

MCTF Local Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Minutes 10 07 21

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

Subcommittee Meeting: Local Engagement

October 7, 2021, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

The subcommittee meeting was started at 12:03 pm and Heidi Ricci (Chair) welcomed the subcommittee members. A roll call vote was performed. Derek Brindisi couldn't be heard but waved. All others subcommittee members were present. The meeting purpose was to introduce subcommittee members, ensure all members are clear about the subcommittee purpose, charge, process, and ground rules, review and clarify the MCTF subcommittee guidance, and clarify the process for recommendations development. Jessica Burgess (EEA Representative) is filling in for Alisha Bouchard (EEA Representative) and provided a housekeeping update related to the meeting requirements. Derek Brindisi rejoined with working audio. Heidi Ricci noted the purpose of the meeting is to establish a process and framework for operation and review key questions.

Jenny Helmick (ERG Facilitator) requested that subcommittee members introduce themselves and give name, affiliation, and expertise. Jenny briefly walked through the ground rules. Heidi noted that subcommittees were divided with language from the statute that created the task force, with recognition that there's some overlap. This subcommittee is about local engagement with directives about public participation, local options, and annual evaluations. Heidi also commented that while this is the general charge, we're not totally constrained by these exact words, it's possible to discuss related items although we need to keep focused given limited time.

Jenny Helmick noted that subcommittee members will attend these meetings and task force meetings (where Heidi as chair will present the subcommittee's progress) and to keep in mind the task force must approve the subcommittee's recommendations. Jenny read and explained the conduct of subcommittee meetings bullets in the guidance document. There were no questions or comments from the subcommittee group.

Jenny Helmick addressed the schedule which shows the phases of recommendation development and noted the deadline for final recommendations is under discussion. Eve Schluter commented that there's at least one meeting she can't attend. Jenny noted that we need three subcommittee members for a quorum and to please let her know in advance if you can't make it. Heidi asked that if a member can't attend a meeting, but the meeting has quorum and proceeds without them, could the subcommittee member provide input for the next meeting to Jenny? Jessica Burgess noted that we can determine a process for any comments go to ERG/EEA and not another member, and can present it at a meeting.

Heidi asked when will we get comments on the report? Abby Burton (ERG Facilitator) noted that the last she heard the plan was to try and release them at the next best practices subcommittee meeting. Jessica Burgess commented they are strategizing to use a meeting that is on the schedule and hope to update soon.

Jenny Helmick read and explained bullets for protocols for drafting recommendations. There are no questions or comments from the subcommittee on protocols for drafting. Jenny then read and explained bullets for voting with no questions or commentary from the group. Jenny Helmick moved

towards roles of subcommittee participants. Alisha Bouchard will be handling Zoom, taking notes, reminding members about OML. Chair, Heidi Ricci will be providing leadership on framing the charge, identifying when discussion is off-topic or out of scope. If time left over at end, chair may recognize other attendees to speak. The role of the subcommittee members is to work constructively and follow ground rules and the OML. There were no questions on the roles that were addressed. Facilitator will help with ensuring meetings are efficient with no influence on content. The facilitator will work with Heidi to prep agenda, and keep focused on agenda, make sure everyone can contribute. Also, the facilitator will work with Abby to support developing draft text. There were no questions on those two roles. The public can listen in, and Heidi as Chair can decide whether/when to recognize members of public. Subcommittee needs always take priority – opening to the public will be rare and their time will be limited.

Heidi Ricci asked if the team know how frequent updates from public comment portal will be. Jenny Helmick answered that she would get back on this question. Heidi Ricci commented that given this is local engagement and we've had limited input directly from municipal officials, that she would like to invite some folks to speak, including Uxbridge and perhaps other outside experts. Heidi indicated interest in hosting a few key people to provide expert information or outside perspectives for brief, focused perspectives. Jenny noted that later we'll go over our proposed process for filling critical data gaps and that would apply to written and speakers. Heidi Ricci wanted to distinguish this between members of public versus people who might be invited by the subcommittee.

Jenny Helmick read through the rules and explained them to the group. There were no questions or comments. Jenny asked if anyone feels as though they cannot agree to these rules? There were no hands or comments from the subcommittee. Jenny noted that in addition to these sections, the ERG technical team is developing a crosswalk between each directive and the report sections.

