

SUMMARY OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #1: ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES

The Steering Committee is an essential part of developing a grounded APC-Nemasket Regional Watershed Management and Climate Action Plan.

The long-standing Assawompset Pond Complex Management Team (“Management Team”) is serving as the project Steering Committee, with additional membership from staff and officials from Lakeville, Taunton, New Bedford, and Rochester. The Steering Committee is indispensable to ensuring that the final plan recommendations are actionable and fit with local goals and priorities. Meetings are held on a periodic basis, mostly in line with the Management Team’s regular quarterly meetings, plus additional working meetings in between as needed.

The first Steering Committee meeting occurred on December 9, 2020. The meeting had two goals; first, to set a common baseline of information for all members of the steering committee to work from going forward; and second, to explore the Committee’s vision for ideal future watershed conditions. The meeting agenda supported these goals, and the meeting activity, a visioning session, specifically interrogated the goal of arriving at a vision statement for inclusion in the plan.

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions (5 min)
- Broad Project Overview: Goals and Tasks (5 min)
- Recap of issues discussed to date (15 min)
- Dynamic Changes to 2050 (growth and climate change 5 min)
- Developing a Vision for the APC and Nemasket River (25 minutes)
- Public Participation Update (5 minutes)
- Tentative Plan for Next Meetings (5 minutes)

Powerpoint Presentation: [LINK](#)

Video Recording: [LINK](#)

Overlapping Projects: [LINK](#)

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Visioning Exercise: Jamboards

The project team decided to use Jamboards (a free google produce) as the method for an interactive digital visioning session. Before starting in on the Jamboards, we gave Steering Committee members five minutes (muted, with on-screen timer) to brainstorm individually around three questions posted on the screen:

1. What should the APC and Nemasket look like in the year 2050?
2. What natural functions remain intact or are enhanced?
3. How will the surrounding communities interact with and enjoy them?

We brought the group back together, and transitioned to the Jamboard environment by posting a link in the Zoom chat for everyone to follow. Clicking the link in the chat brought everyone to the same Jamboard, which we had displayed in the zoom meeting via screen share so that the group could track it simultaneously as entries were made. We had pre-made three boards with prompts at the top of the page, and went through these boards one at a time. Participants filled in the blanks of the prompts by placing sticky notes with their typed feedback onto the board. Where participants had any issue accessing the boards, facilitators were able to take comments verbally and add them for the participants. The boards as completed are pictured below. Check marks on a sticky note indicate support for an idea from other Steering Committee members.

“IN 2050 THE APC AND NEMASKET RIVER... ARE.../ HAVE.../ PROVIDE.../ PRESERVE...”

In 2050 The APC and Nemasket River...

ARE:	HAVE:	PROVIDE:	PRESERVE:
Healthy!	control of invasives	passive recreational opportunities	wetlands
Sustainable	Flood Control	clean drinking water	habitat
free of invasive plant species	better by laws/rules on development around the water	active recreation (canoeing & kayaking)	unique wilife habitat
The AP watershed is a cohesive ecosystem providing aquatic, aviary, and terrestrial habitat as well as reliable and consistently clean water supply.	volunteers willing to be active in management.	Hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities	water quantity and quality through wise bylaws that guide development throughout whole watershed
	communities that understand the system's value and the impacts that their actions have.	Good fish passage	water quality
		broad viewsheds	
		Educational Opportunities for all age groups	

ARE: Healthy!, Sustainable, free of invasive plant species, The AP watershed is a cohesive ecosystem providing aquatic, aviary, and terrestrial habitat as well as reliable and consistently clean water supply.

HAVE: control of invasives, Flood Control, better by laws/rules on development around the water, volunteers willing to be active in management., communities that understand the system's value and the impacts that their actions have.

PROVIDE: passive recreational opportunities, clean drinking water, active recreation (canoeing & kayaking), Hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities, Good fish passage, broad viewsheds, Educational Opportunities for all age groups.

PRESERVE: wetlands, habitat, unique wilife habitat, water quality, Preserve local towns' property rights and ability to generate tax revenues., natural environment (water and wildlife).

