

**Lake Champlain Basin Program
Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 10, 2012
Plattsburgh City Hall, Plattsburgh, NY**

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Bob Stegemann (chair), Daniel Leblanc, David Mears, Ron Jackson, Buzz Hoerr, Real Pelletier, Col. Boule, Lynne Hamjian, Breck Bowden, James Ehlers, Marilyn Stephenson, John Krueger, Dave Tilton, Vicky Drew, Jeanne Voorhees; **Staff:** Bill, Jim, Colleen, Ryan, Eric, Kathy, Fred, Michaela, Martin Mimeault; **Guests:** David Borthwick-Leslie, David Reckahn, Mayor Don Kasprzak, Tom Berry, Mike Jennings, Roman Romansky

Meeting Begins: *Bob Stegemann* introduced Mayor Don Kasprzak who welcomed the Steering Committee to Plattsburgh. Bill introduced James Ehlers as new VT CAC chair. Bill and staff recognized Buzz for his many years of service as the VT CAC Chair and presented him with a gift.

Draft Meeting Agenda review: no change

Action Item: *Dave T. moved to approve the March 2012 Steering Committee meeting as presented, Dave M seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

Public Comments:

Dave Reckahn, Essex County SWCD and VP of CWICNY, recounted his experience with a Section 542 project the proposal for which had been reviewed and recommended to the USACOE by the LCBP Steering Committee. The Rivermeade project has been in the works for about 20 years and after many delays, was ready to start in the year ahead. However, many issues continued to delay the start-up, including rockslides, storms (including Irene) and permitting challenges. The main challenge that could not be overcome was the USACOE determination that this would be a \$2.2M project in order to be done to Corps standards, which meant that the town would have to put up matching funds that actually were greater than the cost of the town simply doing the job without Corps assistance.

Col Boule commented that although the project was important, the Corps could not find a way to make it work; unfortunately, they could not close the cost and funding gap. Project still has his interest and hope the state can assist in implementing the project. Bob S asked how much would be needed, and Col. Boule said the whole project would need about \$350,000 for the full project could be done and it would be done the best way.

Updates from Jurisdictions:

VT – *David M* reviewed recent VT legislation regarding flooding, flood plain protection and river management. Two additional positions have been provided to work with communities on flood plain areas. He described a meeting scheduled in Highgate, VT on 24 May, at which the VT Governor and QC Premier plan to attend.

QC - *Daniel* also discussed the planned meeting at the Tyler Place. He also discussed the developing initiative with the IJC regarding the 2011 flooding study requested by the Premier and the VT Governor. Daniel reviewed the content and outcomes of the LCBP flood workshop in St Jean. **NY** – *Bob* reviewed the outcome of the *Trees for Tribs* programs in a number of communities impacted by the 2011 flooding, particularly TS Irene. 1600 trees were planted on the banks of the Ausable and 500 along Lake George tributaries. The LCBP Flood workshop held in Plattsburg last week was successful in bringing together response leadership from NY, VT and QC, as well as US federal agencies - participation and expertise in that workshop was notable. Bob noted that a recent meeting of VT DEC and NYS DEC officials in Bennington about Lake Champlain initiatives was very constructive.

Reports from Advisory Committee Chairs:

NY CAC – CAC has been looking at the condition of roads in the region and taking note of spots that needed the most repairs and what was needed to fix it and costs. Many flood responders have noted the importance stream gages and the CAC is concerned about the problem of keeping them funded. The data provided by gauges is very important, as demonstrated in last year's flooding, in saving both people and property.

VT CAC – James, as the new chair thanked Buzz for his 15 years of service to the committee. He will be surveying the CAC in the summer to see if changes to the program of meetings etcetera are wanted. The next CAC meeting will be on Monday, May 14th.

QCCAC – *Real* reported that the nursery partnership to plant trees on lake shore, started a nursery 3 years ago, and now has about 10,000 trees that are 3' high and can be sold for \$2 to towns. He described the 2011 inventory on Pike River from VT to Bedford. In April 5300 trees were planted in strategic places identified in that inventory. On 5 farms 2000 trees were planted by professionals. The Rock River inventory been completed, and may result in planting as many as 15,000 trees in riparian areas next year. This year the Musketeer program will have contact with 10 schools. The Annual meeting of the QCCAC will be held on June 20th at 7 pm and will include presentations by Daniel Leblanc and a researcher on BGA.

