

Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan Subcommittee Meeting #7

Remote Meeting

June 18, 2020

MEETING NOTES

Attendees

Laura Blake, MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Eric Boettger, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
Rachel Calabro, RI Department of Health (RIDOH)
Mark Cantwell, U.S Environmental Protection Agency, Atlantic Ecology Division
Caitlin Chaffee, RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)
Michaela Cashman, U.S Environmental Protection Agency, Atlantic Ecology Division
Peter Coffin, Blackstone River Coalition
Alicia Eichinger, Salt Ponds Coalition
Ron Entringer, Save The Lakes
Richard Friesner, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC)
Walt Galloway, RI Rivers Council
Tim Gleason, U.S Environmental Protection Agency, Atlantic Ecology Division
Paul Gonsalves, RI Division of Statewide Planning
Sue Kiernan, RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM)
Anne Kuhn, U.S Environmental Protection Agency, Atlantic Ecology Division
Catalina Martinez, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Paul Mathisen, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Jim McCaughey, Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC)
Dave McLaughlin, Clean Ocean Access
Romell Nandi, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters (EPA-HQ)
Ken Payne, Charlestown Citizens Alliance, Easting with the Ecosystem, Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership,
RI Food Policy Council, and Systems Aesthetics LLC
Kenny Raposa, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR)
Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon
David Taylor, Roger Williams University
Tom Uva, NBC
Jamie Vaudrey, University of Connecticut
Caitlyn Whittle, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1 (EPA-Region 1)
Julia Bancroft, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP)
Mike Gerel, NBEP
Gaby Placido, NBEP
Courtney Schmidt, NBEP
Julia Twichell, NBEP

Introduction

Caitlin Chaffee, Vice Chair of NBEP’s Steering Committee and Chair of the Vision 2032 Subcommittee, called the meeting to order at 10:10am. Caitlin welcomed the group and led introductions. Ken Payne noted he would be in touch to clarify his affiliations for future attendees’ lists. The subcommittee approved the March 31, 2020 and April 16, 2020 meeting notes with a motion and a second.

Framing the Day

Mike opened the day with an icebreaker and then stated that today NBEP staff will be sharing a series of new and revised graphics that are included in the current version of the blueprint ([Version 3](#)). Any new graphics are included within these notes.

He next noted that with the completion of this iteration of the blueprint following this meeting, the subcommittee will shift from the Scoping to the Drafting phase of *Vision 2032* development. He shared the graphic below with the group taken page 8 of the blueprint, which shows the major activities that make up each phase. Mike asked everyone to focus on the Drafting phase which will be pursued for at least the next 18 months.



Vision 2032 Blueprint Enhancements

NBEP staff next shared four new graphics included in the blueprint. These depictions replace previous text and better present the concepts. Note that larger graphics with context are in the blueprint. Mike asked that participants share any comments during or after today’s meeting so staff can update the blueprint and create a Version 4 that will be “final” for now.

Julia Bancroft first shared a new graphic from page 5 of the blueprint that depicts the tensions we are seeking to balance during the development of *Vision 2032*.



Tom Uva pointed out that there is an extra “to” under the ACT NOW icon. Richard Friesner suggested adding these graphics to the website. Julia Twichell responded that she will be talking our plans for a new *Vision 2032* website that will include new text, graphics, photos, and other tools.

Next Courtney Schmidt presented a new graphic from page 6 of the blueprint that defines the hierarchy of focal areas, goals, objectives, actions, and tasks that will form the core of Vision 2032. More discussion of these elements is summarized along with the next graphic and in the workgroups session later in these notes.



