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NROC Coordination and Program Delivery

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NATURAL RESOURCES OUTREACH COALITION

Coordination and Program Delivery

A Final Report to

The New Hampshire Estuaries Project

Submitted by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary goal of the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC) program is to provide education and outreach to communities in the NH Coastal Watersheds that are dealing with the effects of growth, and looking for ways to conserve open spaces and natural resources. Program objectives to meet this goal include:

1. NROC and client communities determine natural resource concerns of the communities.
2. NROC and client communities gather community information about these concerns
3. NROC develops and client communities host community presentations about natural resource-based planning.
4. Communities receive follow up technical and educational assistance as requested.

In 2006, NROC worked with two new client communities (Rollinsford and Fremont) to achieve the objectives outlined above. Both communities received NROC's *Dealing with Growth* educational presentation, customized for each community, followed by a series of follow-up meetings in each community to address issues raised in the presentation and community concerns about growth and natural resources.

At the same time, NROC continued to work with four previous NROC communities (Wakefield, Deerfield, New Durham and Strafford). NROC worked with a total of six communities during the funding period.

Our experiences with the NROC program have led us to the following conclusions:

- a) All the program objectives were met
- b) The NROC approach of an initial education presentation for all boards and the public, followed by an intensive program of follow-up assistance over several months, continues to be an effective strategy for mobilizing and motivating community leaders and volunteers to move forward and take action to protect priority land and water resources. However, the NROC Team is recognizing that as communities in New Hampshire's Coastal Watershed become more sophisticated in their approaches managing growth, there is a need for NROC to broaden its focus and provide a range programs designed to meet the changing needs of these communities. To this end, NROC plans to introduce a new program of NROC assistance in 2007, that focuses on helping communities with specific projects. This will complement the ongoing *Dealing with Growth* NROC program.
- c) The extended period of follow-up assistance and related activities are key to the success of the NROC program in a community. NROC's follow-up assistance procedure has been very successful, resulting in higher levels of volunteer recruitment and retention. This has also resulted in stronger and more focused follow-up programs developed by the participants
- d) Providing continued assistance to previous NROC communities has been valuable in helping those communities continue to move forward, and develop a strong and informed base of public support for natural resource-based planning.
- e) Having funds available for community projects continues to be a strong factor motivating communities to take action on issues they have prioritized. Grant funds available through NROC have been instrumental in getting a number of projects up and running, with successful results, in the communities included in this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC) is a multi-organizational initiative providing technical and educational assistance to communities in New Hampshire's coastal watersheds dealing with the effects of growth. The NROC program offered to communities includes an initial educational public presentation, *Dealing with Growth*, followed by a series of follow-up meetings to help the community focus their goals, develop an action-oriented work plan, and provide the technical and educational assistance needed to help the community meet its goals.

NROC includes the following organizations:

- NH Department of Environmental Services Watershed Management Bureau
- NH Coastal Program
- NH Estuaries Project
- NH Fish & Game Dept – Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Rockingham Planning Commission
- Strafford Planning Commission
- Southern NH Planning Commission
- UNH Cooperative Extension
- UNH Sea Grant

UNH Cooperative Extension provides staff support for NROC program coordination and delivery. This is accomplished through:

- Coordinating the educational and technical assistance resources of the state's major natural resource and planning organizations and agencies.
- Serving as a clearinghouse and referral agent for available resources for coastal watershed communities.
- Presenting education and technical assistance programs to communities, upon request, that emphasize both regulatory and voluntary tools for resource protection, and that illustrate the connections between natural resources, economy and community character.
- Helping community leaders to better understand their community's resources; threats to these resources; the actions necessary to sustain the resources; and then using this information as a basis for community planning and decision-making.
- Maintaining contact with community members throughout the follow up and implementation project phase to ensure their needs are being met.

2. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The NROC Community Assistance Program has the following goal and objectives:

Goal: The primary goal of NROC is to provide technical assistance, education and outreach to communities in the NH Coastal Watersheds that are dealing with the effects of growth. This program helps communities sustain and protect natural resources and open space lands identified as critical to water quality, biodiversity and other resources identified by communities. NROC helps communities protect these resources through voluntary land conservation and land use planning and regulation.

Program objectives to meet this goal include:

1. NROC and client communities determine natural resource concerns of the communities.
2. NROC and client communities gather community information about these concerns
3. NROC develops and client communities host community presentations about natural resource-based planning.
4. Communities receive follow up technical and educational assistance with specific projects identified by community members.

