

Mystic River Watershed Initiative Pre-Steering Meeting  
 October 6, 2008  
 EPA New England, One Congress Street, Boston, MA

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Caitlyn Hunt	EPA
Roger Frymire	
Mary Beth Dechant	MyRWA
Karen Pelto	MAEEA
Andrew B. DeSantis	City of Chelsea DPW
Joan Blaustein	MAPC
Michael Celona	Mass DPH
Steve Kaiser	MyRWA – Policy
Jenny Birnbaum	MassDEP
Tom Faber	EPA
Todd Borci	EPA
John Reinhardt	MyRWA
Beth Rudolph	Town of Winchester
John Durant	Tufts University
Lynnee Hamjian	EPA
Ekongkar Singh Khalsa	MyRWA
Kwabena Kyei-Aboagye	EPA
Corin Parsons	Sen. Jehlen’s Office
Kristi Rea	EPA
Will Congram	EPA

**Notes:**

**The Matrix**

**Initial comments** from Lynne Hamjian (EPA)

In its current form, the matrix provides a snapshot of activities currently happening in the watershed. It is available in formats listed by activity, and by lead organization. Information on monitoring is nearly complete, while grant opportunities could use more coverage. Groups might consider making a list of grant opportunities, including time frames and relevant contact information. We would like to open the discussion to the group for feedback on where to go from here.

**Group Observations**

Joan Blaustein (MAPC): It is hard to get a handle on how far to go with the matrix. Some activities have varying degrees of impact on the watershed. There is a great deal of activity occurring in sub-regions of the watershed that is not documented here.

Roger Frymire (MyRWA/Volunteer): We have issued notices of non-compliance in many municipalities, and monitoring and other projects are going on to fix these problems. Friends groups—Projects by individual cities and commissions would fill any data gaps in the matrix. We should start off with as much detail as possible, then scale back if we need to.

Andrew DeSantis (Chelsea DPW): We (Chelsea) have submitted two main activities: MS4 projects and BMPs. There is a great deal of activity we have not added because it is hard to know what level of detail the matrix is intended to cover.

Lynne Hamjian (EPA): The question of detail seems to keep coming up. What level of detail should we strive for in the matrix?

Roger Frymire: To begin with, we should strive for as much detail as possible, and cut it back later if needed.

Joan Blaustein (MAPC): If we issue a report card once a year, it will take a long time to change grades. We should track projects [continuously] to reassure people that their efforts are important, and we should err on the side of detail.

Mary Beth Dechant (MyRWA): Since municipalities are undergoing a lot of remediation; we should generate a list of those water bodies and projects.

John Durant (Tufts University): Should we include education and outreach? We should keep research and science inventory separate.

Steve Kaiser (MyRWA – Policy): How do we define “planning?”

Joan Blaustein (MAPC): There is no harm in adding more future projects/planning. We could put a link or a place holder. This could be the one master list that holds all projects and planning.

Lynne Hamjian: So far half or so of the entries cover future projects. We could sort for future work or ongoing work by adding tags to the entries.

Mary Beth Dechant (MyRWA): An example of something that needs to get done is a water quality alert system or flagging program. Putting this in the matrix may serve as a placeholder for needed projects.

Joan Blaustein (MAPC): Entering future/needed projects may be helpful in pursuing grants. If grant programs can see unmet needs in the watershed, they may be able to structure themselves more effectively towards those needs.

EK Singh Khalsa (MyRWA): Organizations should feel that projects are “fundable,” or at least that their creators are pursuing funding.

Roger Fymire: The steering committee can group future/ongoing projects in the matrix into high, medium, and low priority groups.

Karen Pelto (MAEEA): There is mention for MET grant. We could list all proposals? This RFP is working toward funding a concrete idea.

John Durant (Tufts University): Criteria for High, Medium, Low areas of the watershed need to be clear and explicit.

Steve Kaiser (MyRWA): There seems to be a lot of information on CSOs missing from the matrix.

Lynne Hamjian: We can add a new column for ongoing or future activities. We will go in and look at future activities. There is a lot of information that is still missing. We need to get to communities for them to enter their work. We could also use an overview of work being done by MWRA.

Joan Blaustein: The steering committee can move projects along in sub-regions to solicit other projects. They could put together a 1-page memo about what is needed and use it as an outreach tool to solicit ideas and fill in gaps.

-How do we get to the municipalities for CSO/SSO work, and what is the best way to reach smaller towns for their participation?

Joan Blaustein: MAPC Hazard Mitigation Plans are projects in these municipalities that can be tagged.

Roger Frymire: Each city's annual report sometimes mentions bigger projects. Their conservation commissions and planning departments should be contacted.

Jenny Birnbaum (MA DEP): We should send out an email introducing people to the process. Cities could see it as an opportunity to seek funding.

Lynne Hamjian: EPA has rules on surveying and we might need some help with soliciting information from municipalities.

Mary Beth Dechant: MyRWA has a contact list and can help with outreach distribution to smaller municipalities.

Rep. Provost: For engaging smaller towns, contact the planning boards, and for larger cities, contact the planning department.

John Reinhardt (MyRWA): What is the purpose of this matrix? To prioritize projects?

Lynne Hamjian: We want to include future projects that people think are important.

Todd Borci (EPA): An email should be sent to the organizations/municipalities asking if they have any projects going on in the Mystic/Aberjona, etc. watersheds.

