Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 10:00 AM
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Attendance
NepRWA-Ian Cooke, Nancy Fyler, Emily Leone, Sean McCanty, Kerry Snyder, Suzanna Sullivan, Anna Yie
MAPC-Martin Pillsbury
Canton—Regen Jamieson, Kristine Meaney
Dedham-Patrick Hogan, Meredith LaBelle, Jason Mammone
Foxborough—Lori Dorce, Ryan Norton
Milton-Cassie Calabro
Norwood-Carly Rockwood
Quincy-Paul Costello, Margaret Laforest, Heather Lis
Randolph-Courtney Botelho (BETA)
Sharon-Rory McGregor (Water Resource Advisory Board, NepRWA Board)
Stoughton-James Conlon, Larry Langlois
Walpole-Landis Hershey
Westwood-Phil Paradis (BETA)
JAguilar

Presentation: *Updates to NepRWA's Community Water Monitoring Network Program,* *Dr. Sean McCanty, River Restoration Director, Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA)*

- CWMN program covers 41 sites across the watershed, tests for bacteria, phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, pH, and temperature
- Changes in 2025
    - 4 sites are now "sentinel sites", representing major confluence points to track health long term. These are NER080 in Norwood (Western Headwaters), EAB010 in Canton (East Branch), NER150 (Start of Lower Neponset, leaving Fowl Meadow) in Milton/Boston, and NER200 (Whole watershed) in Lower Mills Milton/Dorchester
    - These sites will get all testing done monthly – additions of Chlorophyll, total nitrogen, ammonia and orthophosphate
    - 5 former CWMN sites will be relocated to Ponds for more informative nutrient and chlorophyll testing
        - Steep Hill Brook (SHB021) to Pinewood Pond (PWP001)
        - Hawes Brook (HAB002) to Ellis Pond (ELP001)
        - Pequit Brook (PQB040) to Reservoir Pond (REP001)
        - Mill Brook (MLB024) to Petee's Pond (PEP001)
        - Massapoag Brook (MPB037) to Mann's Pond (MNP001)

    - X-Cel conservation Corp will take over former sites to maintain bacteria testing
- Looking for funding for Estuary sampling, likely not done with volunteers (or at least not entirely). Difficulties in scale of estuary, needing both boat and depth sampling and controlling for tidal cycle
- What to do with CWMN data?
    - Hotspot selection, DNA testing for E. coli sources, placement locations for SCMs, identify stormwater hotline issues from abnormal samples
    - Pass data on to DEP in terms of nutrient and primary productivity impairments in both the fresh and saltwater areas
- Report card events are great ways to pass along the information to the public, bring our data more attention, and makes data between Charles, Mystic, and Neponset more comparable
- Town reports
    - Currently rather formal, but unclear how helpful municipal staff find it
    - Possible alterations:
        - More like the report card, in terms of clearer messaging at the expense of a deep dive
        - Inclusion of chlorophyll
- Need from NSP members:
    - Site suggestions
    - Updates on stream issues (stormwater hotline)/construction in areas
    - Suggestions for Town reports from those who get one
    - What would be useful to you?

Q&A

Where are the four "sentinel" sites? NER08 (Norwood), near the Viaduct in Canton is the East Branch side near the 95 interchange, end of Fowl Meadow is another site, and last one at the Baker Dam. What is coming from the headwaters and the Watershed as a whole.

Liked the idea of report cards for consistency over time and how water quality is changing over time. Especially major event call outs can help with publicity. Sharing photos of those who are sampling and highlighting the results/volunteers/X-Cel.

Someone mentioned the amazing presentation at the Canton Library about the report card. June EPA Report Card event and also NepRWA to upload the presentation from the Canton Library to the next e-newsletter and also upload the YCW website.

Canton is collecting data on the ponds and would like to coordinate with Sean about filling in any gaps.

Does NepRWA measure depth/length of the River/Streams. Sean says that might be more technical but we might want to hotspot this but maybe this will be more Staff related. We do ask for notes about the stream from the volunteers monthly but it's not the most scientific.

Question for towns: Any interest in permission to assert local control of nutrient application? (H.1021) Outside of Cape Cod, municipalities are preempted by the state from imposing local regulations on the application of nutrients or pesticides. State regs are developed and enforced by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (Pesticide/Nutrient). Several municipalities have attempted to adopt local bylaws or regulations over the years, to no avail given the preemption. While a uniform

application of agricultural regulations makes sense, it seems that local communities are finding that, especially when there exist particularly sensitive areas, local restrictions that are more stringent than the state regulations are warranted.

Representative Ted Philips of Sharon has filed H.1021 which would grant permission to municipalities to adopt more stringent regulation of pesticide and nutrient application. It would NOT require local governments to adopt such regulations—it simply gives them the option to when, like in Sharon, they are experiencing significant nutrient pollution in a waterbody.

Kerry would be interested to hear if NSP members would welcome such permission and/or see any unintended consequences from such permission.

NSP Updates

- MS4 Comments
    - MS4 update, public comment ends 5/21: https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/massachusetts-small-ms4-general-permit#2024draftmams4gp
    - Public hearing May 7, 7 PM: https://usepa.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/Qkj2EoceQIWGOOiuNGFJdA
- School Program Update
    - On track 275 classrooms and over 3000 students!

  Rory mentioned the school program coming to his grandson's class and his excitement regarding cleaning out storm drains. Curious what we're discussing in the classrooms and fostering the next generation.

  Emily overviews the stormwater program – what ends up in our storm drains, what gets in there, how it can get clogged and leads to flooding.
- Outreach
    - Fertilizer Social Media Campaign – A paid social media advertisement is currently running for all the Towns. The post emphasizes alternatives to fertilizers such as compost, mulch, grasscycling, and planting natives. The same paid advertisement is a social media post on NepRWA's Facebook, LinkedIn, BlueSky, Twitter, and Instagram accounts and all City/Towns have been tagged for ease in resharing. Additionally, NSP has emailed Town contacts with reminders to reshare the content and it's also in our last MailChimp. Please e-mail me directly if you've had any staffing changes and/or new social accounts you'd like us to tag you in.
    - Developer/Construction Outreach – E-mails have going out to our points of contacts in each Town regarding updating the Developer/Construction brochure. Many of the Town's websites have an outdated brochure. The new one does look similar to the old one, however the newer one includes QR codes that bring viewers to the YCW website where they can be linked to training videos and interactive training modules.
    - Industrial/Commercial Outreach - In the past we've done direct mailers, however this year we're switching it up and doing another targeted social media advertisement campaign. The target being those who work in industrial spaces throughout the Watershed. Please be on the lookout for a post that can be reshared on your Town accounts.
    - Working on non-DPW posters for good housekeeping/recognizing illicit discharges
    - Working on direct outreach to landscapers re: proper use of lawn chemicals

- Spring Neponset River Cleanup is on Saturday, April 26th from 9 to noon. We have 15 locations around the Watershed to sign up for so please come and join us and help us promote the cleanup!