In 2006, NROC worked with two new client communities (Rollinsford and Fremont) to achieve the objectives outlined above. Both communities received NROC's *Dealing with Growth* educational presentation, customized for each community, and followed by a series of follow-up meetings in each community to address issues raised in the presentation and community concerns about growth and natural resources.

3. ACTIVITIES

The work tasks to meet the above objectives included:

- Coordinating the activities of participating NROC organizations and agencies to provide effective assistance to communities.
- Continuing to work with existing NROC client communities on community implementation projects and other assistance as requested. Providing technical assistance to existing NROC client communities, through meetings, telephone, and e-mail.
- Developing two community project teams, comprised of NROC staff members, for the two 2006 client communities – Rollinsford and Fremont.
- Meeting with the two 2006 communities to discuss natural resources issues and concerns, and to prepare for the NROC *Dealing with Growth* presentation and follow-up activities.
- Updating the NROC presentation “Dealing with Growth” for 2006, and participating in revisions to customize the presentation for each community.
- Co-hosting the public presentation with the host community.
- Coordinating follow-up technical and educational assistance to each of the two communities over the following 6-12 months.
- Working with the communities to develop a one-year work plan, and identifying goals and priorities through facilitated discussion and brainstorming.
- Assisting the communities with implementing priorities identified in the work plan, and drafting proposals for implementation grant funding.
- Continuing to assist the three communities from 2005 (New Durham, Wakefield and Deerfield) and one community from 2004 (Strafford) with their implementation projects.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following actions were conducted in order to meet the project objectives described above.

ACTION: Coordinate activities of participating NROC organizations and agencies.

- Coordinated quarterly meetings of coalition members to select new client communities for 2007, review work with existing (2004 - 2006) client communities, discuss revisions to the NROC program, and review progress with the new 2006 communities. These meetings

continue to be a valuable forum for discussion and program improvements, foster a greater sense of team work among the NROC organizations, and have helped develop the most appropriate follow-up assistance.

- Organized and coordinated a one-day NROC staff retreat in February, 2006 to discuss and draw up a plan to implement the findings of the Plymouth State College NROC Program Evaluation study. The following areas were identified and prioritized:
 - Consider doing two communities per year in spring and summer, with some advanced follow-up for existing NROC communities, or other coastal watershed communities that need assistance but may not need the full NROC program.
 - Develop a program cycle for communities enrolled in the current NROC program (including closure of community projects and recognition of community accomplishments)
 - Better coordination with other programs to eliminate overlap, and maximize opportunities for community assistance.
 - Engage in more effective marketing of NROC programming to coastal watershed communities
 - Locate future sources of funding (2008 and beyond) to keep the NROC program funded at current staffing levels.
- A follow-up meeting was held a month later, and as a result three NROC subcommittees (Marketing, NROC Program Cycle, and Future Funding) were formed to implement programmatic changes and enhancements.
- Coordinated and facilitated the three NROC subcommittees described above. Worked with the Marketing Subcommittee to develop a strategy for getting the NROC message to the administrators for each partner organization, to other organizations doing related work in the Coastal Watershed, and to NROC community representatives. The recently completed NROC Accomplishments report was included in these marketing mailings. Worked with the NROC Program Cycle committee to develop a timeline of projected accomplishments to track community progress, and to develop a strategy for bringing closure to community projects and celebrating community accomplishments at the end of the NROC assistance period. Worked with the Future Funding subcommittee to come up with a list of potential grants to apply to for NROC funding, and to develop future strategies for NROC that will ensure a future source of funds.
- Coordinated and facilitated a meeting in December, 2006 with staff from the UNH Stormwater Center to discuss potential collaborative efforts between UNHSC and NROC.
- Worked with other NROC staff to provide information for the NROC Accomplishments Report, published in September, 2006.
- Developed NROC staff teams for each of the 2006 communities. The teams for each community were responsible for Initial Planning, Customizing the *Dealing With Growth* Presentation, Presenting *Dealing With Growth*, and Follow-up Assistance.
- Coordinated NROC marketing efforts to solicit applications from communities for the 2007 NROC program. This included sending out application packets in late summer 2006 to planning board, select board and conservation commission members in coastal watershed communities, presenting the pre-application *NROC Introductory Presentation* to prospective 2007 program applicants, and serving as the point of contact for interested communities.
- The town of Hampton was selected for the 2007 NROC program, and the town of Milton is a second potential candidate.
- Completed work on getting the NROC web page up and running (<http://extension.unh.edu/CommDev/NROC/CANROC.cfm>)

ACTION: Continue to work with existing NROC client communities on community implementation projects, and other assistance as requested.

