

NECAN MPWG meeting notes 11/17/20

Present: Emily, Todd, Beth, Sarah, Katie, Juliana, Don, Esperanza, Prassede

We started the meeting with an update from Sarah on national level issues. Most of the activity in DC is caught up in transition. Biden is starting to name members of his transition team, and there are expectations that the US will rejoin the Paris agreement, emphasize efficiency standards and promote Blue Carbon approaches. The congressional outlook is still unknown until the runoff elections are completed. It is too early to hear about agency plans.

We moved on to state updates, starting with Maine. ME DEP has been working on [nutrient criteria](#) for fresh and marine waters. Fresh water standards mostly based on P control were rolled out to EPA several years ago, but were not implemented under the previous state administration (although Vermont did utilize them to develop theirs). Now Maine is ready to implement the standards and that will be moving forward soon. Marine standards are based on N and focus on the Portland area with Angie Brewer as a key staffer. Requests are out now for advisory board members (Matt Liebman and Ivy Frignoca are both members). Support from EPA is available for this, and a proposed rule is intended to be ready by the end of 2021.

The [Maine Climate Council](#) is wrapping up its work after 4 meetings leading up to the plan to the legislature, scheduled for Dec 1. A draft plan has been developed, Esperanza will share that when it is finalized. The plan emphasizes a comprehensive monitoring plan with temp, O₂, and OA parameters, establishing a hub for climate information, increasing capacity in state departments and a survey of salt marsh, seagrasses and intertidal areas for a Blue Carbon inventory. A bill passed the legislature for a Blue Carbon inventory, but did not receive appropriations. Legislators are interested in re-introducing that bill, but have been urged to include it with some of the rest of the climate plan.

The [Maine Ocean and Coastal Acidification partnership](#) (MOCA) is planning a research symposium in December. Hannah Pingree from the Governor's office will be a keynote speaker. Discussions will include the next policy steps and MOCA's role in the them.

In New Hampshire, the Coastal ~~and Ocean~~ Marine [Natural Resources and Environmental](#) Commission has completed reports on OA, nutrients and marine debris. Instead of taking up a new topic, the commission is looking to reach out directly to legislators on communicating recommendations from prior reports. The NH senate and house flipped from Democratic to Republican in the last elections, which may impact messaging. Chris will let us know how NECAN and the MPWG can help with this.

In MA, Todd and Prassede have been assisting their CZM director, Lisa Engler, with the state's Ocean and Coastal Acidification Commission, and discussing what legislation and policy could help. These are similar to Maine's recommendations: comprehensive monitoring, an information hub, and Blue Carbon. There has been a challenge in educating legislators and getting them up to speed on eutrophication and its impacts in MA. The issues are not the same as similar efforts in the Chesapeake Bay, as an overall large-scale approach that is in place there may not work in MA. Because MA has a crenellated coastline and discrete embayments with different watersheds, a more watershed-focused and bay-by-bay approach is probably more appropriate here. Although it is costly regulate nutrients, it is also costly to lose lawsuits under the Clean Water Act. Good science is needed to convince populations to take actions to regulate nutrients.

In CT, the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) workgroups have been updating the state Climate Action Plan. The Science and Technology workgroup has recommendations that include increased monitoring, joining the OA Alliance, and appointing a task force to develop an OA Action Plan, building on the NY plan. Nutrient control efforts are ongoing through the EPA Long Island Sound project, including hypoxia-related monitoring. LI Sound has a [N Action Strategy](#) and has seen nutrients decrease along with a decrease in hypoxic area. More monitoring is needed in embayments.

CT is also working towards a [National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) that would be a hybrid site with the lower CT River, and portions of the shore with existing state parks. The application has moved to the Environmental Impact Assessment stage.

NECAN is holding a [webinar series](#) to highlight recent graduate student projects. The first occurred on Nov 10 by Amalia Harrington, and the recording is up on the website. Keep checking the website, OAIE and NECAN newsletters for updates to the series. EPA has also scheduled a webinar series on Dec 1 and 3 to discuss mitigation possibilities for coastal acidification. Speakers include Dr. Tyler Cyronak, Assistant Professor, Nova Southeastern University (Florida); Sara Randall, Associate Director, Downeast Institute (Maine); Dr. Kimberly K. Yates, Senior Research Oceanographer, U.S. Geological Survey, St. Petersburg Coastal and Marine Science Center (Florida); Dr. Nichole Price, Senior Research Scientist, Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences (Maine); and Dr. Susie Arnold, Marine Scientist, Island Institute (Maine). Register in advance at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1751309128430822416>

At our last meeting, we heard an update from NECAN's Shell Day project. Jennie Rheuben led the development of a paper with the results, and that paper is now out and available at <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/abcb39/pdf>. Parker Gassett, UMaine graduate student who helped to co-lead Shell Day, will defend his thesis on Friday Nov 19. Esperanza sent a link to the MPWG with details on his online defense.

For future MPWG meetings, Beth proposed that January meeting could be a chance to compare and synthesize the different reports and recommendations that are being developed in our NECAN region with deadlines at the end of calendar year 2020. Several common goals and approaches emerged in today's call, and we could come up with a document that consolidates all of those to show commonalities.

For the March meeting, Todd proposed that we might consider development of common Projects of Special Merit for Blue Carbon. This could be proposed in 2021 for 2022 funding. Beth will invite Becca Newhall to our March meeting to help lead us through this discussion.