

**DRAFT**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**NEW HAMPSHIRE WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION**  
**May 15, 2012**

**New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services**  
**Concord, NH**

**Commissioners in attendance:**

Virginia Battles-Raffa  
Kris Blomback  
John Boisvert  
Thomas Burack  
John Gilbert, Chair  
Denise Hart  
Michael Licata  
Marcy Lyman, Vice Chair  
Amy Manzelli  
Glenn Normandeau  
Cliff Sinnott  
Chuck Souther  
Alison Watts

**Commissioners not in attendance:**

Dave Allen

**Public in attendance:**

Thomas Buco, Conway Fire Village District  
Henry Deboer, Epping Water and Sewer  
Commission  
Ted Diers, NHDES  
Bill Housel, CDM Smith  
Wayne Ives, NHDES  
Robert Morency, RCAP Solutions  
Sarah Pillsbury, NHDES  
Jennifer Rowden, NHDES  
Paul Susca, NHDES

***Chairman John Gilbert called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.***

**I. April 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes**

A motion to accept the April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes was made by Amy Manzelli and seconded by John Boisvert. The motion passed unanimously with Glenn Normandeau abstaining.

**II. NH Listens May 8<sup>th</sup> Sessions Follow-up**

Denise asked Commissioner members who attended one of the public listening sessions on May 8<sup>th</sup> to give an overview of who attend, what was said, and what they thought about the NH Listens process. Commission members gave the following feedback for the sessions:

**Attendance** - Those in attendance at most of the locations were mainly those who deal with water more than the average citizen. The range of attendees was from professionals to volunteers to elected officials to students. Manchester and Greenland had the most attendees and many were professionals or well informed citizens.

**Facilitation** – The skill level of facilitators varied widely with some able to ensure everyone had an opportunity to speak and some facilitators allowing the conversations to become a debate. A main suggestion was the need to have a facilitator and a note taker to keep the facilitator from doing both, which distracted from the conversation.

**Discussion** – Several Commission members noted that participants largely whittled down the issues to what the Commission has been discussing all along. The issue of funding came up at all the locations. The following topics were specifically mentioned during the discussions:

- The need for education about water and integration of water into education curriculum.
- Managing at a watershed level.
- Infrastructure funding.
- Balancing water use and regulations.
- Frustration with the ineffectiveness of existing laws.
- Understanding the land and water connection.

- Recognition that the issues in various regions are different.
- Questions about who owns the water and water privatization.
- Issues related to private wells.
- How is water infrastructure going to be fund and who is going to pay for it.
- Innovative funding sources need to be considered.
- The need for information about water on a more refined scale.
- Security surrounding water infrastructure.
- To be successful in this endeavor, the public needs to value water.

NH Listens sent out an initial summary of the recommendations to come out of the May 8<sup>th</sup> sessions locations (Appendix A). Denise will forward the NH Listens event evaluation form to Commissioners and request their feedback so it may be passed along to NH Listens.

### **III. June Stakeholder Session**

The June stakeholder session is designed to be similar to the public listening sessions, but geared towards water professionals. Denise explained that NH Listens will be assisting with this event, but to a lesser extent than with the public listening sessions. The event is currently scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 5:00 PM; however, a location that can accommodate 150 to 200 people has not been finalized. Commission members discussed the merits of keeping the date, or trying to a different date due to the conflict with the Business and Industry Association & DES event on the same day.

Denise described the preliminary structure for the session:

1. Provide attendees with an overview of the Commission's work and the NH Listens final report on the May sessions (which will be available by then).
2. Ask them if these are the key messages/recommendations and what are the priorities.
3. Ask them to identify what the barriers are to accomplishing them.
4. Ask them to identify what indicators should be used (and where the data is if it exists).
5. Provide an evaluation at the end of the session.

The Commission members asked for clarification on details and offered slight modifications to improve the flow of the session. The Public Engagement subcommittee requested the full Commission give the subcommittee the authority to move forward with the above outline structure, with the incorporation of the suggestions posed at the meeting. Today's meeting is the last prior to the session. A motion was made by Kris Blomback and seconded by Glenn Normandeau; the motion passed unanimously.

The Public Engagement subcommittee has also been asked if it might consider holding a public listening session in the Lakes Region. While budget constraints will not allow for this, a group in the Belmont region has offered to host the Commission's July meeting and the Commission could hold a longer public comment period. Assuming an adequate space can be found, no Commission member had an objection to holding the July meeting in the Lakes Region.

