

MCTF Best Practices Subcommittee Meeting Minutes 01 05 22

Minutes for the Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century (MCTF) Task Force Meeting

Subcommittee Meeting: Best Practices

January 05, 2022, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

Meeting Topics:

- Open Meeting, Roll Call, and Welcome
- Goals discussed at the last meeting – share one additional submission
- Review schedule
- Consider the remaining recommendation outlines
- Review the three draft recommendations sent with the Agenda
- Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Open Meeting, Roll Call, Welcome:

The subcommittee meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m. Roll call was conducted by Richard Robinson. The following subcommittee members were in attendance: Kathy Baskin, Russell Hopping, Priscilla Matton, Richard Pollack, Helen Poynton, and Heidi Ricci. Cheryl Keenan provided an overview of the agenda, logistical items, and discussed the recommendation outlines that would be discussed during the subcommittee meeting to determine if there was consensus amongst the group to move recommendations forward to the task force. It was noted that whatever recommendations moved forward would be made available for public comment. Heidi Ricci had a question regarding the draft goal statements. Cheryl Keenan noted that draft goal statements would be shared with the subcommittee and would be going to the task force for consideration.

Goals Discussed at the last meeting – share one additional submission:

Richard Robinson noted his points focused on the larger goal of promoting health, the environment, and ensuring that citizens were free of harm from chemicals. Richard Robinson added that it was quite possible to reduce arborvirus risk through research, monitoring, education, and personal protection.

Heidi Ricci agreed with Richard Robinson's sentiments and discussed her goal and recommendation on mosquito management in relation to a proposed framework of what we know and what we don't know. Heidi noted that the focus was on public education with an emphasis on source reduction and eliminating the creation of new mosquito habitat through stormwater management in addition to using surveillance of where mosquitos are occurring and where are they coming from. Heidi Ricci acknowledged that mosquitos that breed in cattail marshes and crypts are problematic but did not think broad landscape spraying was doing anything to reduce risk. Heidi Ricci mentioned that the best the subcommittee could do was to establish a framework based on the best available science and that some aspects may not be addressed due to time and resource constraints.

Review schedule:

There was discussion about adding an additional subcommittee meeting. The group discussed available dates and Richard Robinson suggested creating a doodle poll to determine a meeting date and time. Kathy Baskin recommended adding time on to existing meetings as a potential accommodation. Some subcommittee members discussed the importance of determining the listening session day and time. Alisha Bouchard noted that an e-mail was sent to the subcommittee soliciting feedback on listening session dates from 2/9 through 2/11.

Consider the remaining recommendation outlines:

The draft recommendation listing that was shared with the subcommittee fell under **Directive VI: Developing procedures to protect human and ecological health and minimize non-target impacts of mosquito pesticides, including, but not limited to, effects on persons with respiratory or immune illnesses, drinking water supplies, pollinators, and aquatic life.**

Richard Robinson suggested discussing Directive IV, the protection of organic agriculture, first. Richard Robinson provided an overview of these draft recommendations and mentioned that some of what was drafted could be handled under the purview of the local engagement subcommittee. Richard Robinson discussed the landowner verbiage within the grouping of recommendations and Heidi Ricci clarified the intention of the recommendation related to non-commercial farming, for example, community gardens and noted that for routine items, they are covered by the local landowner opt out. However, for state response it would not be covered if the opt out was overridden. Heidi noted that the question came down to if we should be doing aerial spraying and that it did not need to be addressed here but wanted it flagged in the bigger picture framework in the new planning process for clearer thresholds for how decisions are made.

Russell Hopping asked a question related to the certification process for organic farms and Richard Robinson provided a response based on the information he was aware of. Alisha Bouchard and Jennifer Forman-Orth provided an overview of the organic farm mapping process for spraying exclusions. Heidi Ricci mentioned that that Mass Audubon has a major farming operation that is not certified organic but uses certified organic farming practices and she hoped that this could be looked at as well. Jessica Burgess added to what Jennifer Forman-Orth discussed regarding certified organic farms and noted that there was currently no definition in MA for commercial farming and mentioned as an agency we do not determine what commercial farming means.

