



LAKE CHAMPLAIN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MEETING SUMMARY

DECEMBER 15, 2020 9:45AM - 3:30PM
VIA WEBINAR/TELECONFERENCE

ATTENDANCE:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joe Zalewski (Meeting Chair, NYS DEC), Nathalie Provost (Quebec MELCC), Julie Moore (VTANR), Vic Putman (Chair, NY CAC), Pierre Leduc (Chair, Quebec CAC), Mark Naud (Chair, VT CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee), John Krueger (Chair, HAPAC), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), Mel Cote (EPA R1), Mario Paula (EPA R2 for Rick Balla), Maya Dehner (USACE), Andrew Milliken (USFWS), Breck Bowden (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Dennis Deweese (NRCS NY for Blake Glover), Vicky Drew (NRCS VT), Stephanie Mikesell (NYS Empire State Development), Steve Garceau (Quebec Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs), Ryan Patch (VT AAFM for Alyson Eastman), Laura Trieschmann (VT ACCD), Craig DiGiammarino (VTRANS), Joe Giordano (NY Local Municipal Representative – Town of Ticonderoga)

STAFF: LCBP: Eric Howe, Jim Brangan, Colleen Hickey, Ryan Mitchell, Elizabeth Lee, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Matthew Vaughan, Lauren Jenness, Mae Kate Campbell; Heather Radcliffe (NEIWPC), Peter Zaykoski (NEIWPC), Erin Vennie-Vollrath (LCBP-NYDEC), Jean-Francois Cloutier (Quebec MELCC), Koon Tang (NYS DEC), Lauren Townley (NYS DEC), Julie Berlinski (NYS DEC), Sarah Coleman (LCBP VT ANR), Pete Laflamme (VTANR), MaryJo Feuerbach (EPA R1), Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Rifat Salim (USACE)

GUESTS: Tom Berry (Sen. Leahy's office), Haley Pero (Sen. Sander's office), Shane Nelson (EPA R2), Mikael Guillou (QC MAPAQ), Ghislain Poisson (QC MAPAQ), Aubert Michaud (IJC/IRDA), David Minkoff (USFWS)

Joe Zalewski (NYS DEC) Chaired this meeting.

MEETING BEGINS

10:00 AM

INTRODUCTIONS

Joe announced Erin Vennie-Vollrath as the new NYDEC LCB Coordinator and Erin introduced herself to the group.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 2020 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

- **Motion By:** Buzz Hoerr
- **Second by:** Mel Cote
- **Discussion on the motion:** Neil Kamman requested a minor revision to the descriptions of the USACE projects on page 2 that was incorporated into the meeting minutes by Eric Howe.
- **Vote:** All in Favor
- **Abstentions:** None

PUBLIC COMMENT

10:20 AM

No public comments were made.

GREAT LAKES AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM (GLLISP) UPDATE (MEG MODLEY, LCBP AND MARIO PAULA, EPA R2)

Meg Modley and Mario Paula provided an update on the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program (GLLISP) that was established by the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA). A requirement of the VIDA Act was for the Great Lakes National Program to submit a report to Congress that identified existing programs in the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain basins that control/prevent aquatic invasive species (AIS) introductions as well as gaps in funding. Mario and Meg thanked the partners who worked on the report which was submitted to Congress two months prior. The report calls for the establishment of a more robust Lake Champlain AIS program, identified opportunities for



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collaboration between the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain, and identified a next step to create and populate a GLANSIS-type database of AIS for Lake Champlain.

- The Steering Committee noted that the report is well-written and an important road map for AIS management that will help the Great Lakes Lake Champlain partnership moving forward.

LOWER SARANAC RESTORATION AND INDIAN RAPIDS DAM REMOVAL 10:30 AM (DAVID MINKOFF, USFWS)

David Minkoff provided an overview of the New York-Lake Champlain Basin Dam Task Force's activity regarding the restoration of the Lower Saranac River via the removal of Indian Rapids Dam, one of three dams located on the lower portion of the river. He and Matt Vaughan, the group's Chair, requested that the Executive Committee provide feedback on their level of support for the project.

- The Steering Committee asked clarifying questions about what type of fish species would benefit from the river's restoration and discussed possible sources of funding.
- The Steering Committee voiced their support for some form of funding for the dam's removal as restoring the 10 miles of habitat and securing fish passage would be an accomplishment.
- The group discussed possible funding sources for this work.

VT AAFM PAYMENT FOR PERFORMANCE SERVICES RCPP GRANT 10:50 AM (RYAN PATCH, VTAAFM)

Ryan Patch presented on Vermont's new Healthy Soils & Payment for Phosphorus Program which is designed to help reduce phosphorus inputs from the agricultural sector to Lake Champlain. The program, funded at \$7M over five years, is an innovative pay-for-performance approach that pays farmers for the pounds of phosphorus reduced by implementing conservation practices and will utilize the new FarmPREP tool.

- The Steering Committee asked clarifying questions about how VTAAFM will be prioritizing payments, how VTAAFM will address equity between farmers who have already implemented conservation practices and those who have not, if VTAAFM will be evaluating additional ecosystem services in the future, and how VTAAFM will provide outreach so that farmers understand the FarmPREP tool.
- The Steering Committee noted that this is an innovative and ambitious approach.

BRIEF UPDATES 11:15 AM

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES

Tom Berry (Senator Leahy's Office): Congress is working on a one-week Continuing Resolution to fund the government and it likely that the omnibus spending bills will be adopted. Tom provided highlights of the funding levels and priorities of relevant FY21 appropriation bills.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

Written updates from NYSDEC, VTANR, NYCAC, QCCAC, VTCAC, E&O Committee, HAPAC, TAC, EPA, USFWS, Lake Champlain Sea Grant, VT NRCS, NEIWPCC and the Lake Champlain Federal Partners Workgroup were circulated prior to the meeting.

Nathalie Provost (Quebec MELCC): The new Vermont-Quebec Missisquoi Bay Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be signed in the upcoming weeks. On December 10th, the Quebec government adopted a law that will accelerate the search and authorization process for funding infrastructure projects. Jean-Francois who was serving as the Quebec MELCC representative to LCBP has taken a new enforcement job starting in January and until his replacement is found Nathalie will be attending LCBP meetings.

Pierre Leduc (Quebec CAC): The proposal for a bi-national mass balance model for the Rock River was accepted. This model is the first step in removing obstacles to do a mass balance model for the entire Missisquoi Bay watershed, a priority IJC recommendation.



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Ryan Patch (VT AAFM): VTAAFM's Covid-19 agricultural relief work and grants are nearly closed out. \$250,000 has been shifted between funding pools to fund additional working lands grant category requests. VTAAFM's Water Quality program has been working to do inspections and enforcement as required throughout the pandemic and financial assistance to farmers continues to be provided.

Laura Trieschmann (VT ACCD): The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has created a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) designating the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum as an Underwater Historic Preserve and archivers for underwater artifacts.

Mark Naud (VT CAC): The VTCAC has seen an increase in public participation due to the switch to online meetings and members hope that they will have continued participation and greater connectivity once the new CAC Coordinator starts. Eric Howe added that the meeting was facilitated by Alli Lewis, the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership Coordinator.

Mel Cote (EPA R1): The EPA Administration transition has begun. Deb Szaro, currently Deputy Regional Administrator, will serve as Acting Regional Administrator, and Bryan Olsen, currently Director of the Superfund and Emergency Management Division, will serve as the Acting Deputy Regional Administrator. Bryan Dore added that EPA is now able to process grant extensions after delays due to the pandemic.

Mario Paula (EPA R2): The EPA R2 Administrator will be leaving, and an acting administrator will likely serve until the beginning of the summer.

Vicky Drew (NRCS VT): a 250-acre farm acquisition/wetlands easement that took place last week is highlighted in the written updates.

Andrew Milliken (USFWS): USFWS's Sea Lamprey Control Program Team successfully treated four major tributaries in Vermont. Andrew thanked the partners who made cross-border sampling possible during COVID-19.

Breck Bowden (Lake Champlain Sea Grant): The National Sea Grant College Program amendments which authorize the program passed with unanimous consent in Congress. Mark Malchoff has retired. LCSG is funding two research projects. One is researching food web dynamics in Lake Champlain and one is researching a wood chip bioreactor to reduce nitrogen delivery to Lake George.

Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee): The committee continues its work to focus priorities. ECHO's attendance is down due to the pandemic. Eric Howe added that the E&O team has been busy working to convert typical outreach programming online.

Rifat Salim (USACE): Section 542 projects are ongoing. Canal Barrier Study has been receiving responses to a survey. The St. Albans phosphorus study planned to be completed by December. The Waterbury Dam study is almost complete and an agreement for the design and construction of the project has been executed.

Neil Kamman (TAC): TAC has reviewed seven workplans, 43 RFPPs, discussed CABN, and has had several State of the Lake conversations.

Heather Radcliffe (NEIWPCC): NEIWPCC is excited for the new CAC Coordinator to begin. The 2021 Boat Launch Steward positions have been posted and will be open until February. Heather will be going on maternity leave in March and Peter Zaykoski will be filling in.

LUNCH BREAK

12:15 PM



LAKE CHAMPLAIN STEERING COMMITTEE - MEETING SUMMARY DECEMBER 15, 2020

LCBP UPDATES

12:45 PM

Written updates from LCBP were circulated prior to the meeting. Highlights include welcoming Joe Giordano to the Steering Committee as the new New York local municipal representative and welcoming Erin Vinnie-Vollrath as the new New York Lake Champlain Coordinator. LCBP has awarded \$2.1M in grants since October and grants will continue to be awarded into January. LCBP is transitioning the E&O budget process to align with the technical and CVNHP process. Jim received an email from the Vermont Council on Rural Affairs about exploring the possibility of placing someone with us for a month in the next couple of years whose interest is biosphere reserves. LCBP staff participated in part one of a two-part DEI workshop. The new LCBP website should be going live within the next few weeks. The Long-term Monitoring Program is being upgraded with new technology thanks to the support of the Steering Committee.

Breck Bowden described three activities of the Lake Champlain Federal Partners Workgroup: (1) the creation of a rack card describing the group which will link to an online brochure and webpage on the LCBP website, (2) a new report describing the hydrodynamic models of Lake Champlain created by Mae Kate Campbell and Julianna White, and (3) the creation of Environmental Sensitivity Index maps for Lake Champlain. He thanked the EPA for advancing the project and the workgroup will be looking for additional Steering Committee support to advance the project.

IJC LAKE CHAMPLAIN-RICHELIEU RIVER FLOOD STUDY UPDATE

1:00 PM

(DEBORAH LEE, NOAA-GLERL/IJC US LCRR CO-CHAIR)

Debbie Lee provided an update on the IJC Lake Champlain-Richelieu River Flood Study which was commissioned in response to the 2011 flooding in the basin. She thanked partners on the call who were involved in its funding and development. The Study is exploring a range of flood mitigation solutions to reduce flood levels and build resiliency with two primary goals: reduce high water levels and limit flooding impacts and reduce flooding vulnerability and building flood resiliency. It is the first IJC study to incorporate an evaluation of the social and political perceptions to proposed measures.

