



THE GRANITE STATE PLANNER

FALL 2013

www.nhplanners.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NHPA held its Annual Meeting on Friday, November 1, 2013 at Fratello's in Manchester which included the adoption of a new membership dues schedule to be implemented in 2014, and a modifications to the By-Laws to change the Sustainability Coordinator position to the Environmental and Sustainability Coordinator.

NHPA was fortunate to receive association management services from LGC through October of 2012 for free. At that time the Executive Committee evaluated its options and chose to contract with Cornerstone Association Management group to handle NHPA's basic needs at an approximate cost of \$3000 per year. To offset the increased costs the Executive Committee suggested a three-pronged approach to increase revenues including; increasing event registration fees, bringing in additional sponsors, and modifying the dues structure. The membership dues for 2014 will be \$50 per year for traditional members, \$15 for students and emeritus members, and \$150 for Organizations with a cap of 5 members, each additional member beyond 5 would be \$25. Thank you for supporting this solution!

Beyond the above initiatives, the Annual Meeting marks the official beginning and end of terms for Executive Committee Officers. Please join me in welcoming two new Officers this year, Sara Carbonneau (Swanzy) and Mark Connors (NRPC), as two others are stepping down. I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Tara Germond and Camille Pattison for their years of service on the Executive Committee. Your dedication, ability to organize complex events and positive perspectives will be missed.

Check out the rest of the newsletter for more great news on planning around the State, including a new Taskforce on Complete Streets. The Conference Organizing Group (COG) is getting started on the Spring 2014 NHPA Conference, with a location to date to be finalized soon. Volunteers are always appreciated to help with the COG, please let us know if you are interested!

“PLANNING FOR EVERYONE” – NNECAPA RETURNS TO MEREDITH

The Northern New England Planning Conference returned to Meredith on September 19 & 20 with NHPA serving as the conference host. Two hundred people attended the conference, which was held at Church Landing overlooking Lake Winnepesaukee. The conference was opened on Thursday morning by NHPA President



Keynote speaker Claudia Folska

Sarah Marchant, NNECAPA President Carl Eppich, and

Continued on Page 2

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Conference Chair Ben Frost, and immediately launched into a plenary ethics session with Russ Thibeault of Applied Economic Research and Victor Rubin of PolicyLink who offered regional and national perspectives to help answer the question “who is everyone?” They sought to identify who the people are who planners are supposed to be planner for and with.



Keynote speaker Claudia Folska provided a perspective on transportation issues that most planners have never experienced. Blind since the age of 5, Claudia has navigated the world around her using non-visual cues and mental maps, which was the subject of her doctoral dissertation. She led conference attendees on an exercise in blindness using eye shades, and asked them to draw maps of where they'd been during the day – using this tool, she has demonstrated that despite not being able to see their surrounding environment, blind people do indeed use maps – those that they create in their own minds.

The awards luncheon was followed by an afternoon of concurrent sessions organized in three tracks: “Mobility for Everyone,” “Healthy Environment for Everyone,” and “Who is Everyone?” These addressed topics ranging from non-motorized mobility to public engagement and a comparison of shoreland protection in our three states. Thursday closed with a reception on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee, where planners were treated to wonderful food and a beautiful moonrise.



Friday began with the NNECAPA business meeting. All members thanked outgoing Treasurer Tara Bamford for her excellent service to the Chapter. The morning continued with concurrent sessions covering topics such as refugee and immigrant engagement, ADA rules on mobility devices on public lands, and planning with health impact assessments. At lunch, attendees heard from legal experts from each state

on the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent Koontz decision on takings jurisprudence. The conference closed with three mobile workshops: a walking tour of downtown Meredith, a trip to Moulton Farm and Page Pond & Forest, and an excursion aboard the MV Doris E with water quality experts.

The conference committee thanks all who participated and is particularly grateful for the support of our many sponsors.

Ben Frost, Conference Chair

COMPLETE STREETS TASKFORCE

At the NHPA meeting on November 1st, the membership created a Complete Streets Taskforce to further the adoption of Complete Street policies around the state. Currently, the Taskforce is looking for volunteers and learning about similar work already underway, for potential partnerships and to avoid a duplication of efforts.

This Taskforce is the first of its kind for NHPA and we are excited to be joining with partners across the State on this initiative. The Taskforce will keep you informed as it gains momentum over the next couple of months.

HOW ARE PLANNERS USING INFORMATION ABOUT GROUNDWATER AND AQUIFERS IN NH?

In Quebec, hydrogeological information in Quebec involves a small but growing number of documents containing such information made public by the Quebec Environment Department. Often, in Quebec, maps, reports and related technical information concerning aquifers and groundwater have yet to be exploited by planners. The Environment Department in Quebec has made it a priority to better understand and attempt to explain why planners may or may not make use of available hydrogeological information in their planning tasks. My study was designed to ask and answer some basic questions regarding how Quebec planners could better use this information in their work.

