

Maine Water Utilities Association's 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.

September 24th, 2003, 9:30 AM
Auburn Water District, Auburn, 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; Jeff McNelly; Mary Jane Dillingham; Madeline Storer; Greg Cataldo; guest Kathy Moriarty

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM by Gary Stevens.

- There were no corrections to or comments concerning the previous minutes.
- Mary Jane Dillingham provided several articles at the meeting concerning hydrilla and bottled water. MJ also brought some interesting photos of the Monhegan Island water supply. Not pretty. Greg Cataldo brought a copy of a magazine called On Tap highlighting a water consolidation article.
- The next point of discussion involved promotional items that the MWUA could purchase and distribute to its members. Jeff Preble looked into this and found 20 oz cycle bottles that cost about \$1.25 per bottle. The Committee would like to get a couple of sample bottles to look at. The bottles could be handed out at the trade show as part of the registration fee. Might get up to 1,000 or so of these and give out the remainder after the fact. We'll put this back on Jeff Preble to handle ordering a few samples and bringing those to the next meeting. We will also need pricing on 1,000 bottles and a single color logo. Printable Promotions offers Nalgene 1 liter narrow mouth Lexan bottles for \$8.75 each in a 1,008 count order with your logo printed. HDPE (soft plastic) bottles are about \$5.22 each. Canoe Imports will do 1,008 for \$5.05 each and has mountain bike bottles for \$4.80 each. The mountain bike bottles by Nalgene are the best.
- The committee discussed the new stormwater regulations at length. MWUA will be having a couple of seminars on Stormwater Phase 2 regs this winter. New rules affect MS4 (larger municipal areas including Portland, Bangor, Auburn) areas that require enhanced efforts to protect against discharge. 1 acre or greater land disturbances anywhere in Maine also fall under this rule. EPA can now go after both the town and the contractor, not just the contractor. These regs are in effect now, but they might even be revised as soon as next year. This is Preb's issue too and does not require action by the PAC.
- MJ and Jeff McNelly met with the DEP's Jon McPhedran a couple of weeks ago at Auburn Water District. MWUA wants vision / plan to deal with the hydrilla issue and to look at all of the options. MWUA message is that we want to be proactive and prevent this problem not wait until it happens and wonder what to do next. For example, what happens when hydrilla

gets in a Public Water System? Do we treat w/ SONAR (fluridone) or do we stock the pond with grass carp? If so, who would be involved and who would be in charge of the project? MWUA wants to be able to add language that requires written consent before state / federal agencies "work" on ponds. Harvesting and the installation of say, grass carp, can also have a negative effect on drinking water quality. When Jon left, he appeared to have a better understanding of MWUA's concerns and position. The Bureau Of Health's position on use of fluridone and its safety is reflected in a document from DEP to Senator Bruce Bryant. Would this change if fluridone was added to an active drinking water supply? MWUA is not sure that the public would want to drink water with even a low amount of this chemical in it, even if it were perfectly safe to do so. MWUA's goal is to ensure that state agencies have written consent from public water systems affected by any kind of non-native plant infestation before treatment begins. MWUA needs to see the DEP bill and run this by the Invasive Plants Task Force. MJ will continue to keep the committee informed on this subject. No action by the Public Awareness Committee is required at this time.

- ATV task force. On 9/18/2003, the ATV task force reconvened and voted on recommendations from the three subcommittees on the task force; safety, trails and law enforcement. Law enforcement wanted to add public water supplies as a prohibited usage area. The task force asked Kathy Moriarty and Gary Stevens to write up issues that public water systems have with ATV operation on (winter) and around public water systems. MJ liked adopting the shoreland zoning regs as a guide for prohibitive use, but questioned how this would address ATV usage near tributaries? The PAC also recognized that some PWS's might want an exception for operating ATV's on an "approved trail". There was debate on whether or not ATV operation on the ice over public water supply would be prohibited. Kathy believes that each utility will want to have this law applied specifically to their utility. Some utilities own the entire watershed and want the whole area prohibited while others may want less restrictive regulations. Some members of the PAC also felt that written permission to operate an ATV on a person's land should be required, not recommended, but that it out of the scope of our mission here. Others thought that this was less important. The ATV task force needs a response ASAP. Jeff M. was concerned that this timetable might force bad language and may not represent the needs of the membership. Public water suppliers want to be able to restrict ATV activity within a watershed in sensitive areas. The group felt that any regulation restricting operation of ATV's near surface water sources should also extend to groundwater sources. The risks from atv usage on public water supplier lands included: trash, swimming, rapid access to closed areas, concerns about being overrun by ATV's, limited enforcement, increased erosion, illegal fires and illegal camping. It was decided that utilities may want to comment to Roberta on an individual basis. The PAC recommended that the Legislative committee pursue a written response from MWUA to Roberta. The Association will write up a response to Roberta's request via Jeff McNelly.
- Need to research trespass laws. Brian will research this and send it around to committee. Joy will do the same.
- Does MWUA have an email list that allows email to be quickly sent to all "CONNECTED" members?

- Gary suggested that we have a MWUA trade show photo contest. Greg suggested that we open this contest up to the public. The contest will award any member of the public who takes the best photo of any drinking water related People, Places or Things. The photographer with the best photo in each category will receive a \$100 gift certificate. Gary will do a write up for a submittal form. Photos will be no larger than 8"x10".
- MWUA display for public presentations. What should this look like? The PAC would like Jeff to bring the exhibit booth to next meeting and see what we can add / change. Greg's idea was to showcase the benefit of the safe drinking water. Community resources owned by the utility, show kids drinking water etc. Should focus on what the benefit of safe drinking water is. The DWP will set up a map of water utilities represented by the MWUA. Joy and Mad Dog will collaborate on this effort.
- Railroad stakeholders will be reporting to board of pesticides control soon. The railroad industry gets waivers from showing precisely where they apply herbicides. The Board of Pesticides Control needs assurance that the railroad owners aren't contaminating waterways during application of pesticides. Right now, the railroad can't prove that they're causing a problem or not because they've not conducted any herbicide testing. The DWP can't attend so someone else needs to attend. Maybe public water suppliers can test nearby waters before and after spraying to establish a background level and then determine effect? Public water supply operators would be the logical people to test this.
- Here are the press release assignments for the remainder of the year.
 - Press release for October MWUA meeting in Farmington, Maine – Greg Cataldo

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 21st, 2003, Woodard and Curran's

Portland office, 9:30 AM. Directions to Woodard and Curran:

http://www.woodardcurran.com/ourlocations_ME01.asp

- Meeting adjourned at 13:00