



2023 Local Work Group Locally-led Conservation Planning

Date: May 18th 2023, 12:30pm - 4:30pm Location: Prouty Beach Pavilion Newport VT

Proposed Agenda Simple Outline

12:40 Welcome and What this Forum is about

1:00 Basin 17 (Memphremagog) Tactical Basin Plan Draft & Public Comment

Focus on strategies for community engagement

2:30 NRCS Local workgroup

Recap on local the impacts of the 2022 LWG

Local fund pool 2023 recommendations

4:00 Dessert and Mingling

Purpose: Provide a venue for Orleans County landowners, farmers, foresters, and conservation partners to give feedback on natural resource concerns, strategies, and conservation practice priorities.

Goals:

- Inform participants on natural resource issues including the water quality in the Memphremagog Basin.
- Gather input on Basin Planning strategies and action items
- Inform community of the NRCS opportunities to address local resource concerns: explain the local funding pool.
- Gather input on resource concerns and practices for OCNRCD to make a funding proposal to NRCS to secure USDA NRCS local fund pool funding solely for Orleans County landowners.

Outcomes:

- Participant's weight to provide useful input on strategies for the Basin Plan
- Participant voice concerns to conservation professionals
- Conservation professionals hear from landowners and work together to meet local needs.
- Participants share and OCNRCD summarize the local natural resource concern priorities for the Orleans County local fund pool proposal. This is meaningful with real results with dollars for conservation on the ground.
- Participants gain a better understanding of natural resource issues and NRCS, how programs work and opportunities for conservation through the NRCS.

11:30 Organizers arrive – Sarah and Bevin

Set up computer and PP screen – set up drinks, chairs, tables and small group spaces etc

12:00 Presenters arrive - Ben

Set up and load Power Points

12:30 Participant Arrival & Mingling – Sarah and Bevin will manage sign in table

Sign in sheet, name tags

Point out hand outs: [Memph Basin Plan Executive summary](#), [Report from 2022 available](#), [Local fund pool fy23 factsheet and agenda](#)

And NRCS [5 steps to assistance](#)

-Connect people from the public with other people to help them feel comfortable - **Walter and Ben**

“Warm up” questions: Big sheets with these questions: put on picnic tables with markers. As we are waiting for folks to arrive, ask people to answer these questions.

1. What do you appreciate most about Orleans County landscape and natural resources?
2. What do you see as the greatest opportunity to make a positive change on the landscape?
3. Where would you like to see more resources like technical assistance, financial assistance, education etc be put to work?
4. What are your biggest worries related to natural resources for future generations?

12:30 Bevin will interact with online folks, start conversations with and let them know that we plan to start at 12:45 once folks in the room are settled. Put the four “warm up” questions in the chat for them to answer. (will need to save/get the chat later)

12:45 Welcome – Walter Medwid

Mention the mandate of NRCDs to hold these meetings and say a little something positive about the partnership work that we all do together and how that is an important local asset.

12:50 Brief Round of Introductions – Walter Medwid

NRCD Board Members and staff introduce themselves by standing and to get a sense of who’s in the room, have folks stand up based on who they work for and members of the public. Then do # of years in their profession, over ten & under ten.

List of professions: farmers, foresters, non-profit staff and board members, federal employees, state employees, lake association members, residents

12:55 Overview of the Agenda, Goals and Outcomes and any housekeeping– Sarah (will have the agenda written out on a big pad).

Note taker - Nathanael Johns

Online participant management – Bevin

1:00 (5 minutes) What's a Conservation District & Description of the Local Workgroup – Sarah

Brief Conservation District overview

Locally led conservation is based on the principle that community stakeholders are best suited to identify and resolve local natural resource problem. These Local Work Group Meetings serve as a Conservation Needs Assessment forum and are a valuable part of the NRCS and other agency planning process.

Convened by local NRCD and NRCS, the Local Work Group responsibilities include:

- Identifying the biggest conservation needs in our counties
- Identifying strategies for addressing needs
- Prioritizing those conservation needs that can be addressed by USDA and other Programs
- Recommending USDA conservation program application and funding criteria
- Recommending focus of NRCS funding efforts
- Assisting NRCS and other agencies with public outreach and information efforts

Providing recommendations for NRCD programs and services; to the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee; and VT State Agency's.

District role in Tactical Basin Planning

Intro on the Basin plan -Sarah

Sarah - Purpose of the Basin Plan segment: state up front **why** you're doing this item on the agenda/what you want participants to get out of it?

Build in some interaction so Ben knows the audience- a show of hands poll asking about familiarity with the plan – 3 options: raise your hand if you know the plan/what is in it, is new to you; if you have some familiarity; if you're very familiar.

1:05 (25 minutes) Memph Basin Plan Ben Copans

- Ben will hand out the ex summary with strategies
- Basin planning overview
- Knowledge of the public concerns about the landfill leachate and how the context of this meeting is not the place for us to address the significant and legitimate concerns.
- Overview of the essential information in the beginning of the basin plan- watershed description, water resource and priority sub-basins) and Over of basin water issues and TMDL summary and update
- Lakes Classification
- How the public is involved for gathering feedback. (setting the stage for the break out groups)
 - Results of the last Workgroup, farmer meeting and point out interesting trends of the survey results - Sarah
- Overview of the process of development of strategies
- Explaining the strategies — examples of breath that can be covered, technical accepts of the needs but the community engagement needs and strategies to address barriers.
- How outcomes sets up fundings and coordinates partners.

- Go over current drafted strategies being developed. (SPEND AT LEAST 10 MINUTES ON THIS TO SET UP THE SMALL GROUPS WELL).

