

**Sustainable Water Management Initiative
Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
April 27, 2010
DRAFT**

Attendees

Committee Chairs: Laurie Burt, MADEP; David Cash, EEA; Mary Griffin, MADFG; Jonathan Yeo for Rick Sullivan, MADCR

Committee Members: Kathy Baskin, EEA; Lee Breckenridge, Northeastern Univ.; Jack Buckley, MADFG; Anne Carroll, MADCR; Alan Cathcart, Mass Water Works Assoc.; Mike Domenica, CH2M Hill; Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA; Nancy Goodman, Environmental League of Mass.; Phil Guerin, Worcester DPW; Glenn Haas, MADEP; Michael Hanlon, ACEC-MA; Scott Horsley, Horsley & Whitten; Raymond Jack, Town of Falmouth; Jeff Lafleur, Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Assoc.; Ken Moraff, USEPA; Peter Newton, SEA for Jon Beekman; Jennifer Pederson, Mass Water Works Assoc.; Martin Pillsbury, Metropolitan Area Planning Commission; Peter Shelley, Conservation Law Foundation; Mark Smith, Nature Conservancy; Margaret Van Deusen, Charles River Watershed Assoc.; Tom Walsh, Upper Blackstone WPAD; Peter Weiskel, US Geological Survey

Other Attendees: Ralph Abele, USEPA; Sue Beede, Mass Rivers Alliance; Julia Blatt, Mass Rivers Alliance; Alison Bowden, Nature Conservancy; John Clarkeson, EEA; Sara Cohen, DCR; Garry Crago, Trout Unlimited; Karen Crocker, MADEP; Jeff Davis, Donahue Center; Jen D'Urso, MADEP; Lucy Edmondson, MADEP; Richard Friend, MADEP; David Gold, Wilmer Hale; Linda Hutchins, MADCR; Steve Kaiser, Assoc. of Cambridge Neighborhoods; Tom Lamonte, MADEP; Duane LeVangie, MADEP; Steve Long, Nature Conservancy; Kerry Mackin, Ipswich River Watershed Assoc.; Elizabeth McCann, MADEP; Rosemary Powers, MADEP; Tim Purinton, MADFG; Vandana Rao, EEA; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon; Jordyn Rozensky, Brandeis; Marcia Sherman, MADEP; Becky Smith, Clean Water Action; Mettie Whipple, Eel River Watershed Assoc.

April 27 Meeting Objectives

- Provide advice on possible short-term goals, how these goals would be established, and how they would be applied.
- Establish a working group to examine statutory, regulatory and other implementation mechanisms.

Update on Technical Subcommittee

April 13 Technical Subcommittee meeting included -

- Presentation of the USGS accelerated Fish and Habitat study results and how study results can be used to support the SWMI
 - Final accelerated study report is due in July on the web
 - Published final is due in September
 - Final publication of the complete Fish and Habitat Study is scheduled for September 2011
- Presentation of refined approach to classification, including new ideas and Advisory Committee feedback.
- Approval from the Subcommittee to move forward with proposed classification approach, performing two pilot exercises. The SuAsCo and Nashua basins have been recommended by staff.
 - The SuAsCo and Nashua basins have been recommended by staff because of their diverse characteristics
 - SuAsCo/Assabet is low gradient and a net inflow basin
 - Nashua is high gradient and has cold water fisheries

May 11 Technical Subcommittee meeting will include –

- Presentation of draft option for setting safe yield
- Presentation of the released USGS Draft Accelerated Fish and Habitat report

Establishing goals and developing potential implementation

Points of Agreement

Committee chair began the discussion by noting that there has been broad agreement on:

1. “Building block” model for framing water management issues in Massachusetts
2. Framework using 2-step analysis for categorizing Massachusetts streams
 - Physical characteristics of the watershed - size and gradient
 - Overlay current data – SYE, Mass Indicators Project Data and fisheries data when available
3. It is appropriate to talk about “classification” and long-term goals after determining current categories

Now the Committees will turn to the harder work of goals, criteria and allocation

Are short-term and long-term goals the right framework for moving forward?

Restatement of the issue we are working to address

Massachusetts is a water rich place, but we need an integrated system for allocation of water resources to support (in no particular order) high-quality water supply, wastewater assimilation, recreation, ecosystems, fisheries, stormwater management, etc.

Discussion:

Charge of the Sustainable Water Management Initiative - There were differing views on the scope of the Initiative’s charge. Views on the desired end product for the Initiative included:

- **Develop stream-flow quantity standards** similar to air quality standards so in-stream status can be measured as withdrawals and streamflow changes are made
- **Develop a rational allocation system for supply, waste and ecosystem** that prevents piecemeal allocation of resources until everything is gone
- **Develop watershed management plans that integrate all the mandated water resources goals across “policy silos”** – water supply, wastewater assimilation, recreation, stormwater etc.
- **Instream quantity standards will be insufficient**
- **Look to coordinate existing mandates/policies/laws** (e.g.: Clean Water Act (CWA), National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Water Management Act (WMA). See below for those who volunteered to form subcommittee coordinating these other tools with implementation.

Short-term/Long-term goals

- **It is the overall framework that is important** – short-term should be viewed as the status quo, long-term is identifying resources that can be allocated and mitigation

- **Some goals will achieve themselves** – e.g., overall water use has been falling and will continue to through changes to the plumbing code, etc. – Initiative should target goals that “won’t get done anyway”
- **Short and long-term goals should be consider together, not in sequence** – how can we manage for both green lawns and brook trout
- Rather than “goals”, **develop watershed planning with management objectives and criteria that need to be met**

Specific issues identified in the discussion:

- **Stormwater** – WMA has been implemented to regulate water withdrawals – current research shows stormwater may be a much larger problem
- **Manage movement of water resources through the environment holistically**, withdrawing water for use does not necessarily mean it is lost to ecosystem, it depends on how it is used, discharge point and quality
- **Clarity on in-stream goals** is needed to make long-term water planning possible
- **Restoration** is a long-term goal

Conclusion: Committee chair concluded the discussion by noting that “**Are short-term and long-term goals the right framework for moving forward?**” is not the right approach.