- The Executive Committee asked clarification questions about the Study's messaging around wetlands and about the structural solutions proposed.

2021 STATE OF THE LAKE UPDATE

2:00 PM

(LCBP STAFF)

LCBP staff presented preliminary proposed changes to the 2021 State of the Lake Report including content changes (updating figures and removing and replacing some figures with new topical information) and format changes (hardcopy augmented by digital web content and some text will be reduced in favor of info or data driven graphics) and asked for feedback from the Steering Committee members.

- The Steering Committee asked clarifying questions and said they look forward to seeing the changes at an upcoming meeting. They requested time to review the drafted report before it is published.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

2:45 PM

(NY AGRONOMY GRANT AWARD DECISION; TECHNICAL AND CVNHP PROGRAM PRE-PROPOSAL Q&A)

Members of the public were asked to exit the meeting at this time.

MOTION: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **Motion By:** Mel Cote
- **Second by:** Neil Kamman
- **Discussion on the motion:** Pierre Leduc recused himself from the technical pre-proposal discussion and Breck Bowden recused himself from discussing one technical pre-proposal.
- **Vote:** all in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

EXIT.



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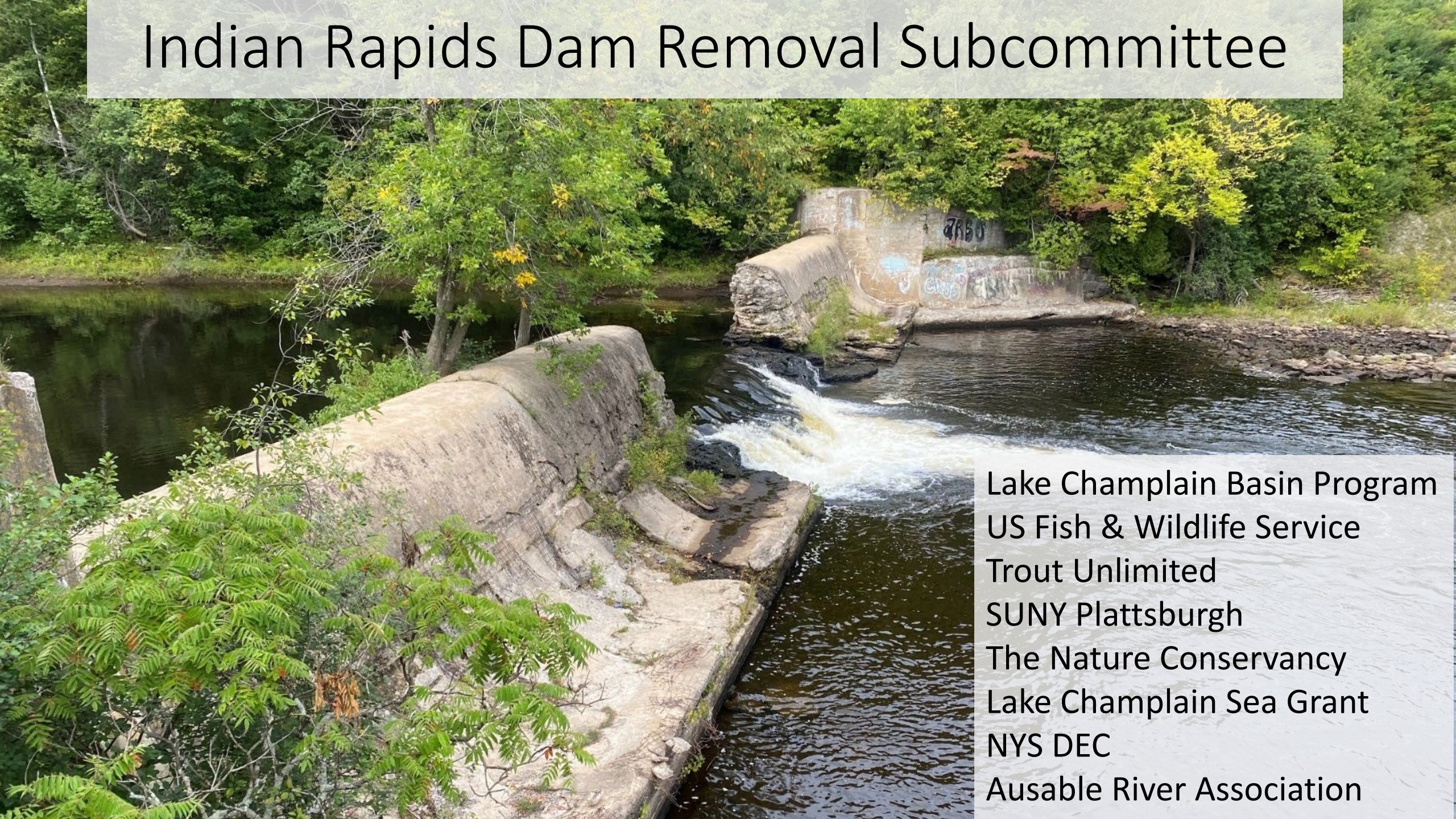
ACTION ITEM: TO APPROVE THE GRANT AWARDS AS PRESENTED IN THE RECORDS OF DECISION FOR THE NEW YORK AGRONOMY GRANT PROGRAM

- **Motion By:** Neil Kamman
- **Second by:** John Krueger
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** all in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

