

**Developing a Collective Vision, Core Principles and Goals for
Narragansett Bay, Coastal Rhode Island and Their Watersheds
in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut**

Technical Report



Produced for:

The Partnership for Narragansett Bay

by:

University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center

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Partnership for Narragansett Bay

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Photo credits

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Executive Summary

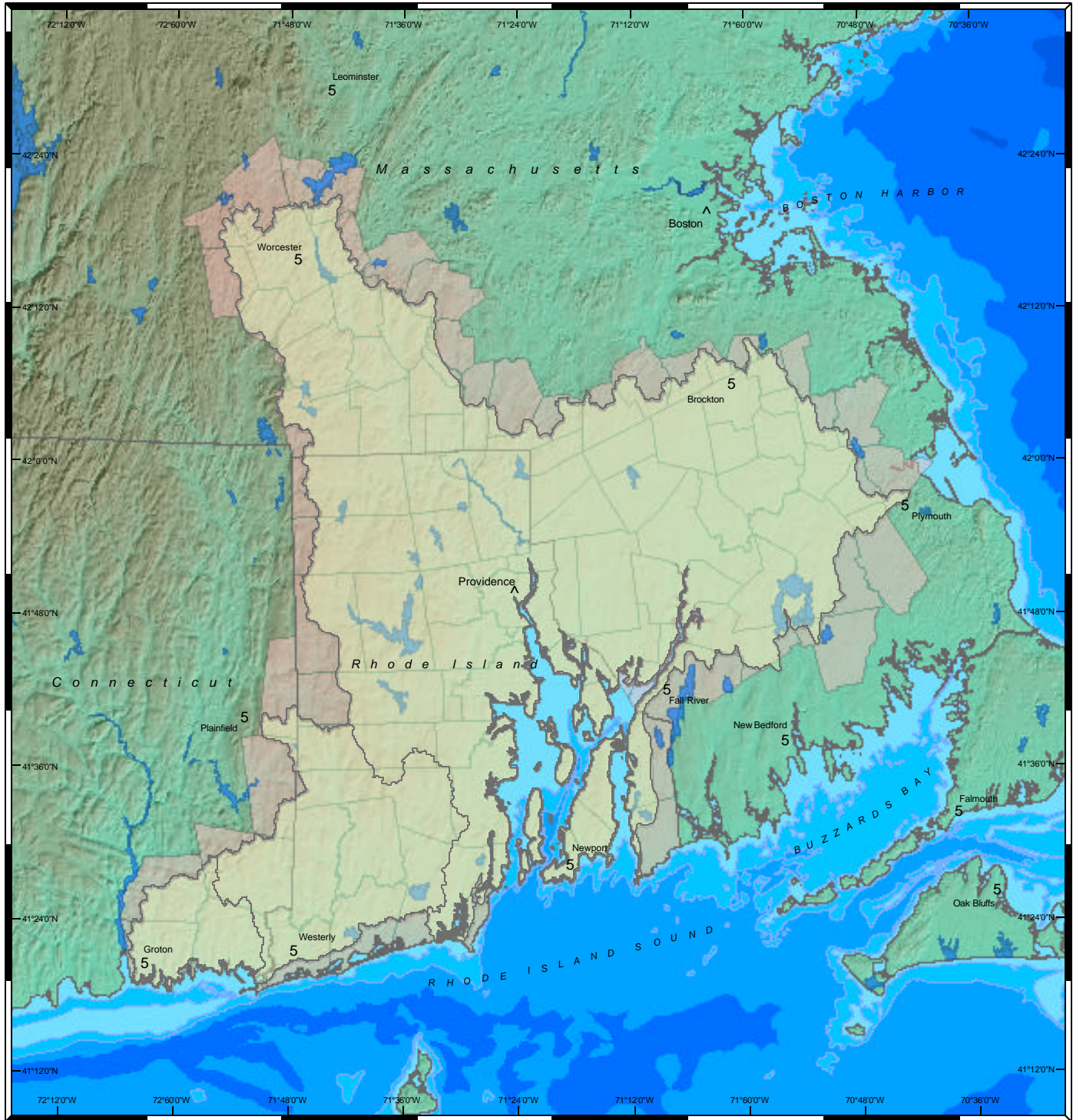
The University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center (CRC) was contracted by the Partnership for Narragansett Bay (PNB) through its Chafee/HUD initiative to develop a decision-making framework that will help Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds move forward as a region to resolve many of its shared environmental and economic issues. This task is, in part, also in response to recommendations developed at the Narragansett Bay Summit 2000.

CRC presents the collective vision and the core principles and goals that achieve the vision in the draft document *An Agreement with Goals for the Development, Conservation and Restoration of Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and Coastal Rhode Island, their Rivers and the Lands of their Watersheds in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island*. This draft reflects months of meetings with major stakeholders as well as the review of many regional, state, and local visions, strategies, and research documents.

This draft document is ready to serve as a basis for an interstate negotiation process towards the creation of a final Agreement to be signed by the Governors of Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut. This negotiation process should also determine the other signatories to the Agreement.

This technical report describes the process used to develop the vision, core principles and goals for Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. It includes summary notes for all study tours, and focus group meetings as well as all agreement drafts that have been created during this busy year. This technical document also includes the *Implementation Strategy* that CRC is recommending to be followed in order to obtain endorsement of the vision, core principles and goals.

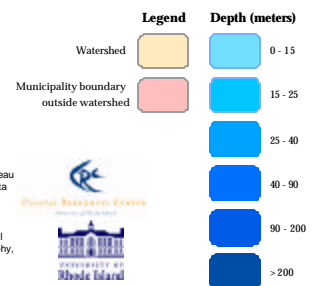
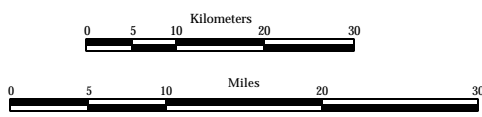
Narragansett Bay, Wood-Pawcatuck, and Southeastern Coastal Watersheds



Total population of Massachusetts and Rhode Island residents living within the Narragansett Bay Watershed = **1,794,239 people**
 Total population of Connecticut and Rhode Island residents living within the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed = **66,764 people**
 Total population of Connecticut residents living within the Southeastern Coastal Watershed = **71,593 people**

Total population of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut residents living within the Narragansett Bay, Wood-Pawcatuck, and Southeastern Coastal Watersheds = **1,932,596 people**

Total land area of all three watersheds = **1,731,684.45 square acres**



Data courtesy of Rhode Island Geographic Information Systems (RIGIS), Massachusetts Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS), University of Connecticut Map and Geographic Information Center (MAGIC), United States Geologic Survey (USGS), and National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration Center for Coastal Services (NOAA CSC).

