

**RIVER NETWORK PROPOSAL FOR
OUTREACH TO WATERSHED PRACTITIONERS
Narrative Statement**

I. Introduction

We propose that River Network and EPA continue to cooperate to enhance outreach to watershed practitioners. Through this cooperation, River Network will provide watershed outreach efforts to local, state and regional practitioners which will directly benefit the public. The specific project proposed for funding is a third Northeast Watershed Round Table.

II. Background: Northeast Watershed Round Tables

In late 1996, a number of nonprofit river and watershed organizations in New England and New York approached the New England Federal Partners for Natural Resources about working together to hold the first Northeast Watershed Round Table. The purpose of that first gathering was to bring nonprofits together with federal and state agency personnel to dialogue about how to protect, manage and restore watersheds in the Northeast through integrated action among governmental and non-governmental organizations. A planning committee consisting of nonprofits and federal and state government personnel put together the program and recruited participants.

The first Round Table was held in July 1997 at the Northfield-Mt Hermon Campus in western Massachusetts. Over 150 people attended the two-day event and a good deal of excitement was generated by the lively discussions of six key issues: water quality, instream flow, habitat restoration, watershed information, riparian buffers, and watershed planning. Participants produced lists of short and long term actions to help solve problems or improve existing conditions in the watersheds

The second Round Table, in July, 1998, took up where the first left off, focusing on creating a prioritized list of recommended actions. At the top of the list was integrating growth management policies, tools, and techniques with watershed planning ; next was developing a watershed message for the region, third was protecting and restoring riparian areas, and critical to all of these was to build capacity at the local level by strengthening watershed organizations and increasing available resources.

Where there was energy and resources, working groups were formed and their accomplishments have been significant:

- a northeast listserv with 350 subscribers was created as a tool for communicating items of interest to the entire northeast watershed community.
- a funding directory for watershed groups in the northeast was produced and distributed and two “Fundraising Clinics” were held
- an In-Stream Flow Workshop for the New England states was held
- a brochure summarizing the recommendations of the Round Tables for key decision-makers, funders, and others was produced and distributed

At this point, the Round Table has developed a structure consisting of an appointed executive committee and a steering committee that is open to anyone. Because of the high priority accorded to growth management at the second Round Table, the Executive Committee is beginning to plan a third Round Table meeting for summer 2001 that will focus on integrating growth management and watershed management.

We plan to hold the third Northeast Watershed Round Table in July, 2001, at the Northfield-Mt. Hermon School, where the other two Round Tables were held.. While the overarching theme of the Round Table will be how to integrate growth management and watershed management, a second goal will be to reinvigorate the Round Table working groups and refocus priorities around the idea of Growth Management and Watersheds. Key ideas include:

- Focus on local officials
- Focus on Regional Planning Agencies to influence local officials
- Focus on the corporate community
- Develop a directory of resources on sprawl/watersheds
- Invite legislators/representatives, land trusts and universities

Scope of Work:

River Network, working cooperatively with state and regional nonprofits and state and federal governmental agencies, will serve as convener of the Round Table meetings and author of the proceedings.

River Network, as convener of the third Northeast Watershed Round Table will:

- Collaborate with the other members of the executive and steering committee to organize the Round Table. This will include coming to consensus on the location, the date and duration, and scope of the meeting.
- Implement the plans for the third Northeast Watershed Round Table that are reached by the executive and steering committee.
- Continue to move forward on the regional agenda developed at the two regional watershed round tables held in 1997 and 1998 as determined by the Northeast Watershed Round Table Steering Committee and Executive Committee. Produce a set of Proceedings that summarizes the accomplishments of the third Round Table, as well as any information that is relevant to the watershed approach and to the Clean Water Action Plan and its goal of restoring and protecting our nation's waters.

We hope that EPA can provide \$9,000 (Personnel-\$9,000) toward the cost of project work, staff time and meeting expenses involved in carrying out the activities convening the third Northeast Watershed Round Table.

III. Relationship of the project to River Network's Mission

River Network was founded in 1988 to help people organize to protect and restore rivers and watersheds. River Network is dedicated to strengthening the efforts of America's nearly 3,000 grassroots river and watershed conservation groups. From our national office in Portland, Oregon, and our office in Washington, D.C., we provide river and watershed groups with the

information, technical assistance, and strategic guidance that these grassroots conservationists need to succeed in their work.

The round table project will further River Network's mission by fostering a more integrated watershed movement in the Northeast, and providing information about innovations in watershed restoration and conservation

IV. River Network's Capabilities

Because of River Network's long history and extensive experience in convening meetings, preparing publications and disseminating information, RN has the necessary expertise to successfully carry out these projects.

Meetings Organized. In the fall of 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999, River Network convened annual forums for the leaders of river/watershed groups around the country. These weeklong meetings were attended by anywhere from 20 to 100 people. In addition, River Network organized the Watershed Innovators Workshop in June, 1995, a two-day conference for approximately 30 participants, and two Northeast Watershed Roundtables, in July of 1997 and 1998, each attended by 150 people. All of these gatherings received rave reviews from participants.

Publications. River Network has produced extensive publications including its quarterly journal, *River Voices*; *How to Save A River*; the *River Fundraising Alert*; *A Citizen's Guide to Conserving Riparian Forests*, *Protecting Instream Flows: A Resource Guide for Activists*; *The Watershed Innovators Workshop Proceedings*, *The Clean Water Act: An Owner's Manual*, and others.

VI. Budget.

The current request is for \$9,000, broken down as follows:

Personnel (\$9,000)

Northeast Watershed Forum

Project Intern: 200 hrs @ \$15/hr=\$3750

Project Coordinators: 175 hrs @ \$30/hr=\$5250