ADJOURN

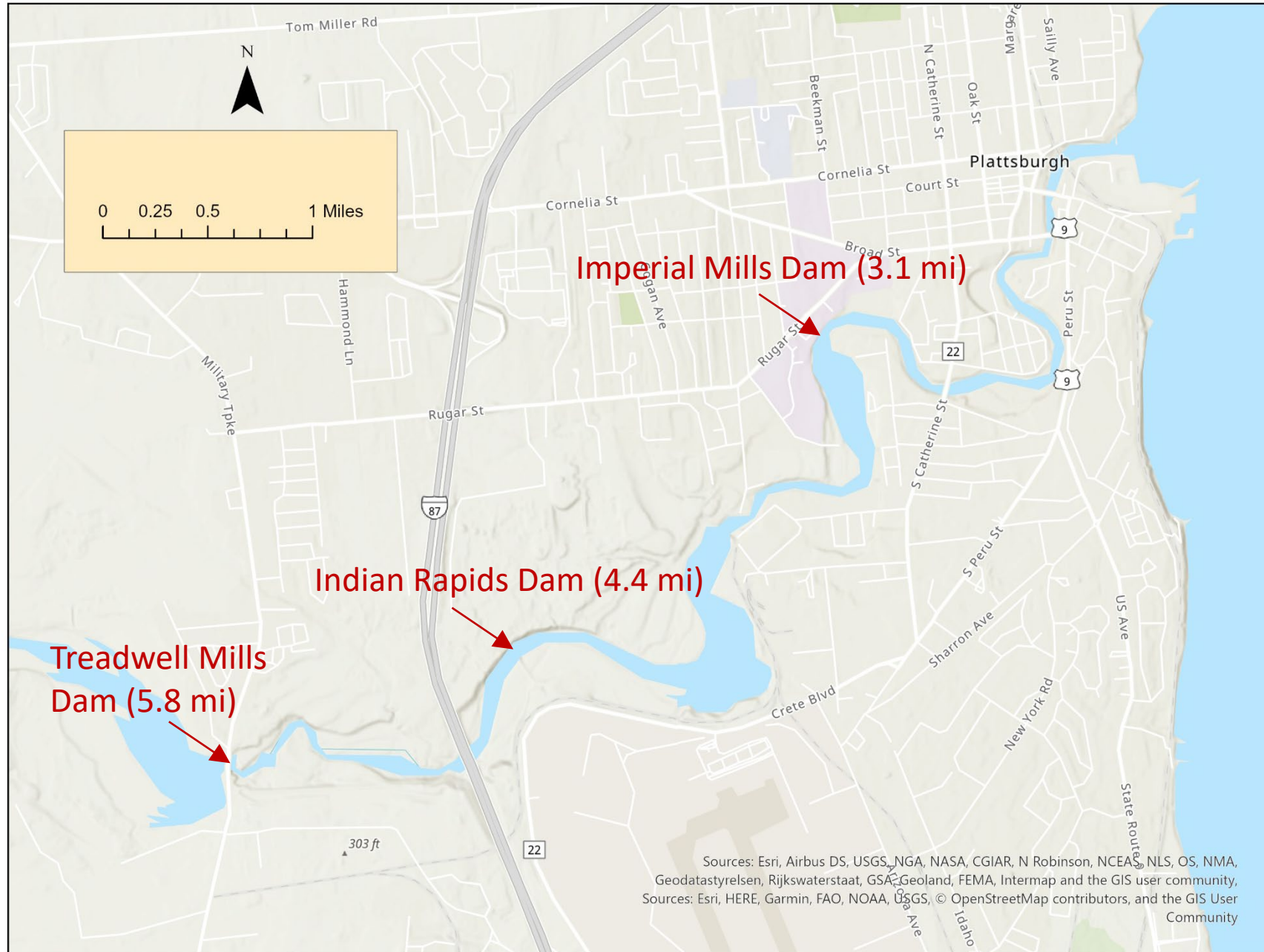
3:30 PM

Indian Rapids Dam Removal Subcommittee



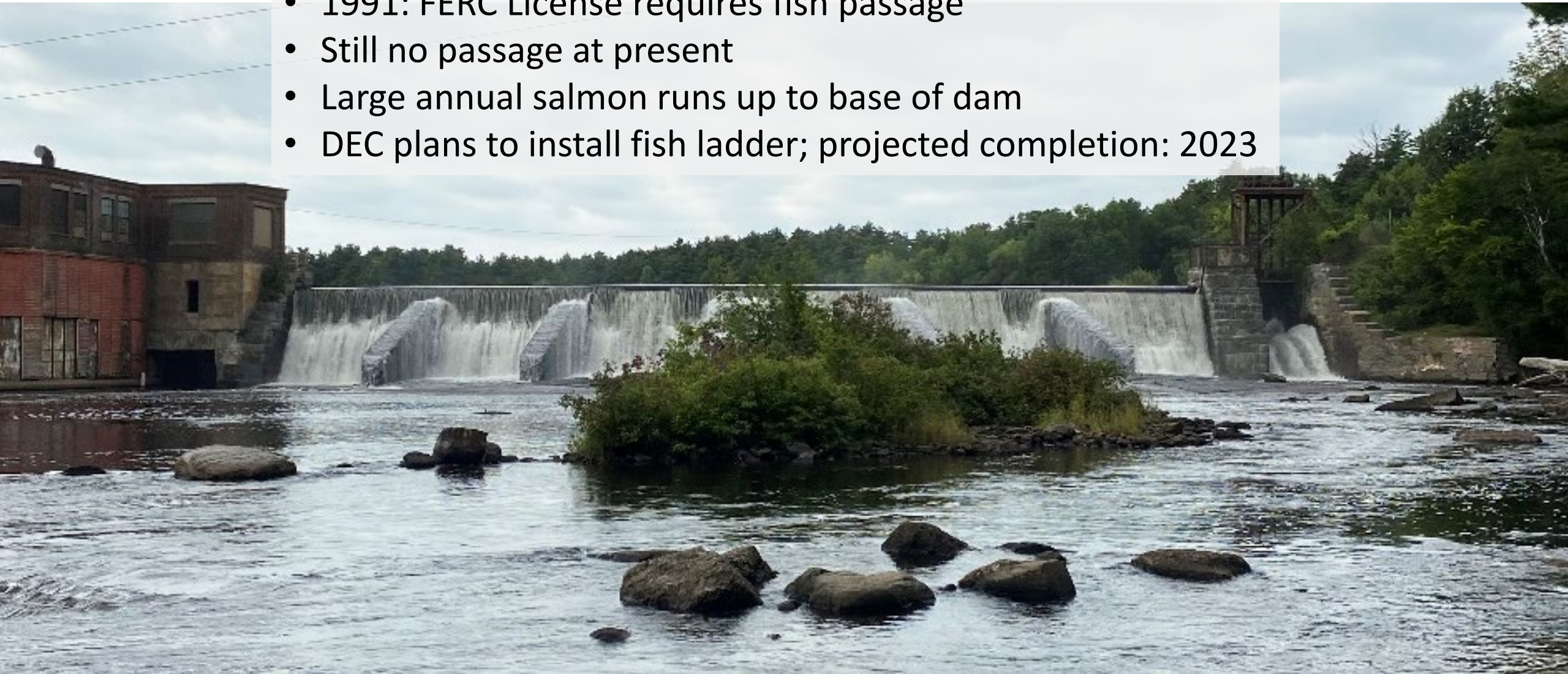
Lake Champlain Basin Program
US Fish & Wildlife Service
Trout Unlimited
SUNY Plattsburgh
The Nature Conservancy
Lake Champlain Sea Grant
NYS DEC
Ausable River Association

Lower Saranac River Dam Locations



Imperial Mills Dam

- Built 1855; first hydro in 1925
- 1991: FERC License requires fish passage
- Still no passage at present
- Large annual salmon runs up to base of dam
- DEC plans to install fish ladder; projected completion: 2023



Salmon migrations up to Imperial Mills Dam



Photo credit:
Mike Lynch
Adirondack Explorer

<https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/stories/saranac-river-salmon-fishing>

Treadwell Mills Dam

- Approx 6 miles upstream from Lake Champlain
- Fish ladder constructed but never used
- 80% of salmon nursery habitat lies upstream of this dam (NY DEC)
- Next barrier upstream is Kent Falls (12 miles from mouth of Saranac)



Indian Rapids Dam

- Built 1905
- Deliberately breached for safety reasons
- Passage over cascade uncertain



Indian Rapids Dam Spring, 2019



Photo credit:
Mark Malchoff,
SUNY Plattsburgh

Indian Rapids Dam Removal

- Appears manageable
- May be relatively inexpensive
- Easy access on service roads
- Bring attention to area/needs
- Continued progress on Imperial dam



Indian Rapids Dam Removal

- Boquet River dams provide successful model



Indian Rapids Dam Removal

- Owners appear receptive
- Owners responsible for removal (FERC)...
- Only once salmon arrive (2024 or later?)



Indian Rapids Dam Sections

1



2



3



Proposed Next Steps

- Consult with USFWS NY Field office re: FERC negotiations
- Reach out to dam owners
- Partners to facilitate removal
- Provide admin/other support
- RFP – feasibility/cost estimates/options
- Portion of funding for removal?



VPFP Vermont Pay-For-Phosphorus Program



USDA NRCS Awarded \$7million in 2020 to VAAFM to implement the VPFP Program

Pay-For-Phosphorus is an innovative pay-for-performance approach that pays farmers for the pounds of phosphorus reduced by implementing conservation practices, as opposed to paying farmers a portion of the cost to install a practice.

- **Pays on results** improving cost-effectiveness and accelerating implementation
- **Flexibility for farms** to manage fields how they choose
- **Complements** existing State and Federal assistance programs (e.g. EQIP, FAP)
- **Statewide** voluntary program available to eligible farms
- **Incentive payments** for program enrollment regardless of farm performance

Goals

- **TMDL reductions and stewardship**
 - This program will serve Vermont's need to reduce phosphorus loading under the TMDL while compensating and incentivizing farmers for beneficial land stewardship.
- **Farmer buy-in**
 - Farmers need autonomy over their land management decision-making and degrees of participation.
 - Farmers desire fairness: farmers' stewardship efforts will be appropriately valued, and a variety of farm sizes and land use types will be eligible for payment.
- **Verifiable, measurable, location-specific outcomes**
 - The system will be designed with accurate, quantifiable, location-specific outcomes and payments that are directly tied to a positive value for the state.
- **Equity and Efficiency of program funding**
 - The system will be equitable across geographic location, farm size, and length of time as land stewards while efficiently directing funding in a way that provides the most value to the public and to the farmer.
 - There are inherent trade-offs, but with flat baselines and equal payment rates across the state, yet ranking priority within funding pools, a compromise will be reached between these goals.
- **Additionality of stewardship**
 - Farmers will be paid for voluntary stewardship that goes above and beyond their baseline levels of stewardship (i.e. TMDL P-reductions).
- **Sufficiency of payment**
 - Payment level will be sufficient to compensate farmers both for their stewardship and for their efforts to gather data and input it into the system.
 - Payment schedule will be fair, reduce risk to both the funder and the farmer, and acknowledge the upfront effort/costs of participation and the length of outcome benefits.



TECHNICAL REPORT NO. 97

Implementation of a Farm Phosphorus Management Optimization Web-based Tool in the Vermont Portion of the Lake Champlain Basin

FARMPREP

A FARM P-REDUCTION PLANNER

Easily evaluate the impacts of field-level best management practices on farm scale phosphorus (P) loss reductions and identify modifications to achieve water quality improvement targets on the watershed-scale.



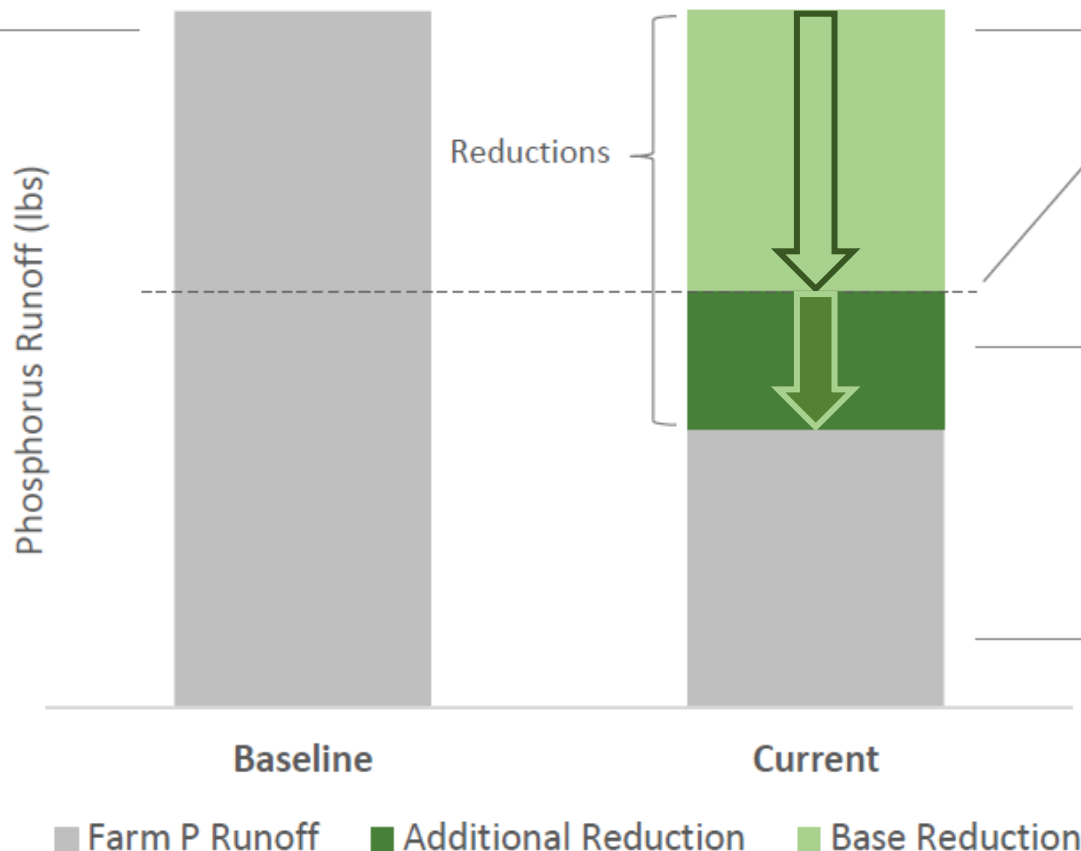
Sign Up for a Free Demo

Learn more

Farm Practices Scenario	Total P Reduction from Baseline (%)	Total P Reduction from Current (%)	Total P (lbs/ac)	Soluble P (lbs/ac)	Sediment P (lbs/ac)	Tile P (lbs/ac)	P Input Reduction (%)	Compare
Baseline:			2.67	1.92	0.75	0	0	
Current:	7.24		2.48	1.76	0.72	0	0	
	Total P Reduction from Baseline (%)	Total P Reduction from Current (%)	Total P (lbs/ac)	Soluble P (lbs/ac)	Sediment P (lbs/ac)	Tile P (lbs/ac)	P Input Reduction (%)	
F1_Corn	13.76		4.01	2.52	1.49	0	0	
F2_Corn	0		3.55	2.71	0.85	0	0	
F3_Hay	0		0.49	0.36	0.13	0	0	
F4_CornHay	0		1.62	1.39	0.22	0	0	
F5_CornHay	0		1.62	1.3	0.32	0	0	

Base Farm P Runoff will be modeled based on historic TMDL management scenarios and will act as the baseline from which P runoff reductions are calculated.

Reductions can be achieved via improved nutrient management or conservation practices.



Base Reductions/Threshold corresponds to the P reductions that are estimated to be met through for the TMDL.

Additional Reductions beyond the threshold will be paid through the VPFP program based on a set price per pound of P.

Current Farm P Runoff based on a farm's current management.