Census data courtesy of United State Census Bureau 2000 Census of Population and Housing. All data projected in Rhode Island State Plane Feet, North American Datum 1983, World Geodetic System 1984.
 Map production by Joshua Frederickson, Coastal Resources Center, Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island.
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Introduction

Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut comprise a national treasure. Nowhere else in America do colonial history, the days of sailing ships, the industrial revolution and the wealth it produced come together in so rich a landscape of villages, towns, forests and rivers, hills and ponds and beaches and harbors, stretching from Worcester and Brockton in the north through Providence, Fall River and Newport all the way to the shores of the Block Island Sound. Yet much of what the people of this place cherish is now endangered. Rural landscapes and town centers are threatened by suburban sprawl. Old industrial sites lie abandoned. Demand for drinking water outstrips supply and inshore fish catches are at historic lows. In order to resolve these critical issues and prosper without losing the sense of a place, Southern New England must address its future as one region.

The University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center (CRC) has been contracted by the Partnership for Narragansett Bay (PNB) through its Chafee/HUD initiative to develop a decision-making framework that will help this region move forward as one to resolve many of the issues mentioned above. This task is, in part, in response to recommendations developed at the Narragansett Bay Summit 2000.

CRC's approach has been to implement a similar consultative process used to create *The Chesapeake 2000 Agreement*, for the Chesapeake Bay Region. The Chesapeake Bay Program is a premiere example of the process of consultation and public involvement in framing a collective vision, core principles and goals in a region with a long history and complex government. CRC has also applied its experience on Aquidneck Island to create the *Aquidneck Island: Our Shared Vision* and in Washington County to produce *A Shared Future: Washington County in 2020*.

CRC's core team for this initiative includes Stephen Olsen, Virginia Lee, Jennifer McCann and Michelle Moulton. Bill Matuszeski, recently retired Director for the Chesapeake Bay Program, is also part of the CRC team. During his 10-year tenure, Mr. Matuszeski was instrumental in the development and implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement*. He continues to develop similar documents for other coastal watersheds including the Sea of Cortez along the West Coast of Mexico, the New York harbor effort with New York and New Jersey, and the Hudson River in New York.

CRC's project objectives have been to:

1. Develop a collective vision for Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds that reflects multiple stakeholder goals.
2. Establish a set of core principles and measurable goals for a decision-making framework for Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds that achieve the vision.
3. Develop an implementation strategy to obtain endorsement of the vision, core principles and goals by the major decision-making institutions in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

CRC presents the collective vision (objective 1) and the core principles and goals that achieve the vision (objective 2) in the draft document *An Agreement with Goals for the Development, Conservation and Restoration of Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and Coastal Rhode Island, their Rivers and the Lands of their Watersheds in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island (Tri-state Agreement)* (page 11). Appendix 1 provides the reader background references for each goal. The purpose of this appendix is to acknowledge the ongoing local, state and regional work that support the goals and reveals that in most cases the goals already have an immense amount of support. This draft reflects months of meetings with major stakeholders (Appendix 2) as well as the review of many regional, state, and local visions, strategies, and research documents (Appendix 3).

The draft *Tri-state Agreement* is ready to serve as a basis for an interstate negotiation process towards the creation of a final Agreement to be signed by the Governors. This negotiation process is presented in the *Implementation Strategy* (objective 3) starting on page 19 of this document.

This technical report describes the process used to develop the vision, core principles and goals for Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. It includes summary notes for all study tours, and focus group meetings as well as all agreement drafts that have been created during this busy year. This technical document also includes the *Implementation Strategy* that CRC is recommending to be followed in order to obtain endorsement of the vision, core principles and goals.

The Process Used to Develop the Vision, Goals and Core Principles Document

As part of the full proposal submitted to the PNB in fall 2002, CRC developed a project timeline that describes the activities and proposed dates of completion for each activity. Generally, CRC has followed this timeline and kept within a month of completing all activities on time (Appendix 4).

1. Learning from other experiences

Prior to undertaking this initiative CRC reviewed the experience from other initiatives that are defining and achieving a desirable future for large and politically complicated coastal regions. Efforts in Europe (the Wadden and Baltic Seas), Australia (Great Barrier Reef Authority), and the Gulf of California (Mexico) mirror our own US experience, particularly the lessons from the Chesapeake Bay Program and other National Estuaries Programs (see Appendices 5a & 5b for a copy of the *Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement* and the *Long Island Sound Study Agreement*). CRC continues to follow and learn from these experiences as we work to define the *Tri-state Agreement* for this Southern New England region. Some major lessons learned from other regions include the following:

- A. *Chesapeake Bay*: Involving the highest levels of leadership possible and embracing clear, strong, specific comprehensive and measurable goals have resulted in the creation of a strong

and diverse constituency, and solid commitments and funding at the local, state, and national levels towards achieving the goals (Swanson, 2003).

How we have applied this lesson to this effort: CRC continues to recommend that the Governors from the three States be the primary signatories to the final agreement. Signing by legislators, the federal congressional delegation and federal agencies are also encouraged. CRC has used the best available science and strategies to develop time bound, quantitative goals.

- B. *Wadden Sea:* A specific geographic boundary should not be considered an immediate priority. Countries involved in this successful multi-national management initiative did not define a specific boundary until ten years into the process (Enemark, 2003).

