

NH Network Plastics Working Group (PWG) #25
Sunday, August 14, 2022, 6 pm

Next Meeting: Sunday, August 28, 2022, 6 pm

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 627 560 9302

Passcode: garden

[Plastics Working Group Slide Deck Link](#)

[Ten Towns Toolkit Slide Deck Link](#)

[Ten Towns Toolkit website Link](#)

[PWG Facilitator Schedule](#)

 PWG Visioning Workshop

 Ten Towns Ten Actions Promotion Pieces

(All are invited to add resources to the first two slide decks)

CHALLENGE FOR EVERY MEETING: Bring a high school or college student

Attending: Cindy Heath (Facilitator), Kristine Baber (Notes), Carol Sullivan, Jack Hurley, Bonnie Christie, Mary Armstrong, Christina Dubin, Patsy Beffa-Negrini, Ann Polidny, Diana Sullivan

Guests: Taja Sims-Harper, PhD candidate at University of New Hampshire

Agenda: in

- 6:00 - land acknowledgement (slide 7) and introductions
- 6:10 - Special Talk- Current Microplastics Research at University of New Hampshire (Presentation was recorded.)



Taja Sims-Harper, PhD
Candidate UNH

Taja's Short Bio

I am originally from Oakland, California, born and raised. I did my undergraduate degree at the University of Maine-Orono, class of 2017. After interning with New Hampshire TNC in 2018, I was hooked on the conservation and restoration of oysters in Great Bay, which is what brought me back to New England. My interests overall involve oysters, mainly farming them as well as kelp farming, so a lot of what I am interested in is improving the quality of water for farmers and aide in the betterment for their livelihoods. I would like to own and operate a multitrophic farm one day. Currently, I am a PhD student at the University of New Hampshire, studying the potential effects of microplastic pollution on the living resources and non-living resources of the Great Bay estuary.

Summary of Taja's Presentation:

A Galactical Microcosm: Baseline Studies of Microplastic Pollution in Great Bay Estuary.

Taja provided an overview of the problems with plastics. Plastic has become the most abundant form of ocean debris. Breaks down into microplastics and then to nanoplastics that affect our environment.

Microplastics are distributed worldwide, but we don't know the local distribution or how they are transferred from water to animals and humans. Her research will address these gaps in knowledge.

Her work is focused on Great Bay, the health of which declined significantly since the 1880s. As the health of Great Bay declines, the entire estuary is affected. The Nature Conservancy has run programs for 10 years to try to restore ecosystems.

Taja is now working with Kennedy McGrath and studying microplastics (MP) in fish from Great Bay. They are interested in finding whether MPs might alter the biology of animals. They have investigated MPs in water columns, shellfish, Tomcods, and silver sides. They are doing analyses to collect and separate MP and then do testing of the samples. They currently send samples to MA for testing with advanced technology equipment not locally available. These analyses reveal how much of each type of plastic is in the sample.

Among the questions they hope to answer are:

How many and where are MPs in Great Bay?

Where do these MPs originate?

Where do they accumulate?

When MPs leave the Bay, where do they go?

What are levels of MP in organisms in GB and other states along the estuary?

The goal is to map MP particles in GB and determine where they come in, where they are going, where they are settling, and, if they leave, where they go.

Taja presented some of the implications of her research. Among the most intriguing was that they might learn whether living organisms choose not to ingest MPs just like they can with phytoplankton and other food. Knowing about MPs in fish and crabs will help understand how they are affecting our food web. Also the mapping of MPs would suggest whether there are good and bad locations for fisheries and aquaculture farm placement.

Patsy asked Taja if we really do not know the effects of MPs on humans? Taja said she personally hasn't seen much research on humans. People are starting research with food sources and then may move into effects on humans.

In regard to a question about trends in her research, Taja said she can't give any trends at this point. They have been working through methodology. A lot is not known about how to properly separate microplastics. She expects to have data analyzed by November.

In response to a question about whether there is any data sharing going on between colleges at UNH, Taja said she was in contact with Hanna Mogensen and, in the future, they will probably be talking together more.

Taja is starting the oyster portion of her study in the next few weeks. Cindy is adding Taja to the PWG email list so Taja can update us on her research.