- Maintained contact with the community representatives for one 2004 (Strafford) and three 2005 communities (New Durham, Wakefield and Deerfield) and tracked progress of their community implementation projects.
- **Strafford:** Provided input regarding ongoing questions about their implementation projects via telephone and e-mail.
- **New Durham:** Attended follow up meetings with the newly formed (through NROC) **New Durham Land Conservation Committee** to help them focus their efforts. Coordinated and presented the *Dollars and Sense of Saving Special Places* public workshop in April, 2006. Organized and presented *The Nuts and Bolts of Land Conservation* workshop in May, 2006. Worked with New Durham NROC participants to develop a proposal for funding the development of a Master Plan Survey, with assistance from the UNH Survey Center.
- **Wakefield:** Assisted the newly formed (through NROC) **Wakefield Land Conservation Committee** with developing a short term outreach plan and outreach materials to build public support for a warrant article for \$500,000 to fund two ongoing land conservation projects. The warrant article was passed by 14 votes at town meeting. Worked with Wakefield NROC participants to develop a proposal focused on longer term land conservation outreach, which included a survey of voter attitudes to land conservation funding (with assistance from the UNH Survey Center), as well as newsletters, developing a traveling display, and a brochure about the Wakefield Land Conservation Committee. Helped Wakefield organize a *Dollars and Sense of Saving Special Places* public presentation in March, 2006, and facilitated a meeting with the Wakefield Select Board in May, 2007 to explain conservation easements. Provided assistance to the **Wakefield Water Resources group** on Phase 2 of their project to develop a Water Resources chapter of their Master Plan.
- **Deerfield:** Assisted the **NROC Land Conservation Group** and Open Space Committee with developing a short term project to build public support for increasing the Conservation Fund (LUCT) to strengthen land conservation efforts (the measure to increase the LUCT allocation to the Conservation Fund from 25% to 50% passed at the March 2006 town meeting), and helped the group develop a strategy for implementing and publicizing their recently completed Open Space Plan. Assisted the **NROC Planning & Zoning group** with building public support for zoning changes to preserve Deerfield's natural resources. These zoning amendments were successfully passed at town meeting in March, 2006. Assisted the group with developing a proposal for a town-wide survey (with assistance from the UNH Survey Center) covering land conservation, long term planning for the town, business development, etc. for the Master Plan update. Helped the **NROC Taxes and Affordability** group to develop a focus. The group decided to focus on supporting businesses that would depend on a sustainable natural resource base in town, and renamed itself the **Deerfield Business Ventures Council**. The group worked with the Planning & Zoning group to develop the Master Plan Survey.

ACTION: Work with two new client communities to determine natural resource concerns of the communities and gather community information about these concerns

- Coordinated preliminary NROC program planning meetings with Rollinsford and Fremont three months prior to the *Dealing with Growth* public presentations in each community. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit community input through facilitated discussion about natural resources issues and concerns for incorporation into the presentation. These meetings were followed up with a second meeting to review the draft *Dealing with Growth* presentation for each community, and get community input regarding any changes they felt were necessary.

ACTION: Develop, with community input, customized community presentations about natural resource-based planning.

- Coordinated efforts and participated in customizing the *Dealing with Growth* presentation for Rollinsford and Fremont. Worked with the communities to collect local photographs and data for the presentations. Organized and participated in meetings with each community to present the draft presentation to representatives from the community boards for review and input.
- Coordinated and participated in presenting the public *Dealing with Growth* presentations in each community. Presentations were held on the following dates:
 - Rollinsford – April 18, 2005; attended by 30 people.
 - Fremont – June 12, 2005; attended by 26 people.

ACTION: Develop a program of follow-up technical and educational assistance to the needs of each of the two new client communities.

