

**Mystic River Watershed Water Quality Subcommittee**  
**Tuesday November 18, 2014**  
**1:00 – 2:30 pm**

EPA Region 1, Mount Lafayette, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary  
Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

**Action Items**

EPA

- Find and distribute information about the Dartmouth, MA Fishing Day as a potential method for fish tissue data collection in 2015.
- Seek and distribute information about the tissue sample hold-times for fish tissue toxins analysis.
- Send language to CBI about using bioindicators as a new strategy related to aquatic invasive species under priority 3.
- Distribute turf initiative
- Distribute the NRD settlement announcement and invitation for the December 2 pre-grant announcement meeting to the Water Quality subcommittee members.
- Check to see if Dave Mendlesohn is still at FEMA.
- Contact MassDOT about getting someone for the Steering Committee/WQ committee

CBI

- Incorporate suggested revisions to mission and priorities statement
- Work with Patrick Herron to draft the mission and priorities brief for the Steering Committee meeting.
- Draft and distribute meeting summary for review.
- Poll participants for the next Water Quality Subcommittee meeting date in late January.

Karen Pelto

- Send the NRD settlement announcement and invitation to the December 2 pre-grant announcement meeting to Caitlyn Whittle for distribution.

Patrick Herron

- Brief the Steering Committee on the updates made to the mission and priorities document.

**Welcome and Review of the Agenda and Objectives**

Facilitators from the Consensus Building Institute, Eric Roberts and Stacie Smith, welcomed the group, and reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to share brief

updates, discuss updates to the mission and priorities document and identify additional priorities for Subcommittee Action in 2015, and briefly discuss the Science Forum.

## **Brief Updates**

The following brief updates were provided:

- *Availability of EPA lab saltwater electrofishing gear* – The EPA lab has freshwater electrofishing gear but not saltwater gear.
- *MassPort use of CAD Cells* – This project is moving forward. Some participants said they would like opportunities to be involved or provide input on this project and suggested that members of the committee could participate on the project's Technical Advisory Committee.
- *Mystic River Water Quality Report Card* – The report card release is anticipated for the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of December.
- *Fish Advisory Study* – Five groups are collaborating on this project to evaluate fish consumption and concentrations of toxins in fish tissues commonly consumed. Although some fish were caught, it was challenging to catch sufficient quantities of fish and the key types of fish needed for toxins sampling. The fish that were caught may not be included in the analysis due to sample hold time requirements. The research team learned that people are consuming fish from the river and they will seek revised fish consumption advisory. The project will be extended through June 2015.
- *Funding Sources* – A National Fish and Wildlife Foundation request for proposals, which may cover water quality monitoring or modeling, was distributed via email to the Water Quality subcommittee members prior to the meeting. A pre-grant announcement meeting will be held on December 2 regarding funding available from a Natural Resources Damages settlement. The funding from the settlement will be used for water quality restoration projects. A press release will also be distributed soon.
- *Nutrient Modeling* – The Department of Agriculture has been working on regulations for phosphorus reduction and they should be distributed publicly in January.

## **Mission and Priorities Updates**

Participants supported the changes highlighted in red text of the draft document and suggested several additional changes including:

- Update the year of the document to cover 2015/2016.
- Under priority three, add a strategy using bioindicators for aquatic invasive species.
- Add the US Army Corps of Engineers (US ACOE) as a potential federal partner for priority 3.

Participants said State and Federal agencies such as Housing and Urban Development (HUD), United States Geological Survey (USGS), US ACOE, and the US Forest Service (USFS) could be more involved in the following priorities. The EPA could engage these agencies but

the group would first need to provide well-scoped requests for specific assistance for the other agencies to consider.

- The US ACOE could provide data on legacy contamination for priority four.
- The USGS jointly applied for state funding for measuring phosphorus loads (priority three) but the funds not awarded to the team. They could be engaged again to apply for funding to measure and model phosphorous budgets and estimate reduction levels required to resolve water quality impairments (priority three, vii).
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency could also potentially assist with investigations (time of transfer studies or other) under priority three.
- MassDOT or the Federal Highway Administration could be engaged if any of the roads qualify as federal.

### **Planning for 2015 – Priorities for Subcommittee Action**

The following points were made about priority two (creation of a municipal technical assistance program):

- An MS4 information session is planned for November 25 with the Municipalities subcommittee. All Water Quality subcommittee members are welcome to attend.
- The group decided it would be best to add time at the November 25<sup>th</sup> meeting to seek input from the Municipality subcommittee members on priority two strategies. Participants noted the need to ensure all voices are heard during the discussion about the most important strategies to pursue under priority two. They also suggested seeking input from Newt Tedder, EPA, as he may have insight about the elements of the draft MS4 permit that municipalities seem most interested in or concerned about.
- At the next Water Quality Subcommittee meeting, the group decided to discuss and develop a work plan describing how the Water Quality subcommittee could help achieve the interests of the Municipality Subcommittee members in regards to priority two.

### **Science Forum**

The following comments were made about the next science forum: The science forum could be structured thematically or as a ‘tasting menu’ of presentations on new and continuing work in the watershed. If done thematically, phosphorous could be a focus and it could be organized similarly to conferences organized by the New England Association of Environmental Biologists (NEAEB). If organized as the tasting menu, then 6-7 presentations could be delivered on topics such as cyanobacteria, IDDE, municipality success stories or ongoing work, MyWRA success stories or ongoing research, science of CAD cells, turf regulations, MIT research on sediment issues, and ongoing research by UMass Boston. The group suggested a half-day conference in February or March. Designing the forum so that it links to and promotes the priorities of the Initiative would be useful. A small team is working to organize the science forum; anyone who wishes to participate may do so.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.