- 6:45 - Updates from group
 - Christina Dubin (Portsmouth): Dismantled library display from Plastic Free July and had Eco Day at Farmers' Market. Did tabling there. Shared restaurant cards. Talked about getting food out of the waste stream. Busy onboarding with Beyond Plastic.
 - Kristine Baber (Dover) Distributed brochures, bookmarks, and restaurant cards. Working with Dover's Business Development Director to distribute information sheet on plastic reduction and reusables to Dover's 80 restaurants. Finished a draft of a restaurant survey to be used across the state. Created another Green Tip. (Make your own yogurt.)
 - Carol Sullivan (Center Harbor): Display at Center Harbor Library. Purchased nonplastic storage containers, put them up, and compared them to plastic, used one of our PWG signs, distributed bookmarks, and brochures. Spending more time at the library, which is well used by residents and visitors, is a good venue for educational materials. Librarian has kept handouts and is continuing to distribute. Bags being distributed through the library. Do you think restaurant reps will know how to differentiate among materials. Should we put definitions in? Could put symbol in.
 - Patsy Beffa-Negrini (Nelson): Wrote LTE to Keene Sentinel. Put out Ten Towns Newsletter. Met with three people in Peterborough that want to start a regional group.
 - Cindy Heath (Cornish Flat): Has done deep dive into chemicals in plastic after talking with Jenny Davies, MD advisor to Cafeteria Culture. Looked at ME legislative work on banning chemicals in plastic. Maybe it's something we want to pursue. Placed a call and was able to get energy bars in bulk, so she doesn't have to get them individually wrapped in plastic. Work with Coop moving forward. Has been an executive limitation issued which means the board lays out a statement and Coop has to figure out how to achieve what is presented as goal. This one was "Managers will not make decisions in purchasing that are harmful to the environment." This should include plastic. Learned about what EU is doing to ban chemicals to protect humans and the environment. Left brochures with NE Resource Recovery Association. They will distribute..
 - Jack Hurley (Claremont) On several boards and commissions that he will take info about plastic reduction to. Had celebration in city and restaurant cards and brochures distributed. Jack is part of the Anti-Litter committee which has three current initiatives; Adopt a Spot, a project to deal with cigarette butts, and a plastic reduction project.
 - Mary Armstrong (Harrisville) Will be starting in September to put together pictures of plastics for display at transfer station showing which plastics are acceptable for recycling. Will distribute NH Network cloth bags. Mary is a representative to their transfer station recycling committee.
 - Ann Podlipny (Chester): Plastics Free Picnic organized but nobody came because of the heat wave. Going to be held next year. Wrote LTE that appeared in Concord Monitor. Wrote comment for the NHSWMP. Meeting with Chester Academy to talk about getting students more involved with environmental issues. Maybe starting an eco group or having students write bills, have students create signs, plastic free lunch day and urging

cafeteria to switch to reusables.. Also working with Boy Scouts and Fire Department. Met Julia Logan who has gotten signatures on a petition for carbon cashback resolution. Ann joined the Conservation Commission. Is setting up meeting with Waste Management group so they can explain the waste process in Chester.

- Bonnie Christie (Hopkinton): NRRA will do trash on the lawn day. Will put all trash from the school day out on the lawn and students sort it as an educational process. Asked Chamber to support proclamation that had been issued by the Select Board. As a result, sensitivity has increased in regard to handling waste at an upcoming fall festival. Bonnie is working on how to reduce plastic waste for the event where food will be provided by food truck.
- Diana Sullivan (Stratham) attended for the first time. She is a student and heard about the program on the radio.
- Any successful use of marketing materials?
Many members spoke about the distribution of brochures, restaurant cards, bags, and bookmarks. See details in updates above.

- 6:55 - Brainstorm the next collective action for the group

- Restaurant Survey - The restaurant survey was discussed and seen to be a viable, collective action. We have a penultimate draft of a survey, but a few additional revisions were offered. There were questions about methodology and how to collect data. Patsy wondered whether we should distribute via US mail. Christina noted that Surfrider has been having trouble with restaurant emails and not getting responses back. Not having personal contact would probably result in low return. We should also consider whether there is a better time to distribute surveys when restaurants are not overly busy.

It was decided that the next step would be for us to pilot the survey in different towns around the state and a number of participants volunteered to do this. More information on this activity will be forthcoming.