One approach at attempting to explain planners' motivations (to employ hydrogeological data) involved creating a case study of New Hampshire (which shares a border with Quebec), where a substantial amount of hydrogeological information can be found. The aim was to see how many planners in

the area seemed to make use of this information, and how frequently. Thanks to input and feedback from Pierce Rigrod of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES), a survey was created and sent out to all the planners. Its purpose was to evaluate how and why New Hampshire planners integrate the data and the tools made available for groundwater protection, such as the Stratified Drift Aquifers maps found in the GRANIT GIS system. During the winter of 2011, questionnaires were sent out to as many New Hampshire planners as possible. 95 planners completed the survey. Their answers allowed for the creation of variables and a statistical analysis aimed at measuring the influence of these variables was done. Afterward, field visits were conducted to complete the information gathered through the survey.

The results of a statistical analysis performed on the data collected from the survey showed that two variables seemed to have an explanatory power on the most important variables in the study, which is the indication of planner's tendency to make use of tools in preparation for groundwater protection.

Those two variables are training received on groundwater and the indication of knowledge on groundwater, although the former had explanatory power only in the case of responses made by municipal planners and Planning Board members, and not in those made by regional planners. In short, a planner's likelihood to use available information on groundwater depends on his or her knowledge of groundwater, and that goes for all the groups who responded to the survey. For municipal planners and Planning Board members, results showed that the training received on groundwater, as well as the existence of groundwater protection regulations in their municipality also influences their tendency to use available hydrogeological information.

A vast majority of respondents considered the available information on groundwater in New Hampshire to be sufficient. This indicates that if there is a problem with groundwater protection in the state, it should not be attributed to a lack of information, a lack of quality of the information or the quality of the tools provided, but rather to the implementation of those tools and to political willingness.

A variety of common points arise from the six in-person follow-up interviews conducted in the summer of 2011. First of all, groundwater protection was not a planning priority, according to the interviewees, in their respective municipalities. It wasn't the last priority, either, however. All the interviewees underlined the importance of having access to a wide variety of tools to be able to act effectively, depending on the context of each municipality. This "context" actually refers to a "culture," whether it is political or popular, specific to each municipality. The Aquifers maps were also seen as a useful tool for groundwater protection, although their regional scale was sometimes a problem for local applications. In most cases, planners say regulations were the most effective way of protecting the resource.

The groundwater protection ordinances in New Hampshire offer basic protection without great cost to the applicant or municipality. At the very least, these ordinances contribute to a more regular consultation of the aquifer delineation/cartography by Planning Board members and municipal planners.

*By Louis-Alexandre Jacques
Former student in planning at Université Laval*

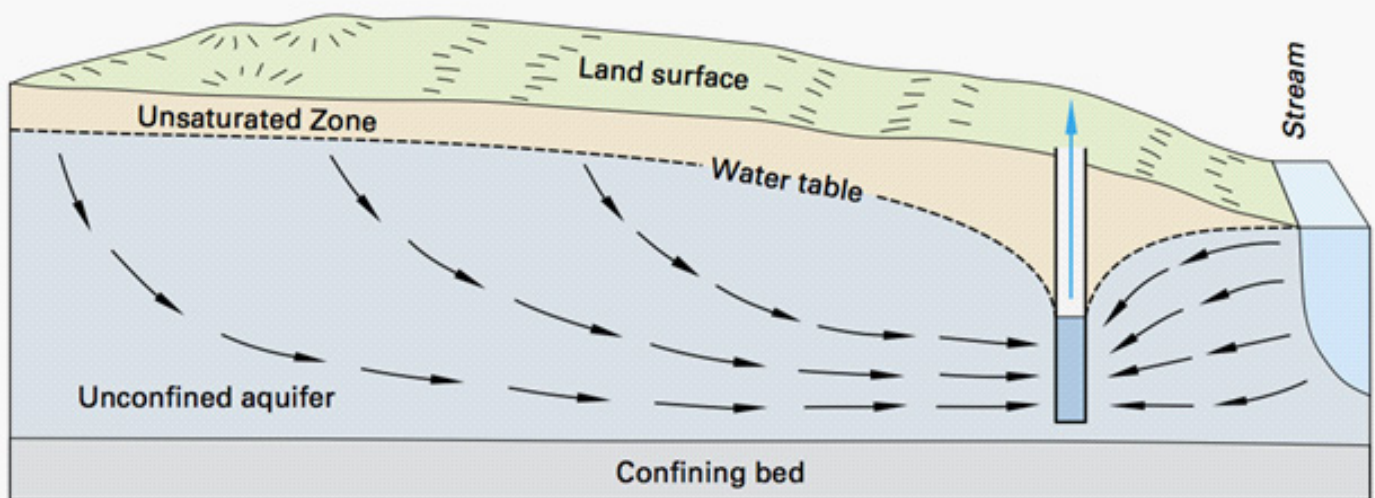


Image Source: USGS



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