Finally, the subcommittee requested the Commission's input about holding a formal public comment period during June. The public would be encouraged to comment on specific topics the Commission is addressing in addition to providing general comments. The Commission gave the Public Engagement subcommittee to the approval move forward with the comment period.

### **IV. Southeast Watershed Alliance Overview**

Alison Watts and Ted Diers provided an overview of the Southeast Watershed Alliance (SWA), an organization established by statute in 2009 to help the coastal watershed municipalities coordinate and address intermunicipal water issues (See Appendix B). Ted provided a brief history of the enabling legislation, emphasizing that the ability for municipalities to cooperate on issues was already in RSA 9-B, and this was the attempt to focus that cooperation on water quality issues. Alison gave an overview of SWA's work to date, including the 2011 SWA Symposium that brought researchers working in watershed

together and SWA beginning to develop model stormwater standards for use by New Hampshire coastal watershed communities.

According to Ted, Alison and others Commission members involved with SWA, the main challenges for SWA moving forward include:

- The all-volunteer nature of the organization means it is difficult to get work done if no one has the time or interest. Currently, there is not funding for any staffing.
- SWA only works on those issues for which there is funding, members with interest/expertise or both. It, therefore, functions as more opportunistic, and less strategic.
- Having representation from all the municipalities is still a challenge.
- Difficulty in getting municipalities with varying priorities and challenges to focus on specific issues.
- Municipalities fear the loss of autonomy and control with collaborations like this unless the benefit is very clear.
- If SWA is ever going to be funded through the state or communities, then it needs to be seen as having momentum and a clear purpose.

Commission members discussed the flexible nature of the SWA-enabling legislation. The flexibility is a benefit that will allow SWA to adapt to changing issues and priorities, but it is a challenge to get municipalities to see the purpose and benefit of joining. Ted described that this type of legislatively enabled municipal cooperation is a two-step process: one, is to foster general cooperation, and secondly, to build something (such as a multi-town sludge hauling facility). The SWA is only at the beginning of step one, but there is enough momentum to keep progressing forward. The Commission discussed that SWA is a good example of watershed-based management occurring in New Hampshire and some of the complexities of pursuing that approach. If the Commission recommends it as the model, there needs to be consideration about the funding and support such entities receive.

## **V. Final Deliverable Discussion**

Given the fast approaching September deadline, the Commission needs to begin to finalize its deliverable to the Governor and the approach to rolling it out. John and Marcy asked Commission members to provide feedback on the mock report outline developed by Sarah Pillsbury to give them a starting point. Comments included the following:

- The approach does not rehash all of the other reports and recommendations which is a positive. This can be used as an educational/ marketing tool.
- Questions about how the results from the NH Listens process would be incorporated into this structure.
- Short, digestible documents like the mockup are needed, but a longer report with all the details also needs to be created so the details the Commission has looked at do not get lost.
- Suggested appendices included the NH Listens report, the list of recommendations from all the water-related commissions, example/stories and the Commission's minutes.
- The recommendations the Commission feels are most important need to be highlighted.
- The report needs to include key next steps, actions to be taken, and responsibility assigned to different entities.

For additional comments regarding the mockup report, Commissioners were asked to submit them to Virginia. Members of the Implementation subcommittee will work with additional Commission members on the deliverable and rollout.

## **VI. Public Comments**

The public in attendance at the meeting provided the following comments to the Commission:

- Thomas Bucu, Conway Village Fire District Commissioner, submitted two letters for the Commission's consideration. The letters are to DES Commissioner Burack and Governor Lynch regarding the need to reinstate the state aid grants for water and wastewater systems for the 2014/2015 state budget (Appendix C). Conway Village Fire District was awarded funding in April to interconnect with the Conway Wastewater Treatment Facility which will eliminate its discharge into the Saco River. The town leveraged the funds for this with the state aid grant funds, for which payments back to the towns are on hold.
- Bill Hounsel, CDM Smith, stated that the Southeast Watershed Alliance is a good model, and helps to unite municipalities. However, the state needs to contribute funds in order for municipalities to tackle and leverage additional funding for water and wastewater projects.
- Henry Deboer, Epping Water and Sewer Commission, stated that there is a need for New Hampshire to promote using water wisely and to its economic advantage. People get tired of hearing about water conservation, but using water wisely gets to the same point. DES advising towns more regarding rates would be helpful. Promoting more education through programs such as the chemical monitoring waiver program would be good. The program provides incentives for systems to save money through reduced testing if they qualify, but requires educational material to be distributed as part of it.

