



**Department Of Environmental  
Management**

**Wetlands Task Force**

**Final Report**



**March 21, 2001**

## Acknowledgements

The Department of Environmental Management started its review of the Wetlands Program in December 1999. We sent out about twenty-five letters to people and requested their help in reviewing the DEM Wetlands Program. The Wetlands Task Force grew and over forty people volunteered their time to assist the Department of Environmental Management in this effort.

The DEM would like to express its gratitude to all the members of the environmental, municipal and regulated communities, program staff, along with the many state and federal agencies who participated in this review process. It was only through their time and energy that this report could be developed.

The recommendations of this report, for the most part, were generated by the output of the working groups. Sean Coffey, Bryan Wolfenden, Dave Reis, Chuck Horbert, Chris Mason, Hank Ellis and Russ Chateauneuf led these groups. It was through their efforts, the groups were able to develop the consensus needed to generate recommendations to the full Wetlands Task Force.

Special thanks goes to Carol Murphy, Sue Kiernan and Russ Chateauneuf for their hard work in guiding the technical analysis of the Task Force and the Final Report.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	Page 1
I	INTRODUCTION .....	Page 2
II	SUMMARY OF ISSUES.....	Page 3
III	FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS .....	Page 4
	Statutory Changes .....	Page 6
	Regulatory Changes .....	Page 6
	Policy Changes .....	Page 9
	Administrative Changes .....	Page 10
	Outreach Activities .....	Page 10

## TABLES

Table 1 - Tiered Buffer Zones and Key Considerations in Assignment of Wetlands types to Buffer Tiers .....	Page 44
Table 2 - Projects Common to Wetlands Task Force Recommendations and the DEM Work Plan .....	Page 5
Table 3 - Proposed Freshwater Wetlands Rules .....	Page 7
Table 4 - Final Policy Recommendations .....	Page 9
Table 5 - Final Administrative Recommendations .....	Page 10
Table 6 – Final Outreach Recommendations .....	Page 11

## APPENDICES

Appendix A – Wetlands Task Force Roster .....	Page 13
Appendix B – Working Group Charters .....	Page 15
Appendix C – Regulation / Policy / Administrative Initiatives .....	Page 17
Appendix D – Statutory Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 19
Appendix E – Application Processing / Quick Reviews Recommendations .....	Page 23
Appendix F - Beneficial Projects / Exemptions Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 25
Appendix G - Field Enforcement / Complaint Resolution Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 28
Appendix H - CRMC / DEM Program Consistency Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 35
Appendix I - Certification Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 36
Appendix J - Inclusive Meetings Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 38
Appendix K - Outreach /Public Education Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 39
Appendix L - Wetlands / Watersheds Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 41
Appendix M – Statutory Working Group Recommendations .....	Page 47
Appendix N - Wetlands Process Issues Recommendations .....	Page 48
Appendix O - Public Interaction Issues Recommendations .....	Page 50
Appendix P – Watersheds Recommendations .....	Page 52
Appendix Q – Draft Wetlands Program Permit Streamlining Recommendations .....	Page 54
Appendix R – Wetlands Task Force Draft Recommendations.....	Page 56
Appendix S – Wetlands Program Permit Streamlining Prioritization .....	Page 67
Appendix T – Combined Working Group Regulatory Prioritization. ....	Page 69
Appendix U – Combined Working Group Policy Prioritization .....	Page 70
Appendix V– Combined Working Group Administrative Prioritization .....	Page 71

# Wetlands Task Force Final Report

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wetlands Program has undergone several program evaluations including an extensive review by a Governor appointed Advisory Committee on Wetlands, and an audit by KPMG. In order to continue this program evaluation process DEM formed a Wetlands Task Force, in January 2000, to investigate specific administrative, policy, regulatory and statutory changes that could be used to further streamline program operations, increase customer satisfaction and meet the mandates of the law. As a result of these meetings, DEM is moving forward with the following changes to the program:

### Regulatory Changes

DEM will revise the Wetlands rules in four phases (Table 3).

#### Rule Revision 1

- ◆ Addresses the implementation of the new DEM-CRMC jurisdictional boundary as well as fee reductions for water quality improvement projects, wildlife habitat projects, and land reuse/ redevelopment projects.

