

Wednesday & Thursday 15 & 16 February 2017

Lake Placid Crowne Plaza

Draft Meeting Summary

Wednesday 15 February 2017

9:30 AM Arrive, meet and greet (*coffee etc. provided*)

Steering Committee members present: Bob Brower (NYS Dept. Agriculture & Markets, for Mike Latham), Mark Hohengasser (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation), Dan Dutcher (VT Agency of Transportation, for Joe Flynn), Renee Rouleau (Mayor, Municipalité de Clarenceville, MRC Haut-Richelieu), Mike Winslow (Chair, Technical Advisory Committee), Andrew Milliken (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Mario Paula (US Environmental Protection Agency Region 2, for Richard Balla), Mel Cote (US Environmental Protection Agency Region 1), Bob Stegemann (NYS Dept. Environmental Conservation), Martin Mimeault (Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, for Daniel LeBlanc), Pete LaFlamme (VT Agency of Natural Resources, for Julie Moore), John Krueger (Chair, Heritage Area Program Advisory Committee), Pierre Leduc (Vice-chair, Comité consultatif des citoyens du Québec - Québec CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, Education & Outreach Advisory Committee), Jason Shea (US Army Corps of Engineers), Laura DiPietro (VT Agency of Agriculture, Farms and Markets, for Anson Tebbets) Phone: Laura Trieschmann (VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development, for Michael Schirling), Vicky Drew (USDA Natural Resources Conservation District – VT), Breck Bowden (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Christina Marts (National Park Service)

Guest: Steven Engelhart, Adirondack Architectural Heritage)

Staff: LCBP: Eric Howe, Meg Modley, Ryan Mitchell, Elizabeth Lee, Matt Vaughan, Stephanie Castle, Jim Brangan, Colleen Hickey, VT ANR: Bethany Sargent NYS DEC: Fred Dunlap, EPA R1: MaryJo Feuerbach, NEIWPC: Jane Ceraso, Sen. Leahy representative: Tom Berry

10:00 Meeting Begins Bob Stegemann, Chair

- Welcome and Introductions
- Draft Meeting Agenda review – no amendments
- ACTION ITEM: John Krueger moved to approve the December, 2016 Steering Committee minutes, seconded by Martin with the noted edit by USFWS update provided by Andrew Milliken. All in favor, no abstentions.

10:05 Public Comments – none provided.

10:15 Steven Engelhart, Executive Director, Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH)

“Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH): Collaborations on Stewardship and Education”
Steven reviewed a sample of over 150 distinct programs AARCH offers to connect the public, visitors, and school groups to their cultural and recreational history in the Adirondack region through experience. As a preservation organization they work on regional programs but the program was initiated based a model at on Camp Santanoni. Most people visit the site by hiking, skiing, or by horse drawn wagon. Next publication pending is “A Guide to Architecture of the Adirondacks”. AARCH also works to submit historic buildings and places to the National Registry.

10:45 Brief Jurisdictional Updates (NY, QC, VT, US Fed Partners)

- Detailed Updates were provided prior to meeting, and will be included on file with this meeting summary.
- Martin M. added that there had been a good meeting between Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau and US President Trump this week. Daniel LeBlanc was not able to make this meeting because he is in Quebec City meeting with a VT delegation. He will be meeting this week with IJC to set up study board, etc.

- Tom Berry asked for an update on the Champlain Canal project. Bob Stegemann said NYSDEC is working with USACE to help move that contract forward. Progress has been slow because of the number of players involved.
- Pete LaFlamme discussed the VT Clean Water Fund allocations (\$1.3 million) for TMDL implementation. The Tactical Basin Planning process is completed, and money is now on the ground. A “report card” has been issued for each watershed with prioritized implementation plans. More information on accountability, can be made available, if there is interest. The VT State Stormwater Design Manual is now completed. The VT legislature looking for a stop-gap funding procedure for the next two years, and is working on a funding plan for remaining years to meet TMDL targets.
- Pierre LeDuc asked about the Quebec-Vermont agreement for Missisquoi Bay work that expired in December. Pete LaFlamme responded that VT is very interested, and thinks it may be easiest if QC takes the first step for an MOU, and VT will follow. Martin said QC is still discussing the content of the new MOU, and may hold a meeting within the next month to draft a letter to VT. They hope to have the MOU signed before June.

11:15 Legislative Update (5 min)

Tom Berry reported that LCBP well represented on the Federal level (Schumer, Leahy, Gillibrand and Sanders). Leahy is now the ranking member on the Senate Appropriations Committee, and is collecting FY18 advice for this committee. There is a Fy17 Continuing Resolution through late April, and there is a lot of uncertainty with the new Administration. Scott Pruitt was nominated for EPA administrator and will probably be confirmed by the Senate at the end of this week. Leahy will make statements against this appointment. A bill has been introduced to extend the North Country Trail in the Adirondacks to the Long Trail in VT. National Scenic Trail. The Governor from Georgia (Purdue) was nominated for Secretary of Agriculture; very little opposition to this appointment so far. This will be good for considerations of the new Farm Bill. A Federal hiring freeze is troublesome (10% of USDA-NRCS positions are not filled right now). This freeze may also hurt NPS.