Some Time for Questions

1:30 (20 minutes) Small group time – deep dive – Sarah will organize and present

Sarah explain the small group activity

Ben explains the process for public comment vs the information gathering in this small group.

Focus groups on developing strategies for sectors.

Three goals: getting people engaged in understanding the process, reviewing existing strategies in the draft plan and providing feedback on strategies

3 groups – choose your group of interest need at least one copy of the strategies per group

1 Agriculture

2 Natural Resource Restoration - rivers, wetlands riparian and floodplain, lakeshores, forestry

3 Developed lands - roads and stormwater

Facilitators – Ben, Sarah, Ted, Bevin will oversee the online group depending how many people might do break out rooms on each topic or if there are not many people online have them choose a time.

The directions and questions are on the handout.

Try to address the what's in it for me for the participants and make sure you are aware of language barriers and provide clarification as needed.

Facilitator Explain directions: Have folks write ideas down individually for a few minutes; facilitate individual report outs; collect handouts from individual reflection time; reflect on themes from the report outs, write themes on big pad and discuss points of interest recording/capturing ideas on the big pad. Facilitator reports out to the whole group

5 minutes to get into groups, 5 minutes reflecting, 10 minutes sharing out

1:50 (10 minutes) report outs from facilitators for give us the main flavor – Sarah

Invite each group facilitator to share one insight but not to repeat insights already shared.

closing statement/meaning making/ about reflection on the report outs -themes

2:00 (25 minutes) Community Engagement and Equity - Sarah

(5 minutes) Intro - This community engagement topic came out of our initial meetings as an important piece for success and we want to spend more time on this.

Read example strategies on how do we make this happen

(State needs to fund communities engagement roles)

(10 minutes) Work one on one to discuss ideas on community engagement

(10 minutes) Report out - Sarah writing down main ideas on big sheets

(5 minutes) BasinPlan Wrap up - Ben

Next steps - review the plan for public comment . how to submit comment to Ben

2:30 Break

NRCS Local Work Group

2:35 (10 minutes) Making the Bridge from Basin Plan to Local Fund Pool. Sarah

Purpose of the NRCS segment: state up front why we are doing this item on the agenda/what you want participants to get out of it? And that we are now broadening beyond water quality

Raise hands, who knows how the NRCS programs, application and project ranking process?

Call on three folks to share

Then I share, if needed. Why ranking the local fund pool proposal from this group- impacts what gets funded and what resource concern area addresses with federal funds.

Set the stage for this portion of the meeting: Share the Orleans County LWG results from 2019 and 2022. This is where the rubber hits the road!

2:45 (30 minutes) Open Conversation on natural resource issues. Sarah

Purpose: Generate a list of natural resource issues and a build share understanding issue

Read through the drafted list - have dialogue about each and Nathanael will TAKE GOOD NOTES on the discussion on a big sheet. Then condense the big sheet at the end to big buckets of topics from the discussion.

Address the PFAS issues

3:15 (20 minutes) The 2023 survey - Sarah

Fill out the survey (10 Minutes)

Big group sharing out on two of the questions: (10 Minutes)

1. What conservation/environmental issues are most pressing to you?
2. What conservation measures/practices/actions do you think would help the issue?

Nathanael will capture the sharing on big sheets.

3:35 (15 minutes) NRCS Practices Local Fund Pool Activity in Orleans County - Sarah

Recap on LWG: convened by NRCD sets local priorities based on area that are given to the state tech committee helps determine state priorities and Local Fund pool is becoming the main role of the LWG

Now that we have spent time thinking about the resource concern I want to shift to thinking about NRCS programs.

- What is the local fund pool?

- Provide an overview of FY23 local fund pool
- Provide stats on what applications are not getting funded in Orleans County.

Of what we discussed and thought about in the survey, and the stats on what is happening currently in the NRCS office, what are the 5 top priorities.

Review the condensed summary that Nathanael draft

On the big sheet with 5 stickers each. Then summarize topics with the most stickers. THIS IS WHAT Dave, Nathanael and I will work with.

Divide things that need more outreach

Potential fund pool - unmet NR needs

Items for the district to work on

3:50 Take Away Sharing and next steps

Ask three question that are up on flip chart

Write on a sticky note:

1. What inspired me most or struck me as most important to remember from this workshop?
2. What worked best for the day?
3. What would you change for the day?

Give people something to go home with - **what's next**, Dave and Sarah work on a local fund pool proposal and report to be sent to the NRCS state tech committee (timeline of NRCS process too).

Adjourn

4:00 Serve Dessert - Board member, Walter, to oversee

Supplies:

- Sarah Speaker with camera from the USDA office conference room
- Sarah screen, projector, cords
- Sticky pads
- Big pads
- Name tags
- Markers
- Small folding table—Sign in table and sign in sheet, and newsletter sign up
- Upcoming events leaflet
- BEVIn Yard signs (for directional signage)
- BEVIn Drinks—Seltzers
- BEVIn Bowls, bamboo spoons, napkins
- BEVIn Cooler & ice (ice cream Ted)
- Ben - computers
- Paper copies of LWG 2022 report
- MEMPH Plan Executive Summary (Ben)

- Sarah Ed materials — OCNRCO, TMDL report, A few copies of the basin plan, NRCS — “Five Steps to Assistance”

Prep

- ✓ Prouty - confirm wifi, electric & siding, bathroom unlocked?
- ✓ Confirm dessert/ pick up; buy ice cream

Bring chairs — how to get to Prouty?

PowerPoints - Sarah & Ben

Google Meet - make Sarah a host? Use Ben's computer

Ideas in the future

One pager on ways for the public and partners to engage —

- LWG, State tech committee, review cost share rates in the fall.