

**Southeast New England Council for Coastal Watershed Restoration**  
 Draft Summary 3<sup>rd</sup> Work Group Meeting  
 November 16, 2012 10:00am – 1:00pm  
 Cape Cod Commission

**Meeting Attendees**

Walter Berry	EPA, ORD
Eric Boettger	RI NRCS
Joe Costa	Buzzards Bay NEP
Rick Deveriglio	Cape Cod Conservation District
Ed Dewitt	Assoc. to Preserve Cape Cod
Robert Duncanson	Town of Chatham & Barnstable County/Coastal Resources Committee
Hunt Durey	MA Dept. of Fish and Game
Tim Gleason	EPA ORD
Bill Hubbard	Army Corp of Engineers
Johanna Hunter	EPA Region 1
Erin Jackson	Cape Cod Commission
Jon Kachmar	The Nature Conservancy
Sue Kiernan	RI DEM
Donald Liptack	NRCS

Ken Moraff	EPA Region 1
Paul Niedzwiecki	Cape Cod Commission
Suzanne Paton	Fish and Wildlife Service
Margherita Pryor	EPA Region 1
Anne Reynolds	Cape Cod Commission
Richard Ribb	Narragansett Bay NEP
Ann Rodney	EPA, Region 1
Cathy Rogers	Army Corp of Engineers
Elizabeth Selbst	EPA Region 1
Kristy Senatori	Cape Cod Commission
Karen Simpson	EPA Region 1
Jonathan Stone	Save the Bay
Doug Thompson	Keystone Center
John Torgan	Nature Conservancy

**Meeting Objectives**

- *Identify gaps in current, ongoing and planned restoration work with the intention of finding aspects that may not be otherwise accomplished.*
- *Develop an outline for a restoration framework which will eventually include selection criteria and prioritization of projects.*

**A Message from Senator Reed**

At the beginning of the meeting, Kelly Knutsen from Senator Reed’s office joined the group on the phone. Senator Reed has been interested in this effort for many years, and has secured support language in the 2012 appropriations bill to convene a stakeholder group. With an emphasis on southeastern New England, this group will look at what restoration efforts are currently underway, identify gaps of what could be addressed, create partnerships between groups, and set a long-term vision for what can be accomplished in this geographic area. This group will need to set forth a vision and strategy in order to determine what can be done with existing resources and what can be done in the future.

**A Case Study on the Cape**

Following Knutsen’s introduction, Donald Liptack (MA NRCS) and Robert Duncanson (Town of Chatham/Coastal Resources Committee) gave a presentation to the group entitled The Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project. This project was a locally-led effort where a ranking process helped to identify a list of priority projects to fund with \$5 million of ARRA funding. The three categories that were considered included fish passage, shellfish and salt marsh related projects. Developing criteria for ranking these projects was a challenge because each of the 15 towns participating in the project had different priorities. As funding becomes available, the list of projects evolves because some projects are funded by other means or town priorities change. In the past, bacteria and stormwater had been top priorities for the towns but eventually evolved into nutrients being the primary concern since they have a larger impact in the long-term. Two-way communication between the county advisory committee and the towns was shown to be essential in identifying and addressing local and regional issues.

**Preliminary Conclusions from Gap Analysis**

Liz Selbst, from EPA Region 1, presented some preliminary conclusions regarding the restoration project gap analysis. These conclusions were based on responses from members of the workgroup which provided information on what types of restoration projects are planned, are currently underway, or have been completed. Projects were categorized based on the type of project and only 3 of the projects in the inventory fell into both the habitat and water quality restoration categories. This research revealed the following gaps which present opportunities to include in the Council's restoration framework:

- Broaden the scope of monitoring for post-project habitat restoration and water quality improvements
- Develop measures of success for restoration
- Integrate climate change resilience or adaptation measures into project prioritization schemes
- Strengthen the connection between water quality and habitat restoration
- Focus on restoring ecosystem functions (both freshwater and coastal)
- Involve local interests; expanding the functions of project funding

The group felt that this is a great opportunity to look at how the projects are talked about and the language that is used to describe them. This work will be developed further in order to show how projects are related spatially and temporally, and how restoration efforts overlap or align with each other.

### **Elements of a Restoration Framework**

The group has identified nutrients and stormwater as the issues to tackle first, but has also emphasized the importance of bringing clarity to what the goal is, as well as what the scope will be for this effort. There is also interest from the group to align with other federal partners in order to link additional funding sources to this initiative. Several other regional watershed restoration programs were suggested as examples of how this group could operate.

In order to make the case that nutrients are an issue, it would be beneficial for the group to come up with a larger restoration metric that resonates with the public. In addition to having a core focus of the group, there will need to be a connection to individual goals. In other words, making a link to nutrients and how addressing them achieves a broader mission would be in the best interest of the group. The economic justification of the negative impacts from nutrients is also important and contributes to the reason of why they are important to society.

One proposed option for building a self-sustaining collaboration is to put available funds towards a pilot study which uses the knowledge of the agencies and labs involved in the workgroup. Other members of the group agreed that pilot studies and innovative approaches would be beneficial to make the connection between the source of pollution and an impaired water body.

### **Where do we go from here?**

Building a case statement would be beneficial to get an idea of what would be effective and what needs to be developed by this group. This case statement would establish what the important message is and convey that message in a clear and concise way. It would be the marketing strategy to address the problem so the public can relate to it and agree on it. It would also help to engage additional partners in this effort.

In order to determine the elements to include in the Council's restoration framework, examples of other geographical program frameworks should be reviewed.

Another beneficial step would be to review the information that is currently available relating to nitrogen research and technology. This would help to identify what is applicable and build a better understanding of what could be done within the geographic scope of this effort.

### **Action Items and Next Steps**

- EPA will look at other geographic programs which focus on restoration of surface waters in order to come up with some examples of what could work for this bi-state effort
- A small group of workgroup members will meet to refine and flesh out both the vision statement and case statements. These will be shared with the rest of the group for comment.
- The next workgroup meeting will be held on January 28 at 1:00pm at EPA's ORD lab in Narragansett, RI.
- The next workgroup meeting will continue to focus on developing an optimal restoration framework for the Council.