

MEETING NOTES
Public Engagement Working Group
Water Sustainability Commission
February 27, 2012

The meeting was held at the offices of Baldwin and Callen in Concord, NH.

Commission members present: Denise Hart, John Gilbert, Amy Manzelli, Marcy Lyman
Guests: Paul Susca/DES staff, Courtney Otto, Cindy Otto

The notes from the previous meeting were approved.

John Gilbert provided background on the purpose and work of the Commission to Courtney Otto, a student at Bishop Guertin High School who was attending the meeting as part of an assignment for a Civics class.

Issues discussed:

1) Update on NH Listens and public engagement sessions: Marcy updated the group on a revised budget that NH Listens provided following the news that one of our grant proposals was not funded that will allow the project to move ahead with the 5 sessions originally planned but with stakeholders and general public invited together. The subcommittee members agreed to integration of stakeholders and public into each session.

ACTION: Denise will follow up with Molly Donovan from NH Listens.

2) Outreach Events: The group discussed two opportunities for Governor to make proclamation regarding water: World Water Day (March 22) and Earth Day (April 22). Paul will be moderating the workshop panel at the Water and Watersheds conference March 23; Denise & Molly are scheduled to present.

ACTION: John will work with Governor's office. Denise will develop suggested language incorporating call for sustainable water management, thinking like a watershed and forward to John.

3) Water Stories: Several stories were submitted by commissioners and DES and discussed including: Southeast Watershed Alliance, Great Bay Municipal Coalition, Seacoast 42 Community Groundwater Study, Samuel A. Tamposi Water Supply Reserve (Barrington), Save Our Groundwater, Maxwell Pond Dam/Black Brook in Manchester, Agricultural issues, Green Mountain Conservation Group, Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative, Pat's Peak/mitigation, Gorham NH's Town forest/water supply, Ossipee Watershed Coalition, White Mountain National Forest. Headwater/watershed projects (Umbagog, Connecticut River Headwaters), Save our Shores (1970's – proposed siting of oil refinery in Great Bay and citizen response).

The group discussed categories of stories including need/opportunities for stories about:

- 1) Water systems (municipal – Manchester, Gorham, Keene, Concord, Pennichuck)
- 2) Watershed collaboration/technical assistance and support
- 3) Industrial sector (water users) – green infrastructure
Pat's Peak, Monadnock Paper

Other themes that were suggested include: infrastructure vulnerabilities (e.g. Alton Dam), impacts of international trade treaties, out of basin transfers, ownership of water systems (foreign/private/out-of-state e.g. Hampton), need to balance uniqueness between municipalities with need/desire for uniformity.

It was suggested that we look for gaps in stories, where work is NOT being done (either geographically within individual watersheds, or substantively in the categories).

Process: In addition to substantive issues for stories, the group discussed the need for each story to be consistent in form: short (500 words or less), accessible language and the story should stand on its own. There was a suggestion that each story be accompanied by a short (one sentence) description of what the story illustrates – why it's a good story. Denise suggested, however, that we need to make sure that through all of them that we communicate that water issues are layered and illuminate through the stories the complexities and why understanding those complexities matters. Amy suggested to have a small number of stories that are told from different perspectives.

The issue of how to use the stories was discussed. The group identified three target outlets for the stories:

- 1) Governor's office – to use in speeches, press etc.
- 2) Commission's report
- 3) Background material for NH Listens sessions

It is the intention of the subcommittee that the full Commission will be sent the revised water stories for review and comment before using them publicly.

Other discussion around water stories included the following:

- 1) There was a proposal to create displays (board, computer set-up for short videos) for the Listening Sessions/Water Conference using water stories, stock photos (DES, Cameron Wake?)

ACTION: Denise will talk with Molly to see if the visual component could be incorporated into the sessions.

- 2) Other opportunities and resources were suggested: Agriculture, White Mountain National Forest, coordination of technical assistance to watersheds (Ossipee Watershed Coalition). The Water Conflict Chronology (Pacific Institute) has one point in NH (blasting of a dam in the 1850's) and the Museum of NH History had an exhibit on water – need to look at their archives and see if any of the exhibit is available for use.

The next meeting of the Public Engagement Working Group was scheduled for **March 20 at Fish and Game from 12-2; bring a bag lunch.** (before the next Commission meeting)

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.