

March 23, 2016 Squam Watershed Wellness Committee Meeting Notes

Squam Watershed Plan

Present:

Bob Snelling, Jeff Hayes, Tiffany Grade, Cindy O'Leary, Peter Webster, Mark Ristaino, Rebecca Hanson, June Hammond Rowan

Participating by Phone: Jim Elcock, Andrea LaMoreaux, Dave Martin

Introductions:

Rebecca welcomed everyone and the group provided brief introductions.

- Bob Snelling (Environmental scientist, watershed planning board member, Shoreline Protect Committee, NH Wetlands Committee)
- Jeff Hayes (Lakes Region Planning Commission)
- Tiffany Grade (Loon Preservation Committee)
- Cindy O'Leary (SLA Board member, shorefront resident)
- Peter Webster (former SLA Board president, former watershed Select Board member, shorefront resident)
- Mark Ristaino (life-long Squam history)
- Rebecca Hanson (Squam Lakes Association Director of Conservation)
- June Hammond Rowan (Plymouth State University, Center for the Environment)
- Jim Elcock (SLA Board member, shorefront property owner)
- Andrea LaMoreaux (NH Lakes Association)
- Dave Martin (SLNSC Board Chair, Squam water quality volunteer, shorefront property owner)

Work Accomplished:

Rebecca noted that over the years a lot of work has been done on the Squam Watershed. There are >140 recommendations in the 1991 Squam Watershed Plan and she has compiled a spreadsheet that lists the recommendations & accomplishments made in achieving them. There are also numerous projects and studies that have information that will contribute to a new Squam Watershed Plan. Many are posted on the SLA website and more will be added. These include:

- Septic system study
- Water quality monitoring reports
- Bio Inventory report - 2005
- Watershed Report Cards – started in 2013 – provide a summary of the state of the watershed
- *Shared Waters Create a Shared Future for the Squam Lakes Watershed* – Report on land use regulations by Plymouth State University graduate students, 2014
- *Watershed Towns Zoning Regulation Summary*
- *Management of the Squam Lakes Watershed: Understanding the priorities with a specific focus on trails and milfoil* – report from 2014 survey

There was discussion on how to use these documents and reports as a base to move forward. The following points were raised:

- A SWOT analysis is need. Will help us see where we are today and where we need to go.
- A searchable database of information would be useful. Creating this should be part of the communication and education sections of the plan. We need to think about how to store information for future use.

- Co-occurrence mapping would be useful to help see key areas of the watershed.

Notes from the Jan 20, 2016 public meeting were discussed. Questions were asked about the priorities from the meeting. The format of the meeting did not set priorities but rather was designed to gain comments from everyone participating. From the meeting notes, the topics were grouped and categorized but priorities were not established. It was suggested that each year there should be an annual watershed wellness committee meeting to review assess what has been accomplished and keep moving forward on plan implementation.

June noted that Plymouth State University students are currently working on interviewing Squam stakeholders to help identify key issues. They will also develop a survey to be administered at boat launches, campsites, and trailheads this summer.

It was noted that it is in assessing land use regulations between towns, absolute consistency is not important. It does not really matter if a shoreline setback is 75 or 100 feet, but rather it is the concept of a setback that is important. We need to be looking for gaps and not just differences. We will need to get towns involved early and having a champion in each town will be important. It was noted that one member of the committee had been on their town's Planning Board for 12 years and not once did the Squam Watershed Plan come up so we need to make sure the plan is useful. Peter offered to assist with visiting local watershed town Select Boards and Planning Boards.

Jeff noted that the planning process means we need to have a vision. We will need to pull back and work with stakeholders on creating a vision. Paradise is part of the vision, but we also need to make sure the vision is broad enough to pull together all people that have a stake. We will also need goals. Having large scale goals can be hard to implement, but are useful because they get people and boards engaged. We need to be cautious about people questioning what we are doing and focus on building a tent that everyone can get under. He suggested thinking about the big picture, developing a vision and small number of goals (5) and use this to discuss this with communities. People want to be brought along with the process which then makes implementation easier.

Bob suggested working with SLCS on GIS maps of land in conservation. A build out analysis would also be helpful. Mapping out land not likely to be developed (land in conservation, steep slopes, wetlands, etc.) will show us what proportion of watershed can be developed. This might be a good project for a PSU student. NH has also been mapping the state using Lidar which gives new perspectives. For example, Lidar is showing new stream networks which could change our stream ordering system and impact the Shoreline Protection areas.

EPA/DES Requirements:

Rebecca provided an overview of the requirements of the EPA and NHDES for watershed plans. The requirements are known as the "A-I list." They have been developed for severely impacted watersheds and, luckily, Squam is minimally impacted. Our challenge will be to address the A-I list requirements. Squam does have impairments: invasive species, mercury, phosphorus, & pH (mostly due to acid deposition), and oxygen which is common in deep lakes and can't really be address by a watershed plan. Phosphorus is from non-point sources and is not a major issue for Squam. Invasive species issues are primarily milfoil, and SLA has managed this well in recent years.

Rebecca will send out examples of DES approved plans so the committee can see the technical aspects required in meeting the A-I requirements. Most of these plans have been completed by engineering

consultants at substantial cost. SLA in unique position and the cost of doing a watershed plan will be a lot of Rebecca's time and her work will also become her thesis for her MS in Environmental Science & Policy at Plymouth State University. There will also be costs for analysis of water quality samples.

Discussion followed and suggestions were made:

- We should look at the square footage of road in the watershed as part of characterizing the watershed
- How do we define water quality? We should think broadly and include bio-accumulants such as flame retardants
- We should look into grants. Need a project budget.
- UNH Stormwater Center is a good resource that might be helpful in the project.

Plan Outline and Timeline:

Rebecca shared a rough outline and timeline of the Squam Watershed Plan and asked for comments from the committee.

Next steps:

Rebecca asked committee members about the following:

- What skills do we have and what do we need? Using a handout from EPA, we need to assess the skills of committee members to determine what skills are missing and who we can contact to get them.
- Sample watershed plans – Rebecca will send out examples and asked committee members to look these over.
- Dates for the next meeting were discussed. Rebecca will send out a meeting poll. We will try to meet again in early May.
- We need a meeting for visioning, maybe in June or July. This meeting could also be used for setting priorities and rating what is most important to people.
- The plan outline is a very rough draft. Rebecca will send this out and asked the committee to provide feedback.