

Casco Community Groundwater Protection Program Municipal Stakeholder Meeting March 11, 2014

Participants:

David Morton-Town Manager
Mary Fernandes – Select Board (Chair)
Don Murphy-Code Enforcement Officer
Nadia Herмос – Open Space Commission and Conservation Committee (Chair)
Jim Macklin – Planning Board
John Kimball – Planning Board
Ray Grant – Select Board
Paul Edes – Select Board
Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation (CCSWCD) Staff: Kate McDonald, Patrick Marass,
Heather True, Robyn Saunders

David Morton - Overview:

- 1950s and 1960s, waste oil used to keep dust down on gravel roads
- Tenney Hill took waste in, this waste eventually washed into underlying aquifer contaminating groundwater.
- As a result, Tenney Hill became a Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP) Superfund Site in which efforts were made to clean up the waste.
- Most of the surface waste was disposed of yet the oil that had contaminated the groundwater is too costly and not feasible to extract. Therefore there is still some residual that is being monitored by the State and in lieu of being able to clean up all of the waste oil in the groundwater, the State is giving the Town \$500K for ground water protection.
- Town is looking into ideas and directions on how to use these funds.
- Select Board has engaged CCSWCD to help steer Town through the process.
- This is an initial stakeholders meeting: Participants invited based on their affiliation with community and Town. A follow-up public stakeholder meeting will be held in a couple of months (late April/early May).
- [Note: following the stakeholder meeting, the next meeting date was set for May 6 at 6:30]

Kate McDonald, Project Scientist, CCSWCD – Power Point Presentation (of process and ideas generated thus far):

- Purpose of meeting: How does Casco want to invest these funds?
 - Up to 10% of funds can be spent on administration
 - Timelines
- Background of Tenney Hill:
 - 58 million gallons of groundwater under site
 - Site to be clean in 100 or more years by natural processes
 - Maine DEP determined that it is not feasible to clean
- Overview of Groundwater:
 - Aquifers = underground river
 - Confining layers = layers groundwater can't go through
 - Unconfined aquifer has direct contact with surface – this is what was present at Tenney Hill. Spill and then rainwater washed into aquifer

- Aquifers can be sand and gravel or bedrock – contaminants in bedrock is very difficult to clean up
- No mandatory testing exists for private wells
- Major Groundwater Threats:
 - Leaking underground tanks from gas stations
 - Heating oil tanks (likely to be the biggest threat)
 - Industrial storage tanks
 - Failing or poorly designed septic systems
 - Winter salt (big issue, more so on a regional scale rather than town-based, municipal and state but also private)
 - Leaking landfills
 - Solid waste dumping
 - Automotive waste
- How to set priorities?
 - Proactive – possible threat, not causing an issue right now
 - Reactive - Contamination in the ground or imminent contamination
- Ideas/Options generated thus far:
 - Proactive Option 1: Community Education and Outreach
 - Proactive Option 2 : Revolving Loan Fund
 - Proactive Option 3: Regional Initiatives
 - Responsive Option 1: Community Education and Outreach
 - Responsive Option 2: Address known sources of contamination

Open Discussion:

Use of Funds

- David: Want to make clear we are not trying to fix Tenney, instead, we want to invest funds into other things
- Kate: Not limited in area, these funds can be applied to entire Town
- David: There really are no rules in how to use these funds except the have to be used for groundwater protection and the Town has to have a plan that the State will approve