Extension staff, together with other NROC staff, planned and participated in follow-up assistance to the two 2006 communities. Specific accomplishments for each of the two communities are described below:

ROLLINSFORD (Workplans in Appendix A):

Ten follow-up meetings have been held with community members to date. A total of around 11 people have been involved in these meetings. At the first and second follow up meetings, participants identified Land Conservation, Water Resources, and Future Planning as their three top priorities. The following activities resulted from the formation of these three groups:

- **Land Conservation Group:** The Land Conservation Group that formed through the NROC process combined with the Conservation Commission to reduce the number of meetings for participants. Extension staff worked with this group to help develop a process for land conservation in Rollinsford. This included a review of existing Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) maps, which revealed that an updated NRI is needed. The group also wants to develop a conservation plan. They are currently working on an NROC grant proposal to fund these projects. The group has been working on developing a mailing to landowners to introduce people to Rollinsford's land conservation plans and actions, developing a conservation section of the town's web site to provide information for landowners, identifying conservation priorities and land conservation funding options.
- **Water Resources Group:** Extension staff held a facilitated session: *Community Strategies for Protecting Water Resources* with this group. As a result of this discussion and subsequent follow up meetings, the group identified two projects to focus on: water resources clean-up, and water quality monitoring.

- Natural Resources Clean-Up – The group organized and advertised a clean-up day held on Saturday September 16, 2006 at the Newichawannock Trail/Fresh Brook bridge site. The event was attended by nine people. They cleaned up the brush, brambles, and debris from the spring floods at the site. A second clean up day at a different location is being planned for Spring, 2007.
- Water Quality Monitoring: A meeting was held with NROC staff, the Coheco River Watershed Coalition (CRWC) and the NH Coastal Program to discuss water quality monitoring programs and how the Rollinsford group could get involved. This led to one member of the action group attending training and participating in the fall Volunteer Biological Assessment Program with NH DES. The group decided to conduct a water quality monitoring program under the umbrella of the Coheco River Watershed Coalition in Spring, 2007. The group identified seven possible monitoring sites, and two members went out with the CRWC on Saturday September 16 to do an initial reconnaissance of the sites and to narrow the list down to a manageable number. NROC staff coordinated a second meeting with CRWC and NHDES Coastal Program staff in November, 2006 to review next steps for the proposed spring 2007 water quality monitoring program. A follow up meeting will be held in January, 2007. In March 2007, the group will send out press releases and notices to advertise the upcoming spring water quality monitoring. On April 3, 2007 the group will meet with NH DES staff from the VRAP program to discuss the program design, and to review maps and identify and list problems. Volunteer training with VRAP will be in late April/early May, with monitoring beginning in May.
- o **Planning for Future Growth and Development:** This group's discussion focused on architectural design standards to preserve Rollinsford's rural character. They are considering developing a Design Review Ordinance or Guidelines.

FREMONT (Work plans in Appendix B)

Seven follow-up meetings have been held with community members to date. A total of 12 people have been involved in these meetings. At the first and second follow up meetings, two priorities were identified: Land Conservation, and Future Land Use planning. Since Fremont already had an Open Space Committee and a Future Land Use committee, participants decided to merge the NROC groups with these ongoing groups. This also helped to achieve their goal of adding new members to these groups.

- o **Both action groups** requested assistance with public outreach: Land conservation education for landowners, and outreach to build public support for the proposed zoning changes for 2007 town meeting. The NROC workshop *Developing an Effective Education & Outreach Strategy* was held on September 19, 2006, and attended by 10 participants. By the end of the workshop, both groups had developed an outreach strategy that they will work on implementing (Appendix C).
- o The two action groups also submitted a joint proposal to NROC for funding for a written Natural Resources Inventory Chapter for the Master Plan. The grant funds were approved by the NH Coastal Program in November. Work is now beginning on this project. Fremont has contracted with Rockingham Planning Commission to write the report, and put together associated publicity materials.
- o **Land Conservation Group/Open Space Committee:** This group is initiating conversations with the Rockingham Land Trust to discuss possible mutual interests and ways in which the two groups can work together. They reviewed their natural resources

inventory maps to identify areas in town with high conservation values as a preliminary step in identifying the first round of priority landowners. The group is also working on putting together a proposal for a conservation plan, and identifying funding sources for the plan. The group has also prioritized developing a wildlife & habitat inventory of the recently conserved Glen Oakes property. Planning for this is still in progress. As a result of the Education & Outreach workshop, the group has prioritized holding small informal informational/educational sessions for landowners. They are planning an event for Saturday January 20, 2007 from 1-4pm at the Fremont Library. Extension NROC staff will be facilitating this session. A follow up outreach session is being planned for March/April 2007.