11:20 Advisory Committee Updates (2 min each)

- HAPAC update, John Krueger – The Lake Champlain fleet in 1809 was constructed in Whitehall, NY to keep smuggling through Canada in check. James Cooper, who was 19 years old and expelled from Yale for dangerous pranks, was a mid-shipman who inherited an estate, resigned, and began to write stories of his first-hand experiences. Cooper petitioned the NY State legislature to change his name to Fenimore Cooper and then published the Last of the Mohicans. This was among the first pieces of literature to include Native American characters. He died in 1851, so he is not on the Steering Committee but he is here in spirit. Later today, the Steering Committee will consider supporting a project for the Mohican trail.
- EPA- Joint updates were provided in the meeting packet. EPA R1 will soon be issuing an interim TMDL report card for VT. Mario said that OFA is being reviewed by various EPA committees; and comments have been forwarded to Eric Howe. Signing of the Plan may difficult to arrange given the change in Administration and Regional Administrator appointments. The Geographic Response Plans (primarily to address potential spills from oil trains) are progressing on both sides of the lake. A meeting in January prioritized 15 sites to target in Vermont; the next step will be field surveys this spring. Then, tactical response procedures will be developed this summer. NY side is slightly ahead for these prioritized sites. Region 1 submitted two research proposals to support new research in the Lake

Champlain region addressing agriculture and water quality. EPA grants are back, after a budget freeze, and EPA is now back to business as usual. The federal hiring freeze will be an issue for refilling Johanna Hunter's position that was vacated at the end of 2016.

- USFWS: Andrew Milliken submitted a letter to Eric Howe to appoint Brad Young as a member of AIS Rapid Response Task Force. Bill Ardren is stepping down from that position. The White River Fish Hatchery re-opened, and welcomed a few new staff before the hiring freeze. The hatchery staff will be working on brood stock for landlocked Atlantic Salmon; USFWS staff also are looking into the thiaminase problem for salmonids in Lake Champlain, caused by alewife in the forage base now. We had the first documentation of naturally-reproducing Atlantic salmon in the Winooski River last fall. The USFWS has developed a 6-part [blog series](#) documenting Atlantic salmon restoration success stories on Lake Champlain. The Staff have been working with Jim Brangan on an exhibit highlighting the history of salmon in the Basin. USFWS is not currently treating sea lamprey, but still conducting sea lamprey population surveys in streams. They also are focusing on five tributaries using alternative treatments. A Federal District Court issued a depredation order against lethal cormorant control until the NEPA process is complete, however, agencies with individual permits may be able to continue work on cormorant management.
- NRCS-VT: Vicki Drew reported that \$10 million dedicated to Lake Champlain projects through the USDA EQIP program in Vermont. NRCS as allocated \$5 million already, and will allocate the rest by mid-summer. The hiring freeze affects field staff, but the Connecticut River basin will be more greatly affected. TMDL requirements have produced a backlog of interested farmers (there is now a 10-fold increase in funding requests for agronomic practices). NRCS is continuing work in their 4 priority watersheds for the Champlain basin and has added Hubbardton Brook and East Creek (these are tied directly to the TMDL).
- NPS: Christina Marts: Ryan Zinke from Montana will be appointed Secretary of Interior. NPS will be looking to build greater equity in the FY18 budget in existing National Heritage Areas (the funding formula is currently skewed towards older heritage areas). They are working to bring the Heritage Areas more into NPS funding calls, etc.
- TAC: Mike Winslow: TAC has met twice since last Steering Committee meeting. TAC finalized their FY17 budget recommendations in January. Also approved the language for an RFP for a Tile Drainage study, which is currently open on the LCBP website. The group has heard several technical presentations. Reviewed a Record of Decision for grants to be considered by the Executive Committee, and has discussed changes in the Technical budget process which will be discussed later today.
- E&O: Colleen Hickey: E&O has provided updates in the meeting folder. LCBP hosted a table at the VT Farm Show in January - a lot of good conversations about ag and water quality there. Wanted to thank Committee Members for their outreach at World Water Day. The annual "Love the Lake" speaker series begins soon.
- VTCAC: Bethany Sargent: The CAC membership has undergone some transitions lately- Julie Moore, the former CAC Chair, was appointed Secretary of ANR. Lori Fisher was elected Chair, Denise Smith is vice-chair. Nearly all committee members are seeking re-appointment. There are two vacancies, and Lori Fisher has discussed these seats with potential candidates. There are Copies of the new VT CAC Action Plan available in the meeting binders. The CAC will be rescheduling the February meeting, with Eric Howe's OFA presentation, which was cancelled due to snow.

