

**Lake Champlain Basin Program**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Auberge West Brome, West Brome, QC**  
**January 13-14, 2010**

**Members:** Daniel Leblanc, Mary Watzin, Real Pelletier, Bruce Hyde, Rolf Diamant, Erik Beck, Betsy Lowe, Jonathan Wood, Breck Bowden (for Mike Winslow), Dave Tilton, Roger Albee, Judy Doerner, Mario Paula (via phone), Buzz Hoerr, Gina Campoli **Staff:** Meg Modley, Bill Howland, Jim Brangan, Beth Card, Colleen Hickey, Martin Mimeault, Tom Hall, Michaela Stickney **Guests:** David Borthwick-Leslie, Chantal D'Auteuil, Benoit Limoges, Julie Moore, Laura DiPietro, Pierre Leduc, Tom Berry

The meeting convened at 10:15 AM. Daniel Leblanc, chair, welcomed everyone to West Brome and wished them a Happy New Year 2010! All present introduced themselves, and Daniel introduced Real Pelletier, who now will represent the QCCAC on the Steering Committee.

***Action Item:*** *Betsy moved to approve the November 19, 2009 draft meeting summary as presented. The motion was seconded by Judy, Motion met with unanimous approval, no abstentions.*

**Public Comments:** There were no public comments

Daniel introduced the guest speaker, **Mr. Benoit Limoges**, MDDEP, who made a presentation entitled **Ecosystem Services and their Economic Value**. **Presentation notes are appended to these minutes**

**Updates from Jurisdictions:**

- **New York:** Betsy reported that Governor Paterson will be releasing the budget on Tuesday, and they are expecting more cutbacks. A press release issued yesterday offers to consolidate many state agencies with similar missions, which is a good idea. Partnerships, such as with LCBP, are also being lauded as a way to save money. Also, more than half of the workforce is over 50 years old and few younger employees are entering the workforce. She noted the great cooperation between VT and NY with the Champlain Bridge. Another bright note is that point sources on the lake are meeting their targets, largely. As depressing as the economy is, there are lots of positive things happening.
- **Vermont:** Jonathan reported Governor Douglas will give his budget address next week. There will be an 8-10% cutback in the budget. Some departments and agencies have already seen 20% cuts so far. The state will be looking more to partnerships and innovation to keep things moving. Vermont has been working on the Lake Champlain TMDL implementation plans, which will be delivered to the legislature on Friday. Other legislative initiatives include cutting back the Current Use Program. Legal actions involving CLF are aimed at de-delegating VT from water quality self-regulation; this is costing the state much in a time when resources are

scarce. Jonathan also acknowledged the cooperation between Vermont and New York regarding the Champlain Bridge.

- **Quebec:** Daniel LeBlanc reported that emission restrictions for automobiles in QC will begin in 2016, similar to emission standards in the US. He said the MMDEP budget and staff will continue to remain the same as last year.

### **Committee Reports:**

- **Education & Outreach** - 44 applications for education and outreach grants were received; CBEI recruitment continues for Watershed in Every Classroom programs; and a social marketing workshop is being held on February 10, 2010. The workshop will allow groups to be more effective in getting their messages out. There were 28K people visiting the resource room this past year.
- **NYCAC** - Betsy distributed a written report for Ron Jackson
- **QCCAC** - Real Pelletier distributed a report. He discussed the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the CAC in Quebec; 5 awards handed out for environmental protection, knowledge acquisition, agro-environmental practices, community awareness, involvement of U.S. Partners (accompanied by a handout). He thanked the LCBP for its involvement. The CAC has a new board of directors chaired by Daniel Racine. Real is the vice-chair, Albert Santerre is the secretary-treasurer.
- **TAC** – Breck, chair designe, briefly reported on the Critical Source Assessment, the IJC project.
- **CHRAC** - Jim Brangan passed around a handout summarizing recent cultural heritage and recreational work. He noted the great Quadricentennial partnerships with the States of Vermont and New York, with the LCMM to send the Lois McClure up to Quebec. A total of \$366,000 for 41 grants was distributed in the last year to support the Quadricentennial. He showed the Fleming Museum's brochure entitled "A Beckoning Country" which had a very nice thank you to the LCBP. He also shared the Lake Champlain Voyages of Discovery brochure. Daniel noted that the partnerships through the LCBP have resulted in many good projects and products.
- **VTCAC** - Buzz thanked Judy for her service to the basin, since she is weeks away from retirement, and how helpful and responsive she was to the VTCAC. This year's CAC recommendations are reflective of concerns of watershed groups. With budget and staff cuts already made and more on the horizon, there will be tension around action that needs to happen and the ability to take action. The format this year will be new—a double-sided page with ten recommendations. Buzz read the 10 recommendations and noted that VTCAC members have until Friday to make final edits.

