

# **A Collective Vision and Core Principles for a Decision-making Framework for Narragansett Bay, Coastal Rhode Island and Their Watersheds**

## **Rhode Island Sea Grant, University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center**

Narragansett Bay, coastal Rhode Island and their watersheds in Rhode Island and Massachusetts are facing economic, social and environmental issues, including suburban sprawl, accelerated land development, a shortage of technical talent in the workforce, increased competition for bay resources, compromised quality of natural resources, and contradictory public policy.

In order to manage these issues, all stakeholders – politicians, developers, municipal officials, volunteers, environmentalists, educators, business leaders and individuals – must “buy in” and stake their commitment to achieving a common vision and agree upon governance principles and specific objectives that will guide decisions for Narragansett Bay and coastal Rhode Island watershed communities towards that collective vision.

### **Project Objectives**

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

### **Methodology**

**Step 1: Draft Strawman “Vision 2020 and Core Principles”:** We will draw upon the results of prior efforts that will serve as the basis of the initial draft “strawman” for *Vision 2020: A Collective Vision and Core Principles for Narragansett Bay, Coastal Rhode Island and their Watersheds* (*Vision 2020 and Core Principles*). Topics may include economic development, regional transportation, housing, watershed and water quality protection and restoration, sound land use and community engagement.

**Step 2: Conduct a consultative process with keys stakeholders in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts to enhance the structure and content of “Vision 2020 and Core Principles”:** We will organize focus groups to collect and incorporate views and opinions of individuals/experts working closely on specific social, economic and environmental issues and representing the business, environmental, direct user and scientific communities. The overall purpose of the focus groups will be to discuss the components of the draft *Vision 2020 and Core Principles*, including proposing changes, reordering the draft, and adjusting its content. This will also encourage individuals and organizations from diverse sectors of the community to begin identifying and discussing their common issues and aspirations.

**Step 3: Build broad-based input and support for “Vision 2020 and Core Principles”** We will apply survey tools to analyze the percentage of respondents from various stakeholder groups and adjust our efforts to ensure that there is widely distributed input from key stakeholder groups and both states.

**Step 4: Formulate final Vision 2020 and Core Principles (July 2003):** The final version of *Vision 2020 and Core Principles* will be placed on the PNB web site with hot links to the CRC and Rhode Island Sea Grant web sites, among others, and submitted in hard copy and in digital format to the PNB.

**Step 5: Develop a strategic plan to obtain endorsement of the Vision 2020 and Core Principles by major decision-makers in Rhode Island and Massachusetts (September 2003):** We will organize a one-day retreat for Massachusetts and Rhode Island political and non-political decision-makers for the purpose of drafting a strategic plan to obtain official endorsement of *Vision 2020 and Core Principles*.

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