- NYCAC: Bob Stegemann: The group hosted a public meeting in Plattsburgh on January 30, where Eric presented the draft OFA. The group will continue to provide feedback.
- QC CAC: Pierre LeDuc: Eric will be coming to the next meeting to give his OFA presentation. The Board of Directors has changed- Real Pelletier resigned and was replaced by Gilles Rioux. We will meet him in May. The group is working to reduce erosion from agricultural lands in the Pike River. There are 14 committed farmers- up from 2 last year. 3300 m of enlarged buffer zones (10-20 ft wide), 1400 m stabilized riverbank, 7600 sq m biodiversity (return to nature), 7 sediment basins around ditches will be completed, 1400 m stormwater management. Funding looks good, so hopefully more farmers will participate. To track effectiveness, the group would like to add three monitoring stations. The next big project- Rock River was selected as one of 5 watersheds in QC to do “all-in” approach. The goal is to have to have 90% of the acreage without bare land, and return the corridor around Rock River back to natural conditions. The group also is gearing up for the new LCBP-supported Boat Launch Stewards this summer.
- USACE: Jason Shea: USACE happy to hear NYSDEC is involved with Canal Barrier project. Jason would like to start new Section 542 workshops to discuss this and other projects as soon as possible. All work completed in 542 program is partnership-based. The local entity must provide the 35% cost share. High cost- big ticket projects are good candidates for the 542 program.

11:30 AM Manager’s Report – LCBP staff (15 min)

Eric thanked everyone for making trek in the snow. The new LCBP 2016 Annual Report summaries are in the meeting binder. We also have the “full” version available that outlines every active project last year. This document will serve as our official report-out to EPA in the future, and we are hoping to automate this report development process in future. Eric recognized the work of Executive Committee to push through a lot of grant awards, and other decisions in between Steering Committee meetings. LCBP and CVNHP have awarded close to \$1.2 million in local and technical grants since September. Stephanie Castle will be leaving LCBP on 2/17/17. Welcome back to Christina Marts and welcome to Dan Dutcher, VTrans (replacing Gina Campoli). Mel Cote, EPA R1, is back replacing Johanna Hunter as the representative for Region 1. The Executive Committee drafted a Resolution recognizing Johanna Hunter’s service to the program, which Bob Stegemann, as Chair of today’s meeting, will sign on behalf of the Steering Committee. A copy of the resolution is included in the meeting binder.

An updated Steering/Executive Committee meeting schedule has been circulated and is in the meeting binders. Next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for May 9 in Quebec. The Continuing Resolution for the US Federal budget runs through the end of April, so we should know the FY17 appropriation in time for the May 9 Steering Committee meeting. The annual two-day budget meeting for FY18 decisions was pushed back to March 2018 to accommodate the new LCBP Technical budget process. Eric also circulated a draft of the newly revised conflict of interest guidelines, to be discussed tomorrow morning.

Meg reviewed the 10-year LCBP Boat Launch Steward report. Ryan reported that the new LCBP webpage “Meet the Scientists” is now live. This page is intended to be a resource to the news media and public. Eric and Jim had a good trip down to DC for last week, where they met with staff from the NY and VT senators, the NPS and the IJC. Eric and Jim briefed each of them with information about LCBP, CVNHP and activities last year. The IJC Lake Champlain-Richelieu River Study Board met for the first time in January, kicking off their new 5-year project to look at options to address flooding issues in the Champlain-Richelieu River corridor. They will be recruiting volunteers for a series of technical workgroups and a public advisory workgroup to inform the project. Eric has been asked to provide some recommendations, so some of you might receive requests for participation. Eric is anticipating a contract (LCBP-IJC) for continuing work with them (subject to federal contract freeze). Tom Berry requested the IJC reach out to Senator Leahy to connect on this project.

MaryJo asked about a water quality mandate for new IJC work. The proposed water quality work was proposed via the IJC-Ottawa office, and would apply to Lake Champlain and Memphremagog watersheds. Eric discussed this when he met with the IJC in Washington DC last week, and stressed the importance of partnerships on this project, in whatever form it may take, so that work isn't repeated. EPA agreed. The water quality mandate was not a part of current reference and a new reference would be required to move in that direction.

LCBP showed the latest video to be released in the Diving In series, "[Rowing to a Thriving Community](#)", which documents a community rowing program developed in Champlain, NY as part of a CVNHP grant to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.

1:30 PM FY17 LCBP Draft Budget Task Review & Discussion *LCBP staff facilitate (90 min)*

Eric reviewed the proposed FY17 LCBP budgets, which were developed on the assumption that LCBP will be level-funded from FY16: EPA \$4.395 million, NPS \$299,500, GLFC \$808,000 (out of \$3.5 million in Lake Champlain support from GLFC). There likely will be a slight reduction in GLFC funds due to additional funds needed to support a study to determine human health impacts of lampricide applications.

