

Water Resources Planning Committee

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

December 6, 2023

Agenda

1. Introductions – new members
2. Legislative updates and bills
3. Water Resources Data web portal
4. Saltwater intrusion work at MGS

5-MINUTE BREAK

6. Pop-up presentations
7. Public comment period
8. Future meeting topics

New members and terms

Seat	Name	Organization
1	Stephen Dickson	MGS
2	Craig Lapine	DACF Food and Rural Resources
3	David Braley	PUC
4	Mark Margerum	DEP
5	Stacie Beyer	LUPC
6	Susan Breau	DHHS Drinking Water Program
7	Jeannie Tapley	Maine Potato Board
8	Mary Jane Dillingham	MaineWater and Maine Water Utilities Assoc
9	Mark Dubois	Poland Spring
10	Bertrand Kendall	retired Denmark Town Manager
11	vacant	“EXPERTISE IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION”
12	Dirk Gouwens	Ski Maine
13	Susan Gallo	Maine Lakes
14	Stacy Thompson	City of Saco WRRD
15	Ryan Gordon	MGS
16	Jessica Meeks	MGS
17	David Bell	Cherryfield Foods Inc
18	Julie Ann Smith	Maine Farmers Coalition
19	Kate Warner	Maine Rural Water Assoc
20	Andrew Beahm	Maine Audubon
21	Dan Kuznierz	Penobscot Nation

WRPC Mandate

APPROVED

APRIL 30, 2019

BY GOVERNOR

CHAPTER

67

PUBLIC LAW

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN

H.P. 162 - L.D. 199

An Act To Create the Water Resources Planning Committee

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA Pt. 15-C is enacted to read:

PART 15-C

WATER RESOURCES PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER 357

WATER RESOURCES PLANNING COMMITTEE

§6401. Water Resources Planning Committee

1. Water Resources Planning Committee. The Water Resources Planning Committee, as established in section 12004-I, subsection 68-C and referred to in this subsection as "the committee," is established in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

Summary of WRPC Goals

Plan for the sustainable use of water resources. The committee shall focus on:

1. Collecting and reviewing information regarding water withdrawal activities;
2. Coordinating state water resources information; and
3. Identifying watersheds at risk by refining the most recent analysis of watersheds at risk performed by the . . . Maine Geological Survey, including:
 - a) Conducting appropriate water resources investigations in watersheds at risk;
 - b) Considering projected increased water use by population, agricultural irrigation, commercial users, industrial users and other users;
 - c) Considering seasonal use;
 - d) Considering potential effects of climate change;
 - e) Considering the effects of anticipated future water quality classification changes on the availability of water for withdrawal;
 - f) In establishing priorities for further investigations, seeking input from the user community, from towns dealing with multimunicipal aquifers and from towns with significant local aquifers; and
 - g) Developing guidelines for consistency in further investigations.

Summary of WRPC Goals

Review state policy with regard to:

1. Conservation of water resources;
2. Development of regional sources and solutions to water use issues;
3. Incentives for stewardship of water resources; and
4. Effects of surface water quality improvements on water withdrawal opportunities.

The committee shall provide guidance to municipalities and water districts and develop and disseminate educational materials on water resources and the regulatory regime.

“Commission to Study the Role of Water as a Resource in the State of Maine”

- Established by a resolve of the 130th legislature in 2022
- Met 5 times September through December
- Final report issued in late 2022:
<https://legislature.maine.gov/role-of-water-as-a-resource-in-the-state>
- Takeaways:
 - People want better information about water use and availability in Maine
 - There is ongoing interest in legislation over water resources
 1. Information about water availability and water use
 2. Control/ownership of water
 3. Regulation and monitoring of water use

Bills in the Maine Legislature

First Session of the 131st Maine Legislature

- LD 1111, “Act Concerning Contracts and Agreement for Large-scale Water Extraction”
- LD 1641, “Resolve to Further Study the Role of Water as a Resource”
- LD 1441, “Act to Enhance State Oversight of Water Use and Water Resources”

LD 1111

“Act Concerning Contracts and Agreement for Large-scale Water Extraction” (Energy, Utilities and Technology)

- Main aim was to limit length of private contracts between water utilities and large customers
- Originally contained a local voting requirement based on “watershed”:

Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §6109-B, sub-§1-A is enacted to read:

1-A. Local approval required. In addition to the other requirements of this section, a consumer-owned water utility may not enter into a contract or agreement subject to this section, including, but not limited to, the renewal or extension of a contract or agreement subject to this section, until the legislative body of each municipality and township located within the watershed from which water is to be extracted and transported pursuant to that contract or agreement has voted to approve such extraction and transportation.

