

Lake Champlain Basin Program Steering Committee Meeting

November 21, 2008

Valcour Conference Center, Peru, NY

Final Minutes

Members: John Krueger, Kenny Miller, Steve Garceau, Marilyn Stephenson, David Lane, Gina Campoli, John Sayles, Betsy Lowe, Martin Mimeault (for Daniel Leblanc), Dave Tilton, Jen Thalhauser (for Gene Brickman), Mike Latham, Ron Jackson, Real Pelletier, Mary Watzin, Rosanne Murphy, Daniel Laven (for Rolf Diamant), Erik Beck (via phone) and Mario Paula (for Mario DelVicario)

Staff: Meg Modley, Kris Joppe-Mercure, Nicole Grohoski, Nicole Ballinger, Colleen Hickey, Bill Howland, Michaela Stickney, Tom Hall

Guests: Marc Simoneau, Mike Rapacz, Tom Berry, Mike Winslow, Julie Moore, Therese Lacombe, Eric Smeltzer, Bob Paquin, Seth Ausubel

WELCOME

The Committee was welcomed by Steering Committee Chair, Betsy Lowe.

Action Item: *John Sayles moved to approve the draft September 2008 Steering Committee minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Martin Mimeault. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

Public Comments

Mike Rapacz of CLF spoke of a proposal by VTANR to conduct alum treatment in wetlands and asking the Steering Committee to support wastewater treatment plant phosphorus reductions. He noted that CLF is concerned about more than wastewater issues, and circulated a list of other actions on which CLF places high priority. CLF recommends USACE support for further phosphorus reductions at the treatment plant in St Albans.

Jurisdictional Updates

- **VT Update-** John Sayles noted the difficulty in having a dialogue at the meeting regarding topics under litigation. Budget issues in VT and another downgrade of VT revenue projection result in likely budget cutting targets for FY09 as well as for FY2010. High resolution photography in Hungerford/Rock/St. Albans rivers have been received and will ID critical P source areas. NRCS is analyzing the data.
- **QC Update-** Martin reported on a Nov 15th meeting with the P task force group. Marc Simoneau and Eric Smeltzer came to present results of the report. Quebec is working on identifying specific actions that will fit into *OFA* revisions. Missisquoi River lamprey treatment has been concluded and following the monitoring of the water intake pipes in QC, all is well.
- **NY Update -** Betsy Lowe reported that NY faces very significant budget issues and both non-personal service costs and travel are cut. NYSDEC is presently unable to hire staff. The recent climate change conference in Tupper Lake included presentations from communities in the area about energy conservation relative to their carbon foot print see www.Adirondackalmanac.com. Lampricide treatments took place this fall in the Great Chazy River, etc. Tom Hall described the Lake George area rules for stream corridor management and protection.

- **EPA** Erik reported that EPA has adjusted the invoked the scope and of NPDS permitting to require additional stormwater management for larger facilities in MA. Mario Paula described the EPA \$900,000 targeted watershed award to CWICNY to reduce P loads to Lake Champlain.
- **USACE**- Jen Thalhauser provided an update on USACE 542 program and distributed a summary of the status of watershed projects.

Legislative Update

Bob Paquin described the process by which lame duck session will consider the FY09 budget, and the likelihood of operating under a continuing resolution through the late winter. In January, there being a more solid majority in the senate, bills will be able to be passed through.

Manager's Report:

Bill reported on the status of several projects:

- IJC funded tasks: Bourdeau and Bushey's, Inc. have developed NRCS-590 nutrient management plans of 30 small farms in the Missisquoi Basin. The new IJC agreement for **Critical Source Area** mapping in the Missisquoi Basin is now under way. LCBP will hold several workshops through fall and winter to establish where new monitoring stations are required and to identify the best approach to identifying Critical Source Areas.
- The CVNHP planning process will result in an updating of cultural heritage and recreation parts of *Opportunities for Action*. In developing the required management plan for NPS approval, and following the NEPA process, LCBP held 22 public meetings through the summer and fall, speaking with 718 people. The Committee advised staff to look with care on the choices between an Environmental Assessment and an Environmental Impact Statement.
- NYSCC and LCBP sponsored a public meeting on AIS management; the turnout was very strong, and Bill thanked Dave and Ron for their work to advance that initiative.