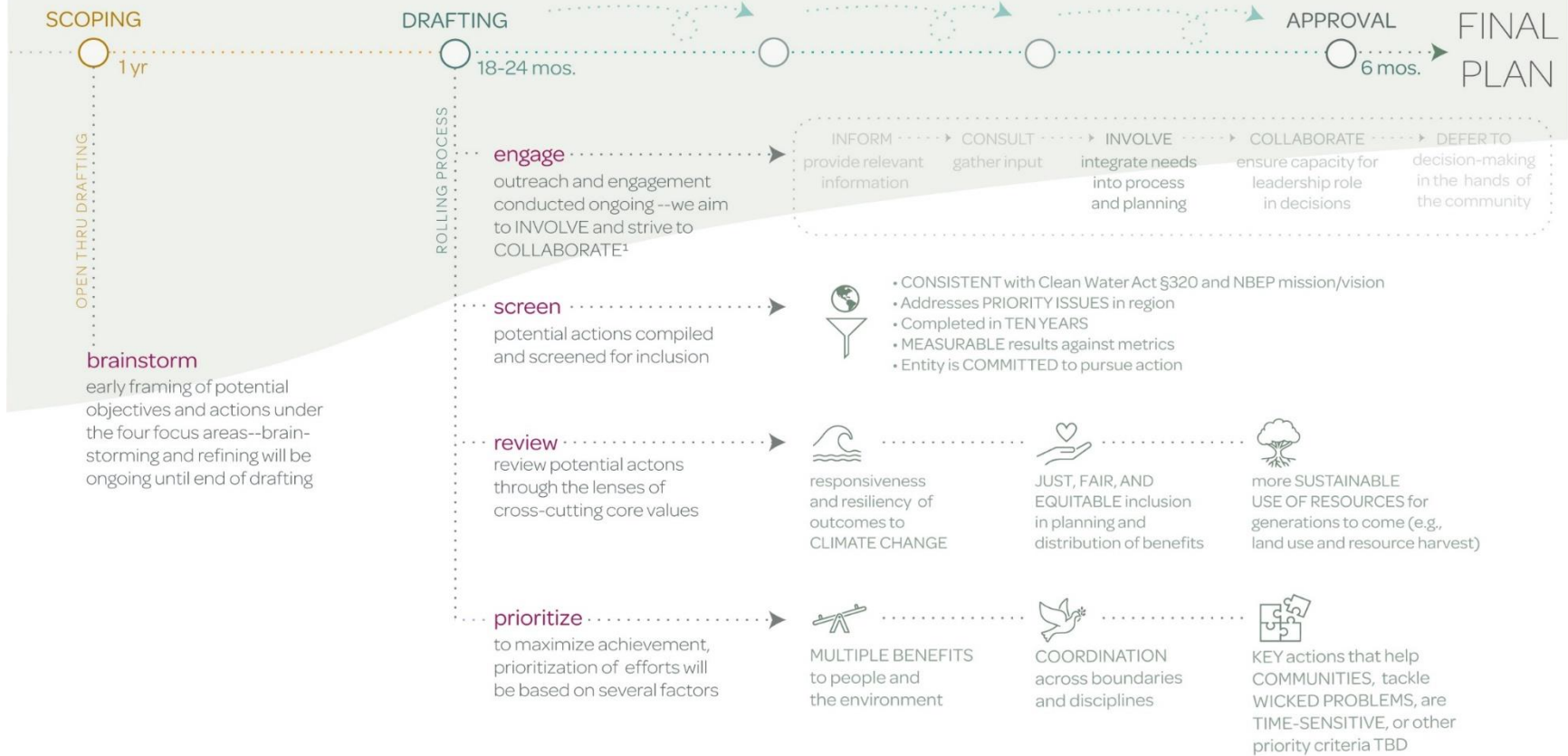
Heidi Ricci suggested connecting the SMART icon to the hierarchy graphic on the right to emphasize that the SMART concept will apply to goals, objectives, actions, and tasks. In response to an inquiry from Richard, Mike noted that the actions/tasks will be tied to specific outputs and outcomes in the action plans. Action plans and their content will be highlighted with the next graphic discussed today.

Mike continued by sharing a series of six graphics that builds out to the graphic provided on page 13 of the blueprint and the next page of these notes. The graphics show the process that will be used to systematically select actions and create action plans.

Sue Kiernan noted that since climate is woven through all goals of the plan, she appreciated that it was included as “core value” and would be considered for all actions in the Review steps and not a separate standalone goal. She also added that how climate change will work into the prioritization piece should be further considered (e.g., will each element of prioritization be looked at separate, together, rated?). Richard suggested defining wicked problems, so people understand as we pursue the Prioritize step. Jamie Vaudrey suggested a different icon for the coordinate activity under the Prioritize Step. Paul Mathisen noted that a huge amount of effort will go into creating the action plans across an almost two-year period. He suggested expanding the timeline for the Drafting phase to provide interim milestones/outcomes along the way to keep track of necessary activities and keep us on track. Ron Entringer noted that we should make sure that the “Just, Fair, and Equitable” core value in the review component applies across the study area from headwater to sea. Finally, multiple people suggested that the grey text in the graphics in the blueprint be a darker color to make it easier to read. Mike concurred with all these comments and indicated we will respond to them via our processes and in future versions of the blueprint.