EK (MyRWA): It would be useful for the steering committee to request priority projects. If on the committee, it would be important to know about past and ongoing enforcement actions.

Rep. Provost: We need to define short- vs. long-term, or provide a time frame, instead of saying “ongoing.”

Cynthia Leibman: We should also include research projects at universities, as well as projects that aren’t necessarily research, but could hold relevance. We should also access local sub-watershed groups like Hord Pond Advocacy group for their activities. Does CLF have a group?

John Durant: Shouldn’t EPA’s superfund projects be included? We can also use the GIS layer that shows 21E, superfund, and brownfield projects.

Steve Kaiser: The current matrix could just show ongoing and actively funded projects, while a second matrix could provide information on planning and future projects. Also, a project by Winchester on the third page of the matrix may spark some controversy as the planning entry somewhat contradicts other entries.

Beth Rudolph: NEPA should assess whether projects upstream don’t increase flooding downstream.

Kristi Rea: We need to find a way to get it on legal sized paper to make it printable.

Lynnee Hamjian: Taking into consideration the feedback provided in this discussion, we will work on two matrices. The first will cover current activities. We’ll tweak the format to meet all the suggestions. We need to reach out to smaller municipal planning groups, DPW, MWRA, BWSC, and DCR, and we will ask all to check entries to fill in blanks. The second matrix will contain future or needed projects. The steering committee will help focus this matrix. We will work on that after we get a little further on the current activities matrix.

We also need to map out 21E sites, enhance science inventory, and reach out to local groups.

### **Science Committee Update:**

We’d like to discuss an outline for the structure of science committee meetings that will present results and share data. The committee could meet in the winter for four hours, and anyone who is interested is invited. There will be a few major presentations, followed by an around-the-table update on activities. We will set up the first meeting after January. We hope to link data and results to actions in the watershed. We should also connect with the steering committee to provide some time to set priorities.

John Durant: The public is often interested in hearing scientific findings that have implications on policy. For the Charles River Watershed science symposiums, 25-30 people showed up.

Roger Frymire: Every other year we can have a public symposium. Tom Faber, John Durant and myself will work together. Charles committee meetings were generally more closed, and were concerned with large-scale funding and projects, which we don't have as much of in the Mystic.

Steve Kaiser: The committee needs to assure the accuracy of data, and it needs to be applied science.

Mary Beth and Tom will take the lead in getting the science committee meetings started.

### **Steering Committee Straw Proposal**

Opening comments from Lynne Hamjian: It is time to move forward with the steering committee, and formalize its structure. We would like some volunteers to work with us to draft a more formal proposal, and coordinate work between local and state groups. We need to decide on the size and membership of the committee, and it needs to have a balance between government, local, and state officials.

Kristi Rea: We emphasize the need for volunteers from this group to work together between now and our next meeting to decide on the essential characteristics of the steering committee. EPA does not want to dominate the discussion here, as we are mainly here to facilitate the process.

Steve Kaiser: What will the frequency of the group's meetings be, and how long will it exist? These are for the group to decide, and it depends on what its needs are.

Joan Blaustein: Would it operate under bylaws?

Lynne Hamjian: It will have operating procedures. We will share the straw proposal by email after this meeting.

Mary Beth Dechant: How will the agenda be created?

Roger Frymire: The steering and science committees need a smaller executive committee to make decisions and develop agendas. This executive committee should meet twice as often as the real committee. We also need to be conscious of whether it duplicates or interferes with boards that are already acting.

Steve Kaiser: I recommend that a strategic direction be stated. Also, Ch. 21, section 2 requires DCR to do management plans. Management plans could help develop a strategic direction, and also serve as leverage for getting them involved.

EK: Are we talking about establishing a steering committee now?

Kristi Rea: No; just soliciting volunteers to help work on the steering committee proposal.

Joan Blaustein: We need to keep the bigger picture at hand and make sure smaller groups get representation. It needs to be possible for non-steering committee members to participate in the initiative.

Kristi Rea: We're trying to keep what was established at the summit in mind as we move forward. EPA did not want to pre-determine the nature of the steering committee; we're trying to get volunteers representing a breadth of organizations from the watershed to think it through.

Lynne: We need to know how to reach out to smaller groups and municipalities. The whole proposal needs to be fleshed out.

Joan Blaustein: We should set a six-month goal to structure the rest of the committees. If we saw all the committees, we could look into where MAPC belongs.

Tom Faber: We may be focusing on too many committees at once. We should start with establishing the steering committee, and then develop from there.

EK: The steering committee is the first task in identifying further structures. Some of the players who aren't present today might provide an entirely different avenue we didn't think of. The committee will need to sit together and identify their stakeholders and priorities.

Lynne Hamjian: We will pick a date for folks to get back to us about volunteering to help craft the steering committee. Please let Caitlyn know if you'd like to volunteer. We'll set up a call to work together to answer these questions. We will also send around the straw proposal to give folks opportunity to comment via email.

## **Announcements**

Caitlyn Hunt: There is a general MET grant that I will send around to you folks that you might be interested in applying for.

Roger Frymire: The Worcester NPDES permit is open for comment until October 14 as is the BWSC phase I and the MS4 general permit.

John Reinhardt: October 22<sup>nd</sup> there is the Mystic River Watershed Annual meeting. It will be at the Yacht club at Orient Heights and Bob Zimmerman will be speaking. It is from 6pm – 9pm

NEXT meeting is scheduled for Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:30 am at EPA.