
TO:	ACEC-MaineDEP Joint Committee	DATE:	5/2/2017
FROM:	Ryan Wingard, PE, Wright-Pierce	PROJECT NO.:	OHCVME
SUBJECT:	Water Working Group May 2, 2017 Meeting Minutes		

Attendees:

Gregg Wood, MaineDEP
John Pond, CES
Katherine McDonald, GZA
Ryan Wingard, Wright-Pierce

Discussion Items:

1. Reviewed the attached Mission Statement and Goals and Objectives for the working group.
2. Discussed the fact that Bill Longfellow at MaineDEP (DEP) has reached out to engineering firms to open lines of communication and there might be potential to combine efforts.
3. Agreed that this working group would best serve the stakeholders if the focus is on big picture feedback loop items rather than getting into the weeds on specific technical issues.
 - a. Agreed that meetings should take place twice per year.
4. Opened discussion for potential items to discuss within this group. The following items were suggested and will likely form the agenda for the next working group meeting:
 - a. Communication between some DEP staff and consultants has been lacking.
 - i. Lack of bi-directional trust seems to be an issue.
 - ii. Consultants need to trust that DEP due diligence is occurring and decisions are not based on opinions, but rather on factual evidence.
 - iii. Lack of clear direction on roles and responsibilities contributes to communication issues.
 - iv. Communication with newer DEP staff could improve.
 - b. Lack of consistent and clear rules on stormwater permitting is an issue.
 - i. Admittedly, DEP could improve on defining roles and responsibilities.
 - ii. Difficult for consultants to help clients plan for permit requirements.
 - iii. Consistent interpretation of rules and regs could clear up frustrations.
 - iv. Consultants would like consistency and assurance that the regs won't change on their clients a year later.
 - v. Consistent and clear rules are welcomed and form the basis for productive communication on permit issues (i.e., the 2015 Long Creek permit renewal process and timeline).
 - vi. Lack of nutrient criteria direction is making it difficult for future planning.

- vii. Lines in the sand clarify efforts needed by consultants/clients.
- viii. “Rogue Inspectors” send mixed messages regarding permits and are potentially overstepping their bounds.
- ix. Changes in leadership have contributed to clear messages in the past.
- x. The MS4 permit is “out-of-control” and needs someone at the DEP to create a clear message that is consistent and can be shared with stakeholders.
- xi. “Fuzzy” permit requirements and lack of clear direction creates a difficult consultant/client relationship due to client expectations.
- c. G. Wood stated that DEP does not have specific concerns about consultants that this time and feels he communicates with them well at his current position.
 - i. Consultants are not afraid to discuss issues with DEP staff. They feel some frustration on the feedback loop.
 - ii. Some clients are afraid of discussing items with DEP.

Assignments:

1. R. Wingard to develop meeting minutes.
2. R. Wingard to develop agenda prior to next meeting and distribute for feedback.
3. Group to consider inviting other consultants or DEP staff to the next meeting.
4. Group to make suggestions for future discussion items to add to the agenda.

Next Meeting:

Specific date TBD, but 6 months out would be November of 2017.