Documentation and Testing of Abandoned Tanks

- Jim: Any known abandoned tanks?
 - David: Don't know, state looked into around the 80s-90s
 - Kate: There are state and federal maintained databases that we could search town-wide to see where the tanks where and how they were registered; Also agricultural farms using tanks for gasoline, lot of tanks put in during the 40s, 50s, and 60s and not licensed
 - Don: In work conducted through the Town of Bethel, would go to USDA in Lewiston, look at farms, then interview neighbors prior to water quality testing on site; Wouldn't have to reinvent the wheel and we know where DEP tanks are
- There are drilled wells that are pulling from Pleasant that are now abandoned, we could use these for testing
- Nadia: Next door there was a family that had septic and oil tank, it is now abandoned and can't imagine digging up the place to just to find these tanks; Perhaps testing of the water could occur on the pond below this property
- Kate: Could do a groundwater testing program if that was an interest; Large percentage of Maine's drinking water comes from wells (private and public); Could have an opt in testing program for residents and get a discounted rate from testing lab if there were testing orders in bulk
 - Nadia: Don't think residents would take on this testing unless funding to do so received from the Town



Other Groundwater Contamination Sites

- David: Town has been involved in a few other groundwater contamination sites:
 - Gas contamination across from the Grange parking lot
 - Pipe's Corner – gas contamination, 7-8 wells affected, some re-drilled
 - Kettle Cove: Two incidents – 1) Residential building, heating oil spill from ice fall that knocked off fire release valve; 2) Commercial septic sludge illegally dumped adjacent to Sebago Lake
- Mary: Accidents should be available and documented
- David: they were at the time, now they are pretty old, don't want to create a panic and scare people
- Mary: Perhaps take historical cases and make them educational?
- Pat: For oil tanks, education on covering fire valves?
- Jim: Have oil companies inspect
- Dave: They are supposed to do this, don't always do
- Paul: Were Webbs Mill/Plummer Park tanks dug up? Garage across from community center, tanks dug up?
- Nadia: Two sides – 1) your own well contaminated/private versus 2)contamination from property affecting others/public

Hazardous Waste Day

- Jim: Town once had chemical pick-up day at elementary schools. Now, have seen stuff in woods left to rot away.
- David: Hazardous waste day stopped due to expense, only a few places now take it. Also, only residents who are social responsible and willing to pay for the disposal are disposing of waste properly.
- Tenney Hill funds could help financially sponsor a hazardous waste day
- Kate: Standish has a hazardous waste day one once a year that is very popular with people lining up ½ mile down the road
- Don: Live in Oxford County and on Conservation Commission from Bethel – had an annual event with AVGOG and volunteers helped with traffic control
- Also went around with truck to barns and elderly residences to pick up waste
- David: There is no GPCOG program in Casco, we just refer people to outside locations. Town does have a public safety day to pick up unneeded medications
- Paul: Late spring/early fall for cleaning, disposal
- David: May and August would be good due to large seasonal population
- Nadia: Many clean up in September
- **Action Item: Explore this, talk to folks and see what would be the best time**

Education, Assistance, and Enforcement of Hazardous Waste Disposal

- David: Don doesn't have time to look for problems, yet if we LOOKED we would find tire, rubbish piles, junked autos, debris scattered through woods; Through these funds, could say we have a program to help get rid of these issues
- Pat: Could use a soft approach: we aren't going to get you in trouble for having stuff but to help to clean up
 - Don: We have codes as our tool for violations and enforcement; We could educate, have amnesty period and then when that is up, enforcement takes effect – give it a back end
 - Waste disposal could include: tire piles, burn piles (from house fire), septic tanks, oil tanks
- Kate: Soft approach to offer grants with no pay back or a loan? Or just spend money educating that cleanup is needed?

