



**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Water Resources Board**

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Providence, RI 02908
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**December 11, 2007
Big River Management Area**

**Notice to
DEM Environmental, Local & State Law Enforcement Officials,
Other Interested and/or Affected Parties Etc.**

The Rhode Island Water Resources Board (WRB) has recently become aware of some misunderstandings regarding Big River Management Area (BRMA) use policies, specifically those dealing with public use of the area for cycling. It is important to note that there have been no changes in the BRMA public use policies pertaining to this particular activity or other public uses since the policies were adopted in 1996. There have been increased efforts to secure and protect the property, however. This was the case recently with the closure of a dead-end road to traffic to minimize illegal dumping, vandalism, etc. This protection effort will continue into the future even as the WRB reviews current use policies, seeks public input and possibly makes changes. Any changes, however, will focus on the prime purpose of the BRMA, i.e. to provide a new water supply for Rhode Island and to provide appropriate protection of that water supply.

All of the board's policies including the one that deals with both allowed and prohibited uses of the BRMA may be found at http://www.wrb.ri.gov/lawsregs/BRMA_Policies.pdf. The preface to the policies and the specific policy that deals with public use of the property is as follows:

PREFACE

The following policies have been developed to guide the Rhode Island Water Resources Board in its management of the state-owned property in the Big River Management Area. It recognizes the natural resources of the area and those public uses that are compatible with them. The plan addresses administration, operation, maintenance and development requirements as well as the budgetary demands imposed.

The Board further recognizes the present usage of the land by the original owners. Only by joint local and state concern for the natural features of the area, can the character of the region be maintained. The Board also acknowledges that all aquifers within the State must be preserved. The Big River Management Area is a water aquifer under State control and the integrity of the water quality can and must be preserved.

Furthermore, the RI Water Resources Board is committed to providing equal opportunity in every aspect of its programs and will not discriminate because of race, sex, national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

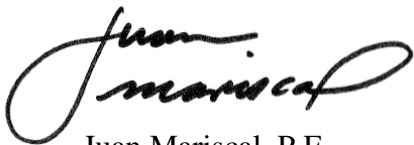
POLICY CONCERNING USE OF THE BIG RIVER MANAGEMENT AREA

Consistent with the General Assembly designation of the Big River Management Area as open space to be utilized and enjoyed by residents of the State of Rhode Island, the Water Resources Board may allow individual and organized recreational and training activities within the area. Groups and/or organizations interested in conducting such activities must submit a Big River Management Area Land Use Request Form to the Board thirty (30) days prior to the activity date. The Board requires verification of general liability insurance coverage in an amount determined by the Board and/or reserves the right to require additional information it deems necessary. Individual activities which do not require Board approval include, but are not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing of Big River and horseback riding. Activities that are forbidden include swimming, trapping, camping, off-road biking, clear-cutting, firewood cutting and canoeing on ponds. Fuel, electric motors and all terrain vehicles are forbidden in the Big River Management Area. The Board will seek the assistance of local and state law enforcement agencies in the removal/detainment of persons found engaging in unauthorized activities within the Big River Management Area. The Board cannot be held liable for any injuries sustained during voluntary recreational use of the Big River Management Area.

Again, there are no new restrictions and no actions that have been proposed regarding persons using any motorized or non-motorized vehicle on the *paved* roads of the Big River Management Area. Off-road motorized or non-motorized operation of vehicles however has been historically prohibited to eliminate associated environmental damage.

Please pass this notice on to any other persons in your organization that may have enforcement authority.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, you may contact Mr. Romeo Mendes, Supervising Civil Engineer or me at 401-574-8400.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juan Mariscal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Juan Mariscal, P.E.
General Manager

cc: Romeo Mendes, P.E. Supervising Engineer