

Changes to the Decision Making Process



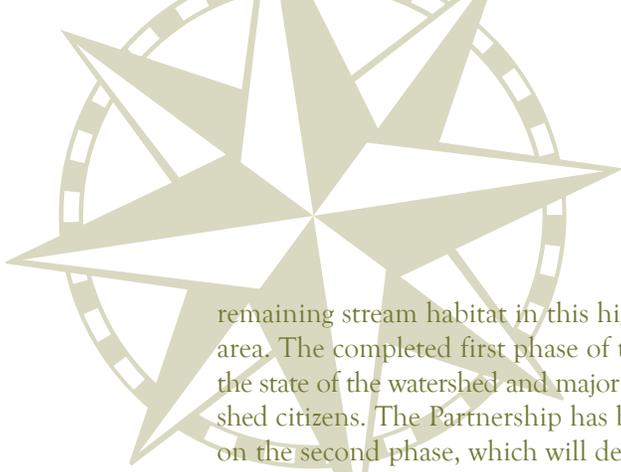
With a Spotlight on New York NEMO

The way a town “does business” has a lot to do with the ultimate outcome of land use decisions. The type and structure of land use boards, cooperation between departments in a municipality and between municipalities in a region or watershed, maintenance procedures, public involvement and education—all can have a critical impact on the effectiveness of the planning process.

- ▶ **Candia, New Hampshire:** After a year of targeted support from the New Hampshire NEMO effort, NROC, the Town of Candia hosted a “Conservation Nuts & Bolts” workshop that was attended by folks from neighboring towns. The workshop led to a public education brochure on the importance of open space conservation, and **the town is raising \$200,000 for conservation purposes.**
- ▶ **Floyd County, Indiana:** The Indiana NEMO effort, *Planning with POWER*, worked with the county planning director and helped organize a **natural resource protection committee** to address future natural resource protection and water quality concerns. The committee worked with POWER to develop a list of critical issues for consideration in planning, including the use of septic systems, development on steep hillsides and protection of sensitive natural areas.
- ▶ **Alabama:** In response to state Stormwater Phase II requirements, the Cities of Auburn and Opelika, Auburn University and Lee County formed a **stormwater think tank** to tackle new regulations, improve stormwater management and have a consistent regional message. AL NEMO representatives help guide the group’s decisions and recommendations. NEMO has also assisted in the creation of educational brochures that target erosion and sediment control, stormwater management resources and post-construction stormwater management practices.
- ▶ **Mississippi:** MS NEMO educational programs have assisted towns and counties throughout Mississippi to **assess the cumulative impact** of new development on storm drainage systems and to determine what on-site stormwater BMPs to require.
- ▶ **Armand Bayou Watershed, Texas:** The TX NEMO Program convened the **Armand Bayou Watershed Partnership**, a group of over 40 municipalities, non-governmental organizations, state and federal agencies and universities to develop a watershed protection plan that focuses on preserving



IN NEMO is helping communities form local committees to address natural resource issues in land use planning.



remaining stream habitat in this highly urbanized area. The completed first phase of the plan details the state of the watershed and major goals of watershed citizens. The Partnership has begun working on the second phase, which will develop a habitat protection plan and an overall plan that meets the ten elements required by EPA watershed plans.

- ▶ **Eightmile River Watershed, Connecticut:** The Eightmile watershed is comprised of a 63 square mile area of unusually intact forest and agricultural lands in the Towns of East Haddam, Lyme and Salem. Following an educational effort by the CT NEMO Program, the three towns signed an **Inter-municipal Conservation Compact**, agreeing to work together to grow in a way that protects the pristine watershed's resources. Since the Compact was signed, the towns have formed open space committees, initiated local land trusts, protected hundreds of acres of forest and farmland and are seeking federal designation of the river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers program.



Local officials from the Eightmile River Watershed sign Inter-municipal Conservation Compact.