**Legislative Update:** Tom shared a list of appropriations that Senator Leahy had requested. The most significant new appropriation on Lake Champlain is \$6.5 million through Great Lakes Fishery Commission. USFWS and LCBP/NEIWPC have existing memoranda to move this money. These funds can be used to match other federal funds, such as USACE funds, but should be done selectively. A good deal of these dollars will flow through the LCBP, and will not replace the USEPA dollars, which are also higher this year.

**Manager's Report:** Bill reflected on *Progress 2009* and how LCBP staff and the Program was able to achieve so much this year even though staffing levels have remained constant. Copies of this report are available.

**Budget Discussion for EPA and NPS:** Bill reminded the group that many of the budgets still have moving parts, so today's discussion is an initial step in budgeting FY10. The EPA budget number for the LCBP will be \$2.881 million. The NY and VT Attorneys General offices will provide \$500,000 to be administered through the LCBP for grants. TAC ranked nearly \$4 million in possible tasks. There is 1.5 FTE new staff projected need in the overall LCBP budget. The budget line items have changed since the Executive Committee to correct an error. In this budget we have moved the LT monitoring and blue-green algae monitoring to the GLFC funding. We have also moved the local grants line to the GLFC as well. So for today, we can work on \$2.8 million from EPA with significantly more coming from the GLFC funding in the future. Bill circulated a spreadsheet and writeup of proposed tasks and the Committee discussed them.

Gina asked how this list of projects lines up with the work that *Clean and Clear* is proposing. There are several key needs met, but the task recommendations from TAC do not focus on backfill of state cuts. The committee discussed the limitations of the use of EPA funds, pertaining to compliance issues. Buzz emphasized the need for tasks to reduce phosphorus load, perhaps in targeted watersheds, and encouraged that individual projects be considered in the *OFA* framework. The committee agreed to revisit the budget.

**CVNHP Draft Management Plan Review:** Jim described the Draft Management Plan development and the alternatives included in the Environmental Assessment. The outreach meetings suggested including a third interpretive theme in the heritage partnership for the first phase. Although the subtheme (now called) *conservation and community* was well received and can be absorbed into the first two themes, there also is much interest in including it as a third theme. Jim reviewed and circulated the briefing.

Page 3 of the briefing, shows three alternatives: alternative A—no action; alternative B—operate CVNHP as a traditional heritage area; alternative C—incorporate interpretation of contemporary socio-environmental issues into the management of the CVNHP. Alternative C incorporates the natural world, conservation and sustainability. If alternative C selected, conservation and sustainability elements will be incorporated into the management plan, which is a chapter of *OFA*. Alternative C would utilize the institutional strength of the LCBP to interpret and address environmental issues associated with heritage-related resources.

Bruce noted that the themes in alternative C are not traditionally included in NHAs. The schedule is for the plan to be released to the public again in March. Roger noted that food and agriculture could play greater roles in the plan. Rolf noted that the initial alternative was narrowly focused on cultural heritage sites without looking at larger values of the working landscape, agricultural landscape. Alternative C looks more holistically at the multiple values of the basin, and see synergistic opportunities to leverage resources. The last alternative would be a wise decision. Mary noted that the listed alternatives need to be more holistic so that they incorporate the working landscape. Bill added

that the authorizing legislation assigned leadership to the LCBP, because the stewardship of cultural heritage resources cannot easily be handled separately from stewardship of the environment. Jonathan said he would like additional discussion on this issue. Bill noted that the steering committee is not being asked to vote at this point, and it will again be reviewed by the Executive Committee, after further development.

### **Recognitions for steering committee members**

**Pierre Leduc** — As chair of the Quebec CAC, Pierre informed himself very well and demonstrated passion and dedication to the cleanup of the Lake.

**Judy Doerner** — As VT state conservationist at NRCS Judy underscored the word service at the end of that NRCS title. She was always available to help and did help LCBPs work in important ways. Judy offered to help as a peer reviewer. ☺

### **DAY TWO January 14, 2010**

***Action Item: Daniel moved to go in to Executive Session to discuss committee nominations and competitive grant proposals. Erik and Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

After a short Executive Session, Daniel declared the end of Executive Session.