#### Rule Revision 2

- ◆ Includes a simpler fee schedule that will reduce the number of calculation errors that result in application deficiencies. This simplified process will also reduce staff review time.
- ◆ Reorganizes the rules to provide better clarity about the application requirements, review criteria and approval process.
- ◆ Removes barriers in the regulations for pre-application meetings.
- ◆ Expands the administrative finding section to discuss the significance of the bordering areas in scientific terms.

#### Rule revision 3

- ◆ Continues to improve the clarity and predictability of the rules and the review process by incorporating new tiers of applications. Some of the major changes include development of a new:

*Determination of Applicability* application for those applicants who are outside of, but near, the limits of regulatory jurisdiction.

*Request for Preliminary Determination* application with reduced requirements for specific small projects such as planting projects and alterations to already developed residential lots. Approximately 20% of the permits issued for individual residential lots are on already developed property.

#### Rule Revision 4

- ◆ Will facilitate water quality improvement and habitat restoration projects.

## **Policy Changes**

DEM will make policy changes in a number of areas to reduce the number, and improve the quality of wetlands applications (Table 4). Major changes include:

- ◆ Implementation of an internal coordinated review process for ISDS applications for single-family residences that are located near, but outside of wetlands.
- ◆ Development of a policy that facilitates water quality and wildlife habitat improvement projects through the existing regulatory framework.
- ◆ Development of new policies for meetings with the Wetlands Program staff.
- ◆ Development of a Memorandum of Agreement between DEM and CRMC regarding freshwater wetlands in the vicinity of the coast.

## **Administrative and Outreach**

DEM will significantly expand its outreach effort with the goal of increasing application quality, minimizing review time and enhance compliance. OWR will develop new guidance materials and conduct workshops for consultants, applicants and municipalities.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Wetlands Program has undergone several program evaluations including an extensive review by a Governor appointed Advisory Committee on Wetlands, an audit by KPMG and a stakeholder review. DEM has modified the program as a result of these processes. In order to continue this program evaluation process DEM formed a Wetlands Task Force, in January 2000, to investigate specific administrative, policy, regulatory and statutory changes that can be used to further streamline program operations, increase customer satisfaction and meet the mandates of the law. The Wetlands Task Force consisted of members (Appendix A) of the affected regulated, environmental and legal communities. Other representatives included state, municipal and federal agencies along with members of the DEM staff.

The Task Force usually met on the first Thursday of each month from January to June 2000. A draft report was distributed to the Task Force that identified some of the concerns raised by the previous review groups, and DEM staff. At the first two meetings the Task Force developed a list of additional issues. The concerns raised were grouped into nine specific areas and were then assigned to a working group consisting of members of the Task Force for detailed analysis. Appendix B is a listing of the membership and the charters of each of the working groups. A number of issues that were raised by the DEM staff were discussed at a Task Force meeting and were approved for implementation. Appendix C is a list of those actions that were proposed for early consideration.

Due to the amount of information that was being generated by the working groups, it was determined that the web format would be effective in keeping all the Task Force members apprised of the process.

The record of the Task Force and working groups meetings were posted on the DEM web-site located at the following address:

<http://www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/ombuds/pstream/wetlands/index.htm>

## II. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

As a result of the first two meetings thirty-seven issues were identified for further review. These issues were then assigned to nine working groups that met and discussed possible solutions to these issues.

The group identified problems with the existing DEM process for the evaluation of simple modifications to permits. They expressed there should be a way of having simple applications processed in an expedited manner. This task was assigned to DEM staff for study.

A second category of issues revolved around the need for consistency between the DEM and CRMC wetlands programs. It was thought that the programs, in some instances, were duplicating efforts. A working group was formed to discuss these issues.

A third category of issues centered on field enforcement issues and how DEM responds to complaints. Concerns were raised that DEM does not monitor the progress of construction activities and determine if permit conditions were being met. These issues were assigned to the Field Enforcement/ Complaint Response Working Group.

The fourth category of issues was related to wetland values, the cumulative impacts of alterations to wetlands and the value of small wetlands. There were other issues raised that questioned how DEM was incorporating the Wetlands Program into the Watershed approach. These issues were discussed at the Wetlands / Watersheds Working Group.

Another broad category of issues centered on how the program could be made more predictable and understandable. There was also a suggestion that DEM could provide more program information to the public and should spend more time in outreach activities. These issues were sent to the Public Education and Outreach Working Group for further discussion.