LD 1641

“Resolve to Further Study the Role of Water as a Resource”
(Environment and Natural Resources)

- Failed to get 2/3 for emergency enactment in time for this fall
- Would have reconstituted the Commission to Study the Role of Water in fall 2023
- More focused scope addressing:
 - public access to information, water resources monitoring and data collection
 - legal rights and ownership over groundwater
 - drought preparedness
 - PFAS

LD 1441

“Act to Enhance State Oversight of Water Use and Water Resources” (Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry)

- Passed, sent to Appropriations, then carried over
- Key additions to our mandate (Water Resources Planning Committee):
 - “provide for the **consolidation and centralization** of collected state water resources information **within a single state agency**, ensuring **public access** to that information”
 - Identifying measures to enhance or supplement **monitoring and data collection** regarding water use and water resources
- Also makes changes to the Agricultural Water Management Board

Water Resources web portal at MGS

- There is a clear desire for more publicly available water data
 - Availability and ease of use are important
 - A centralized internet portal that consolidates data sources
 - we propose to host one at MGS
- Content would include:
 - Water use estimates made through USGS and MGS research projects
 - Aggregated water use data collected through State programs
 - Groundwater level data collected by the USGS and MGS
 - Studies on water availability
 - Links to other resources
- Thoughts?

Potential complications with water use reporting

- Reporting is incomplete, and estimates are not contemporaneous (MGS estimates based on category: irrigation, public supply, industrial)
- Water use reports sent to the State under the Water Withdrawal Reporting law (Title 38 §470-A ff.) are confidential.
 - In the past, data in public reports was aggregated by county.
 - Aggregation by small watershed might not preserve confidentiality.
 - **How can we share water use data with the public more transparently, while still protecting security and privacy of water users?**

