

Lake Champlain Basin Program
Steering Committee Meeting
Friday, March 07, 2008 - Hampton Inn - Colchester, Vermont

FINAL Minutes

Members Present: John Sayles, Betsy Lowe, Mary Watzin, Dave Tilton, Ron Jackson, John Kruger, Bob Reinhardt, Judy Doerner, Gina Campoli, Mike Latham, Marilyn Stephenson (for Ron Alvarado), Larry Forcier, Erik Beck, Randy Beach, Phil Benedict (for David Lane), Mario Delvicario (via phone) **Staff:** Bill Howland, Art Stemp, Martin Mimeault, Molly, Meg, Kris, Colleen, Nicole, Jim, Kathy, Michaela, Beth Card, Mario Paula (via phone) **Others Present:** Lynn Hamjian (EPA Region 1), Fred Dunlap (NYSDEC), Tom Berry (Nature Conservancy), Julie Moore (VT ANR), Mike Repacz (Conservation Law Foundation)

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 January, 2008 meeting. Bill reported to the Committee that Mayor Kiss, though unable to attend the meeting today, has been appointed to Steering Committee by Gov Douglas at the Committee's request.

Action Item: Randy moved to approve the January 2008 Steering Committee meeting minutes as presented. Bob Reinhardt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Remembrance of Canute Dalmasse – Steering Committee and LCBP staff shared memories of our colleague Canute Dalmasse, who passed away suddenly this spring. Canute retired from VT ANR and the Steering Committee in April, 2007. Many of those present had known him and worked with him through his years of service in state government. All members of the Steering Committee and LCBP staff wanted to place in the minutes a note of their great appreciation and affection for Canute - as a tremendous human being who cared deeply for his family, for all the people with whom he worked, for the natural environment and for the Lake. Many of those present recounted personal stories of Canute as a mentor, a friend and fair, good, and very thoughtful player among leading environmental stewards.

Public Comments – No members of the public offered comments.

State of the Lake 2008 & Ecosystem Indicators Scorecard Update - Since the presentation to the Steering Committee of the key *State of the Lake* report content at the January meeting the text development and graphic design has progressed with the assistance of members of the Technical Advisory Committee, particularly Mary, and many agency partners. The greatest challenge has been to assemble the indicators data from different jurisdictions in comparable units and terms. During March, TAC subcommittees will review key messages and text for accuracy. The April TAC meeting will review the report language and graphics and the following Executive Committee also will have a review copy for comments by the end of April. LCBP will be focused on design during May and printing by late June. All members are encouraged to attend TAC or Executive Committee meetings for more information. Bill reviewed the release protocol developed for the State of the Lake 2005 edition, and planned for this edition - that there will be no pre-release. LCBP staff also will meet with any partner desiring to see in more detail the interpretation of the data given to LCBP. Rather than having a Steering Committee meeting in Quebec in April, the Executive Committee will meet in Grand Isle to review the report and the status of the update of OFA. The Steering Committee felt it was appropriate for the release of *State of the Lake* to be located at the LCBP office in Grand Isle.

Jurisdiction Updates-

NY: Betsy shared a press release from NYS DEC showing support for the quadricentennial celebrations and an interest in tying the events to NY and VT stewardship objectives. Bob Reinhardt reported on funding in the state budget for refurbishing state parks

QC: Martin reported that waste water treatment plan upgrades for two municipalities will be done in 2008 and a third in 2009, representing about \$10 million invested.

VT: John reported on the status of the Act 43 follow-up in the VT Legislature, which considered reopening the NY-VT Phosphorus Reduction TMDL. The House passed a bill to not reopen the TMDL, and this has now gone to the Senate. ANR plans to have the next version of the Clean and Clear workplan to share with the Steering Committee this spring, leading to an LCBP endorsement. John thanked Phil and the VT Agency of Agriculture, and Judy Doerner, NRCS, for their efforts to put together funding for getting as many backlogged EQIP projects going as possible.

US Federal Partners: Judy noted her enthusiasm for the progress in getting funds committed for engineering - this will amount to \$2-million from the two agencies over next 3 years and will have a huge effect to get implementation back on track..

