

Lake Champlain Basin Program

Steering Committee Meeting

Friday, June 27, 2008 - Gordon Center House - Grand Isle, Vermont

Final Minutes

Members Present: John Sayles, Betsy Lowe, Mary Watzin, Ron Jackson, John Kruger, Bob Reinhardt, Jane Gregware, Mike Latham, Kenny Miller, Marilyn Stephenson (for Michele DeMaio Grace), Erik Beck, Rolf Diamant, Phil Benedict (for David Lane), Mario Delvicario (via phone), Kip Potter (for Judy Doerner), Bob Kiss, Bruce Hyde and Pierre Leduc.

Staff: Bill Howland, Martin Mimeault, Molly Michaud, Meg Modley, Kris Joppe-Mercure, Colleen Hickey, Nicole Ballinger, Jim Brangan, Michaela Stickney, Mario Paula and Seth Ausubel (via phone), Rich Wagner **Others Present:** Mark Malchoff, Bob Paquin, Walt Lender.

10:05 AM John Sayles, Chair, welcomed all present and opened the meeting with introductions, a review of the Draft Agenda and a review of Draft Minutes from the March, 2008 meeting.

Action Item: *Betsy Lowe moved to accept the Draft March meeting minutes as presented, Erik Beck seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

News from Jurisdictions:

- For New York, Betsy reported on the recent climate change conference in Region 5, and of Governor Paterson's initiative to address climate change. She also reported on public meetings regarding a proposed ban on open burning in NY.
- For Quebec, Daniel summarized the latest annual report (for 2007-2008) and circulated a summary to committee members. Quebec invested over \$1.7 million last year in Missisquoi Bay, especially for needed wastewater treatment upgrades. He also reported on two new regulations, one restricting P in dishwashing detergent as of ban in 2010, and another that limits discharge from pleasure boats, beginning immediately.
- For Vermont, John Sayles reported on recent work of the Center for Clean and Clear and developing water quality projects on the ground on farms. The Agency also is preparing for lampricide applications for Winooski and Missisquoi Rivers. He reported good news from the LCI tournament, that there was a noted reduction in the number of trout and salmon lamprey strikes. This also is the 75th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and VT has had the largest number of participants per capita in the country. John noted that Vermont and Very pleased with recent meetings with EPA and they are talking, communicating and working together and making progress.
- For EPA, Erik reported that the Agency is working with VT on communications and plans additional meetings in the future. EPA is working on the grants for FY08-NEIWPC, VT and NY, and hoping to get them out in the near future. Regions 1 and 2 are working closely on Lake Champlain coordination.

Managers Report:

- Bill reported that this is Molly's last full-time day of LCBP employment and thanked her for maintaining a constant good humor, a very high professional standard and a tough workload through her three years on the staff. He noted that Molly began her job on the day of the release of *State of the Lake* (2005), and in concluding her work on the day of the release of her main project through the past year, *State of the Lake* (2008). The Steering Committee gave Molly a round of applause.
- The *State of the Lake* report (in the folder) will be released in the hour following lunch. Bill thanked Molly for leading the report development, Nicole for assisting with that and for undertaking the graphic design, and all staff for careful work in preparing the document for release
- USACE GMP task review is an ongoing process; the Executive Committee recently passed a Record of Decision that recognized two proposed projects that should move ahead and three that need more information. Jason Shea (USACE) will meet with us and applicants in mid-July and we will try to obtain any additional information needed. The result will be three to five new programs eligible for USACE support through the Section 542 funds.
- IJC funding that Sen Leahy secured requires that a reference (the term of art for a letter of instruction) be sent to the IJC from both federal governments. After lengthy negotiations about the specific nature and locations of the tasks that could be supported, we are very close to an agreement which is acceptable to QC, Canada and the US. Bill thanked Martin for his assistance in these negotiations.
- The new NPS cooperative agreement for the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership is ready for signatures, pending the finalization of non-federal matching funds. Also, the agreement providing partial support for the journey of the Lois McClure to Quebec was signed last month. LCBP organized a very successful sendoff event as the Lois embarked from the Perkins Pier in Burlington, VT; Gov Douglas, Commissioner Hyde and Lois McClure herself were among the speakers, and a crate of VT-NY products was loaded aboard for transport to Quebec City. Mayor Kiss issued a proclamation of friendship to the Mayor and people of Quebec City on the occasion of their 400th anniversary, on behalf of himself and Mayor Kasprzak of Plattsburgh, NY.
- Vermont Quadricentennial Commission has invited all LCBP Steering Committee members to participate in the quadricentennial celebrations in Quebec City next week. LCBP has been a strong partner in the work of the VT Quad Commission and will be well represented in Quebec.
- Jim spoke about public meeting program for Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership planning program and public meetings now underway.
- Bruce Hyde spoke of the events planned in Quebec City and the involvement of Vermont and the LCBP. One public event will feature Marcel Leahy and the Senator, and over 30 people will be there as part of official delegation in QC city from VT. A second event will be the dedication of New England and Vermont monuments that congratulate Quebec and relate the importance of Franco-American heritage to Vermont and New England
- Colleen has taken on a new Champlain Basin Education Initiative teacher training program, and there are 10 teachers enrolled in this round -1 from QC, 4 from NY, 5

VT. The goal is to enrich the existing curricula with Lake Champlain and related natural resource content.

