

Summary of Public Comments from the N.H. Water Plan “Road Show” February – May 2009

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Between February 25 and May 27, DES staff conducted 16 public meetings throughout the state to present work completed and still underway to support the Water Resources Plan process. The format for the “road show” meetings typically comprised a one-hour overview of the *Water Resources Primer*, the survey of state and local decisionmakers, and the hydrologic stress index work being conducted by N.H. Geological Survey; followed by up to one hour of discussion focusing on issues of concern to those in attendance. This report presents a summary of the comments heard during those meetings, as well as comments received in writing during and after those meetings. The meetings were publicized through DES media releases, emails to legislators, publicity conducted by the partner organizations that hosted the meetings, and in some cases phone calls to area media outlets.

DES and its partners issued a total of 12 media releases related to the Water Resources Plan process and the public meetings during this period. Sign-in sheets from the meetings indicate a total of approximately 270 attendees, but this understates the actual number of attendees.

In addition to the 16 public road show meetings (listed in Attachment A), the following meetings were held with legislators and stakeholder groups, generally following an abbreviated version of the public meeting format:

- February 19 – Legislators
- March 11 – Water Council
- April 15 – Business and Industry Association Environment Committee
- April 16 – N.H. Water Works Association
- April 28 – Southern N.H. Planning Commission (commissioners)
- April 29 – PM Trout Unlimited Council
- May 28 – New England Water Works Association Water Resources Committee

The Water Resources Plan process and the road show were also the subjects of a one-hour call-in segment on N.H. Public Radio’s *The Exchange* on April 30.

Note: Although the statewide water road show garnered significant interest, for the most part attendees included local officials and volunteers with prior knowledge of and interest in water resource planning. During the fall and winter of 2009-2010, DES will make more attempts to reach out to average citizens and the business community to increase their understanding of water resource issues in New Hampshire.

This summary is presented in three sections. The first section attempts to synthesize the comments into a handful of most frequently discussed issues. The second section is a more lengthy overview of almost all ideas discussed. The third section lists the words that appeared most frequently in the discussion notes and written comments, grouped into

related ideas. Following these three sections are two attachments: a list of public meetings and the complete notes from the discussions and written comments.

SECTION ONE: TOP ISSUES

Issue #1: Stormwater Management

The subject that came up most often during the road show discussions was the management of landscape change. While a handful of comments focused on managing or slowing growth, many more focused on the challenges of stormwater management. This is not surprising, since the presentation by DES staff stressed landscape change as one of the top issues identified in the *Water Resources Primer*. Many of the comments reflected the attendees' familiarity with low impact development techniques and focused on the challenges of implementing stormwater management programs on the local level.

Issue #2: The Role of Local Officials in Protecting Water Resources

The frustration of local officials attempting to cope with the tremendously complex responsibility of protecting various water resources in the context of local land use regulations was evident in many of the comments. Local officials seemed to recognize the shortcomings of local regulatory programs with respect to water resources protection, and they were often of the opinion that they needed more guidance, more authority, more resources, and generally more support from DES. At the same time, their comments indicated that they were not aware of the extensive guidance materials and technical assistance already available from DES, as well as the extensive authority already afforded to them by enabling statutes. This is understandable, given the wide-ranging and complex nature of water resources protection, and the likelihood that the existing structure for local land use regulation was not designed to deal effectively with today's challenges. Related to this concern about the appropriate role for municipalities were many suggestions regarding watershed-level planning and resource protection, and potential roles for regional planning commissions.

Issue #3: Groundwater

As indicated by the list of words in Section Three, concerns about groundwater came up often. These focused on both water quantity and quality. The impacts of groundwater withdrawals, and the fact that the water is sometimes bottled and sold (private profit from a public resource), were both mentioned a number of times. Several commenters were interested in aquifer protection, and road salt was mentioned several times as a groundwater quality concern.

Issue #4: The Ability of DES to Adequately Enforce Regulations and Otherwise Pursue Its Mission Effectively

In this regard, the concern cited most often was the ability of DES to ensure that permit conditions are being met and generally ensure compliance with its existing rules. Mentioned less often were concerns about DES having adequate resources for environmental monitoring, resource characterization, and planning.

