**New Hampshire Water Sustainability Commission**
**Implementation Subcommittee**

February 7, 2012
Meeting Notes

Attendees: Virginia Battles-Raffa, John Gilbert, Marcy Lyman, Glenn Normandeau, and Cliff Sinnott.
Guests: Jennifer Rowden and Bill Hounsell

## I. Draft implementation matrix contents

The subcommittee continued discussion on the draft matrix of topics, issues, and recommendations outlined at previous meetings, specifically focusing on topic areas that had not been addressed at the January 24th meeting (see Appendix A). Discussion regarding the matrix included following comments:

- Adding issues and recommendations regarding the value and cost of water should wait until after the Commission hears from experts on that topic at the March meeting.
- All of the topics outlined are related, i.e. if 80% of water quality impairments are cause by stormwater then recommendations to address stormwater also address water quality.
- What really is critical in the next 25 years? Is addressing climate change critical for the whole state or just the coastal communities (minus the impact of extreme precipitation)?
- Stressing integration in watershed regulations and management is important.
- Based on the experience with the Leadership NH attendees, the general public's knowledge of water and water cost issues is very limited to non-existent so getting them to value water makes this Commission's work and recommendations more difficult.
- In order to get the public to be willing to pay for water goes back to communicating the value of water. If the public understands the value of water that will help to create the political will to pay for it or to enact measures to protect it.
- Education, outreach and communication will need to be part of the recommendations at many levels and be continuous to some degree.
- The current regulations to protect or pay for water are medium specific rather than outcome specific. For example, to protect drinking water DES has regulations regarding how hazardous waste should be stored with the assumption that it will protect the water from the hazardous waste. This is a prescriptive regulation, rather than a goal oriented regulation. Perhaps the regulations need to be changed to be more goal-oriented.
- While the Commission is mainly tasked to look at items at the state level and smaller, there is also a need to look across state boundaries since many of New Hampshire's water issues may come from somewhere else or impact other states downstream.
- The Commission needs to determine where it can add value and help to integrate all of the work of the previous commissions and other know information. What can we recommend that will impact the issues now, in two years, ten years, etc? The key may be to identity why many of the other commissions' recommendations were not implemented and how to deal with them.

## II. Commission recommendations and approach for 2/14 meeting:

Discussion around what the subcommittee would like to achieve at the February 14th Commission meeting and how the Commission can add value as a whole included:

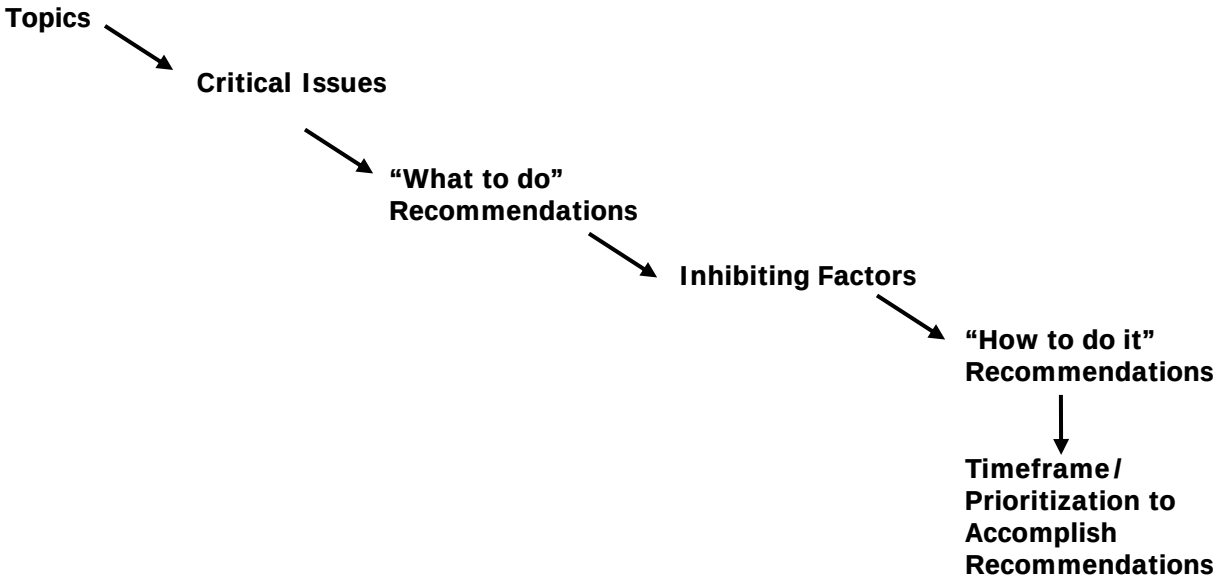
- Consensus on the topic areas and major issues.
- Agreement on what key items need to be addressed.
- Identification of the factors stopping those issues from being addresses.
- Outlining a strategy to overcome those inhibiting factors.