## **VII. Upcoming Meetings**

Marcy and John discussed the need for the Commission and subcommittees to start meeting more often. The suggested schedule will be to meet twice in July and twice in August with the final report rollout the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week in September. A poll will be sent out to Commission members regarding their ability for dates for upcoming meetings.

***Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.***

***The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 19, 2012 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This will be the water stakeholders meeting. The location of the meeting is pending.***

## Appendix A – NH Listens Report

*The following summary was sent to participants on Friday May 11, 2012*

### Key Issues and Recommendations from May 8th Water Conversation

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#### *Education and Public Awareness of Water Issues*

- The need for public education and awareness on water issues was noted repeatedly across groups and sites.
- Participants emphasized education for all ages and residents, including tourists.
- Informative PSAs could help raise awareness across the state
- Give decision makers access to experts
- Emphasize conservation in education efforts

#### *Management, Coordination and Protection of Water Resources*

- Move toward watershed-based water management (across political boundaries)
- Create a statewide water plan based on quality information
- State and local entities need to work together
- Address and plan for concerns about water security and water ownership
- Share data broadly
- Support innovation: e.g., wastewater reuse,

#### *Regulation and Incentives for Conservation*

- Focus regulation on the common good
- Keep in mind that one size does not fit all (differences in northern and southern NH, for example)
- Need regulation that considers the long term and that incentivizes conservation and responsibility of property owners
- Support and reward research and innovation
- Update legal and political infrastructures for conservation and long term planning

#### *Create a Funding Structure for Long Term and Proactive Investments*

- Charge a price for water that is reflective of the cost, including infrastructure maintenance
- Create funding stream for capitol repairs
- Consider long term funding needs and begin to address resource issues
- Need to invest proactively

**Compiled by NH Listens for the  
Governor's Water Sustainability Commission**  
[www.nhlistens.org](http://www.nhlistens.org)

*Bringing people together for engaged conversations and informed community solutions*

## **Appendix B - Southeast Watershed Alliance Overview**

### **Vision**

Healthy coastal water resources that provide a balance between social, environmental, and economic benefits, in keeping with State and Federal regulations.

### **Mission**

The mission of the SWA is to establish a regional framework for Piscataqua coastal watershed communities, regional planning commissions, the state and other stakeholders, to collaborate on planning, and implementation measures to improve and protect water quality and more effectively address the challenges of meeting clean water standards.

### **Enabling Legislation**

TITLE L WATER MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION. CHAPTER 485-E SOUTHEAST WATERSHED ALLIANCE  
Section 485-E:1 Findings and Purpose.

I. New Hampshire's coastal water resources have significant ecological, commercial, cultural, and recreational values for the state and its citizens. The state's coastal water resources are highly sensitive and are subject to intense and increasing pressures associated with population growth and development, including increased pollution loads from many sources, including wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater runoff, septic systems, and land use practices. Excess levels of nutrients are of particular concern, have become a significant problem in the Great Bay estuary, and are likely to result in more stringent water quality requirements that could affect activities occurring in municipalities throughout the coastal watershed. In order to improve and protect water quality and meet state and federal regulations, it is necessary for municipalities to reduce nutrient pollution loads from wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater runoff, septic systems and septage, and land use practices. It is essential that the state, and municipalities located within the state's coastal watershed, work in a coordinated way to address these problems and protect the health and sustainability of New Hampshire's coastal resources.