- **Future Land Use Group:** Rockingham Planning Commission produced a set of NRI maps in 2005, but the town had no funds for a written report. The Future Land Use Group decided to prioritize a written NRI report that could serve as an updated natural resources chapter for the Master Plan (see discussion above). The group also identified the benefits of conservation subdivision vs conventional subdivisions (e.g. preservation of wildlife habitat, differences in appearance, economic benefits) as its primary focus. Once the Planning Board has developed a zoning proposal, then the group will start to implement the outreach strategy (developed through the Education & Outreach workshop) using mailings and posters.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- a) All the program objectives stated above were met.
- b) The NROC approach of an initial education presentation for all boards and the public, followed by an intensive program of follow-up assistance over several months, continues to be an effective strategy for mobilizing and motivating community leaders and volunteers to move forward and take action to protect priority land and water resources. However, the NROC Team is also recognizing that as communities in New Hampshire's Coastal Watershed become more sophisticated in their approaches managing growth, there is a need for NROC to broaden its focus and provide a range of programs designed to meet the changing needs of these communities. To this end, NROC plans to introduce a new program of NROC assistance in 2007 that focuses on helping communities with specific projects. This will complement the ongoing *Dealing with Growth* NROC program.
- c) The extended period of follow-up assistance and related activities are key to the success of the NROC program in a community. NROC's follow-up assistance procedure using an outcome-based approach, and then developing action plans to achieve those outcomes continues to be key to the success of community NROC programs. This has resulted in higher levels of volunteer recruitment and retention, and in stronger and more focused follow-up programs developed by the participants. It has also had the effect of creating more independence in the action groups, enabling them to develop the momentum to keep moving forward on their own after NROC assistance is completed.
- d) Having funds available for community projects continues to be a strong factor motivating communities to take action on issues they have prioritized. Grant funds available through NROC have been instrumental in getting a number of projects up and running, with successful results, in the communities included in this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Interest in land and water conservation in New Hampshire's coastal watersheds continues to be high, and we feel this will be sustained or increased as growth pressures in south-eastern New Hampshire continues to affect communities. Of the 42 coastal watershed communities, NROC has worked with 17 communities to date. We recommend that the NHEP continues to support community conservation efforts by providing support to NROC.

The NROC member organizations are committed to assisting communities with natural resource-based planning, based on successes thus far. We recommend that implementation funds continue to be made available to communities to enable them to implement prioritized actions, and to achieve their conservation goals.

NROC has spent much of 2006 working on revising its strategy to better meet the needs of communities in the Coastal Watershed. With the recent publication of the Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan, and the upcoming completion of the Coastal Ground Water Project, NROC will be looking at ways to take this information to the communities it's working with. NROC also plans to work with the UNH Stormwater Center, to incorporate the findings of their research into ongoing NROC programs. As we move into 2007, the NROC Team will continue to review and update its strategy to provide the appropriate level of assistance needed by communities.

Work Plan – Land Conservation in Rollinsford
June 21, 2006

THEME: CREATING A CONSERVATION PLAN

Goal – Rollinsford has a comprehensive conservation plan

OTHERS?

TASKS/ACTIONS		2006	2006	2006/07	2007	2007	Responsibility
		Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	
1	Inventory parcels > 20 acres	done					RCC
2	Rank parcels	In progress					RCC
3	Examine examples from other towns and groups	x					RCC
4	Get soils map(s)	x					RCC
5	Get aquifer map	x					RCC
6	Get tax maps overlaid on resource maps	x	x				RCC
7	Decide how to get conservation plan done	x					RCC, Paul (will get NHEP grant info)
8	Identify sources of help		x	x			NROC
9	Initial draft of conservation plan						RCC with consultant?

RCC – Rollinsford Conservation Commission

LCG – Rollinsford Land Conservation Group

NROC – Natural Resources Outreach Coalition staff

Work Plan – Water Resources Protection in Rollinsford
Updated October, 2006

THEME: CLEAN UP DEBRIS IN RIVERS, STREAMS AND WETLANDS

Goal – Rollinsford has cleaner water sources

TASKS/ACTIONS		2006	2006	2006/07	2007	2007	Responsibility
		Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	
1.	Organize a clean-up day in September, 2006 in the Newichawannock River <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a date • Advertise the clean up day • Get permission to access the site • Organize the clean-up team 	X	X				RWRG, Nelson Lawry
2.	Organize a second clean-up day in Spring, 2007, at a second site.			X	X		RWRG, Nelson Lawry
3.	Continue the clean-up days as an annual event			X	X	X	RWRG, Nelson Lawry