Concerns were raised that applications often needed to be revised because the regulations were too complex and applicants did not know how to interpret the rules. It was suggested that DEM should meet with applicants early in the process and respond to questions concerning the wetlands projects. DEM should also work with towns and municipalities to help them with wetlands issues. This issue was studied by the Inclusive Meetings Working Group.

A number of issues were raised concerning the need to evaluate the existing exemptions that are listed in the regulations. There was also a concern raised that wetlands enhancement projects should be processed faster and given a higher priority than other projects. These concerns were studied by the Beneficial Projects / Exemptions Working Group.

A question was raised about the need for a variance provision in the wetlands regulations. This issue was discussed at the Statutory Working Group.

A number of other issues were raised that required changes in the statute. People requested that we evaluate the definition of jurisdictional area, increasing the length of time for permit renewals / expiration, and clarifying the Declaration of Intent in the statute. The Statutory Working Group was assigned these issues for further analysis.

The use of Wetlands Professionals was discussed as a mechanism for streamlining permit applications. It was suggested that this group could certify the validity of their work and this certification could be used by DEM in the application process. This issue was assigned to the Certification Working Group.

The working groups all issued final reports that can be reviewed in Appendices D through L. The working groups final reports were analyzed and their recommendations generally fit into four categories, i.e., statutory issues, process issues, DEM public interactions and watersheds issues. The recommendations from these four groupings can be reviewed in Appendices M-P. These appendices tabulate the recommendations from all the working groups. An issue number identifies each recommendation.

One of the major impetuses of the Wetlands Task Force was to evaluate the program to determine if there were ways to streamline the program, increase customer satisfaction and to protect the wetland resource. Recommendations that concern program-streamlining issues have been separated from Appendices M through P and are grouped into Appendix Q.

The reports from the working groups were all analyzed and the recommendations were then distributed into statutory, regulatory, policy and administrative categories. Appendix R of the report describes the draft recommendations in each category and identifies the issue number by the working group that made the recommendation. These recommendations were then prioritized at the August 24, 2000 meeting of the Wetlands Task Force.

After the August 24, meeting, DEM staff met to review the results of this prioritization effort and to evaluate DEM's capacity to implement these changes. (Appendix S through V details the result of this prioritization effort. Numbers in the columns indicate the number of people who either supported or opposed the recommendation.) Section III of the report outlines the results of this analysis and details the final recommendations that will be included in DEM's Office of Water Resources Work Plan.

The Wetlands Task Force met again on December 14, 2000 and reviewed the Draft Final Wetlands Task Force Report. At this meeting the group recommended that DEM should report back to the Task Force on its progress in implementing changes. As a result of this suggestion, DEM will schedule a meeting in January, 2002 to review the status of the many regulatory, administrative and policy changes that were proposed as a result of the Task Force.

### **III. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

DEM staff has reviewed the recommendations of the Wetlands Task Force to determine if they are consistent with the goals of the DEM work plan and if there is capacity within the organization to implement the proposed changes. The Wetlands Task Force was formed primarily to evaluate streamlining opportunities for the program and to determine if services could be provided in a consistent manner that would be conducive to increased environmental protection. This evaluation initially centered on reviewing the regulatory, policy and administrative streamlining recommendations of Appendix Q.

The Office of Water Resources (Office) 2001 fiscal year wetlands workplan reflects an ambitious, approach to program development and permit streamlining. The intention is to move on those actions that can contribute immediately to streamlining efforts including policy, regulatory and administrative initiatives. Recognizing its priority, the office is proposing to fully apply existing resources toward this wetland streamlining effort. In addition, successful completion of the overall workplan requires the securement of additional contractual assistance utilizing federal wetland funds. The plan proposes to delegate newly defined outreach tasks to a contractor thus freeing up staff time to pursue regulatory



reform and program development. To expedite rule changes, the plan proposes to retain additional legal help to draft language changes. This will be contingent on EPA's approval for securing contractual services. This schedule can only be met if internal review is timely.

The remaining recommendations were then evaluated to determine if they would complement the streamlining efforts. Efforts were made to include as many of the recommendations as possible into the work plan. There were some issues that were not moved forward at this time, either because there was no capacity to implement the recommendation at this time, or they were considered a lower priority recommendation.

Among existing commitments, the Office will continue to work with EPA, the University of Rhode Island and stakeholders on the development of a proactive freshwater wetland restoration plan for the Woonasquatucket River watershed. This plan will be a prototype for other RI watersheds and will serve as a foundation for the development of a statewide freshwater wetland restoration strategy. This effort complements restoration planning work being done in the coastal zone.