How we have applied this lesson to this effort: Although the watershed of Narragansett Bay and coastal Rhode Island is clear, the economic-shed of this region, still remains under discussion. According to the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council (RIEPC), the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) and their Connecticut counterparts, the real economic –shed reaches beyond New London to the west and New Bedford to the north. CRC believes that the general boundary for this agreement should include the region stretching from Worcester and Brockton in the north, through Providence, Fall River and Newport, all the way to the shores of the Block Island Sound (Figure 1). Once the States have applied and feel comfortable implementing this agreement, a firm boundary can be set.

- C. *Gulf of California:* Involve the economic leaders from the get go. The Gulf of California ecosystem management initiative involves a coordinated effort among five Mexican States that surround a body of water the size of Italy. Conservation organizations are coordinating with some of the most prestigious businessmen to develop an agreement with both economic and environmental goals. In this case, these private sector individuals are able provide more constant leadership and commitment than the politicians. This grassroots process has the support from the federal government. (Rubinoff, 2003).

How we have applied this lesson to this effort: All three Governors are considered businessmen whose priorities are the economy over any other issue. Because the Governors are considered the priority signatory to this document, CRC has developed a *Tri-State Agreement*, that addresses both the environment and the economy, that would appeal to an administration with and economic focus. As the vision states and the entire document presents, the health and diversity of the economy is dependent upon the health of the environment.

2. Draft a “strawman” for the vision, goals and principles document

CRC dedicated the first several months reviewing many regional, state, and local vision statements, strategies and research documents (Appendix 3) to understand the major issues and actions that were being undertaken within the region. In October, CRC organized a study tour to meet with many of the individuals and organizations implementing these efforts (Appendix 6a and 6b). The purpose of the study tour was for CRC to have a clearer understanding of the

shared issues that people of this region felt passionate about and to which they were connected. The CRC team traveled throughout the Taunton, Blackstone Valley and Wood-Pawcatuck River watersheds and listened to people's concerns about managing growth. The CRC team met with some of the region's economic and environmental leaders in Providence and Fall River to learn about the regional economy and existing efforts to integrate the economy and the environment. Individuals from the East Bay told the team about their struggle to maintain a strong marine economy. Issues identified during this study tour and by reviewing many of the regions' strategies are the foundation for the vision, principles, and goals and the driver for the entire agreement document. Based on this analysis, the five issues that "stirred the blood" for most people from this region are:

- 1) Economic development that conserves our soul;
- 2) Restoring our fish and shellfish;
- 3) Public access;
- 4) Protecting our landscapes; and
- 5) Governance.

The first draft of the agreement, called *An Interstate Agreement with Goals for the Development, Conservation and Restoration of Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays, their Rivers and the Lands of their Watersheds*, was completed in December 2003 (Appendix 7).

3. Ground-truth and revise the vision, goals and principles document

CRC dedicated the next seven months to refining this version of the agreement by holding regional focus groups, continuing to review documents and meeting individually with stakeholders.

3.1 Review draft and process with international, regional, state and local experts

In December 2002, representatives from The Dutch Institute of Coastal and Marine Management visited CRC to discuss the application and refinement of concepts and tools for shaping the next generation of coastal governance in both the Netherlands and in the Narragansett Bay region. One of the objectives for this visit was to determine if an agreement-type initiative could be usefully applied in other European Union nations. CRC saw this visit as an opportunity to not only request the assistance from these international coastal managers on implementing this task, but also a chance to invite key Rhode Island and Massachusetts representatives to reflect upon past initiatives to develop, conserve and restore the Bay region. CRC's hope was to learn from the past efforts to make this next effort more successful.

At the PNB admin teams' request, CRC placed brackets around all of the quantifiable goals and the dates of expected completion to illustrate that CRC recognized that for the moment the focus was to craft the text for the issues and goals. Once there was general consensus with the text, CRC would then focus on determining the most accurate numbers based on the best available science available.

This meeting with experienced and dedicated individuals provided CRC with excellent feedback on how to move forward and more effectively describe the issues and focus the goals. Participants felt that some of the principles were encouraging protection of our natural resources, while other principles were encouraging traditional fishing – the very practice that was depleting the natural resources. Some recognized that there was no clear mention of water quality in the document. Many asked if we should focus on the function of a natural system versus how many acres we plan to protect or restore. Most felt both the introduction and the principles dwelled too much on the past. Massachusetts representatives expressed that the document was too focused upon Rhode Island. Summary notes from this meeting are included in Appendix 8.

These constructive comments were incorporated into the next version, version two, of the agreement (Appendix 9).

3.2 Hold focus group with the PNB Admin team

In March, CRC held the first focus group meeting with the PNB admin team. Participants questioned how the goals could be achieved considering the diminishing state and federal budgets. Many stated that the agreement had too many goals and some were unrealistic. Some felt the agreement should include goals on jobs and taxes since that was the priority for the Governors. Some believed the document was focusing too much on the economic issues and that more emphasis should be given to the natural environment. A specific role needed to be identified for the municipalities and the hundreds of non-profits that already dedicate so much time to these issues. There was a call for changing the “Governance” section to “Stewardship and Community Engagement” (see Appendices 10a & 10b for a summary of this focus group meeting).

At the PNB admin teams’ request, CRC revised the draft agreement to reflect many of the comments presented by the PNB admin team (Appendix 11).

3.2.1 Adding Connecticut to the Agreement

Also incorporated into this version, version three, were the comments collected during a two-day study tour in March 2003 (Appendix 12). During this study tour, the CRC team met with key economic policy representatives including RIEPC and the RIEDC. Both RIEDC and RIEPC strongly encouraged CRC to include Connecticut into this initiative. Rhode Island already has economic ties with Connecticut through The Rhode Island/Connecticut Economic Collaborative. This Collaborative focuses on promoting the shared defense and tourism industries. In addition, Connecticut and Rhode Island share the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed and the Pawcatuck borderlands – 200 square miles of biologically diverse forestland. Already, the two Governors are interested in formally making the preservation of these borderlands a priority. Both RIEDC and RIEPC offered to help involve Connecticut through their existing contacts once the focus group meetings were completed.

