

Bureau of Policy & Administrative Services

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Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2000

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
FY2000 WORK PLAN – BUREAU OF POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

I. Bureau Description:

The Bureau of Policy & Administrative Services includes the following office and divisions:

- Office of the Director
- Office of Legal Services
- Office of Administrative Adjudication
- Office of Criminal Investigation
- Office of Strategic Planning & Policy
- Division of Planning & Development
- Office of Management Services
- Office of Human Resources

II. Bureau Mission:

The mission of the Bureau of Policy and Administrative Services, and the Offices included in the Bureau, is to work in an effective and coordinated manner to support the Department's mission of:

1. Enhancing the high quality of life for this and future generations by protecting, managing, and restoring the Environmental Protection of the state, enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, protecting public health, and preventing environmental degradation.
2. Guiding utilization of the state's Environmental Protection to provide for sustainable economic opportunity while sustaining our natural environment.
3. Motivating the citizens of the state to practice an environmental ethic based on an understanding of their environment, their own dependence on it, and the ways in which their actions affect it. (Strategic Assessment, 1996)

In particular, the Bureau should assist the Director and senior management through policy research and development, strategic planning and management services ranging from technical and logistical support management of human and financial resources, to legal services.

III. Work Plan Highlights:

In Fiscal Year 2000 the Bureau will lead and undergo several programmatic and organizational changes consistent with the Department's strategic priorities. Major changes include:

- Reinventing the Office of Strategic Planning & Policy to focus on integration and development of department policies for sound land use, watershed approach, stewardship and partnerships especially with local communities. This will involve suspension, transfer or even termination of program management by this office in areas such as waste reduction, household hazardous waste collection, commercial recycling and litter prevention, most or all of which are being transferred to the Office of Waste Management in the Bureau of Environmental Protection.
- Rethinking the Department's approach to information management improvements, consistent with such strategic priorities as better coordination among divisions and programs, better tracking of program outputs, and information exchange with applicants, consultants, volunteer monitors and watershed partners. The Bureau intends to establish a strong information management unit that builds upon existing resources, can respond to both policy and operational needs, and is feasible given limited resources.
- Realigning reporting functions in the Division of Planning & Development to strengthen linkages with the Bureau of Natural Resources. As noted in the Division's Work Plan, a major portion of its responsibilities is to service the divisions of the Bureau of Natural Resources, and in particular to implement an ambitious land protection initiative with those Divisions. The two Bureaus will be working together to optimize coordination through administrative changes by November 1999. In areas that cut across the entire Department, however, such as Capital Budgeting, this Bureau will maintain direct oversight.
- Exploring consolidation of the Office of Criminal Investigation (OCI) with the Division of Enforcement in the Bureau of Environmental Protection as part of the Department's effort to

coordinate its enforcement activities better and to establish a department-wide enforcement policy and protocol.

- Investing in human resources by developing a first of its kind professional development review system for managers and staff. The Office of Human Resources is in the process of designing this system and hopes to begin implementing it and an associated employee training program later this year. The intent is to evaluate and strengthen skills and performance at all levels in the context of the Department's goals and strategic priorities, and to do so through a collaborative (rather than disciplinary) process. The system will first be implemented at the nonunion management levels.
- Improving communications and information management. The implementation over Fiscal Year 2000 and Fiscal Year 2001 of the Permit Streamlining Project will immeasurably improve the quality of and access to environmental information, as well as the Department's ability to process applications more quickly. In addition, the Office of Policy and Strategic Planning will work with the Communications Director to develop a stronger external communication program. Tools will include an expanded Earth Month / Day; a reformatted Annual Report that reports progress on strategic goals and indicators, and public education and participation programs, especially within the context of the watershed approach.
- Capital planning. A major challenge for the Bureau is to develop a long term strategy for capital asset management, including facility maintenance and equipment replacement. In addition, the Bureau will focus on expanding assistance and incentives programs to encourage local and regional efforts relating to open space preservation and watershed protection.

IV. Strategies and Activities designed to meet Strategic Priorities Fiscal Year 2000.

1. Pollution Prevention (P2):

- The Office of Strategic Planning and Policy will collaborate with the Pollution Prevention Program in the Office of Technical and Customer Assistance (OTCA) in the areas of public outreach and education, integrating P2 into permitting and enforcement programs, and targeting sectors for innovative regulatory and voluntary compliance initiatives.

2. Address Public Health Risks:

- The Office of the Director via the Oil Spill Prevention and Restoration Program (OSPAR) will continue its effective remediation program at the Davis Tire site in Smithfield, Rhode Island. In Fiscal Year 2000, approximately \$1 million will be spent on tire removal and disposal as part of the Department's five year remediation project at this site containing an estimated six million tires.
- In the high-risk area of lead pollution, the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy will collaborate with the Offices of Air Resources, Compliance and Inspections, and Technical and Customer Assistance to develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy with the Department of Health, Attorney general's Office, United States Environmental Protection Agency, United States Housing Urban Development, City of Providence and others.
- Dam Safety: The Division of Planning and Development will lead the Department's effort to re-engineer its dam safety program in Fiscal Year 2000, so as to reduce the risk to public safety and property from dams classified as presenting a high or significant hazard. This effort will include capital planning, engineering standards, inspections, training programs and a public assistance (including financial) strategy to encourage proper inspections, repairs and maintenance.