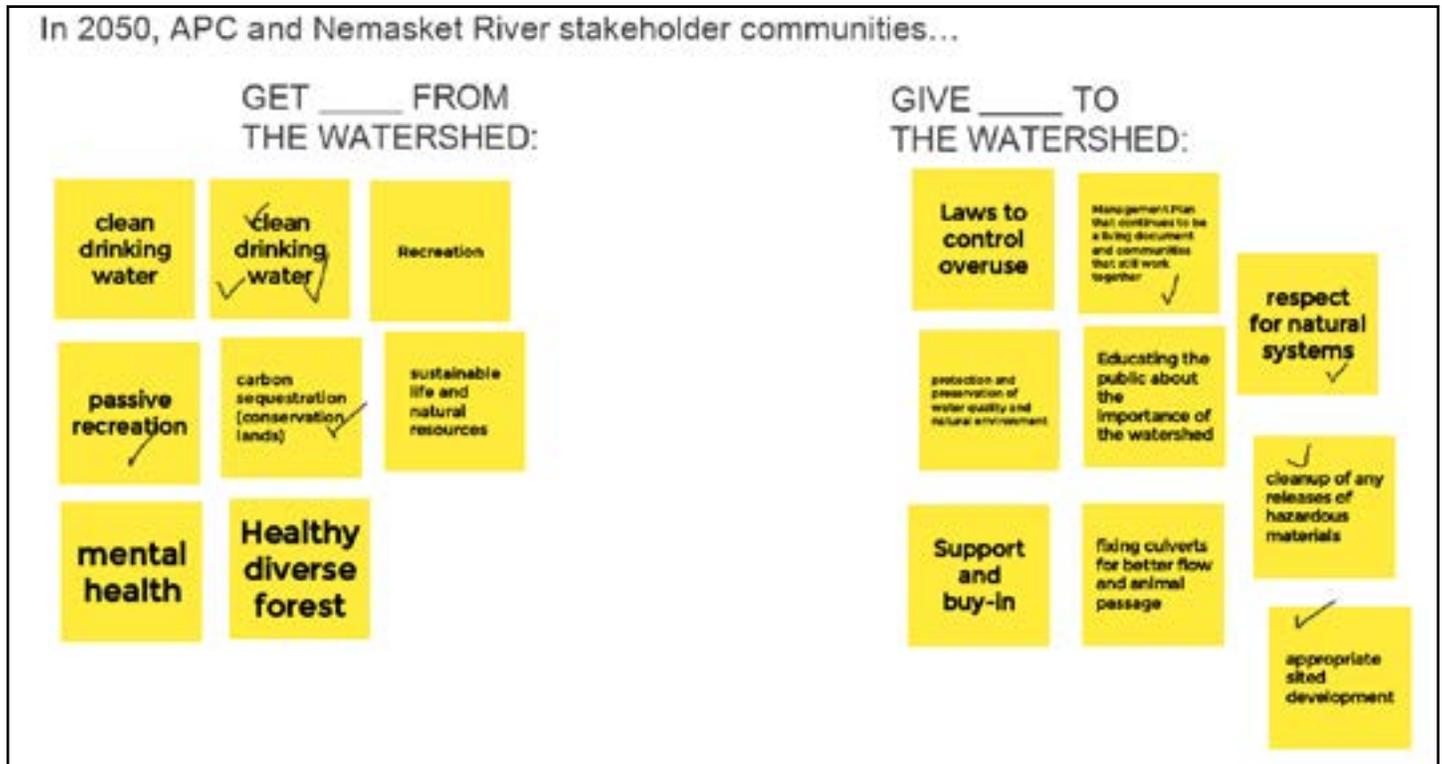
Other sticky notes: A team of people protecting it, a maintenance plan that will be strictly adhered to, clearly defined work areas and responsibilities, enough clean drinking water for all, sediment and invasives removal, and a sand trap installed to capture and additional sedimentation, No contamination, Active Forest Management, improved water and life quality of natural environment, abundant wildlife, functioning wetlands, good water flow, community attitude of value and need to preserve.

