

**Maine Statewide Wood Energy Assistance Team
Meeting Notes - 31 January 2018
MFPC HQ, Augusta**

Welcome; introductions; agenda review

Members and staff present

Maura Adams, Peter Beringer, Doug Denico, Eric Kingsley, Charlie Levesque, Donald Mansius, Richard Nass, Charlie Niebling, Lisa Smith, Bede Wellford (for Bill Bell)

1. Introductions

Introduced the contractor that will be managing the wood energy assistance program from here - Innovative Natural Resource Solutions, LLC (INRS).

Question - Can significant changes be made to the work plan/outcomes?

Response - Yes, if the USDA Forest Service (grantor) approves.

2. Review of proposed ME SWEAT workplan

Charlie Niebling led the discussion of the proposed workplan (attached to these notes):

Task 2 - Develop and publicize list of practitioners

- Need a list of practitioners/vendors/installers/etc.
- Won't be in a position to endorse/recommend particular firms; consumers need to do research.
- Categorize by schools/municipalities/businesses, etc.
- The list will be Maine-specific (est. 50-100 practitioners).
- Will link to NH, VT sites.

Tasks 3/4/5 - Tech. assistance through qualified independent professionals (engineers); Develop and coordinate tech. assistance program; Maintain database of tech. assistance provided

- Highly dependent on US Forest Service financial assistance or some other form of funding external to this grant.
- Important to have a point person/champion at local level.
- Idea is to have Ambassadors who make presentations to groups, followed up by coaching by modern wood heat engineers for good prospects.

- “Coaching” would include providing estimates for appropriations/bonding purposes; engineering study (pre-feasibility); enable prospects to take the next step to getting a system.
- Or could have a “Coach Plus” - engineer who provides extra assistance; or additionally, do a true feasibility study (these are cost-shared 50/50 in NH).
- Anyone interested in going beyond feasibility study willing to find the \$? Things are tough right now w/relatively low oil prices.
- There might not be \$, but engineering firm under contract to US Forest Service could do survey.
- Who will do the coaching? These were loss-leaders for engineers in NH; roughly \$2K - \$2.5K for one-day on site plus write-up. There are some firms in ME that could do this.
- Can we develop a questionnaire? It’s been done.
- Maybe the US Forest Service contractor could train Ambassadors.

Task 6 - Comprehensive database of commercial/institutional/municipal modern wood heating systems in state. Collect data on systems through survey process. Identify 3 - 5 with persistent operational challenges for tech. assistance funded by ME SWEAT. Prepare case studies of these. Publicize

- INRS will make appropriate inquiries to get full population of systems operating in Maine. Will conduct 100% survey - email w/followup call.
- Find 3-5 underperforming systems; attempt to understand why; maybe get US Forest Service contractor to help fix.
- Document w/case studies.

Task 7 - General outreach

- In NH, INRS helped people publicize new installations. Propose to do same in Maine.

Task 8 - Conduct two Maine Modern Wood Heat Symposia for system owners and operators, vendors, advocates, prospective owners

- Surveys of potential attendees/audience would inform the program.
- Intended for more than boiler operators - include vendors, “tire kickers,” public officials, etc.
- October is a good month. Spring and summer not so good. Settled on mid-October to mid-November.
- Look at school building funding list.

- First symposium - fall 2018 - Presque Isle (existing facilities available to tour).

Task 9 - Provide updated info to website and other communications (e.g. possible e - newsletter)

- Will develop e-newsletter
- Look at other states' sites for ideas
- Northern Forest Center automated wood heat site going live soon.
- WoodheatMaine.org/com/net domains to be acquired for ME SWEAT website.
- Team members, please review <https://www.nhwoodenergycouncil.org/>. The map is at the base of the homepage, and will be the model for a Maine map. INRS welcomes any feedback.

Task 10 - Conduct at least 10 presentations at events for stakeholder groups

- Ideas: MMA, MSMA, etc.

Task 11 - Develop white paper analysis on sector growth impediments and challenges

- Try to schedule face time with new administration, Legislature's Energy, Utilities and Technology committee early 2019 (Jan. - Feb.).
- Look at NH thermal REC program.

Task 1 - Quarterly ME SWEAT Mtgs

- Meeting schedule to be developed. Two face-to-face meetings and two conference calls/year. Remainder of 2018: late April/early May; late September; mid-late December.

FOLLOW-UP

- Update website - Mansius (and Levesque to build new site with URL and link to MFS site)
- Meeting notes - Mansius/coordinate w/INRS
- Solidify meeting schedule - Team members to get schedules to Mansius
- Set up call w/US Forest Service on funding of engineering support - Mansius/INRS
- School building funding list - Mansius