SECTION TWO: OVERVIEW OF COMMENTS

The following is a condensation of 15 pages of comments (Attachment B) recorded during and after the road show discussion periods:

Dissatisfaction with DES's follow-up of permitted activities

- Alteration of terrain (AoT) and wetlands permits in particular; also shoreland protection
- Adequate staffing levels for DES to do follow-up and enforcement
 - Also concerns about adequate DES staffing levels for AoT permit applications
 - Water quality monitoring should be incorporated into permits
 - Provide more support and guidance to applicants
 - Fines should be “significant”
 - Funding for water programs in general

Data collection, resource characterization, and modeling

- Devote sufficient funds to data collection: water quality, groundwater levels
- More accurate delineation of flood-prone areas
- Groundwater availability and sustainable yield
- See comments regarding volunteers
- Modeling would be useful to municipalities

Stormwater, land use regulation, and the role of municipalities

- Concern about impact of land use change (“development” or “growth”) on water resources
- Difficult for municipalities to effectively oversee stormwater management
 - Maintenance of stormwater management systems – municipalities typically are not structured to oversee this
 - Patchwork of local land use regulations; help needed
 - Need to build local capability
 - Stormwater utilities
- More guidance needed
 - Regarding limits of local authority (esp. regarding groundwater protection and low-impact development, and enforcement) and recommendations for local ordinances
 - Modeling to analyze impacts to water resources
- Provide incentives for municipalities to do a better job of protecting water resources
 - Back up local enforcement with state authority
 - Aquatic Resource Mitigation money
- Some argue for increased support for municipalities to carry out their role in land use regulation and water resource protection
 - Some argue for increased delegation of authority to municipalities
 - Comprehensive Shoreland Protection permits
 - Improved coordination between DES and municipalities is suggested

- State could mandate and fund local protection programs
- Some feel a stronger state role is needed
 - Expand applicability of DES stormwater program beyond AoT
 - Clear programmatic responsibility within DES is needed
 - Local reliance on property taxes was cited as an obstacle to environmentally appropriate decisions on the local level.
 - Continuity of local staff another obstacle
- How to encourage more widespread use of low-impact development techniques
 - Tax incentives

The role of regional planning commissions

- Potential role in data collection
- Watershed planning – role could be similar to transportation planning
- Could expand to an enforcement role as in some counties in other states

Watershed-based planning

- Needed to properly address stormwater
- Needs to be incorporated into local land use process
- Establish watershed authorities
- Plan for water supply on a regional basis

Groundwater withdrawals

- Guidance needed regarding extent of local role
- What is cumulative impact of unregulated withdrawals?
- Concerns about adequacy of existing state program to regulate these withdrawals
- Locals need information on sustainable yield of aquifers to guide development

Rivers and streams

- Strengthen protection of riparian areas
- Shoreland protection policy should be driven more by science
- Don't place too much emphasis on impaired waters while neglecting the protection of clean waters
- Protect in-stream flows

Wetlands – better protection needed, e.g. buffers

Lakes

- Increased access exacerbates problem of invasive species
- Timber harvesting laws not effective at protecting lake water quality
- Impact of septic systems
- Speed limits too high

The role of volunteers

- Expanded role

- More support needed from DES, e.g. Volunteer Biological Monitoring Program
- DES should identify data needs that could be addressed by volunteers
- Are we already asking too much?

Water use efficiency and maximizing public benefit of water use

- Improve awareness
- Economic incentives were suggested, e.g. pricing/taxes
- Establish a hierarchy of water uses
 - Make water supply a priority
 - Concern about commercial uses

Protection of water supplies

- Local policies are not adequate to protect future sources
- Protect stratified-drift aquifers now
- Fund land conservation to protect water supplies
- Watershed/regional approach needed, include aquifers

Infrastructure

- How will we find the money?
- Wastewater facilities “strangled” by lack of adequate federal funding
- Nutrient discharge limits for WWTPs should be realistic
- Consider more regional wastewater options

Septic systems

- Impact on lakes
- Consider mandatory pumping, inspection at property transfer
- Fund a septage treatment facility
- Encourage and support alternatives to septic systems, e.g. composting, grey water re-use

Increased emphasis on education

- Youth – through schools
- Public
- Local officials
- Through Cooperative Extension and County Conservation Districts

State agencies as environmental stewards

- State agencies, exempt from local regulation, often not sensitive to water resource protection
- Better coordination needed between DES and other state agencies, in particular DRED and DOT

SECTION THREE: FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IDEAS

Some words that appeared frequently in the notes from the public meetings:

- 119 – stormwater, impervious, pervious, pavement, land, development, BMPs, growth, erosion, terrain, AOT, developments
- 85 – local, municipal, municipality, town, community
- 56 – protect, protection
- 51 – groundwater, aquifer, well
- 44 – educate, education, outreach, information, guidance
- 37 – fund, funding, money
- 34 – data, monitoring
- 27 – enforce, enforcement
- 23 – region, regional, RPC
- 19 – stream, river, streamflow, instream
- 19 – wastewater, waste, sewer, sewage
- 19 – supply, drinking, public water system
- 19 – cost, value, economic
- 18 – watershed
- 18 – withdraw(al), extract(ion)
- 16 – wetland
- 15 – lake