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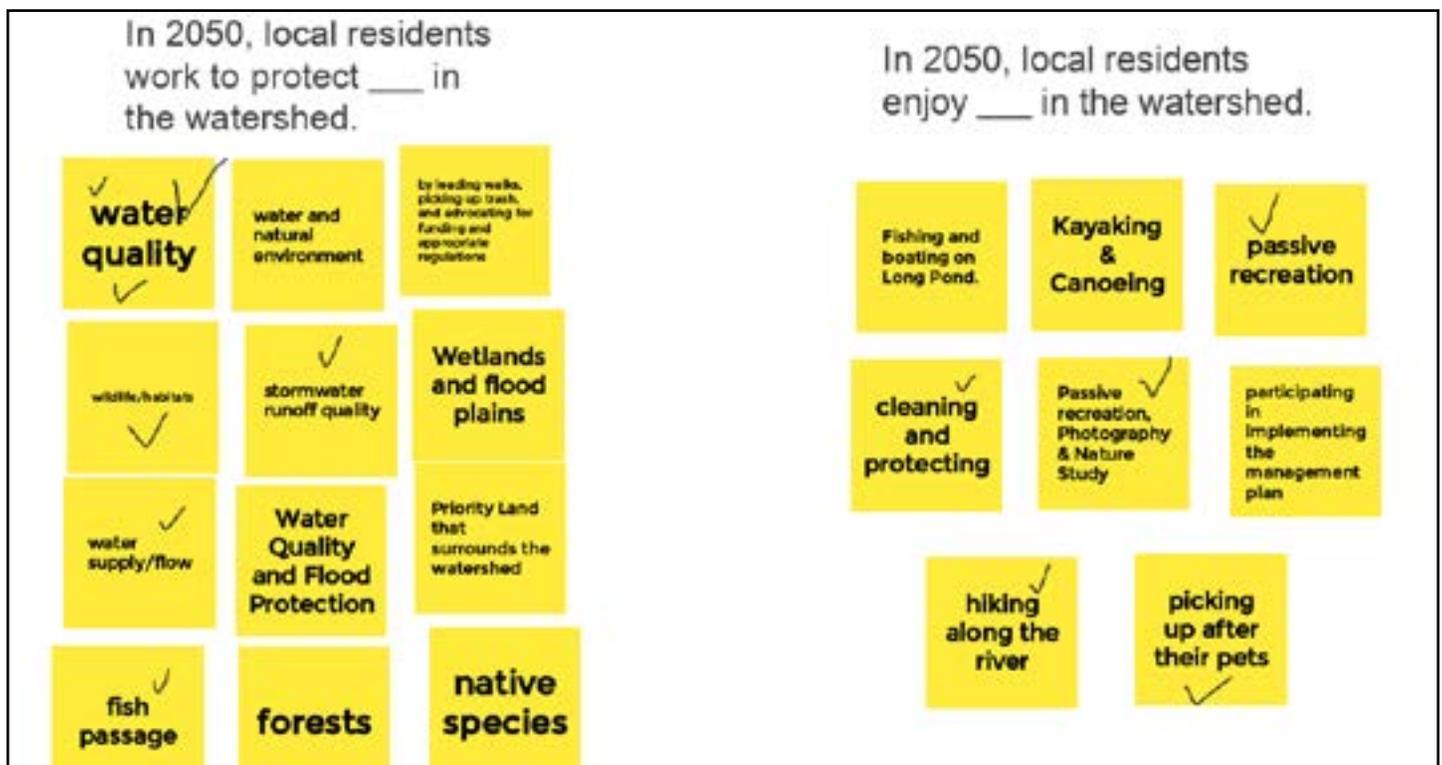
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“IN 2050, APC AND NEMASKET RIVER STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES...”



“IN 2050, LOCAL RESIDENTS WORK TO PROTECT.../ENJOY...IN THE WATERSHED”



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Jamboard Result Statements by Topic

In 2050...

Broad Vision Statements

The APC and Nemasket River are	healthy!
	sustainable
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities get ___ from the watershed	sustainable life and natural resources
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities give ___ to the watershed	protection and preservation of water quality and natural environment
	respect for natural systems (1 support check)
Local residents work to protect	water and natural environment

Habitat

The APC and Nemasket River is	a cohesive ecosystem providing aquatic, aviary, and terrestrial habitat as well as reliable and consistently clean water supply.
The APC and Nemasket River have	abundant wildlife
The APC and Nemasket River provide	good fish passage
The APC and Nemasket River preserve	habitat
	unique wildlife habitat
Local residents work to protect	wildlife habitats (1 support check)
	fish passage (1 support check)

Recreation

The APC and Nemasket River provide	passive recreational opportunities
	active recreation (canoeing & kayaking)
	hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities
	broad viewsheds
	educational Opportunities for all age groups
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities get ___ from the watershed	recreation
	passive recreation (1 support check)
	mental health
Local residents enjoy	fishing and boating on Long Pond
	kayaking and canoeing
	passive recreation (2 support checks)
	photography and nature study (1 support check)
	hiking along the river (1 support check)

