

**Lake Champlain Basin Program  
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, November 4, 2009**

**Final Meeting Summary**

**I. Updates and Announcements**

- a. David Lane, Deputy Secretary of VT AAFM, has stepped down. Diane Bothfeld and Laura DiPietro are filling in (Laura is doing WQ). Secretary Albee will be taking David Lane's place on the LCBP Steering Committee.
- b. CWICNY received 604B grant (NYS planning grant for watershed assessment via Water Quality act money for WQ planning, ~\$130,000
- c. Agency of Agriculture has expended Cover Crop money for VT; 8,700 acres throughout state for cover cropping (increase from 5,700 in 2008); budget is depleted for spring practices (no till, aeration, etc.).
- d. NY NRCS is currently signing up projects through the Farm Bill Conservation program
- e. Plattsburgh Cumberland Head sewer district referendum - Town obtained stimulus money thru NYS DEC, \$6M grant to construct infrastructure for low-pressure sewer system, will connect to City of Plattsburgh system. Will need to form sewer district first. Will serve about 2,000 people.
- f. Wetland Reserve Program in VT – 16 new applicants in VT, all in Lake Champlain basin; is an increase from 2-3 projects/year previously, likely do to increased availability in NRCS funds for this program and multiagency partnership to continue and support this program. Recently completed project in 178 acre floodplain site in Rutland County on Otter Creek.
- g. Essex sewer project – now out to bid, due Nov 21<sup>st</sup>. \$10M project, \$9M in grants. Willsboro wollastonite phosphorus removal project is complete (black ash project). Port Kent water system is now drawing from lake.
- h. Lamoille River sea lamprey treatment – had high flow issues in beginning; application successful with help from hydropower company to maintain flow. Maintained 1.3 MLC target. Post treatment surveys indicated very few fish and frogs, but significant number of mudpuppies. Graduate project tagged 80 mudpuppies with PIT tags, but none of these were recovered from 500+ non target mudpuppy mortalities. No cage studies were done during this treatment.
- i. 23<sup>rd</sup> Congressional Race in NY – Bill Owens is the new Representative.

**II. Summary of Previous TAC Meeting**

- a. Review and approval of minutes from October 7 TAC meeting
- b. ACTION: Motion to approve October meeting summary (Neil, Kip second, as amended, all in favor)

### III. **Lake Champlain Basin Program Update, *Bill Howland***

- a. EPA budget moved through House at \$4M for FY10; awaiting to hear congressional intent for distribution of these funds
  - i. Full continuing funding for USGS gaging and toxic research
  - ii. \$500,000 for cultural heritage program
  - iii. Still needs official Presidential signature
  - iv. Creates opportunities for new funding new initiatives
- b. Local implementation grants announced
  - i. Including new grant program for farms (St. Albans/Missisquoi Bay),
    1. no match required
  - ii. Proposals due on 4<sup>th</sup> of December
- c. South Lake AEP settlement almost complete
  - i. \$400,000 in grants for South Lake for P reduction
- d. GLFC Habitat Restoration Grants coming soon
  - i. \$100,000 available
- e. FY11 budget priorities discussion coming soon after November Steering Committee meeting
- f. Section 542 USACE projects informational session on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Gordon House
  - i. Applications are reviewed by TAC for prioritization and then turned over to USACE

### IV. **Green Buffers Presentation, *Richard Lauzier, Centre de service du MAPAQ***

- a. **Presentation and discussion of the Green Buffers project in Quebec**
  - i. Goal: Build 30 ft wide buffer strip around intensive agricultural areas in Missisquoi Basin
- b. Proposition of a new approach toward non-point source pollution
  - i. Change crop in floodplains from annual crops into perennial crops
  - ii. “farm the best, buffer the rest”
- c. Elements of project:
  - i. systematic installation of runoff control structures above the streams to break hydrologic connectivity between fields
  - ii. SWAT model validation – look at the on-field reality of the parcels
  - iii. Incentives for farmers to participate
    1. reimbursement of necessary investments to build runoff control structures
    2. paid farmers money to compensate for monetary losses (\$/ha)
- d. Research and analysis questions
  - i. Is watershed approach working?
  - ii. Incentives for farmers that would cause them to change?
  - iii. Held focus groups for discussions for periodic review
    1. Trends are not always immediately obvious; need to factor in lag time
    2. Regional organizations are in charge of ditch cleanup
    3. Worked with mayors to fast-track ditch cleanup
- e. Needed to do a lot of interventions with most of the farms to complete project
  - i. Started field work for remediation in June 2007
  - ii. Used soil from local fields to fill in ditch filtering systems
  - iii. Used hay, barley as cover crops in buffers, and shrubs on stream banks, ditch banks
  - iv. Replaced some corn with switchgrass, now exploring a fast-growing willow crop intermixed with switchgrass