As a follow-up, CRC attended several Rhode Island/Connecticut Economic Collaborative meetings, including one with the Southeastern New England Defense Contractors Alliance (SENEDIA). During several events several people stated that they felt Massachusetts should

also be part of this Collaborative, since Massachusetts was also a strong player in this regional economy, especially in the defense, tourism and marine trades industries.

After studying this issue, CRC felt there was enough commitment and momentum to involve Connecticut into this effort. There were already many obvious economic and environmental issues and goals that were common as well as many of the same stakeholders. Governor Rowland is a Republican with a business focus – similar to Governors Carcieri and Romney. In addition, CRC was charged by the PNB to develop a vision and principles for Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds. By proposing a bi-state agreement CRC would be ignoring coastal Rhode Island and its watersheds – about one-third of the state of Rhode Island.

3.3 Implement additional focus groups

Once version three of the document was complete, CRC organized five additional focus group meetings in the region. Hosts for these meetings were: 1) Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District; 2) Rhode Island Marine Trades Association and the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission; 3) The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association; 4) Woonasquatucket Watershed Association; and 5) The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. CRC captured participant comments using two scribes. One scribe would use either a flip chart or a computer that projected the scribes' notes onto a screen so that all participants could witness their comments being noted. The other scribe would write down specifically proposed grammar, sentence structure or word changes and other content oriented comments on a copy of the agreement. Both sets of notes were written up for each event and sent to the participants for their review. These summary notes are in Appendix 13a – 13j.

Many stakeholders were very supportive of the development of a tri-state agreement that would be signed by the three Governors. Many viewed this as an opportunity to improve the management, conservation and restoration of the southern New England region and as a means to connect all of the existing state and neighborhood environmental and economic efforts under one political strong umbrella. Some expressed their concern that this was a very aggressive initiative and possibly too much to achieve – especially if Connecticut is included. Other major comments include the following:

- Change the title so that it reflects the involvement of all three states, however is not so cumbersome (eg. Southern New England Waters Compact).
- This still sounds like a Rhode Island document. The document needs to more effectively describe the places and initiatives within this region in Massachusetts and Connecticut (eg Taunton River and National Park Service Wild and Scenic effort and the Pawcatuk Borderlands effort).
- Ensure that protecting the natural resources located in the urban areas is reflected in the goals.
- The U.S. Navy has been a significant player in this region. This federal presence needs to be honored in this document.
- The issue of affordable housing should be connected to the job issue.
- If this document is an agreement, we should call it an agreement.

- It is because of the diversity and beauty of our natural environment that we have a strong economy. The value of our natural resources must be given more credit in the document.
- The document needs to more effectively present the urban fabric and the cultural diversity of this region.
- Many of the principles and goals need to reflect the need to encourage growth where adequate infrastructure is located. The growth center concept needs to be presented more clearly.
- The issue of water supply and allocation needs to be more prominent. The States need to work on a joint water conservation plan.
- If we are not going to have a water quality goal, the significance of water quality needs to be widely discussed in the text.
- The document must include specific goals that advocate an increased effort towards educating the regions' youth about our bays and rivers and their watersheds.

Most of these comments and more have been incorporated into the final draft *Tri-State Agreement*.

3.4 Meet individually with key stakeholders

Throughout this process, CRC has met individually with key stakeholders to discuss the contents of the agreement document. Initially, CRC met with individuals to formulate the issues and develop the vision and principles. During the past six months, individuals have been instrumental in refining the goals so that they are realistic and challenging. Appendix 2 is a complete list of individuals who have participated in this effort.

3.4.1 Massachusetts Involvement

CRC has dedicated much of the ground-truthing process to understand and incorporate many of the concerns and issues identified by the Massachusetts stakeholders. Two of the regional focus groups were held in the Blackstone River Valley and the Taunton River watersheds. CRC has also met with Massachusetts state agency representatives to better reflect their issues in the document.

The Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD) has helped to provide both the environmental and economic concerns and issues within the Taunton River watershed. This organization involved other Taunton River watershed stakeholders and shared the document on their own with appropriate organizations within the watershed. SRPEDD has met several times with CRC staff to ensure that the vision, principles and goals reflect the values and the priorities of the people of the Taunton River watershed and are based on the best available data.

For the Blackstone River Valley region, the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, and the Blackstone River Watershed Council have assisted CRC in understanding the major issues facing this region. They have helped to organize focus groups, introduce CRC to the major

stakeholders and provided comments on each version of the agreement. Jointly, these organizations recognize that a *Tri-State Agreement* will benefit and support their individual efforts.

CRC has also met periodically with representatives from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). Throughout the process, individuals have assisted in the organization of study tours and also introducing CRC staff to key stakeholders. The EOEA water policy director recognizes this effort as a model that should be used in other regions where Massachusetts shares a watershed with another state. EOEA staff recognizes the importance of working with their Rhode Island counterparts to manage the shared natural resources. CRC understands that EOEA staff would like some of the goals to be framed as biophysical outcomes rather than indicators and that water quality improvement be a specific goal rather than implied as a requirement to achieve many of the goals including swimmable and fishable waters. Although they recognize the need for Massachusetts and Rhode Island to coordinate on the watershed issues, they do not see Connecticut's involvement helping to resolve the environmental goals. Concerning the economic issues, EOEA staff have expressed that the entire Massachusetts is not driven by the economic issues facing the Massachusetts lands located within the Narragansett Bay watershed, therefore the economic justifications for involving Connecticut, in their opinion, are not strong.

3.5 Developing a final draft document

The CRC team reviewed all summary notes from the focus group meetings and the meetings with individuals to revise the vision, core principles, and goals that make up the *Tri-State Agreement*. All comments were considered for potential incorporation into the document. If many individuals made a comment, it was likely that the comment was incorporated into the revised document. CRC incorporated all comments that made the document stronger or clearer.

Developing an Implementation Strategy to Obtain Endorsement

Throughout the process, CRC has met with senior level staff in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts to listen to their opinions on who should sign the *Tri-State Agreement* and what the process should be to obtain this endorsement. CRC also reviewed other regional examples that could serve as implementation models for this effort. The Chesapeake and the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor model were seen as possible examples to follow.