Jane Ceraso noted that office operation costs are under EPA, and EPA has new requirements that make it more difficult to pay for these meetings, so we shifted some office operations into the GLFC budget. Tom expressed some concern that LCBP has been shifting funds towards GLFC more in recent years due to increased difficulty working with EPA restrictions.

Eric then reviewed the Key Functions budget, particularly the new items proposed for Key Functions including: a grant program to support concepts generated during the 2017 Leahy Summit (\$120,000), and 2018 Lake Champlain Research Symposium (\$20,000). Tom Berry confirmed that the Leahy Summit would be open to NY, and outreach to NY has already occurred. The projects would be capped at \$20,000, and the grant program would run as any other open LCBP RFP grant program. With GLFC funding, Quebec projects would be eligible as well.

Heritage Area Tasks: Jim Brangan and John Krueger reviewed the Heritage budget process and proposed tasks. New tasks for this year include Interpretive Theme Passport Program and the Mohican Heritage Trail.

Technical Tasks: Mike Winslow reviewed the Technical Task budget process. This list was prioritized and then reviewed by the Executive Committee, and the projects recommended are based on the assumption of level funding from FY16. They were ranked based on impact of project, feasibility, and need to do the work in this budget cycle. Mike highlighted a few projects that were ranked higher by TAC than by the Executive Committee, specifically the feasibility of real-time monitoring, and a tile drainage project with matching NRCS funds.

Mike said the agronomist position for NY was submitted by NYSDEC and will be specific to NY. Tom said this committee has wrestled with ongoing support for agronomist positions. Pete clarified that no VT proposal for agronomist was put in for FY17, per the resolution of the Steering Committee last year. The VT program had a 2-year head start, and funded multiple positions. Bob said additional funds were needed to continue start-up funds for NY agronomist. NYSDEC will make a decision about long-term funding for this position soon. Jane asked if there was coordination between VT and NY agronomists. Folks agreed that communication could be improved. Bob suggested that a summary on work completed each year could be provided to the Steering Committee, for both VT and NY programs.

Martin asked how the Rock River project moved below the funding line. This project includes entire watershed on both sides of the border. Martin said this project would enhance current work on riparian plantings, geomorphic assessments, and nutrient reductions. Matt explained that the riparian planting and agronomist lines were "combined" to focus agronomist work on riparian planting. Rock River project was above funding line (ranked slightly higher in TAC than Executive Committee). When the TAC project spreadsheet was updated, Rock River fell below the line. Martin and Pierre stressed that the project was important to enhance collaboration between VT and NY. Andrew Milliken asked if we could reduce the "innovative ag" grants by \$90,000 to allow for support for the Rock River project. Eric said that is possible,

if that was the direction the Steering Committee wanted to go to find support for the Rock River project. Mel Cote said there were many larger pots of funds that could be moved around. Tom said the Rock River project could potentially fit into the innovative ag category and could be applicant to that pool. Mike agreed, and he also pointed out that the Long-Term Monitoring Program could be flexible. Mike ran through four options from long term monitoring, which reduced the budget based on sub-contracting phytoplankton analysis to reduce costs (saves almost \$40,000).

Bob asked if there were comments on other projects that fell below funding line.

Andrew Milliken asked about the Ag BMP database hosting task. Laura said that VAAFM has put \$20,000 into building firewalls due to new security restrictions, and needs support for hosting the database for an additional year. There are many partners, so she is hopeful that money will not be needed in future years. There is the possibility that LCBP could host this database in the future. NRCS and VAAFM have invested a lot in this project; based on the data platforms, the project does not have to be specific to VT, so could potentially be used in NY or other states.

Andrew Milliken asked about riparian plantings. TAC discussed this project and concluded that this support should be specific to NY, but the Executive Committee decided that this project should be open to VT as well as NY. Some reported that the planning element has already been done in VT, and has not yet been done in NY, which was the basis for the TAC decision to focus the planning funds in NY. Andrew reported that there is no overlap with USFWS programs, especially not in NY.

NRCS says there is a research gap on tile drains, and highlighted the St Albans Bay and Rock River projects – these have been high priority watersheds for NRCS funds. Added the caveat that work under these projects should be work that cannot be completed with NRCS funds, as NRCS is already working in these watersheds. Eric clarified that this year, the innovative agriculture grant category would be open to the entire US-portion of the Lake Champlain watershed, not just St Albans as it was this year. Pete LaFlamme reported that VT ANR and AAFM produced a tile drain report which was given to the VT legislature. The Secretary of ANR feels strongly that this research is needed.

There was a suggestion to not support a specific task for the Rock River project, and that a group could apply to Innovative Agriculture RFP. Laura said these tasks should be separate since alternative/innovative agriculture projects are big picture or new concepts. Rock River is more about geomorphic assessment and planning. Vermont side already has some of this planning done, so maybe we could just focus on the Quebec side. Pierre LeDuc said they've been working for 10 years to get a cooperation across the border on the Rock River so this would be a big step.