Richard Robinson noted Jessica's point about what is a commercial farm and discussed the additional questions related to organic farming. Heidi Ricci noted that Mass Audubon and the Trustees may not fit under the commercial farming designation due to their nonprofit status. Priscilla Matton commented that she did not get a lot of requests for farm exclusions in Bristol County and her 120 requests are residents and not farms. Richard Robinson noted that he was talking about a small number of farms that would be interested in exclusions and would like to offer a greater degree of protection for farms that are not certified but are concerned. Additional discussion by subcommittee members related to a lack of awareness as a contributing factor to the number of opt-out requests.

The group recapped the review of the outline recommendation language to determine what would move forward to the task force for consideration. It was determined by the group that the first recommendation would not move forward. The second recommendation would move forward but with added notes and discussion. Priscilla Matton recommended to not move the second outline recommendation forward since it could result in less efficacy and the difficulty of determining how it is defined. Richard Pollack suggested caution on how we are defining things and on the restriction of pollinator habitat as it would make it difficult to apply pesticide anywhere in the state.

Heidi Ricci suggested a way to move the outline recommendation forward was by stating that there was not consensus on how to move it forward. Kathy Baskin asked if there was any information on aerial spraying of cranberry bogs. Jessica Burgess added that there were studies and sampling done years ago and believed that the post spray sampling did not indicate any issues related to the products that were used over cranberry bogs. Jennifer Forman-Orth added the sampling protocol and results were included in the ERG report as well. Kathy Baskin noted her concern regarding the complete exemption of lands that may be breeding grounds for mosquitos.

Cheryl Keenan asked for a show of hands from the subcommittee members for consideration of moving the outline recommendation forward, Kathy Baskin, Richard Robinson, Heidi Ricci, Helen Poynton, and Russell Hopping raised their hand in approval of moving the recommendation forward. Kathy Baskin and Russell Hopping asked how this would be presented and if there would be tiers of recommendation based on what was still under discussion. It was noted that there were multiple categories, and more discussion was still needed.

Richard Robinson recommended that the first three recommendations related to water supply drafted by Kim LeBeau under Directive VI be moved forward to the task force for consideration. Kathy Baskin added that the second recommendation would be difficult to implement due to lab capacity in the state and recommended having targeted chemicals to bring this in line with something that could be implemented. Richard Pollack agreed with Kathy and noted that it would be practical if there were specific chemicals of concern in formulated products identified. Richard Pollack added that when the aerial adulticiding process takes place products are shipped in from out of state and may be on the ground for a day or so before they are applied. Heidi Ricci noted that this needed to be looked at more broadly but added that it could be narrowed to PFAS and PFOS.

Russell Hopping recommended making water supply areas exempt from spraying and Kathy Baskin noted that they are exempt with a 500-foot buffer. The group discussed waiting for Kim LeBeau for further discussion and to allow for conversation related to the recommendations. Kathy Baskin, Helen Poynton, Priscilla Matton, Russell Hopping, Heidi Ricci, and Richard Robinson agreed to wait for Kim LeBeau. Heidi Ricci also noted that she would like the recommendation language expanded to include other bodies of water as well.

Cheryl Keenan moved to the next recommendation regarding reducing nuisance control requests, which was under the IPM Directive. Kathy Baskin recommended wordsmithing the language in the recommendation. Heidi Ricci agreed and noted that there may be an opportunity for consolidation of the recommendation. The group moved to the next recommendation related to developing an on-line reporting system. Richard Pollack suggested tabling this recommendation until further discussion. Members of the subcommittee discussed this recommendation based on the benefit the Commonwealth would receive and that this was a problem worth funding. Priscilla Matton asked about the subcommittee charge and if there was authority over private applicators. Richard Robinson suggested that it was within the subcommittees purview to make this recommendation to the Legislature.

