

## Great Bay Watershed Stewardship Branding Campaign

### Listening Session Summary

July 12, 2016

In June 2016, Great Bay 2020 commissioned a series of listening sessions focused on a public marketing campaign to encourage segments of the general public in the Great Bay watershed to “learn, do, and give” to build a culture of water and natural resource stewardship. These sessions engaged members of the Southeast Watershed Alliance, Seacoast Stormwater Coalition, Natural Resources Outreach Coalition, and diverse non-governmental organizations focused on water quality and conservation throughout the watershed. The sessions were intended to inform campaign development; increase understanding of how the campaign could support existing water quality outreach; clarify the campaign’s substance and objectives; and encourage a sense of larger ownership in the campaign. Now that the listening phase of the project is complete project work will shift to the campaign developers which include: PREP, Stout Heart advertising agency, TideWatch Market Research Firm and the Great Bay 2020 Decision Team which includes NH Dept. of Environmental Services, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Conservation Law Foundation.

The listening sessions were well attended, cumulatively drawing approximately 65 participants from 30 organizations. Participants could offer input in person or asynchronously. They were given opportunities to participate in group discussion to encourage collaborative idea building and to offer input individually to offset the bias of group think. Input was informally coded and aggregated into four categories: 1) Understanding of what the campaign is and how it will work, 2) Enthusiasm and support for the campaign, 3) Audiences and uses for the campaign, and 4) Advice for campaign developers. The following is a summary of how this input will inform campaign development over the next six months.

#### 1. Understanding of what the campaign is and how it will work

Each listening session included a campaign overview followed by a question and answer period. These discussions underscored the need to continue to clarify the substance of the campaign and the process for managing it as these take shape between now and February of 2017.

- As a result, the FAQ and presentation will be updated to explain the campaign using some feedback captured in these sessions. These will be posted on the Great Bay 2020 website by July 19th at <<http://preestuaries.org/initiatives/great-bay-2020/>>

#### 2. Enthusiasm and support for the campaign

Reactions to the campaign and its usefulness in helping to promote water quality tended to fall between “wait and see” and positive, with many participants voicing approval for the idea. However, some were more cautious, expressing concern about issues including the limited name recognition of Great Bay in the larger watershed, the potential for certain demographics to be left behind, the question of how funding for the effort would be sustained, how the campaign would connect to specific behaviors, and how its effectiveness would be measured.

- As a result, campaign developers will consider a brand that does not rely solely on affinity to Great Bay itself. They will strive to find resources to expand the campaign to bring in new demographics and places throughout the watershed over time. They will create an evaluation plan with short and mid-term metrics of effectiveness to offset the fact that the campaign’s environmental impacts will not be felt—or be able to be measured—for at least 10 years from its launch.

### 3. Potential audiences and uses for the campaign

Potential audiences suggested by participants generally fell into two groups: 1) partner organizations and members of the “choir” who need tools to engage other audiences and 2) specific subsets of the general public. Within the first group, municipalities were identified as a key audience as were community decision makers. Specific segments of the general public cited included younger people who connect through social media; contractors who support public works, festival goers, school age children and their families, non-English speaking residents, vacation home owners from out of state, community gatekeepers who may transcend demographic boundaries, chambers of commerce, and church groups. Many noted the challenge of reaching communities with markedly different demographics, ranging from the “blue collar” residents of Seabrook and commuting renters of Rochester to the winter renters in Hampton and more affluent residents of Rye and Portsmouth. Some strongly emphasized the need to be as inclusive as possible and not focus solely on people between the ages of 20 and 40.

- Stout Heart will work to develop a series of “personas” that incorporate suggestions from session participants to the extent possible given current funding for this campaign. Development of these personas will rest on proven market research and trends, they will prioritize target audiences, that are not already the focus of existing outreach organizations, have an established interest in enjoying water resources, and can be reached—and potentially triggered to action—in the most cost-effective manner. The campaign will focus on a small subset of these at the outset and seek to add more over time, as the campaign is tested through market research and refined and more funding is available.

Given the abstract nature of the campaign at this point in its development, it was difficult for most participants to provide concrete ideas of how they could use it to advance their public outreach efforts around water quality. However, there were able to describe generalized potential uses for the campaign. These included leveraging it to stimulate support for individual (citizen) stewardship and appreciation for water bodies; using it as a resource for common tools and messages to communicate around water quality and diverse content types for a wide variety of outlets; using it to educate the public on their connection to water quality and the need for municipal actions to support water quality.

- As a result, campaign developers will ensure that the website will include general messages and diverse tools to support public outreach around water quality. They will test all website function and feeling with target audiences. They will work with state and local assistance providers (e.g. NHDES, SWA, etc.) to ensure there is a clear process for partners to work directly with third parties to customize these tools for their own explicit purposes. They will also continue to engage listening session participants to understand how they define individual stewardship in the watershed.

### 4. Advice for campaign developers

Participants offered a wide range of advice to help insure the success of the campaign. For example, they encouraged developers to create a broad umbrella in which partners everywhere in the state can find their place, but a brand flexible enough to cater to one community’s residents. They recommended the use of a mentor-mentee model that introduces new audiences to “the choir,” linking the campaign to resources that can make an economic case for stewardship, being on guard against “greenwashing,” and being clear about how the campaign can be used for MS4 permit requirements or not.

- Some of the advice tendered, while well-informed and considered, is beyond the resources and reach of this campaign. That said, campaign developers will make every effort to consider all suggestions as the campaign and the processes for managing it are developed.
- Further thoughts can be shared via email with project manager Jill Farrell from PREP at [jill.farrell@unh.edu](mailto:jill.farrell@unh.edu), however, please keep in mind the expedited timeline, project process and limited budget.