Mike next shared the Anatomy of an Action Plan graphic from page 14 of the blueprint, which details what information will be included in each action plan. Sue noted that assigning a cost to actions and the plan is not easy. We will need to decide what level of precision we are seeking. She said that for the RI

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Nonpoint Source Plan they estimated implementation costs by categories to simplify the task. Being thoughtful and flexible about cost and value will be important. Richard concurred and noted that the assigning value is complicated. Ron also offered the calculating the “non-monetary costs” and values, like aesthetics or existence, is difficult. Mike felt providing costs and value at some level (from plan to goal to action, etc.) is absolutely vital to creating upfront and sellable plan, but agreed it is not a simple task. He said NBEP has budgeted to hire an economist to provide guidance in this area at the right time. More generally, Heidi suggested that we need to maintain flexibility to adjust the action plan format as needed. Tim Gleason said it was clear that a lot of work had gone into this effort so far. He suggested remaining flexible, test driving the proposed process and evolving and adapting as you go.

Since there was not enough time to review the Logic Model today, Mike directed meeting participants to page 15 of the blueprint to view the model. Since folks have seen previous versions of this model it is not replicated in these notes.

Public Comment

No public comments were provided.

Drafting Phase Workgroups

Mike shared the results of preliminary voting by the subcommittee on preliminary objective areas completed at the April meeting. The table below provides voting results. He noted that the resulting prioritization is by no means final; they will be used as a base to drive further thinking. Notice that three objective areas in bold have been re-cast as the “critical lenses” that all actions will be considered under during the Drafting/Review phase (see the graphic on the previous page of these notes).

Preliminary Objective Area	Votes
1. Water quality (PS and NPS).	15
2. Water quantity (for beneficial uses).	10
3. Protect native ecosystems.	1
4. Restore ecosystem health and resilience from sea to headwaters.	13
5. Improve wildlife management.	0
6. Create conditions that empower connections and fair access to the benefits of abundant, healthy, and resilient natural resources (CRITICAL LENS)	11
7. Improve human well being in local places across the region.	7
8. Preserve local heritage and culture.	7
9. Gather, organize, and share information necessary to create baseline information, answer question, and inform future actions.	10
10. Develop and sustain strong leaders and sound governance structure among those implementing <i>Vision 2032</i> .	9
11. Acquire funding to sustain NBEP and its partners implementing <i>Vision 2032</i> .	9
12. Provide technical assistance to those executing Action Plans.	2
13. Resilience to climate change (CRITICAL LENS).	13
14. Promote environmental sustainable land use regulations, planning, and development (CRITICAL LENS).	8
15. Preserving natural capital.	1
16. Monitoring.	10
17. Include traditionally under-represented communities	15

Based on this voting and past discussions of the subcommittee, Mike next introduced the four *Vision 2032* focus areas (capacity for action, water, habitat & wildlife, and quality of life) and the subcommittee workgroups that will be formed around each to build on the preliminary objective areas to create more goals, objectives, and actions. The graphic on the next page of these notes uses color-coding to show how the results of the voting in the table were integrated into the workgroups and preliminary objectives. Pages 6-13 of the blueprint map out the process for building the plan, with pages 11-13 focused on the development of actions and action plans. Mike noted that more specifics on *how the workgroups will operate* (including a more detailed process, tools, timeline, etc.) to develop a final set of draft goals, objectives, and actions for each focal area will be shared at the next subcommittee meeting and refined as necessary into 2021.

Meeting participants were referred to a link to a Google document where they can select the workgroup (or workgroups) they would like to join. NBEP will ultimately assign everyone that has attended a subcommittee meeting to a workgroup. Folks are free to participate in as many workgroups as they have time, and those assigned to a group will not be expected to attend unless they indicate their intention to participate. An NBEP staff member will serve as a coordinator and liaison for each group. The full subcommittee will come together periodically and receive status updates from each group to allow for broader input, identification of cross-cutting issues, etc. The current plan is for workgroup meetings to be in August.

