

Piscataqua Region Monitoring Collaborative (PRMC) Meeting Notes, 1/26/24

Attendees:

Mike Bobinsky (Somersworth)
Steve Couture (DES)
Jon Balanoff (AWWA)
Katie Ambrose (Rochester)
Jake Kritzer (NERACOOS)
Brian Goetz (Portsmouth)
Lindsey Butler (Newmarket)
Jake Roger (Epping)
Kate Swails (NOAA)
Melissa Paly (CLF)
Cory Riley
Kim Arlen
Peter Egelston (Eliot)
Steve Cronin (Exeter)
Bart McDonough (Newmarket)
Kristen Murphy (Exeter)
Brianna Obrien (Hampton)
Ariel Wright (Newington)
Amanda McQuaid (UNH Cooperative Extension)
Sally Soule (DES)

PREP Staff (Kalle Matso, Abigail Lyon, Trevor Mattera, Annie Cox, and Nate Gruen)

- How is the estuary responding to efforts by the group? Reference to 2023 SOOE report.
 - o Water temp is measurably increasing from AP buoy data (SOOE pg 14)
 - o Sea level rise (SOOE pg 16)
 - o Impervious cover increase (SOOE pg 25)
 - >10% = problem
 - o N2 levels increasing phytoplankton pop. (SOOE pg 62)
 - o Oyster restoration (SOOE pg 82)
 - o Soft-shell clams (SOOE pg 90)
 - o Migratory fish (SOOE pg 96)
 - How to continue monitoring w/o dam in Exeter?
- Kalle: overview of PRMC handout (what/why/budget/funding breakdown).
 - o *all read handout
- Cory: What are specific objs of mtg?
 - o Kalle: Not here to decide what to monitor, mainly 'how do we make sure our watershed has the support (finance and labor) it needs to effectively manage the problems in the estuary?
 - o (Melissa Paly echoes Cory's question)

- Kalle: If we're successful, this group grows to 40 ppl, with more representation from other towns in watershed. Citizens Action Community is another dimension.
- Steve: What's the distinction? To me, this is about monitoring and systems of monitoring. How we invest resources, and what resources we need for the future.
- Mike: From municipal perspective, it's important to track and know what is going on in the watershed to measure how it impacts communities. Future concern: How are we shifting from Point-Source to Non-point-source loading tracking?
- Lindsey Butler: What differentiates PRMC from MAAM?
 - Mike: Somersworth and other communities—especially those without WWTPs-- are not part of MAAM, so there is only partial overlap.

POST LUNCH DISCUSSION

Prompt

How can we grow this collab so there are more monetary and in-kind resources?

- Is it about better understanding the value of monitoring? Making sure we're providing value?
- Is it just about spending more time knocking on municipal doors?
- Other ideas?

Kalle: We're as wealthy as we've ever been thanks to new partners & MAAM. Also Bipartisan Infrastructure until 2027. But even as well as we're doing, we don't have the money to do everything (e.g. seaweed, freshwater issues, etc). Grow the collab for resources but also to help solve problems across the watershed.

Brianna: Speak to how \$ is coming from MAAM logistically?

- Kalle: Based on effluent, I believe.
- Katie: Agreement at the collaborative on how we're collaborating together; amount and how we'll allocate those funds. Voting on a budget and then those amounts are allocated per community.
 - Brianna: Raising and appropriating the same way across communities?
 - Katie: It depends. (e.g., Rochester & Portsmouth approp'd the same way)
- Kalle: The PRMC ask/bill is based on population

Peter: Is private sector funding problematic? Foundations, etc?

- Kalle: NH Charitable Foundation created GB 2030, and many here are working on allocating those resources. Some NEPs have committees focused on funding from businesses. That's an option for us.
- Cory: Monitoring is not always what private entities are interested in. They like projects. The clams have been funded privately forever. There is a mechanism of getting private funds, but might be through regulations.

- Melissa: GB2030 resources are not really for monitoring...more for implementation of projects, outreach, dam removal, land conservation.
- Jake K: re: Melissa, monitoring req's a sustained funding stream and that's always challenging

Discussion Around the Prompt of Growing the Collaborative, Showing Value

Mike: Little ol' fashion 1-on-1 knock on the door. Kalle came to Somersworth; it was effective. Als, the NHMA – NH Muni Assoc. Broad base of folks – could be a presentation, services & function of monitoring.

Ariel: Newington mainly industrial, companies that have mission statement of enviro, etc. Those business could be solicited. Make a donation, tax right-off, looks good for them.

Rayann: Similar to previous – linking to permitting req's and what they're already doing to better justify their investment.

