

**Lake Champlain Basin Program
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 4, 2011**

10:00 AM – 3:10 PM

Final Meeting Summary

I. Updates and Announcements

- a. The Lake Champlain Ecosystem Team met April 8 with the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative coordinator; meeting was well attended by NGO and State folks talking about climate change. Bill Ardren is currently working on a summary of the meeting, which will be circulated to the TAC and the Ecoteam to provide guidance on what types of climate change projects are necessary.
- b. NRCS-VT was approved for a new standard for evaluation of new agricultural practices. This may be available through FY11 funds; will be dependent on successful proposal.
- c. Asian clam eradication effort is underway in Lake George; 225 benthic mats had been deployed as of last week. Proposed suction dredging was canceled due to high costs; effort will focus entirely on benthic barrier.
- d. NYS DEC public comment period is out on revised baitfish transport law. 3 travel corridors are proposed – lower Hudson; upper Niagara/Erie; St. Lawrence. APA feels this revision weakens the law and does not support the revision.
- e. Public health issues will be a major concern following the flooding. Sewer systems, public water supplies have all been impacted, as well as homes – all porous materials should be scrapped to prevent mold buildup (sheetrock, wood, etc.).
- f. Clinton Co. WQCC has met twice now and is moving forward with some initiatives. The WQCC is working with NYS DEC on mobile home parks on upgrades to facilities or closures where necessary for WQ issues.
- g. EPA has been in VT doing farm inspections on LFO and MFOs. Feedback so far is good.
- h. VT DEC is holding TMDL process meetings; AAFM held one with farmers. Good dialogue with farmers – they want to know what they are doing right and wrong to help.
- i. VT AAFM is working with NRCS to develop common BMP P reduction coefficients.
- j. WASCoBs project – working on ways to install these in cooperation with wetland regulations, currently funded outside of LCBP. Workplan for the LCBP funded project will probably be ready in early fall.
- k. VT DEC – now has a general permit for all perennial streams; DEC and AAFM are trying to identify differences between ditches and streams and determine which “streams” farmers can and cannot manage without a stream alteration permit.

- l. VT AAFM will be doing joint inspections with VT DEC on MFOs, particularly farms moving to LFO.
- m. CREP position funded through GLFC funds will be refilled.
- n. ERP funding is still in Capital bill in legislature at a slight reduction from previous year funding.
- o. Essex County, NY was hit hard from 3” rain storm on 4/26. NRCS is inventorying these sites. Emergency watershed protection program is in effect. Mill Brook watershed (Moriah) was hit hardest.
- p. NRCS NY – exploring funding through Great Outdoors program that was rolled out last year. Requested EQIP, WHIP, CTA funding to put some new projects together – over \$5,750,000 to pay for different programs in NY and VT. Project ideas came from Farm Bill program applications and CWICNY project suggestions.
- q. NRCS NY annual report has been released for 2010.
- r. NRCS NY also involved in GLRI – WHIP program in particular, and protecting gold-winged warbler habitat in St. Lawrence valley.
- s. Deb Perry & Bob Kort formally resigned their TAC memberships due to new job duties. TAC will send a letter to Deb and Bob thanking them for their efforts on the TAC.
- t. UVM RSENR professor position search is complete; selection should be made in next week or two.
- u. Record floods occurring in Missisquoi Bay and the Richelieu River. 2,000 people in this area have been affected by the flooding in Québec.
- v. Québec MDDEP has been having meetings focused on the Rock River watershed with river management groups and municipalities; presented geomorphic modeling tools in development on US side.
- w. Greater Adirondack Resource Development Council – budget was zeroed in the FY11 federal budget. Group addressed dam removal, RC&D coordinators no longer employed by NRCS.
- x. Northern VT RC&D will still try to stay active without a coordinator. In NY, this will affect the skidder bridge project. National Water Research Institutes budget has been zeroed out as well. This is a \$300,000 loss to NY and VT.

II. Summary of Previous TAC Meeting

- a. Review and approval of minutes from April 6th TAC meeting.
- b. Motion to approve as amended by Doug F., second by Mike W., all in favor, no abstentions.

III. Lake Champlain Basin Program Update, Bill Howland

- a. Bill provided a slideshow of photos of the flooding he had taken from a plane in late April, illustrating flood impacts and sediment plumes around the northern half of Lake Champlain.
- b. No new information is available on the LCBP FY11 budget. The Steering Committee has reviewed and approved a prioritized list of projects; projects on this list will be funded as far down the list as funding is available. This list is fairly similar to the TAC prioritizations from January.