Jenny Helmick moved the conversation to subcommittee directives and understory questions – key questions were provided for each directive. The subcommittee may decide to use all, some, or add other questions. Jenny then reviewed the page of the guidance entitled "Overlapping Scope in Directives Assigned to Different Subcommittees." Heidi Ricci noted these issues around mosquito control are intertwined so should be interaction between subcommittees. For our committee, these are some overlapping areas that have been identified including annual evaluations and organic agriculture, which have overlap with best practices, in addition to the evaluation of efficacy and property exclusions.

An example recommendation was provided from the Cranberry Revitalization Task Force. Jenny noted these are not perfectly parallel to the recommendations needed for this subcommittee, but the examples give a sense of the type of language that is used, and the recommendation is provided to view at the group's leisure. Seeing no further questions or comments from the subcommittee group, Jenny Helmick turned the meeting conversation to clarify stage one: clarifying the process for recommendation development.

Jenny noted the first stage of recommendation development is the review and discussion of information. The schedule for the first stage lays the foundation for everything to come. We need to identify the information we have, assess whether it's sufficient, identify gaps, and if feasible, identify any information to fill those gaps. We have six hours for three directives, which means two hours per directive. Everyone will need to do some work in between meetings. Jenny showed slides with types of

tasks to consider for next meeting: consider understory questions, read the relevant section to the next directive (ERG will provide a crosswalk), and we hope the Task Force member comments will be distributed to review. There is a need to assess whether there is enough information and if not, identify critical data gaps and credible info sources to suggest. Heidi Ricci asked a question regarding the MCTF comments and if we'll also get all public comments on the report? Jenny responded that she believed so and noted this will help strategize for the next meeting.

Jenny then moved the conversation to review the process for identifying critical gaps and for filling them. Jenny noted that the subcommittee needs to be mindful that time/resources are finite.

1. Identify critical gaps. Read report to see if there are any gaps that prevent recommendation development
2. Identify sources to fill the gaps. These should be public – identify a link or confirm you can make it public and get a copy.
3. Evaluate each source. Some suggested questions to consider about the source are in the slides. Email your links to facilitator.
4. Propose gaps for subcommittee vetting. You'll have to describe gaps and why critical. Please email JH before next meeting with any gaps you've identified.
5. Present why you think source is credible and valuable.
6. Subcommittee vets proposed sources. Lack of info can be part of recommendations
7. ERG will distribute sources. Links will be in minutes.

Eve commented on identifying sources to fill critical gaps. Is there assistance from ERG for gap identification and research support? Jenny Helmick commented that we'd need to see what kind of support is needed and see what ERG can do. There was interest from Eve and Heidi Ricci that ERG should do this support work and research. Heidi Ricci flagged that there are gaps in the report itself where it identifies that information just doesn't exist. For example, there are no quantitative means of evaluating mosquito control – it's a gap but it's not something we could fill. Also, some sources were referenced in report but not adequately discussed in the text. For other sources – how will we ourselves find and evaluate those sources? Heidi noted one final point, outside experts/voices may fill gaps. Russ Hopping echoed what Heidi said, and indicated time sensitivity. Russ Hopping noted that he may know some things off the top of his head but thinks most gaps won't be able to be filled easily with published info. If subcommittees have overlap and identify overlapping gaps could we add a joint meeting to have some expert presentations? Heidi Ricci noted that Russ's suggestion is a good suggestion to consider. Some of this may be iterative. We may not be able to think of every gap in the next week and we might identify gaps later and need to maintain flexibility to bring in additional experts. Regarding ERG support, Jenny asked Abby Burton if an answer can be provided. Abby responded that we would need to see specifically what the gaps are and what ERG can do. Abby noted the report is thorough as a source. Russ commented on some sources that are cited in report and asked can we get those sources to review? Heidi Ricci noted that most of those sources are linked in the citations. Jenny let the group know that if there's anything they can't get, ERG should be able to provide it. Heidi indicated that she would like to hear from ERG on how they made the model in the report and ask some follow-up question questions. Jenny requested that the to allow for time to finish discussing these steps and then loop back for further discussion on gaps.

Heidi Ricci asked who came up with the process? Jenny Helmick responded that this process was developed by ERG in collaboration with EEA. Heidi commented that one of the biggest issues with this

program is public transparency. Especially regarding municipal input and municipal opt-out. Heidi commented that we haven't heard those voices. We didn't get sufficient reasoning on how the opt-out process was run or how decisions were made. We need to hear from people as the local engagement subcommittee. Derek Brindisi commented that these were great points from Heidi. This was one concern Derek raised to the full task force, about having a public dialogue prior to issuing guidance for the municipal opt-out process. Derek noted that over the course of the summer, articles have shown the difficulties municipalities have had opting out and he doesn't know of any guidance that's been provided since. Heidi Ricci noted that she has been part of many processes where hearing input has been a key part of the process. Heidi emphasized Uxbridge has some very qualified people, with degrees in Public Health, and experience working with DPH, and coming up with alternative mosquito control processes. knows at least one Board of Health (BOH) member that she would like to speak with. Derek had asked about holding public comment period on the municipal opt-out process and stated that we should have a public comment period for anything we're going to recommend.