Martin reported that, in the context of the PBDEs in Fish Tissue project that was proposed, Quebec recently released a report on assessments of contaminants in southern Montreal. Short answer was that they found PBDEs in fish tissues.

E&O Budget: Colleen Hickey reviewed the E&O budget. Local grants were still the highest priority for the Committee, recommending \$240,000 (increase from \$150,000 in FY16). There were \$280,000 in requested funds from this category this year. This task is now in the local grant task line in the LCBP Key Functions section of the budget, rather than the E&O budget as in previous years. The Committee also supports a second year of the Healthy Soils Initiative (So. Burlington and Plattsburgh are the focus communities this year). The

MaryJo asked about the LakeWise task; this seems like a lot of money for seasonal work. Are there other options, such as AmeriCorps? Bethany said that one problem with AmeriCorps is that they would need to drive a state vehicle, which is not allowed. Pete reported that this is a highly effective program. Eric clarified that the correct budget for this task would be \$48,000, because the funds would be transferred directly from EPA to VT ANR, and would not incur NEIWPC indirect rates (this task was in the budget at \$57,000).

Bob asked if we cut the \$100,000 project that ranked last in the E&O list (Evaluating Environmental Outcomes of Water Quality Related Outreach and Technical Assistance Efforts in the Lake Champlain Basin), there would be enough funding for the rest of projects. Pete asked if we could include some parts

of this project into other projects that fall above the line, such as testing the effectiveness of TMDL outreach, etc. Colleen clarified that it might be hard to fit those items into other projects. Mike said this same project was brought in front of TAC and ranked very low. Buzz arrived and reported that the ranking process flipped between E&O committee and Executive Committee, likely due to the slightly different ranking criteria that each committee uses. The process continues to evolve. Mike said if we have less funding than thought, may have to cut the next project, which ranked high for E&O and low for the Executive Committee (The Vermont Lake Wise Program). This would have to be revisited.

The group returned to the Technical Tasks portion of the budget. Eric reported that there is about \$100,000 in unspent funds from the St. Albans Innovative Agriculture RFP. Mike Winslow suggested we select one of the options for the LTMP to save \$40,000, and reduce the new innovative agriculture category in the FY17 budget by \$90,000. We also saved \$10,000 from the LakeWise Program. This allows us to fund the tile drainage research task. Mike also suggested that the Rock River project could be eligible for the "enhanced grant" category. The tile drainage project cannot fit in any other existing category. Would need to shift GLFC funds into the Enhanced grant category to allow Quebec to compete for the funding.

Tom Berry noted that the tile drain project is very important and collectively partners have spent over \$1M on this issue. Is \$250k then enough to support this project? This is a 3 year study project. The bottom line is there is no silver bullet and there are BMPs that work at a certain level but there are some unidentified factors. Site specific issues are the challenge. TAC ranked the tile drainage project higher than the EC but it is not clear if there is enough funding right now to do this project at the \$250,000 level. LCBP has an RFP out for tile drainage related to crops and it does not take into consideration the surface and subsurface understanding of nutrient reduction loss. Quebec has some of the best research available but it is limited in terms of the type of farming and the soils. There was substantial further discussion on this project. Many different organizations are exploring the impact of tile drainage systems on their watersheds. There will not be a solution for all agricultural lands in the different watersheds. The Legislature wants more answers in VT and in certain segments there are greater impacts likely from tile.

Breck noted it is an important topic but encourage the group to think tonight about what you will get out of this project for 1 site. At the end of 2-4 years? We will see differences that will agree or disagree with what we know from California and the mid-West, but how will that influence what we will tell the farmers to do with the results? Breck suggested putting in practices in a few places to get more broad answers, and perhaps this concept could be included in the RFP for this project. Breck worried about 1 more edge of field project with little results that will be applicable. The proposal is for one site and this means the results may not be meaningful. Laura noted it is really expensive and we are trying to establish year round monitoring and most of the phosphorus losses are in the winter months but winter monitoring increases the cost significantly.

Pete said that everyone has made good points but doing nothing is not a great alternative. Breck agrees \$250,000 is only enough to support 1 site. If that site were chosen not because it was representative but because it was representative of a difficult problem with a specific soil type and you do this to show you can make a difference and what the difference might be because it will show managers that we are trying to address the problem. MaryJo said that if we fully fund the Rock River and we have a little more left over then we have to figure out how much we are short for this tile drainage project. We can probably make the \$250,000 work but is it the best use of our funds, and if we can't fund this project than what will we support? Pierre brought the group back to focus on the question we are trying to answer. We want science to support our decisions but what will it tell us? To install or not to install drainage based on soil type? Are there conditions by which you would best install new tile? We are looking to set up BMP tile implementation criteria. We need to look forward because tile is going in now but could also help us look at existing tile drainage. Matt reminded the group that we have an RFP out now to test absorption media and the Stone Environmental report also offered supporting information.

