Great Bay Pollution Tracking and Accounting Pilot Project

Workgroup Meeting 2: More Tracking
Meeting Date: March 23, 2015

MEETING 2: NOTES AND OUTCOMES

Overview & Summary of Outcomes Achieved
The second workgroup meeting of the Great Bay Pollution Tracking and Accounting Pilot Project (PTAPP) was held March 23, 2015 8:30 AM -12:00 PM at the DES Pease Field Office.

Outcomes Achieved – Meeting 2:
- Agreement on final definitions of tracking and accounting
- Agreement on working list of items for tracking
- Four subcommittees established to research tracking items: Septic Systems, Land Conversion, BMPs, and Business Plan

The following meeting notes summarize discussion and outcomes for each agenda item as follows: 1.0) definitions and tracking list, 2.0) tracking tool presentations, 3.0) regional approaches and 4.0) subcommittees and next steps.

Meeting 2: Opening Remarks Summary
Ted Diers of NHDES opened up the meeting. He commented on the success of Meeting #1, and reemphasized the purpose of the tracking and accounting system: 1. To know what is going on, 2. To help inform the funding process, and 3. To show progress.

Ted identified the decision points for today’s meeting, and highlighted that regional cooperation is needed to overcome the challenges and barriers. He also reminded everyone to do their PTAPP homework and to keep their expectations realistic, recognizing that the process and outcome may not fit everyone’s needs, but there is inherent value in the dialogue.

Jamie provided an overview of likely changes that will be made to the order of meeting topics: The 3rd meeting will further define tracking items and the 4th and 5th meetings are likely to be accounting-related discussions. The change reflects a recognition and responsiveness to the group’s discussion and outcomes to-date.

1.0 Tracking and Accounting Definitions and Tracking Items List Discussion

1.1 Tracking and Accounting Definitions Discussion
The group reviewed the draft definitions for tracking and accounting developed with input by the group during Meeting 1 and through post-meeting comments and evaluations.
Discussion Outcome: Agreement was reached that the following definitions will be used during the PTAPP process to describe tracking and accounting:

Tracking Definition: Information about activities that may contribute to increase or decrease in pollutant loading.

Accounting Definition: A quantitative method for inventorizing and tabulation planning, management, and conservation practices that affect hydrology and water quality.

(The final definitions will be added to the PTAPP Glossary of Common Terms.)

1.2 Tracking List Discussion
After reaching agreement on the tracking and accounting definitions, the group moved into a discussion to reach agreement on the list of tracking items.

Discussion Summary: The group reviewed the draft list. The review and discussion centered on two main topics: Existing BMPs and Conservation.

Tracking Item: Existing BMPs
Summary of Key Discussion Points: Much of this discussion centered on how to track and credit BMPs built before time zero and the role of modeling in estimating load reductions. Multiple participants raised concerns that many older BMPs are not maintained and do not function at the same level as newer BMPs and therefore should not receive credit or be tracked. Additionally, BMPs are not always built to specifications nor maintained. Several participants felt that older BMPs could be tracked and credited if operation and maintenance practices are certified through inspections, self-reporting or similar mechanism. Note: Many points in this discussion cross over with accounting; therefore, we will revisit this topic during future PTAPP workgroup meetings.

Existing BMPs Discussion Outcome: If the existing, “baseline” load is generated by an analysis of the watershed without BMPs, and then BMPs are inventoried and plugged in to estimate benefits, older BMPs could be counted if operation & maintenance (O & M) is certified; however, if the existing load is modeled with BMPs in place, it may not be feasible to go back and credit older BMPs since the model will have accounted for them already. The need is measuring change in existing load.

Tracking Item: Land Use Conversion – Conservation
Summary of Key Discussion Points: Concerns were raised that conservation doesn’t necessarily change land use or reduce pollutant loading from the existing watershed load. Conservation is more like “load avoidance” than load removal; however, most group members felt it was still important to track conservation efforts.
**Conservation Discussion Outcome:**
It was agreed that Conservation items would be added to a tracking list that may precipitate accounting methods that may be part of a future effort.

**Summary of general comments about the tracking list:**
- Include outreach activities
- Be mindful of the needs of rural communities
- Some items will be able to be tracked at the regional level: Septic systems, wetlands, and possibly impervious cover (IC), although the frequency of reporting may be an issue
- Add an “other” item to the tracking list to capture additional items as they emerge

**Tracking List Discussion Outcome:** At the end of the discussion, the group agreed that the following list will serve as the working list of tracking items with the following understanding: a.) the list will evolve over time, and b.) communities might track some, but not all items on the list; what is tracked may vary depending on the community, needs, and requirements, and some items could be tracked at the regional level while others will need to be tracked at the local level.

- **Septic systems**
  - New or modified
  - Septic connected to sewer
  - Decentralized waste water treatment facilities

- **Land Conversion**
  - Changes to the amount of EIC and disconnected IC
  - New IC, IC removed, IC routed to pervious area
  - Conversion of existing landscape to lawns/turf
  - Wetland conversion – lost or restored
  - Land converted to agriculture
  - Shoreline conversion – lost and/or restored
  - Forested land - lost or restored
  - Conservation Practices

- **BMPs**
  - Structural BMPS
  - BMP operation and maintenance
  - Non-structural BMPS
  - Other

- **Other Significant Activities**
2.0 Summary of Tracking Tool Presentations

Four presenters provided information about several tracking and accounting tools that are under development or have been implemented. Follow-up discussions were held after each presentation.

