



Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Meeting Notes

June 17, 2022, 10am-12pm

Zoom <https://clarku.zoom.us/j/91977706024> Call: 646-876-9923 Meeting ID: 919 7770 6024

Attendees: Ted Beauvais, Sarah Bower, Deb Cary, Phyllis Charpentier, Jessica Davis, Greg Doerschler, John Marsland, Kate McPherson, Ray Kelley, Katie Liming, Elisabeth Cianciola, Jenny Sanders, Heather, Mary Hannah Smith, Nick Cohen, Patti McAlpine, David Tapscott (MA Board of Health), Peter Friedland, Heidi Ricci, Joe Haberek, Karen Slattery, Katie DeGoosh-DiMarzio, Mark Nimiroski, Rep. Mary Keefe, Peter Coffin, Sam Jackson, Rebecca Quinones, Arthur Plitt, Douglas Botelho (Rep. Donahue), Hillary King, Diana Figueroa, Allison Hamel, Donna Williams

View recording:

<https://clarku.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=beaffb7f-443e-4a03-832b-aeb70119e568>

- 1. Highlighting our Collaborators: [Elisabeth Cianciola](#)**, Aquatic Mitigation Specialist, MA Department of Fish and Game – discussing a funding opportunity in the Blackstone Watershed for wetland and waterway restoration
 - <https://www.mass.gov/in-lieu-fee-program>
 - MA DFG In-Lieu Fee Program (ILFP) allows payment instead of on-site mitigation of project impacts (determined by Army Corps)
 - Both preservation and restoration projects are eligible (restoration scores more highly)
 - ILFP subject to multiplier ratios: projects must have a greater positive benefit than the area being impacted
 - Projects may be conducted in the site's service area (MA has 4) - the entire Blackstone is in Central MA region
 - CBO roles: share watershed plans/priorities, inform stakeholders of funding opportunities, apply to sponsor a project
 - Project examples: removing stream barriers (e.g. dams, culverts), floodplain revegetation, land restoration (note: conservation requires aquatic resource *on* the property & should be high quality & high threat)
 - Ineligible projects: feasibility or monitoring studies, educational programs, long-term water control structures, invasive species control (but these may be components of a larger eligible project)
 - More projects in Eastern MA. Burnshirt River Watershed Preservation project in Barre, MA located in Blackstone watershed
 - Phyllis – Manchaug Pond – Certified CWF in Sutton – restoration project? Or culvert replacement project and land conservation abutting existing conserved area with CWF resources.
 - **Available:** \$200k for wetland & \$70k for stream projects (can be combined) - no match required
 - Application requirements: Project manager, description, location, budget, types of resources improved by project (classify and quantify wetlands/streams and buffer areas), permits (if restoration)
 - Project requirements: public notice (to inform agencies), documentation of site protection, project plan including long-term management, annual progress report during implementation
 - Can be used for community's first right of refusal for permanent protection of Ch61 land

2. Special Topic – Addressing the ongoing sewer discharge from the Woonsocket Wastewater Treatment Plant ([see EcoRI news story here](#)),

([Link to final letter here: Woonsocket Sewage Letter.docx](#))

- **Updates from Joe Haberek, RI Department of Environmental Management**
 - A no-contact advisory was issued in response to 6/5/22 notification of unpermitted discharge from Woonsocket Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, stemming from a buildup of solids. Partially treated sewage in the 6 million gallons per day outflow from the plant.
 - A previous no-contact advisory was issued 3/23-25/22 for a similar situation at plant of solids