- The collective action of asking libraries to buy books on plastics and climate for both children and adults was not discussed due to lack of time.

- 7:10 - Patsy and Cindy- responding to the solid waste management plan due Aug 23rd

- It was decided that it would be best to have a more comprehensive letter coming from the PWG and then individuals could write their own letters also. Both types of letters are needed and encouraged. Cindy will set up a Google Doc on Drive based on her own work and that which Patsy has done for all of us to contribute to. Watch for the link to this document from Cindy.

- 7:15 - Look for “champion” to work with legislative group on things like toxic food packaging bill and bottle deposit/return bill –Not discussed because of lack of time.

If there's extra time: (There was not.)

- Create a list of different films and videos of different lengths and aimed at different audiences.
- Creating a slide in the slide deck for information about different projects that towns are working on such as reusable resources for restaurants so we can collaborate rather than each town duplicating efforts because they are not aware of others efforts.
- Consider connecting with Businesses for Social Responsibility.
- Identify the best tabling venues in the state that we can take advantage of.

Messages from Chat

From Cindy Heath to Everyone 06:31 PM

Food Contact Chemicals of Concern (Journal of Hazardous Materials)

EPS Manufacturing Process

Plastics Effects on Human Health (International Pollutants Elimination Network)

From Cindy Heath to Everyone 06:40 PM

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-1ExNi8TVwZSpddWfqBGeWmHWgca_RLkcaQ-v5Wwwr8/edit?usp=sharing

From Patsy Beffa-Negrini to Everyone 06:43 PM

<https://www.10towns.org/actions-in-progress-and-completed/portsmouth#h.wjf9ncyc8fpr>

From Taja Sims-Harper to Everyone 06:43 PM

Thank you all so much! i actually have to go! i really appreciate the platform and thank you all for listening and the awesome questions! Please do not hesitate to email me with any questions and i will happily update you all with any plastics trends i collect! my email is tcs1039@unh.edu! please reach out if you would like! Thank you!!

From Christina Dubin she/her to Everyone 06:46 PM

<https://www.beyondplastics.org/events/community-advocates-guide-restaurants-dry-cleaners>

That's the link for Hold The Plastics: A Webinar for Community Activists Who Want to Help Restaurants and Dry Cleaners Ditch Plastic Tuesday, September 13, 2022 7:00 PM 8:00 PM

From Christina Dubin she/her to Everyone 06:51 PM

here is a photo of the farmer's market table

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ieEn0YJxYEx2dGS61IP1QDXRBi7I8OO7/view?usp=sharing>

and a close up of the lit

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kblyeqs0bja6XMd3gWgNvQqSc_mCsN3K/view?usp=sharing

From Mary Armstrong to Everyone 06:52 PM

can someone pass along the link for the restaurant survey?

From Christina Dubin she/her to Everyone 06:59 PM

Here it is Mary:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OidN1DSUKnKZwfkpgUnxYsdiyPJLz_LHr73gGFGnufo/edit

Kristine, one note for the notes, is that if the restaurant cards are reprinted that what is written as "Surf Rider" should be "Surfrider Foundation" :)

From Christina Dubin she/her to Everyone 07:21 PM

We (Surfrider Foundation NH) have had a lack of response with cold emails to restaurants that our Chair has been sending. I also worry about general vs. target email addresses

From Cindy Heath to Everyone 07:22 PM

how about partnering with....<https://www.nhlra.com/>

From Cindy Heath to Everyone 07:28 PM

what if we each ask a restaurant in our town to do the pilot?

Great idea Jack!!

From Patsy Beffa-Negrini to Everyone 07:39 PM

The NH Network Plastics Working Group has been working tirelessly for the last year to educate NH residents by using grassroots educational efforts to help people "rethink plastics." I will do everything I can to help the PWG continue this work. In particular, I believe the PWG can help with 3 of the overarching themes in the SWMP: "reducing and diverting waste," "conducting robust outreach and education," and "addressing climate change and environmental justice." We are doing our best to prioritize our efforts by encouraging

NH towns and citizens to rethink plastic using the actions in our Ten Towns • Ten Actions Toolkit;
restaurants and dry cleaners to find substitutes for plastics;
consumers to refuse plastics, particularly single-use plastics;
people to utilize reusables such as reusable bottles and utensils;
citizens to recycle right.