**Attachment A
Water Resources Plan Public Meetings**

Meeting Date/Time/Location
<p>Monday, Feb 2, 12:00 PM (for DES staff) Auditorium NHDES 29 Hazen Drive Concord</p>
<p>Tuesday, Feb 10, 9:30 AM Press Conference Legislative Office Building (lobby)</p>
<p>Thursday, February 19, 12:00 PM (for legislators) Map Gallery N.H. State Library 20 Park Street Concord</p>
<p>Wednesday, February 25, 10:00 AM Partner: Strafford Regional Planning Commission Location: Strafford RPC Offices 2 Ridge Street Dover</p>
<p>Thursday, February 26, 7:00 PM Partner: Lake Sunapee Protective Association Location: Knowlton House, Sunapee Harbor 63 Main Street Sunapee</p>
<p>Tuesday, March 10, 6:00 PM Partner: Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Location: The Hugh Gregg Coastal Conservation Center 89 Depot Road Greenland</p>
<p>Monday, March 16, 5:00 PM Partner: Contoocook-North Branch Rivers LAC Location: Peterborough Town House – Selectmen’s Room 1 Grove Street Peterborough</p>
<p>Monday, March 23, 6:00 PM Partner: Lakes Region Planning Commission Location: Pines Community Center 61 Summer Street Northfield</p>

<p>Tuesday, March 24, (7:00 PM) Partner: Nashua Regional Planning Commission Location: NRPC Conference Room 9 Executive Park Drive Merrimack</p>
<p>Tuesday, March 31, 7:00 PM Partner: Pemigewasset River LAC Location: Small Auditorium, Room 001, Boyd Hall on campus of Plymouth State University</p>
<p>Wednesday, April 1, 6:30 PM Partner: Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission Location: SNHPC Conference Room 438 Dubuque Street Manchester</p>
<p>Thursday, April 2, 6:00 PM Partner: Green Mountain Conservation Group; Tamworth, Ossipee, Effingham, and Sandwich Conservation Commissions Location: Ossipee Town Hall 55 Main Street Center Ossipee</p>
<p>Monday, April 6, 6:00 PM Partner: Southwest Region Planning Commission Location: Keene Public Library – auditorium 60 Winter St Keene</p>
<p>Tuesday, April 14, 6:00 PM Partner: Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission Location: Lebanon City Council Chambers 51 North Park Street Lebanon</p>
<p>Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 pm Partners: Strafford Rivers Conservancy Location: N.H. Fish & Game Conference Room, Durham</p>
<p>Thursday, April 30, 9:00 AM The Exchange with Laura Knoy New Hampshire Public Radio</p>
<p>Monday, May 4, 7:00 PM Partner: Newfound Lake Region Association Location: Bristol Town Offices 230 Lake Street Bristol</p>
<p>Thursday, May 14, 7:00 PM Partners: SPNHF, NH Rivers Council, NH LAKES Location: Conservation Center, 54 Portsmouth St., Concord</p>

Thursday, May 21, 5:00 PM

RESCHEDULED

Partner: Squam Lakes Association

Location: Squam Lakes Association Resource Center

Route 3

Holderness

Wednesday, May 27, 5:30 PM

Partner: North Country Council

Location: Red Barn, SPNHF Rocks Estate in Bethlehem

4 Christmas Lane

Bethlehem

Attachment B

Notes from discussions and feedback forms during the Water Plan “Road Show”

These notes have been taken straight from the flip-charts and the feedback forms.

February 2, 2009

N.H. Department of Environmental Services (meeting with DES staff)

Discussion

- What is the cumulative impact of private (unregulated) groundwater withdrawals on adjacent groundwater users?
- What is the impact of timber harvesting activities on water quality? This is a significant issue in the north country where large areas are clearcut.
- Look into the adequacy of climatological monitoring in the state.
- While we closely regulate fill and placing of structures in wetlands, we also make it difficult to remove structures from wetlands; this should be easier.
- DES’s follow-up of permitted activities (e.g. alteration of terrain permits) has not been adequate to ensure protection of water resources.
- Adequate funding for DES is a major issue.
- The Primer should include information about the economic value of riparian areas.
- Be sure to involve business and other private interests in development of the Water Plan.
- Compare the Primer and the Survey results to identify differences between the different points of view as well as information gaps and misunderstandings.

Written comments

- Stronger state laws addressing land use/stormwater/groundwater/surface water relationships are needed.
- Wastewater facilities strangled by lack of adequate federal funding.
- Reliance on property taxes makes towns unable to make sound environmental decisions because of tax revenues promised by industrial development.
- Maintenance of stormwater controls is lacking (2)
- Lack of oversight of construction activities (stormwater)
- Testing of private wells
- Cyanobacteria is a growing problem
- Enforcement is almost non-existent (AoT and wetlands)
- Need more staff to review (AoT) permit applications
- Impact of development on wetlands, streams, and groundwater
- Economic incentives to conserve and protect water
- Need for continuing data gathering and analysis
- Adapting to climate change rather than planning on staving it off
- Need to resolve septage disposal issue soon; why not create a receiving facility at Franklin?