II. The purposes of this chapter are to:

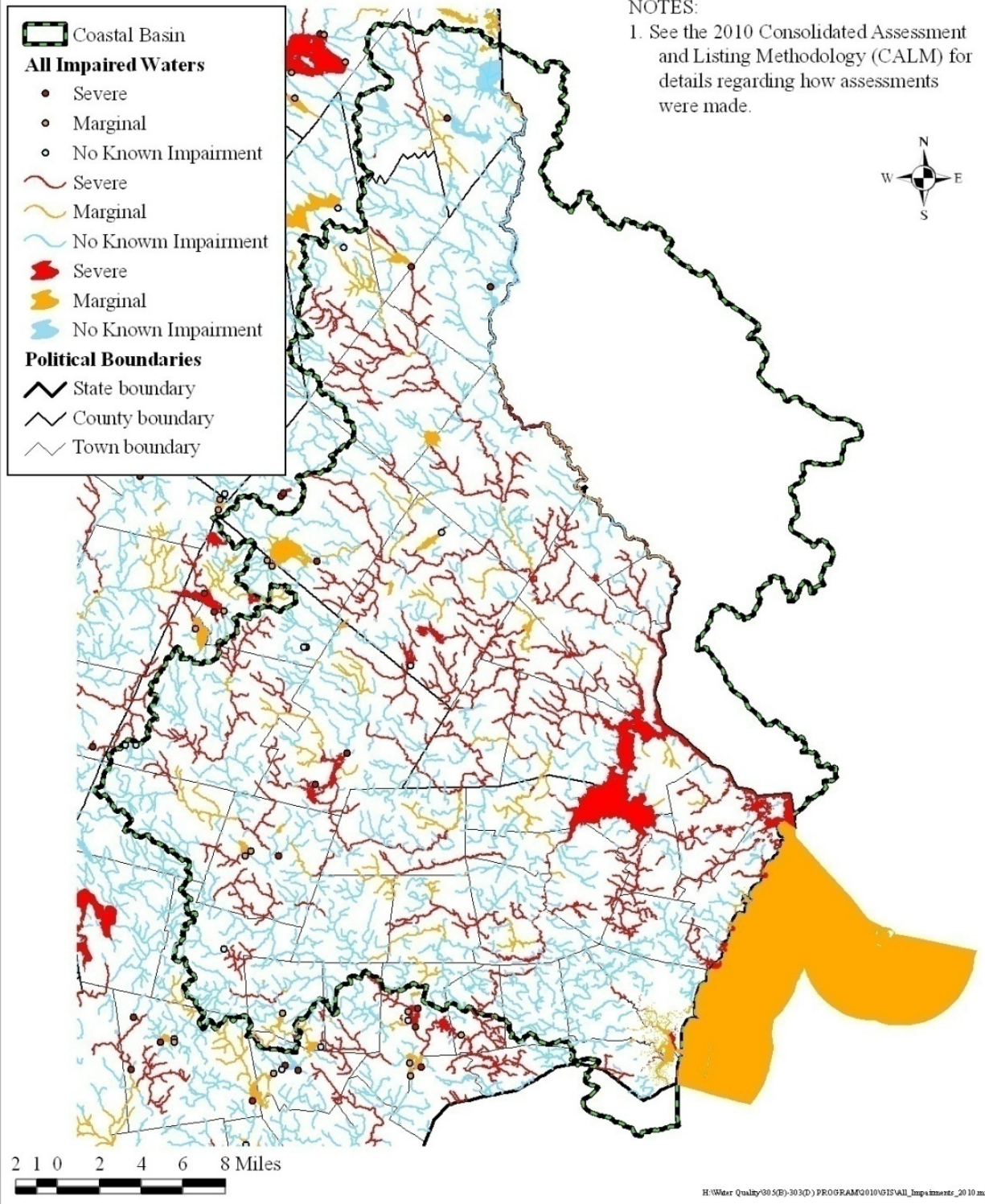
(a) Create better municipal, intermunicipal, and regional planning and coordination relative to wastewater and stormwater management, water quality and water supply planning, and land use;

(b) Establish a regional framework for coastal watershed communities, regional planning commissions, the state, and other stakeholders to collaborate on planning and implementation measures to improve and protect water quality and more effectively address the challenges of meeting clean water standards, particularly with respect to nutrients pollution;

(c) Encourage coastal watershed municipalities, the state, and other stakeholders, individually and in collaboration with one another, to plan, implement, and invest in wastewater, stormwater, and land use planning and management approaches that protect the water quality, natural hydrology, and habitats of the state's coastal resources and associated waters and that advance the state's economic growth, resource protection, and planning policy, established in RSA 9-B; and

(d) Seek innovative solutions to reducing pollution and enhancing water quality.

## 2010, All New Hampshire Impaired Waters



**Appendix C –Letter submitted by Thomas Buco, Conway Village Fire District Commissioner.**