

June 21, 2011 -- Forces of Change Discussion

One way to create change is to increase the forces driving change and decrease forces constraining change. The following include both Drivers and Constrainers of change relative to the future of water resources in New Hampshire. The list represents some of the key assumptions about the future. (*Facilitator's note: There are far more constraints than drivers. This group input is presented in a table format to make it easy to reference related potential action items and to sort by type of driver.*)

TYPE Driving/ Constraining	Description of Force	Change Action Envisioned?	Responsible Organization:
D/C	Population Growth – this includes details regarding where, how and patterns of development		
D	The need to protect water resources and infrastructure such as waste, storm, treatment, to include both concrete and green infrastructure		
D/C	Regulatory issues and permits. On the constraint side, no funding available and there are associated conflicts.		
D	Economic value of recreation and agriculture		
D	Uncertainty about future demand		
D/C	Climate Change uncertainty		
D	Permits drive water resources protection		
D	Effects of International purchase of NH water and NAFTA		
D	Major population centers could create big demand resulting in a look northward to supply towns in the south, future use of Merrimack River?		
D	Local zoning and land use planning combined with grandfathering lock people in without requiring them to upgrade surfaces		
C	Local political boundaries – we need a bridge to get us to working at the watershed level		
C	Funding at all levels – government and private		
C	Economic constraints due to regulations		
C	Public does not recognize the need to		

	regulate – takes water for granted.		
C	Impact of pollution and its acceptance as a trade-off		
C	Limited ability to have policies that allow us to look at water issues in an ecosystem or consumption context		
C	Variability among municipalities regarding zoning and water management (note: we do have an inventory of drinking water protection)		
C	Immutability of decisions in policy and regulations – can these be changes in light of new science? They need to be flexible and adaptable.		
C	Rules system is difficult to change		
C	Mindset that we can have as much water as we need		
C	We do not give water its true value – we don't invest the way we should, don't see value in wastewater and accept costs, fail to look for value in discharge. We need to challenge our assumptions.		
C	Building codes – stop more creative ways of developing		
C	Different sets of rules for tapping into groundwater		
C	Existing law does not take into account the interaction between groundwater and surface water - need systems approach		
C	We have not taken authority for all enforcement -- we have ceded some control		
C	Systems thinking		
C	What are we obligated to provide to other states		
C	Date re: quality and quantity – there are gaps especially on the quality side. We need more river gauges in order to manage.		
C	How much water will be available in the future? Not knowing how much the environment will need for ecosystems use.		

C	Voids in the regulatory framework. Grandfathered, no trigger for review. Land owned is too small to be picked up in permitting but together small parcels make an impact.		
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What do we mean by the use of the word Quality?

- Relates to use – example – drinking water has different quality standards than what is needed for wildlife
- Adequate to support and not cause harm to all “designated uses”, includes quantity. Who decides? Based on science, evolves, connected to economics, connected to in-stream flows
- How do “designated uses” (human and other uses) get applied in the regulatory scheme? Clean Water act refers to recreation, fishing and drinking.
- Decisions made on highest use it can support – new water quality standards being developed. Does grandfathering come into play here too?
- The standard in the Clean Water Act is fishable, swimmable and drinkable, but no protection of groundwater.
- Distinguish between a cup of drinkable water and the watershed. Can you have an impaired ecosystem with good water quality?
- Role of economics in quality – is it at all costs? Certainly impacted by cost.
- Quality is an aspirational goal.
- What do we want to attain – linked to cost and funding available.

Vision/Working Hypothesis Discussion

- The Vision, written in plain English will result in water sustainability.
- Start broad then refine.
- Everyone intersects with water.
- Should recognize the critical need for members of the public to be engaged
- Talk about the story of our water. What your watershed address? The story should be reflected in education and state processes. Develop sense of ownership
- The vision is sustainable water resources
- Individual and collective responsibility

Draft Vision:

Water in quality and quantity that meets the needs of people and the environment.

Guiding Principles (these are still pretty rough – will need some more conversation and polish):

- People must take personal responsibility

- Water costs need to be aligned with its broad value – both market value and potential scarcity, non-renewable. (hidden vs. true value)
- Ensure access to water needed (equity, affordability). Where are water rights embedded?
- Decisions should be made as close as possible to the user of it.
- Water is a state resource that belongs to the people – it needs to be worked on at that level. Get past municipal boundaries. Value the locals perspective. Make decisions in the context of watersheds. Working on a watershed helps towns share costs.**
- Fair allocation without depleting resources
- Bring adaptive management approach to allow for changes in science, changes in economic circumstances and changes in water availability.
- Talk about the meaning of cumulative impacts.
- Use the Governor’s Executive Order data/statistics in the vision introduction to reach into the hearts of New Hampshire citizens.
- Define the intersection of management decisions and impact on resources. (think Weeks Act and navigable rivers) Communities will still control land use but we could provide an umbrella to this reality.
- ** tie to bullet starred above – Shifting ownership of water to maintain it as a public resource re: groundwater. Public Trust Doctrine – may need legislative action to clarify and codify.

Here are three **draft vision statements** prepared by members of the Commission

1. Water is an essential statewide resource that is the responsibility of New Hampshire Citizens to protect. We should work towards an affordable quantity and quality of water to sustain New Hampshire’s citizenry, wildlife and ecosystems into the future.
2. The vision of the Water Sustainability Commission is dedicated to preserving the quality and quantity of New Hampshire’s water resources for future generations by ensuring that water resources are carefully managed to protect ecosystems and the environment, improve the quality of life and influence the state’s economy.
3. Healthy, clean water in sufficient quantity to sustain and nourish human and ecological life with a reasonable measure of security for the future needs of both at a cost that is not unduly burdensome. Decisions concerning cumulative water use shall be watershed oriented, science based and collaborative from the town resident to state agency and federal regulators.

Judy Stokes
 NH Fish and Game
 271-1738
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