5:00 PM Meeting Recessed Overnight

Lake Champlain Basin Program

Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday & Thursday 15 & 16 February 2017

[Lake Placid Crowne Plaza](#)

Thursday 16 February 2017

Steering Committee members present: *Bob Brower (NYS Dept. Agriculture & Markets, for Mike Latham), Mark Hohengasser (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation), Dan Dutcher (VT Agency of Transportation, for Joe Flynn), Renee Rouleau (Mayor, Municipalité de Clarenceville, MRC Haut-Richelieu), Mike Winslow (Chair, Technical Advisory Committee), Andrew Milliken (US Fish & Wildlife Service), Mario Paula (US Environmental Protection Agency Region 2, for Richard Balla), Mel Cote (US Environmental Protection Agency Region 1), Bob Stegemann (NYS Dept. Environmental Conservation), Martin Mimeault (Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, for Daniel LeBlanc), Pete LaFlamme (VT Agency of Natural Resources, for Julie Moore), John Krueger (Chair, Heritage Area Program Advisory Committee), Pierre Leduc (Vice-chair, Comité consultatif des citoyens du Québec - Québec CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, Education & Outreach Advisory Committee), Jason Shea (US Army Corps of Engineers), Laura DiPietro (VT Agency of Agriculture, Farms and Markets, for Anson Tebbets) Phone: Laura Trieschmann (VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development, for Michael Schirling), Vicky Drew (USDA Natural Resources Conservation District – VT), Breck Bowden (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Christina Marts (National Park Service), Caitlin Lecker (NYS Empire Development)*

Guest: *Eric Holmlund, Paul Smith's College*

Staff: *LCBP: Eric Howe, Meg Modley, Ryan Mitchell, Elizabeth Lee, Matt Vaughan, Jim Brangan, Colleen Hickey, VT ANR: Bethany Sargent NYS DEC: Fred Dunlap, EPA R1: MaryJo Feuerbach, NEIWPC: Jane Ceraso*

8:30 Meeting re-convenes: brief summary of *Agenda* and the *previous day's work* (10 min)

8:40 Public Comments (5 min) – None provided.

8:45Dr. Eric Holmlund, Director, Adirondack Watershed Institute, Paul Smith's College, "A review of the Paul Smith's College Boat Launch Steward Program" (30 min)

Dr. Holmlund noted that Bob Stegemann had asked the Adirondack Watershed Institute, Lake Champlain Basin Program, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, and Lake George Association to analyze existing boat launch steward program data and come up with recommendations for prevention of landscape level spread of aquatic invasive species in the Adirondacks. The partners developed a white paper that provided recommendations based on the boat launch steward data collected and identified invasion spread hub lakes which are invaded lakes with outbound traffic to uninvaded lakes. The data analysis also revealed pathways of frequent travel between visited lakes. The data analysis resulted in recommendations for where stewards and watercraft decontamination stations should be placed.

Adirondack partners coordinated by the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program organized to develop a Memorandum of Agreement for aquatic invasive species spread prevention in the Adirondack region. The memorandum was signed by numerous partners and was finalized and announced by the Governor. An ADK AIS Spread Prevention Advisory Committee, a subset of those who signed the MOU, helps guide the implementation of the recommendations from the white paper. In the past few years, NYSDEC grant funding has become available to support the program in addition to support from the Great Lakes Restoration Institute, local lake associations, and Lake Champlain Basin Program.

NY state has also recently passed statewide regulations that support the clean, drain, and dry message a year after NYSDEC passed similar regulations on their launches. So now across the state people cannot knowingly launch their boat with AIS attached and they have to drain their bilge on the way out. Pierre noted that Province of Ontario recently adopted a regulation that makes the transport of AIS illegal.

Eric noted that the website Adirondackcleanboats.com directs visitors to where the nearest decontamination station is located and includes the mandatory inspection and decontamination stations

around Lake George. The website provides an interactive map that has a good interface with hand held devices and provides up to date information.

The Steering Committee discussed the value of the maps in showing patterns of lake use that have not been known before, the concept of charging for inspection and decontaminations, and if the data was available to support such a map for the VT side of the basin.

9:15 FY17 Budget results presentation and final budget discussion (45-min)

Eric reviewed a few options for the group to consider to make the FY17 budget work. Eric listed the budget items (a total of \$171,600) that could give the group some room to make adjustments:

1. There is \$125,000 available in unexpended funds from the FY16 Innovative Agriculture task that can be re-allocated.
2. The group released \$37,000 from the Long-Term Monitoring Program by subcontracting phytoplankton analyses to SUNY Plattsburgh
3. \$9,600 was released from indirect for the VT LakeWise program.

Option 1: Accept budget as is.

Option 2: Support the Rock River project at \$90,000, and do not support tile drainage research.