Note: The Tracking Tool Presentations can be downloaded here (scroll down to Meeting 2 – Additional Resources): [http://www.unh.edu/unhsc/meetings](http://www.unh.edu/unhsc/meetings)

2.1 Town of Exeter Nitrogen Tracking Approach
Presenter: Edward Leonard, Wright-Pierce
Summary: To meet consent order requirements, Exeter is developing a GIS-based tool to track land use change. Information is pulled from development permits and input to the tracking summary sheet.

Key Follow-up Discussion Points:
- How is PREP’s IC data generated? It doesn’t seem to match other IC estimates; this could be a critical question if we plan to use PREP data to help with IC tracking. (Jean Brochi, US EPA will look into the methodology and report back)

DI 2.2 Town of Newmarket Tracking for Total Nitrogen
Presenter: Zach Henderson, Woodard and Curran
Summary: In response to a consent order, Newmarket developed a tracking worksheet to gather data about septic systems, land use conversion, BMPs, and impervious cover. Worksheet development activities included interviews with town staff, review of current codes/ordinances, and consideration of regulatory needs and conditions.

Key Follow-up Discussion Points:
- What is the de minimis threshold for disturbance and pollutant load
- Start by tracking gross change and threats
- Tracking should show that investments – BMPs, ordinances, etc. – improve water quality
- Finding the information and certifying accuracy can be a challenge at the local level

2.3 Rochester SW Update
Presenter: Rob Roseen, Geosyntec
Summary: Presentation included a work done to review and revise stormwater regulations to include land use change tracking; the goal is to meet MS4 and potential waste water requirements. A key aspect is to develop a standardized process where project applicants are responsible for developing and submitting information to the city to make tracking less burdensome for municipal staff.

Key Follow-up Discussion Points:
- PTAPP tool development should include other pollutants
- A database vs. Excel format opens up options for reporting
• Most communities are not tracking where BMPs are going in the ground; include a lat/long component for tracking BMP location
• Important to track redevelopment and establish criteria (incremental decreases in IC, type and rate)

2.4 Overview of BayTAS and a Tracking and Accounting Tool for Vandenberg AFB

**Presenter: Guoshun Zhang, TetraTech**

**Summary:** BayTAS was developed to track, account, and report on activities conducted to meet the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. BayTAS tracks wasteload allocations and nonpoint sources. It tracks TMDL progress relative to watershed modeling and load targets. The Vandenberg AFB tool is a local level tracking and accounting tool developed to meet stormwater regulations. BMPs are tracked as implemented; additionally, the tool generates planning level guidance for future BMP installation based on optimization modeling.

**Key Follow-up Discussion Points:**
• The Vandenberg tool has a standardized format for data collection with common language
• Guoshun will try to get information on information input (Vandenberg tool)

3.0 Summary of Regional Approach Discussion

The group then discussed whether a regional approach would enhance the ability to collect data, and also discussed whether some tracking items could be collected at the regional level.

**Discussion Summary:** Participants saw benefits in having a regional system where a separate entity would manage the system and data. Under this model, any data collected at the local level would be fed into the system. Regional data collection would be the responsibility of the system’s managing entity. Output—reports, summaries, etc.—could be provided to users as needed. This approach has benefits including standardization of tracking, cost efficiencies (1 system as opposed to several, separate systems), could save staff time spent on tracking at municipal level. Participants envisioned a data “portal” where local information could be plugged in by towns, regional information could be tracked internally by the portal’s managing entity, and reports generated as needed.

**Discussion Outcome:** The group agreed that a regional tracking and accounting approach would be welcomed, but implementation challenges exist:
• Funding and sustainability
• Who will “own it”
• Timing could be an issue for some tracking items (IC, for example)
• Scale...what is the scale?

**Next Steps:**
Four subcommittees were established to look into each tracking item in more depth. Specifically, the committees will further define the items and evaluate who/what/when/ where/how/why for each item.
A matrix has been developed to help guide each subcommittee through the discussions. Each subcommittee will report out at the next PTAPP meeting on April 21.

**PTAPP Tracking Subcommittees:**
- Septic
- Land Use
- BMPs
- Business Plan

List of subcommittee participants and facilitators: [http://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ptapp-subcommittees](http://www.unh.edu/unhsc/ptapp-subcommittees)

**The group also set dates for the next workgroup meetings:**
All meetings will be held from 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM at the NH DES Pease Field Office.
- Meeting 3: April 21 – Tracking Subcommittee Reports
- Meeting 4: May 19 – Tracking Follow-up and Accounting
- Meeting 5: June 23 – Accounting
- Meeting 6: To be determined (likely September)
**PTAPP Meeting 2: More Tracking - March 23, 2015, DES Pease Field Office**

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