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- November noncompliance letter addressed effluent (nutrient) violations, not a bacterial issue (didn't close river)
- Jacobs operates the plant, Synagro operates a sewage sludge incinerator located at plant serving the region. Plant was instructed to increase bacterial testing and upstream/downstream monitoring
- Plant installed 2 additional filter presses to address the solids this week (a temporary solution)
- RIDEM is currently evaluating the advisory, which could be lifted if solids and effluent issues are resolved. The effluent has been meeting limits since Friday, 6/10 and **no-contact advisory was lifted on 6/17 after the meeting**
- Fecal coliform data are collected daily and is publicly available, but isn't easily shared – currently received via informal email. For info on this data, reach out to Joe.
- Sludge not currently tested for PFAS (ME doesn't allow land-applied sludge; RI does not land-apply)
- Penalties or fines have not been assessed for these events.
- The permit for this site is up for renewal as of 12/31/22. However, NPDES permits remain in effect if a complete permit is submitted
- There is a 30 day comment period and public hearing, if requested, though the permit is not anticipated to be drafted until end of 2023 or early 2024 due to limited capacity and lag time in permit issuance.
- This is an environmental justice issue given its disproportionate impacts on the populations of Woonsocket, Central Falls, and Pawtucket.
- Link to DEM-Office of Water Resources RIPDES Permit listserv:
<http://listserve.ri.gov/mailman/listinfo/ripdesnotice>
- <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/permits/ripdes/>
- **Questions/Discussion**
 - Is the city applying for BIL/ARPA funds to upgrade this facility?
 - A question for the City, but they are looking at funding
 - Note: Woonsocket City Council meeting on Monday, 6/20
 - We've had to cancel events, such as Connecting with Canoes, ZAP50th, water chestnut pull, etc. And in the 50th anniversary of ZAP and CWA, it's very frustrating and unacceptable.
- **Actions**
 - The Collaborative drafted and sent a letter addressed to RIDEM concerning the situation
 - This event could be leveraged as an opportunity to engage with regulation development for the Sewage Notification bill (advocated for by Mass Rivers)- - connect with Save the Bay
 - This could be leveraged as a way to advocate for greater investment in public infrastructure
 - Rep. Mary Keefe interested in working with representatives in Rhode Island, such as Committee on Environment
 - This news should be shared with local schools, community organizations, summer camps, best through direct outreach

3. Subgroup Updates

- Municipal Resolutions Supporting Needs Assessment
 - Uxbridge: no updates
 - Presented to Boylston Board of Selectmen meeting on 6/21/22
- ZAP 50th
- Bike/greenway
- Water quality
- University work



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- Expedition 2022: Save the date! August 11-14, 2022
 - Festival on August 12, 4pm at River Bend Farm in Uxbridge in partnership with DCR
 - End of paddle speakers & celebration on August 14, 4pm at Narragansett Beer in Providence

Ted Beauvais: Any interest in forming a **watershed-wide group to focus on water chestnut control**. To seek funds to do a range of projects to make a dent in this problem with a 10-15 year focus and working to target priority areas. The BRWA is aware of a case where removal takes place downstream on the West River and the upstream source area that is loaded with chestnut is not being controlled. If we want to be effective we have to take a broader, long-term, coordinated approach. Let me know. Ted Beauvais, President BRWA at tedbeauvais@gmail.com

4. Partner Updates

- **Worcester**
 - Urban forestry plan: bit.ly/WorcesterTrees
 - Now-Next (comprehensive plan): <https://now-next.worcesterma.gov/> has two upcoming public workshops on [6/23 in person](#) (Worcester Senior Center) and [7/7 virtual \(zoom\)](#) both at 5:30PM! Spanish & ASL interpretation are available at both events.
- **Woonsocket** - Comprehensive plan update – please take the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NKXQD2P>
 - Don't have to be a resident to take the survey. See plan website: <https://www.woonsocketplanning.com/>

5. Priority Projects & Criteria

- What are your priority projects for your organization or municipality? How do they overlap between groups? Do you know what they'll cost yet or where to start? Let's get our Collab priorities list going!

Next meetings & Speakers

Zoom link: <https://clarku.zoom.us/j/91977706024> or Call In: 646-876-9923 Meeting ID: 919 7770 6024

July 15, 2022: **Patty Burke**, Pretreatment/Lab Technician, Upper Blackstone Clean Water

August 19, 2022: *(Speaker TBD)*

September 16, 2022 *(Speaker TBD)*

6. Events

- **June 13-18, MA EEA**. Statewide MA conversation on how the impacts of climate change affect you and your community, to inform the [2022 MA Climate Change Assessment](#) & prioritize climate impacts based on your experiences and concerns for the future. Register at: https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSd-Gupz4sG9IAw7pA-h5_EeGitcCXuV8
 - **June 13**, 11am-12:30pm / **June 15**, 10:30am-12pm / **June 15**, 6:30pm-8pm / **June 18**, 1pm-2:30pm
- **Sat/Sun June 25-26** – 9am-4pm. Friends of the Blackstone hosting an invasive water chestnut pull at Valley Falls Marsh in Cumberland, RI. <https://www.facebook.com/events/536093424836118/536309378147856/>
- **July 14-16** – RI Land Trust Council Land and Water Conservation Summit. The main day of the summit is July 15, featuring keynote addresses and several workshops on environmental justice, solar development, and more. <https://www.landandwaterpartnership.org/>
- **July 16** – Riverzedge Arts 20th Anniversary Summer Block Party. Riverzedge is a member of the Blackstone Commons Group, raising awareness about the River through events this summer. <https://fb.me/e/1zurqXtXo>