- Support grant programs to protect water supplies, public access projects, and shoreland protection
- DES should be a better example of environmental stewardship (building & grounds)
- Include protection of vernal pools and restriction of construction in floodplain as recommendations
- Adequate funding of existing programs
- Strengthen existing riparian protection/protect vegetative buffers
- How do we get money to very small water supply systems in need?
- How do we get more data on private wells?
- More local involvement needed but funding/staffing not there

Feb 19 Legislators brown-bag luncheon

- Work with N.H. Municipal Association on road show/outreach
- Do something in connection with national drinking water week
- Provide copies of Primer to public libraries

Feb 25 Strafford Regional Planning Commission

- MTBE: What are the future prospects of contamination? Trends?
- Delegation of authority, responsibility to municipalities.
- Better, forthright, prompt communication between DES in municipalities is needed to save costs and become more efficient (ex. Berry River).
- Watershed/basin planning needed as prelude to addressing issues, e.g. stormwater.
- Cochecho River watershed planning near Rochester is an example of successfully collaboration with DES. Several stormwater BMPs have been installed, public has been educating. Planning by DES Watershed Management Bureau was effective and should continue.
- Water Supply Land Grant Program – very important and cost effective way to protect water resources; what is its future?
- RPCs should be figured into data collection. They have a data collection infrastructure in place for DOT.
- RPC can play a role in watershed planning and administration; similar to RPC's current role in transportation planning. RPC could enforce various water resource issues: similar to county enforcement in other states; model is Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod.
- Enforcement/Jurisdiction issues: guidance/model is needed (e.g. agricultural violations).
- Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act- State or Local (zoning) approval first? Not clear from language in the Act.
- Improve collaboration among state and municipalities to get citizen acceptance.
- Are we asking too much of our volunteers? More collaboration with the state is needed.
- Improve Volunteer Biological Assessment Program...more resources from DES.

- Support Cooperative Extensions and County Conservation Districts in assisting and educating communities and landowners (e.g. Natural Resources Outreach Coalition-NROC). Very important component of educating public.
- Flood events –impacts on roads, culverts, bridges.
- Improve water conservation/efficiency awareness.

Feb 26 Lake Sunapee Protective Association

Discussion

- Take it to the schools e.g. through Project WET?
- Develop a media strategy for the Water Plan process
 - o Make it **local** . . . through town newsletters? (media strategy)
 - o E.g. a report card ranking each town?
- Red tide
- PPCPs – need to be addressed
- Large groundwater withdrawals – controlling/restricting uses?
- Stormwater
 - o Expanded state role and/or enhanced local capability?
 - o Clear programmatic responsibility within DES needed?
- Septic system pumping requirement, assessment of septic systems upon RE transfer
- Make N.H. less attractive and stop population growth!
- Outreach to other state agencies: DRED, DOT, etc.
- Difficulty in controlling growth

Written comments

- Sensibly control growth of population and industry
- Growth
- Additional funding for DES to work on water issues
- More attention to preventing pollution of water sources and improved planning for use of NH facilities such as docks, moorings, and slow expansion of boating and impingement on our lakes, streams, and rivers
- Protecting the drinking water and regulations for development that protects water resources
- New housing developments should be required to prove there is enough drinking water to supply the people and enough capacity in the wastewater treatment plant
- All water resources should be considered public resources. If private companies want to withdraw water (to bottle it for example) they should have to pay the state big bucks.
- Limit growth.
- Action items to reduce stormwater runoff.
- State-local issue: the towns are focused on maintaining water quality, having stringent regulations imposed on themselves, which they enforce. The state agencies appear not to have water quality as a priority, and exempt themselves from the reasonable regulations and concerns, even presented here tonight! The state needs to “walk the talk.”

- Use [the governor's] political capital to help citizens see the long term value of preserving our resources rather than settling for short-term economic growth.
- Offer personal things homeowners can do/buy/use in their houses and lives to help prevent water problems.
- Wild Goose boat launch debacle
- Blodgett Landing sewer system upgrade/problems/solutions
- The more water is taxed, the more wisely it is used, unfortunately!
- Thorough vetting of the state's water resources relative to development both residential and commercial
- Education about NH's water resources as part of the science curriculum for elementary, jr. high, and high school. Teacher workshops, materials geared to these levels, field trips, hand-on activities, lab demonstrations, etc.
- Regulating and fixing what is already in place, e.g. dams.

Comments on feedback forms – about the presentation/meeting

- Content very good; take a little more time in the presentation
- A Saturday morning would be better
- It would be nice to have more comfortable chairs
- Some photos & graphs too small; make them separate slides
- Develop a clear media/communication strategy to get the issue on everyone's agenda with a few simple suggestions for individuals, towns, state actions.