- Instead of short-term and long-term goals, the approach will be to develop **integrated management strategy and set implementation goals**

Discussion then turned to brainstorming session to identify DRAFT Goals –

The following is a raw list of proposed draft goals for the Sustainable Watershed Management Initiative as they were offered at the meeting. Staff will work to organize these proposed goals into a more coherent draft for review by the Committee.

1. Restore and maintain natural flow regimes – Pre-Colonial model, but many rivers have been in “pre-colonial state” quite recently, or are there now
2. Make sure there is enough for public safety, economic development, human use and food production – ID areas of stress, the contributing causes and how we fix the problem areas – e.g. is it stormwater vs withdrawals
3. Restore and maintain aquatic habitat – includes flow, quality and more
4. In-stream recreation and recreational fishing
5. Rivers should have river fish
6. Do all this in an integrated way to serve other water programs, e.g. stormwater – craft our goals to serve multiple water programs
Create a flexible array of management options that achieve multiple water goals
7. Triple bottom-line – quality, economics and equity
8. Minimize flood damage to the built environment
9. One size does not fit all – sometimes moving water has provided GREAT benefits – we will not set goal of moving all the water back, e.g. MWRA system
Swift River is one of the best cold-water fisheries because of MWRA discharges – recognize that “pre-colonial” is not the goal – goal is a philosophy of sustainable water resources and a management plan to achieve that

10. Restore, maintain and protect biological diversity
11. Prepare and adapt to climate change in the long-term
12. Incorporate hydropower (along with supply, wastewater, recreation, stormwater and ecosystem goals)
It was noted that hydropower is now managed to protect the aquatic resources at state and Federal levels, this has not always been true
13. Incorporate how climate change could change habitat
14. Protect high quality areas (goes with Goal 1)
15. Restore and maintain ecological integrity
16. To the extent possible, keep water local
17. Foster resilient ecosystems
18. Robust public outreach to get public buy-in
19. Protect areas suitable for supply development, wastewater discharge and stormwater recharge – we cannot lose them all to shopping mall development
20. Incorporate water quality into management – these goals are all quantity goals, but we must have water quality in the mix – e.g. Cape Cod TMDL development is ongoing with goal of restoring quality in embayments to restore habitat – meeting the loading limits will cost Cape communities \$millions in wastewater treatment – How will we get support to get \$ to make this real?
21. Clear and predictable regulatory process
Ease of establishing, implementing and administering policies and incentive options – transparency that influences sustainable behavior among all actors who have an impact
22. Minimize impacts on environment/ mitigate impacts/ use water efficiently
23. Prevent heat energy users from using the river water, no non-contact cooling
24. Support, demonstrate and promote innovative technologies across silos of drinking water, wastewater, stormwater – with a focus on technologies and management techniques that mimic natural systems which by their nature address/maximize quality and quantity
25. Prepare for shortages
26. Protect the structure and function of watersheds
27. Reduce water energy use – promote conservation to reduce supply pumping, keep wastewater local to reduce wastewater transport
28. Antidegradation
29. How do you factor cost? What if a goal costs \$2M? This ties to the triple bottom-line, but should also be called out separately
There is also cost associated with not acting

Additional points of note:

Restore vs Maintain - Are “restore” and “maintain” two different things?

- Response from group is “Yes”

Does place matter - Some have said we will need different goals in different places – can this be summarized as “Place is important and will determine specific goals”? Are there some statewide goals?

Response:

- You can have a consistent framework that includes different goals for different types of places
- Politics will be important to setting goals – how will we incorporate different politics in different areas?

Aspirational vs Implementable - There are two kinds of goals. Are we aiming toward aspirational goals, i.e. fishable/swimmable, or implementable goals, i.e. water quality standards?

Response:

- We will need implementable goals, i.e. flow regime of X gallons and supply allocation of Y w/drawals
- We have not been arguing because we are still talking about aspirational goals

Role of cost in implementation - There are ways to incorporate cost into implementation – cost will be incorporated through the implementation process, and so should be considered, but does not need to be addressed in detail in the goal-setting process.

Establish a working group to examine existing legal and regulatory levers and non-regulatory tools for implementation

The Chair called for volunteers to form a working group that will examine existing legal and regulatory levers and non-regulatory tools that exist now that could be used to implement the Sustainable Water Management Initiative. The following volunteered:

Kathy Baskin	EEA
Jon Beekman	SEA
Jack Buckley	DFG
Laurie Burt	DEP
John Clarkeson	EEA
Sara Cohen	DCR
Steve Estes-Smargiassi	MWRA
Mary Griffin	DFG
Phil Guerin	Worcester DPW
Scott Horsley	Horsley & Whitten
Steve Long	Nature Conservancy
Jen Pederson	MWWA
Martin Pillsbury	Metropolitan Area Planning Commission
Tim Purrinton	DFG
Peter Shelley	Conservation Law Foundation
Margaret Van Deusen	Charles River Watershed Assoc.

Parking Lot

There were no new parking lot issues raised at this meeting.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 25 from 1:00PM – 3:30PM

Location: EEA, 100 Cambridge St, 2nd Floor, Rooms C & D