

Lake Champlain Basin Program
Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday May 27 - Thursday May 28, 2009
Auberge West Brome, West Brome, Quebec.

Final Minutes
Wednesday May 27th

Members: Real Pelletier, Roseanne Murphy, Judy Doerner, David Lane, Pierre Leduc, Buzz Hoerr, Jean-Pierre Lessard, Mary Watzin, Daniel LeBlanc, Betsy Lowe, Jonathan Wood, Kenny Miller, Dave Tilton, Bruce Hyde, Jane Gregware (for Ron Jackson), Steve Garceau, Gina Campoli, Erik Beck (via Phone), Marilyn Stephenson (via phone for Astor Boozer), Mario DelVicario (via phone) **Staff:** Bill Howland, Nicole Ballinger, Colleen Hickey, Jim Brangan, Michaela Stickney, Tom Hall, Martin Mimeault, Kris Joppe-Mercure, Meg Modley, Mario Paula (via phone), Seth Ausubel (via phone) **Guests:** David Borthwick-Leslie, Therese Lacombe, Julie Moore, Tom Berry, Richard Lauzier, Bob Paquin, Robert Sabarian

Daniel welcomed participants to the meeting; introductions followed. The meeting agenda was approved, with the addition of a discussion on trend assessments.

Action Item: November 2008 Steering Committee meeting minutes corrections: Dave Tilton was in attendance; Mario P noted, in the discussion of the phosphorus chapter, EPA's concern that the plan does not adequately track phosphorous load.

Dave moved to accept the minutes of November 2008 with corrections; Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Public Comments

No public comments

Updates from Jurisdictions

- New York - Betsy Lowe reported on the approval of the Lake George watershed EIS. Planning for the Crown Point Quad event scheduled for September 19th is underway. Save the date invitations have been sent. The American Electric Power settlement activities for Lake Champlain are being planned by the NYSOAG. Budget challenges remain very severe, and the State work force may be reduced by 6.5%.
- Vermont - Jonathan Wood reported that an acting DEC commissioner will be appointed soon. Vermont ANR officials recently attended the Friends of Missisquoi Bay meeting, a good event that highlights the cooperative spirit of the LCBP; Julie Moore is working on the VT language for the phosphorus reduction chapter. New statewide LIDAR coverage may be eligible for stimulus funding. An updated implementation plan for the P TMDL is due in January 2010.
- Quebec - Daniel Leblanc reported that the draft 2009-2016 plan for Missisquoi Watershed was distributed for review and will be approved at the end of the year. The Ministry of Environment website has updates on manure management.

Reports from Advisory Committees (*written summaries were circulated*)

- **Vermont CAC**- Buzz Hoerr: Future of VT meeting was a success; the CAC is focusing on the future of agriculture with an eye to water pollution. The meeting at the Tyler Place included many farmers who were engaged in water issues, and the non-farmer participants reported that including the perceptions of the farmers was very helpful. Farms are in trouble, credit is drying up, the future of agriculture is uncertain in VT. The CAC Action Plan asked for \$700K in nutrient management support; it seems \$500K will be in the budget.
- **New York CAC**- Jane Gregware reported that Ron is working on the sewer and water plant in Essex, so he could not attend. She circulated an update handout.
- **Quebec Citizens CAC** – Martin Mimeault (for Pierre Leduc) reported that Baie Missisquoi just published the 4th water musketeer program. It is an excellent education program. They also have produced a guide for shoreline stabilization. Richard Lauzier spoke of the importance of the LCBP's Quebec Farm award— these farmers have created buffers along stream banks, generate organic produce, and have been stewardship leaders for years.
- **Cultural Heritage & Recreation Advisory Committee** - Jim Brangan gave a CVNHP planning update and summarized Quadricentennial programs planned in New York and Quebec; Bruce gave an update on events planned in Vermont and handed out the new brochures.
- **Education & Outreach Committee** - Buzz reported on a Quadricentennial curriculum developed by VT Quad Education Committee and LCMM. The indigenous expressions exhibit at ECHO is installed. The cultural heritage aspect of the LCBP is seen as very important to the water quality mission. The E&O staff activity report was distributed. Twelve Lake Champlain Farm Awards have been given in the past 4 years.
- **Technical Advisory Committee** - Mary reported on recent TAC activities and circulated the technical activities report. Mary was appointed Dean of Rubenstein School, so she will step down as Chair of TAC; she will be Chair of Sea Grant, so will remain on Steering Committee in that role.

Legislative Update - Bob Paquin will become Director of the Farm Services Agency in Vermont in August; Senator Leahy is interviewing candidates for Bob's replacement. The EPA budget money is in Boston. Great Lakes Fishery Commission will receive .5 million in '09 for Lake Champlain; Sen. Leahy's staff are working with Dave and Bill to identifying projects to be supported by that money. Quad funding proves to be complicated to disburse, and the office is working out the distribution for funding with Congressional colleagues in NY.