In addition, the Office will complete background research and outline a statewide wetland conservation plan. This work will be coordinated with the existing planning initiatives of the Nonpoint and Groundwater programs. This broad action strategy for wetland protection will be fully developed in the 2002 fiscal year. Many of the recommendations of the Wetland Task Force Watersheds Working Group such as integration of local wetland protection measures will be revisited in this planning process. The results of a current project to assess the state's wetland mapping needs will be incorporated into the plan. Table 2 details the major projects that were already included in the DEM work plan that support the recommendations of the Wetlands Task Force.

<b>Table 2 Projects Common to the Wetlands Task Force Recommendations and the DEM Work Plan</b>		
<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Issue Originator</b>	<b>Proposed Completion Date</b>
Continue development of proactive freshwater wetland restoration strategy with URI and stakeholders. Phase 2 is restoration plan for Woonasquatucket River watershed. (EPA 104(b)3 wetland grant)	EPA, DEM WW-5d, WVO-2a	Phase 1 December '00 Phase 2- December '01
Participate in RI Habitat Restoration Team. Provide some technical assistance for freshwater restoration projects.	DEM	Ongoing
Manage URI project to determine wetland mapping needs and to assess mapping alternatives and costs (EPA 104(b)3 grant funded)	WTF O&E3b; DEM	January '01
Administer grants for local projects: 1) TNC Wetland Conservation Plan for Tiverton & Little Compton; 2) Town of Coventry restoration demonstration project; assist 3) EPA other FY99 grants	EPA, DEM WW-5e WVO-2aiii	1. December '01 2. August '01 3. September '01
Write wetlands status & trends report	EPA, WW-5d	March '01
Complete background research and outline issues for statewide Wetland Conservation Plan. Coordinate planning with other Office of Water Resources plans.	EPA, DEM WW-5d	Plan outline due September '01
Participate in N.E. Wetlands Workgroup through NEIWPC	DEM	Ongoing
Participate in N.E. Wetland Bioassessment Workgroup through EPA, Region 1	EPA, DEM	Ongoing
Participate in RI Invasive Species Forum	DEM	Ongoing

## Statutory Changes

The Wetlands Task Force is not recommending statutory changes to the Wetlands Act. The Task Force discussed this issue at length and there was no consensus to reopen the Act. The Task Force however, made many recommendations that will result in streamlined program operations. Proposed regulatory changes should reduce the number of applications submitted to DEM and new processes should shorten the review time of applications. These proposals should be implemented and then determined if further statutory changes are needed.

If the Act were to be reopened, there were only three issues the Task Force recommended moving forward and including the following:

The existing Statement of Legislative Intent should be clarified and it was recommended that the language in the 1996 Governor's Advisory Commission be used. (S-2)

There was a recognition that some of DOT's projects have completion timelines greater than the limit prescribed in the statute. The Task Force recommended that DEM work directly with DOT to develop an administrative process to review major transportation projects according to the a timeframe and procedures consistent with DOT project planning and implementation needs.(S-1)

It was also suggested that posting of a bond for completion of mitigation work be considered. (S-04).

## Regulatory Changes

In response to the Wetlands Task Force, DEM is planning a major effort to revise the Wetlands rules. Regulatory reform will be accomplished in 4 phases.

The first set of rules is pending further review with CRMC and it is anticipated to be heard in February 2001. The remaining regulation revisions will be ready for review by the following schedule: Phase 2 in late March, phase three in September 2001 and phase four will begin the process in September 2001. The rule revisions are outlined in Table 3.

The first rule revision, currently drafted, addresses the implementation of the new DEM-CRMC jurisdictional boundary as well as fee reductions for water quality improvement projects, wildlife habitat projects, and land reuse/ redevelopment projects. Successful implementation of the DEM-CRMC Rules and memorandum of agreement will increase interagency coordination and further reduce duplicative wetlands permitting.

The second rule revision will include a simpler fee schedule that will reduce the number of application deficiencies and reduce staff review time. Additionally we will reorganize the rules to provide better clarity about the application requirements, review criteria and approval process. We will eliminate unnecessary administrative restrictions to provide more flexibility and make the rules more user-friendly and understandable. Included in this revision will be removal of barriers in the regulations for pre-application meetings. This revision will also expand the administrative finding section to discuss the significance of the bordering areas in scientific terms.