IV. Livestock Exclusion workplan, Laura DiPietro (VT AAFM)

- a. Laura provided an overview of the project and explained that this project would be linked to the GLFC-funded agronomists program.
- b. If cows aren't present (i.e. farm shrinks), the farmers will be required to maintain the BMPs regardless or reimburse the State for the project.
- c. Larger projects, such as major stream crossings, should be funded through other programs. This project addresses smaller streams & smaller projects.
- d. Guidelines – watershed size & land use – smaller watershed would be favored. Clarify this in the workplan.
- e. Is fencing vs. plantings preferred? This is a cost- benefit analysis.
- f. NRCS cannot select farms based on size; can this occur for this project?
- g. Fencing type for this project is a lot more flexible than NRCS-funded projects (less paperwork for farmers). Fencing will generally meeting NRCS-VT fencing standards. Other practices should meet NRCS standards.
- h. Motion to approve as amended to address the comments below, made by Doug, second by Ed, all in favor, Laura D. and Eric S. abstained:
 1. Clarify the watershed size selection
 2. Clarify the cost-benefit analysis for fencing vs. plantings
 3. Strike out language regarding small farms
 4. Clarify language regarding water sources
 5. Distinguish purpose of this project from other NRCS projects.
 6. Clarify NRCS fencing standards that will be used as guidelines for the project.

V. Technical Presentation: Gil Newbury, VTrans

- a. The winter road maintenance balancing act: results of a study comparing conventional use of road sand and salt to brine. Gil provided an overview of road salt issues – by itself, road salt is only effective down to 15-20°F. A lot of road salt bounces off the road when applied before snow accumulates on the road. VTrans researched brine solutions for application to VT roads; determined to be more effective than road salt alone (the brine sticks to the roads, and allows the salt to be effective down to 10°F), can reduce the amount of salt applied to roads, and is overall cheaper than road salt alone. Can also mix additives into the salt brine to allow it to work effectively at lower temperatures (down to +5°F).

VI. Review of the 2011 water chestnut management workplan

- a. Project is similar to FY10 project. Less than 1 FTE to coordinate the program for VT and some compensation to TNC for coordination of volunteers.
- b. Motion to approve as amended to address the comments below, by Marilyn S., Vic P., all in favor, Eric S & Fred D. abstain:
 - i. Please provide the entire budget for the project to illustrate how LCBP funds are complementing other funding sources.
 - ii. Clean up typos
 - iii. Clarify the high fringe rate on the employee salary time.

VII. Discussion of TAC operations & membership (Tabled from previous meetings)

- a. TAC reviewed current membership & areas of expertise. Several gaps in expertise areas were identified, including modeling, land management, stormwater, NYS agriculture, climate sciences, regional planning (VT), conservation biology, ecological economics. Eric H. will work with Breck B. to bring names to the Executive Committee for possible nomination to the TAC.
- b. TAC discussed current TAC operations, including the budget and task development process. Many TAC members noted inefficiencies with the current process for Task development: TAC members develop one-page task ideas, describing a project concept, possible deliverables, and a funding level. Once approved in the LCBP budget, TAC members with expertise in the relevant field (who do not have a conflict of interest) develop an RFP. The RFP is released, interested applicants submit proposals, and a proposal is selected based on comments from confidential peer reviewers, TAC review, and final approval of the Steering Committee.

Many TAC members would prefer to see a pre-proposal process occur, to allow the greater research community to develop projects that would address focus areas identified by the LCBP. Bill Howland indicated that LCBP must have full proposals competing against each other. Ultimately, the TAC and Bill Howland agreed to develop a model in which TAC, drawing from tasks in OFA, and with advice from the greater research community, would develop a bulleted list of concept areas to be released in a single RFP. The Steering Committee would amend and approve this list; the RFP would identify a total amount of funding available, and provide an indication of how many grants would be expected to be awarded from the available funding. The RFP would provide a bulleted list of high priority task areas that respondents should consider. Projects that address other topic areas identified in OFA would still be considered, but may not be given as much weight as a project that targets at least one of the high priority task areas. A paragraph (or two) would be provided for each bullet point, describing the general vision LCBP has for deliverables for the high-priority task. The added benefit to this approach is that the applicant would know what broad deliverables they will be expected to produce from their project, but the applicant will develop the timeline (up to a maximum set in the RFP), the budget, and the specific deliverables. Applicants would submit full proposals; there would not be a pre-proposal process. All proposals would compete against each other. If specific projects are identified in the task development process, separate RFPs may be developed and released as needed.

3:10 PM Motion to adjourn: Doug, Laura. All in favor.

TAC members: Breck B., Mike W., Doug F., Bill A., Kip P., Mark M., Ed. S. Vic P., John K., Laura D., Eric S., Marilyn S., Fred D.

Guests: Bob Brower (NYS AG & Markets), Wayne Laroche (LCI), Gil Newbury (VTrans)

LCBP: Eric H., Bill H.