- David: Some state laws don't help, such as up to two junk cars, snowmobiles, appliances, ... properties may look like junk yards yet are just messy yards
- Don: There is a Maine DEP staff member that deals with this; There are laws that kick in if the Maine DEP staff member sees oil on the ground or an issue
- **Action Item: Identifying sources is proactive, going back to what Don said in using a three prong approach?**
 1. **Educate – lead horse to water, talk about contaminants, Maine DEP means business = stick**
 2. **Amnesty day – closed ended and closed budget – one site can use up a lot; What if there is a really yucky site?**
 3. **Follow-up with enforcement and more education, something to give back to community to end a positive note**
- Don: For example, if tires are identified, can remove in a collective approach for a reduced fee
- Jim: Yet don't want to reward someone for doing something illegal (ex. Holding tanks, leaking septic tanks)
- Kate: There are other programs in the state we can leverage – use these programs to help accomplish tasks with Tenney Funds helping to supplement their use in the Town of Casco. For example: oil tanks and suppliers insurance
- **Action Item: educate where people can get funding.**
- Heather: Education listed as first step, yet what about surveying for issues? Will education bring landowners to the Town seeking assistance or should the Town be actively looking for sites to address?

Funding Available

- David: Want to allocate funds for specific purposes since we have limited funds (For example: \$100K for acquiring public easements on signification aquifers, \$100K for revolving loan for septic system replacement...)
- How to allocate the money? Or should we?
- Mary: There is a finite amount of money, can't do everything, need to focus on most feasible. For example, half the residents in the town could say their septic is failing and they need financial assistance and these funds would get used quickly. Instead, create a priority for these, such as those that are over significant aquifers.
- Don: Preserving funds for response in the future is important too, for unforeseen situations.
- **Proposed action item: Map and catalog significant & potentially significant aquifers that could be impacted by surface spills, septics, etc... Use the mapping/cataloguing to prioritize funding expenditures.**

Failing Septic Tank Replacements

- David: State has funds to deal with failing septic tanks, yet to get funds, Town needs to submit list of failing tanks to the State, yet due to State laws, if Town knows of a failing tank, then the Town HAS to fix it! How can we apply for these funds then?
- Robyn: Could CCSWCD identify the failing tanks and make the Town aware of them just at the time the request for state funds needs to be submitted?
- David: Yes, however don't want to wait a year leaving the septic unfixed – submit for failing septic tank replacement funds just once a year
- Don: For septic systems, Town has a good bank of files available (permitting, building, selling, additions) but there are many properties that have no septic designs; Those without septic designs typically means they are over 20 years old; **Summer interns could go through map/lot files, create spreadsheet of septic design information and zoning (with identified aquifer zones) and then help prioritize the tanks needing replacement.** Economy of scale would kick in when there are 20 people that need replaced septic tanks; We could put this replacement out to



bid for the whole group. Revolving loan could then be on a case-by-case to the Select Board on what and whether assistance is provided.

- Pat: In other areas, have done surveys of septic tanks that are the priorities, and inventory is part of the education piece. A survey for Casco should be very feasible.
- **Action Item: Map and catalog septic system information as described by Don above (bolded). Couple with aquifer mapping above for prioritization.**

Data Acquisition and Compilation

- **Action Item: information to be gathered (possible internship program)**
 - Data inventory
 - GIS data for aquifers, soil, and geology
 - Review town files
 - Create inventory
 - Prioritize replacement of septic tanks
- Mary: this sounds like a good start

Salt

- David: Salt is a difficult issue. It is cumulative over time. Casco has had to replace wells due to contamination yet don't know if new well will be contaminated. There are no cost-effective deicers, and with deicers there are also lots of other contaminants.
- Kate: Have worked with outreach in more urban areas of the state. The same conclusions have been made that dealing with salt needs to be dealt with at the state level through regulations.
- David: It is a circular argument. People now expect to be able to travel in ALL conditions.
 - Pat: Should education initiative try to lower expectations of traveling in all conditions?
 - Kate: Have seen other municipalities send their public works to regional training on how to calibrate equipment properly, get refreshers on when to use salt, sand, mixture...trainings are available for free or very low cost.
- David: Casco uses 300 tons of salt per year on average, this year it is 900 tons! And it is cumulative! Lot of salt!!!
 - Use salt brine?
- Robyn: Was an environmental consultant for Maine Turnpike Authority. Salt brine is salt pre-mixed with water, use to pretreat, put on before snow. Now adding acetate to brine because it is effective at lower temperature. Salt brine is different than wetting salt. Sometimes use the two together.
 - Salt brine needs different equipment in order to apply
- Kate: Salt is something to keep an eye on, could be good for education
- **Possible Action Item: Include salt application education for contractors training as part of education/outreach program. Available through Maine Local Roads & Maine DEP.**

