**Steering Committee Meeting**

March 22, 2019

UNE Sutton Lounge

12pm-3pm

**Attendees**

Mitchell Brown, University of New England, mbrown33@une.edu

Mary Jane (MJ) Dillingham, Maine Water Company, jdillingham@mainewater.com

Mark Dubois, Poland Spring, mark.dubois@waters.nestle.com

Kristin Feindel, ME Dept. of Environmental Protection, Kristin.b.feindel@maine.gov

Christine Feurt, University of New England, cfeurt@une.edu

Victoria Green, AmeriCorps Member at Green Mountain Conservation Group, water2@gmcg.org

Emily Greene, University of New England, egreene@une.edu

Juan Hernandez, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, juan.hernandez@usda.gov

Dalyn Houser, Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC), dalyn@srcc-maine.org

Kira Jacobs, Region One Environmental Protection Agency, Jacobs.kira@epa.gov

Rick Knowlton, Maine Water Company, rknowlton@mainewater.com

Pam Morgan, University of New England, pmorgan@une.edu

Wayne Munroe, ME Natural Resources Conservation Service, wayne.munroe@me.usda.gov

Bonita Pothier, Senator Angus King’s Office, bonita\_pothier@king.senate.gov

Marybeth Richardson, ME Dept. of Environmental Protection, marybeth.richardson@maine.gov

Robyn Saunders, Attaining Sustainable Solutions, robyn@attaining.me

Sophia Scott, ME CDC Drinking Water Program, Sophia.scott@maine.gov

Sean Tarpey, Rumery’s Boat Yard, starpey@rumerys.com

Andy Tolman, Resident of Saco Watershed, andyinme@gmail.com

Nina Young, Maine Farmland Trust, nyoung@mainefarmlandtrust.org

Steve Zeeman, University of New England, szeeman@une.edu

**How has my organization benefitted from the SWC?**

Steve: The Saco Watershed Collaborative (SWC) benefits the students and research and projects on water quality. For our students, it’s a gold mine.

Rick: The SWC benefits us. There are about 50,000 people that are served water. We also own a public water system in Kezar Falls. We manage and operate the Fryeburg Water Company. Total, there are about 60,000 people that rely on public water sources that are the SR directly. Our mission is to do public water service. To do that well, we have great sources of water. We have been involved since day one, we are looking forward to 2019.

Sophie: We regulate folks like the Maine Water Company. Any group putting effort towards protecting water sources is a huge… We have over 300 public water systems on the Maine side of the watershed. It’s a great benefit to those who rely on ground water.

Kira: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has benefitted at looking at how many water suppliers that I work with. Its has forced them to look at the best value for the work that we do. We can’t be in all the places that we used to be. Personally, it has taught me how a water utility can initiate from the ground up, rather than coming from the federal or state agencies. That has been a huge lesson for me in the 18 years that I have been doing this work.

Kristin: This benefits us by getting a better idea of what data is available on the Saco. It is great to see what else is out there. We do support efforts like this to protect rivers, we don’t have a lot of funds, but it’s a great effort and we continue to protect this great resource.

Marybeth: This has gotten us to look at our ordinances to keep the water quality as good as it is.

Dalyn: We are a quasi-state regulator agency. Our board is made up of volunteers to protect this resource. We benefit from the SWC because we get to be in the know on what is happening on the river form you all. We are here to figure out how to help and listen to what is going on to protect this resource.

Andy: What I get out of this, is that more people will understand why watersheds are important and the quality of the watershed is an indicator of the water that you drink. If all people can help make that linkage, I feel good about that legacy.

Christine: My students benefit from having the living laboratory through the watershed, and they get to understand what it takes to protect a watershed through the science.

MJ: Rick Knowlton involved me in this collaborative. Through the work that everyone is doing, I have learned how we can use data to get the message out.

Mark: This project has been great, I enjoyed the University of Michigan students that visited in 2017 and did their preliminary assessment on us on increasing watershed collaboratives. As a company, we are doing more collaboratives around the globe. I want to get this solidified as a long-term project. We are starting an Alliance for Water Stewardship which is new and Nestle is one of the signatory parties.

Pam: I echo what Chris and Steve had said about the student engagement. Personally, I was trained as a wetlands ecologist, this project has helped me learn new things like working with water quality data. I have also enjoyed working with everyone and bringing stories from the watershed into my classroom.

Bonita: From a personally level, the Saco River has been the source of my drinking water forever. I realized that people outside of Maine do not have the resources that we have. Globally, the water source becomes ever more precious and important. Professionally, we hear that government gets in the way, in order to government to work well, you have to have people on the ground who develop the relationships who know how people to come together, who understand process, and look at data to drive good policy. To sit here and be able to bring the data back to the Senator, share with him the importance of the work that we are doing, you get the confidence that we are going to get this right. I have learned so much and have shared so much with the Senator, it has helped him drive policy on natural resources. He quotes information that he has received from us, so I appreciate you to letting me sit in on your meetings.

Juan: A couple things that are interesting, it has been great that you have been already been in motion for some time, you are in a good position to take advantage of whatever this might mean. We have the means through USDA, but interpretation is everything. How will that fit into everything that we know and how we want to proceed. We need to engage all of the congressional people. This is something that we need to proactively make them keenly aware of the importance and ideas of what is happening here. We are all about privately owned lands at NRCS, we are not designed to work with municipalities, but we are on board. We will do as much as we can.

