewal of the joint funding agreements with USGS to maintain existing water related monitoring programs with modifications. The request of \$282,475 will allow continuation of monitoring at 21 stream gages, 9 observation wells and five large</p> <p>river water quality stations with a reduction in the scope of activities carried out in FY14. The proposal adds one station to those streamflow gages in the state agreement (the station referred to as the Pawcatuck River at Wood River.) The proposal</p> <p>shifts investment for groundwater monitoring from a larger set of monthly measurements to a smaller number of groundwater wells that will collect data on a continuous basis which provides more value to management decision-making.</p> <p>See further explanation attached.</p>		
III. RI Bays, Rivers & Watersheds Systems-Level Plan PRIORITIES to be ADDRESSED		
9.1.2 Develop accurate inundation models for Rhode Island coastal and riverine floodplains.		
10.1.3 Maintain the state’s streamflow gages network, ...		
13.4.4 Update the state strategy for nutrient control and management for RI coastal waters including Narragansett Bay, taking into consideration monitoring results and consideration of EBM.		
13.6 Identify and implement pollution abatement actions necessary to restore water quality in RI impaired waters		

<b>IV. Project Cost</b>	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	\$ 512,850
<b>BRWCT FUNDS REQUESTED</b>	Not to exceed \$282,475 ( Reduction of \$60,236 over FY14)

### **Renewal of Annual Agreement with USGS for Monitoring Programs - FY14**

Background: As the BRWCT is aware, both the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Water Resources Board (WRB) have for many years entered into joint funding agreements with the federal United States Geological Survey (USGS) to secure their services in carrying out monitoring programs via a streamflow gage network, groundwater well network and targeted sampling of RI's largest rivers. The important uses of the data generated from this work are documented in reports of the RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative.

Beginning in 2007, the RI Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) chose to support a portion of these programs (3 stream gages, 5 river monitoring stations) in response to recommendations from the RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative concerning critical monitoring program gaps. Support has been continued and expanded as state agency general revenue funds for related monitoring was reduced. In renewing the agreement for state FY14, the BRWCT authorized up to \$342,711 for a year of continued activity which covered 13 stream gages, 19 groundwater wells and water quality monitoring at 5 large river stations as well as \$19,361 shortfall needed to continue the WRB agreement with USGS. During FY14, DEM and WRB negotiated some savings by reducing the number of groundwater wells effective October 1, 2013 (DEM cut 8 of its 19 wells). Certain well continue to be monitored by DEM.

Projected Costs for FY15: USGS has provided RI with cost estimates which require a larger state contribution in order to sustain the current level of monitoring. . Limitations on available federal dollars for the water quality work are limiting the match in FY15 for this component of the program. With respect to its cooperative dollars, USGS is offering a 30% federal/70% state match ratio with a final year of continued phase-in for the WRB. In recognition of fiscal constraints, USGS, DEM and WRB has explored options for cost-savings that minimize the loss of value with respect to on-going data collection activities

To maintain the program the CT funded last year would exceed the funding tentatively budgeted for this activity which consists of \$250,000 from OSPAR and \$32,475 from the CT fee account for a target of \$282,475. DEM and WRB are therefore proposing a curtailed level of activity that consists of:

#### No reduction in the streamflow gage program

All active stream gages covered under the FY14 agreements with USGS were deemed to be important to a variety of important management activities. In addition, a critical gage at the Wood River Junction, that previously had been supported by USGS entirely, was added into the state agreement for a cost of \$300. USGS is providing the remainder of funding through its National Streamflow Information System (NSIP) which provides funds for gages of national interest. Incorporating the gage into the state agreement is intended to prevent disruption to operation such as occurred during federal sequestration.