USGS water use models

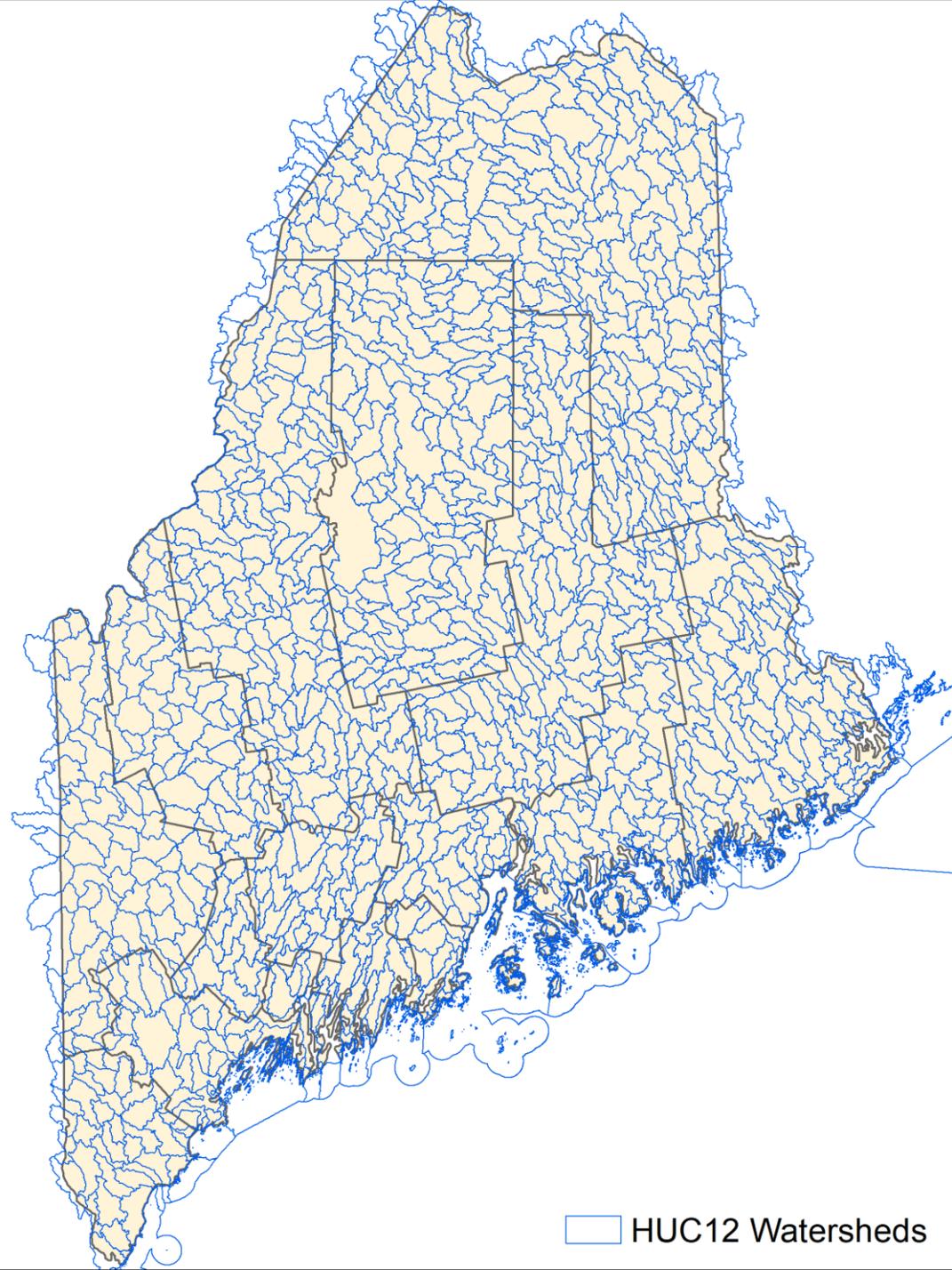
New model-based estimates of water use

- use national datasets, remote sensing, and regional studies to calibrate

Annual water use estimates for 2000 through 2020 at HUC-12 watersheds:

- irrigation
- public supply
- thermoelectric

<https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources/science/water-use-united-states>

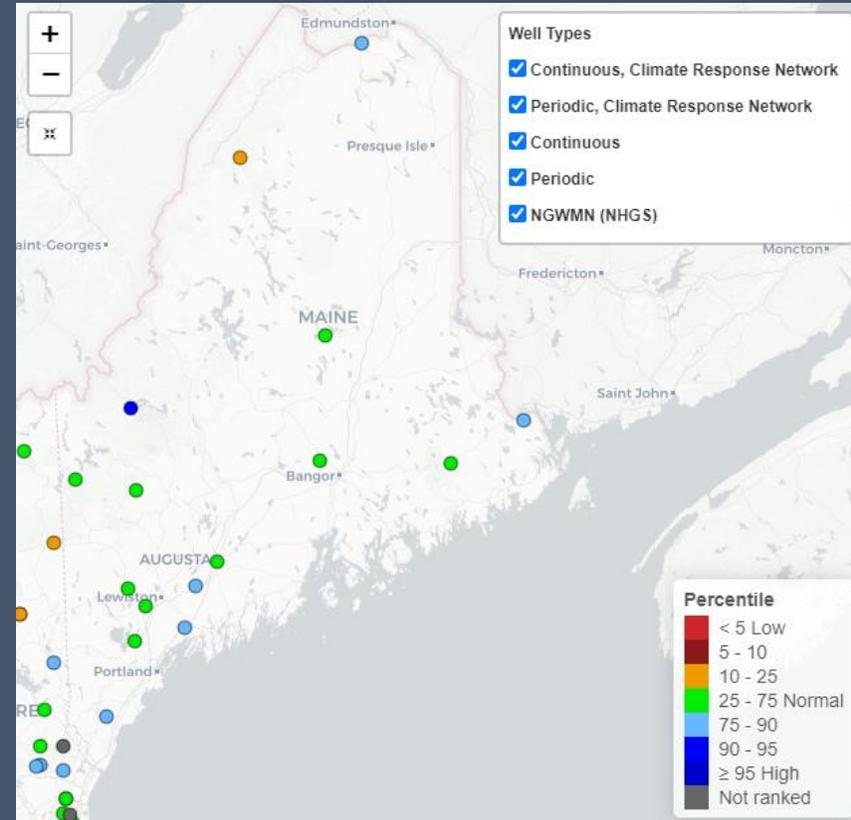


□ HUC12 Watersheds

Groundwater level data in Maine

USGS NWIS data:

https://newengland.water.usgs.gov/web_app/GWW/GWW.html



The National Groundwater Monitoring Network (NGWMN):

<https://cida.usgs.gov/ngwmn/>

National Ground-Water Monitoring Network

<https://cida.usgs.gov/ngwmn/>

- 18 USGS wells (not shown at right)
- 27 MGS/DEP wells
- 10 new MGS wells
- new real-time data equipment still a work in progress