Sean: I am a business owner and resident in Saco, I’m also on the Saco River Corridor Commission. I also have a few volunteer roles in the City of Biddeford. The SWC helps me understand how important the Saco River is. The fact that clean water is important to us from my point of view, it’s a means of getting boats down the river to the ocean, and that’s how I make my living. As I sit on various boards of Biddeford, I have a much keener feel for the importance of Thatcher Brook Watershed, which is an urban impaired stream and a tributary of the Saco River. It’s a real problem in the city. And as the economic pressures on developing along the Thatcher Brook, it’s important that we all dig in our heels and do what is important. Once development starts, it’s hard to turn back to clock. I appreciate everything that is happening.

Mitchell: I’m a fundraiser here at UNE. I couldn’t say it better than the others at UNE, this is an invaluable resource for our students. My role personally, it’s a great opportunity to talk about the work that we get to participate in that is evidence of our commitment and community.

Victoria: I’m an AmeriCorps Volunteer with Green Mountain Conservation Group in Effingham, NH. I’ve been tasked with working with our data. I’m just observing and seeing how we can benefit from this organization.

**Review of the Action Plan and Committees**

Robyn: Do we feel that we are a “dedicated group of individuals….” IS this still serving our purpose?

* Are there missing elements?
* Are these elements going to be better achieved individually or together?
* We need to solidify our messages for each committee/action strategy so that we know what direction we are heading in.

Wayne: Page 6, is the action plan, is a nice format for community members, 7, 8, and 9 is the substance of water quality of science and data that we have agreed needs to be boiled into a digestible meal. I’m advocating that we just get it condensed into a palatable message. Marry that into 6, condescended that can then be handed out to people.

Robyn:

* 2019 Actions at Committee Level: Where we are going today is to talk about when those committees are going to meet.
* Get salient points made and condensed.
* Make sure that we don’t exhaust the donor sources (donor fatigue).
* Need feedback on the Action Plan, need to finalize it. Also need to finalize the guiding principles. Other things that need to change? Add language that refers it as a “living document.”
* Appendices to add: Field trips and meetings. Take out Saco bit (Chris)?
* Mission statement: is “sustaining the Saco River for future generations.”

Mark Dubois: Municipal Committee and Data. Two interested party groups that met this morning. Talked about DEP’s look into the SRCC data that has been collected. Get that data out to the public space. We talked about municipal outreach as well and some of the difficulties about that. It’s a pretty big effort. We need to get a NH rep on that committee. In the database provided by Rob Mohlar, there could be a lab that could certify that data. Get some of that stuff on Basecamp.

* + April meeting for EOC.
	+ DC will have a conference call set up by Robyn in April. In person meeting in May.

**Story Map Review**

* We can provide some maps with data on it to prioritize land conservation and properties.
* Poland Spring: Poster that we could also have with some of those objectives.
* We can have PS working with NRCS making maps together.

**Partner Updates**

Dalyn: Updates on LR2004, nothing has happened with this, no movement forward. The SRCC had a public hearing to discuss the rule changes to 102 and 107 that deals with the reconstruction or replacement of nonconforming structure. In order to give us time to make those decisions, the city leadership has pushed back that the bill be stalled until we can make those changes. But the bill is still out there, hasn’t been printed yet, but it could essentially be scheduled for a public hearing at any time. We have requested a meeting with Biddeford to discuss the changes that we are proposing and continue to work on. We haven’t heard back from them. We are in the process of reviewing the public comments that we received. My general sense is that people will not be satisfied with the changes that we are making.

Chris: The Maine Water and Sustainability Conference is net Thursday in Augusta. We have a session on the SWC. We will be hearing from Dalyn, Rick, Jim Innes from the White Mountains National Forest, and myself. Please come and bring your friends. We will have a student presenting on storm water management at UNE. We have 30 BMPs just on this campus. We could have trainings here for stormwater BMPs. Then we could propose a training workshop right here at UNE.

Kira: EPA had that call for technical assistance, we will figure out what kind of tech assistance could be offered. It relates to our action plan strategy number two.

Wayne: USDA and NRCS has their first press release for the new Farm Bill.

Sophia: Source water protection grants and wellhead grants, we have one that is available to schools across Maine where they can apply for a groundwater/watershed table models. Or they can also apply for a wastewater model if they want one. The second thing is that the land acquisition loan program, will now have a principle loan forgiveness.

Rick: Maine Water is proceeding with the design of the new drinking water treatment facility. We will have NRPA and site location apps in soon. We will be launching our public outreach at the end of May for the communities that we serve here.

Mark: We have plastic updates. The Chinese are not taking recyclables anymore. Our companies are trying to retool what we will do in the future. We are looking for other ways to recycle our PET. For us, it’s a huge undertaking. We have a partnership with Danon to create bio-based plastics. Using biomass from Maine to see if we can make a bottle out of that. There are huge commitments that the company is making since the customers want our content to be recycled. There will be another water line that will be launched where water will be taken from Rangeley, Maine. All of the recycled content will be provided.