

Lake Champlain Basin Program Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday & Wednesday February 12 & 13, 2013
Lake Placid, NY

Final Minutes Tuesday February 12

Meeting Begins – *Bob Stegemann, Chair*

Members: Bob Stegemann (chair), David Mears, Daniel Leblanc, Louis Hak, Chuck Ross, Catherine Brooks, John Krueger, Ron Jackson, Mark Hohengasser, Dave Tilton, James Ehlers, Mario Paula, Lynn Hamjian, Mike Winslow, Vicky Drew, Don Pettit, Mike Latham, Rosanne Murphy, Buzz Hoerr (on phone); **Staff:** Bill, Kathy, Michaela, Fred, Jim, Colleen, Ryan, Elizabeth, Eric, Meg, Stephanie, Myra Lawyer, Martin Mimeault, Clair Ryan; **Guests:** Tom Berry, Pete LeFlamme, Megan Smith, Jeanne Voorhees, Johanna Hunter, Jan Surface, Kip Potter, Laura DiPietro

ACTION ITEM: *David moved to approve the November 2012 Steering Committee minutes as presented. Louis seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.*

Public Comments: None

Brief Jurisdictional Updates Circulated:

- **Quebec:** described work on agricultural best management initiatives in Quebec, and distributed a handout describing recent projects.
- **Vermont:** David reported on Vermont's continuing response to tropical storm Irene and related flood mitigation issues. VT Agency of Ag and VTDEC are working together on an assessment of management practice issues in agriculture.
- **New York:** The 2011 storm events continue to take a lot of time, particularly relating to infrastructure and land use in the flood zone. Fred spoke on behalf of Roseanne Murphy (whose arrival was delayed) on recent economic development awards in the Basin. In 2010-2011, the governor's office created 10 regional economic development offices throughout the state to help increase the regional availability of pooled development funds. The Lake Champlain Basin fits into two of these economic regions, (the North Country and Capital Regions). In the present year we received the first awards - several of which align well with LCBP and they are highlighted in the meeting binder. A \$200,000 award to CWICNY focuses on nonpoint pollution assessment throughout the NYS sector of the basin. The Ausable River Association, Town of Moriah, Village of Lake Placid will be removing a dam. There is a weblink describing these projects in the binder; the North Country got \$90M. Not all is for environmental projects, but all of it is good for the region.
- **Federal Partners:** Jeanne reported that the new federal agency MOU now has six signatures and is waiting for 4 more. The MOU is an agreement between the federal agencies to communicate and collaborate on stewardship issues in the Lake Champlain Basin, to assist in

the implementation of *Opportunities for Action*. Mario said EPA Region 2 will sign soon. The Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA-Sea Grant and US Forest Service have not yet signed.

Legislative Update - Tom reported on the state of the Continuing Resolution and the likelihood that sequester cuts may be a continuing reality. There was an extension to the dairy support program and water quality implementation in the Farm Bill.

Manager's Report - Bill explained the new meal guidelines for meetings - going forward. Non-federal participants need to retain the itemized receipts for dinner (no reimbursements for alcohol, of course) in order for LCBP to reimburse. Travel will also be reimbursed at the federal rate upon request.

- Bill reported on his recent meeting in DC, in which he spoke with Congressman Tonko about heritage area interests, and participated an annual meeting of Heritage Areas and a reception by National Heritage Area Directors for interested congressional delegations and their staff.
- Staff has been working on technical reports, web site updates, and the flood report.
- Within a year LCBP will prepare a retrospect (of two to three years) of what has been accomplished with LCBP budgets, as a briefing document for committee members, the jurisdictions and the Congressional delegation. Bob noted that this would be a big help especially to Steering Committee members who are fairly new. Dave T said he hopes it also will emphasize the partnership successes of the group. David said having a sense, operationally, of where we have come from, the roles of the staff, and the governing structure will be a helpful piece of information.
- Ryan reported on the revision of the LCBP website <http://www.lcbp.org>; the new site will go live in a month or so.
- NY & VT Office of the Attorneys General funding to the LCBP for agricultural best management practices is complete. Eric described the tasks implemented with \$500K to improve water quality in the South Lake.
- Bill, Meg, Dave T and Fred met with the Director and engineering staff of the NYS Canal Corps, and made important progress towards an agreement for a barrier feasibility study. Meg reported on recent aquatic invasive species tasks, including the latest status of the planned Canal Barrier Feasibility Study and related NYS Canal Corp, US Army Corps & LCBP workplan development efforts.