The subcommittee agreed that it was necessary to key in on the overlapping issues and to keep the list of inhibiting factors for addressing those issues relatively small (5-10 roughly) in order to keep the

Commission's final list of recommendations manageable. John suggested the subcommittee explain the logic of their proposed topics, recommendations, approach, etc. though the lenses of "what do we have to do in the next 25 years to address these problems or else it will be too late to do anything?"

- What are the critical topic areas?
- What issues must be addressed in the next 25 years?
- What has been recommended that needs to be done, i.e. what is "known"?
- What factors have inhibited those recommendations from being accomplished?
- What needs to be addressed or changed to overcome those inhibiting factors?
- What is the timeframe (immediately, short-term, mid-term, long-term) these recommendations need to be accomplished within to help address the critical issues?

General outline of the proposed structure for the Commission to outline its recommendations:




Two suggested ways to breakdown general topic areas:

| List 1 | List 2 |
|---|---|
| Watershed Management and Planning | Water Access and Rights |
| Water Ownership and Value of Water | Value and Cost of Water |
| Water Infrastructure - Drinking Water, Wastewater, Dams and Stormwater | Integrated Watershed Planning |
| Non-point Source Pollution - Stormwater Runoff and Water Quality | Adaptive Management |
| Floods, Drought, and Climate Change - Adaptive Management | Infrastructure Investment and Design |
| Adequacy of Water Supply - Water Quantity | Applied Science and Policy Decision-making |
| Water Quality | |

**Action Item:** For the next full Commission meeting, John will ask each Commission member to identify two recommendations they have at this point based on the information presented thus far. The implementation subcommittee will present the two sets of topic areas, and the issues and recommendations drafted by the subcommittee to the Commission at the next meeting for discussion. The implementation subcommittee members will then walk the Commission through the proposed process for how the Commission may be able to add value and prioritize recommends for addressing these issues using one or two examples.