As presented in the project timeline, CRC began writing a draft implementation plan in August that reflected many of the opinions on how to obtain endorsement of the *Tri-State Agreement* from the three States. In late August, CRC held a meeting with key decision makers including Jan Reistma and Richard Ribb (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management), Rick Reed and Townsend Goddard (Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, and Karl Honkonen and Vandana Rao (Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs) to receive comments on the draft. These comments were then incorporated into another draft which was presented to a wider audience of stakeholders during the September 25, 2003 PNB meeting

held at the Narragansett Bay Commissions Corporate Offices (Appendix 14). The final *Implementation Strategy* is presented on page 19.

Results

On behalf of the PNB, CRC has facilitated a year-long public process to develop a collective vision, core principles and goals for a decision-making framework for Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds.

1. Vision

The collective vision is a one sentence statement: “Our vision is to assure a healthy economy while sustaining the unique cultural and natural environments that provide our enriching quality of life and make this region such a special place to live.”

2. Principles and Goals

CRC presents the collective vision and the core principles and goals that achieve the vision in the draft document *An Agreement with Goals for the Development, Conservation and Restoration of Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and Coastal Rhode Island, their Rivers and the Lands of their Watersheds in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island* (page 11). This draft reflects months of meetings with major stakeholders (Appendix 2) as well as the review of many regional, state, and local visions, strategies, and research documents (Appendix 3). Appendix 1 provides the reader background references for each goal. The purpose of this appendix is to acknowledge the ongoing local, state and regional work that support the goals and reveals that in most cases the goals already have an immense amount of support.

In our judgement, this draft *Tri-state Agreement* is ready to serve as a basis for an interstate negotiation process that would produce a final version of the Agreement to be signed by the three Governors. This negotiation process should also determine other signatories to the agreement.

We believe that this degree of specificity in the document will assist the Governors, the General Assemblies, the Federal Delegation, Federal Agencies, non-profits, municipalities, and others in the three States to focus their efforts on the outcomes of an ecosystem management initiative. In order to achieve this vision, Southern New England must address its future as one region.

3. Implementation Strategy to Obtain Endorsement

It is CRC’s recommendation that the three states use *The Implementation Strategy* (page 19) as a guide to secure formal adoption of a final Tri-State Agreement. CRC has developed this *Strategy* by first looking at models from other areas of the world and then through a series of meetings with key Rhode Island and Massachusetts officials. Appendix 14 presents the summary notes from the September 25, 2003 meeting where CRC presented a draft strategy for review to many Rhode Island and Massachusetts stakeholders. The *Implementation Strategy* on page 19 reflects the comments made during this meeting.

Tri-state Agreement

(July, 2003 Revision with Results of Public Meetings)

**AN AGREEMENT WITH GOALS
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF
NARRAGANSETT AND MOUNT HOPE BAYS
AND COASTAL RHODE ISLAND,
THEIR RIVERS
AND THE LANDS OF THEIR WATERSHEDS IN
CONNECTICUT, MASSACHUSETTS AND RHODE ISLAND**

PREAMBLE:

Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and coastal Rhode Island, the historic rivers flowing into them and the lands of their watersheds comprise a national treasure. Nowhere else in America do colonial history, the days of sailing ships, the industrial revolution and the wealth it produced come together in so rich a landscape of villages and towns, forests and rivers, hills and ponds and beaches and harbors, stretching from Worcester and Brockton in the north through Providence, Fall River and Newport all the way to the shores of the Block Island Sound. Our vision is to assure a healthy economy while sustaining the unique cultural and natural environments that provide our enriching quality of life and make this region such a special place to live.

We have grown and prospered from our bays and rivers -- the Taunton, the Blackstone, the Woonasquatucket and the Pawcatuck and others -- sometimes at their expense. The earliest settlements grew up along our coasts. Our economies then depended on the Bays' protected harbors and the extraordinarily abundant fish and shellfish offered by the Bays and the sea beyond. As we moved inland and harnessed the power of our rivers, we became the cradle of American enterprise. The early spinning mills quickly evolved into an industrial powerhouse second to none. Prosperity and demands for labor brought immigrants from many cultures and their traditions have enriched our region for all our benefit. More recently, we have encouraged the emergence of new centers of technology, medicine and education.

Today we are challenged to hold on to this common heritage in the face of pressures for change. The corridor from New London along the coast to Newport up to Fall River and beyond is built on centuries of service and support for the U.S. Navy, and in these times has become a powerful engine of economic growth for the Region. The Heritage Corridor along the Blackstone River provides another example, by showing how to meld new economic opportunities with our rich industrial past. But, at the same time, rising housing costs mean that too many of our citizens must live too far from the jobs they want. As the overflow of the Boston metropolitan area begins to blend with the growth out from our own cities, we are in danger of losing our open landscapes, our town centers and our traditional skill at mixing well the old with the new. Meanwhile, large tracts of abandoned or underused acreage around our Bays and along the Blackstone, the Taunton and other rivers provide prime locations for economic growth and public access. Our water supplies must be managed to meet the new demands. And the fish,

shellfish and other natural resources of the Sound, the Bays and rivers that first drew people to our shores remain an important part of our legacy, and are in need of restoration and better management.

We must address the future as one region with the pioneering spirit, the creativity and the determination that lie at the core of our culture. Like others, we seek to prosper; but unlike others, we believe we can do so without losing the sense of a place that is part of our soul. We therefore commit to this Agreement for Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and coastal Rhode Island, their Rivers and the lands of their watersheds. It is comprised of a set of principles to guide our collective efforts to achieve a set of measurable economic, cultural and environmental goals to which we are committed. We also commit to assemble regularly to assess our progress, celebrate our successes and recommit to what more must be done.

OUR TEN PRINCIPLES:

Our Principles reflect an underlying belief that our economic prosperity derives to a large degree from the beauty of our surroundings and the inspiration they give us. Our skills were developed in traditional industries that used the land, the water and the sea. We can therefore only achieve our goals if we are assured continued access to our well-protected natural and cultural environments.

