

Joint RMAC/LMAC Water Quality Indicators Subcommittee

October 7, 2019, 9:00 am to 11:00 am

NHDES Conference Room 112

29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH

MEETING SUMMARY - DRAFT

Members Present

Mark Lombardi, Lead
Shane Bradt
Garret Graaskamp
John Magee
David Packard
Michele L. Tremblay

Representing

RMAC
LMAC
LMAC (non-voting)
RMAC (non-voting)
LMAC
RMAC

NHDES Staff Present

Jen Drociak
Marah Mitchell
Tracie Sales

1. Welcome and introductions

Mark welcomed everyone to the first Joint RMAC/LMAC Water Quality Indicator Subcommittee Meeting. The subcommittee decided to operate using a consensus basis rather than a voting basis. Members agreed that having a real estate representative on the committee was important, and that Mary Truell volunteered to serve on the committee but was unable to attend this meeting. Subcommittee members also considered having a representative from NHDES who works directly with water quality data collection and interpretation. Staff explained that there is not a designated individual who answers all water quality questions, but suggested Sara Steiner because of her work with the New Hampshire Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP).

2. General subcommittee mission and historical efforts

Michele explained that the RMAC and LMAC had created this subcommittee several years ago, but it was unable to function due to NHDES budget cuts and staff restrictions at the time. Michele further explained that the subcommittee was developed with the intention of developing a tool that would be able to answer common questions that the general public has about river and lake water quality in New Hampshire. To support its answers, the tool would use information and data from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, New Hampshire Fish and Game, and other reputable sources.

3. Discussion and ideas

The subcommittee decided that their first task will be to determine the most commonly asked questions about water quality in New Hampshire, why the questions are being asked, and who are the common entities asking the questions. Michele shared that the most common audiences who ask her questions about water quality are local residents, visitors to the state, media outlets, and real estate agents. The subcommittee then determined that their second task will be to determine the best way to answer these questions and what data would be needed to support the answers. Garret advised that the group avoid using emotionally-related questions and answers for this project. Committee members will ask various groups/entities what kinds of water quality-related frequently asked questions (FAQs) they receive. Members will also ask for safety-related FAQs related to water quality. Michele and Tracie shared that some of the most common questions they receive are: Can I swim in the water? Can I boat in the water? Can I fish? Can I eat the fish? Can I drink the water? What is the cleanest lake? What is this thing in the water and is it harmful? Members determined that while it might be challenging to contact every lake association in the state for their feedback on FAQs, it would be worthwhile reaching out to some of the larger groups such as the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance and the Green Mountain Conservation Group.

4. Website/Resources Design

After the subcommittee completes their first two tasks, they agreed they would like to develop a web tool that could provide answers and supporting data. Michele stated that she owns a website domain that the subcommittee could potentially use to host the web tool. The website could potentially use data from NHDES or link to other reputable websites when necessary. It was suggested to also provide a

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contact person relative to each question in case the provided answers do not provide enough information to the user.

5. Review of Material that is Currently Available

Jen Drociak presented an overview of the information that was distributed to the subcommittee prior to the meeting. This information consisted of all of the current NHDES resources and publications used to address surface water quality. The subcommittee agreed that this information was not always easy to find and/or understand, especially for someone looking for a quick answer and/or someone who does not have any background in water quality analysis. This information would be valuable to use to support answers to water quality FAQs.

6. Next Steps

Tracie advised subcommittee members that for NHDES to support this initiative, the LMAC and RMAC should send letters to the NHDES commissioner discussing the intent of the subcommittee and a proposal of what they want to do. She also advised members that any product(s) (website, documents, etc.) that are created would need to be maintained and updated; therefore, the subcommittee would need to consider who would be responsible for that maintenance.

7. Assignments

Subcommittee Member	Individual Assignments
Mark Lombardi	Contact Mary Truell to determine if she is still interested in being on the subcommittee and/or if she has any recommendations of other individuals who would be beneficial to have on the subcommittee. Also contact the New Hampshire Tourism Board to inquire about water quality FAQs they may receive.
Shane Bradt	Ask on Twitter/social media what water quality FAQs other groups (water quality related groups) may receive. Additionally, tweet to receive questions the general public would like answered.
Garret Graaskamp	Inquire as to the FAQs received by: the New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions, NH Fish and Game colleagues, and Dick Smith (Fishing Interest representative on the LMAC)
John Magee	Ask Fish and Game colleagues water quality FAQs they receive.
David Packard	Ask the Lakes Management Advisory Committee and NH Lakes what water quality FAQs they receive. Send letter to NHDES commissioner from the LMAC in support of the purpose of the Joint RMAC/LMAC Water Quality Indicator Subcommittee.
Michele L. Tremblay	Compile a list of water quality FAQs she receives and ask water related committees with which she is involved what water quality FAQs they receive. Contact Mark Hayward of the Union Leader, David Brooks of the Concord Monitor, and Jeff Thurston from the New Hampshire Marine Trades Association, to inquire as to what water quality FAQs they receive. Send letter to NHDES commissioner from the RMAC in support of the purpose of the Joint RMAC/LMAC Water Quality Indicator Subcommittee.
NHDES Employees (Tracie, Jen, Mariah)	Ask NHDES colleagues, Marine Patrol, and DNCR and/or the Department of Business and Economic Affairs what water quality FAQs they receive.
Assignments due November 7, 2019. As members complete their tasks, they will reply-all to Mark's original meeting email so that the group can track the accrued information.	

Next meeting will be scheduled approximately six weeks after this meeting (week of November 18th). A Doodle Poll will be sent out to determine the date and time. Mark thanked all members for attending the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 11:02am.