***Action Item: Buzz moved to appoint Dr. Breck Bowden as TAC chair for a three years term that could be renewed by the Steering Committee thereafter. Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

***Action Item: Erik moved that the Executive Committee work with LCBP staff to put in place staggered three year terms without limits for all advisory committees. Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

***Action Item: Dave Tilton moved to accept the first six projects recommended for 2009 pollution prevention or aquatic invasive species local implementation grants as funding allows. Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Gina Campoli and Jonathan Wood abstained.***

### **Budget Discussion**

Mary recommended approving the portions of the budget we are comfortable with and hold the rest of the items until a future meeting when we are aware of other funding amounts, or overlap among funding. Erik was comfortable with framework, building local level implementation, measuring and monitoring, and the CVNHP, sections but would like further discussion of some of the other projects. Dave Tilton noted that some task decisions are time sensitive. Mary added that she is comfortable with the first page of the spreadsheet and down through the first two lines in monitoring. She disclosed that her UVM team is the recipient of the BGA funds within the monitoring. She suggested that if stream gaging around St. Albans Bay is to be supported it should be approved now so that we don't miss the

spring field season. She supported the mercury monitoring. Jonathan suggested the committee discuss what might be missing in the budget - a project to support the TMDL is important.

The Steering Committee felt it important to recognize budget priorities at an earlier stage in the budget process, so that TAC can prepare task proposals that are more targeted to immediate needs. Buzz noted that from the public's perspective, budgeting by the lake segment is important. Bill noted that LCBP will hire a part-time person to work with the adaptive management group that Mary chairs, to pull together information to help refocus resources. Bill added that technical advice comes to the Committee from the TAC – which forms both a highly talented consultant team. While proposals come only through the TAC it works in the context of Steering Committee guidance and *OFA*.

**Action Item: Erik moved to approve all of framework, for plan implementation section, all of the informing and involving the public section, all of the building local level implementation section except for NYSAOG piece, then individual projects: long-term monitoring program, BGA monitoring, meteorological station (16), gaging station (23), methyl mercury monitoring station in Underhill (22), ANS coordinator, cultural recreation coordinator, water chestnut harvesting (28), boat launch stewards, phase II ARS-Andrew Simon (2), critical source analysis for \$300,000 in the P section (IJC). Mary seconded the motion.**

- **Roger Allbee moved to amend the motion to add the stormwater utility for \$100,000 to the list of approved projects which will be set aside and defined later. Ron Jackson seconded the motion.**
- **The motion to amend passed unanimously, with Erik Beck, Jonathan Wood, Steve Garceau, and Judy Doerner abstaining.**

**The amended motion passed unanimously with Steve Garceau and Jonathan Wood abstaining. (Mary Watzin was absent for the vote)**

There was agreement that the staff and TAC would discuss the possible consolidation of several technical tasks for further Steering Committee review.

### **OFA Chapter Discussions**

**Fish and Wildlife:** Bill Ardren from USFWS led the discussion. TAC has worked on this recently based on feedback from various groups at the USFWS office. LCBP and USFWS draft input now is complete. Quebec working on the information needed. Betsy noted that a few NY actions that were sent but have not been incorporated yet. People should contact Bill or Eric Howe to get draft tasks in this document. Wetlands are now included with this chapter.

The Committee discussed each proposed action, particularly:

- the degree of commitment to removal of the Swanton Dam project,
- the need for various partners working together to agree on common metrics of progress,
- the separation of objectives to restore natural populations from the interest in maintaining populations for fishing

- the importance of supporting native plant nurseries for riparian buffer plantings.
- the degree of interest in focusing on aquatic endangered species issues.

All parties agreed to provide the missing information by March and another version will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

**Opportunities for Action: Lake Champlain Management Plan – Online :** Nicole distributed an outline of her presentation as it appears on the computer screen and a list of the plan sections for both the website and printed version, as requested by the Executive Committee. All of the progress updates link back to chapters and actions. They will be the part that is updated online.

The action database will include the actions that can be linked to and within other chapters. For example, actions which refer to climate change in the Fish and Wildlife section will link you to actions within the climate change chapter. Progress updates in the chart for each set of actions and tasks will then be linked to full reports, contact information links, etc. These can be brief updates that the public will need.

Mary noted the need for work in progress to be listed as ongoing. Nicole replied that with this system, we can show multiple updates per task, including information about unexpected challenges. David Borthwick-Leslie said that this is just what the public wants to know. By showing the reasons that things may or may not be accomplished, the public will learn just how complicated these issues and processes can be. It would be much more transparent.

**Rapid Response Planning for Aquatic Nuisance Species:** Dave T. said it's important to get the task force underway soon. If the jurisdictions could get their names to Meg, we can get the task force process underway. Jonathan asked if LCBP could send partners an announcement asking for an appointment to be made and a possible meeting date.

**Managing Nonnative Invasive Nuisance Plants and Animals:** Meg presented the draft chapter, which still is missing some commitments, but planning is underway to address those. The Committee discussed including a breakout of agencies or departments working on specific tasks, so that it is better understood who within an agency is doing the work.