E&O – The E&O report included a handout. At a meeting on March 16th the committee discussed the need and content for PSAs on the *Don't P* initiative in NY and VT, the refurbishment of the LCBP Website, the Marina Workshop, Grants, School Programs, the Local Watershed Group Meeting, and the next iteration of CBEI. The LCBP Resource Room at ECHO at the Leahy Center expects to pass **250,000** visitors to the room this fall. The next E&O meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2012.

TAC – The TAC report included a handout. In April, TAC had a presentation by Bill Ardren on landlocked salmon. It reviewed the long term monitoring program final report for 2011 and approved the workplans for 2012 for both the monitoring program and the water chestnut management program. In the May meeting TAC discussed the final report on the 2011 Water Chestnut Management task and the current state of modeling lakeshore development in littoral habitats in Malletts Bay. TAC also reviewed and commented on the latest State of the Lake draft. TAC members would like to meet with Executive Committee to discuss goals for the next year. Bill noted there is time in a summer Executive Committee meeting for that to part of the agenda.

HAPAC – *John* pointed out that it was 237 years ago, in the American Revolution, that Fort Ticonderoga was captured by Ethan Allen and others. Tom noted official opening of Champlain Bridge is June 19th. Jim said the Bikeways guide, circulated, is the first update to be done since 1999. He also described the trading card program associated with the War of 1812.

Comments, US Army Corp of Engineers:

Col. Boule, District Commander spoke about the role of the USACE as the major water resources management agency in the US, along with partners, USFWS, and USGS. 3 main focus areas were described: navigation, flood management, environmental management. Col Boule provided an overview of the projects that are currently being done by ACOE in the basin. ACOE is ready to partner with local governments for future projects in the Basin. Dave T asked about the authority received in WRDA 2007 legislation for an invasive species barrier feasibility study in the Champlain Canal. Col. Boule noted that the challenge is that there is not the funding for that study, even though they have the authority - this problem really arises from the elimination of earmarks. Tom noted that there is something like \$3.8M in the Section 542 program and ACOE will need to determine how to use those funds. Col. Boule noted that the priorities for the use of the funds will come from the LCBP Steering Committee. Bill explained how the process for funding projects is done.

Legislative Update:

Tom Berry reported that Farm Bill has made it through the Senate Ag committee with bi-partisan support, and conservation programs a big part of that bill. However the fate of the bill in the House remains very uncertain.

Manager's Report:

Bill reported on the LCBP involvement to date in the development of the scope of work for the potential IJC study to explore flood impacts on Lake Champlain and future potential impacts. He reviewed that the USGS stream gages budget received about \$135,000 from LCBP in FY11 and would again in FY12. This support, which includes a contract with VT DEC, will carry them through Sept. 30, 2012. Bill reviewed the recent key accomplishments of the program, including the CSA report (LCBP Technical Report #63), Local grants for \$450,000 were approved at the April Executive Committee, the LCBP website is being revamped, the SOL Report is being finalized, and the GLFC FY12 funds likely will become available soon. We have preliminary okay to allocate \$170,000 to pay remaining share of the farmer costs after the NRCS uses Equip money to pay 75% of cost and the State of Vermont chips in what it can to offset

State of the Lake:

The committee discussed several outstanding questions regarding content and graphics. The release date was postponed from June 30th in favor of having adequate time for completing work and in-house design, so will be rescheduled for a date to be determined in late summer.

Flood Workshops recapped, June Flood Conference Plans:

Eric provided handouts of the agendas for the first two workshops. The February meeting focused on what happened in 2011 flood with a series of speakers. The May workshop focused on aquatic organism passage and culverts, and floodplain policies in jurisdictions and emergency response in the afternoon. The culminating conference is scheduled for June 4-5 at UVM Davis Center in Burlington. The committee discussed potential content for the Flood Conference Agenda.

Adjourned 3:15 pm