FARMPREP

CurrentConditions Results /P Reduction Target: 0%

EastMontpelierFarm

Results Guide

Download CSVs

Return home

Farm Practices Scenario	Total P Reduction from Baseline (%)	Total P Reduction from Current (%)	Total P (lbs/ac)	Soluble P (lbs/ac)	Sediment P (lbs/ac)	Tile P (lbs/ac)	P Input Reduction (%)	Compare
▶ Baseline:			3.35	1.97	1.38	0	0	
▼ Current:	18.95		2.71	1.55	1.16	0	0	
	Total P Reduction from Baseline (%)	Total P Reduction from Current (%)	Total P (lbs/ac)	Soluble P (lbs/ac)	Sediment P (lbs/ac)	Tile P (lbs/ac)	P Input Reduction (%)	
▶ F1_Corn	15.62		9.83	5.4	4.43	0	0	
▶ F2_Corn	30.15		0.95	0.57	0.38	0	0	
▶ F3_CornHay	28.13		0.46	0.36	0.1	0	0	
▼ F4_CornHay	28.05		0.59	0.42	0.17	0	0	
Soils								
Soil Type	Hydrologic Soil Group	Slope (%)	Slope Length (ft)	Modified Morgans Soil P (ppm)		pH	Al (ppm)	Tile Drainage
Dummerston	B	4.8	150	5		5.5	50	
Crops/Tillage/Manure								

Scope/Goals:

- \$7,000,000 over 5 years
- Payment rate determined with an eye to the current cost to the state of P-reductions in various sectors (CWI Report).

Eligibility Requirements

- Actively farming in Vermont
- All fields managed (owned and leased) by the farm
- Annual cropland and hayland
- Up-to-date Nutrient Management Plan or Land Treatment Plan
- Good Standing with the Agency for state & federal environmental regulations, including VT's Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs)

AAFM Pay-for-Performance webpage:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/vpfp>

Contact:


Ryan Patch | VAAFM Water Quality Division Assistant Director

802-272-0323 | Ryan.Patch@Vermont.gov

Lake Champlain Steering Committee



State of the Lake 2021 briefing
December 15, 2020



2018

STATE of the LAKE

and

Ecosystem Indicators Report

for Lake Champlain



Photo: Perri Siverhart



State of the Lake 2021

- Figures updated and improved for interpretation
- Hardcopy connected to and augmented with digital web content
- Some figures will be removed and replaced with entirely new topical information
- Text quantity will be reduced in favor of info- or data-driven graphical interpretation
 - 8th grade reading level

Ecosystem Indicators Scorecard - 2018

		MISSISQUOI BAY		NORTHEAST ARM		MALLETT'S BAY		MAIN LAKE		SOUTH LAKE	
		STATUS	TREND	STATUS	TREND	STATUS	TREND	STATUS	TREND	STATUS	TREND
PHOSPHORUS	Phosphorus in Lake (p. 11)		~				~		~		~
	Nonpoint source loading to Lake (p. 12)		~				~		~		~
	Wastewater facility loading* (p. 13)		~		~		~		~		~
		*There are no monitored tributaries in the NE Arm.									
HUMAN HEALTH & TOXICS	Beach closures (p. 8)		~		~		~				
	Cyanobacteria blooms (p. 10)		~						~		
	Fish advisories for toxics* (p. 7)		~		~		~		~		~
BIODIVERSITY & AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	Sea lamprey wounds* (p. 19)										
	Aquatic invasive species arrivals (p. 20)										
	Water chestnut infestations (p. 23)						~				

* These indicators are lake-wide; therefore, scores are the same for all lake segments.
Quebec and South Lake do not have monitored beaches

STATUS

- GOOD
- FAIR
- POOR
- NO STATUS AVAILABLE

TREND

- IMPROVING
- NO TREND
- DETERIORATING
- NO TREND DATA AVAILABLE

Ecosystem Indicators Scorecard - 2020

Add Climate impact indicators, such as:

- Seasonal surface temperature
- Ice cover
- Precipitation, fish spawning dates, others that may be considered

STATUS

-  GOOD
-  FAIR
-  POOR
-  NO STATUS AVAILABLE

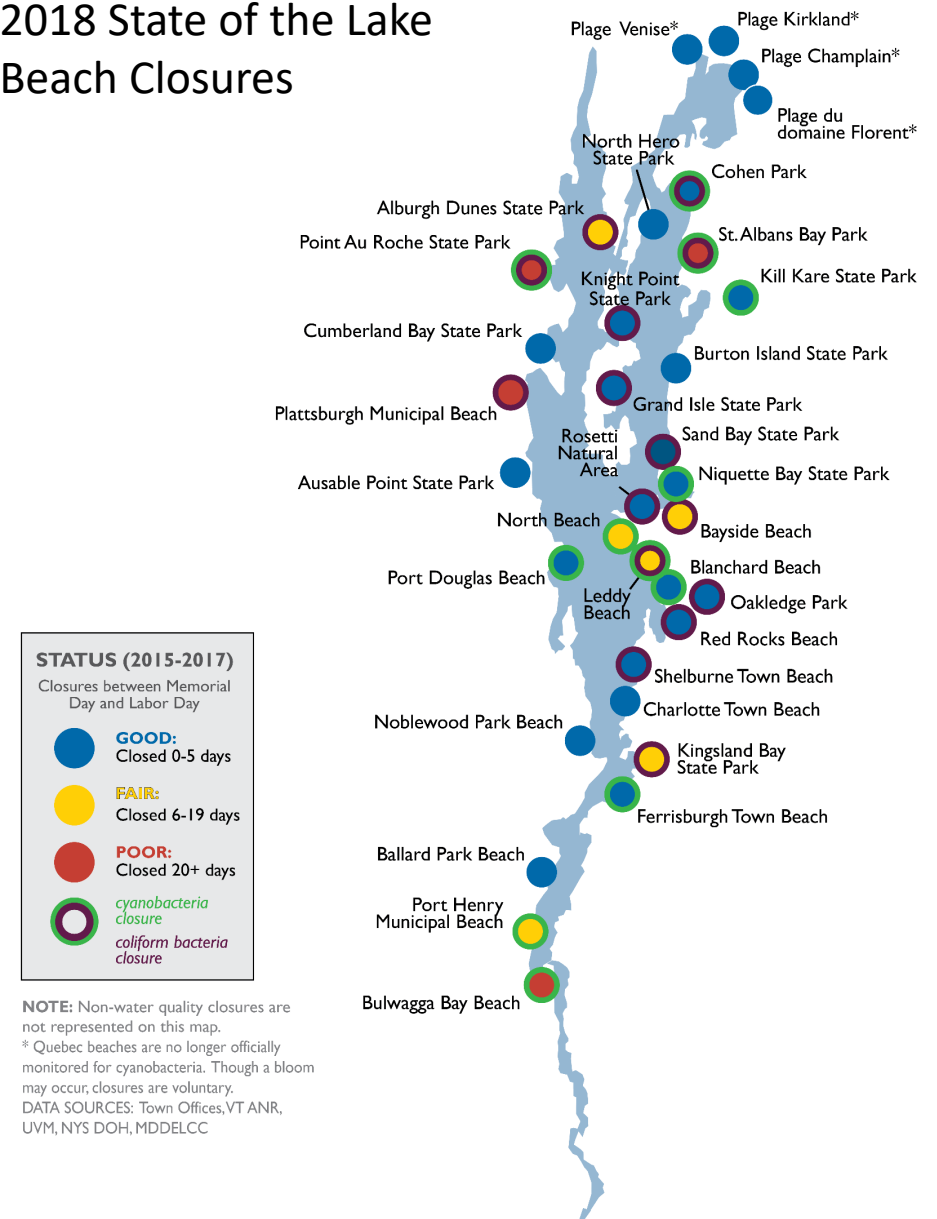
TREND

-  IMPROVING
-  NO TREND
-  DETERIORATING
-  NO TREND DATA AVAILABLE

SOL 2021 Report Figures

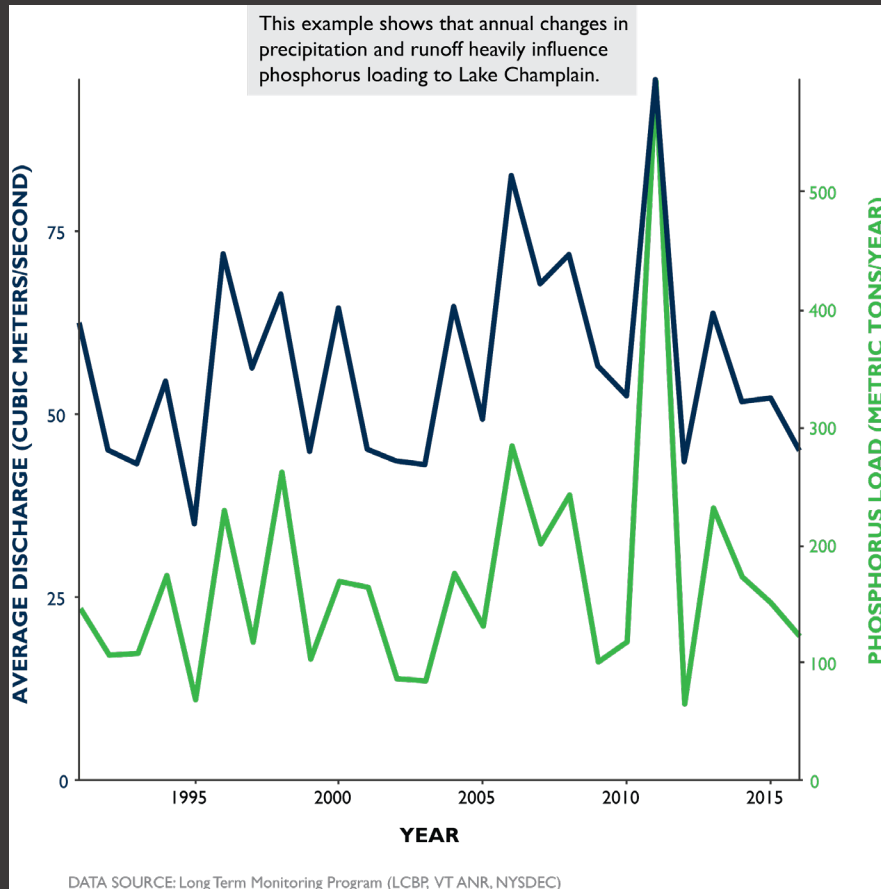
- Public Beach Closures
 - Figure 2, Page 8 in current report
 - Data collection challenges
 - Not all towns record closures
 - Different closure/reopen criteria
 - FOIL to NY DOH