The third rule revision will continue to improve the clarity and predictability of the rules and the review process by incorporating new tiers of applications. Some of the major changes include:

- Development of a new determination of applicability application for those applicants who are outside of, but near, the limits of regulatory jurisdiction. The goal is to reduce the number of persons who apply for projects outside of jurisdiction.
- Development of a new request for preliminary determination application with reduced requirements for specific small projects such as planting projects and alterations to already

developed residential lots. Approximately 20% of the permits issued for individual residential lots are on already developed property.

- Development of regulatory timelines to approve complete applications, by application type. It is proposed that DEM will develop appropriate wetlands application review timelines for each type of application. Review times will start when the applications are complete. DEM will also investigate refunding permit fees when timelines are not met.

The fourth rule revision will facilitate water quality improvement and habitat restoration projects.

**Table 3  
Proposed Freshwater Wetland Rules Development**

<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Proposed Revision #1</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2.03 A-F	New rules for “freshwater wetlands in the vicinity of the coast”	Result of legislative change
5.00	New definitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freshwater wetlands in vicinity of the coast;</li> <li>• Water quality improvement project; and</li> <li>• Wildlife habitat project.</li> </ul>	Result of legislative change, DEM
7.04 B	The rule was deleted to allow for entities other than government and public utilities to pursue emergency permits.	DEM
9.01 A	The rule has been revised to allow private landowners to pursue permits for emergency alterations that represent threats to health and safety.	DEM
8.02 C	The rule has been revised to clarify that if an applicant proposes alterations on property owned by other(s), a notarized signature of the other landowner(s) is required, but the other landowner(s) does not become an applicant.	DEM
8.04 E6	This rule includes new reduced fee categories for wildlife habitat projects, water quality improvement projects, and land redevelopment/reuse projects in recognition of their potential environmental benefits. Also based on this revised rule, the fees for airport projects will be calculated by the Estimated Construction Costs (ECC) method.	DEM
8.05 C	The rule was reviewed and it was determined that the first sentence provided enough flexibility to allow applications to be processed out of sequence. The rule has been revised to specifically state that Critical Economic Concern applications will be processed out of sequence.	DEM
9.02	The rule has been revised to state that application files for wetland edge verification will be considered closed after 2 years if an applicant hasn’t responded to a request from the Wetland Program for more information.	DEM
9.05 E4a	The rule has been revised to extend the appeal period, after an <i>Application to Alter</i> decision, from 10 days to 30 days.	Result of legislative change
9.05 G2	The rule has been revised to allow an <i>Application to Alter</i> file to stay open for 30 days after a decision is made.	Result of legislative change
9.09 A	The rule has been revised to allow a permit to be modified if the proposed change involves increased disturbance into already disturbed wetland.	Wetlands Task Force # A-2
9.09 D	The rule has been revised to explain that a permit modification will not be approved if there is a proposed increase in disturbance into land areas not evaluated by the Program as part of the initial application.	Wetlands Task Force # A-2
15.10 A1)	The rule has been revised to extend the length of the appeal period during which an adjudicatory enforcement hearing can be requested from 10 days to 30 days.	Result of legislative change.

