

Great Bay –Inland Workgroup Meeting Minutes

CRHC Commission

December 19, 2014

The NH Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission – Great Bay Inland Working Group met on Friday, December 19, 2014, from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM in conference room D at the NH Department of Environmental Services, Portsmouth Regional Office, Pease International Tradeport, 222 International Drive, Suite 175, Portsmouth, NH 03801, (603-559-1500)

Attendees:

Steve	Bird		<s.bird@dover.nh.gov>,	City of Dover
Sherry	Godlewski	Alt	<Sherry.Godlewski@des.nh.gov>,	NH Dept. of Environmental Services
James	Houle		<james.houle@unh.edu>,	Town of Durham
Kirsten	Howard		<kirsten.howard@des.nh.gov>,	Coastal Program
Richard	Huber	Alt	<huber@acm.org>,	Town of Exeter
Peter	Kinner		<peter.kinner@unh.edu>,	Vice-Chair Town of Greenland, NH
Tom	Morgan		<planning@newington.nh.us>,	Town of Newington
Chris	Muns		<chrismuns@chrismuns.net>,	Representative - District 21
Kyle	Pimental		<kpimental@strafford.org>,	Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Cory	Riley		<cory.riley@wildlife.nh.gov>,	NHFG
Roger	Stephenson		<r-stephenson @comcast.net>,	Town of Stratham

Notes:

Comments on the template have been received from the State Historic Commission, Division of Historic Resources, Peter Kinner, who had reviewed the Georgetown study, and Julie LaBranche of the Rockingham Planning Commission. The meeting focused on reviewing these comments and other items in the current working template with regard to the first 3 commission goals. Some items were moved from the template to a separate external Notes page for further consideration. The updated template will be distributed to the work group participants for further review.

Goal 1: Sound, science-based planning assumptions about future coastal hazards in New Hampshire relating to sea level rise, coastal storm surge and storm related flooding are understood, established and adopted

It has been observed that Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge are of more concern to coastal communities, while Extreme Precipitation Events are of more concern to inland communities. Our work group's focus needs to be on the unique challenges faced by inland communities. What is at risk and what are the vulnerabilities in the inland locations? For example, with respect to Extreme Precipitation Events these aspects are of noteworthy concern:

Fresh water wetlands

Water Quality

Anadromous fish

Shell fish

Rain events causing invasive bacteria or viruses from overrun sewage treatment facilities

Rain events causing reduced salinity that threatens the Great Bay habitat

Drought event threatening forest habitats

Drought is currently thought to be outside the scope of the commission's current concerns but perhaps this should be reconsidered. Consider the effects of drought on wells dependent on the water table.

A recommendation to request an improved water level model (based on updated bathymetry data) for the Great Bay and its input rivers was proposed. Work is needed to more precisely characterize the tidal variations to determine the true height of the water under various conditions in the Great Bay. More accurate modeling of climate-change-driven precipitation is needed. Discussion need to occur regarding potential funding by the legislature.

Goal 2: Public and private infrastructure, natural resources, economic and cultural assets that are vulnerable to sea level rise and other coastal hazards are identified and the scope of that vulnerability is understood

Items identified as infrastructure may also be historical resources and such resources could be public and private. A survey of currently unidentified cultural resources (e.g. dams, bridges, pipes) should be conducted and the information shared with appropriate parties.

The expression "tidal crossing" should be changed to "coastal drainage infrastructure" and its relation to passage barriers and fragmentation of habitat should be noted.

The Exeter CAPE project cost about \$600K and similar projects are beyond the means of other communities.

PRIMEX = the NH Public Risk Management Exchange, a public entity risk pool organized and operating as a trust on behalf of member municipalities, schools, counties and other governmental entities [see <http://www.nhprimex.org>]. PRIMEX may have vulnerability index data that can be used to assess risks to specific assets.

There is concern about assigning value to vulnerable assets as this could pit communities against each other.

What is needed is a standard methodology so that vulnerabilities can be viewed through a common lens.

Goal 3: Adaptation strategies are identified that will enable state and coastal municipalities to effectively protect and sustain current and future: state and municipal infrastructure, economic assets, recreational, historical and cultural resources, natural resources, water quality, habitat and ecological health

There is a need for a state wide coordinator and implementer focused on climate vulnerabilities, a “Chief Resiliency Officer” reporting to the governor. Sen. Watters may have already proposed this. It is unclear how such a position could be funded and isolated from the political process.

There is a need to establish regulations to control future development in flood plains. Participation in the community rating program is not feasible for some of the smaller communities. Prohibitions of development in flood plains would probably be very difficult to accomplish.

Communication strategy going forward:

How are work group members to communicate with the towns? The template should not be published until it has been merged with other work group templates and the combined template scrubbed. Who are the town departments that should be contacted?(e.g. Conservation Commissions, Planning Boards, etc.) How should we manage expectations? We need to carefully craft a communication strategy.

See the updated work group template for the current status of the proposed strategies and recommendations.

Next Meetings:

01/09/15 Great Bay Inland Work Group Meeting 8:00-10:00 (DES)
01/09/15 10:00-12:00 Steering Committee Meeting
01/23/15 8:00-10:00 Great Bay Inland Work Group Meeting (DES)
01/23/15 10:00-12:00 Coastal Communities Work Group Meeting
01/23/15 12:00-2:00 State Agencies Work Group Meeting
02/06/15 Steering Committee Meeting
02/20/15 Full Commission Meeting