Education

- Naomi: In regards to education, what is the best way to get the word out?
 - Kate: CCSWCD has an education team that works on outreach to businesses and homeowners and one staff member who focuses solely on schools; Have many programs in place (one example is fertilizer use); Any of the identified issues discussed can plug into these program models (we would like you to reduce your use of salt and this is why)
- Naomi: How to tell people/advertise?
 - Robyn: Public meetings, websites, point-of-sale, flyers, mailings, articles – tiered approach
 - Kate: We have a program where we educate in the schools on fertilizer, information goes to parents and parents then see the same information in stores when they go to buy the materials. This tiered approach works very well.

- Children retain information taught to them for years and encourage their parents to implement what they have learned
- Don: Town website can also be used to get the word out
- **Action Item: CCSWCD can present our education and outreach techniques at the next stakeholders meeting in April**

Emergency Response

- Specific program or general?
- Jim: Very expensive to keep people trained and current
- David: Want to keep current list of resources, who to call if you have a certain kind of spill, and whether there is town or state funding to help
- State offers program that covers most of fix yet landowner can't come up with remainder/their cost share, perhaps Town can cover this remainder through Tenney Hill funds?
- Don: State household, oil dealers, there is a co-pay to participate, need \$500-600 for insurance broker up front
- Robyn: Likes response list/ emergency reaction list, all the different insurances and who to call
- David: Town doesn't even know all the resources out there to direct people to
- Don: In Bethel, got MMA grant for first response, absorption blankets etc. and some training; Some of this could possibly augment Casco emergency response, help give resources/materials until insurance kicks in
- David: Resources are out there just need to know who
- Mary: It is powerful to have Town Manager to say these resources are few and far between
- Emergency action list/ prioritization list
- Robyn: First responses have to wait to replenish response equipment, set aside money for this so that replacement could be ordered right away before insurance company filled in
- John: County response team, training is ongoing
- David: Town has some response equipment yet it is replaced by Town or Maine DEP when used.
- **Action Item: develop response list/emergency reaction list and who to call for each type of issue.**

Summary of Projects Identified In Discussion:

- Hazard Waste Day 2X/Year
 - Include free dump day
- Water Testing
- Source Cleanup
 - Educate
 - Amnesty
 - Enforcement/Education/Follow-Up
- Education and Outreach
 - Groundwater successes
- Emergency Response Toolbox
- Easements on aquifers (includes identification)
- Data inventory

Wrap-up Discussion on Prioritization List

- Kate: USGS/Maine Geological Survey has identified one aquifer for drinking water in area
- David: All aquifers are important since the whole town drinks well water
- Kate: Aquifer assessment, look at Maine Geological Survey assessment and then look at material as to where you have confined areas
- Robyn: Lessons learned from groundwater assessments, and successes



- David: Hazardous waste can't be done in conjunction with bulk waste due to licensing; Can set up at a multi-town location that would make it more economical
- Tires are a problem

Post Meeting Additions – from Mary and Don:

- Aquifer mapping with intention of obtaining easements to protect and develop potential public water resources – Possibly 50% of funding set aside.
 - The mapping is captured in the action items above.
 - **Action Item: talk to Naples about their process for evaluating potential public drinking water wells (just completed, article in the paper).**
- For hazardous waste day, look into transportation for senior citizens who might not be able to get to the transfer station.
- Include an internship program wherever possible (especially for mapping and cataloging).
- Invest in GIS mapping/GPS locating equipment and expertise.
 - GPS equipment
 - Educational posters (“what is an aquifer?” “where does the water go?”)