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**Journal of  
New Hampshire Water Works Association**

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**NHWWA Annual Meeting** - November 5, 2020, 1:30 PM,  
Zoom Platform

For a complete list of our fall events please visit our website  
at [nhwwa.org](http://nhwwa.org).

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# Scenario-based Strategic Planning

by Boyd Smith, Executive Director

This summer the NH Water Works Association (NHWWA) prepared for the future using a scenario-planning approach. Planning and preparation are critical to our industry, where service interruptions can have serious consequences. The future is uncertain and impossible to predict. However, we know that change will occur, and some of it – such as emerging contaminants, drought, and COVID – will be significantly disruptive. This article summarizes how a small Association with a big mission is preparing itself for the future. We think there will be useful ideas for you and your organization, too.

It's hard to think outside of the box when living and working inside of the box. We are good at responding to events but cannot predict the future, especially years from now. Scenario planning is designed to expand our imaginations to better consider what might be coming over the horizon. Scenario planning takes a long view, contemplating what the world will be like 10+ years in the future. Of course, it is important to balance the demands of today while building resilience and flexibility to prepare for the unknown. Some key concepts and questions for scenario-planning include:

Apply Outside-in Thinking (What external changes over the long-term could have a major impact?)

Obtain Multiple Perspectives (Which diverse voices could help shed new light on your challenges?)

Don't Rush to Find Solutions. First imagine and describe plausible future worlds, then use the effects or implications of those worlds to help identify effective strategies.

Funded by tax credits purchased through the NH Community Development Finance Authority (NHCDFA), we contracted with attorney and former NH Department of Environmental Services Commissioner Tom Burack to lead us through the planning process. Tom brought deep experience in New Hampshire's water industry with a scenario planning framework to our strategic planning process, and we are benefitting from his leadership. Some key elements of our scenario planning process are summarized below.

## **Interviews**

We assessed current conditions by interviewing a cross-section of leaders in the drinking water sector, from NHWWA Directors who represent utilities, consultants, suppliers and regulators; to vendors, analytical laboratories and legislators. We learned about challenges facing the industry and ideas for addressing them. Many of the challenges, such as underfunded infrastructure and a maturing workforce, have been around a long time. Others, such as public engagement with emerging contaminants through social media, are newer. Technological innovation, from communications to SCADA to treatment systems, can happen quickly and affect how we operate our systems. The slower but accelerating impacts from climate change are impacting both surface and ground water sources, and possibly future demographics and population growth.

## **What if?**

Building on the traditional S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) framework, Tom led us through several exercises to practice imagining plausible "what-if" situations that would change the world around us. We all practice "what-if" every day, usually unconsciously. For example, what if that car crosses the centerline? What if I get laid off? What if we win the lottery? It was interesting that most of our scenarios were based on problems, but positive changes can be equally disruptive.



## **Imagineering**

During a late-August in-person workshop we picked two driving forces, infrastructure funding and public engagement, to imagine four possible New Hampshire towns built around the extremes of fund abundance to scarcity, and well-engaged to unengaged public (see matrix on following page). The four towns were all communities we would recognize. Then we exercised our imaginations by adding plausible yet unusual disruptive events (extreme weather, power and communications failures, contaminated water supply, rapid population growth) and considering how the towns would and should respond. Our ability to think outside of our well-established boxes, or mental models of how we see the world, began to grow. This required repeated attempts, as with any effort to learn something new.

## **People are the critical resource**

All of our challenges are met with varying degrees of human creativity, skill, commitment and teamwork. A top-quality team consistently outperforms a group that lacks training, purpose and leadership. The sector's ability to meet its near- and long-term needs requires a dependable, sustainable flow of qualified workers to enter and advance through their professional fields. Our strategic planning approach includes building and sustaining our leadership skills and culture.

## **Building and sustaining a culture**

Effective organizations have established systems that help them consistently exceed expectations. Consider how the New England Patriots won multiple Super Bowls while cycling rookie and veteran players through their ranks. Their mental and physical "bench depth" allowed them to continually surprise their opponents, often snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. Ways that the NHWWA will build and maintain its culture of success include clear, mission-focused governance documents and procedures; thoughtful selection and cultivation of Directors; establishing and nurturing

**Matrix of Condensed Scenarios – DRAFT  
NH Communities in 2030 (10 Years from Now)**

**Abundant Funds**

**Rich and Clueless:** This coastal town is dominated by a self-contained, gated, over-55 community of 250 homes with modern infrastructure. Association fees and local taxes are high, but people don't care as long as things work....

**Happily Green, Until....:** A NH town with large budgets and a population involved on volunteer committees and boards. Town infrastructure is well staffed and funded, family incomes are above average, and citizens feel entitled....

**Unengaged Public**

**The Bare Minimum:** Ethnically diverse, low-income NH town. Stagnant population growth, older age demographic, no commercial or industrial growth, and dependent on Social Security. Unemployment high but taxes low in this SB-2 town....