- v. In spring, prepare buffer strip with seeding
- f. Installed 602 interventions (structures), 97 out of 113 hectares in perennial crops, 85 Km of buffer strips installed
- g. ~85% participation
- h. Obstacles:
  - i. timeframe was challenging
  - ii. most farmers were receptive when compensated
- i. Questions
  - i. Will farmers go back to cropping after they're no longer compensated?
    - 1. Will be compensated a few more years to allow for accurate measurement of WQ improvement
    - 2. Most farmers will probably continue cropping the buffers when compensation ends because they realize that it is a good thing to do
  - ii. Cost of project?
    - 1. 85 km, 250 acres were buffered; spent about \$825,000 (about \$3,300/acre)
  - iii. Two-year project, including time required to recruit farmers to participate

**V. Agenda addition:** Discussion on status of USACE Section 542 Projects

- a. Clarification on St. Albans projects
  - i. City of St. Albans received project for 9 Vortex grid separators for city streets
    - 1. City of St. Albans would like to see some movement on this project; would like to hear from USACE
  - ii. NWRPC received grant for other work is the work described on USACE draft (Tyler Branch)
  - iii. NWRPC pilot project (Tyler Branch project) was suspended
- b. Lake George project funded went ahead
  - i. NY NRCS involved to reimburse one of the NGOs that holds one of the land rights for this project
- c. LCBP approves projects and passes them off to USACE; Vermont projects have not moved forward because the matching money hasn't been available

**VI. Opportunities for Action Revisions**

- a. Fish & Wildlife chapters (*Bill Ardren, USFWS*)
  - i. Vision for this chapter is mostly lake-oriented (below fall line)
  - ii. Should this be limited to first barrier?
    - 1. F&W cooperative only goes to certain level
    - 2. Statewide regulations are different (i.e. walleye regs)
    - 3. Can take this to stakeholders for their ideas/concerns
    - 4. Do we want to get into deer management issues?
    - 5. Grassland birds, Endangered Species habitat (i.e. Indiana bat)?
    - 6. Might create opportunities to enhance currently funded programs
    - 7. What about inclusion of SWG SGCN?
      - Development of recovery plan for all SGCN is out of scope of OFA
  - iii. Identify the programs under which each commitment will happen
- b. Species that are managed: LCFWMC that has management authority with formal agreement among jurisdictions

- i. Need to bridge communication gap between Cooperative and LCBP, identify funding opportunities to enhance Cooperative projects, identify areas the Cooperative doesn't cover
- c. Culverts
  - i. Should be coordinated by RPCs or VTTrans
- d. Maintaining/restoring ecological integrity
  - i. Exploring/researching management of buffers, temperature and habitat relationships? i.e. thermal pollution
- e. Opportunities for Future Action
  - i. should identify possible implementation actions alongside research opportunities
- f. Swanton Dam removal: should "socially acceptable" be carried over from 2003 OFA? Perhaps... "pending results of a feasibility study"
- g. Inclusion of terrestrial habitats – should receive input from USDA
- h. Phosphorus (*Eric Howe, LCBP*)
  - i. Discussion on Objective 3, "Identify actions and funding levels needed to attain TMDL loading targets by 2016."
    - 1. TAC felt that an end date (2016) sends the wrong picture to the public, since the lake will not be cleaned up by then, no matter what level of funding is available.
  - ii. VT AAFM will update their commitments for the November 10<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting

**VII. Update on Andrew Simon project, *Michaela Stickney, VT ANR***

- a. Eric Howe provided the revised budget and literature review per TAC request from October meeting, and update on status of field projects. No further discussion.

**VIII. Adjourn**

**Attendance:**

TAC: Mike Winslow, Neil Kamman, Fred Dunlap, Richard Lauzier, Kip Potter, Mark Malchoff, Laura DiPietro, Eric Smeltzer, Vic Putman, John Kanoza, Deb Perry, Marilyn Stephenson, Bernie Pientka, Steve Lanthier, Ed Snizek, Bill Ardren  
 LCBP: Eric Howe, Bill Howland  
 Guests: David Borthwick-Leslie (public)