

**Taunton River Watershed Study  
Public Forum  
June 13, 2007  
Moakley Center, Bridgewater State College**

**Summary Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Attendees were asked to sign in and pick up a “Watershed Perceptions and Practices” survey for completion during the event. We had 28 members of the public attend the meeting, plus several Steering Committee members and several of the interns that will be supporting the project and their advisors. Representatives from the consultant team of Horsley Witten Group, Inc., Geosyntec and Weston & Sampson were also present. The public was represented by a combination of non-profit organizations, town staff in the water, sewer and other departments, representatives of local boards and commissions (Conservation, Health, Water Supply, Wastewater), residents and a local reporter. (Contacts have been added to the project master contact list, and surveys are being tallied for future reference. A copy of the survey is also being made available on the project website.)

**Introduction:**

The meeting was opened by Ed Minnock, Vice President for External Affairs, Bridgewater State College and primary contact for the Study Steering Committee. Mr. Minnock introduced the project, the consultant team led by Horsley Witten Group, Inc., and Scott Horsley.

**Presentation:**

Scott Horsley presented a slideshow that included an overview of the Steering Committee, the project scope of work, the draft outline for Phase II of the project, and a general overview of watershed statistics and concerns. Bob Hartzel, from Geosyntec, presented a brief overview of the previous EOEAA 5-year Action Plan, describing how that was different and will contribute to this study. Mr. Horsley then described the water budget methodology, including the use of a trial subwatershed to test the methodology before applying it throughout the Taunton watershed. Potential watershed restoration and protection tools were introduced, such as LID, integrated water resource management techniques, smart growth and village style development, and trading of development rights. Ellie Baker then reviewed some statistics of homeowner practices that can affect the watershed, and solicited feedback on a watershed perceptions and practices survey.

A copy of the presentation is available to download from our project website, under ‘Public Workshops’.

**Discussion/Question and Answer:**

The last hour of the meeting entailed discussion and questions from the attendees about the project and the major issues in the watershed. Below is a summary of the comments that were voiced:

- Commercial-Industrial properties in our trial subwatershed, Coweaset Brook, are located in both Brockton and Easton and discharge to the Brockton treatment plant. Industrial discharges from Brockton require pretreatment while those from Easton do not require the same pretreatment.
- Comment that local changes (zoning, ordinances/bylaws, regulation, and enforcement) can begin now, and do not need to wait until this study is completed.
- Question was raised about whether building inspections enforce or can enforce stormwater management on sites.
- Easton DPW discussed the benefits and successes in Easton from public education/ watershed education. He noted that the Wastewater Department has \$20,000 in its annual budget to fund household hazardous waste.
- Concerns were voiced about the water quality to the Salisbury River from the Brockton wastewater treatment plant.
- A large wetlands replication project being considered for Burrige Pond was mentioned.
- A suggestion was made for a survey to be given to local town boards in the watershed to gather information about needs, problems and areas to highlight for Phase 2 of the project.
- It was noted that there appear to be missing groundwater discharge permits in the data from MassGIS.
- It was stated that there are problems in Taunton with untreated wastewater discharges to the river during large storm events due to overflows. Many sump pumps are hooked directly to the system (stormwater or wastewater?) and contribute to overflows. These overflows create fines for the city to DEP, and this person questioned whether that money was used by the state to help solve the problem. A large study on sump pump locations was done in Brockton to begin to address this problem.
- A question was asked about whether the project would include any watershed education outreach to young school children. Kevin Curry commented that Bridgewater State College was working on that down the road.
- Wetland restoration to address historic wetland loss was requested to be included in the recommendations from the project. Another noted that wetland loss seems to be an even growing problem, despite regulations.

- It was noted that the local elderly services agencies were urging elderly residents to throw away all old medicines by flushing them down the toilet, and commented that we contact them with alternative approaches for water quality purposes.
- Several people commented that local enforcement of wetland regulations and other local building regulations was inadequate and needs improvement.
- A concern was raised regarding aerial mosquito spraying, a large concern in southeastern MA, and asked how that should be addressed. Is it a water quality and habitat concern, and can it be done differently with less impact? Similarly, is cranberry bog aerial spraying a concern and will it be addressed?
- A suggestion was made that we compare and contrast our pilot watershed, Coweaset Brook, with the Salisbury/Matfield Rivers subwatershed due to differences in the amount of protected area and the existence of an Enterprise Zone for Commercial development in one watershed.
- A question was asked about the recently released DEP RFP for a wastewater study in the northern Taunton communities, and questioned whether that study should wait to start until after this study is completed.
- A Bridgewater State College professor noted that BSC has an Institute of Regional Development that is adept at carrying out surveys. He suggested that they may help in gathering watershed survey information, such as the survey distributed at the meeting.