March 10 Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

- Ocean issues, e.g., acidification, coal fired plants.
- Seacoast issues, including future water supply sources – need protection from land development.
- Local policies are not adequate to protect future water supply.
- Do not send sewage to the ocean.
- Restrict uses of water to high priority uses, e.g., drinking water.
- Encourage water use efficiency.
 - Conservation rate structure.
 - Encourage efficient industry.
- Encourage water use efficiency.
- Promote pondering of purity paradox.
- Realistic nutrient discharge limits for WWTPs – watershed approach
 - “Poop Paradox”: making it too clean to afford.
- Technology improvement; especially with copper (Cu) removal.
- Recycle sewage nutrients to agriculture, lawns, forests, etc.
- Salt in groundwater.
- Keep up to date on climate change and sea-level rise data.
- Large groundwater withdrawal process: monitor potential migration of contamination.
- Local enforcement/implementation: continuity of personnel.

- Connect with local communities: outreach and education.
- Innovation with regard to water resources management.
- Better economic data with regard to cost/benefit to make water resources decisions.
- Need information concerning sustainability/future resources.
- Incentives (property or B.P. tax?) for pervious pavement.
- Include regional long-term impact when considering water resource investments.

March 16 Contoocook-North Branch Rivers LAC

- Why are we flushing toilets with drinking quality water?
- Cost needs to be a factor for infrastructure.
- Need a state-coordinated list of information/data that local volunteers can supply.
- More funding for NHGS to map geology and groundwater availability and quality.
- More use of pervious pavement/other innovative methods to reduce impervious surface.
- Need a 10-20-year plan/ follow up water resource plan/sustainability.
- Recommend public education, especially on phosphorous/non-point sources.
- Preventative work on agricultural operations/ BMPs.
- Is there a problem with abandoned wells? For example, old Superfund monitoring wells.
- Use elementary/secondary school curriculum and testing to educate on water and environment.

March 23 Lakes Region Planning Commission

Discussion

- Bedrock wells – how does one determine area’s capacity?
- Local ability to protect groundwater – limits of authority in regards to aquifer protection and low impact development.
- Weakening of Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, 3rd order stream proposal.
- State mandates for local protection.
- Bottled water – guidance for locals?
- Local role in groundwater withdrawals.
- Employ volunteers to address data gaps.
- Wastewater infiltration and pharmaceuticals and personal care products.
- Ensure that large withdrawals are sustainable.
- Need to fund local mandates.
- Market-based mechanisms to limit impacts on water resources.
- Wetland mitigation fund is wrong.
- Determine sustainable yield of aquifers as basis for development.
- DES’s ability to enforce and significant penalties.
- Conflict between DES and DRED: development depletes resources.

- Stratified drift aquifers – focus on protection now.
- Timber harvesting impacts on lake water quality – current law not effective; harvesting can be done properly.
- Courts should respect super majority when town adopts ordinance
- Towns need more information concerning regulatory authority.
- Protest petition override 70% requirement is excessive.
- Moratorium (2-year) on large groundwater withdrawals.

Written comments

- Need more funds to get the needs done
- Local municipalities have very little authority and enforcement ability
- Enforcement of water protection strategies and penalties and significant fines for violations
- Requirements for BMP use; require LID, etc. and improvement in BMPs re: climate change
- Certification of loggers and developers to protect water resources
- Require that state statutes are followed by towns
- Silviculture regs for timber harvesting
- Wolfeboro wastewater effluent is being discharged indirectly into Lake Winnepesaukee
- Communicate with town conservation commissions to work together on lands that should be preserved to protect water quality.
- Quantity and quality of water especially the streams
- Enforcement by the local community, “back up” by the state.
- State back up water quality enforcement. Help the locals with research etc. on projects such as the removal of ground waters.
- More guidance on how to use what (authority?) we have
 - More suggestions from DES re what towns should have in zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, site plan review to better protect all water resources
- State-owned buildings should be subject to local land use regulations

March 24 Nashua Regional Planning Commission

Discussion

- Equitable hierarchy of water uses?
- Issue of local municipal control of water vs watershed
- Stormwater/BMP use – increased infiltration
- Need incentive to local (municipal) level for implementing good local land use regs.
 - Write into local regs
 - Admin & enforcement
- Long term maintenance of stormwater infrastructure (not just municipal infrastructure – applies to individual developments too)

- Need to build local capability
- Need local money: stormwater utilities
- Watershed concept would help communities cooperate/implement
 - Need to work watershed idea into municipal land use process
- Money to towns for stormwater (if they come) need to be forever
- Local level is where many (most) of the decisions that affect stormwater are made
- Private maintenance of stormwater BMPs won't work – need a municipal/utility process
- Need stormwater management at “micro-watershed” level – erosion/hydrograph issue
- Public awareness is key to institutionalize good stormwater management
- Local control of groundwater not a good idea