Heidi Ricci noted that it would be a good idea to set up one of our meetings as a public comment meeting. Jenny Helmick commented that we'd need to circle back and check what would be involved in having a whole meeting as a public comment session. Jenny asked the group if there were thoughts on the process of suggesting speakers for subcommittee meetings? Russ Hopping asked what the process might look like, and if members would suggest ideas, to raise and present at the next meeting? What if multiple people suggest the same thing? Jenny responded that we'll consolidate whatever we're sent. Russ Hopping and Heidi Ricci indicated agreement as proposed.

Heidi Ricci asked the group to set a date for members to have info to Jenny to compile ahead of next meeting. Heidi Ricci had a request as Chair, noted that the process may be iterative, we could identify key gaps later, and if things come up later, we aren't shut out from addressing them. Jenny noted that it's a balance between time and the need to do this right. Heidi Ricci asked if Priscilla has thoughts? Priscilla Matton answered that she is concerned about the potential to volley with sources at the expense of progress. Priscilla is interested in hearing from towns that had opt-out issues. Priscilla noted that the process was done quickly, which might be the reason why things weren't done as we might have wanted. But because our directives are very specific, we could get overwhelmed with comments and lose focus. Heidi Ricci agreed some questions are unanswerable – we need to use best judgement, recommend better practices. We need to focus on these directives. Some gaps we identify we might be able to pass to other subcommittees.

Jenny Helmick noted that the key question is, if we don't have certain info, will that prevent us from creating recommendations? Jenny asked the group if they wanted to start with a focus on one directive or more than one, and if one, which. Priscilla Matton commented that she wanted to hear from someone about the municipal opt-out process. Jessica noted that the municipal opt-out concept is in legislation only for one more year and it only applies in relation to SRB activity. Heidi Ricci commented that she wanted to hear from municipal officials regarding their experience this year. Interested in local input on what happens in their own towns. She noted that heard from towns that they want more local control over what's happening, they want help with education, and source reduction, in addition to concern over arbovirus and nuisance species Sometimes they want larviciding, and want more control over adulticiding and thresholds for how those are done. Local options are about more than just pesticides. Jessica Burgess commented that this is good to know so we can formulate information to share. Heidi Ricci noted this also relates to the first directive on public participation. A partnership

across levels of government. Local source control might be more effective in partnership with local officials. What are the different roles for individual, town, region, state?

Jenny Helmick noted the idea of the understory questions is to provide more granularity to the directives. Some of what Heidi just raised could be folded into the understory questions. Jenny reminded Heidi to identify when she's speaking as the chair or as a subcommittee member. Heidi Ricci responded that she expressed details there as member but speaking as Chair, she sees our issue as local engagement, broadly. Jenny commented that it seemed like the group was landing on focusing on directive (iii) for our next meeting – identifying gaps and sources for that directive would be the next step. Heidi Ricci commented yes, but she'd like to write the directive more broadly. Jenny commented that she thought we can re-write the directives. Heidi Ricci clarified looking at the task force charge from the law that she is talking about #2. Heidi noted that our first and second directives are very intertwined. Jenny suggested that people work on both #2 and #3 to the extent they can by 10/18 in order to identify critical gaps and identify how to fill the gaps. Jenny asked the group if this approach was appropriate and no one disagreed.

In the remaining meeting time, Heidi Ricci wanted to spend a time discussing some more about ideas for speakers. Heidi had in mind Uxbridge and some people from Harvard. Jenny noted that we would want people to be thorough in considering a source's quality and relevance before it's proposed and to go through the process systematically, first thinking about the critical gap it meets. It might be premature to propose sources now, and instead might be best to discuss at the next meeting. Heidi Ricci indicated concern that it gap identification wouldn't be possible without the report comments. Jenny noted that comments would be available hopefully by the end of this week and acknowledged urgency.

There are no other comments regarding process. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on 10/18. Heidi Ricci asked for a motion to adjourn. Priscilla Matton motioned, and Derek Brindisi seconded the motion. All in favor said aye and the meeting was adjourned at 1:57 pm.