Heidi Ricci added that there was a need for online reporting and that it would also be a benefit to private applicators as well to digitize information. Russell Hopping agreed that as a private applicator an online system for reporting would be incredibly useful. Helen Poynton also included her agreement as an ecotoxicologist this recommendation would be very important. Richard Robinson, Richard Pollack, Russell Hopping, Priscilla Matton, Helen Poynton, and Kathy Baskin agreed an on-line system was worthwhile to move forward.

Kathy Baskin noted the vulnerable population recommendation was important to move forward with some added language. Subcommittee members discussed in detail and agreed the recommendation could move forward but additional discussion was still required. Kathy Baskin added that it seemed the recommendation was covering two topics and members of the subcommittee agreed with separating the recommendation into two parts. Heidi Ricci noted that she was still waiting for data from DPH on her vulnerable population questions. Richard Robinson recommended deleting one recommendation related to the Hinds Bill.

Review the three draft recommendations sent with the Agenda:

The three draft recommendations that were related to **Directive I: Facilitating the use of integrated pest management** were displayed for subcommittee member comments. Richard Robinson suggested that if there were substantive problems, the group should discuss. Heidi Ricci asked if the subcommittee would be sharing what was worked on regarding goals. Cheryl noted that it is not in the scope of the subcommittee to write up the goal. Heidi Ricci discussed a need to address a broad outline of concepts, such as, education, source reduction, and surveillance related to where mosquitos were coming from not whether they had disease. Heidi Ricci shared her concern regarding what could and couldn't be shared related to draft documentation. Jessica Burgess provided an overview of OML related to what could and could not be provided.

Richard Robinson asked Cheryl Keenan if she was looking for guidance on the three recommendations that ERG drafted. Cheryl asked if there was any general agreement to move these three recommendations forward. Richard Robinson suggested the group do three polls to send forward to the task force. For the first

recommendation, Richard Robinson noted that he was for it and asked if anyone was against it. No one was against it, but Heidi Ricci mentioned that there were comments that she added that she hoped could be included. Russell Hopping noted that he was fine sending any of these forward as long as the group could continue to discuss and work through the content. Subcommittee members discussed the sharing of comments and agreed to move forward the first recommendation.

Richard Robinson read the next recommendation and noted that he was agreeable to sending it forward to the task force for discussion. All subcommittee members agreed with the understanding that draft recommendation content was still open for discussion. Richard Pollack noted he was ok sending all three draft recommendations to the task force with the caveat that they are still under discussion. Priscilla Matton noted that she was concerned with the word control in one of the recommendations and discussed her viewpoint. Helen Poynton mentioned that she was ok with moving all three draft recommendations forward. Heidi Ricci noted that if the last recommendation was just about pesticide, she was not comfortable with it moving forward and mentioned the need to discuss IPM. Richard Robinson read the third draft recommendation and asked the group if they wanted to move it forward. No one on the subcommittee was opposed to moving it forward as long as there was an opportunity for additional discussion and changes.

Closing Remarks and Adjourn:

Cheryl Keenan asked for subcommittee volunteers to wordsmith the three draft recommendations that were reviewed. Heidi Ricci, Priscilla Matton, Richard Robinson volunteered. Jessica Burgess provided an OML overview related to case-by-case review of work conducted by subcommittee members who are taking on the editing of documents that had been discussed at the meeting. Cheryl Keenan also mentioned that ERG could draft it based on the information and comments that had already been provided and distributed to the group. Richard Robinson noted that if there was a risk the work of volunteers would not be seen, then it made sense for ERG to do the editing. In closing the meeting, Russell Hopping's edits of the draft recommendation were shared with the group so they could be taken into consideration. It was noted that ERG would get the revised recommendations, with caveats, to the full task force. Seeing no other comments from the group, Richard Robinson took a motion to adjourn from Richard Pollack. The motion was seconded by Priscilla Matton. All in favor said aye. The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 pm.