RWRG – Rollinsford Water Resources Group

CRWC – Cocheco River Watershed Coalition

NROC – Natural Resources Outreach Coalition

NHDES – NH Department of Environmental Services

**DRAFT Work Plan – Land Conservation in Fremont
Fremont Open Space Committee (FOSC)
 July 14, 2006**

<i>THEME: AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE FOSC CONSERVATION PROCESS</i>							
<i>Goal 1 – Same as theme</i>							
TASKS/ACTIONS		2006	2006	2006/07	2007	2007	Responsibility
		Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	
1.	Create a work plan for the coming year	X Frank sent a draft					NROC, FOSC
2.	Develop additional written policies for land conservation	x	x				FOSC, FCC

FLUC Future Land Use Committee
 FOSC Fremont Open Space Committee
 NROC Natural Resources Outreach Coalition
 NHDES NH Department of Environmental Services
 RPC Rockingham Planning Commission

**DRAFT Work Plan – DRAFT Work Plan – Zoning Changes
Fremont Future Land Use Committee (FLUC)
July, 2006**

THEME: NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY							
<i>Goal – Fremont has a comprehensive natural resources inventory with maps and an interpretive report that serves as the Natural Resources Chapter of the Master Plan, and serves as a basis for a Conservation Plan (FOOSC).</i>							
TASKS/ACTIONS		2006	2006	2006/07	2007	2007	Responsibility
		Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	
1	Identify a professional to help write the NRI report/chapter and associated map interpretation	x					FLUC, NROC
2	Work on proposal to apply for NROC Implementation Grant Funding for the NRI report	x					FLUC, NROC
3	Work with the Fremont Open Space Committee on the natural resources inventory report	x	x	x			FLUC, NROC
4	Initial draft of report		x	x			Consultant, FLUC, NROC
5	Complete the NRI			x			Consultant, FLUC, NROC

THEME: OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE							
<i>Goal 1 – Fremont has an effective Open Space Subdivision Ordinance</i>							
<i>Goal 2 – The voting public will support passage of this ordinance</i>							
TASKS/ACTIONS		2006	2006	2006/07	2007	2007	Responsibility
		Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	
1	Get input to, and critical review of, the ordinance from NROC staff (Carolyn Russell, NH DES).	x	x				FLUC, RPC, NHDES
2	Develop and implement an outreach strategy (discussed above) to build public support for the ordinance	x	x	x			FLUC, RPC, NROC

FLUC Future Land Use Committee
 FOOSC Fremont Open Space Committee
 NROC Natural Resources Outreach Coalition
 NHDES NH Department of Environmental Services
 RPC Rockingham Planning Commission

APPENDIX C

Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC)

FREMONT-NROC EDUCATION & OUTREACH WORKSHOP SUMMARY September 19, 2006

(NROC Staff: Julia Peterson and Amanda Stone, UNH Cooperative Extension, and Steve Miller, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve)

The NROC Workshop “Building an Effective Education & Outreach Strategy” was held at the request of the Fremont Open Space Committee and the Fremont Future Land Use Committee. Below is a summary of the flipchart notes developed at the workshop.

LAND CONSERVATION (OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE)

1. What is the SITUATION?

- There is funding through the recent bond, but lack of interested landowners.

2. What is the outreach project GOAL?

- More interested landowners.

3. What Outcomes (results) would you like to see as a result of your outreach?

- Landowners understand benefits of land conservation – landowners will understand economic, environmental and personal benefits resulting from conserving their land.
- Landowners will know more accurate information and will let go of their misconceptions.
- Landowners will support the OSC purchasing conservation easements.
- Landowners will trust the OSC that their information is correct.

4. Who is the target Audience/s?

- Landowners in five priority areas (OSC has identified a landowner list).
- In-town landowners.
- Out-of-town landowners (absentee).

What do we know about the landowner audience?

- Some are local; some are absentee.
- Older landowners – larger properties for the most part.
- Other family members.
- Their land is their financial investment/ retirements funds
- Newcomers may appreciate rural character more – longer term residents may take it more for granted.

5. What are the BARRIERS for this audience?

- Lack of accurate information/knowledge.
- Misconceptions and fear.
- Competition from developers.
- Current use misconceptions.