Heidi noted that there are a lot of interconnections across the four focal areas. She also offered that the 'capacity for action' and 'quality of life' action areas are about people and communities, while the other two are focused on resource goals. Success in the people goals will be essential to achieving the resource goals. Mike concurred with this thought and felt that literature and experience have proven Heidi's observation to be true, so we are committed to bolstering the people piece.

Richard said the preliminary objective areas were a good start and a good way to distribute the work. He felt the graphics in the blueprint and presented today were visually appealing and easy to understand. Mike confirmed that workgroups will be able to add, subtract, and change the existing objectives as they are just a guide to stimulate thought.

Heidi followed that she would have trouble picking just one or two workgroups to join. She said having a focused meeting on each focus area where everyone can be involved would be better suited to identifying and resolving cross-cutting issues. Mike responded that NBEP staff had worked through the considerable input from the subcommittee to date and studied similar literature and similar planning efforts to explore how to break up the work of building the plan into a reasonable chunks, while thoroughly consider cross-cutting issues. He felt that the use of the proposed stepwise action development process (including the critical lens), four workgroups, and coordination between the groups via staff liaisons and the full subcommittee was the most balanced approach for now. He offered that once the workgroups begin their work this fall, the subcommittee should plan to circle back and determine if the process is working and adjust, as necessary.

Vision 2032 Website

Following up on initial plans shared at the last subcommittee meeting, Julia Twichell provided further details on our plans to work with a graphic designer to build a *Vision 2032* identity and website. She said the purpose of this work is to better facilitate learning about *Vision 2032*, connecting with new people, obtaining new perspectives, and otherwise enacting the reflective engagement concept described in the blueprint. She shared the graphic below taken from page 9 of the blueprint, which indicates with arrows that we want to 'Involve' and strive to 'Collaborate' with those that are interested in or impacted by our work in the study area. The message of "your voice, your vision, your future," conveys our early thoughts about a message for the website. For the foreseeable future, creative outreach approaches will be vital if we are to attain the

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WORKGROUP

PRELIMINARY OBJECTIVES - AREAS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

- Develop and Fund Leaders and Organizations
- Obtain Data Necessary to Inform Decisions and Adaptation
- Create and Implement Plans Consistent with *Vision 2032*



WORKGROUP

PRELIMINARY OBJECTIVES - AREAS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

- Reduce Water Pollution to Improve Water Quality
- Manage Water Supply to Better Support Beneficial Uses
- Advance Sustainable Land Use and Watershed Protection



WORKGROUP

PRELIMINARY OBJECTIVES - AREAS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

- Restore Habitat Connectivity, Function, and Resilience
- Support Climate-Adapted Wildlife
- Advance Sustainable Land Use and Landscape Protection



WORKGROUP

PRELIMINARY OBJECTIVES - AREAS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

- Provide Equitable Access to Benefits of Natural Resources
- Preserve and Build Natural Capital
- Create Stronger Communities and Improve Human Well-Being

Collaborate stage with new voices (and not fall back to ignore/inform). Julia indicated that this website will be one of many tools we will use to connect. NBEP is finalizing a contract with a skilled graphic designer (Greg Nemes with Work Shop Design: <https://workshop.co/>) and will work with them throughout July. We expect to share the website with the subcommittee at the August meeting concurrent with its soft launch.



Richard felt this was a great and well-thought out way to engage people earlier in the process. He believes it will also lead to a better network of community members ready and willing to help implement the plan when it is completed. Caitlyn Whittle noted that NBEP should work with EPA to get any Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) issues worked out prior to collecting information. Mike noted that he and Caitlyn have a meeting with an EPA lawyer later this month to discuss the list of questions included as pages 28-29 of the blueprint and explore how NBEP can meet its goals and comply with PRA.

Timeline

Julia Bancroft shared a slighted revised version of the Vision 2032 development timeline. It is provided as page 25 of the blueprint. The main changes were adding further specific actions and the timing of their pursuit. So far, despite challenges posed by the pandemic, we remain on schedule. Julia stated that the subcommittee will check-in on the timeline periodically and revise as needed. Since the subcommittee has seen previous versions of the timeline it is not replicated in these notes.

Action Items

1. Subcommittee members provide comments on the current blueprint (Version 3) to Mike by July 31st.
2. Subcommittee members should sign up for Workgroups via the provided Google link ASAP.
3. NBEP staff will work with the graphic designer to build the *Vision 2032* website.
4. NBEP will schedule workgroup meetings for August.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be August 20th from 10am-noon via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 12:09pm.