

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
SUSTAINABLE WATERSHEDS OFFICE FY 2002-2003 Work Plan**

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FY2002-2003 WORK PLAN**

SUSTAINABLE WATERSHEDS OFFICE

I. Program Name and Description: The Sustainable Watersheds Office is a new office that coordinates DEM's involvement in the Rhode Island Watershed Approach. The goal of the watershed approach is to preserve, protect, and restore Rhode Island's environment through collaboration and consensus building. This is done by establishing broad-based partnerships, called watershed teams, to include all the key stakeholders within a watershed. The intent of the partnership is to bring additional resources, expertise, and different perspectives to the table to comprehensively identify, prioritize and solve complex environmental issues. We also coordinate what have traditionally been separate government programs in order to use existing resources more effectively.

The watershed approach is a top DEM priority and we have developed action plans for two watershed areas: Woonasquatucket and South County. In addition, two full-time watershed coordinators have been assigned to work with and assist watershed stakeholders to make sure that we efficiently respond to their needs and concerns. While most state watershed approaches limit their focus to water quality, the Sustainable Watershed Office effort is much broader and provides coordination and technical assistance to address the following issues:

- Planning for growth
- Creative land use techniques
- Alternative natural resource-based businesses
- Habitat restoration
- Open space preservation

II. Program Highlights: Highlights and initiatives implemented in this work plan include:

- Develop an Urban Environmental Design Manual.
- Complete Greenspace or Community Character Preservation Plans in the South County and Woonasquatucket watershed.
- Prepare a Conservation Development Guidance Manual for local officials and developers.
- Assist the Governor's Growth Planning Council to establish growth center criteria to target state investments and to eliminate infrastructure obstacles for compact growth.
- Prepare a watershed action plan for the Blackstone Watershed.
- Coordinate action plan implementation efforts in the South County and Woonasquatucket watersheds.

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Goal: Livable Communities		
OBJECTIVE 1: Help communities plan for growth to minimize impacts to the environment and community character.		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alternative land use techniques adopted and implemented. ▪ Environmental impact of new growth minimized.
STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Work with broad-based partnerships to develop more creative techniques to more effectively plan for growth.	1a. Work with urban planners, developers, and other stakeholders to develop an urban environmental design manual.	Manual done by 6-03
	1b. Assist the Governor's Growth Planning council to establish priority funding areas for state infrastructure investments.	Recommendations developed by 6-02.
	1c. Provide staff support for the Governor's Growth Planning Council-Compact Growth Infrastructure subcommittee to minimize barriers to encourage compact development.	Ongoing activity
	1d. Assist Grow Smart, Washington County Regional Planning Council and the South County communities to determine appropriate locations and types of economic development for the region.	Final Plan done by 6-02

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	1e. Work with the Governors Growth Planning Council and other stakeholders to develop strategies to assist communities to more effectively use GIS applications for growth planning. Examples include digitized tax maps and more technical GIS assistance.	Ongoing activity
	1f. Assist with the administration and technical support for the Governors Growth Planning Council, steering committee, and subcommittees.	Ongoing activity
	1g. Coordinate DEM response to updates/revisions to community comprehensive plans.	Ongoing activity
2. Develop training programs for local boards to increase their knowledge of basic and more creative land use techniques.	2a. Complete a training manual and course with URI, statewide planning, and community officials to assist planners and developers to implement conservation development.	Manual completed by 12-01
	2b. Assist the Governor's Growth Planning Council in establishing and implementing a Planning Institute.	Institute operational by 9-01

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STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
3. Prepare and distribute educational materials to make people aware of the impacts of unplanned growth to the environmental community charter.	3a. Develop out-reach materials, web site link, and a power point presentation to promote the South County Design Manual.	Completed by 12-01
	3b. Present slide presentations and lectures to wide audiences, including RI Builders Association, planning board, town councils, other state agencies, on creative development techniques.	Ongoing activity
4. Establish challenge grants to encourage the adoption and implementation of creative land use techniques. Strategy 4 can be pursued through the Governor's Growth Planning Council and Grow Smart.	4A. Establish ongoing challenge grants to encourage the adoption and implementation of creative land use techniques and pro-active planning.	Ongoing activity
	4b. Continue to pursue grants to help build capacity of communities to more effectively plan for growth, such as Sustainable Development Grant and other appropriate funding sources.	Ongoing activity

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Goal: Livable Communities		
OBJECTIVE 2: Coordinate re-orientation of DEM activities toward effective watershed resource management through community based planning and implementation.		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective local/regional partnerships ▪ Community based Watershed Action Plans Impaired waters/habitats restored ▪ Community priority natural resources preserved/protected
STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Facilitate and encourage the development and implementation of Action Plans to address community based watershed objectives.	1a. Expand the watershed approach to the Blackstone River and assist with the formation of a watershed team. The Blackstone will join the Woonasquatucket as part of Northern Watershed Region.	Watershed Team formed by 9-30-01
	1b. Assist the Blackstone watershed team to develop a watershed action plan.	Watershed Action Plan by 6-03
	1c. Expand the watershed approach to the Pawtuxet River and assist with the formation of a watershed team.	Watershed team formed by 9-30-01
	1d. Assist the Pawtuxet watershed team to develop a watershed action plan.	Action plan developed by 6-03
	1e. Revise the model format for first generation Watershed Action Plans, as needed, to incorporate watershed team comments.	This is an ongoing activity
	1f. With assistance from stakeholder groups, continue to build and work with a broad-based watershed team for both the South County and Woonasquatucket Watersheds building on the groups that already exist. *	This is an ongoing activity.
	1g. Assist the South County and Woonasquatucket watersheds to implement watershed action plans.	This is an ongoing activity
	1h. Determine where planning gaps exist within both the South County and Woonasquatucket Watersheds and bring other partners/resources into the process to address gaps. #	Planning gaps identified and addressed as an ongoing activity.
	1i. Coordinate watershed action plans - including DEM activities and those of other applicable partners	This is an ongoing activity.