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Ecological Integrity

The APC and Nemasket River are	free of invasive plant species
The APC and Nemasket River have	control of invasives
	no contamination
	functioning wetlands
	active forest management
The APC and Nemasket River preserve	wetlands
	natural environment (water and wildlife)
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities get ___ from the watershed	healthy diverse forest
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities give ___ to the watershed	improved culverts for better flow and animal passage
	cleanups of releases of hazardous materials (1 support check)
Local residents work to protect	stormwater runoff quality (1 support check)
	wetlands and floodplains
	priority land that surrounds the watershed
	forests
	native species

Regulatory Framework

The APC and Nemasket River have	better by laws/rules on development around the water
The APC and Nemasket River preserve	host towns' property rights and ability to generate tax revenues
	water quantity and quality through wise bylaws that guide development throughout whole watershed
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities give ___ to the watershed	laws to control overuse
	appropriately-sited development (1 support check)

Drinking Water Supply

The APC and Nemasket River are	enough clean drinking water for all
The APC and Nemasket River provide	clean drinking water
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities get ___ from the watershed	clean drinking water (4 support checks)
Local residents work to protect	water supply/flow (1 support check)

Climate Change Impacts

The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities get ___ from the watershed	carbon sequestration (conservation lands, 1 support check)
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Stewardship

The APC and Nemasket River have	volunteers willing to be active in management
	communities that understand the system's value and the impacts that their actions have
	a maintenance plan that will be strictly adhered to with clearly defined work areas and responsibilities
	a team of people protecting it
	better by laws/rules on development around the water
	community attitude of value and need to preserve
protection and preservation of water quality and natural environment	support and buy-in
The APC and Nemasket River stakeholder communities give ___ to the watershed	a Management Plan that continues to be a living document and communities that still work together (1 support check)
	public education about the importance of the watershed
Local residents protect the watershed by	leading walks, picking up trash, and advocating for funding and appropriate regulations
Local residents enjoy	cleaning and protecting (1 support check)
	participating in implementing the management plan
	picking up after their pets (1 support check)

Water Quality

The APC and Nemasket River have	improved water quality
The APC and Nemasket River preserve	water quality
Local residents work to protect	water quality (4 support checks)

Water Flow

The APC and Nemasket River have	flood control
	sediment and invasives removed, and a sand trap installed to capture and additional sedimentation
	good water flow
Local residents work to protect	water flow (1 support check)
	flood protection

As can be seen, some of these individual contributions overlap between phrasings. As a next step, the project team will synthesize these into a draft vision statement for review by the Steering Committee. Once in place, the vision statement will give the project team a base against which to calibrate and cross-check plan recommendations.

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Anticipated Agenda for Next Meeting (planned for February 10, 2021)

- Discussion of Draft Vision Statement (15 minutes)
- Existing Conditions White Papers Presentation and Discussion (60 minutes)
- Public Participation Update (10 minutes)
- Tentative Plan for Next Meetings (5 minutes)

In preparation, the project team will prepare:

1. Draft Vision Statement

- Initial draft assigned to HZ with deadline of 1/20/21 to send to project consulting team (PCT)
- Draft review assigned to all PCT members with final edits deadline of 2/3/21, at which point it will be circulated to full Steering Committee for review.

2. Existing Conditions White Papers

- Assigned to all PCT members as discussed - deadline 1/13/20 for discussion at PCT meeting 1/15/21

3. Watershed Tour Outline with specific requests for Steering Committee Member points of participation

- Goal/Purpose Statement and framework/outline assigned to HZ - deadline of 2/10/21, but will circulate to PCT members for review/comment about two weeks out (1/27/21)

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Assawompsett Ponds Complex Management Team Quarterly Meeting Nemasket River Watershed Management & Climate Action Plan, Steering Committee Mtg #1 December 9, 2020

Nancy Yeats opened meeting – Ymane will serve as chairman; this isn't a public mtg yet but would be good if public so all can hear about the work we're doing.

APC Management Team – APC is slow now, water coming up, so today's meeting is dedicated to the grant (member Pat Freitas is unable to make it today).

Helen Zincavage (SRPEDD):

Sharing PowerPoint presentation 'APC – Nemasket River Watershed Management & Climate Action Plan' (WMCAP) - today we'll do introductions and share a broad project overview.

Steering Committee for this grant are APC Management Team members with addition of various Town/City representatives; the grant Project Team comprised of staff from SRPEDD, Mass Audubon, Horsley Witten Group, Manomet, The Nature Conservancy, and the MVP Program.