<b>Table 3 (Continued)</b>		
<b>Proposed Freshwater Wetland Rules Development</b>		
<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Proposed Revisions #2</b>	<b>Wetlands Task Force #</b>
8.04	Revise the fee schedule to simplify both the presentation and the way the fees are calculated. Eliminate the fee additives (per sq. ft. of alteration, etc.). Eliminate fees for municipalities. Otherwise strive for revenue neutral fees.	DEM
6.00 through 14.00	Reorganize the rules for readability and clarity: improve application requirements and process descriptions, improve table of contents, and add an index. These revisions will be more presentation than content.	O&E 6b
6.00 through 14.00	Remove rules that address internal administrative operating procedures and create a new management procedure document as appropriate.	O&E 6a
3.00	Expand administrative findings section to discuss the significance of the bordering areas (perimeter wetland and riverbank wetland) in scientific terms	S-4
8.07 B. 8.07 C.	Delete these rules and develop a policy whereby meetings with the Program (as opposed to w/ OTCA) will be scheduled and conducted.	RIAWS 8/24; DEM
<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Proposed Revision #3</b>	<b>Wetlands Task Force #</b>
----	Develop new <i>Determination of Applicability</i> application for those ~75 applicants per year who file a <i>Request for Preliminary Determination</i> and receive determination of non-jurisdiction. Roll applicant into the Preliminary Determination process if it is determined that an alteration is proposed.	A1-c
----	Develop new Abbreviated <i>Request for Preliminary Determination</i> application (PD1) with reduced requirements for specific projects including planting projects and alterations to already developed residential lots.	A1-a,b,d; BPE-1; BPE-9; C-5; O&E-1&5f; DEM
	Develop new regulatory timelines to approve complete applications, by application type. Investigate refunding permit fees, if review times are not met.	
14.00 and App. 5	Evaluate site plan requirements, particularly for small projects such as single family residential.	DEM
6.13	Consider revising exemption to allow others beside DEM FWS to undertake conservation projects as exempt activities or as a "FONSI"	BPE-9
7.01 B	Develop guidelines, BMPs, and/or performance standards for major projects outside of wetland jurisdictional areas that have the potential for significant wetland impacts.	WW-2
6.03L	Clarify the exemption on replacement of shoreline structures as to "in-kind" materials.	BPE-8
-----	Evaluate the CRMC fact sheet on program differences and revise rules as agreed upon. For example, the length of time permits are valid differs.	CRMC-1a
6.00	Revisit rule 6.00 and consider expanding the list of exempt activities.	DEM
App. 1	Revisit appendix 1 and consider expanding the list of activities considered insignificant alterations.	DEM
5.00 ++	Develop and add buffer zone and setback rules.	CRMC workgoup
<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Proposed Revision #4</b>	<b>Wetlands Task Force #</b>
Several	Revisions to facilitate water quality improvement and wildlife habitat projects (phase 2)	DEM, EPA

## Policy Changes

The proposed policy changes should reduce the number of wetlands applications filed with DEM and improve the quality of the applications and are detailed in Table 4. Major changes include:

- Implementation of an internal coordinated review process for applications for single-family residences that are located near wetlands. The Wetlands Program will complete field inspections in response to ISDS applications. There are approximately 75 applications per year that are determined to be 'not in jurisdiction.' Many of these applications are filed in response to questions raised during the review of the ISDS application.
- Development of a policy that facilitates water quality and wildlife habitat improvement projects through the existing regulatory framework. This is a prior EPA commitment. Application guidance and requirements will be described. Although these changes currently impact the workload of less than five applications a year, DEM expects an increase in these projects as proactive restoration plans are developed and additional funding sources become available.
- Development of new policies for meetings with the Wetlands Program. As mentioned above, the regulations will be changed to remove impediments to meet with staff. Policies will also be developed that will allow pre-application meetings with staff and to facilitate field meetings in instances where edge verifications are difficult to determine.
- Development of a Memorandum of Agreement between DEM and CRMC regarding freshwater wetlands in the vicinity of the coast.

<b>Table 4 Final Policy Recommendations</b>		
<b>Policy Changes Description</b>	<b>Project Originator</b>	<b>Project Completion Date</b>
Develop protocols that clarify responsibilities between DEM's compliance and permitting programs.	DEM	December '00
Complete DEM-CRMC Memorandum of Understanding for regulation of freshwater wetlands. (Phase 1 regulations)	CRMC-1a,b,c; DEM	December '00
Develop policy that encourages water quality and wildlife habitat projects. (Phase 1 regulations)	BPE-4; DEM	February '01
Revise and make public the internal memo on "insignificant alteration versus non-jurisdiction" decisions.	DEM	December '00
Develop trial policy for pre-application field meetings for problem wetland edges.	C-3	February '01
Develop policy for pre-application meetings with Program (Phase 2 regulations).	IM-1	February '01
Establish ISDS / Wetlands coordinated field review for projects that are near but outside regulated wetland.	Alt. C-2	May '01
Develop policy that promotes planting projects with recommended species and Best Management Practices (Phase 3 regulations).	DEM, BPE-2	September '01
Develop buffer zone and setback concept: a) Develop permit condition that identifies area to remain undisturbed as a buffer zone; b) Buffer zone mitigation and setbacks especially for residential lots.	CRMC-	a) December '00 b) July '01

## Administrative Changes

DEM will be required to make administrative changes in order to implement many of the recommendations that have been noted above. Rather than detailing all these changes, this report highlights some of the issues that were discussed at the Task Force meetings. The changes encourage swifter processing of applications by empowering employees to make decisions and by changing the manner in which DEM processes applications. Table 5 is a summary of these changes.