The Committee felt that the draft contained too much focus on how – at a workplan level - tasks would be performed, and recommended reducing the text with briefer task descriptions. It was also recognized that the detail in the draft reflected careful planning and is an essential implementation resource, though not for the plan itself. The chapter will be revised to reflect this simplification.

**Toxins:** The Committee considered whether to keep reference to brownfields in the Chapter. The Committee opted to include general text to the effect of working with communities to clean up contaminated lands. The Committee discussed the *precautionary principle* as a prioritization guide. Jonathan and Ron felt it was not appropriate, others felt it provides the kind of guidance the public wants to see. The Committee was undecided. Mario and Erik agreed to work on suggested language for this chapter.

Daniel proposed a new title for the Toxins Chapter. After discussion the Committee chose a new title: **Reducing Toxic Substances and Pathogens.**

**Climate Change:** Text is adapted from text written by Stager and Thill (TNC). Meg asked the committee to review this and send them their comments. As presented, climate change actions here are pasted in from the other chapters; they are not newly written.

**Next Meeting:** The Committee chose to meet next on March 30<sup>th</sup> in NY.

### **Guest Speaker Presentation Notes:**

Among the main points made by Mr. Limoges on January 13<sup>th</sup>, were:

- 1) Significant losses of biodiversity have already occurred. Every year we lose more species and the rate of loss is accelerating with every year. We have, however, seen some stabilization of populations of some species, due to management actions. However, the diversity of indigenous species continues to drop.
- 2) Unfortunately, the number of *invasive species* is increasing every year.
- 3) Some people benefit from activities that reduce the biodiversity - and this reduces ecosystem services. Often, the costs to society are higher than the benefits obtained by the individual interest. There is a certain number of people who benefit from actions that also reduce ecosystem services, but with the decline in those services, a larger number of people lose out. The result is an increase in poverty.
- 4) We have worked to reduce the loss of biodiversity and this adds some positive effect. But what we have done has not been enough. We need new types of actions and approaches to preserve ecosystem services.
- 5) New efforts are needed to meet the 2010 target to reduce loss –
  - a. Economic incentives would assist sustainable intensification of agriculture (more food with less space and less pollution) and reduce climate change
  - b. Internalization of the loss of ecosystem services is not accounted in today's economy and we should introduce this concept.

Lake Champlain is an ecosystem with lots of species that are interacting with their environments. And humans are part of this ecosystem. The links between humans and the ecosystem are generally identified but not well known. Ecosystem services are directly linked to the quality of life.

We know of 40 services from the environment such as:

- 1) **regulating services** - These stabilize the environment - like peat lands, local climate regulation (shelter vegetation, buffers), protection against extreme meteorological events, reduction of inundation and dryness (wetlands: \$185K/hectare value) , air purification - trees can absorb 6 lbs of toxins per year, composting, soil fertility, decontamination of soils, wind and water erosion, landslides. Pests: 99% of agricultural pests are controlled by their enemies like lady bugs, without pesticide. Pollination: 100k types of pollinators are identified in the environment, and dispersion of seeds is often by animals. We know the most about these services

- 2) **Natural environment services** - fresh water, combustibles, fibers, natural ornaments, pets, domesticated animals like buffalo, dogs, etc., medicinal plants and animals, biochemical and pharmaceutical products, genetic resources,
- 3) **Youth nature services** - If you are in contact with many micro organisms when you are young you will fortify your immune system, but if you live in a bubble your immune system may not develop well and you may get sick later. There also is a psychological development of children or “nature deficit syndrome”. In a school yard with trees and gardens there is less delinquency than one with plastic and concrete.
- 4) **Socio-culture services** – Some areas are considered sacred, tourism, aesthetics, inspiration, heritage crops inherent to certain places, relationship with nature, sense of place, system of knowledge.

Why should we give ecological value to nature? The idea is to have arguments that are scientific and economically beneficial. We need to put an economic value on the services so that politicians and resource managers can make informed decisions. Not all aspects of biodiversity have value; some of the value is intrinsic.

The economic value of the environment is not taken into account of the economy today. The value of the ecosystem services may be \$33 trillion per year. Each year it is reduced by \$50 billion. This is a horizontal concept and we need to integrate the social, economic, and ecological aspects. In 10 years we might have tools that can help to internalize these services into the economy.

Jonathan asked if there are any types of processes or examples in QC that exist now for private land owners. Mr. Benoit stated that QC has declared itself to move in this direction with two action plans. The update of the plan will maintain constant or increasing ecosystem services. We have a number of examples but they have not been implemented yet. The three nations have supported a study where they assessed the existing ecosystem services.

Daniel added that some protection of wetlands and forests comes through riverbank protection. Erik mentioned that it would be wise to integrate some of the ideas on the presentation into the economics chapter.