Ellie Baker (Horsley Witten):

The APC-Nemasket River WMCAP looks at ecosystem services, habitat for critters, other issues including drought; it is forward thinking incorporating climate change impacts and development.

Considers the APC/Nemasket as one system with many inter-related issues, pinch points, water movement, dams, recreational opportunities, etc.

We'll establish/describe existing conditions in watershed and build out to 2050 using climate change high emissions scenario and development/growth, and how these will impact the watershed (2050 is standard timeframe used when considering climate change, precipitation, storm events); looking at predicted increases in droughts, length of droughts or dry conditions, and what these mean to the watershed and how we mitigate those; e.g., what do more intense rainfall patterns mean for development and communities using watershed, what are implications of these for water supply, fish passage, water quality, recreation opportunities – what steps can we take now to mitigate for those; we expect climate change and development to continue so how manage this?

Want to stress **this is a living document** – we heard loud and clear in last project from all of you there's a need for a plan that provides an umbrella to house all of this, so this living doc will include actions taken now and preparing for future actions. It will have a focus on managing competing ecosystem services that benefit different interests – how to look at these services, how it provides for all to live in the watershed, and how to balance these to get to a win/win situation.

Overview of Project Tasks:

Work will span over 2 fiscal years with completion end of June 2022:

- Yr 1 – 4-5 SC meetings between now and June, then same the following year;
- Most outreach done in year 2 with hopes can do some in person;
- In year 1 – lot of data collection/synthesis, existing condition statements, and identifying data gaps - will be coming to lot of you on these, need to fill gaps into plan/next steps;
- Regulatory Review – interagency agreements in year 1; year 2 local bylaws and how they work to protect watershed and waterbodies;
- Write plan – some time in year 1 write pieces of plan, year 2 with all of you and community outreach to identify recommended actions/benchmarks for success that will be bulk of plan and action items moving forward.

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Bill Napolitano (SRPEDD) – how we've got to where we are:

Done some deep dives into data, DER grant study went back 40 years; if you are new to APC and this process, **visit DER project page on SRPEDD website, very comprehensive summary of all projects.**

APC-Nemasket Watershed Projects Hub webpage:

<https://srpedd.org/comprehensive-planning/environment/watershed-planning/assawompset-ponds-complex-and-nemasket-river-watershed-planning/>

- Water supply – what is the firm yield? Drought becoming more frequent, need to plan for future
- Fish Passage – always an issue, how can we facilitate
- Flood Control – how water moves from APC to Nemasket, some people think dam is flood control structure, but it's not, it could be considered a water control structure for supply
- Recreation – always big issue, great opportunities, herring fishery – people come to see; but don't want people to come into the ponds, portage is an issue
- Water quality – invasives, sedimentation
- Unchecked climate change will exacerbate all these

All above issues factored in as we move forward

DER Study –

- Sedimentation – Herring Commission working with Outback Engineering, 1st phase work completed, review possible alternatives for alleviating sedimentation
- H&H – SRPDD worked with SNEP, Horsley Witten looking at flow and test various scenario, we need groundwater data
- Big Plan – all of these are part of this plan
- Snake R Culvert – Bill N wkg with MassDOT, in process of obtaining access permit.
- AP Dam Repair – lkg at pot'l funding sources
- Wetland restoration – one north of dam on eastern side (?), also priority sites for acquisition and management, did great exercise to identify good candidates for acq and restoration (with Sara Burns and Eric Walberg)

APC/Nemasket MVP (with Courtney Rocha)

Put together a regional addendum to individual MVP plans (one of few areas in the state with this), great way to organize these types of projects; we were also consultant for many of these towns; One of big item that came up pretty consistently across municipalities - was to revise existing management plan for AP and flooding.

Nancy Y. – should Priority Level for Middleborough be High? Helen - this is how it was ranked from the MVP process, it's Medium.

Role of APC-Nemasket River WMCAP – it's the 'big tent' – all of this will fit under this plan, many projects underway right now, all projects flow into this plan, comprehensive goals of entire watershed, doing this with you, not at you, which is why you are all here; actions from previous work fit into this and carried out, come up with outcomes/game plan looking forward to 2050, a living doc to hand off to people who follow us in this process, not an end all/be all, where can balance competing interests and identify surprising co-benefits. **See Project timeline chart (appended)**

Eric Walberg (Manomet) – planning for dynamic changes:

Change comes in many different ways, but plan will focus on climate and future development and how these factors interact with each other; looking out to 2050 under high emissions scenario, since we

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don't know exactly what emissions will be, considering possible scenario with business as usual/high end emissions (although hope is there will be some drawdowns in emissions in future).