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7. Grants:

- **MassDEP NPS Program 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant**
 - Questions are accepted through 7/6 at 5:00pm. **Applications due 8/17.**
 - [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#604\(b\)-grant-program:-water-quality-management-planning-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#604(b)-grant-program:-water-quality-management-planning-)
- **National Fish & Wildlife Federation (NFWF)**
 - America the Beautiful Challenge – several grant programs for conservation, stewardship, invasives, connecting waters, capacity building, and more. \$85 Million available. **Applications due 7/21.**
 - Note: if municipalities or tribes are interested in partnering, the Collaborative will help you apply! Nonprofits are not eligible for the Dept. of Interior funding, which would best align with the Collaborative's goals.
 - 10% match required for states/municipalities; 3% match requirement for tribes/territories
 - <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge/america-beautiful-challenge-2022-request-proposals>
- **MA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program**
 - Statement of Interest deadline: Rolling, but recommended by 6/28/2022 (Note: Sub-application final State is 10/09/2022)
 - *Activities can include but are not limited to:* stormwater drainage and culvert improvements; floodplain and stream restoration; flood control, diversion, and storage; property acquisition; slope stabilization; infrastructure protection; aquifer storage; seismic and wind retrofits; structure elevations; resilient infrastructure projects
 - **Must fill out and submit a completed Statement of Interest** about project to determine basic eligibility. *Construction Projects Form:* <https://www.mass.gov/forms/fy-2021-mitigation-statement-of-interest-for-construction-projects> *C&CB/Planning/Advance Assistance Form:* <https://www.mass.gov/forms/fy-2021-mitigation-statement-of-interest-for-cbplanningadvance-assistance>
 - Note: requires use of benefit-cost analysis (BCA), but support provided on first-come first-served basis from MEMA
 - <https://www.mass.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance-hma-grant-programs>
- **SNEP Network**
 - Free technical assistance for community projects. **Applications due 7/12 at 5pm**
 - Focused on community-scale and/or watershed-scale planning opportunities for communities to build local capacity and move towards more sustainable financing and long-term climate resilience through enhanced stormwater management and ecological restoration efforts.
 - <https://snepnetwork.org/community-assistance-projects-round-3/>
- **RI Save the Lakes**
 - Up to \$2,000 to create a new lake association, develop a lake management plan, or otherwise improve lakes against aquatic invasive species, stormwater runoff, etc. (Note: funding CANNOT be used to purchase equipment). **Applications due 7/22**
 - Learn more: <http://stlri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/STL-RFP-2022.pdf>
 - Apply at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10heuX1OK09sIFIsdoTSEfvBOLTAoLep_wT9FugaxA5M/viewform?edit_requested=true



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8. Job opportunities:

- **Conservation Law Foundation**
 - Great Bay 2030 Manager. Lead and coordinate a coalition of conservation and environmental organizations working collaboratively to achieve the shared vision of Great Bay 2030. Ability to commute to NH. 5 years' academic/professional experience
 - Learn more or apply by emailing Kaylee Keim at kkeim@bridgepointassociates.net
- **Mass Association of Conservation Districts** (<https://massacd.wordpress.com/employment/>)
 - Grants & Contracts Manager – 10-15 hrs/wk, \$30-40/hr, remote. Letter of interest & resume to MLeffMACD@gmail.com
- **EPA** – *coming soon!*
 - Check out www.usajobs.gov for new EPA scientist and engineering positions to be posted soon (per SNEP Network!)
- **Mass Audubon**
 - Senior Director, Nature in the City Program: <https://www.massaudubon.org/jobs/senior-director-nature-in-the-city-program>
 - Education Coordinator: <https://www.massaudubon.org/jobs/education-coordinator-community-engagement2>
- **Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council**
 - Green Infrastructure Steward (24 hrs/wk), River Ranger, Senior Civil or Environmental Engineer, English/Spanish Interpreter, Community Engagement Coordinator
 - <https://wrwc.org/wp/about/careers/>
- **Buzzards Bay Coalition**
 - Restoration Coordinator, Water Resource Specialist, Land Steward, Youth Program Assistant
 - <https://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/about-us/our-team/job-opportunities/>
- **Save the Pine Barrens**
 - Attorney: environmental, Native American Indian law. FT. Remote/in person Plymouth, MA
 - www.savethepinebarrens.org / environmentwatchesoutheasternma@gmail.com