Bart: Create a jingle to get in people's headspace. Catchy tune and you have some free advertising.

Jon: Convincing communities – since the water only flows in 1 direction, can be tough for head-water comms. But if they believe that more funding could create more monitoring in their communities. We have N in our lakes too...

Steve C: Capital budget – has happened in the past where state has funds for GB monitoring. But have to start planning now for that ask.

Next Steps Section

Kalle: If we're thinking funding field season 2025, meeting in June has been advantageous. How to get more at that meeting?

Jon: Good next step to develop a target funding goal and where to fundraise from. Good to visualize our target.

Mike: Some comms are participating and some aren't. Helpful to ID those communities and becomes part of the strategic discussion – e.g. knocking on doors, which doors?

Bart: Discussion of merits of est.'ing a fundraising committee – pros & cons.

Katie: Focus on who's not been at the table. Combining that with SOOE and tied to attendance of the conf... i.e. How can we get the word out about the report, spread utilization of the report and making sure ID'd folks have those resources.

Melissa: The larger purpose of this – think of the funnel of engagement (inform, (something), and engage). Fundraising component should be the last piece. Folks need to understand how this gives value to their community. Maybe this is about community engagement. Making the content relatable and valuable to them. Reframe the purpose of this.

- Really focused on the muni's and engaging them to make it valuable.

Ariel: Off Melissa's ideas – develop marketing presentation that's personalized towards the individual audience (those that are contributing). PREP has a mission statement for the group? And ID'ing who we want to reach out to for funding and making it specific.

Cory: Some sort of charter or charge and being responsible about roles. Who holds money? Who's marketing to towns? PREP is just the convener? What is PREP's role, etc. Things can shift but need to ID.

- Kalle: We could bring a draft to our next meeting.
- Steve: Totally agree with Cory – not sure about what our charge was when we started, but have an idea of where we want to go, and later we can focus on actions.
- Mike: Echo comments. Hearing that we can clarify roles, provide direction, meaningful actions that doesn't duplicate efforts.

Rayann: ID in each community the member or staff that should attend. Look back at our SOOE conf list and match up – that could be the person. PRMC role is dealing with the budget, but planning for the next field season? Is that just from a budgetary standpoint?

Jake: 1) How well do we understand the full landscape of needs/interests w/in muni's (gov't & citizens; regulatory & non-reg) to which monitoring can contribute?

- Conduct a survey to document (before and during the meeting)

2) How do people access/visualize monitoring data? Would it help build understanding & support if data visualization was easier and more effective?

- Hold a collaborative product design session during the meeting

Brianna: 1) Specific asks/goals – i.e., "X more communities contributing by 202X." Outline what the target is.

2) Speak directly w/ muni decision makers (town managers). Do they have needs? What is their willingness to contribute.

- Melissa and Cory...now is the time to lean on value and ask for money in 2028

Flip Chart Suggestions Regarding the Prompt (see below)

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- Group 1 (Melissa, Jake Roger, Kristen, Lyndsey)
 - One-on-one meetings with Town/City officials
 - Presentations/connections at NHMA conference/workshops
 - Link in permit requirements and the monitoring services provided
- Group 2 (Peter, Steve Cronin and Cory)
 - Focus on the towns that are not contributing now.
 - Knock on doors, make the case.
 - Make connection to economic benefits to communities
 - Recognize that “pitch” will be different in each community (big vs small/regulated vs. unregulated/water enterprise vs. no water enterprise)
- Group 3 (Rayann, Amanda, Ariel)
 - Don’t forget about industries
 - Sliding scale for contributions (avoid sticker shock)
 - Value = connecting monitoring to PREPA and other projects to implement BMPs
 - Link to MS4 outlets and (EPA Permits)
- Group 4 (Jon B, Katie, Bart, Brian)
 - More municipal outreach and buy-in from munies that aren’t at the table currently
 - Convince small communities of value of monitoring
 - State funding sources
 - Use fees
 - Special opportunity zones
 - License plate
 - Pass through funding
 - Individual donations, fundraising
 - PREP may have farther reach than smaller groups
 - Business fundraising
 - PSAs...come up with a jingle
- Group 5 (Brianna O, Kate, Steve Couture, Jake Kritzer)
 - H-S Estuary: lean on SHEA as convener
 - What’s in it for me?
 - Making data useable
 - High tide data in Hampton isn’t that useable
 - Freshwater committee
 - Cyanobacteria, phosphorus, water access/recreation
 - Template for communities can contribute (CIP or operational enterprise)
 - Examples from other communities
 - Success stories for how data has helped w/grant requests or actions
 - Additional “state” funding – capital budget
 - Outreach to support resource asks