## Appendix A - Implementation Subcommittee Issues and "What to Do" Recommendations

| Topic | Issue | "What to Do" Recommendation | Source of Recommendation, if applicable |
|---|---|---|---|
| Watershed Management and Planning (Virginia) | 1) Watershed management issues spread over multiple jurisdictional areas/levels/programs/agencies | Integration of state watershed management | |
| | 2) Watersheds cross state and municipal boundaries | | |
| Water Ownership and Value of Water (Marcy) | *To be addressed in March after the Commission hears form experts on the true cost of water and the value of water.* | | |
| Water Infrastructure - Drinking Water, Wastewater, Dams and Stormwater (Bob) | 1) Water infrastructure is aging at a faster rate than it is being replaced | 1) Implement asset management and capital improvement programs to maintain and upgrade water infrastructure. | Primer |
| | 2) Inadequate funding resources are available for replacing or improving water infrastructure. | 2) Determine and implement long term funding strategies to improve deteriorating infrastructure. | Primer |
| | 3) Federal and state regulations on water and wastewater systems are becoming increasingly difficult (expensive? burdensome?) to meet, particularly for smaller systems. | 3) Investigate regional or partnership approaches to improving small system financial, technical and managerial capacity to sustain state and federal regulations. | Primer |
| | 4) The impacts on water infrastructure resulting from land use changes and climate change (i.e., increased runoff, increased flooding and drought, increased demand). | 4) Provide assistance from State and Federal Government to better understand and prepare for the impacts of land use and climate change. | Primer |
| | 5) Lack of public understanding about the costs and impacts of maintaining (or not maintaining) water infrastructure. | 5) Prepare and implement educational programs that improve outreach and public awareness of the benefits, risks and environmental protection provided by water infrastructure. | Primer |
| Non-point Source Pollution - Stormwater Runoff and Water Quality (Cliff) | 1) Land conversion from forested landscape to impervious surfaces | Continue active state. local and private land conservation and protection efforts (with a 25% protected landscape goal?) | Multiple: Primer, SPNHF, many others |
| | 2) Lack of adequate riparian buffers | Maintain and strengthen CSPA and augment with local shoreland and non-isolated wetland buffer protections | Primer, Land Use Commission, others |
| | 3) Cumulative effect of multiple, dispersed, larger unregulated pollution sources | Implement integrated watershed planning approaches that integrate point and non-point remedies to address impaired waters status | Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, EPA, DES |
| | 4) Inadequate understanding of sources and effective management / mitigation techniques | Encourage development and redevelopment which limits the addition of impervious surface (i.e. smart growth) | Primer, general Smartgrowth principles, OEP, DES, RPCs |
| | 5) Inadequate and inconsistent regulatory framework and funding for implementation | Require best-practice storm water management and low-impact-development techniques for all new development and redevelopment. | Primer |

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| Floods, Drought, and Climate Change - Adaptive Management (John) | 1) Increased frequency of extreme weather events results in more frequent and more severe flooding | Establish suitable network of stream gages (automated?) to enable collection of data regarding flow characteristics, targeting flood prone areas. Use gaging and improved topographic data to upgrade flood mapping. Revise flood mitigation/response plans accordingly. | |
| | 2) Changes in precipitation patterns can result in more frequent and prolonged droughts (e.g., snowless winters coupled with earlier runoff while ground is frozen). | Encourage interconnection of water infrastructure to allow towns to diversify and share water sources. Develop mechanisms for capturing, storing, and recharging runoff from extreme weather events. Fund research regarding bedrock aquifer recharge dynamics to protect 60% of citizens dependent on bedrock sources. Establish clear hierarchy of need and vest appropriate regional (i.e., watershed, state) enforcement authority. | |
| | 3) Climate changes will result in increased frequency of extreme weather events (addressed in stormwater and flood/drought recs), changes in water quality, and invasive species issues. | Develop adaptive management programs to address possible adverse impacts in coastal zones due to sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, and water quality impacts associated with runoff. | |
| Adequacy of Water Supply - Water Quantity (Cliff) | 1) Protection of existing and future surface and groundwater water supply sources | Continue and expand DES source water supply program and increase leverage with local and NGO land conservation activities. | |
| | 2) Preparing for increased frequency and severity of drought as a consequence of climate change | Development state and local adaptation plans for water supply, addressing storage, supply buffers, drought management procedures, system interconnections | |
| | 3) Managing competing demands between domestic and commercial water supply, and between private and public water supply | (Placeholder for a recommendation addressing prioritization / allocation / fair use of water supply among competing users) | |
| | 4) Making adequate investment in aging water supply infrastructure | Increase availability of state revolving loan fund and matching grant assistance to public water supply systems, funding through user fees | |
| | 5) Ensuring safety of private well water supply | Implement private well testing requirements at property sale or transfer | |
| Water Quality (John) | 1) Storm water quality impacts need to be addressed. | See stormwater recs. | |
| | 2) Develop capacity to monitor regional source water WQ patterns for early indications of changes requiring intervention. | Establish routine head/source water WQ monitoring programs and interactive databases (use volunteer effort to sample?). Establish regional (watershed/State) authority to implement corrective action. | |