Written comments

- More central planning
- Stormwater
- Public outreach
- Water quality, esp. money for monitoring
- Enforcement and funding
- Groundwater and aquifers
- Wetlands
- Rivers and streams

March 31 Pemigewasset River LAC, Plymouth State University

Discussion

- Water quality protection and monitoring not adequately funded; can't rely so much on volunteers; current data monitoring is inadequate.
- Public engagement and education
- Policy should be driven more by science/protection, e.g., Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, 3rd order streams.
- Need to be more proactive
- Is New Hampshire ready for state- or regional- level land use regulation? (See Vermont Act 250).
- Watershed Level Land-Use Planning.
- Stormwater – huge issue; difficult for local regulations, especially concerning water quality and follow-up.
- Ensuring maintenance of stormwater best management practices
- Encourage and support onsite waste water alternatives, e.g., composting, re-use, graywater
- Alternatives to impervious pavement
- Assess cumulative impacts across programs, e.g., Alteration of Terrain, Wetlands – need great commitment at DES to water quality protection.

Written comments

- Stormwater management
- Watershed management areas with oversight by regional boards
- Wetland protection
- Work toward keeping areas of the state with less impact on water this way; don't over-focus on impaired parts of state
- DES has done an excellent job with the primer and the presentation
- State needs to move to watershed land use planning to address water issues
- Land use planning @ municipal level needs to be changed; local land use regulations may lack water quality/quantity thresholds that are clear, based on fact & science, and may not even be enforced.
- Need more testing at site level of performance of a site development & this needs to be continued over time (5, 10, 15+ years after construction) (for stormwater)
- Stormwater structures need to be maintained & state needs to require this

April 1 Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission - Manchester

Discussion

- Money for regional groundwater models (e.g. seacoast)
- Integrate watershed planning, surface and groundwater
- Paying for infrastructure
- Educate policymakers and public about groundwater
- Equitable sharing of responsibility for managing withdrawals/protecting flows
- Need groundwater level monitoring data to see impacts of development
- Emphasize interconnection of water systems; increase funding and awareness.
- Watershed approach for water supply protection
- Emphasize interdependency of water supply and source protection
- Recognize importance and priority of water supply in allocation /instream flow protection
- Effectively encourage municipalities to drive water-smart development
- Consider regional approach.
- How to meet regional water needs?
- Find way(s) to capture high flows
- What about recreation?

Suggestions

- Video version of Primer
- Are we reaching the public?

Written comments

- The concerns and interests of public water systems should be among the highest of priorities when legislation, rules, and policies are being formulated. (via email)

April 2 Green Mountain Conservation Group; Tamworth, Ossipee, Effingham, and Sandwich Conservation Commissions

Discussion

- Infrastructure funding
- Better wetlands enforcement
- Protect against commercial water extraction
- Protection of aquifers – regional (watersheds across town boundaries) aquifer protection
- Mandate stormwater BMPs on the state level:
 - Over and above Alteration of Terrain.
 - Low impact development
- Protection of aquifers – regional (watersheds across town boundaries) aquifer protection
- Create ombudsman office for NH water resources management – Like drinking water small systems
- More modeling analysis for water quality impacts to guide decisions
- Need local mechanisms for groundwater control and management
- Emphasize the survey results that show decision-makers think water protection is worth the cost
- Governor should support \$\$ resources to do it
- Get Department of Safety and Department of Fish and Game on board more with water protection. For example: 1) ice activity: fires and trash; 2) water access points with no sanitary facilities
- Consider more regional wastewater options
- People who apply for permits need help to do it right – ombudsman
 - Help people obey the law
 - Better enforcement for violators
- Send information on water resource protection with tax bills
- Bedrock well monitoring network (capital budget) is important
- Enforcement of stormwater BMPs
- Task force for technical assistance and education to property owners: both Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act and wetlands.
- Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act permits (apps) should go through Conservation Commissions like wetlands
- Move landscape change permits to local regulation:
 - Mitigation money should stay in town
 - Water transfers across boundaries; not a good idea.
- More pro action than reaction
- Float plane threat of milfoil spread – put out notice to aviators (NOTAM).

Written comments

- Better advertisement of information session in local media would increase attendance
- Start meeting later (6:00 pm was starting time), to make it easier to get to after work

- Make sure we keep enough money in the budget to truly protect our water resources
- Have Brandon Kernen attend and address questions about water withdrawal due to its significance to the area.
- Groundwater: should make education a high priority
- 15 minutes with the Governor:
 - Controlling commercial water extraction
 - Make sure we take care of our water supply and wastewater treatment facilities
 - Settle the water extraction/exporting issue before it becomes an extreme crisis
 - Provide sufficient funds for enforcement and permitting process education
 - More funding for data collection and modeling so that more proactive decisions can be made about water sources
 - More enforcement of state regulations
 - Make it mandatory for town boards to attend a session
 - Have regulatory folks involved with feedback; seems to be a missing link in the system because many water quality violations are not followed up on or corrected