Option 3: Support Rock River line, support tile drainage project at \$100k

Option 4: Support the Rock River line at \$90,000 and tile drainage at \$250,000. To make up the difference, reduce local grants task by \$215,000. Allow the TAC to decide the scope of the tile drainage project.

After some discussion the group developed a fifth Option to consider:

Option 5: Reduce \$100,000 from Innovative Agriculture task (\$500,000 to \$400,000), making a total of \$271,600 available. Support tile research at \$200,000, and then \$18,400 reduced from other projects to support the Rock River task at \$90,000.

The scope of work for the tile drainage RFP would be developed by the TAC, with input from a tile drainage workgroup that is facilitated by VTANR and VT AAFM. The Steering or Executive Committee would review and approve the scope prior to release of the RFP.

Renee Rouleau said that this seems a bit like a short-term crisis problem. We need to understand the tile systems better to help influence the decision making. We need to have an objective view so we can support innovative projects appropriately. We also need to be careful to not send messages to farmers and installers and then change our minds in a few years. It's to better understand and come up with best practices to reduce pollution.

Bob said that the group may be narrowing in on an agreement (OPTION 5). Eric said we can reduce the local grants task by \$20,000 to make up the difference and fully support the Rock River project at \$90,000. If funding gets tighter, the Steering Committee will revisit during the May 9 meeting.

ACTION ITEM: FY17 Budget Ranked and Prioritized Task List

Buzz H. made a motion to approve the budget as discussed, with Option 5. John K seconded. All in favor. Bob asked to clarify that \$60,000 would be available to both NY and Vermont for the riparian restoration work.

Buzz moved to clarify this in the task description for the riparian restoration project. John K. seconded. All in favor.

10:30 AM Technical Budget pre-proposal process- Introduction and Discussion (60 min)

- Review of a proposed new budget development process for technical projects; guidance from Steering Committee as needed

Eric introduced this agenda item. Last fall, he reviewed a new conceptual process for developing the annual technical budget that would more closely align with typical grant processes from other organizations, and would likely yield a more informed suite of projects to be evaluated during the annual budget meeting

(this one today), with respect to the outputs and outcomes that could be achieved for each task, and the budget necessary to execute those tasks. Eric asked Matt to lead this effort. Matt has been working with the TAC over the past few months to develop the process he is going to review with you today.

Matt presented the new budget preproposal process to the Steering Committee. Some limitations of the existing process is that the pre-defined budget tasks may limit innovation of the applicants. Budgets (at the task level) are not created by the people doing the work on the ground. We also have Conflict of Interest challenges as TAC members may present a proposal and then be awarded funding. The current process very is resource-intensive for the TAC and LCBP staff.

The new process would involve one call for preproposals, and a subset of these will be selected for full proposal development. The LCBP Technical Budget would be determined from full proposals. This could advance our process and reduce the step of sending out numerous individual RFPs. The process would include a parallel track for annually-funded projects like LTMP, water chestnut, boat launch stewards, and possibly others that would be sole sourced to government agencies or NEIWPC-FCBP. Advantages to this new process include fostering of innovative ideas; more detailed and accurate budgets that would provide a more informed basis for funding decisions by the TAC and the Steering Committee, a more accessible process for outside groups; more streamlined and simpler process; there would be less investment for groups submitting preproposals; and the new process can include a mid-process feedback element for applicants. The greatest challenge with this process is the conflict of interest challenges, which we will review later. Matt reviewed the timeline for the concept.

September 2017: TAC will recommend priority areas for the call for preproposals, approved by Executive or Steering Committee. The Steering/Executive Committee decides on core projects for the parallel track. Then the call for preproposals is released.

November 2017: the call for preproposals closes and TAC reviews & ranks the projects, and provides a recommendation to the Executive Committee for projects to call back for full proposals. The December Steering Committee would consider and approve this list.

We would not review a pre-proposal and then open up a competition on that specific project. The pre-proposals are intellectual property and it would be unethical to take that idea and then openly compete it. However, we can reserve the right to hold back funding to release in a separate RFP if we would like to see more projects in a specific area. MaryJo responded that this really makes the process open to everyone. Mike said that we are shifting the competition to the pre proposal process. LCBP would provide feedback to every pre-proposal. MaryJo said that as long as there is language in the pre proposal process that clearly informs applicants about the process it will be fine. LCBP also will hold a public meeting to share the new process at about the time the call for pre-proposals is released. Renee asked what we would do if we need to combine two proposals together to make a better project? There is no mechanism to do that now but we could build that into the process. Mike said that there is more potential to do that this new process. Mario supported the idea of a public meeting/webinar to inform people about the new process. Questions and Answers (about the process) also can be posted on the LCBP website.

