

Summary Points from Strategic Planning Meeting

Mission/Goals/Vision Statement

- Need to clarify focus --- habitat/ecological or nutrient/water quality [But can we lead the way in showing how these are not separate concerns?] Ecosystem services is area where SNEP can play major standardizing and application role
- Need a problem statement (why) and a SNEP approach (how) that makes program unique, enables it to stand out from other geographic programs; frames the threat (nutrients) as a shared problem across the region; sets the stage for next steps; highlights leveraging and efficiency; takes lead on ecosystem services valuation; changes conversation with potential implementers
- Effective and credible problem statement and mission would enable SNEP members to defend their participation, demonstrate how SNEP amplifies success of their individual organizations
- Innovation, experimentation, investment in new and emerging approaches, openness to risk-taking are program themes – these aspects need to be more clearly and actively stated in discussion of SNEP approach
- Inspirational goal of ecosystem restoration (including protection as a goal/approach) is currently missing
- Need to invest in efforts that drive implementation and that advance system response; e.g., rule-making, adopting and communicating successful approaches, seeking more collaboration across management silos
- Ensure local innovation, common methodology, and successful restoration practices have a path to regionalization in SNEP and beyond

Steering Committee Discussion

- Role is/can be to shape priorities, even if implementation projects have to go through competitive RFP process
- Winnowing and enabling roles are key --- identify investable technologies, prioritize testing and adoption; standardize ecosystem valuation approaches; find baseline tools and approaches;
- Recognize that serving as funder of projects that could be supported by other sources is not a sustainable or compelling role for SNEP; key area should be in creating synergy for greater effectiveness and efficiency
- Decisions should have a “learning” aspect, assimilate information from earlier and ongoing projects to feed back into priority setting
- Simplify terms and structure for greater consistency; focus more on subcommittee work, less on Steering Committee meetings; confirm membership, including missing perspectives

Ecosystem Subcommittee Discussion

- Initial Information Needs
 - Need starting point (goal of some level of ecosystem restoration) and framework for discussing (could explore Corps' Estuary Restoration Council)
 - Should create inventory/baseline of existing work and needs to prioritize activities/tools/approaches, identify those which SNEP could most effectively advance, propose realistic tasks, and feed into policy committee for action; term "baseline" captures tools and approaches (including economic valuation) and coordination of agency priorities in one place
 - tools and approaches include financing, capacity building, economic valuation of ecosystem services, community engagement and restoration activities
 - coordination includes who is doing what where and comparison of agency goals, pulling information from existing efforts, monitoring effectiveness
- Short term needs:
 - Template for baseline information
 - Synthesize needed information through gap analysis, but first project should be to define and standardize ecosystem service valuation with ERG report as a starting point (contract out)
 - Look at effectiveness of interventions, restoration activities
 - Identify criteria to limit consideration of activities to those having greatest promise because scalable, amenable to SNEP ability to influence, addressing WQ and nutrient issues
 - bylaws, natural habitat restoration, stormwater financing, wastewater treatment, research
 - transfer of development rights on an ecosystem basis
 - Definitions
 - Innovation (including process) = experimenting, new to this area, suite of efforts that can have impact, collaboration
 - Valuation = why ecosystem is important, why do we need to restore/conserv
 - Habitat restoration = subset of possible interventions that will bring about change, have a monitoring component
- Next Steps
 - Create template for baseline information – group will fill in, including scale and location of efforts; note that getting engagement to compile community and stakeholder needs will take much longer and more work
 - Richard Freisner is going to create a template for each of the categories in 2 weeks, Alison Bowden will send around a model of where this has been done before (make sure information requests go to right targets/sources, ask the right person)
 - Mahesh - will take first crack at synthesis and underlying themes.
 - 3 weeks - set up a conference call to discuss the template
 - Information gathering phase - 2 months (February/March)
 - Calls as needed and emails
 - Organize a summit for information sharing to see what's going on in the region (narrow focus)
 - Determine most effective messaging for restoration/protection; seek a common thread at a regional or watershed scale
 - Consider municipal needs, build local engagement, address community concerns
 - Seek subcommittee chair for 2017
 - Define metrics for reporting progress in 6 months

Monitoring Subcommittee Discussion

Water quality monitoring looms large over the SNEP region and presents many opportunities but also poses questions and problems for those working with the data. With the amount of data collected, storing, analyzing, and sustaining programs can be challenging may lead to gaps in knowledge, ineffective work, and aimless work. How can the SNEP Monitoring Subcommittee work to build cohesive, complementary monitoring in the region to address long-term and innovative technology needs?