2018 State of the Lake Beach Closures



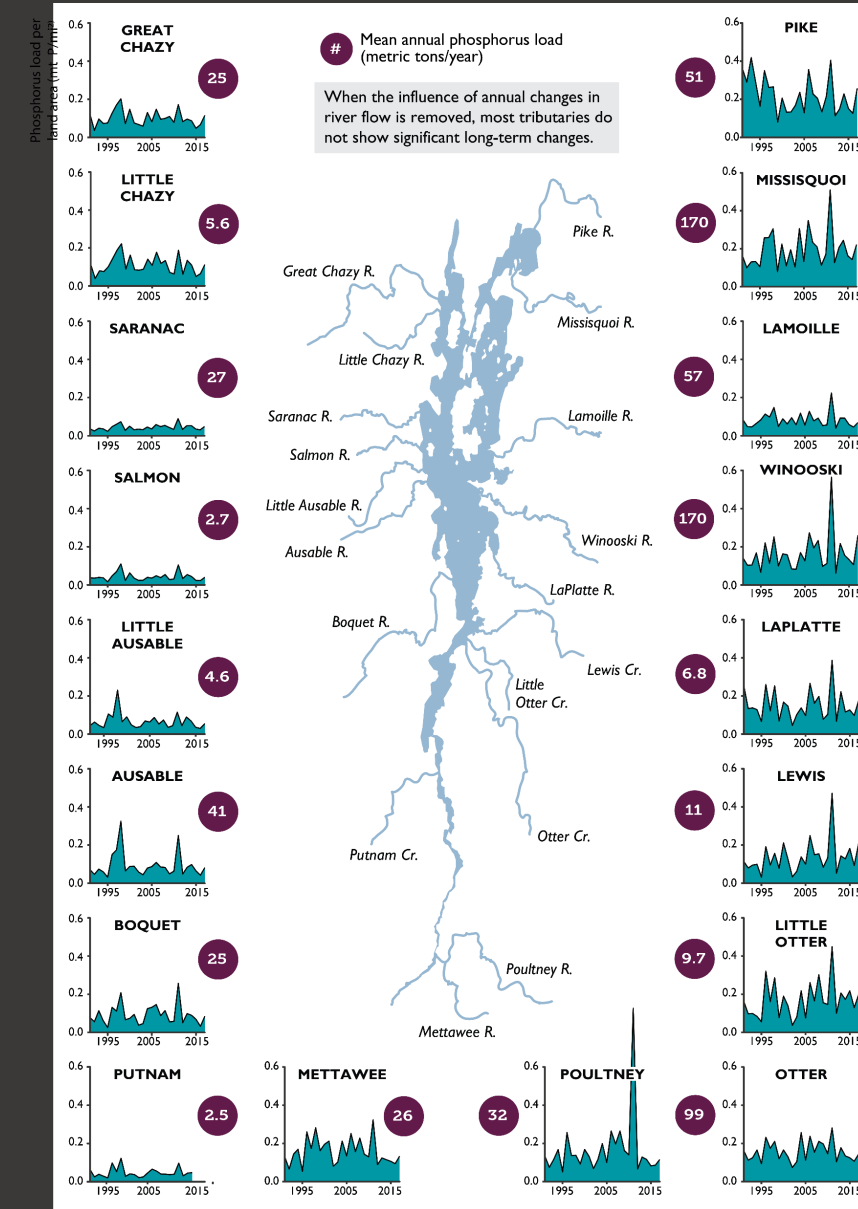
Report Figures

Figure 5 Mean annual discharge, Winooski River (p. 12)



- Difficult to interpret
- Other important messages with this data
- TMDL connections

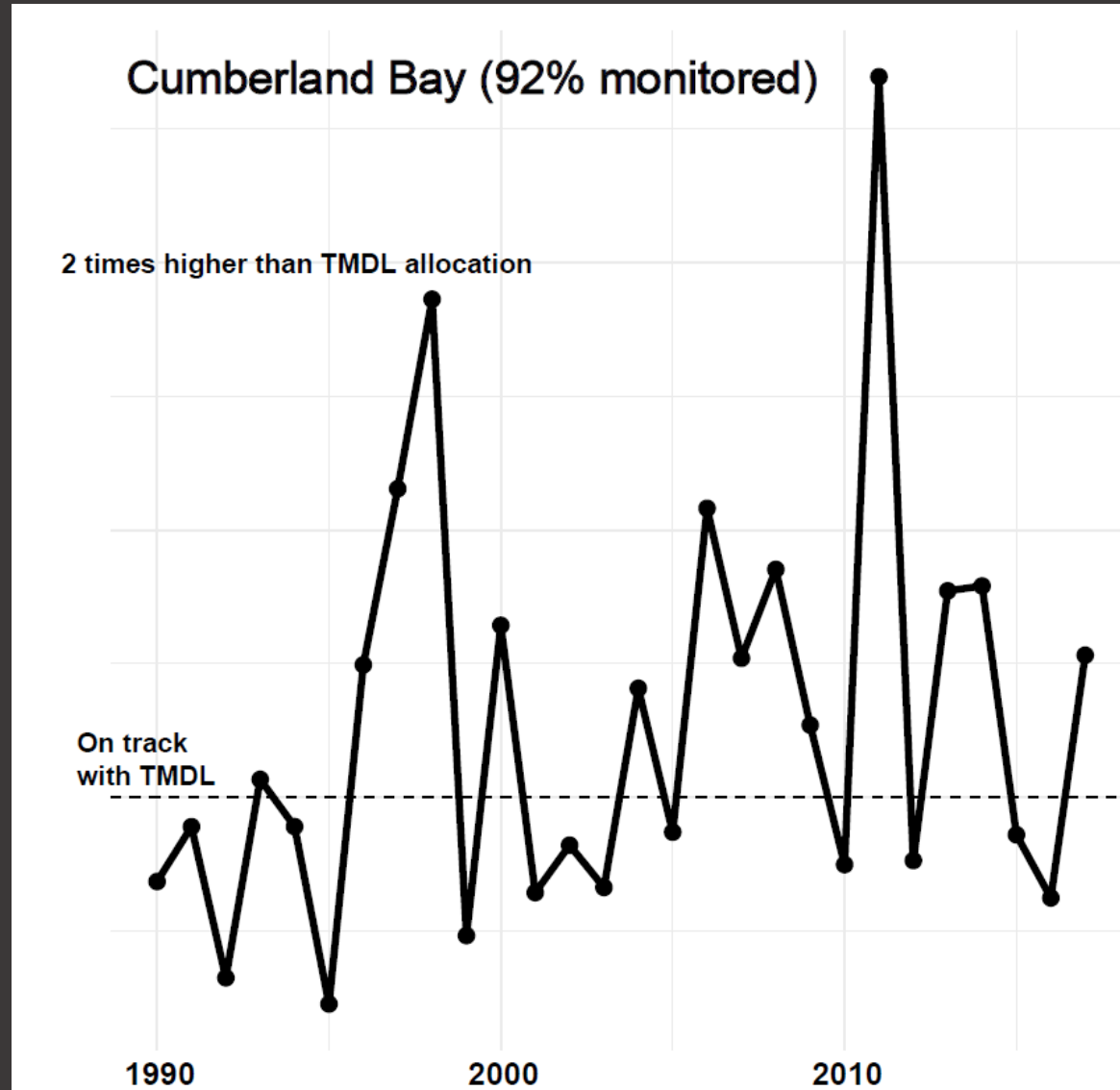
Figure 6, Annual tributary phosphorus loading (P. 12)



Report Figures - 2021

Phosphorus loading – NEW approach for interpretation that connects to the 2016 TMDL

(Matt Vaughan)



Main Lake (90.7% monitored)

5 times higher than TMDL allocation

On track
with TMDL

4

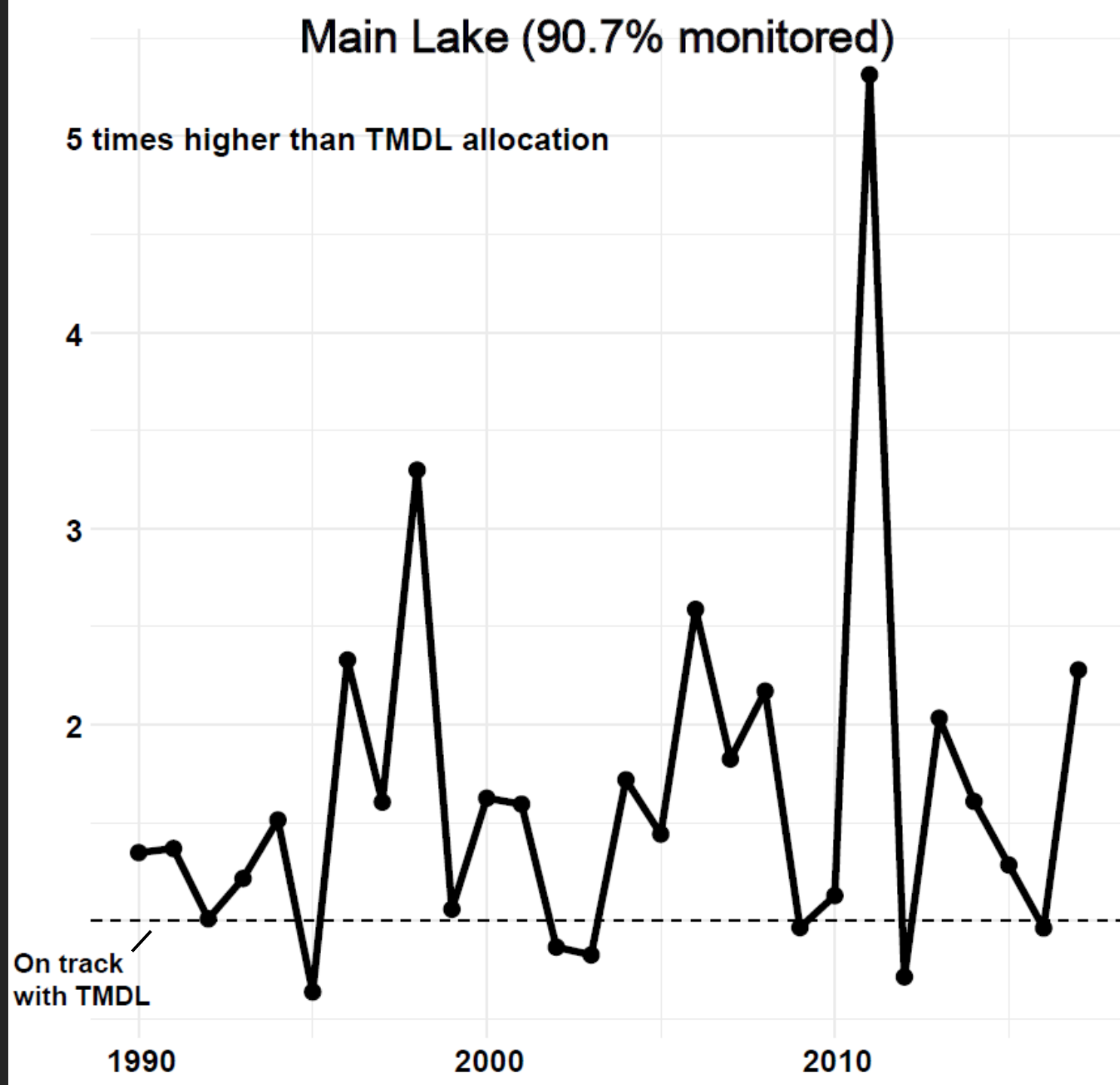
3

2

1990

2000

2010



Missisquoi Bay (89.2% monitored)

