

Mystic River Watershed Initiative Steering Committee Purpose and Structure

The creation of a Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee is an important next step in building on the success of the Mystic Summit. It is anticipated that the Steering Committee will work to improve water quality and environmental conditions in the Mystic River Watershed. We have had strong participation from many stakeholders over the past several months and we are ready to establish a Steering Committee to guide the strategic direction of this collaborative effort. This description reflects discussions among representatives from the Chelsea Collaborative, the Mystic River Watershed Association, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the Charlestown Waterfront Coalition and EPA New England. The structure and function of the Steering Committee will be revisited at the end of the first year to determine if more revisions are necessary.

Steering Committee: Structure, Participation & Key Concepts

Role

- The Steering Committee will operate as a coordinating and information exchange organization to help establish strategic direction and priorities as well as to recommend key projects and actions needed to improve environmental conditions in the Mystic River Watershed.
- Taking into account a broad array of stakeholder input as well as work already accomplished by community groups and the agencies themselves, the Steering Committee will advocate for and help to coordinate key agency and cross-agency actions and initiatives to be undertaken by Federal, State and Local agencies and officials to support restoration of the Mystic River Watershed.
- The Steering Committee will seek support and resources for the initiatives that it recommends.
- Additional responsibilities will be determined by the group. In addition to creating an action plan with cross-agency priorities, examples of these responsibilities could include reporting progress and results to Mystic Watershed residents, organizing periodic events (e.g., Summit, workshops, Report Card Event, etc.), public education and outreach, and discussing how to improve and coordinate the Mystic River Watershed Report Card.

Composition

- The Steering Committee should be a manageable size of about 20 to 22 members and its members will represent a diverse set of stakeholders in the watershed (e.g., government, nonprofit, community residents, and other critical interests) and shall equally represent government entities and the community groups/nonprofits it will serve (e.g., 10 to 11 total federal, state, and local government officials and 10 to 11 total nonprofit and community groups).
- The Steering Committee composition should equally represent the geographic diversity of the watershed, including urban, suburban and rural populations.

- Members of the Steering Committee must be able to speak on behalf of their organizations and/or constituency, and be able to make decisions on behalf of the group represented or at a minimum consult quickly with required leadership when needed.
- Members must agree to attend the meetings in person or to send an alternate. Members may bring staff from their organizations/agencies as needed depending on agenda topics.
- Meeting minutes will be created, circulated to interested parties through an e-mail list, and posted online. All meetings will be open to the public and meeting notices will be posted online.

How

- The Steering Committee will establish a regular meeting schedule and will aim to meet approximately once every two months to start, or more frequently if needed.
- The Steering Committee will work to reach agreement on priorities and issues whenever possible. If agreement is not reached, the Steering Committee will determine the majority opinion of the Steering Committee members and move forward on an issue.
- The Steering Committee will set meetings so that they take place within the watershed. Meetings will take place in both the upper and lower watersheds.
- In order for a Steering Committee meeting to be “official,” a quorum must be present. The Steering Committee will decide what percentage of participation is required for the Steering Committee to act.

Role of EPA

- EPA will have only one seat on the Steering Committee.
- EPA will help organize and provide facilitation to the initial Steering Committee meetings and will take notes to capture and create minutes to be finalized by the group.
- EPA will provide coordination and facilitation for one year. After the first year, the Steering Committee will determine whether another organization(s) is willing to take on this role.

Role of Municipalities

- EPA and the Steering Committee will carry out an outreach effort to involve and engage municipalities and ensure that all 21 communities are fully informed.
- The Steering Committee will maintain contact with the municipalities through emails and newsletters, and will provide opportunity for each municipality to raise concerns thru these communications.
- EPA and the Steering Committee will assist municipalities with setting up a subcommittee to network and exchange information.
- Municipal representatives on the Steering Committee must represent the diversity of the watershed and will be from municipalities in the upper and lower watersheds. Initially, the City of Chelsea and the Town of Winchester will serve as interim members of the Steering Committee for one year. After one year, the

Steering Committee will revisit municipal representation in consultation with the municipal subcommittee and will appoint municipal members.

- Municipal representatives will be responsible for bringing information back to the municipalities and also for raising municipal concerns directly to the Steering Committee.

Role of Government Agency and Community Organization Heads

- Agency and Organization heads will be brought together around the Report Card Event (mid-April), Mystic River Summit events, as well as other important meetings and when important actions and priorities are being discussed.

Science Committee

- The Science Committee will convene one or more times per year, and will focus on sharing monitoring and scientific data and findings. Membership will include scientists and technical watershed experts. This Committee will provide scientific expertise and recommendations to the Steering Committee.

Membership (draft)

Community Groups/Non-profits

- Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA)
- Chelsea Greenspace
- Charlestown Waterfront Coalition (CWC)
- La Comunidad
- Neighborhood Of Affordable Housing (NOAH)
- Alternatives for Community and the Environment (ACE)
- Woburn Residents' Environmental Network (WREN)
- Friends of the Mystic Lakes
- Friends of the Middlesex Fells
- Conservation Law Foundation (CLF)
- Friends of the Arlington Great Meadows
- Roots and Shoots

Government/Quasi-Government

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment (MA EEA)
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)
- Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)
- Private Industry (Development)
- Municipality (2) (representing the upper and lower watershed)
- MassPort
- MassHighway

Technical Liaisons

Although, Technical Liaisons are not voting members, they are welcome to attend all Steering Committee meetings and/or can serve as scientific experts for issue-oriented and project specific needs.

- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Academic
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)