**GudenPoor:** A rural NH town with an educated, worldly, and engaged population, aging infrastructure, high taxes and limited commercial tax base. High level of trust in local government, with numerous affinity groups that champion various causes....

**Well Engaged Public**

**Scarce Funds**

effective partnerships; and frequently and objectively assessing goals and our progress toward them.

Tom developed the Water Wheels planning model from our interviews, our sector's core mission, driving forces, and desirable organizational attributes (see June 2020 draft on the following page). Placing our core mission – to provide safe, clean drinking water – at the center of the Water Wheel, we arrayed internal and external attributes and drivers to model the interconnected and dynamic nature of the industry. In our June 2020 example the long-term effects of climate change lead to increasing droughts, which may require water rationing. The organization will need excellent communications skills and platforms to help our members motivate the public to act in a way that maintains sufficient water for everyone.

Scenario planning balances the daily demands of our profession with preparing for disruptions that we can't predict. Our scenario planning remains a work in progress, with November 5, 2020 (our Annual Meeting) as the targeted completion date. Building on what we learned this summer, we will continue to refine our priorities and methods to address some of the sector's biggest challenges. We are committed to applying our knowledge and experience to help our members and partners provide reliable, safe and clean drinking water.

**Acknowledgments.** Special thanks to the NHCDFA for accepting our project proposal, and to Merrimack County Savings Bank; Cleveland, Water & Bass, PA; and Wright-Pierce Engineers for being the lead tax-credit investors that funded our strategic plan. We greatly appreciate the experience and committed and collaborative approach that Tom brought to help the NHWWA build on its already impressive leadership skills.

# NHWWA's Water Wheels: Planning for Future Worlds While Working in Today's

(June 2020 DRAFT 1.1)



# Construction Day 2020

## July 29, 2020



Construction Day started with breakfast and an introduction at the Merrimack Village District's garage.

NH Water Works Association's annual Construction Day has a long tradition of friendship and adventure. We rent a bus, gather a bunch of drinking water professionals, tour a facility to learn about current drinking water projects, and share a meal to connect with our colleagues. The COVID pandemic raised a big question mark over our 2020 plans, but with the creativity and perseverance typical of the profession, we found a way to enjoy one of the few in-person technical events held this summer.

Merrimack Village District (MVD), which is undergoing substantial system upgrade to address PFAS contamination, invited us to visit three critical parts of their system to learn from their experience (see technical article on MVD's response to PFAS challenges in the [Spring 2020 Journal article](#)). Their consulting team, Underwood Engineers, Inc., staffed each of three locations with a professional familiar with the project. After starting the day in MVD's garage, we

divided into three groups, took separate cars, and rotated through each location. After the site visits, we gathered at the garage for boxed lunches and a wrap-up presentation by Underwood’s project manager Mike Metcalf, PE. Slides from Mike’s intro and wrap-up presentations can be found at [nhwwa.org](http://nhwwa.org).



Peter Pitsas, PE of Underwood Engineers, Inc. presents the Wells 4&5 PFAS treatment project.



The Turkey Hill Booster Pump Station project was reviewed by Mike Metcalf, PE and Tim Puls, PE of Underwood Engineers, Inc.





Lynnette Carney, PE, Underwood Engineers, Inc. presented at the Wells 7&8 WTP.

While we missed riding the bus together, getting outside to see an innovative and important project with our friends and colleagues made for a great day. NHWWA wants to thank MVD and Underwood Engineers, especially Jill Lavoie of MVD and Mike Metcalf, PE of Underwood, for the time and effort they invested to make this an interesting and fun event. Please take a moment to send a note of thanks their way.

We look forward to 2021, when we expect to be back on the bus, learning about other drinking water challenges and how our peers in the profession are solving them!



Installing carbon vessel at Wells 4&5.

# WATER IS ESSENTIAL

## Fall Seminar Series

October 20, 22 & 27, 2020

### **Three webinars featuring three one-hour presentations each**

Though COVID prevents us from meeting in person this October, we are sharing the spirit of our annual Trade Show and Exposition through a series of interesting and relevant webinars featuring leaders in emerging contaminants, infrastructure management and funding, emerging technologies, state-of-the-art equipment, drinking water regulations, and more.

**Each Webinar will be held from 8:45 AM—12:15 PM.**

**3 TCHs - per Webinar**

#### **COST:**

\$40 per webinar for NHHWA members

\$50 per webinar for non-members

\$100 for all three seminars, NHHWA members

\$125 for all three seminars, non-members

**REGISTRATION:** To register visit our website at [www.nhwwa.org](http://www.nhwwa.org) or fill out the form on page 20 and return with payment. Zoom login will be sent upon receipt of your registration. **Please use the email for the attendee to receive the Zoom link.**

## Day One

# MONITORING, MAINTENANCE AND EMERGING CONTAMINANTS

**Tuesday, October 20, 2020**

### **8:45 - 9:00 AM - LOGIN TO WEBINAR**

**9:00 AM - MONITOR YOUR SYSTEM FROM HOME** by Dave Crawford,  
Champlin Associates

Increase productivity from home. All personnel can check in on the water system safely during unprecedented times. Supervisory control and data acquisition remain a terrific asset to the water system. SCADA systems are used to monitor and control the equipment which includes vital components to your water system.

