

One of the charges to the RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative (EMC) in *The Comprehensive Watershed and Marine Monitoring Act of 2004* is:

"[Develop a] plan to provide data from the state marine monitoring system for disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery efforts in the marine environment;" (RIPL 46-23.2-2d)

The data requirements in environmental emergency response (EER) and natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) are more focused than those that have been defined and discussed in the context of an overall monitoring framework for the Bay, coasts, and watersheds. Emergency response and NRDA protocols require select environmental data. These data help responders identify and protect the most sensitive natural resources, measure injuries to those resources, estimate damages, and plan remediation. For example, the locations, diversity, abundance, and impact to certain species or habitats (eelgrass, shellfish, lobsters, commercially important finfish, sea birds, marine mammals) are always of high priority in emergency response management and damage assessment.

The RI Department of Environmental Management Office of Emergency Response and the URI Coastal Institute have collaborated since 2000 to develop plans and protocols for scientific response to coastal environmental emergencies (see www.ci.uri.edu/bartsci). In the summer of 2004, an administrative system was developed to rapidly engage members of the scientific community in supporting environmental emergency response. Data requirements for response and damage assessment have now been systematically compiled and vetted through the EER and scientific communities. Although RI is fortunate in having relatively current Environmentally Sensitive Index (NOAA ESI) data for the region (see www.edc.uri.edu/riesi/), there are other data that are critical in emergency response.

Therefore, the EMC recommends that the Collaborative constitutes an advisory team to accomplish three tasks:

- 1. Define the high priority data sets for environmental emergencies and NRDA.*
- 2. Assess the quality, availability, and spatial/temporal resolution of existing priority data sets identified in task 1.*
- 3. Identify data gaps and develop a proposal to fill the gaps with new or enhanced data.*

The Advisory Team will be composed of experts in environmental emergency response and natural resource damage assessment. It will be a small group, combining the expertise of university, private, and state/federal institutions – in particular, URI, Brown University, environmental consulting firms (such as ASA, SAIC), the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, the National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the Office of Emergency Response and the Office of Water Resources in the RI Department of Environmental Management. The Advisory Team will provide a report and proposal to the RIEMC by the end of 2005. This report will be included in the annual RIEMC report to the Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team in January 2006.

The cost of this task is:

Personnel (0.2 FTE for 6 months)	\$9,100
Supplies and Copying	\$1,500
In-state Travel	\$750
TOTAL	\$11,350