



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION
100 CAMBRIDGE STREET, BOSTON MA 02114

Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2010

Minutes approved March 11, 2010

Members in Attendance:

Kathleen Baskin	Designee, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Marilyn Contreas	Designee, Department of Housing and Community Development
Michele Drury	Designee, Department of Conservation and Recreation
Glenn Haas	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection
Jessica Burgess	Designee, Department of Agricultural Resources

Others in Attendance:

Jennifer Pederson	Massachusetts Water Works Assn.
Bruce Hansen	DCR
Marilyn McCrory	DCR
Vandana Rao	EEA
Frank Koll	Irrigation Assn. of New England and Ecological Landscaping Assn.
Sara Cohen	DCR
Lexi Dewey	Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee

Agenda Item #1: Executive Director's Report

Hansen provided an update on the hydrologic conditions for January 2010: Statewide average precipitation was 93% of the long-term average for the month. He noted that an all-rain event on January 24 – 25 caused minor flooding in parts of western Massachusetts, mainly from ice jams. There is no tendency for drought conditions through April 2010.

Drury noted a section of the Hydrologic Conditions report that highlights the timing of natural phenomena and provides a web site for volunteer naturalists to report their observations (the National Phenology Network, www.usanpn.org).

McCrory announced that EPA is sponsoring its second annual “Fix a Leak Week” from March 15 – 21, 2010

Drury announced a public informational meeting on February 23 at Wompatuck State Park for water suppliers in the South Coastal Basin to review the water needs forecasting process and the process for renewing Water Management Act permits.

Agenda Item #2: Vote on the Minutes of December 2009

Lacking a quorum, Baskin tabled a vote on the meeting minutes for December 10, 2009, until the March meeting of the commission.

Agenda Item #3: Presentation: Building Blocks of Sustainable Water Resources

Cohen's presentation was tabled until the March meeting of the commission.

Agenda Item #4: Update: Sustainable Water Management Initiative

Baskin provided a report on the work of the technical subcommittee of the Sustainable Water Management Initiative. The technical subcommittee has been meeting regularly to discuss and refine ideas for the advisory committee to consider. Agency staff has been focusing on determining what is included in the terms “safe yield” and “allocation.” A conceptual framework has been presented to the technical subcommittee for discussion.

Baskin noted that the technical foundation for any work to be done on safe yield and allocation is the scientific studies that have been completed or are ongoing. These include streamflow data from USGS gages, 177 years of precipitation data, the Index Streamflows report, the Sustainable Yield Estimator tool, the USGS fish and habitat study, and other studies. Baskin reviewed examples of questions to be addressed by the technical subcommittee in order to develop a safe yield methodology. Such questions include determining what degrees of “drought” and a “drought reserve” should be incorporated; considering whether precipitation or streamflow data should be used in determining the baseline for a drought; recommending environmental protection factors to be included in safe yield; and determining what the appropriate scale (both temporal and spatial) should be for different kinds of questions.

Baskin announced that the technical subcommittee will generally meet on the second Tuesday of the month, in the morning; and the advisory committee will generally meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month, in the afternoon. Baskin added that she would continue to update the commission on the activities of these committees.

Haas added that MassDEP expects it will develop regulations as a result of the work of the Sustainable Water Management Initiative, and will present these to the Water Resources Commission for review and a vote.

Meeting adjourned

Attachments distributed or presented at meeting:

- Current Water Conditions in Massachusetts, February 11, 2010
- Building Blocks for Sustainable Water Resources in Massachusetts: handouts from February 9, 2010, presentation to the Sustainable Water Resources Technical Subcommittee