

Maine Water Utilities Public Awareness Committee Minutes

Mission: The *Public Awareness Committee* shall communicate to the general public on issues important to the drinking water profession and assist the membership in enhancing public awareness in their local communities.

June 30th, 2003, 1:00 PM
Portland Water District, Portland, Maine

Committee Members: Joy Adamson; Mary Jane Dillingham; Kim Marchegiani; Jeffrey McNelly, Jeff Preble, Gary Stevens, Madeline Storer, Brian Tarbuck, Greg Cataldo

Committee Members Present: Brian Tarbuck; Gary Stevens; Jeff McNelly; Joy Adamson; Michelle Clements; guest Carrie Rossiter; guest Jeff LaCasse

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM by Brian Tarbuck.

- There were no corrections to the previous minutes.
- In the course of reviewing the previous minutes, the Committee talked at length about the hydrilla problem. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the issue of non-native, invasive plants will soon become a major issue for drinking water suppliers unless their control and management is immediately improved. The committee arrived at the following points that need to be addressed in an editorial:
 - How did hydrilla get into [Pickerel Pond](#) (Susan Collins testimony)?
 - How is DEP controlling the further spread of hydrilla?
 - How does SONAR application ([fluridone](#)) affect the use of the pond? That is, can you swim there, can you fish there?
 - How does SONAR application affect native plants and animals? That is, are the fish dying, does it kill other plants that are beneficial?
 - What do we now about the public health effects of applying SONAR to a public water supply? This is the what-if scenario.
- Jeff will bring the hydrilla idea before the board on Wednesday, July 2, 2003 for discussion. The Committee believes that this issue needs to be acted on quickly before a public water supply is faced with DEP trying to control a plant through aquatic herbicide application.
- Gary's watershed article came up again and he asked that we drop it indefinitely. It hasn't gone anywhere, and he'd rather not keep talking about it. Other committees should be advised that the PAC has developed a series of positions on public use of water supplies in the event this issue strikes locally.

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- Sustainable water use and municipalization (even though we aren't going to call it that anymore) were discussed, but there are no action items on these priority issues at this time.
- There was substantial discussion about the website. Jeff M., Joy and Brian reviewed and commented on the proposal from Xwave to make substantial improvements to the existing site. The proposal was in the thousands of dollars and Jeff was concerned that there wouldn't be a substantial benefit from this level of investment at this time. After going through the proposal, the Committee recommended that Jeff recommend to the Board that they authorize Xwave to pursue the addition of a message board to the website that is customized to our needs. This should come in at approximately \$1,000 or so. The other elements can be addressed by printing documents to Adobe Acrobat and adding them to the website as needed. As time goes on, additional infusions of cash can be made to fill in the gaps in the website. Joy and Brian will be going to MWUA next week to implement a number of computer system upgrades that will facilitate these processes.
- [Bikers Against E. coli](#) survived the 2003 Trek and are eager for more riders in 2004 for the Trek Across Maine. Bring rain gear just in case!
- No Northern Maine Children's Water Festival this year.
- The Southern Maine Children's Water Festival was relatively successful. We'll work on a stump the experts thing for the next time around.
- Here are the press release assignments for the remainder of the year. The CCR press release can be done any time since utilities have all completed them at this point.
 - Press release for October meeting – Greg
 - Press release for CCR notification – Madeline
 - Press release for SWAP activities - ? talk with Andy Tolman
- MWUA will make each member utility's CCR on its website. In the case of utilities that already have a CCR online, a link to that site will be made. This is one of the express goals of the PAC and is a simple, tangible way to provide meaningful information to the public.
- There is a continued need to ensure that MWUA members are better trained in media relations. The Committee recommended that Ed / Ops include some media / outreach training in February and ensure that this gets coordinated w/ NEWWA. Tying media stuff to non-media topics would help improve attendance. This needs to get planned now if we want to secure media personalities for the Trade Show. Probably won't get Howard Stern... ☺

Next meeting: Thursday, July 31st, Portland Water District, 9:00 AM.

- Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.