Therefore, our first principle must be to seek economic prosperity that will provide stable, high-quality employment opportunities for the citizens of the Region, in a way that preserves our communities, our way of life, and the natural and cultural environments upon which we all depend for health, renewal and recreation.

Second, we will develop the skills of our workforce in high technology, quality workmanship and innovative design by drawing on our historic strengths in the maritime, educational and industrial sectors.

Third, we will respect and work to sustain family businesses and traditional livelihoods such as fishing, boatbuilding, farming and artisan crafts, which are the origin of many of our skills, as well as important features of our culture and our sense of place.

Fourth, we encourage tourism based on our shared historical, cultural and natural heritage.

Fifth, we recognize that our Region is one system of interrelated lands and waters, that we must save our rivers to save our Bays, and that to save the rivers we must learn to live lightly on the land.

Sixth, we will work toward healthy populations of fish and shellfish in the Bays and the rivers that flow into them.

Seventh, we will protect our un-fragmented forests and active farms, and will restore the forest stream and coastal buffers, wetlands, salt marshes and underwater grassbeds that have made our Region a place of great beauty and recreational opportunity.

Eighth, we will improve urban parks and forests and expand public access to and along the rivers and throughout the Bays and the Sound for a full range of uses.

Ninth, we will maintain the textures and traditions of our neighborhoods, villages and agricultural landscapes as they evolve, by focusing industrial, commercial, residential and recreational growth into growth centers, many of which should be in existing communities with underutilized infrastructure, often along our older waterfronts.

Tenth, we will achieve all this in a spirit of openness, spirited debate and cooperation, and with a proper balance of voluntary action, incentives and state and local participation and oversight.

OUR GOALS:

FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT CONSERVES OUR SOUL:

A long history of master ship-builders, successful merchants, inventors, designers, skilled machinists and dedicated teachers has given the people of our Region a reputation for skills and capabilities that are the envy of the world. Thanks to our long history of ties to the U.S. Navy, we are the world center for research and manufacturing in undersea technology, an important economic niche that we must protect and expand. Our innovative spirit, our respect for quality, and the importance we give to an uncluttered but fulfilling lifestyle are all assets that can assure the best kind of economic investment in our Region. We also have a large inventory of previously developed sites for economic investment, many with historic character, views and access to water and other services and amenities. We need to enable new construction and renovation at these locations to take advantage of existing infrastructure in already built-up areas. This will also help to protect our remaining open landscapes and safe water supplies. Meanwhile, we must act to bring new investment, new uses and new public access to significant urban waterfront sites around our Bays and along our rivers. And we should take advantage of our wealth of historic resources and the increasingly successful examples of Newport, Mystic and the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor to build an even stronger tourism industry. To achieve these ends, we establish the following goals:

--Beginning immediately, we will take actions to integrate job creation and the designation of economic growth centers that preserve, renew and strengthen our villages, towns and cities and the rivers that run through them.

--We will build on the strengths of our workforce by seeking new investments in the maritime trades and marine technologies that will add 2000 new jobs to these sectors by 2010.

--By 2005, working closely with local communities, we will identify and designate major vacant or underutilized sites suitable for economic development; we will work to assure reuse of twenty-five percent of them by 2010, and twenty-five percent more by 2015.

--By 2005, we will complete a public process to develop revitalization plans for five major underused urbanized areas to create significant new employment opportunities, greater

public access to the water and protected shoreline vistas. Priority properties are the west side of Aquidneck Island, the Fall River waterfront, the Weir section along the Taunton, the East Providence, Providence and Pawtucket waterfronts on the Providence and Seekonk Rivers, and Quonset-Davisville. We will work with local authorities to assure implementation.

--By 2005, we will complete and begin to implement a 20-year needs analysis for navigational and recreational channels, marinas and basins in the Bays, including properly disposing of the dredged materials, all in order to support and grow our maritime industries and protect our recreational access.

--By 2010, we will double the economic value of heritage-based tourism in the Region.

--By 2005 we will initiate the development of an interstate water conservation and use plan to assure future supplies of safe fresh water for all our people and the activities they need to prosper, and by 2010 this plan will be implemented.

FOR RESTORING OUR FISH AND SHELLFISH:

When the colonists came to our bays and rivers they were astounded by the abundance of salmon, shad and herring that seasonally swarmed up our streams and rivers to spawn, as well as by the wealth of clams, scallops, lobsters and oysters that could be collected from the Bays shallows. Over the centuries, this abundance supplied sustenance and employment. More recently, pollution and overfishing took their toll on the numbers and health of some species. Despite continuing water quality problems in some rivers and tidal reaches of the Bays, today the Bays support over a million recreational fishing trips a year, and the return of spawning fish to our rivers is celebrated every spring. While finfish and shellfish are more prevalent, there has been a recent decrease in the numbers of lobster. Scientists say the Bay and rivers could support substantially higher levels of finfish for both commercial and recreational purposes. To achieve this will require continued water quality improvements in some areas, protection and restoration of key spawning and nursery areas, removal of blockages in streams, and a coordinated tri-state effort to better manage catches of migrating and local species. We therefore establish the following goals:

--By 2004, we will define desirable levels of key fish and shellfish species in the Bays and rivers, and by 2015, we will achieve them.

--By 2007, we will achieve conditional reopening of 1000 acres of currently closed beds in the upper Bays and rivers for shellfishing.

--By 2007, we will increase the amount of rivers and streams open to shad, herring and other anadromous fish by 502 acres; by 2015, we will restore anadromous fish to the Blackstone River.

--By 2007, we will increase forest buffers of rivers, streams and bays by 25 miles, and by 2015 increase this to 40 miles.

-- We will prevent the additional loss of key natural habitats. By 2007, we will restore 160 acres of salt marshes and 50 acres of eelgrass beds; we will permanently protect another 500 acres of freshwater marshes and salt marshes and 150 acres of eelgrass beds. By 2015, we will increase the restoration to 200 acres of salt marshes and 150 acres of eelgrass beds.

-- By 2005, we will reduce by 90 percent the loss of fish by entrapment and other causes at Bayside powerplants and other industrial facilities, using 2000 as a baseline.