April 6 Southwest Region Planning Commission- Keene

Discussion

- Better protection for wetlands
- Pervious pavement should be encouraged
- Implement anti-degradation policy
- Local authority regarding commercial water withdrawals should be clarified
- Guidance for municipalities, esp. regarding wellhead and groundwater protection
- Public access policy (lakes, etc.) increases chance of infestations by exotic spp.
- More monitoring data needed
- Put money into TMDLs
- Concerned about fuel consumption by lawn mowing, ATV's snowmachines, etc.
- Commercial water withdrawals
- Improve enforcement of well log reporting requirements
- Don't neglect water resources needs in rural areas by focusing on areas where problems are more acute. Needs include protection and planning. Help by packaging information for local use.

Written comments

- More on Water Plan process during information session
- Need to get the word out to a wider, more general, audience: public education
- 15 minutes with the Governor:
 - Funding for infrastructure: water; wastewater (sewer); stormwater
 - Water quality (protection and restoration)

- Funding into TMDLs
- Commercial water pumping: how to regulate and how local governments can have more control over approval process
- Water quality: pollution/contaminants in water
- Water conservation: awareness programs; lawn tax
- Wetland Loss
- Reducing impervious cover by using permeable material
- Why does state legislation guarantee access by boats and trailers, thereby guaranteeing, at least statistically, the infestation over time of all lakes and streams by invasive species?
- Concerned about commercial groundwater withdrawals. I do not believe it should be permitted. These withdrawals do not return to the local water table
- Need benchmark data on water tables throughout the state
- Data: it's not "sexy" but we need to provide state support for an appropriate and extensive data collecting network including infrastructure (e.g. monitoring wells) and ongoing monitoring (personal)
- Education: NH has historically been "water-tech" but in many ways that is changing, and the state should invest in a strong and extensive program of public education so that the people of the state are more aware that we really do have water issues in NH.
- New well data to study water loss
- Public access policy increased at lakes

April 14 Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission – Lebanon

Discussion

- Concerned about upgradient water withdrawal robbing downgradient users
- Keep low streamflow high – streamflow protection
- Concerned about salt/chloride contamination in groundwater – growing issue
- Impacts of geothermal wells on groundwater
- Use constructed wetlands for stormwater treatment
- Use land for wastewater and sludge treatment
- Consider economic impact
- Septic systems have the advantage of putting water back where it came from
- There is huge expense (= taxes) for the needed infrastructure
- Erosion due to development adequate erosion controls
- Use more BMPs/rain gardens
 - Bury power lines at the same time BMPs are installed
- Apply source water protection and water use criteria down to individual well size
 - Water availability is issue
- Need to change behavior on water conservation and proper use of septic systems
 - Educate children – next generation
- There is a place for municipal, cluster/small systems, and individual on-lot systems
- Need time of sale site assessment for septic systems

- Request more administration and enforcement of shoreland protection act
 - Minimize waivers/variances
- Need more \$\$ for Lake Host Program
- Understanding soils is important for groundwater management
- Encourage wastewater/greywater recycling at the homeowner level
- Allow/think about “no discharge” households
- Discourage lawns
- How will we find enough \$\$ to fix infrastructure

Written comments

April 28 Strafford Rivers Conservancy – Durham

Discussion

- Using dams for hydropower
- Head-of-tide dams; an opportunity to restore fisheries
- Road salt: fate and impact?
- Water quality assessments should be expanded
- Recommendations: base them on explicit, weighted criteria
- Pharmaceuticals and personal care products
- Heavy metals; especially contaminants from tires
- Impact of onsite disposal systems (OSDS) and land-disposal of septage.
- Wastewater treatment plants should be prioritized based needs, condition, etc. to identify systems that should be upgraded
- Reclaim, reuse and recharge – emphasize these approaches
- Does DES have its needed resources?
- Study interaction between land use and water regulations: unintended consequences (e.g. large lot, private well and septic system, to avoid permits).
- Why don't we have inspection of septic systems?
- True cost of water should be reflected in water rates
- Increased conservation (ascending) block water rate structure
- Examine attitudes/values concerning green lawns
- Conservation can offset demand from population growth.
- Limits? How much land development is too much (impact on natural infrastructure)
- Why not allow use of gray water?
- What is the water demand by agriculture? It was go up as local agriculture increases
- Find funds to support and enhance water resource programs and do research
- Water (supply) protection – Key reason to protect land – need more money/funds
- Determine how much land needs to be protected (c.f. build-out) – state, regional, local
- “Ground Water Paradox” – Need more data on groundwater quantity and quality
 - Nonpoint source pollution, especially nutrient impacts
- Financial incentives to encourage pervious pavement

- Property tax rebate/credit for water conservation /treatment
- Charge for discharge permit (pollution tax)
- Increased groundwater recharge
 - Swales /BMPs
 - Vegetation

Written comments

- NHDES should do more permit follow-up and inspection.
- Stormwater management: there is a disconnect between what we agree to be important stormwater management principles for water resource protection and what gets approved, installed, and maintained.