FY 2008 Budget Process, Funding and Support Status Update – Bill circulated a spreadsheet showing the US Federal revenue lines. Last July the Steering Committee approved the EPA Phase I FY08 budget on a provisional basis, so that NEIWPC could prepare an initial grant proposal for EPA to review informally. The grant application was submitted for preliminary review. Phase II fund allocations for implementation tasks can be completed today, now that the amount of FY08 funding is known. (On the spreadsheets, Phase I is yellow; Phase II is orange.)

The new revenues for the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership from the National Park Service are for completion of a management plan for Park service approval, and interim management plan implementation. Additional NPS funds for the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial were appropriated by VT Sen. Leahy and NY Congressman Hinchey, with LCBP designated as managing entity. It was necessary to identify the NPS tasks in order to secure the funding, so these tasks are already well defined. Upon approval of NPS Phase II lines for CVNHP grants, LCBP staff will return to CHRAC for recommendations on the grant award criteria, and confirm these with the Executive Committee.

Senator Leahy was able to restore \$300K in International Joint Commission funds that we were unable to obligate last year, and he sponsored an appropriation for an additional \$500K for FY08. Given the inability of the IJC to process these resources without a new reference, Bill is working, with assistance from Martin, on draft language for a new reference letter for the US and Canada to consider.

Draft FY'08 Budget - Bill presented the draft Phase II budget task descriptions and the Committee discussed the proposals. One change in the Phase I budget (that was approved in July, 2007) is that cultural heritage resource management and coordination (\$84,000) can rely more on new NPS revenues, so that corresponding EPA funds can be made available for Phase II tasks. This means that \$35,000 in new NPS revenues will be added to residual funds remaining from last year to cover this task. The Committee adjusted several line items, including an increase in support for the Boat Launch Stewards task. John noted that VT ANR could find a way to increase support for an additional \$10,000 of the phosphorus reduction/scorecard task, releasing those EPA funds. The Committee felt that a review of the jurisdictional support for the blue-green algae sampling program will be needed before the LCBP supports this task in future budgets, not due to any change in the importance of the task, but rather due to its being primarily a state responsibility.

Action Item: Betsy moved to approve the FY2008 Phase I and II budget draft as adjusted. Randy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

CVNHP Briefing: Bill described work on the development of the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (CVNHP) Plan. Three tasks are planned for the next few months.

- Management Plan development has begun, in accordance with the NEPA process;
- A Quadricentennial Workshop on March 19th will include an introduction of the CVNHP
- OFA will serve as an interim plan while planning progresses, so that implementation activities (local grants, etc) may continue throughout the process.

Champlain Quadricentennial Programs in NY, VT and QC are in planning stages. Quebec City celebrates its 400th anniversary in the first week of July, 2008. Quadricentennial activities do address the themes of the CVNHP established in the Congressional authorization (the Making of Nations and Corridors of Commerce), so associated funds may support Quad activities.

Review of Opportunities for Action Plan Revision Guidance - Flip-chart notes from the January and October Steering Committee Meetings were circulated to Steering Committee members. This revision guidance has been integrated into the plan's chapter text, and also was circulated in a strike-out format. OFA chapters that have been annotated with comments from earlier SC meetings are included in the meeting binder. Steering Committee members are encouraged to look through the chapters and annotations to review changes and get back to staff with any comments or concerns. Later this spring, this revision guidance will be given to LCBP committees and workgroups as their charge for work on the revision of text. TAC review will be followed by text development by staff, based on committee recommendations. This process is also benefiting from the research conference in January, 08.

The Executive and Steering Committees will need a number of meetings to work on OFA over the next year, so a two-day work session on plan revisions is planned for the September Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee expressed its growing interest in how best to treat two challenging issues: climate change and benefit-cost economics pertaining to clean water.

Review of Candidates nominated for Committee Service

Action Item: Dave moved to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, Mike seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The Steering Committee entered **Executive Session** at 2:00 PM

The Steering Committee returned to **Open Session** at 2:15 PM by a motion of Betsy with second by Mike.

Action Item: Randy moved to appoint Mike Winslow to the position of TAC vice-chair. Mike seconded the motion. The majority approved the motion, one vote opposed, Mary abstained.

Action Item: Dave moved that Rolf Diamant be appointed to the Steering Committee representing the National Park Service. Betsy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

John noted that Steering Committee member Randy Beach, representing Empire State Development, has been with Committee for 6 ½ years, but will be leaving us as of the end of the day. He noted Randy's active participation in the work of the Committee. All Steering Committee members joined John in thanking Randy for his service.

Adjourned 2:20 pm