Lot of surprises with climate change as impacts have come faster/harder than many scientists predicted; 2050 projections provide great bracketing of where we expect to be/trends, but can't get fixated on end points and realize can be surprises along the way. Exacerbation of times with too much and too little water, factors driving potential increase in association with increasing total rainfall over time (a clear trend in NE) and also increase in prevalence of very heavy precipitation events, not just more total rainfall but biasing away from mild/mod precipitation to more extreme events, so could lead to increased flooding issues.

In contrast, increasing impactful drought - modeling in these changes is tough, not a lot of agreement on trend in this part of the world, but rising temps are increasing impact of drought 'hot drought' - will get longer growing season, higher evaporation rates and make today's mild/mod drought more impactful (rising temps really play role here).

Development – changing patterns, anticipation there will be continued development in watershed, no way around that, but importance should be on placement of development, think about impervious surface, as get more paved areas, decrease infiltration of precipitation into groundwater and also increased runoff rates, so we really need to be cognizant of how future development will exacerbate having too much/too little water in a given year, e.g. impervious surface get flashier floods; also with increased development, increase demand for water supply from pond and groundwater withdrawals, need to think about interconnection of these issues – think about what trends are and what alternatives are, particularly in placement of development and interactions.

Danica Warns (Mass Audubon): visioning exercise:

What we want watershed to be, look like in the future, clear idea for that vision, important to be explicit and all in agreement up front, gives us something to work towards; make sure working with this vision in mind and check in throughout the process to make sure working towards vision; it's also a benchmark, something to work towards and help us understand how balance various interests/conflicts (shared Harlem River Watershed example)

Jam Board exercise - What you want watershed to look like, ideal conditions, timeframe 2050 – think about 2050 what is your ideal APC/Nemasket system, 5 minutes on own, indiv reflection – 3 Qs in middle of screen. Link to Jam Board results here (can add more or edit):

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/120495gK1bMPJ9RszWBUSaAJeorRenAuMGSZd5kpvqaU/viewer?f=0>

Tom – add by 2050 invasives, sedimentation removed and have sand trap installed to prevent further sedimentation blocking the river;

Nancy – a maintenance plan strictly adhered to, also all work that has to be done for a functioning system; work areas clearly identified so we know who is to do what, so management plan continues to go smoothly, areas of work clearly need to be clearly defined.

Helen Zincavage (SRPEDD) – Public Participation:

5-10 minutes each Steering Committee mtg to discuss public comments/efforts going forward; as Ellie mentioned, the tasks breakdown yr 1

Visit SRPEDD website – lists all efforts with dedicated project pages.

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Sara Burns (The Nature Conservancy) – Existing Conditions:

This is the kick off for the MVP grant/WMCAP, but many of us working in format together in DER grant already; as think about moving forward, content for next mtgs:

- Feb Mtg – deep dive on existing conditions in watershed, different dimension of interest in previous efforts and that came up today during visioning session – put all in one place so can read/review, talk about in Feb
- Managing for increasing floods/droughts – some of solutions might seem to be in conflict but hoping can look into win/win solutions
- Will share draft vision statement at next mtg from input from Jam board
- Planning a watershed management tour for public participation – good example, a narrative way to share values, needs, etc., will be a video tour
- March meeting – planning to dig into changing future conditions touched on today, more in depth on climate change projections and what might mean for watershed/resources, and also build out predictions, and think about public mtg schedule

Presentation complete, next steps:

- Take jam board items, put into draft vision statement that we can discuss further, but any last comments to guide us based on what you saw today or things that came to mind? Any particular way we should approach things?
 - **Nancy – we are missing a brilliant mind, really need Cathal O’Brian (Taunton Water Division) to be involved in some of this; Bill N. – he was in touch with Cathal, who said he’d make sure Taunton Representative would attend (Kate (?) and Philip Duarte attended today).**
 - **Also – Freetown staff person role still needed; Lia Fabian (Lakeville) will try to call few people over there.**
- Steering Committee meetings will be aligned with quarterly APC Management Team meetings, with some additional meetings in between b/c there is a lot to cover, so other than that will run with regular meetings.
- **Tom – can we get ‘regional’ added to title APC/Nemasket ‘regional’, b/c so many towns included so make it clear it’s an extensive town scope, will get people from other Town’s interested that aren’t directly on watershed.**