#### Re-design of the Groundwater Network

A priority use of this data is drought management. For this purpose, groundwater elevation data collected on a continuous basis provided much greater value than single monthly measurements. DEM, WRB and USGS reviewed current network looking at a number of factors including data quality, location and aquifer setting, etc. The analysis indicated that data collection could be cut back in certain geographic areas without jeopardizing the ability of state managers to track groundwater elevations with respect to drought. USGS and state managers agree that a network of continuous measurement would provide greater value and devised a strategy that shifts the program to continuous data collection at fewer locations across the state. USGS has agreed to install equipment to make this transition at no charge. Working within available resources and in recognition of future rising costs, DEM and WRB are proposing that the network consist of nine groundwater wells. In the future, if additional funding allows, it would be appropriate to add coverage, most notably in the eastern part of the State. The USGS network operated in addition to DEM measurements made at 18 stations bi-weekly (wet season) or

monthly during the year for purposes pertaining to the design of on-site wastewater systems. WRB anticipates using data from the DEM network and from water supplier well data to supplement information during drought or emerging drought conditions.

Reduction of monthly monitoring at Pawcatuck River from 12 to 9 months (eliminate 3 winter months)

The technical review indicated that a reduction of data collection during three winter months would not jeopardize data needed by RI managers. DEM has higher interest in the remaining seasons (spring – fall). USGS is exploring possible collaboration with its Connecticut office which is involved with the Long Island Sound Study. The LIS program previously funded work at this location.

DEM & WRB Costs for Stream (SW), Groundwater (GW) and Water Quality Monitoring Program For the Period July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

USGS projections for FY15 for the state joint funding agreements are reflected in the table below. The combined costs (DEM, WRB and USGS) represent the total annual cost of the overall monitoring program. The total cost to the state is \$345,805. The WRB has \$55,000 in state general revenues in its original FY15 budget submittal to allocate to this work which brings the total needed from the BRWCT to \$282,475.

Total Costs for Stream (SW), Groundwater (GW) and Water Quality Monitoring Program For the Period July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

<b>Monitoring Activity</b>	<b>State Cost</b>	<b>USGS Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
Stream gages (21) (a)	\$201,500	\$117,100	\$318,600
Groundwater Wells (b)	\$ 25,515	\$10,935	\$36,450
Large River Monitoring	\$110,460	\$47,340	\$157,800
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$337,475</b>	<b>\$175,375</b>	<b>\$512,850</b>
WRB State Contribution	\$ 55,000		
<b>BRWCT Cost</b>	<b>\$282,475</b>		

(a) Includes \$31,000 in National Stream flow Information Program (NSIP) funding which largely covers the cost of two gages.

(b) Includes 9 continuous wells.

DEM and WRB are requesting that the BRWCT authorize funding of \$282,475 to renew the annual funding agreements with USGS with the contribution not to exceed a total of \$250,000 from OSPAR plus up to \$32,475 from fee account. As is practice, the fourth quarter of the agreement entered into with USGS by RIDEM for FY15 would be expected to be paid in state FY16. As part of developing the JFA or JFAs, DEM and WRB will work out the allocation of funding between the agencies as deemed necessary.

## BUDGET FORM: FY 2012-FY 2013

GRANT RECEPIENT: DEM			STATE FISCAL YEAR: FY 2014	
PROJECT LEAD: Sue Kiernan			DURATION (months) : 12	
<b>A. SALARIES AND WAGES:</b>	person-months		BRWCT Funds	Other Funds
	No. of People	Amount of Effort		
Sub Total:				
2. Other Personnel				
<b>Total Salaries and Wages:</b>				
<b>B. FRINGE BENEFITS:</b>				
<b>Total Personnel (A and B):</b>				
<b>C. PERMANENT EQUIPMENT</b>				
<b>D. EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT:</b>				
<b>F. PUBLICATION AND DOCUMENTATION COSTS:</b>				
<b>G. OTHER COSTS:</b>				
1. CONTRACTUAL –			\$282,475	
2. CONTRACTUAL – USGS				\$175,375
3. CONTRACTUAL – WRB general revenues				\$55,000
<b>Total Other Costs:</b>				
<b>TOTAL DIRECT COST (A through G):</b>				
<b>INDIRECT COST:</b>				
1.				
<b>TOTAL COSTS:</b>			<b>\$282,475</b>	<b>\$230,375</b>