

KEY FUNCTIONS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

LCBP



Each year the LCBP and Citizens Advisory Committees hold public meetings to hear comments on the implementation of *Opportunities for Action*.

The Lake Champlain Steering Committee has identified a list of functions that must be accomplished to continue successfully implementing the Plan. These functions include the following:

Coordinate Programs and Implementation Activities

Coordination among government agencies, regional and local governments, the public and private sectors, nongovernmental/non-profit organizations, and residents and visitors is critical to successful implementation of the Plan. Coordination involves facilitating data management and information exchange, data sharing, and improving efficiency among key partners while not duplicating programs or creating new layers of bureaucracy.

Inform and Involve the Public

Public information and involvement efforts are required for successful implementation of the Plan. A public that understands water quality and resource management issues of the Basin can make informed choices about the long-term protection and restoration of the Lake. A commitment to lifelong education about Basin resources is needed to facilitate this process. Furthermore, involving the public in planning and implementation increases both the sphere of responsibility for action

and support for recommended actions. Refer to “Informing and Involving the Public” (p. 91) for actions dedicated to accomplishing this function.

Build Local-level Implementation

Participation at the local-level is the cornerstone of successful Plan implementation. Addressing pollution problems at the local level is important because those most affected by an issue are often best able to address that issue. Many communities have existing resources and organizations to help implement programs, but may lack technical expertise, adequate funding, or access to additional human and financial resources. Building local capacity for Plan implementation requires a strengthening of technical assistance to community groups, and may require additional financial support for local programs. Refer to “Building Local-Level Implementation” (p. 95) for actions dedicated to accomplishing this function.

Measure and Monitor Success Against Plan Benchmarks

A critical component of watershed planning is monitoring. Monitoring must accomplish two roles. First, it must be a source of information regarding the health of the Lake and Basin. Management capacity hinges on the availabili-

ty and reliability of comprehensive monitoring of key ecosystem indicators. Second, monitoring must measure the degree of success of management programs and ensure accountability to the public. Monitoring can help determine progress toward goals and whether or not priorities need to be adjusted. Refer to “Measuring and Monitoring Success” (p. 99) for actions dedicated to accomplishing this function.

Create Links with Legislative Bodies

Successful Plan implementation depends greatly on the ability to gain political support for recommended actions. A framework is needed to communicate needs and recommend actions concerning the Lake to legislative bodies who formulate federal, state, and local laws and appropriate funds to various programs.

Create Links with Interest Groups

Implementation of the recommended actions in the Plan depends greatly on continued support from numerous individuals and groups. Decisions concerning the management of the resources in the Lake Champlain Basin must be made through a consensus-based, collaborative process that encourages the expression and understanding of diverse viewpoints. This process helps integrate economic and environmental goals into Plan implementation and ensures that a focus on implementation at the local level is maintained.

Conduct Research

The Plan identifies several areas in which research is needed. Research has been an important component of preparing the Plan and will continue to provide critical information as implementation evolves. Improved knowledge of the physical, chemical, biological, and social characteristics of the Lake and Basin will help resource managers make effective policy and management decisions in the future.

Secure and Direct Funding

The cost of implementing the Plan is high, but not as high as the potential costs of failing to act. The ability to implement watershed programs rests heavily on the availability of and access to funding sources. A mechanism must be in place to seek public and private funding for program implementation and to allocate resources to appropriate entities based upon recommended priorities. Refer to “Strategies for Funding Implementation” (p. 103) for a discussion of funding implementation efforts.

Update Plan Recommendations

Because environmental conditions in the Basin will change over time and new technologies will be discovered, priorities for action in the Plan may change. Some management programs may become more important, others less. The Plan should be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect these changing conditions.

Advise and Encourage Agencies Responsible for Implementation

As the Plan evolves, various agencies will fulfill their responsibilities for implementing certain actions. Listed benchmarks provide gauges for monitoring success. A mechanism is needed that encourages those responsible for implementing actions to follow through with their commitments and reach these benchmarks.



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In May 2002, the annual Lake Champlain Research Consortium Symposium was held in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Québec.