

Shellfish Conservation Committee
November 6, 2017, 5:30pm
Bristol Town Hall
Pemaquid Watershed Plan Kick-off

Committee Members present: Scott Burke, Dave Cheney, Steve Lackovic, Ronald Poland, Steve Termine
Additional persons present: Forrest Bell and Maggie Burns (FB Environmental); Carolyn Shubert and James Hatch (Pemaquid Watershed Association); Melissa Britsch (Darling Marine Center, University of Maine); Hildy Ellis (Knox-Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District); Meryl Bond (Department of Marine Resources, West Boothbay Harbor); John Stolecki (Pemaquid Harbormaster); Rick Poland and Slade Moore (Bristol Fish Committee); Joe Rose (Code Enforcement Office and Plumbing Inspector); Chris Hall (Town Administrator); Hannah Annis (Department of Marine Resources, Area Biologist)
Apologies: Kristin Feindel (Department of Environmental Protection)

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm.

Part One – Regular Business

Cheney shared that he knew of a second-hand upweller for sale. Discussion ensued on the merits of building an upweller vs. buying one. Concern was voiced as to who would maintain/tend the upweller on a regular basis. It was noted that Pemaquid River has a bigger tidal current than Muscongus Sound so would probably work better in Pemaquid Harbor possibly near Hanna Landing. An added concern was that only a handful of people would end up doing all the work while the results would be shared by all commercial harvesters.

Part Two – Lower Pemaquid Watershed Assessment

At 6 pm, chair Steve Lackovic asked persons present for the Lower Watershed Assessment to introduce themselves. He then asked Chris Hall to give a brief overview of the project and the grant from the Department of Environmental Protection. The grant is limited to \$6,250 and the Shellfish Committee has committed a further \$2,000, which is just enough to cover the costs of hiring FB Environmental to complete the Lower Pemaquid Watershed Assessment, a report needed in order to qualify for further grants to support clean-up activities. Forrest Bell, principal of FB Environmental, then handed out a sheet containing a timeline for the project from November 2017 to November 2018.

The first phase – until spring runoff – is primarily collecting existing data, the amount and availability of which was discussed. Beginning in April, volunteers (from PWA, the Fish Committee, and others) will work with FB professionals to do a physical survey of the lower watershed, from Boyd Pond to the harbor and including Little Falls Brook. This would start with a ‘windshield survey’ where accessible by vehicle, but would likely include kayaking and waders.

Joe Rose discussed the status of information about septic systems and overboard discharges in proximity to the river, pointing out that the problems are likely to not be recently-built (and inspected) systems, but pre-1972 septic code systems that may be failing. He and the Town staff will do research on Town tax maps and property records to see if there are properties that may justify requests to property owners for follow-up checks.

Dave Cheney urged the inclusion of seeding wild oysters in the harbor as a strategy for water purification. This met with widespread agreement as a potentially low-cost mitigation measure, but will need discussion with DMR due to concern about spread of pathologic bacteria. Melissa Britsch will check if there are oyster scientists at DMC who can advise the Committee.

Chris Hall noted that he and Carolyn Shubert will be meeting with Kristin Feindel of DEP on Thursday (November 9) to review their water quality data, which will be forwarded to FB Environmental, and also the terms for contract administration.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm with a sign-in sheet being circulated by Maggie Burns. A subsequent meeting will be scheduled in the spring to review data and schedule volunteers for the survey.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hall, Town Administrator