FY13 Budget Process Review - Bill and Eric discussed a handout summarizing the tasking within *Opportunities for Action* and the status of each task. Of 249 total tasks assigned to LCBP for a five-year period beginning 2010, 97 are active and 2 completed, leaving 139 with no activity. These tasks should be considered high priorities when developing budgets. Several meetings have been held on what the executive committee conveyed to committee chairs would be the priority tasks areas in the FY13 budget. TAC, HAPAC, E&O met through the fall to design tasks responsive to the Executive Committee charge, to estimate their costs, and to recommend a prioritization. These ranked lists of tasks were presented to the Executive Committee by Advisory Committee chairs, along with base operational tasks proposed by the manager. Task prioritizations were adjusted by the Executive Committee after discussion, as reflected in the meeting binder, for Steering Committee action at the February meeting. The Executive Committee also suggested LCBP use another mechanism to reach out to the whole Steering Committee for input; this was the Survey Monkey in which many members participated.

Survey Monkey process and results were distributed; the results seemed inconclusive, as only 12 members participated.

Executive Committee FY13 Budget Recommendations The committee discussed the Executive Committee recommendations, which were included in the meeting notebook in spreadsheet form and as written task descriptions. Lynne noted the needs:

- to think critically about what are the most appropriate things to fund, as there are many more proposed projects than available funds.
- to discuss who else could fund each proposed task and
- to fund for short terms rather than many years.

Of the total funds available, it is likely that we will spend 46% on the base budget tasks, 24% on other implementation tasks, and the balance on research.

Budget Dialogue Part-1 – Bill reviewed the base budget of operations, including key staff tasks, long term monitoring, local grants and water chestnut management.

- **Cultural Heritage Tasks** – John and Jim reviewed the CVNHP budget, which has been extensively reviewed by the Steering Committee at previous meetings. HAPAC met yesterday and took its cue from the January Executive Committee, reducing the draft budget to about \$400,000. A spreadsheet was circulated and tasks were described in rank order.
- **Education and Outreach Tasks** – Buzz and Colleen reviewed the ranked list of \$500k in tasks. The list includes (1) \$33k this year to create an interpretive exhibit on resource management in NYS. Two tasks were proposed by the VT and NYS DEC's and are shown as priorities (3) and (4). NY is connected with the Delaware County Public Works and we're looking to model their work in the Champlain Basin. The green infrastructure program would allow ongoing training and would not be duplicative. Task (5) has to do with moving LCBP into the future with a mobile application. Task (6) supports a specific exhibit for areas of NY and QC where we see a need for more outreach. Task (7) will engage businesses to train post-storm for future storms. Task (8) is a student conference for students to show their work on stewardship - something the committee has been requesting for a long time.
- **Technical Tasks** – Mike W and Eric described the proposed technical tasks. Three of the eight top ranked tasks are listed in OFA for LCBP action. Task (1) provides new statistical analyses of Long Term Monitoring annual tributary load data. Task (2) provides research and assessment of tile drainage sources and urban stormwater sources of P-loading - two of the biggest outstanding research needs. Task (3) is streambank stabilization for fish habitat. A lot of riparian planting projects have the plastic rodent guards on, and they now must be removed, or these riparian plantings areas will fail. Task (4) is for LiDAR data to support critical source area studies in the Otter Creek watershed. Task (5) assesses Ag BMP Effectiveness with a continuation of the NRCS AGO project. Task (6) Technical Assistance for small and medium WWTPs was prioritized by Executive Committee because the plants are aging, their capacity is stressed, and there is a need for people trained to maximize the infrastructure we have. Task (7) the trout reproduction project was focused on Lake George and though TAC did not prioritize it highly, Executive Committee raised it for discussion today. Task (8) provides operational funding for the new agronomist office in NY, to support NY Ag BMP implementation.

