

# RCAP Project Highlights

**Where:**

Block Island, Rhode Island

**Problem:**

An island community with high seasonal demand, a small, moderate-income off-season population, and high-cost infrastructure. How to set a water rate to be fair to the year-round folks?

**Solution:**

RCAP Solutions formed an ad hoc committee to build a consensus for a water rate that would be acceptable to all. The resulting proposal lowers the burden on year-round users, yet keeps revenue stable through small increases spread among the seasonal users.



*Committee members  
reviewing budget figures*



## Problem Solving in a Unique Situation

A 55-minute ferry ride from the southernmost point in Rhode Island takes you to Block Island, which sits 12 miles offshore. The island is 7.2 miles long and 4.4 miles wide at its widest point – tiny in comparison to Long Island, and even Nantucket. The island is home to a population of 1,000 in the winter months, swelling to 20,000 during the summer. The high seasonal demand for drinking water and wastewater has necessitated that infrastructure be built that far exceeds the demands of the year-round population.

The water and sewer commissions, responding to popular demand for rate relief, turned to RCAP to advise them on a course of action that would continue to fund the system, while perhaps shifting more of the burden to seasonal users (marinas, restaurants, hotels, shops and private residences).

RCAP proposed forming an ad hoc committee made up of stakeholders from the business community and citizenry to devise a conceptual framework for a fair and equitable water rate structure. A series of working meetings resulted in a proposed rate structure in the autumn of 2007. The proposal creates eligibility criteria to identify year-around users and establishes a flat, monthly base rate for all customers. RCAP continues to meet with the commission to implement the proposal, and to facilitate public information sessions.

RCAP Solutions works with communities to address a broad range of needs, including community infrastructure, and to promote public, environmental, and economic health.

RCAP Solutions is a member of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership. RCAP is a national network of regional nonprofit organizations that provide comprehensive, on-site technical assistance and training to help small, rural communities address their drinking water, wastewater, and other community development needs.

**For more information**

Phone: (800) 488-1969

Fax: (978) 630-2751

**E-mail:**

[smueller@rcapsolutions.org](mailto:smueller@rcapsolutions.org)

[dschwartz@rcapsolutions.org](mailto:dschwartz@rcapsolutions.org)



[www.rcapsolutions.org](http://www.rcapsolutions.org)

## Additional Rhode Island Projects

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Abbey Lane Community Association	Development of O & M Manuals
Charbert, Inc.	Develop strategic plan or long range and capital improvements plan
Chimera, MHP	Develop strategic plan or long range and capital improvements plan
Paige Associates	Develop O & M plans
Echo Lake Water District	Develop O & M plans
Glendale Association	Conduct income survey
Hemlock MHP	Conduct Board Training
Heritage MH Cooperative	Establish local leadership
Maple Mill MHP	Assist with development of manuals
Narragansett Indian Tribe	Assist with loan/grant application
Quonochontaug	Develop O & M Manuals