Manager's Report - Bill Howland thanked Bob Paquin for his tremendous service to the LCBP and the Lake, he has been with the program since the beginning. He also thanked Mary for her long hours of careful work as chair of TAC. Kris Joppe-Mercure is leaving the LCBP; a job search for a Technical Coordinator is underway. The IJC project's 30 nutrient management plans has been completed, and LCBP has received a draft final report. USGS is working with LCBP to develop a short term monitoring approach for the Critical Source Analysis project. As this new project has developed, with IJC support, the assistance of our partners has been exceptional; Bill thanked Julie Moore, Kip Potter, Mike Winslow, Eric Beck, Eric Smeltzer and Laura DiPietro. LCBP has filled a .5 FTE for the IJC work and

some CVNHP mapping. Bill reminded the committee that the Executive Committee Chairmanship to (EPA) Eric Beck in September.

LCBP Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Action Plan - Dave Tilton Dave presented a power point that described sources of AIS in the basin and an overview of the main issues and steps in the draft plan.. The Executive Committee recommends the Steering Committee approve this plan. Dave noted that the Rapid Response workgroup members (since 2005) include APPIP, NYSDEC, APA, QC Natural Resources Ministry, LCBP, VTFWD, VTDEC, TNC, and LCC. Workgroup meets quarterly.

- **Action Item:** Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Plan Approval

Buzz moved to approve the proposed plan. Mary seconded the motion. The ANS Rapid Response plan was approved by a unanimous vote.

Marilyn Stephenson commented that Appendix A needs to be updated for NRCS. Mary - This can be done easily. Martin also noted that the exact role of task force partners needs to be determined and a mechanism for resolving potential agency conflicts established. Dave suggested that the agencies think about who they want to see on the task force. Mario asked if the plan was set up in a bi-national way or from the US agency perspectives. Dave said the 3 lead agencies are NYSEDC, VTDEC, and QC, so it is international but there is a lead agency identified wherever an invasion occurs.

EPA FY09 Budget Review - Bill Howland

The Steering Committee previously approved a Phase I budget allocation in June of 2008. Bill explained draft budget spreadsheet and which colors correspond to which phases, and circulated task descriptions for each project on the spreadsheet. Additionally, there is a new project that will be circulated that did not go through the regular LCBP process with TAC review, et al. The first projects on the task description handout were pre-approved by the Steering Committee in February 2009—specifically Blue-green Algae Monitoring, Water Chestnut Control, and Boat Launch Stewards.

Mario registered EPA's general concern that TMDL load allocations are not being met, and that the overall budget focus should better reflect this priority. Bob Paquin added that there are several federally funded programs to perform the actual cleanup (i.e., EQIP, SRF, etc.). So the role of the Steering Committee is to provide inter-jurisdictional coordination so that all the partners are in-sync. LCBP is a management entity not a cleanup service – and the Senator's intent in providing funding is that LCBP's budget is considered the last basket to dip into, to accomplish vital tasks that otherwise would not be done. Bill noted that this last-basket perspective may explain the mix of projects that we see on the list today.

Support for January 2010 Lake Conference A conference is now planned for June 2010. Lake Champlain Research Consortium is a partner in this project.

Determining contribution of internal phosphorus to Missisquoi Bay The internal release of P and N may be a significant trigger for Blue-green algae blooms. A long-term goal is to develop a model for Missisquoi Bay about what's happening with sediments re-suspending.

Roadside Ditch practices and impact to Lake Champlain Water Quality We need to quantify the P-load contribution of the transportation network.

Climate Change Adaptation Research This task looks at altered hydrology and changes in precipitation, and how it affects the sediment and P loads going to Lake Champlain. The new realities may be that what we now call the hundred year flood happens more often than 100 years.

Adaptive management of double crested cormorants TNC has been working on developing an adaptive management plan for all colonial nesting water birds on Four Brothers Islands. This task supports continuation of that project.

Quantifying sediment/P load contribution from eroding river banks Julie Moore mentioned this is a new opportunity that arose after the TAC had conducted its ranking of proposed projects. This task also will support an adaptive management effort with vital information we don't presently have.

Adaptive Management Project This task establishes and supports an adaptive management process to assess the progress made in reducing phosphorus, and to review and refine the targeting of resources to future tasks, given the insight of recent performance and changing conditions. This requires reliance on implementation and effectiveness indicators and regular checking of each to assess progress and adjust management responses.

Education and Outreach Tasks: Buzz, Nicole and Colleen presented E&O task descriptions to the Steering Committee.

Local Grants: Bill reviewed proposed funding levels for local grants.

Betsy noted that the NY Coordinator funds from last year remain available. Julie noted that \$500,000 of EAP funds from NYS for the South Lake will become available. Also, there is another \$100,000 for grants through funding obtained by Senator Leahy for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and passed to the LCBP for use in Lake Champlain.

Action Item: EPA FY09 Budget Approval: Mary Watzin, moved to approve the budget with revisions. Buzz Hoerr and Martin Mimeault seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote with no abstentions.