**10:00 AM - GENERAL WELL CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE** by Lauren  
Thistle, Wright-Pierce

Maintaining a sustainable well supply is often overlooked and undervalued and can result in significantly higher operating and maintenance costs over time. During this presentation principles of groundwater flow to a well, causes for decline in well performance, how to analyze performance data and methods available to regain lost yield and the application of various maintenance and rehabilitation technologies will be discussed. The goal of this training is for operators of public supply wells to maximize the life of a groundwater well source providing long-term costs savings through maintenance and good record keeping.

### **11:00—11:15 AM BREAK**

**11:15 AM - REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE** by Cynthia  
Klevens, P.E., NHDES

Updates on Arsenic and PFAS standards and regulations. Cindy will discuss the programs to cover school and daycare remediation costs for some PFAS contamination.

### **12:15 PM - WEBINAR CONCLUDES**

## Day Two

### MONEY GOES WHERE THE WATER FLOWS

Thursday, October 22, 2020

#### 8:45 - 9:00 AM - LOGIN TO WEBINAR

**9:00 AM - REDUCE NON-REVENUE WATER WITH COST EFFECTIVE LEAK AND PRESSURE DATA** by Brett Johnson, Clow Valve Co., and Tom Bohrer, Nighthawk

Learn about leak detection strategies that fit your utility's needs and save you money.

**10:00 AM - WATER BALANCE – HOW IS YOUR SYSTEM DOING?** by Brian Goetz, City of Portsmouth

From source to tap, knowing and tracking available water supply with demands is critically important. This talk will guide attendees through the process of determining your water balance, which compares the distribution system input volume with the sum of customer consumption and losses (estimated or known). Topics will include metering, meter calibration, data management, leak detection, unavoidable water loss, water efficiency and effective customer outreach.

#### 11:00—11:15 AM BREAK

**11:15 AM - PANDEMIC PLANS, EMERGENCY PLANS, CONTINUITY OF OPERATION PLANS, OH MY!** by Johnna McKenna and Stephanie Nistico, PWS Sustainability Section, Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau, NHDES

There are many types of plans out there. Which one is the best, how can existing plans be improved and what did we all learn so far with the current COVID situation. Upcoming state and federal emergency planning and risk assessment requirements will also be discussed.

#### 12:15 PM WEBINAR CONCLUDES

## Day Three

### PFAS & ARSENIC: WHAT NOW?

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

#### 8:45 - 9:00 AM - LOGIN TO WEBINAR

**9:00 AM - TREATING PFAS OR ARSENIC IN SMALL PWS** by Steve Guer-  
cia, Secondwind Water Systems, Inc.

Discussion will focus on small systems with flows less than 50 gpm and volume less than 50,000 gpd including systems as small as 10 gpm and a few hundred gpd. Topics will include both point of entry and point of use treatment options for both contaminants, a comparison of the various technologies and media that are available, potential fouling minerals in the water, and the necessary contact time for the media available. We will also review the options for systems that already have arsenic treatment but now have to meet a lower MCL.

**10:00 AM - PFAS & ARSENIC TREATMENT IN MID TO LARGE NH WA-  
TER SYSTEMS**, by Michael Metcalf, P.E., Underwood Engineers, Inc.

In the last 5 years, PFAS contamination of both public and private water supplies in New Hampshire has become a major issue. Arsenic, which has been a contaminant of concern for many years has become a greater issue with the recent change in the MCL in NH from 10 µg/L to 5 µg/L. This seminar will cover the design and/or construction phase of PFAS treatment facilities in Merrimack and Dover and an Arsenic treatment facility in Epping.

#### 11:00—11:15 AM BREAK

**11:15 AM - INTRODUCTION TO THE PFAS REMEDIATION LOAN FUND  
(PFASRLF) FOR QUALIFYING PUBLIC DRINKING WATER** by Amy Rous-  
seau, NHDES

House Omnibus Bill 1264 establishes the PFAS Remediation Loan Fund (PFASRLF). This low interest loan will be available to qualifying community and non-profit non-transient non-community drinking water systems for addressing PFAS contamination. Specifics of the loan program and how to apply will be discussed.

#### 12:15 PM WEBINAR CONCLUDES

## WATER IS ESSENTIAL Fall Seminar Series

To register visit our website at [www.nhwwa.org](http://www.nhwwa.org) or complete the registration form below and mail with payment to NHWWA, 18 N. Main St., Suite 308, Concord, NH 03301. **Please use the email for the attendee to receive the Zoom link.**

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### **COST FOR ALL THREE WEBINARS:**

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$125 for non-members

### **PLEASE SELECT YOUR WEBINAR(S):**

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**Deadlines:** Journal Vol. I - April 1 | Journal Vol. II - September 1  
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