*South County Watershed Coordinator focus on the links between the South County Watershed Partnership and the Washington County Regional Planning Council so that the implementation of their action plans is coordinated. Orchestrate watershed organizations participation in the action plan process.

The Northern Region Watersheds Coordinator, as co-chair of the Urban Rivers (URT) Team Meeting, has enlisted the assistance of URT members (RI DEM, RIDOT, RI DOH, US EPA, NBC, Save the Bay, Audubon Society of RI and others) to act as the technical team for the Action Plan implementation process. The group meets bimonthly and provides the technical expertise required.

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STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
2. Coordinate DEM and partner activities to address watershed team management objectives.	2a. Encourage new initiatives or changes to existing DEM programs and partner activities to implement watershed plans and action programs.	This is an ongoing activity.
	2b. Provide staff support to the Watershed Coordinating Council.	This is an ongoing activity.
	2c Provide technical and administrative staff support to the Partners for Resource Protection and subcommittees thereto.	This is an ongoing activity.
	2d Coordinate and provide staff support to watershed organizations and the watershed teams	This is an ongoing activity.
	2e Assist with the coordination and integration of the Rhode Island Rivers Council and the Watershed Coordinating Council..	This is an ongoing activity.
	2g. Coordinate and collaborate with the Washington County Regional Planning Council on action planning in the South County Watersheds Region.	This is an ongoing activity.
	2h. Work with Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association and RI Fish and Wildlife to identify opportunities to enhance an anadromous fishruns in the Pawcatuck	Coordination between RIDEM, WPWA and local governments began in Winter 2001. Coordination will continue into 2002.
	2i. Assist Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association with their stream assessment program that will identify key riparian corridors for the Greenspace Project to promote conservation of the Pawcatuck River.	WPWA and Brown conducting assessments throughout Summer 2001.
	2j. Work with WPWA to form a workgroup to focus technical and financial resources on enhancing river-based recreational opportunities in the Pawcatuck River Watershed.	Workgroup to be formed Summer/Fall 2001.

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STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
3. Develop incentives and provide technical assistance to encourage the implementation of watershed plans and action programs.	3A. Coordinate direct links between state and federal technical and financial resources (e.g. staff and grant programs) and local efforts to identify resources to implement watershed plans.	Assistance provided and incentives developed as an ongoing activity. Areas for potential expansion: Groundwater Protection in South County, Habitat and Fishway Restoration on the Pawcatuck River
	3B. Work with the Woonasquatucket Watershed Team and other partners to identify Riparian Buffer Restoration sites in the watershed.	Riparian Buffer Restoration Sites identified by September 2001. Showcase restoration site selected by June 2001, implemented by June 2002.
	3c. Work with the Woonasquatucket Watershed Team and watershed communities to assist them to identify important natural, cultural, and recreational resources.	Greenspace Implementation Strategy to be completed by December 2002
4. Assist watershed teams with education and outreach to increase public awareness of watershed management plans, strategies for implementation, and the RI Watershed Partnership.	4a. Assist the watershed team to perform educational outreach to communities regarding the watersheds' Action Program. Examples include, but are not limited to, Pass the Paddle and Rivers Day.	Materials distributed and presentations given.
	4c. Continue to update/upgrade the watershed website to link to/or host other appropriate sites.	On going activity
	4b. Coordinate and expand Watershed Educational Campaign in DEM parks. Purchase training materials, coordinate training naturalists, and encourage other partners to participate.	Naturalist Education in parks and partner facilities established by July 2001
5. Assist watershed teams to acquire funds to implement watershed plans and action programs.	5a. Target watershed partnership activities to address specific watershed management objectives.	This is a on-going activity
	5b. In conjunction with the Rivers Council and other partners, assist with developing a stable source of funds to support watershed councils.	This is an on-going activity.

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	5c. Form issue-based workgroups on a watershed basis to target funding sources and to implement work plans.	Workgroups formed around action plans throughout Summer and Fall of 2001. Grant assistance provided as an ongoing activity.
	5d. Use the web site to get broader public feedback on watershed action plans and implementation activities.	This is an ongoing activity.

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Goal: Viable Natural Resource Based Industries		
OBJECTIVE 1: Develop alternative business uses for farm, forest and open space lands to encourage the preservation of these lands.		ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS: Increase in farm, new natural resource-based businesses.
STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Assist with outreach to make land owners aware of alternative business uses for their property	1a. Work with Division of Forestry, Rural Lands Coalition and forest landowners to distribute educational materials to promote the concept of alternative forest business to landowners. Distribute information through brochures, which provide an overview, as well as more detailed fact sheets in order to help landowners evaluate their lands' capability, develop their own skills, and evaluate the cost and revenues associated with each potential product.	This is an on-going activity
	1b. Work with RLC to develop a permanent demonstration site to promote alternative forest businesses	Site developed by December 30, 2001

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Goal: Abundant Open Space and Recreation Opportunities		
Objective 1: Build capacity of communities to protect open space.		
STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES*	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1. Assist communities and partners to plan for open space preservation.	1a. Complete the South County Greenspace Plan.	Plan completed by 1-02
	1b. Initiate the Woonasquatucket Greenspace Plan.	Plan completed by 1-03
	1c. Explore funding sources to do Greenspace Plans in Blackstone and Pawtuxet.	
	1d. Increase in-house capacity to conduct GIS Greenspace analysis.	Equipment purchased and staff trained by 9-01

* These activities also support Livable Communities Goal

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