

BASWG Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2016

9:00 am – 11:30 am

Orono Town Office, Orono, Maine

Attendees: Belle Ryder, Patrick Decker, Tom Palmer, Cara Belanger, Phil Ruck, David Ladd, Doug Hill, Karen Cullen, Cintia Miranda, John Pond, Andrea Dickinson, Scott Wilkerson, Lou Colburn, Rhonda Poirier. Facilitator: Brenda Zollitsch.

Welcome

Belle welcomed everyone and introduced guest presenter Laura Wilson from University of Maine Cooperative Extension. The group did round-robin introductions.

Special Session on BASWG Efforts to Change Stormwater Pollution Behaviors in the Region

Presenter: Laura Wilson, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

Origins of BASWG's lawncare E&O efforts:

- Most homeowners did not treat their laws
- However, those that did often were dumping whole bags of Nitrogen and Phosphorus on their lawns. Rather than identifying the needed amount and using only that, most people were using the whole bag of fertilizer rather than storing it
- Although most of their neighbors were not applying chemicals, those who were thought their neighbors were too
- Research and practice had identified good lawncare practices – amount and timing of applications and ways to have an attractive, healthy lawn without applications. Specific nutrient recommendations were available.
 - o A special point was that most lawns had absolutely no need to apply Phosphorus (no benefit)
 - o If Nitrogen was added to early in the spring or too late in the fall --- doesn't work (amount and timing are key, otherwise applicators are throwing money away).

Behavior Change Goal:

Reduce the amount of lawn care chemicals being applied by homeowners that ran off into stormwater in the Greater Bangor Urbanized Area

Target Audience:

Do-It-Yourself Lawn Care Homeowners aged 30-55 in the Greater Bangor Urbanized Area.

Past Findings about Polluting Behavior

A. Applying chemicals (existing behavior):

Benefits – green lawn, lawn fits in with high standards of neighbors, didn't have to store fertilizer

Barriers – Cost of lawncare chemicals

B. Using less/non (appropriate) amounts (new behavior):

Benefits: Can still have good lawn, less cost for chemicals

Barriers: Have to learn right amounts of, measure and store lawn care chemicals

Message Testing:

Initially the BASWG thought that keeping children and pets safe from lawn chemicals would be the messaging that worked to get homeowners to reduce their use, but message testing showed that the message “your neighbors don’t do it, neither should you” was much more effective in getting homeowners to change their behavior.

Actions that homeowners were asked to take: “Reduce or eliminate your use of lawn chemicals”

- Soil test before applying Phosphorus
- Follow the application directions
- Don’t apply right before rain
- Mow high

How to distribute the message:

- First, BASWG tried a “point of sale” program, having store staff share messages and direct consumers to appropriate products in-store at the time of selection and purchase
 - Did not have adequate resources to make the project work well (need lots of support time, adequately train store staff, provide in-store displays and prompts)
 - Stores were not enthusiastic about participation and did not participate to the degree required to make the effort successful
 - Might want to revisit, as there is much more awareness and acceptance of these new environmental practices; may be seen more as a value added than an environmental effort.
- Moved to stormdrain stenciling – much more successful
 - Able to work in communities
 - Stenciling + door hangers
 - Has been working well for this permit cycle
 - Sage Grant will allow BASWG to assess different stenciling messages and markers – on the ground and with focus groups

What is the “Social Marketing” process of working towards behavior change?

- Identify your goal
 - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound
 - Strive to eventually change behaviors in at least 15% of target audience (tipping point)
- Outcomes and outputs
- Specific target audience(s) – look at benefits and barriers for them
- Identify the message you want to share to achieve those for each target audience
- What methods and resources do you need to get that message out to each target audience

- Implement
- Evaluate
- Revise as needed so continue to increase effectiveness

Group Discussion about Direction for BASWG Behavior Change Work

- Held a round-robin discussion on everyone's opinion on whether to continue to focus on reducing the use of lawncare chemicals or to change to another behavior
- Overall consensus was to keep with lawncare chemicals, but integrate other behavior change messages as well
- There is more to be done on lawncare; the biggest bang for the buck; lots of properties with changing ownership; many first-time homeowners (entering the target audience for the first time).
- Focus on one set of individual target neighborhoods for 3-5 years, rather than always moving from one neighborhood to the next; focus on developing relationships, ownerships; Focus on specific neighborhoods where lawncare chemicals are being applied by homeowners
- Enhance with messages about what happens when lawncare chemicals get into stormwater (impacts)
- Develop a seasonal focus for messaging (lawncare spring and summer; leaf clean-up-fall; snow and ice control winter, etc.
- Consider looking at developing a stormdrain stewards program for the region (message test on this focus) – local heroes.

Behavior Change Planning Next Steps:

- Connect with the other Maine stormwater clusters to see if they plan to continue with lawncare as their focus or change it
- Get sales stats on lawncare chemical sales in the BUA
- BASWG is working with Cara Belanger and Pulse Marketing to test various messages for stormdrain stenciling. It was mentioned that Chesapeake Bay uses "Don't Dump – Chesapeake Bay Drainage". "Don't Dump, Drains to River/Stream" is one of the messages being tested.

Stormdrain Stenciling Project Tasks

- Cara Belanger shared that none of the BASWG communities is planning to do stenciling this fall.
- She is working with communities over the winter months to prepare
- Pulse Marketing will be conducting the focus groups to test messages
- BASWG will be working with SMART students and staff re new outreach efforts
- Brenda Z. wrote and submitted a grant application to the Davis Conservation Foundation to support a partnership with SMART to develop new outreach approaches and a display (including for use at the Science Festival in Bangor in March 2017).

Invoice Payment and Contract Proposal

The BASWG reviewed an invoice from SEE for the BASWG PY4 Regional SWMP Report development/editing work. The current additional invoice was approved for payment. Monthly written reports will be required in PY5, so that data can simply be compiled from these reports for the annual report and reduce costs for end of year report development. The group discussed getting any expenses beyond a signed contract and budget formally approved by the BASWG prior to the work being conducted. The group also discussed the revised contract proposal from SEE. The only proposed change is to the reporting element of the contract, requesting additional funding for annual report development/editing work. The group may want to consider simply relying on a compilation of the monthly written reports. Due to time constraints, additional discussion of the proposed contract was moved to the BASWG Executive Committee Meeting.

Executive Committee Meeting Planned

The BASWG will hold an executive committee meeting to discuss the following actions/needs:

- BASWG 2017-2018 (PY5) draft budget development
- Who should be part of contract discussions (conflict of interest discussion)
- SEE contract review
- Designated voters for BASWG business items
- BASWG Bylaws and Procurement policies
- Ex Officio representatives on BASWG Executive Committee
- Nominations for executive committee positions

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 8, 2016 from 9:00 am – 11:00 am - Location TBD.