<b>Table 5 Final Administrative Recommendations</b>		
<b>Administrative Changes Description</b>	<b>Project Originator</b>	<b>Project Completion Date</b>
Send deficiency notices to applicant, consultant, and/or attorney when requested.	S01	October '00
Revise the application form to encourage applicant's address to improve service to applicant; also add checkoff for CEC projects.	DEM	December '00
Authorize signature authority to lower staff level where appropriate.	DEM	December '00
Assign existing staff intermediate supervisory responsibilities.	DEM	December '00
Provide staff expanded access to FoxPro to update status.	DEM	October '00
Define overall processing sequence.	DEM	December '01
Redesign (simplify) existing application package (w/ Rules 3).	DEM	August '01
An accelerated review process was suggested for the following: i. Applications for Renewal where it has been established that work has not yet commenced. ii. Applications for projects that have been previously approved and need to be minimally modified, but do not qualify for review under an Application for Permit Modification (e.g. involve additional alteration or impacts to freshwater wetlands). (A-1f)	i. A-1e  ii. A-1f	i. December '00  ii. December '00
DEM should notify the public, if requested, regarding the findings of wetland complaints upon completion of the complaint investigation.	FE -3	October '00
CRMC and DEM will develop a coordinated review process for applications for projects on the DEM side of the jurisdictional boundary and are located in CRMC's Special Management Plans.	CRMC-1c	January '01

## Outreach

The Wetlands Task Force process drove home the point that DEM needs to provide clearer information to the various constituent groups, i.e. home owners, wetlands consultants, the building community and the municipalities. Simplification of the rules and conducting outreach activities is critical in having these groups understand and hopefully increase compliance with the regulations. DEM will significantly expand its outreach effort with the goal of increasing application quality and minimizing review time. OWR will develop new guidance materials and conduct workshops for consultants, applicants and municipalities. Numerous administrative changes will supplement the regulatory, policy and outreach projects described in Table 6.

<b>Table 6 Final Outreach Recommendations</b>		
<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Issue Originator</b>	<b>Project Completion Date</b>
Distribute permit guide and fact sheets to municipalities, consultants, RIBA, and realtors.	BPE6; DEM	October '00
Work with OTCA and continue the development of additional fact sheets on application types through the Phase 3 rules.	DEM	December '01
Write fact sheet of common deficiencies and solutions, and distribute to consultants.	DEM	March '01
Write fact sheet for regulated areas.	DEM	March '01
Convert application flow chart to fact sheet.	DEM O&E-1&5b	March '01
Develop sample standard site plans and applications for illustration purposes, display and put on DEM Web page. Include with this information examples of good and bad applications.	DEM O&E-1& 5g;	March '01
Develop Wetlands Program Web page (contingent upon staffing after 2/01) (EPA 104(b)3 funds)	DEM O&E-3c BPE-2, WW-5b	March '01
Make list and location of pending applications available on the DEM Website and update frequently, especially for municipalities.	O&E-1&5c	March '01
Update 1990 brochure for realtors.	DEM	May '01
Develop recommended drainage methodology for consultants to facilitate faster and consistent reviews.	DEM	March '01
Develop format for engineering calculations and computations to facilitate faster / consistent reviews.	DEM	March '01
Develop and conduct workshop for consultants with / OTCA. Coordinate with Board of Professional Engineers & RI Association of Wetland Scientists.	S-02; DEM	March '01
Conduct Wetlands open house for public with OTCA	DEM	May '01
Develop and conduct workshop for municipal officials with OTCA coordinate with the Department of Administration, URI - Cooperative Extension and League of Cities & Towns.	DEM	September '01
Update wetlands permit questions & answers guide after Phase 3 Rules have been promulgated.	DEM; O&E	Begin September '01
Review of web-based vernal pool manual with URI and DEM Office of Strategic Planning & Policy. (EPA 104(b)3 grant)	DEM WWO-2aiv	February '01
Create guidebook with photos and field descriptions of RI wetland types for property owners (pending funding)	DEM	Start October '01
Create wetland Best Management Practices manual with avoidance and minimization techniques; sample designs, etc. (pending funding).	BPE-3 WW-6B	Start October '01