- Focus from water quality perspective should be nutrients
- So much information out there – different groups, different goals, different methods
 - Could there be a need for a monitoring council to take on meta-analysis and ensure no duplicate efforts?
 - What are the gaps?
- How is information that is collected shared? Is it shared?
- Long-term Monitoring
 - Expensive and difficult to sustain funding. It's not realistic to invest one year of funding. How does SNEP want to deal with sustainable funding to generate meaningful information for the region? Need good understanding of what's happening already and the vulnerabilities of what's happening already. (i.e. what programs are at risk of losing funding?)
 - Trends analysis? What happens with data?
 - Are the goals defined for program, or is monitoring taking place because its “what you do?”
 - Is SNEP interested in sustaining long-term monitoring? How does program address needs of long-term monitoring programs? Can they help with connections to other funding sources, help to leverage funds?
- Performance monitoring is the other side of the coin – if SNEP is looking at innovative technologies, monitoring needed to know if approach works, how well, etc.
- How does Monitoring Subcommittee work with other subcommittees and Steering committee?
 - Who defines the focus, projects, goals?
 - Ecosystem Subcommittee identify problem/project, Monitoring Subcommittee help to measure outcomes, Policy deal with implications of the work or help to find policy path for the work. How do the other groups see the flow?
 - Steering Committee define focus and goals
- Methods aren't standardized across parties, hard to compare results with different methods, units, etc.
 - Citizen science – how can their data be accepted and used? Some without QAPPs
- Capacity gaps throughout region
 - Lack of expertise, funding, manpower to address all issues municipalities/NGO's want to
 - Extension service-type model to give someone people can call with questions, ask for assistance?
 - Could also help with standardizing methods, providing data collection templates, help to interpret data
 - See earlier comment about regional monitoring council
- Communication of goals and outcomes is KEY to success
 - Local groups can help tell story
 - How is this done regionally?
 - Sense of place, other regions have something central to coalesce around – Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound, etc. - what is SNEP's?
- Will Monitoring Subcommittee measure the effectiveness of SNEP program? How?

Policy Subcommittee Discussion

- Define the scope and framework for action: state problem, identify barriers, look for/act on opportunity to adopt mechanisms or best practices
 - problems: private rights vs public benefits; resistance to regulation, information and management silos
 - barriers: lack of flexibility, defensiveness, fear of failing, gaps in information and synthesis, manpower capacity
 - opportunities: non-regulatory drivers, regulatory and program alignments, incentives created by resource transparency, revisiting existing processes or old tools in new ways
- Needs
 - Identify regional scale of common conditions
 - Investigate problems/opportunities/successful approaches, incorporate a more holistic approach
 - Develop mechanisms to overcome barriers, make change easier
 - Bring other players into the conversation to
 - articulate concerns
 - suggest tangible activities to alleviate problems
 - Develop a regional nutrient management strategy
- Focus Areas
 - Build capacity and tools to monitor emerging conditions over time,
 - Develop indicators to measure condition and success
 - Share information
 - Conduct tech transfer
 - Delivery of nutrients to the system via stormwater and septic
 - Methods to value ecosystem services
 - Consider/anticipate implications of changes in policy
- Next steps
 - Highlight the identification, processing, and sharing of actionable information as the value added by the SNEP program; focus on how that information sharing can happen
 - Conduct Municipal “listening” sessions to get feedback, hear from key groups

Summary Breakout Reports

Ecosystem Subcommittee

- establish baseline
- Use template for committee members to answer questions (Cape Cod Commission will synthesize input from members)
- Find way to “translate” ecosystem services
- Engage stakeholders; not a one-way conversation
- identify criteria for innovation rather than for specific project types
- Prepare for iterative investigations

Monitoring Subcommittee

- Review and target
 - update, verify Impaired waters list –
 - Conduct a Gap analysis
 - Explore what is already being done
 - Expand partnerships
- Performance monitoring – measuring innovation, new technology, data.
 - Communication is key
 - Conduct a technology inventory
 - Find Gaps with data
 - Understand what principles are used to collect data, design monitoring
 - Look at new technologies for monitoring
- Tools
 - Understand baseline conditions
 - Develop standardized QAPPs
- Provide expertise and panels to assist monitoring and data collection
 - Communicate key Common indicators
 - Measure the SNEP program

Questions for Steering committee

- How does Monitoring Subcommittee work with other subcommittees and Steering committee?
 - Who defines the focus, projects, goals?
 - Ecosystem Subcommittee identify problem/project, Monitoring Subcommittee help to measure outcomes, Policy deal with implications of the work or help to find policy path for the work. How do the other groups see the flow?
 - Steering Committee define focus and goals

Policy Subcommittee

- Policy priorities:
 - Quantify threat of nutrients
 - Monitor for effectiveness
 - Exchange Information
 - Optimize ecosystem services

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

What	Who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise vision/mission/goals statement per discussion; circulate to participants prior to Tuesday call • Comments on revised statement • Conference call to discuss/accept • Develop worksheet and proposed workplan for Steering Committee • Briefing for RA/Senior Leadership on results, final document and proposed SNEP workplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacie Smith • Participants • Participants • SNEP EPA Team • SNEP EPA Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By COB Monday, 12/12 • By COB Monday 12/19 • Tuesday, 12/20 • Early January 2017 • Before 1/20/17
<p>All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Populate committee worksheets to inform development of SNEP 2017 workplan • Draft SNEP workplan/funding plan circulated to Steering Committee • Finalize SNEP priorities and workplan/funding based on Steering Committee input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members • EPA SNEP Team • EPA SNEP Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By mid-January 2017 • By mid-January 2017 • January/February 2017
<p>Ecosystem Subcommittee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop baseline template • Example of similar efforts • Conference call to discuss • Complete information gathering • Data synthesis from questionnaire • Select Subcommittee chair • Organize information-sharing summit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Freisner • Alison Bowden • Karen Simpson • Members • Mahesh • Members • Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Done • ? • Scheduled for 12/? • February/March • ? • For 2017 • ?
<p>Monitoring Subcommittee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize subcommittee discussion and update • Schedule and hold conference call to discuss worksheet revisions, develop workplan for 2017 • Meta-analysis of existing WQ monitoring data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bryan Dore, EPA • Members • Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-December 2016 • By mid-January 2017 • TBD
<p>Policy Subcommittee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule call with members to review draft subcommittee work sheet, feed into mid-January discussion of SNEP priorities for 2017 • Identify changes that could be implemented in the short-term to better align programs to address nutrients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pryor, EPA • Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early January • January/February 2017