Matt continued reviewing the timeline:

December 2017: applicants selected to move ahead to the full proposal step will have 6-8 weeks to respond. TAC will review, rank and develop a prioritized list to give to the Executive Committee in February 2018. The 2-day Steering Committee meeting will be moved to March 2018, where the Steering Committee will review and approve the budget. In the end, we will be ready to move ahead with contractors selected as soon as the agreements with the funding sources are in place.

Pierre noted that last year we started setting aside pots of \$200,000 for special focused grant programs. The Steering Committee gave control to the TAC to decide what to award? No. The TAC ranks and makes recommendations and the Executive or Steering Committee always makes the decisions. Bob responded that we take the advice from TAC and the Steering or Executive Committee makes the decision. That exists with this new process. Pierre asked: when we decide the main topics for pre-proposals do we also allocate funding to each of those priorities? Matt responded that first the Steering Committee selects the priority areas. Core projects (parallel track projects) the Steering Committee would commit funding for, and set

aside until the March 2018 budget meeting. Then you would have program funding left over for other projects. If the EC/SC wants to decide how much to allocate to each priority area then they could do that, and identify a general amount of funding expected to be available for each priority area.

Conflict of Interest Guidelines is a challenge. There is concern about how this would shake out in reviewing the projects. Any TAC member who has a conflict of interest with a preproposal would need to be recused from the entire budget process. This could wipe out a whole sector of the TAC and there could be areas of expertise absent from the review process. If the members of TAC without Conflict of Interest identify areas where expertise is absent then TAC can bring on other experts to either review specific projects, or to participate in the entire process, that don't have conflicts. The Conflict of Interest guidelines need to be updated to make sure an approach for addressing conflicts in this new process is clearly articulated, and that at the end of the day we have a way to properly evaluate and rank projects for the Steering Committee to consider that is not conflicted. One question is about whether Conflict of Interest applies to institution or department. The Executive Committee recommended that it be by department and if someone on the group is from the larger institution or organization then we should state clearly that someone from the institution submitted an application but they do not have a conflict. In another situation, where someone submits a pre-proposal and they are not selected for full proposal then they can come back into the process.

We don't have to set up external review committees, but TAC can consult outsider expert reviewers if that area of expertise is absent from TAC. If members are asked to sign a Conflict of Interest document then they will have to consider this issue. Matt that could easily be a survey check box.

The group moved back to discussing the new budget process. If the Steering Committee is interested in supporting a specific project, such as a tile drainage question, then we use that information to inform our preproposal priorities. Eric pointed out that for concepts like that we could also host a workshop to develop a better defined project. Buzz said that he and Bill Howland worked to develop a world lake vision with limnologists from around the world they found that the largest issue is that the academic community too often pursues individual research interests. The need for identification of what people need to know about the watersheds for management issues is overlooked. If there is a disconnect between what people want to do, and what informs management decision then we will not succeed. Eric responded that applicants can look at OFA and we will continue to hold research symposia to communicate research interests and management needs. Andrew thinks this is a well thought out and improved process. John K commented that this is a good process for TAC but not for HAPAC. Pierre asked what will we lose by moving to this new process? We will lose the competition at the project level, but that is the cost to get the benefit. Martin commented that he approves the process and is ready to move forward with the TAC for FY18.

John K moved, and Buzz seconded to approve the new preproposal process for the TAC project for FY18. All in favor. No abstentions.

11:30 AM LCBP conflict of interest guidelines (30 min)

As mentioned in the previous discussion, Eric has been revising the LCBP Conflict of Interest guidelines, which he then reviewed with the group. There was some conversation around where a conflict of interest would lie within larger organizations that have multiple departments (e.g. state government or universities). An organizational entity would be at the department level or ministry level or a division within a department. Mike suggested that board members be included for conflicts of interest (not just employees). Often a Board member is not an employee of an organization (e.g. NGO board), but is involved in making budget decisions for that organization.

Jane pointed out that if someone thinks that their conflict really isn't a conflict, then they can make their case and a committee can decide. Mike thinks this could be useful since so many gray areas come up in small community like this one. However, Mike thinks that it should be the role of

the LCBP/CVNHP Director to work with the person to make this decision to simplify the process. Renee agreed with the disclosure form.

MaryJo responded that the Executive Committee discussed this issue last week. They wanted to keep the process for the TAC simple and did not want to get into gray areas. If a person is part of the same department as the applicant, then it is a conflict. If not same department, then not a conflict. The person of course would have to feel comfortable with this as well.

MaryJo added that it probably makes sense to have different definitions for advisory committees and the Steering Committee membership.

Bob commented that it is hard to write down ethical issues like this, and it is good to have a clear disclosure policy and discussion.

The group agreed that Eric would work with the Executive Committee to finish up these guidelines, and that when a gray area comes up, he could work with the three Steering Committee chairs (VT, NY, QC) to make a decision, if necessary.

- **Other business**

Renee congratulated Eric for surviving his first Steering Committee 2-day budget meeting as Director and the Quebec members presented him with a card and gift.

12:00 PM ADJOURN