FOR PUBLIC ACCESS:

Our region is blessed with an extensive Bay and river shoreline, but we have not always made best use of it for recreation and public access. We have allowed pollution to close beaches and shellfish beds in the upper Bays and swimming in our rivers. Sometimes we have missed the opportunity to include public access to clean waters as part of redevelopment proposals. As we adopt new policies to concentrate development in already built-up areas, a number of opportunities emerge. New development should be creatively designed to include public access to rivers and the Bays; and public and private funds can be focused on redevelopment areas to assure that facilities for the public are included. Public access is important for our quality of life, for tourism and for recreation. As we protect our rural and urban landscapes, we need to include consideration of public access wherever appropriate. We also need to allow for better access to islands and other areas already in public ownership. To accomplish this, we adopt the following goals:

--Beginning immediately, we will require state agencies and encourage municipalities to use their powers to assure that public access is built into all substantial non-industrial riverfront or bayfront development or redevelopment projects without exception.

--By 2004, the State of Rhode Island will revise the Bay Islands Park Proposal and select strategies to enhance public access to all state-owned islands in Narragansett Bay, consistent with health, habitat protection and safety issues. In 2005, we will begin to implement the strategies.

--By 2010, through the implementation of stormwater and treatment plant improvements, we commit to meeting water quality standards for recreational use so we may reopen to the public for safe swimming 5 historically used beaches in the upper Bays. We will also make all our rivers swimmable by 2015.

--By 2010, we will add 20 new access points and 200 miles of new trails to and along our rivers and the Bayfront. At that time we will consider our progress and set new goals for 2015. We will also maintain existing and new access and assure its safety.

--By 2007, we will establish 400 miles of river trails for canoes and kayaks with supporting information and services.

--By 2004, the upper Taunton River will be designated a National Wild and Scenic River by the U.S. Park Service. The lower Taunton River will be included in this designation by 2006.

FOR PROTECTING OUR LANDSCAPES:

An important part of our common heritage and our quality of life is reflected in the traditional landscapes of our region -- the farmsteads, forests, waterfronts and villages that are characteristic of this part of the world. Ours remains a landscape at a human scale, and stands apart from much of the rest of the sweep of megalopolis along the East Coast. The Pawcatuck Borderlands, the watershed of the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers along the Rhode Island/Connecticut border, is the last un-fragmented forest in the Boston to Washington corridor. Our green landscape is one of our greatest assets; it draws and retains economic vitality in our communities. Yet each year development increases the threat to its continued existence, as more and more of these landscapes change to subdivisions, commercial strips and greenfield industrial sites. Time is running out on our ability to retain this part of our way of life. And it can be done with thoughtful policies that preserve these special open spaces and direct growth to the more than adequate acreage within or adjacent to existing developed areas. We do not underestimate the difficulty of doing this, but we cannot shy away from the need to do it. We therefore commit to the following ambitious goals.

--By 2004, Rhode Island and Connecticut will develop an interstate plan to permanently preserve the Pawcatuck Borderlands as an un-fragmented forest.

--By 2010, we will work with local authorities and over two hundred land trusts in our three states in a program to have municipalities voluntarily designate 500 scenic vistas of our natural landscapes, our rivers and our Bays that are worthy of protection. Together we will act to assure their permanent protection for future generations through the use of easements, the resources of land trusts and other innovative devices.

--By 2010, working closely with local authorities, one-half of new residential and commercial development will be located in designated growth centers, many of which will be associated with existing cities and other once-built-up areas along our rivers and the Bay. By 2020, we will raise the ratio to two-thirds.

FOR STEWARDSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Our efforts to assure a viable future for Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and coastal Rhode Island, their rivers and the lands of their watersheds in a way that does not lose their historic character and their quality of life will be achieved only with the full support and cooperation of all. Therefore:

--We commit to the full support and participation in this effort by all executive and legislative branch agencies of the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

--We understand that education and communication with the public are keys to our success. Therefore we commit that beginning in 2005:

--by grade 5, every student will have studied water and the environment;

- by grade 8, every student will complete a hands-on project related to water and the environment; and
- clean water festivals will be held for teaching and demonstrations.

--Because our success depends on working effectively with the public, that also means engaging those governments closest to the people. Therefore, we will work cooperatively with municipal authorities to carry out these goals. In addition to state/local partnerships, we urge municipalities to join with each other and citizen organizations on a watershed basis to help achieve common goals, and to commit to a fair share of these Region-wide goals where deemed appropriate. We will lend support to such efforts.

--We will seek financial and program support and partnership from appropriate Federal agencies to meet our goals.

-- We will also engage our state legislatures and our delegations to the U.S. Congress in efforts to obtain support for this innovative and clearly stated vision for Block Island Sound and Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays, their rivers and the lands of their watersheds. We see this Agreement as a model for others to emulate, both within our states and nationwide.

FOR CELEBRATION:

--We will meet annually with the public to review and report progress toward our goals, to celebrate our successes and to recommit to what more must be done.

DRAFT

Signed this ____ day of _____, 2003, at _____, _____

For the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations:

For the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

For the State of Connecticut:

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CONSULTANT'S DRAFT

A TRI-STATE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL VISION FOR NARRAGANSETT BAY AND COASTAL RHODE ISLAND AND THEIR WATERSHEDS

Scope: In the course of developing a vision for Narragansett Bay and Coastal Rhode Island, in response to the request of the Partnership for Narragansett Bay, a number of points of consensus emerged from discussions with interested parties.

First, in order to address the environmental issues facing the Bay and coastal areas, it is necessary to deal with sources from the land and water areas comprising their watersheds. In the case of the Bay and adjacent Mount Hope Bay, over sixty percent of the drainage area is in Massachusetts. Another coastal river system, the Wood-Pawcatuck, includes a portion of Connecticut in its watershed.

Equally important, there is a strong public desire to integrate economic development issues in the vision for the region. To do so must take account of an economic zone of related job markets that includes eastern Connecticut in a sweep across Rhode Island to Fall River and beyond. Although the focus within this area is maritime and naval science and engineering, the support and related functions provide a broad base for employment.