- Kris Joppe-Mercure will be the new Technical Coordinator as of today. She has been with LCBP a little over a year and has proven to be a tremendous staff resource - allowing the position to be filled from within. Refilling the Technical Associate position that Kris is vacating may be necessary later in the year, depending on funding, and will be discussed at the Executive Committee before we move ahead.

Legislative Update:

Bob Paquin described the appropriation process for FY09 and noted that Senator Leahy is asking for increased funding across the board. There has not yet been much movement on mark-ups. The request for the LCBP presently is \$5 Million. Bob described the line by line requests and noted that the appropriations bills may not be signed until late in the year or early in the next year, so there may be a period of funding under Continuing Resolutions to deal with. Bruce noted his appreciation for the funding that Sen Leahy has brought in for quadricentennial programs and the strong support from the LCBP that has made possible.

FY09 Phase 1 budget

Bill reviewed the draft budget proposed by the Executive Committee. Acting on the Phase I aspect of the budget permits both EPA and the NPS to better understand the needs and anticipate the content of the grants or cooperative agreements that will be needed in the year ahead. A grant could be put in place soon after an appropriation in a normal year, and then amended with a Phase II budget for additional specific implementation tasks approved by the Steering Committee in its winter or spring meeting.

The Phase I budget draft spreadsheet was reviewed line by line by the committee. In the EPA budget for long-term monitoring the Steering Committee agreed that a review of the efficiency of the monitoring program would be undertaken in the fall, but that the anticipated cost is \$414,000. Similarly, the Steering Committee recognized the need for a discussion of technical staff needs and the option of refilling the vacant staff position. Buzz echoed the need to review the end results of budgeting priorities. John Sayles described the efforts of the Executive Committee to bring the draft budget to the Steering Committee.

Action Item: *Buzz moved to approve the Draft Phase I Budget as presented; Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

OFA review update - Phosphorus Reduction:

Molly described TAC and staff work to address the charge that the Steering Committee produced in its October and January meetings. She circulated a summary sheet of the issues TAC has been reviewing for the P-reduction and Aquatic Invasive Species chapters. The Steering Committee identified major priority action categories and objectives, and the TAC has developed quantifiable and achievable actions that would achieve the priorities. The VT Clean and Clear Center had a brainstorming session and offered their recommendations to TAC, as well.

Mary noted the TAC role is now to provide the Steering Committee with its technical advice, and for the Steering Committee to identify the policies that the partners will commit to. The Steering and Executive Committees will then work together with the staff to develop what the final text will look like. TAC members are taking this job very seriously, and putting a significant effort into developing the technical advice requested. TAC has had lengthy deliberations about what is being accomplished with the current regulations, are there any voids, and what the whole picture looks like. She proposed that the Steering Committee not consider actions in this chapter piecemeal.

OFA review update - Aquatic Invasive Species:

TAC's Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force met in April to discuss the chapter. They have identified spread prevention, early detection and rapid response as the technical strategies on which to focus. The next step is to be discussions of recommended actions by the TAC. TAC recognizes the need to consider climate change in the context of range changes and population management. Another emerging recommendation concerns the need for an overarching concept of biodiversity within which aquatic invasive species, and other fish and wildlife concerns like ANS and FW are connected. Mary noted that the Steering Committee will need to make some decisions on how to have this information organized and presented.

Bill noted that we will be working during the summer to put words on the page. TAC will continue its work on September 3rd, and their recommendations will be available to the Steering Committee at its September 9th meeting. John Sayles noted the importance of the Steering Committee addressing the big policy questions, such as reorganizing these components under a biodiversity theme, so that the TAC and staff will have the guidance needed for their work.

Executive Session: The Steering Committee entered Executive Session to consider nominations for appointment to committees.

Open Session: After 10 minutes, the Steering Committee returned to open session.

Action Item: *John Krueger moved to appoint Adrienne Blattel to membership on the CHRAC. Buzz seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous approval.*

Action Item: *Ron moved to Adjourn; John Krueger seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous approval.*