Presentations:

- ***QC-VT Report***- Marc Simoneau presented the annual report on QC-VT annual Missisquoi phosphorus management. Results underline the importance of nonpoint source reductions on P loading to the Missisquoi Bay. MDDEP, MAPAQ, VT, USGS continue to monitor river flows and P loads. Future data analyses would be aided if final flow data from all the gages could be provided within one year. Martin spoke about the good collaboration among staff working across the boundary to assemble this data. Findings about loading changed in the sub-watersheds will help us identify better approaches to nonpoint source management.
- ***Adaptive Management***- Mary described how adaptive management works to address uncertainty in management choices. The rate at which healthy watersheds will be achieved depends on how fast we apply an information-based, interactive approach that relies on structured learning. Our task is to develop strategies to achieve *O/A* goals. We need to collect critical data to judge how we are doing. Data needs include an established base-line, implementation monitoring, effectiveness monitoring, and validation monitoring to determine whether original assumptions and hypotheses were correct. Marc's presentation is a good example of effectiveness monitoring. To implement adaptive management, we need to select key indicators and a monitoring schedule, agree on acceptable levels and a timeframe for response, and develop a decision plan that spells out how much information is shared, when judgments about progress are made, how actions might be modified if progress is unacceptable.

Data tells us about the past. We must also consider alternative futures, modeling, how to factor uncertainty, think about social side of the equation, and utilize new technology. Adaptive management is very structured; limits of knowledge and data are acknowledged. This allows a systematic consideration of options available, range of responses, and relative importance of mitigation measures. The Steering Committee discussed adaptive management at length.

- **Online Management Plan-** Nicole B. showed what an integrated online plan might look like. As an online planning document, actions would include updatable links to information about accomplishments. This approach is focused on accountability and tracking progress. The plan can be available as a printed document as well as in the form of a larger living document online. Most people now rely on websites for news of this sort, and the online management plan will enable LCBP to better communicate information about progress to the public.

Opportunities for Action - Phosphorus Chapter discussion:

Mary guided the Steering Committee through the latest draft of the Phosphorus chapter. At the last SC meeting, a small group assembled the notes enabling the Committee to identify several overarching themes. Among the concerns for phosphorus loading is concern about the effects of climate change, though the best way to include climate change has not been identified. Mary reviewed each action listed in the draft.

Mary and Julie Moore discussed broad goal statements that apply to all jurisdictions, as well as potential priority actions that may be presented as specific commitments by jurisdictions and partners. Tom Hall spoke of developing NYSDEC goal and action statements that can fit the developing plan model. Mike L. noted that his NYS Agriculture and Markets is going through the same process, looking at trends, regulated agricultural facilities, to identify the actions they will propose for the plan. Erik spoke of the need for compliance with water quality standards to be addressed in the plan, and the EPA will provide further language to that effect. Martin noted that Quebec's action plan will have specific actions appropriate for inclusion.

It was felt important that key measures of progress be identified in the plan. It was resolved that each jurisdiction will continue to work on defining specific actions and that the Steering Committee will continue to review drafts as these actions are included. Mary and Julie will confer prior to the next meeting, to refine this draft and incorporate new language that other jurisdictions can provide.

Action Item: *Dave moved to enter Executive Session to consider competitive grants. The motion was seconded by Roseanne. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

The Steering Committee met in Executive Session for 15 minutes, then returned to Open Session. Mary Watzin recused and absented herself from the Executive Session.

Action Item: *Dave moved to approve the Draft Record of Decision for grants for Education & Outreach, and for Pollution Prevention and Aquatic Invasive Species management. The motion was seconded by Ron. The motion passed by unanimous vote, with Mary Watzin abstaining.*

Adjourned at 2:00 PM