6. What would be the INCENTIVES for this audience?

- Tax Benefits.
- Knowledgeable professionals and others.
- Someone who's already done a conservation easement.

7. What MESSAGES are most important for your audience to hear?

- Personal tax benefits associated with conservation easements and other financial benefits.
- Personal usage benefits (can still live on and use the land).
- Flexible options for a conservation easement.
- Create an immortal legacy.
- Public access is not always necessary.
- Fremont Open Space Committee is a good group!

8. What are the best METHODS for communicating your message?

Top three priorities:

- *Personal letters campaign to targeted landowners (8 votes)*
- *Host an event at an historic home (e.g. old schoolhouse, historic society building, old meeting house. (8 votes)*
- *One-on-one "The Conservation Specialist is in" event at a special meeting place, e.g. an historic home (can be combined with above). (5 votes)*

Note: Host an Event... and One on One... tasks could be combined

Remaining priorities ranked in order of number of votes:

- Recommendations from a friend. (2)
- Host coffee evenings at someone's home for small groups of landowners. (2)
- Information distributed at Bulkie Day. (1)
- Information Booth on Election Day. (1)
- Research the best approach for one-on-one communication. (0)
- Video on website. (0)

NEXT STEPS:

- At the next Open Space Committee meeting, develop an action plan using the above information (who will do what, when (timeline), funding and materials needed)
- Start implementing Education & Outreach strategy

ZONING CHANGES (FUTURE LAND USE COMMITTEE)

Since the zoning proposal for the 2007 town meeting has not yet been defined, the group developed a generic (rather than a specific) outreach model that could be used/adapted once a specific zoning proposal is in place.

1. What is the SITUATION?

- In the past, there has been only one zone in town – rural residential. In 2006, the town voted for a village district zone.

2. What is the outreach project GOAL?

- More support for zoning.

3. What Outcomes (results) would you like to see as a result of your outreach?

- Voters will support zoning.
- People would understand zoning, and know what zoning is and is not.
- They would know the benefits of zoning relating to preserving rural character.
- There would be fewer misconceptions about conservation subdivision zoning (e.g. “favors developers”).

4. Who is the target Audience/s?

- Planning Board (specifically with regard to conservation subdivision/open space zoning).
- Voters.

5. What are the BARRIERS for this audience?

- “Don’t tell me what to do with my land” attitude.
- Zoning is confusing.
- “Unfriendly” language can also be confusing.

6. What would be the INCENTIVES for this audience?

- Simple language.
- Clarify consequences of zoning/non-zoning.
- Seeing results from other community successes in similar communities to Fremont.

7. What MESSAGES are most important for your audience to hear?

Planning Board

- Experiences of other towns who’ve used conservation subdivision successfully

Voters

- Benefits of conservation subdivision vs conventional subdivisions – e.g. preservation of wildlife habitat, differences in appearance – how it would look.
- Economic benefits of conservation subdivisions.

8. What are the best METHODS for communicating your message?

Planning Board

- Someone from another town talks to them about conservation subdivision successes

Voters

- Posters, mailing, and simple language interpretation (use Deerfield model), information on the web, Voting Day booth.

NEXT STEPS:

- Once Planning Board has developed a zoning proposal, start to implement an appropriate outreach strategy based on the above information.

Open Space Committee / Land Conservation - Education & Outreach Action Plan
(to be completed by the Fremont Open Space Committee)

Tasks	Break down tasks into Steps	Person(s) who will take responsibility for each step	Date to Accomplish this	Funds needed?	Other Help Needed (from whom?)	Progress
<i>Personal letters campaign to targeted landowners</i>	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.			1. 2. 3.
<i>Host an event at an historic home</i>	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.			1. 2. 3.
<i>One-on-one "The Conservation Specialist is in" event at a special meeting place</i>	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.			1. 2. 3.

Future Land Use Committee - Education & Outreach Action Plan
(to be completed by the Fremont Open Space Committee)

Tasks	Break down tasks into Steps	Person(s) who will take responsibility for each step	Date to Accomplish this	Funds needed?	Other Help Needed (from whom?)	Progress
<i>Someone from another town talks to Planning Board about conservation subdivision successes</i>	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.			1. 2. 3.
<i>Educating Voters: posters, mailing, and simple language interpretation (use Deerfield model), information on the web, Voting Day booth.</i>	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.			1. 2. 3.