

Meeting Notes
NEW HAMPSHIRE WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
Deliverable Working Session

July 24, 2012
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
Concord, NH

Commissioners in attendance:

John Boisvert
Kris Blomback
John Gilbert, Chair
Denise Hart
Michael Licata
Marcy Lyman, Vice Chair
Glenn Normandeau
Cliff Sinnott
Chuck Souther
Alison Watts

Commissioners not in attendance:

Dave Allen
Virginia Battles-Raffa
Thomas Burack
Amy Manzelli

Public in attendance:

Sarah Pillsbury, NHDES
Jennifer Rowden, NHDES
Paul Susca, NHDES
William Housell, CDM Smith

I. Update

John G. reviewed the discussion from the last meeting and updated the group that the Governor's level of involvement is still not known. Given the discussion from the last meetings, the rollout and content groups elected to meet together given the cross-over of the two groups.

II. Content Discussion

A. Goals & Recommendations

The group discussed the need to be clear with the goals and recommendations. For example, goal one may be emphasizing watershed planning, but there is a need to acknowledge its practical limitations. The group discussed the merits of moving towards holistic watershed-based permitting, the different components of watershed management (ecological, regulatory, etc.), and the varying needs of different regions and municipalities.

Additional comments about the goals and recommendations included:

- What steps can be take now (and into the future) that will be more cost effective?
- Planning and permitting efforts at the watershed scale may be more cost efficient.
- There should be more emphasis on utilizing or expanding existing inter-municipal water efforts such as the volunteer local river advisory committees or the business model of the Winnepesaukee River Basin Program. Incentives for collaborative models such as these should be developed.
- Behavior change is what the Commission is looking for long-term and making tangible suggestions in the report is needed.
- Municipalities need resources, including technical assistance, and DES does not have the capacity to fill all of those needs.
- Incremental incentives are needed for targeted audiences.
- Recommendations need to be simple and realistic. People want to know they can do A, B or C to help. It is also important to show them why, possibly with stories.
- Need to point out that part of sustainability is economic, particularly for infrastructure. Municipalities working together is economically efficient; the soon to be release Stratham and Exeter water and wastewater infrastructure study illustrates this.
- Call out these examples in a case study.

Denise expressed concern about the lack of mention of pressures from outside of New Hampshire, particularly international pressures that may potentially impact our water resources (specifically the commoditization of water). Some members felt the issue was too broad given the Commission's scope and others felt the issue was address in the general statement regarding ensuring the state's water laws are sufficient. For now, the group discusses simply flagging the concern as an uncertainty that may need to be looked into.

B. Purpose & Findings

Commission members agreed that the reason for the Commission's existence and why these recommendations are being made needs to be better emphasized in the report. There is a perception that water in the state is all right, but the Commission members want to highlight that this will not be the situation in the future unless changes are made now. The "why" component needs to be more compelling. The areas discussed included infrastructure funding, water rights/ownership, extreme weather events, and the cost of protection versus restoration.

The group discussed how to present the Commission's findings in a way that does not minimize what the public said, the work of the other commissions, and provides evidence that helps convince people that change is needed or is occurring. Sarah offered DES assistance with finding the statistics the help support the Commission's statements once they are drafted. The facts used should emphasis that water is an asset to the state.

C. Next Steps

The following tasks were outlined to be completed before the next deliverable meeting in August.

- Refinement on why the Commission is looking at the issues it is looking at. (John B. and Alison will draft this to be sent out prior to the August 14th meeting.)
- Outlining the general findings of the Commission and basic facts to support them. (Cliff will draft and work with Sarah to come up with facts and charts to illustrate them.)
- Chairman's overview. (John G. will draft.)
- Logo for the report and future related actions. (John B. will work with Sarah to develop some logo choices for the full Commission to consider.)

The group also discussed future activities to take place after the Commission has ended or as part of the rollout. Suggestions included:

- Development of a New Hampshire water prize. (Marcy will continue to explore this idea.)
- A video contest (for high school students?) for illustrating why water is important in New Hampshire.
- Development of a coalition or advisory committee of organizations that focus on water to help carry out the Commission's ideas. John G. thought the Water Council could potentially serve this function as it already has the legislative authority already.

III. Upcoming Meetings

The following dates and times were proposed for upcoming Commission meetings:

- **8/14** – Deliverable Teams Meeting
- **8/21** – Regular WSC Meeting
- **9/6** – Deliverable Teams Meeting
- **9/11** – Regular WSC Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 14, 2012 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m, at the Department of Environmental Services