Guest speaker Richard Lauzier, MAPAQ spoke about the recently concluded project in Quebec, called the Lisière Verte Project by the *Coopérative de solidarité du bassin versant de la baie Missisquoi*

Action Item: Enter Executive Session to consider Applications

Buzz moved the Committee enter into Executive session to discuss a review of a WRDA Section 542 task proposal. Jonathan Wood seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The SC entered executive session

The SC exited executive session

Action Item: Section 542 WRDA Task Recommendation

Mary moved to approve the ROD proposed by the TAC, to support a feasibility study, with a full EIS, for the removal of the northern part of the Carry Bay Causeway. Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed with Unanimous approval; Jonathan Wood and Marilyn Stephenson abstained

Thursday May 28th

Members: Jonathan Wood, Betsy Lowe, Daniel LeBlanc, Mary Watzin, Buzz Hoerr, Pierre Leduc, David Lane, Judy Doerner, Roseanne Murphy, Jane Gregware, Steve Garceau, Gina Campoli, Mike Latham (via phone), Marilyn Stephenson for Astor Boozer (via phone), Erik Beck (via phone), Mario DelVicario (via phone) **Staff:** Bill Howland, Kris Joppe-Mercure, Colleen Hickey, Meg Modley, Jim Brangan, Michaela Stickney, Martin Mimeault, Tom Hall **Guests:** David Borthwick-Leslie, Mark Malchoff, Julie Moore,

Opportunities for Action revisions Phosphorus Chapter

Mary W. introduced the chapter and the charge, which is to go through the specific actions that everyone is committing to do under the priority action headings. The main change from last time this chapter was reviewed is the insertion of many specific action items from the partners – of what they are committing to do. The goal of this discussion was to review the actions line by line to consider if they represent adequate response to five-year needs.

Mary noted that the LCBP is really the partnership of everyone here, a lot of players contributing in a coordinated way. The idea is that *OFA* presents the partners' planned actions and show them together, and how specifically partners are fully committed to reaching those goals. It's not a document establishing any legal commitment the states have, it is a partnership document.

The Committee agreed to keep the three draft objectives as written. The Committee also agreed to rephrase many of the actions proposed to include five key items: who commits, what the action is, what the target accomplishment is, by when it will be done, and what funding is required. Each jurisdiction agreed to recast its commitments in these terms to the extent possible, thinking of a five-year period, before the next Steering Committee meeting. Each action should have a check-back date for asking the two questions that will need to be answered: Have you done what you said you would do? Has it has an effect on the Lake?

Next steps for the Phosphorus Chapter:

- Jurisdictions will revise the priority actions within 3 weeks and will meet to critique our actions. Reformat who, what, when, why, etc.
- EC meeting on June 18th will serve as a check in for the three jurisdictions.
- Tom will coordinate with feds in NY, Julie will coordinate with VT side.
- EPA Region 1-2, USDA will talk as well, Erik will plan to talk with Kip.
- All parties will consider the gaps in participants, for example, VTrans, are and should be playing an important role in phosphorus reduction, for discussion at the next meeting.

Monitoring data analysis:

EPA request the Committee to consider breaking out aggregate load and tributary loads over time, and having LCBP take on the task of doing a trend analysis for segment by segment loading on a periodic basis. Mario noted the need for better trend analyses for the data points that lead up to the information presented in the *State of the Lake* report - the loads table. (P

and NP loads by state). The *State of the Lake* report shows the aggregates, comparing point and nonpoint sources. It was discussed that Eric Smeltzer and USGS are doing related work. Eric is doing some of the analyses now, looking at different ways to show trends.

***Opportunities for Action* revisions Aquatic Invasive Species Chapter**

The Committee reviewed the AIS Chapter and identified some specific text changes, as indicated in **bold**. The Committee decided to change the goal statement to read: **Prevent the introduction, limit the spread and control the impact**...the rest remains the same. Also, the **Dept. of Interior** should be listed as a possible funding source.

The Steering Committee spoke on a number of word-specific text modifications for the next revision draft of this chapter.

Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership Plan Development **Plan Framework Document Review, Planning Update - Jim Brangan**

Jim presented a review of the Plan Framework document. Jonathan expressed concern that marketing not be considered a prime objective casually, as several parts of the Basin simply do not have adequate infrastructure to support significantly increased tourism. While we want to promote the region, we must also be able to management the impacts from increased marketing.

Jim also described tools to promote trail use and impart messages of stewardship. LCBP offers a free design service for wayside exhibits to ensure quality interpretive messages throughout the region. Also, we help to determine the pace at which this proceeds, and we have the ability to carry a sustainability message as well, similar to strategies to manage invasive species and the health of the lake. Betsy noted that similar concerns came up with building the Tupper Lake Museum: hopefully those who live in the area will appreciate it more, while telling the story of the region to visitors. Many Adirondack residents were concerned during the planning process that the plan would pull too many additional visitors into the region, beyond its capacity. Daniel noted approval of the developing relationship with COVABAR.

Adjourned