6 times higher than TMDL allocation

4

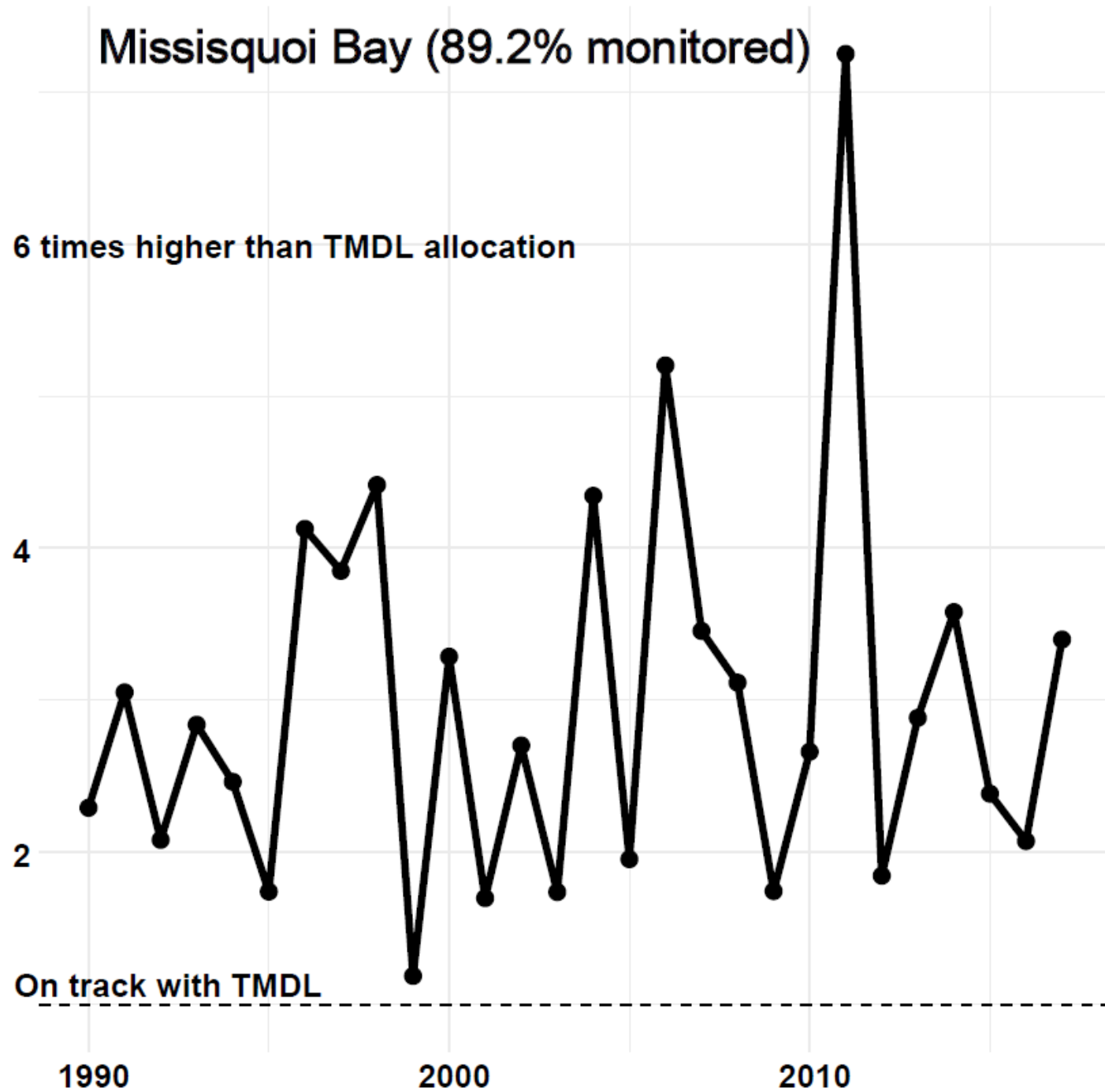
2

On track with TMDL

1990

2000

2010

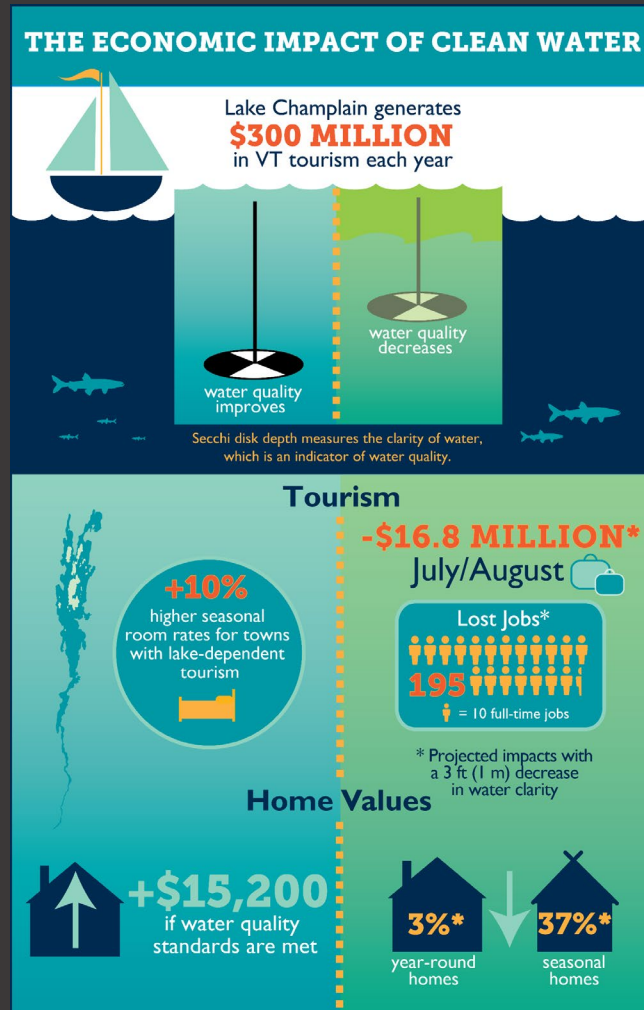


Report Figures- 2021

- New data graphics
 - Chloride trends
 - TN:TP ratio
- New Infographics
 - Combined Sewer Overflows
 - Boat Launch Steward style for messaging (see p. 29 of 2018 report)

Report Figures - 2021

Community Engagement – P. 25, 26

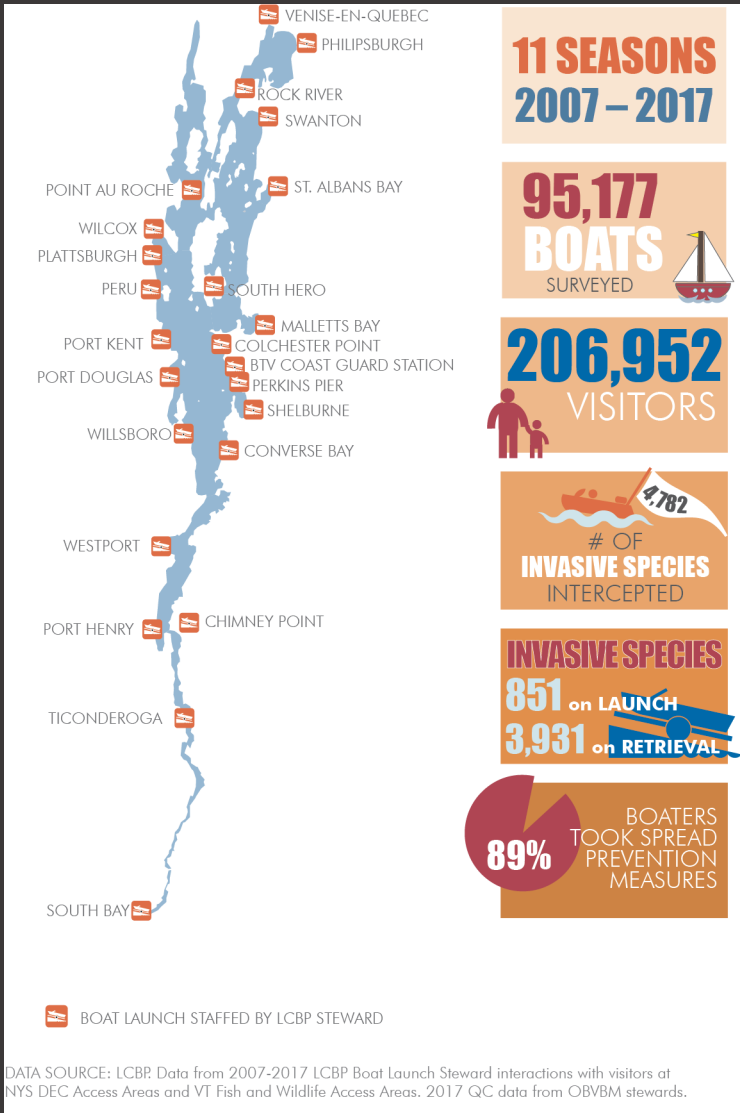


- Re-focus on public beach access, conserved lands
- Emphasis on 2020 COVID movement to natural areas



Report Figures - 2021

Informed & Involved Public



- Update graphic
- Additional content to continue to focus on public engagement programming
- “WYCD” mixed in throughout report

Report Figures - 2021

- Interested in diving deeper? Tune in to January 6 TAC meeting: mvaughan@lcbp.org

Lake Champlain Basin Program Updates

Lake Champlain Steering Committee meeting, December 15, 2020

- Welcome to Joe Giordano, Supervisor of the Town of Ticonderoga, NY. Joe was appointed in October as the New York municipal representative to the Steering Committee.
- Erin Vennie-Vollrath, the NYS DEC Champlain Coordinator has been hired and started work on November 30.
- The new LCBP CAC Coordinator position has been filled and we anticipate a February 8 start date for this individual. Lauren Jenness will continue to coordinate the NY and VT CAC meetings until that time and the new hire can transition in to the role.
- LCBP staff have been approved to continue to work remotely or in isolation due to COVID-19, although some staff do return to the office for scheduled time in Grand Isle as needed. All staff have been set up with necessary tools to complete their work remotely for the foreseeable future.
- LCBP has recruited a consultant to work with LCBP staff on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues over the next several months. The consultant has initiated a review of the LCBP vision and mission through a DEI perspective. Subsequent steps will be to examine the consultant will conduct a cultural needs assessment of LCBP as an organization, and develop a series of metrics and goals for the organization to work toward, and assistance with development of a DEI strategic plan for LCBP.
- Grant award notices from the annual fall suite of LCBP grant programs have been issued to most applicants. This includes the annual Enhanced BMP implementation grants, pollution prevention/habitat conservation, and AIS spread prevention. E&O and organizational support grants are in progress and will be awarded at the January 2021 Executive Committee meeting.
- Champlain Canal AIS Barrier Feasibility Study: the project stakeholder workgroup met over the summer and focused their efforts on evaluating the 6 proposed alternatives (made up from a different combination of a methods) and recommended three for a cost benefit analysis. USACE and their contractors are gathering information to help flesh out those cost-benefit analyses and have received survey results from the stakeholder group that gathered additional info on how to weight the different criteria being considered. USACE expects to report back on that cost-benefit analysis in early 2021.
- Staff are fully engaged in development of the new State of the Lake report, to be issued in June 2021. Considering new graphics either data or infographic forms, of
 - Chloride
 - Combined Sewer Overflows
 - TN:TP ratio interpretation
 - Historical salmon range in the LCB vs current range with barriers
 - Conserved lands and public beach access graphic for the thriving communities section of the report. Much of this section will focus on community access to natural resources in the LCB