May 4 Newfound Lake Region Association – Bristol

Discussion

- Incorporate environmental education into the plan; especially for schools. There also should be general education for the public and local government.
- Need funding to adequately administer existing programs:
 - Enforcement; especially forestry practices
 - Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act needs to be effectively enforced and administered.
- There is a disconnect between the State’s environmental goals/statutes and the capabilities of small towns
- Patchwork of local land-use regulations; need shared, watershed scale resources (technical people) for towns: shared planters, shared enforcement officers for towns.
- Need integrated web access (point & click) to permits and “what’s going on” across programs concerning permits.
- For education, put up road signs: “entering (leaving) _____ watershed”
- Identify top priorities on a watershed basis so towns can focus on specific goals.
- Encourage volunteers/ grow the volunteer network
- Reach out to Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs.
- Make erosion BMPs mandatory
- Consider statewide regulation of stormwater/land use BMPs
- Require inspection and reporting of septic systems upon real estate transaction.
- Put 401 Water Quality Certifications on the web (including water withdrawals).
- Concern regarding control of terrestrial invasive species and the use of pesticides and impact on water quality.

Written comments

- Money should be put behind any plans.
- NH has enough legislation – we need education and enforcement.

May 14 SPNHF, NH Rivers Council, NH LAKES – Concord

Discussion

- Need more money for infrastructure

- Need funding for onsite/septic system issues
- Insure small water systems comply with standards
- How can small water systems survive with conservation – need to sell water to exist
- Need ways to get people to assign appropriate value to water – people are used to pay very little
- Explore grey water use/ land application of wastewater
- Find a mechanism to coordinate local land use regulations and make them uniform
- “Snob” zoning vs. scientifically based land planning:
 - decrease development cost
 - increase density/efficiency

May 21 Squam Lakes Association – Holderness

Discussion

- Septic systems near lakes, especially old ones
- Concern about large groundwater withdrawals and bottled water in general – plastic waste, not a good use of resources
- Look into mandatory septic system inspection and report to DES upon property transfer
- Old heating oil underground storage tanks on residential properties
- Make residential underground storage tanks illegal?
- Non-point source pollution/stormwater is a big issue
- Need to be aware of PPCPs and prevent more environmental issues

Written comments

- Road show presentation was not well publicized
- Difficult for DES to oversee and enforce current laws
- Need some way to help private well users to monitor their wells at a low cost
- Need protection of wetlands
- Water is the most important resource essential to life and New Hampshire’s quality of life
- We need to fund a septic waste processing plant; New Hampshire has no facility
- The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act – Almost too little too late
- Instream flow regulations – why has it taken us so long to get where we are (with really only one river)
- Speed limits and usage on NH lakes – speed limits too high, encourages too much gas usage

May 27 North Country Council– Bethlehem

Discussion

- Ozone for water and wastewater infrastructure
- More accurate delineation of floodplains/flood-prone areas
- Watershed approach – strengthen
- DES provide checklist to coordinate state/local processes
- Review permitting processes re: public input
 - Access to information concerning pending approvals
- State funding for regional planning commissions

- Need assessment of avoided costs by good water resource management
- Funds needed for data collection and monitoring
- Protection and funding of wetland buffers
- Education and outreach for Primer, comprehensive shoreland protection act, buffers
- Floodplains development -/ protection
 - Lack of uniformity on local level
 - Coordinated among towns and states
- Compensation for regulatory restrictions on land use
- Climate change...tell both sides
- Land-use regulations: economic value should be stressed
- Lack of uniformity statewide concerning enforcement of land-use regulations
- DES permitting process should recognize local differences-regional boards for environmental issues

Written comments

- Would like to see a default standard established developed in all communities that would protect adjoining communities. Some development definitely has a regional impact and if a development takes place in a no-zoning town, there is no way to invoke the development of a regional impact statute.
- The first water strategy, as with the first energy strategy, should be conservation, conservation, conservation. All techniques that save water minimize water use and minimize impact on water resources.
- Funding for data collection and monitoring
- Compensation for private landowners for regulatory restrictions on land use; incentives so the private sector is on board with conservation and management practices rather than seeing it as a hardship.
- Education /outreach/ informational sessions on all processes and impacts on a community and personal (landowner) level
- More education of the public
- More funding for water resources
- Use of data so we don't make mistake of other locations developing housing at a level above water volume
- State planning/ hazard initiatives, taking into account expectation for more storms in New Hampshire than other states with Climate Change Plan – pro-active instead of responding reactively

Comments not connected to a meeting

- Quality of drinking water should be one of the top concerns.