3. Promoting "Smart Growth" Strategies Through Proactive Planning To Protect And Restore Critical and Threatened Resources:

- In partnership with the Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition and the Washington County Regional Planning Council, DEM's Strategic Planning and Policy Office will develop model land use techniques for commercial and residential development using computer aided design scenarios. The work plan also provides for creation of a watershed greenspace protection strategy that will guide land acquisitions and compliment DEM's greenways / land protection programs.
- In concert with Grown Smart Rhode Island, DEM's Strategic Planning and Policy Office will lead the development of training programs to build capacity of local officials to more

effectively plan for growth. Training tools include development of a local training manual and course for flexible zoning; and exploring development of an interactive web site with the University of Rhode Island, Grow Smart and the Rhode Island Office of Statewide Planning.

- Open Space, Forest and Farm Land Protection: The Department currently protects, through public ownership, approximately 50,000 acres of land. Consistent with the Department's Land Protection and Acquisition Plan, the Division of Planning and Development will seek to add at least 1,000 acres in Fiscal Year 2000, and will gear up for more aggressive acquisition following passage of the \$50 million bond issue. This effort will involve many partners, including The Nature Conservancy, the Champlin Foundation, Rhode Island Audubon Society, the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, the State's Agricultural Preservation Commission and various local land trusts. Focus areas will include the Woonquatucket River watershed and the South County watershed region.
- Grants for local greenways and recreational development. In Fiscal Year 2000 the Department will award \$2 million in state funds to match local monies for acquisition, design and development of greenways and recreational trail projects. The Department via its Capital Development Plan will also seek establishment of a planning assistance grant program for communities to develop strategic open space plans to target acquisitions to the most critically importance areas / sites.

4. Regulatory and Enforcement Improvements:

The Offices of Legal Services, Criminal Investigation and Administrative Adjudication will play key roles in efforts to streamline permitting, enforcement and compliance assistance activities.

5. Focus on Ecosystem and Watershed Management:

- Publication by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program of Rhode Island's Living Legacy. This publication will include narrative descriptions, GIS mapping and graphic illustrations of the State's natural heritage features. Targetted for completion by Spring 2000.

- Coordination of DEM's new watershed approach. The Bureau will lead the Department's efforts in administering two pilot watershed projects in Fiscal Year 2000. There will be an overall coordinator for watershed-related efforts, a coordinator for the South County watershed region, and a coordinator for the Woonasquatucket watershed. The coordinators will be responsible for coordinating within the Department, as well as being liaisons to watershed communities and partners.
- The Bureau working through the Department's Land Acquisition Committee will seek amendments to the DEM's Land Protection Plan (1997) to incorporate our watershed approach in State land protection. Protection of water quality and water supplies will also be incorporated into the program's objectives.

6. Promotion of Partnerships:

The Bureau will continue to invest in public / private partnerships, such as:

- Completion of the \$1 million Buttonhole Golf Course and Training Center on the Woonasquatucket River. The Bureau is partnering with the private Rhode Island Golf Association in this major urban greenway project.
- Design and development of the new \$650,000 Horse Barn and stables at Goddard State Park. In partnership with the Champlin Foundation, the Bureau will build a new equestrian facility, restore eighteen miles of bridle trails and operate the facility through a private service provider.
- Coordination and implementation of a two year Performance Partnership Agreement (PPA) and a unified Performance Partnership Grant (PPG) with the federal EPA. The federal / state Partnership is significantly expanded in Fiscal Year 2000, since it will integrate activities in all three bureaus of the Department and thus define partnerships with dozens of groups, communities and other state and federal agencies.
- Continuing partnerships for water pollution abatement and habitat restoration will be key to success for the Department's proposed Clean Water 2000 Capital Initiative. This initiative is

intended to leverage up to \$22 million in federal, private and municipal funds to abate water pollution from non-point sources, industrial discharges, failed septic and sewer systems, etc.

- Ensuring passage of the \$50 million bond issue for Open Space Preservation proposed by Governor Almond. Working with the Governor's Office and a broad coalition of advocates, the Department will work to secure legislative and public approval of an expanded matching grants program that could leverage federal and nonprofit funds for a total of \$100 million. This five-year capital program will be a cornerstone for the Department's land and watershed protection efforts.

7. Streamlining Processes:

- The Bureau through the Offices of Associate Director and of Management Services will continue a leading role in the \$3.2 million regulatory permit tracking and streamlining project. In Fiscal Year 2000 the Department anticipates the roll-out of several permit systems. The project is at a critical nexus and will require the reconfiguration of DEM's Information Management Unit to effectively address the many policy and operational challenges ahead. The Department is working closely with the Governor's Office, State Budget Office and the Office of Library and Information Services to successfully implement the streamlining project.
- The Bureau will also execute several internal measures for streamlining and process improvement. These include a new payroll scanning and reporting system; a computerized case tracking and management system in the Legal Services Office; exploration of an on-line licensing services for boat registration (renewals) and hunting and fishing licenses; and revision of current commuting policy for use of State vehicles to increase fleet efficiencies in accordance with State law.

8. Investing in Our People:

In Fiscal Year 2000 the Office of Human Resources will implement new formal policies and procedures for internal complaints, affirmative action and professional development review. It will also continue informal team building opportunities such as the "Brown Bag" lunch series,

career service and outstanding service awards programs and special events like earth day and river clean-ups.

9. Need to Improve Communications:

- The Office of Strategic Planning and Development will coordinate the Business and Environmental Roundtable meetings on a quarterly basis.
- The Office of Strategic Planning and Development will assist the Communications Director in the development of a comprehensive, internal and external communication program.
- The Office of Strategic Planning and Development will assist the Communications Director in coordinating special events such as Earth Day, Pollution Prevention Week, Narragansett Bay Summit and public presentations on DEM Work Plans and initiatives.
- The Bureau will work to improve the timeliness and quality of responses to correspondence requests for information.