>> NGWMN NETWORKS

▼ FILTER MAP DATA

>> Principal Aquifer

>> Available Data

>> Site Type

>> State and County

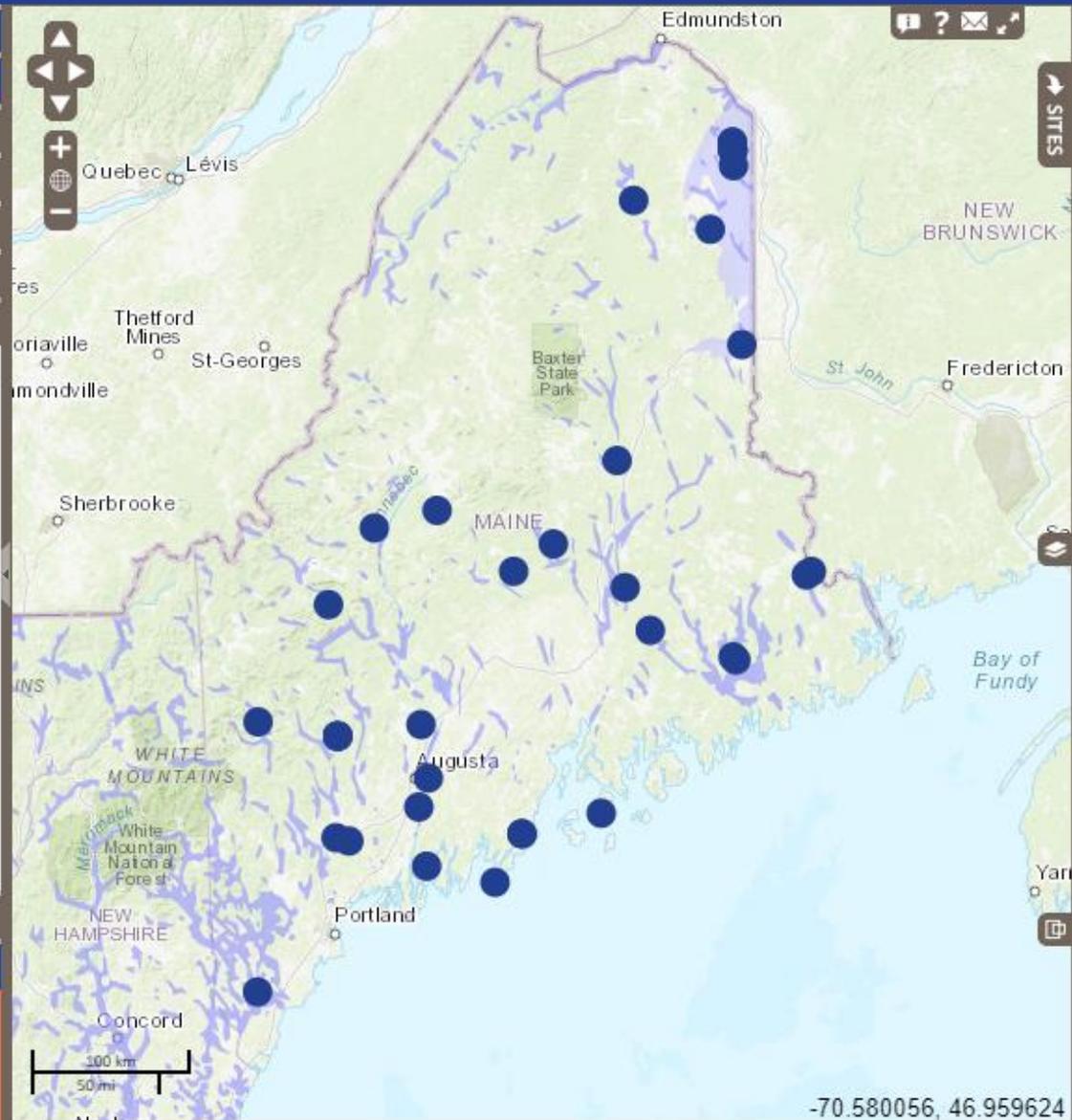
▼ Contributing Agency

- All
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources
- Arizona Department of Water Resources
- Colorado Division of Water Resources
- Delaware Geological Survey
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Geological Survey of Alabama
- Ice Mountain
- Illinois State Water Survey
- Indiana Geological Survey
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Geological Survey
- Kansas Geological Survey
- Kentucky Geological Survey
- Maine Geological Survey
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

>> Aquifer Characteristics

CURRENT STATUS

- 37 Sites mapped
- 37 Sites matching filter
- 37 Water-level network wells
- 0 Water-quality network wells



Other resources, links, etc?

Ideas:

- Links to drought monitoring
- Links to Maine Cooperative Snow Survey
- Links to other short-term climate information
- Links to USGS surface water gaging stations and StreamStats