For these two important reasons, a tri-state vision including Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut is recommended.

Vehicle: It is proposed that the vision be adopted in the form of an Agreement signed by the three Governors. The Agreement would be based on the vision document developed to date -- a short statement of common principles, with measurable goals and specific timeframes organized under a number of themes. The current set of themes includes economic development, fish and shellfish, public access, landscapes and community engagement.

Alternatives considered included adoption at the state agency level, considered insufficient to establish the necessary executive authority across government to achieve the goals. Approval of the state legislatures was also considered, but the Agreement focuses on executive actions; at the same time, there is discussion below about alternative means to engage the legislative branch. Finally, some consideration was given to a municipal approval process, but it was considered unwieldy, and, again, alternative means for local involvement were suggested and are discussed below.

There has been some consideration in Rhode Island of establishing a legislative commission on the Narragansett Bay. Given the interstate nature of the issues, a useful

prototype is the Chesapeake Bay Commission, comprised of legislators from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Each state passed coordinated enabling legislation (copies have been made available to the group developing the Vision). The Chesapeake Bay Commission is one of six signatories to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and provides a forum to discuss issues of regional importance, with the emphasis on those requiring state legislative action, e.g., the phosphate ban in detergents. In addition to legislative members, each Governor appoints a representative to the Commission. The Commission supports a small staff and research budget from state appropriations, and meets quarterly.

A less complex alternative would be the formation of a tri-state legislative caucus to meet regularly and review progress on the agreement. Whatever action is taken by the legislative branches in the three states, there is no reason to delay signing of the Agreement by the Governors and subsequent endorsement by whatever legislative institution or institutions arise.

Support for carrying out the Agreement will be primarily the responsibility of the executive branch in each state, but there may be opportunities for funding assistance from Congress, as has occurred in many other parts of the country. Therefore, a Congressional Caucus on the region covered by the Agreement should be set up to include the appropriate Representatives and the Senators from the three states. This is probably best done as a follow-up to the signing of the Agreement. There is already precedent for such cooperation in the Blackstone corridor.

Finally, current activities are underway in Rhode Island to formulate a plan for the Bay. The tri-state Agreement can be seen as one result of those efforts, and is in no way in conflict with that undertaking.

Next Steps: The current draft Agreement, a work product of months of meetings with interested parties, is considered by the Coastal Resources Center to be ready to serve as a basis for interstate negotiation of a final document.

It is recommended that a high-level tri-state negotiating team be appointed as a first step. So far, discussions have involved state economic and environmental representatives in Rhode Island, environmental representatives in Massachusetts, but neither in Connecticut. The negotiating team should, if possible, be limited to six members, two from each state representing environmental and economic development authorities. Appointees should be the Secretary/Commissioner or designees with direct access. Team members should be responsible for keeping higher-level appointees and their Governor's Office informed of progress.

The negotiating team should develop three products:

- An agreement cleared for the signatures of the three Governors;
- A "business plan" of the resources required and likely sources; and
- A structure for implementation (which could be part of the Agreement or separate)

The estimated time to achieve this is 90 days from appointment of the negotiating team, with signing scheduled for late winter or early spring, 2004.

One issue is the advisability of some form of coordinated interstate public review of the negotiated agreement before it is adopted by the Governors. After some discussion, it was concluded that, given the amount of discussion already held on the draft, additional review of the Agreement itself was probably not needed. However, once in place, there should be annual work plans to carry out the commitments in the Agreement, and these Work Plans should be subject to public review.

Implementation Structure: While the negotiating team will have the task of designing the precise implementation structure for the Agreement, a number of suggestions have emerged from discussions in the course of developing the draft vision.

Executive Council: There should be an Executive Council comprised of the signatories to the Agreement, namely the three Governors. The Council should meet annually to review progress, adjust goals and adopt new ones, as appropriate. This will serve as a major prod to the agencies to achieve their tasks on time. If an interstate legislative commission is formed, it could become a later signatory to the Agreement; in the case of the Chesapeake Commission, the chairman (who rotates from state to state each year) is an additional member of the Executive Council. An additional member could be added to represent the Federal Government, if that is seen as beneficial. The National Park Service, the U.S.Navy and the Environmental Protection Agency are active in the region, and there may be others to consider.

Secretariat to the Executive Council: In the early years of implementation of the Agreement, it is critical that someone be in charge of reporting to the Executive Council on progress and provide oversight and support. This can be a small group working closely with state officials and tracking implementation actions and timetables. It needs to be or be housed in a credible body with interstate credentials. Its interest and expertise should be in management, rather than science, advocacy or planning. It should be seen as an interim body, until more permanent institutional arrangements emerge from experience.

Longer-Term Implementation: There needs to be a tri-state Implementation Committee which meets regularly to review progress and resolve any implementation issues. Because the goals outline WHAT is to be achieved by WHEN, each state can decide within its laws and traditions HOW to achieve them. However it is important to keep each other informed and to work out any problems as they arise. It is also important to work together to allocate any resources from Congress or other non-state sources. At the outset, it makes sense for the Secretariat to chair the Implementation Committee. Meetings should probably be monthly or bi-monthly.

A second need is to develop the means to engage local governments. Because so many of the goals deal with economic development and conservation issues that are decided by cities and towns in all three states, local buy-in to the goals is critical. Among the options is establishment of a Local Government Advisory Committee; however, this requires it to be advisory to someone, which could be the Executive Council (which locals might like but would be difficult to achieve more than once a year), or the Implementation Committee (which the state agencies would prefer but the locals might not like as much). There are ways to make it work both ways.

Another approach would be to seek a subsequent agreement or set of agreements (perhaps on a sub-watershed basis) with local governments, where they would sign on to a set of goals more specifically focused on their issues of interest. This would require a major time commitment by staff. The negotiating team may want to develop other ways to engage local governments.

Finally, to make the Agreement come alive for others will require partnerships with a wide range of watershed groups, non-profits and businesses. It may also be useful to seek out Federal agencies for support. There needs to be a group -- possibly an existing organization -- to take the lead in seeking out and forming these partnerships in all three states.

DRAFT