

Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
May 29, 2012 at Boyd Hall
Plymouth, New Hampshire

Minutes

Members Present:

Max Stamp (Bristol); Dan Paradis (Bristol); Carl Lehner (Holderness); Barry Draper (New Hampton); Fred Gunter (Thornton); John Kelly (Plymouth)

Also Present:

Brandon Kernen (Supervisor, NHDES Hydrology and Conservation Program)

Call to Order:

Chairman Max Stamp called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Carl Lehner made a motion seconded by Fred Gunter to approve the minutes of April 24, 2012. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentation by Brandon Kernen:

Max introduced Brandon Kernen, Supervisor of the NHDES Hydrology & Conservation Program. Max and Barry Draper had attended a presentation by Mr. Kernen at the March Watershed Conference at PSU and felt that it would be valuable for him to share some of his insights with PRLAC. Mr. Kernen distributed an outline of the topics he intended to cover, including eight major initiatives with which his program is involved as well as twelve other projects. It would be impossible to cover these projects in detail, but they include:

- UMPR Conceptual Modeling Study: The Upper Merrimack and Pemigewasset River Study being spearheaded by the US Army Corps of Engineers is ongoing, with the final report due in a couple of years. The aim is to develop a conceptual model to explore the sources of oxygen-demanding substances in the river and to evaluate future management measures for the watershed. Mr. Kernen left a copy of a memorandum summarizing the results through January 1, 2012.
- Groundwater Withdrawal Permitting: Although 28 permits have been issued in the last few years, only one new facility is actually on line and some of the earlier permits are expiring. The recommendations of the Groundwater Commission are on line at nhgroundwater.com.
- Water Use: The position for entering water use data was eliminated in the current budget. Online data entry is now available, but there is a backlog of data entry and enforcement.
- Water Conservation: Grant money has become available to assist cities and towns to locate leaks in their water systems if they will commit to repairing them.
- Water Well Board: Improved well location information (E911 and GPS coordinates) is being obtained on new applications, but the position for entering well completion reports has been eliminated. This valuable database is no longer being maintained. The effects of geothermal wells are being studied.
- Groundwater Discharge Permitting: This program promotes aquifer recharge in irrigation, snow making and industrial reuse projects.
- DES has developed BMP's for the storage of regulated contaminants and offers local groundwater protection assistance.

Topics addressed briefly as "Other Projects" include:

- Drought Management: Towns now can regulate water withdrawals, even from private wells, if a declaration of drought has been made at the state or federal level.
- 1,4-dioxane: A newly discovered toxic substance present in certain consumer products such as shampoos is being studied.
- Rock Blasting: Nitrates tend to show up in groundwater downgrade from a blasting site. BMP's are being developed.
- Sampling for pesticides in drinking water at schools; 100 schools have been studied with low levels found for the most part.
- Groundwater level trends: These have been studied but the data, usually supplied by drillers, is too rough to make definitive conclusions.
- Manganese in drinking water: Once thought harmless, this is receiving new attention.

- Dual Use (Geothermal/Drinking Water) Wells: These are a concern because geothermal heating/cooling equipment is not manufactured to drinking water standards.
- Energy Efficiency for water/wastewater facilities: Upgrades to pumps, motors etc. can often be paid for from the savings, but public facilities do not always take advantage of this opportunity.

At the end of his presentation, Mr. Kernan answered a few questions and offered to come back at a later date if he could be of further assistance. Max thanked him for his comprehensive and informative presentation.

Water Sustainability Commission Input Session (New London):

Earlier in the month, Max, Barry Draper and Dan Paradis had attended a meeting seeking out public input for the Governor's Commission on Water Sustainability. There were about 20 participants who were split into two groups, each headed up by a facilitator. Barry was impressed by the diversity of the participants, including a lobbyist for Anheuser-Busch, which uses water from the Merrimac for its brewing operations. Dan felt there was a certain aspect of "preaching to the choir" as all the participants were concerned about sustainability issues, albeit with emphasis on different concerns. Max explained that the Sustainability Commission plans to issue a final report in the early Fall. Unfortunately, Governor Lynch's announced retirement raises some questions as to the ultimate fate of the report and its recommendations.

PRLAC Funding Issues:

Max summarized the problem facing PRLAC with regard to funding. Currently, seven towns (Thornton, Campton, Holderness, Plymouth, New Hampton, Bridgewater and Bristol) provide contribute \$200 each for a total of \$1,400. However, the services provided by LRPC are approximately \$2,200, leaving an \$800 shortfall. Max read a proposed scope of services document provided by LRPC to see if some of those could be done by the members or eliminated. While there one or two items we could easily handle, such as notifying members of expiring terms, this approach would not be enough to make up the shortfall. Other options discussed include asking the towns to increase their contribution and seeking commercial sponsorship. Concern was expressed that asking the towns for more might not be received well, and that some contributions might be cut off. There was some discussion of which commercial entities might be willing to contribute. Candidates suggested include the several campgrounds on the river as well as the outfitters who run canoe/kayak trips during the summer. Max asked the members to give this some thought and to e-mail him with any suggestions. Dan Paradis said he would not be comfortable doing solicitations, but the other members present did not object.

Management Plan:

Time did not allow the group to review the Table of Contents proposed by Dave Jeffers. Max did hand out draft versions of three sections which he (Max) had prepared. They are "PRLAC Water Quality Monitoring Program", "Impaired Waters (and Longer Term Implications)", and "Total Maximum Daily Load Program". Members were asked to review these for discussion next time. Max also reminded members who had not yet completed the zoning ordinance summaries for their towns to get them done.

Use of PSU Facilities:

Max received an e-mail from PSU which he originally believed was asking us to reserve the use of 001 Boyd Hall one month at a time. In fact, it is use of the PSU computer which now requires a "guest account" (password) each time it is used.

Adjournment:

Barry Draper made a motion seconded by Carl Lehner to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Paradis
Secretary