The Steering Committee recessed for lunch. Awards were presented to **Marilyn Stevenson** (who has just retired) in appreciation for her years of careful work on the TAC and representing the NRCS-NY State Conservationist on the Steering Committee. Awards also were made to **Paul Sands** and **Bruce Lawson**, recently retired from WPTZ News-Channel-5, in appreciation for their partnership with LCBP through ten years of effective special programming on the Lake and its issues.

Implementation news: VT DEC presented a summary of the development and content of the VT Act 138 Report. The state legislature asked DEC to produce a report that highlighted the high priority needs to protect water quality and the costs to improve water quality, options to raise the money and governance to implement needed measures.

Budget Dialogue Part 2 After the base operating tasks, local grants and water chestnut management are covered, the remaining budget expectation is about \$1,500,000. The Airmon project, stream gauges and boat launch stewards are projects recommended by the Executive Committee. The committee discussed education and technical tasks at length, at the end of the day charged David Mears and Bob Stegemann to work with Bill and Eric in the evening, to propose reductions in the task list reflecting the day's discussion, to be considered the following day.

Wednesday February 13

ACTION ITEM: *Dave T moved that the Committee enter Executive Session to review Draft Records of Decision authorizing proposed contract awards and to review Executive Committee nominations for a Committee Chair appointment. Ron seconded the motion which passed by unanimous approval with no abstentions.*

The Committee entered **Executive Session.**

Mike Winslow recused himself from the part of the Executive Session which pertained to a nomination for TAC chair.

Committee Returned to **Open Session** per declaration of the chair

ACTION ITEM: *Dave T moved to adopt the Record of Decision to authorize two contract awards (Aerial Seeding, Mapping) and a series of CVNHP local grant awards. Ron seconded the motion which passed by unanimous approval with no abstentions*

ACTION ITEM: *Dave T moved to appoint Mike Winslow to TAC Chair, Ron seconded the motion. Mike Winslow recused from the discussion and was absent from the room. The motion passed by unanimous approval with one member absent.*

Implementation news: LCBP Structured Decision Process – Eric recalled the September meeting presentation by Robin Gregory and Lance Gunderson, and reported on the follow-up. We have asked Robin Gregory to work with us more on the adaptive management decision making process; he will be in the area on Feb 26-27, 2013 and we would like to have him meet and discuss decision-making with committee members. Conference calls will be set up for those unable to meet with him.

Implementation news: A Phosphorus Reduction TMDL update was provided by David and Lynne.

Implementation news: The 2011 Flood Report, Pre-Publication shared – Eric and Stephanie reviewed the history of the task and circulated the draft pre-publication report, recently accepted by the Executive Committee subject to minor editorial changes. The report will be translated to French and released simultaneously in both languages.

Public Comments - None

Advisory Committee updates CACs, E&O, HAPAC, TAC reports were made as supplemental comments to written summaries provided at the meeting.

Budget Dialogue Continued David facilitated the discussion of budget lines proposed and reviewed the reduced list of priority tasks developed the evening before. The following tasks were approved in a draft budget. Bill will negotiate the draft budget with funding agencies, and will be guided by this decision in making further reductions due to likely sequestration cuts prior to contracts with federal agencies. If further funding is available, discussion will go back to the Steering Committee.

ACTION ITEM: *Rosanne made motion to accept the budget as negotiated at the meeting, and reflected in the updated spreadsheet. James seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.*

The meeting Adjourned at 12:44 pm