- ▶ **Kandiyohi County, Minnesota:** In response to citizen interest and information provided by Northland NEMO, the county and the Cities of Spicer and New London have provided funding to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and citizen groups to conduct **water quality monitoring** on a number of area lakes and streams.



NV NEMO's resource binder is an important resource for planning commissioners.

- ▶ **Nevada:** In Nevada, the NEMO Program provides all participants in their workshops with a **NEMO resource binder** filled with information on the impacts of land use on natural resources. **Planning commissioners are now using the binders as a reference** when considering development proposals. As a result, commissioners are asking developers to find ways to increase infiltration and reduce polluted runoff in their plans.

- ▶ **Connecticut:** Working with CT NEMO, at least ten municipalities within the state have created **separate Conservation Commissions** to pursue natural resource inventories, open space planning and other conservation-related tasks. In towns that have combined Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commissions, the wetland regulation function of the commission often overwhelms the more planning-related conservation functions, to the disadvantage of both.

- ▶ **Lake Superior Watershed, Wisconsin & Minnesota:** Northland NEMO leads boat trips on Lake Superior for land use officials as part of their **A View from the Lake** program. The trips provide a unique opportunity to discuss how land use decisions impact natural resources and, more specifically, Western Lake Superior. Participants not only view the lake and shoreline, but also take



Northland NEMO's A View from the Lake program demonstrates the importance of land use to natural resource protection.

part in build-out scenarios of a model community and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of different development patterns. More than 500 local officials and interested citizens participated in each of the project's first two years.

- ▶ **Darby Creek Watershed, Ohio:** OH NEMO has helped **convene the ten jurisdictions** within the Big Darby Creek Watershed to work together on a joint natural resource based comprehensive land use plan. The OH NEMO Program is coordinating the scientific oversight and review of the plan, which will be presented to all of the jurisdictions for their review and approval in 2005.

Spotlight on New York

Facilitating Cooperation in a Complex Jurisdictional Environment

New York's Long Island is characterized by beautiful beaches, bays, wetlands and harbors. It has also experienced tremendous development and population growth over the last 50 years. Contaminated stormwater on the island has resulted in restricted bathing, reduced fisheries, poor surface water quality and degraded wetlands and wildlife habitats. The vast majority of municipalities on the island are now subject to the U.S. EPA's Stormwater Phase II regulations.

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) started a NEMO program to help Long Island municipalities address nonpoint source pollution and protect natural resources. One of the challenges to stormwater management on Long Island is the many levels of municipal government. Within the Island's two counties are 2 cities and 13 towns. In addition, within the 13 towns, there are 95 incorporated villages. Hence, NY NEMO's stormwater management recommendations emphasize intermunicipal approaches to ensure cost effective, optimal resource protection. In doing so, the NYSG NEMO Program, while facilitating municipal Phase II compliance, has also contributed to increased efforts to

leverage expenditures and to jointly address shared water quality concerns through co-implemented Phase II stormwater management programs.

For example, Nassau County, which has a population of 1.3 million and a population density of 4,665 people per square mile, has now taken the lead in forming an intermunicipal stormwater coalition comprised of over 50 villages. The coalition is working to devise effective, coordinated stormwater management policies and practices. NYSG NEMO has provided support regarding model ordinance development, illicit discharge detection and elimination, municipal pollution prevention and both construction and post-construction stormwater management.



NY NEMO utilizes satellite images to help demonstrate the need for stormwater management partnerships.

Municipalities in Suffolk County are now engaged in intermunicipal management strategies as well. For example, the Town of Southampton has formed a Phase II stormwater management partnership with its five villages. Additionally, elsewhere in Suffolk, joint runoff control efforts are underway in the Town of Huntington and in the Nissequogue River drainage basin.

Such activities represent important resource protection milestones on Long Island, in that they entail a new, broader perspective—one which surpasses local jurisdictional boundaries. Through these approaches, municipalities are likely to realize more effective water quality improvements than could be achieved otherwise. Perhaps of equal significance is that these partnerships serve as models for replication throughout Long Island. NYSG NEMO looks forward to facilitating that important process.

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