- Several LCBP staff virtually participated in the annual North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) meeting in mid-November.
- Staff have been working on a number of new projects and initiatives, including support for new initiatives for the Lake Champlain Federal Partners workgroup (see the Workgroup update in this handout for information on an Environmental Sensitivity Index Initiative, a summary of hydrodynamic model work for Lake Champlain, and new promotional Rack Card for the Workgroup), the High School Stewardship Certificate program, the upgrade to the Long-Term Monitoring Program, and many more
- The CVNHP Sunset is October 2021, 10 months away. The U.S. House passed a bill last week to extend all NHAs through 2034, and all NHAs would be authorized to receive up to \$750K. Bill has moved on to the Senate.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/meetings/>

- **JANUARY 21, 2021: LCBP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Webinar format. E&O Grant award decisions, State of the Lake 2021 graphics review, planning for June 2021 Steering Committee Summit
- **FEBRUARY 17, 2021: LCBP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Webinar format. FY2021 budget: LCBP Key Functions, E&O, HAPAC draft budgets
- **MARCH 16, 2021: LCBP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Webinar format anticipated. FY2021 budget: Technical
- **APRIL 13-14, 2021: LAKE CHAMPLAIN STEERING COMMITTEE.** Webinar format anticipated, hosted by Vermont. FY2021 budget review and approval, State of the Lake 2021 approval, planning for June 2021 Steering Committee Summit
- **JUNE 2021 (DATE TBD): LAKE CHAMPLAIN STEERING COMMITTEE SUMMIT:** The June meeting will be centered around a facilitated workshop to identify high-level priorities for the FFY22 budget process

LCBP and CVNHP Grant awards - Fall 2020

\$2,160,941 Awarded in new grants since October 1, 2020

2020 Pollution Prevention and Habitat Conservation Grants

Appalachian Corridor	Protection of the natural environment of the Haberl property	\$13,902
Bennington County Conservation District	Purchase Brook AOP and Flood Resilience Culvert Replacement Design	\$20,000
City of Plattsburgh	Plattsburgh City and Plattsburgh Town Illicit Discharge and Detection Elimination Study - Phase 2	\$19,605
Essex County SWCD	Essex County No-Till Program	\$20,000
Intervale Center	Stewarding Riparian Forests	\$20,000
Lake George Association	Trinity Rock Road Stormwater Improvement Project	\$15,630
Lake St. Catherine Association	Lake Wise Project Implementation on Little Lake in the Lake St Catherine Watershed	\$19,920
Montpelier Parks and Trees Department	Siboinebi Path Habitat Restoration	\$19,909
OBVBM	Biodiversity assessment of potentially high ecological value wetlands and riparian woods with a conservation objective	\$18,560
Poultney-Mettowee NRC	St Catherine Court Neighborhood Stormwater Infiltration Project	\$20,000
WH Miner Ag Research Institute	Miner Institute Silage Leachate Collection System Renovation	\$20,000
Total awarded:		\$207,526

2020 AIS Spread Prevention Grants

Ausable River Association	AIS River Steward for the Ausable River/Northern Champlain Region, NY	\$15,000
Chazy Lake Watershed Initiative	Chazy Lake Watershed Initiative EWM Removal	\$15,000
Franklin Watershed Committee	Boat Launch Stewards at Lake Carmi	\$13,259
Friends of Missisquoi NWR, Inc.	Water chestnut control at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge	\$10,000
Lake Champlain Committee	Lake Champlain Aquatic Invasive Patrollers Project	\$15,000
Lake Dunmore Fern Lake Assn	Lake Dunmore Greeter Program	\$15,000
Lake Hortonia Property Owners Association	Lake Hortonia Milfoil Management	\$6,000
Lewis Creek Assn	Bristol Pond and Monkton Pond Boat Launch Steward Initiative	\$14,048
MRBA	Knockout Knotweed	\$10,232
Paul Smith's College - AWI	Adirondack Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Watercraft Inspector Program: Second Pond and Lake Flower	\$15,000
Rainbow Lake Assn	AIS Spread Prevention Watercraft Inspector Program in the Adirondacks: Rainbow Lake/Buck Pond Campground 2021	\$15,000
Shore Owner's Assn of Lake Placid	Invasive Species Prevention on Lake Placid	\$15,000
Town of Eden for Lake Eden Assn	Lake Eden Greeter Program	\$15,000
Upper Saranac Foundation	Follensby Clear Pond Aquatic Invasive Species Removal	\$13,938
Total awarded:		\$187,477

LCBP and CVNHP Grant awards - Fall 2020

\$2,160,941 Awarded in new grants since October 1, 2020

2020 Enhanced BMP Implementation Grants

Ausable River Assn	East Branch Reach 4a Stream Restoration for Sediment Transport Capacity Town of Keene, Ausable River Watershed	\$125,000
Ausable River Assn	East Branch Restoration Program, Project 13 Design Development	\$50,000
Essex County SWCD	Lake Champlain Hydroseeding Program	\$125,000
Friends of Northern Lake Champlain	Swanton and Highgate Lakeshore Assessment	\$34,352
Lamoille County Conservation District	Mt Norris Boy Scout Camp BMP Final Design	\$19,822
Lewis Creek Assn	Planning/Prioritization for Stormwater Projects in the McCabe's Brook Watershed	\$35,289
Rutland NRCD	Phosphorus Control Planning for the City of Rutland	\$49,943
South Burlington Stormwater Utility	Irish Farm Stormwater Improvements	\$40,000
Vermont Land Trust	Nutrient Quantification and Phase 1 Restoration Design of Mill Brook Floodplain in the Winooski River Watershed	\$36,170
Washington County Public Works	Washington County Sediment Reduction	\$103,000
Total awarded:		\$618,576

2020 Technical Grants

Ausable River Association	Rapid detection of Atlantic salmon and trout in the Boquet and Ausable Rivers using environmental DNA	\$135,000
Essex County SWCD	Port Henry Stream Study	\$150,000
New York Natural Heritage Program SUNY ESF	Using multi-metric modeling, field surveys, and online spatial tools to support conservation and management for flood resilience, water quality, and native species habitat	\$164,440
Northeast Coldwater Habitat Program of Trout Unlimited	Lake Champlain Basin of NY Dam Screening Tool	\$50,684
Stone Environmental	Efficacy of the 2017 Vermont Stormwater Management Manual Bioretention Soil Specification in Removing Pollutants and Supporting Plant Health and Uniform Accounting of Soil and Sediment P Reductions in Evaluation of WQ Project Benefits in VT	\$203,014
University of Vermont	Consequences of winter perturbations on nutrient export to Lake Champlain	\$281,904
Cornell Pro-Dairy	Agricultural Engineering Training in New York	\$20,000
Total awarded:		\$1,005,042

LCBP and CVNHP Grant awards - Fall 2020

\$2,160,941 Awarded in new grants since October 1, 2020

2020 CVNHP Grants		
Adirondack Experience	Adirondack Experience Library Ephemera and Oral History Processing Internship	\$5,000
Big Heavy World	Youth Radio Program Exploring Modernization of Historic Vermont Teen Center Model	\$4,000
Centre Local de Développement (CLD) de Brome-Missisquoi	Brome-Missisquoi's Prohibition Heritage Circuit	\$7,500
Clinton County Historical Association	Project to Replace Windows	\$4,400
Clinton County Historical Association	Clinton County Prohibition Era Rum Across the Border Revisited	\$7,500
Essex County Historical Society/Adk History Museum	Adirondack History Museum UV/Climate Control	\$7,500
Fort Ticonderoga Association	Maritime Trades Internship and Fostering Historical Thinking in Students from the North Country and Beyond	\$5,000
Historic Saranac Lake	Prohibition in the Saranac Lake Region	\$7,500
Lake Champlain Maritime Museum	LCMM Combined 2021 CVNHP Projects: (1) Prohibition on Lake Champlain: "Destroy the Cargo" Exhibit, (2) Lab Internship, (3) Lois McClure Tour, and (4) "Our Best Endeavors" Conference	\$7,500
Musée Missisquoi Museum	UV Window Filtering Film and LED Lighting for the Missisquoi Museum	\$7,500
Rokeby Museum	Cultural & Natural History Interpretive Trails Project	\$4,000
Rokeby Museum	Rokeby Museum Collections Storage Upgrade	\$7,500
Samuel de Champlain History Center	Cataloging the Champlain Quadricentennial	\$4,000
St Albans Museum	Education Fellowship (Saint Albans Museum)	\$5,000
SUNY Plattsburgh	Storytelling to Build "Sense of Place" and Natural Heritage Stewardship	\$7,500
Tourisme Haut-Richelieu	Celebration of Prohibition and commerce in Haut-Richelieu and the Lake Champlain Valley	\$40,000
VT Folklife Center	Temperance, One Day at a Time: Contemporary AA in Vermont	\$7,500
William H. Miner Agricultural Research Inst	Renewal of the Heart's Delight Farm Heritage Exhibit Wayside Walk	\$3,420
Total awarded:		\$142,320

Total awarded across all grant programs since October 1, 2020: \$2,160,941

Lake Champlain Federal Partners Workgroup

Update for 12/15/2020 Steering Committee Meeting

This workgroup meets quarterly at the convenience of the members to review the status of their activities in the Lake Champlain Basin, to assess the future work that each agency may be conducting in the Basin, to coordinate with the LCBP budget process, and to identify opportunities for cooperative and/or collaborative work to implement priority actions in Opportunities for Action.

List of Partner Presentations since September 2019:

Topic	Presenter	Date
The inundation frequency and phosphorus retention capacity of floodplains: Development of a framework to support Lake Champlain Basin planning	Rebecca Diehl	December 2020
CVNHP 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act	Jim Brangan	September 2020
Overview of the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership	Alli Lewis	June 2020
Oil spill emergency response planning for Lake Champlain	Jason Scott	April 2020
Ongoing USGS projects within the Lake Champlain Basin	Ben Rau	April 2020
Current Intervale Center Programs and Initiatives	Mandy Fisher	December 2019
Preview of the "CEAP Watershed Project"	Vicky Drew	September 2019

On-Going Workgroup Projects:

1. Creation of a 2021 Lake Champlain Federal Partners Rack Card & Webpage

- A rack card and associated webpage on the LCBP website will be created, updated from the [2017 Federal Partners Brochure](#), to highlight the current work of the Federal Partners and the collaborative efforts taking place in the basin. These materials are planned to be made publicly available at the same time as the 2021 State of the Lake Report.
- [Link to current final draft of rack card](#) (password = FedPartners2020)

2. Compilation of Resources: Hydrodynamic Modeling of Lake Champlain

- The workgroup identified a need to better understand the state of hydrodynamic modeling in the Lake Champlain Basin, given the importance of hydrodynamic models to improving our understanding of lake dynamics. This white paper summarizes current models and identifies unmet information needs. [Link to final draft of the report](#)

3. Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) Mapping for Lake Champlain

- The workgroup recognized the importance of creating nationally consistent NOAA maps for the Lake Champlain shoreline so that incident responders from across the country are able to respond rapidly in the case of an oil or chemical spill. A full update on this work can be found [here](#).

Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program Report to Congress

In early October, the EPA Great Lakes Nation Program Office in Region 5 (Chicago) submitted the 2019 report to Congress required under the 2018 Vessel Incidental and Discharge Act (VIDA). The document is a summary of existing federal, state, and tribal invasive species activities aligned with the listed purposes of Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program as set forth under the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act of 2018 and currently supported through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Lake Champlain Basin Program, state, and other appropriations.

Enhancement of the Lake Champlain Geographic Response Plans (GRPs)

A series of GRPs have been developed and finalized for the southernmost 40 miles of Lake Champlain, pending the insertion of aerial photographs, however the Resources at Risk section of the GRPs are primitive and need enhancement. Through EPA Region 2's Emergency Preparedness program, this project seeks to fortify the Resources at Risk descriptions in the GRPs to ensure that emergency planners understand the full scope of all at-risk wetlands, locations of rare/threatened or endangered species, VT biodiversity project locations, NYS natural heritage communities, and public beach locations for the 587 miles of Lake Champlain shoreline and bring the mapping to existing NOAA standards.

Administration Transition Has Begun

EPA has recently begun meeting with transition officials from President-elect Biden's team. While there may be changes for EPA coming over the next several months, on January 21, 2021 in Region 1, Deb Szaro, currently Deputy Regional Administrator, will serve as Acting Regional Administrator, and Bryan Olsen, currently Director of the Superfund and Emergency Management Division, will serve as the Acting Deputy Regional Administrator. Region 2 has made no announcements yet.

Grants Management System Transition

EPA has transitioned from its previous grant management system to the new Next Generation Grant System. This move will not impact how applications are submitted or other actions by grantees, and most processes should remain consistent. The blackout period for award amendments during the transition has ended and updates may be made as necessary.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Updates for Lake Champlain Federal Partners and
Lake Champlain Basin Program Steering Committee
December 10 and 15, 2020

Salmon Restoration

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to work with partners on the restoration of river-run populations of landlocked Atlantic salmon in Lake Champlain tributaries including assessment in the field and production and applied research in National Fish Hatcheries in Vermont.

In the Boquet River, a radio telemetry project is ongoing to look at landlocked salmon passage at the Willsboro cascades (site of former Willsboro dam). 58 fish were caught and tagged on their way upriver and are now being tracked. Data analysis ongoing. 160 adult broodstock salmon from White River National Fish Hatchery (NFH) were released into upper North Branch of the Boquet to spawn naturally. Redd surveys indicate that salmon are spawning above and below the Willsboro Cascades. Snorkeling survey work next spring will determine if fry were successfully produced from these efforts. These activities were covered in two recent *Adirondack Explorer* articles. Partners on this project include: NYSDEC, USGS-Conte Anadromous Fish Lab, and The Nature Conservancy.

In the Winooski River, a radio telemetry project is ongoing to look at migratory behavior of landlocked salmon trapped and trucked from Winooski One dam upstream to Richmond area to spawn naturally (38 fish tagged and trucked upstream this year). Also working on FERC relicensing of Essex 19 dam for downstream passage of salmon smolts and adults (work ongoing). Redd surveys have identified salmon spawning in target spawning habitat above Essex 19 dam and in unsuitable habitat below Winooski One dam. Partners on this project include: VTFWD and USGS-Conte.

An applied research study on the microhabitat use of landlocked juvenile Atlantic salmon in the Boquet River was published this fall in the *Journal of Great Lakes Research*. Brunsdon, E.B., Prévost, A., Fraser, D.J., Ardren, W.R. and Grant, J.W.A., 2020. Microhabitat use of landlocked juvenile Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).

National Fish Hatcheries:

A total of 1.3 million salmon eggs were collected from broodstocks at White River NFH in November. This is the first year that parentage based tagging (PBT) is being used for marking all salmon at White River NFH to aid in assessment of stocking location, broodstock strain, and life stage stocked in New York and Vermont rivers. This assessment includes evaluation of both the maximum genetic diversity and low thiamine tolerant broodstocks. The USFWS is leading efforts on a study plan for using PBT to enhance salmonid assessment efforts in Lake Champlain.

A study based on applied research conducted at White River NFH was published demonstrating landlocked and anadromous Atlantic salmon differ in orientation responses to magnetic displacements. Minkoff, D., Putman, N.F., Atema, J. and Ardren, W.R., 2020. Nonanadromous and anadromous Atlantic salmon differ in orientation responses to magnetic displacements. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, 77(11), pp.1846-1852.

Sea Lamprey Control:

Lampricide treatments of the Winooski, LaPlatte, Missisquoi, and Lamoille Rivers (in that order) were completed this fall. Water Chemistry data and observed lamprey mortalities preliminarily indicate that all four were successful. Post-treatment surveys in the summer of 2021 will confirm the level of larval lamprey reduction in each. Coordination with Champlain Water District for the LaPlatte River went smoothly; no lampricide was detected within 2 miles of their intake.

Coordination with Quebec on the Missisquoi went well as provincial officials, local media, and local citizens expressed their thanks for the communication, information, and updates on plume status that we provided this year. Because of wind and high flow in the river, we never detected any lampricide in the Canadian waters of Missisquoi Bay, nor the intake at the Philipsburg/Bedford water treatment facility.

Non-target mortalities at all sites was low and consistent with previous treatments. There were 38 total mudpuppy mortalities on the Lamoille River recorded by both the Cooperative's survey team and concerned citizens who conducted a separate survey.

Fall lake trout and Atlantic salmon host wounding rate surveys have concluded. Preliminary data indicate that the wounding rate for salmon is about 17 and the rate for trout is about 41. These values are both lower this year than last. Data are yet to be finalized. Official numbers will be reported in the coming weeks.

Vermont Partners for Fish and Wildlife Riparian, Wetland, and Aquatic Connectivity Restoration

Starksboro Riparian Restoration Project

The Lewis Creek Watershed is of very high importance to wood turtles in Vermont (an At-Risk Species for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North Atlantic-Appalachian Region). This project falls within one of only four wood turtle Focal Core Areas in Vermont. Focal Core Areas are classified as geographic areas that are critical to the long-term persistence of wood turtles. The Vermont Wood Turtle Working Group – a working group consisting of non-profit organizations such as The Orianne Society, the USFWS, and other federal and state agencies – has identified habitat restoration in the Focal Core Areas as a very high priority. The Orianne Society's wood turtle specialist has surveyed the general area multiple times and found several wood turtle individuals. Over time, this project will provide valuable habitat in a critical wood turtle population area where historically key habitat features have been lacking.

The Starksboro Vermont Riparian Restoration Project involved coordination and cooperation with multiple conservation organizations. The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) worked with the new landowner to place a River Corridor Easement on the property. The permanent easement protects a 50' buffer along the Lewis Creek and restricts development in the buffer as well as any channel alteration activities. The stream channel can now naturally adjust over time. The USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program, the Otter Creek Natural Resource Conservation District, and the Lewis Creek Association worked with the landowner to implement the riparian restoration project within this easement area. The landowner also worked with VLT to place the rest of the property in an agricultural easement that protects the land from development and ensures its continued use as a working landscape. With these easements and restoration actions, this project balances critical habitat needs of an At-Risk Species with the importance of maintaining valuable agricultural land and keeping working lands working.

The PFW Program facilitated the riparian restoration project and served as the project lead. PFW biologist completed the project designed and provided oversight for implementation activities. The PFW Program will lead future monitoring efforts, including early spring surveys for wood turtles.



Camp Wihakowi Dam Removal and World Fish Migration Day Video

The Camp Wihakowi Dam on Bull Run (a tributary to the Dog River) in Northfield, VT was built in 1920 by owners of a summer camp to create a swimming reservoir. Over the years the dam became partially breached on the left and right sides. The dam held back an estimated 26,000 cubic yards of accumulated sediment which, in the event of a failure, would cause water quality and habitat damage to downstream areas including the mainstem Dog River downstream. In September, construction finished on the dam removal and river restoration. The dam removal opened 27 miles of stream habitat. The Friends of the Winooski worked to remove this structure along with the state and other local entities.

The Service worked with numerous other partners to help produce a video for World Fish Migration Day with a focus on the Camp Wihakowi Dam Removal -

<https://youtu.be/ynF13D1jyFA>

Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge:

The refuge public use trails continue to receive consistent and heavy use through the fall. New trail counters have been installed on two trails helping staff track trail use numbers and patterns.

Waterfowl season is winding down with surprisingly good harvest results being reported by hunters. Low water levels at the beginning of the season were anticipated to lead to lack of hunter interest and harvest success, however typical participation was observed.

Deer hunting on the refuge has also shown typical numbers interested in participating with several large deer being reported harvested on the refuge during the rifle season.

The refuge continues to meet with staff of the ECHO Leahy Center in Burlington to develop an interpretive display about the refuge. The display will provide information about the refuge's biological diversity, regional importance, cultural history, and public use opportunities.

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (VT ANR) Update
Lake Champlain Basin Program Steering Committee Meeting
December 15, 2020

Legislative Updates

- The Vermont Legislature's 2020 session concluded on Friday, September 25, 2020 when both the House and Senate adjourned 'Sine Die'. This concluded a historic, COVID affected session that involved prolonged pauses, passage of a first quarter then full state budget, and a remote, Zoom-based format from early spring to early fall. The Legislature's 2021 session and start of a new biennium begins on Wednesday, January 6, 2021. The body will continue to meet remotely for at least the first month of the session and will feature new leadership of both the house and senate.

Act 250 update: The Vermont Legislature passed on September 25, 2020, a very stripped-down Act 250 reform bill. The bill, H.926, contained only two main provisions – one that added new forest block and connecting habitat criteria to Act 250 and one that paused new Act 250 jurisdiction on certain recreational trails for 2 years to provide stakeholders an opportunity to bring back to the Legislature a proposal to address trail oversight through an alternative framework. The dramatic reduction of scope was the work of the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Governor Scott vetoed H.926 on October 5, 2020 because it lacked key elements such as provisions to promote development in state designated downtowns and neighborhood development areas, support for the forest products processing sector, and provisions to address the financial and operational impacts of the new criteria on ANR. Concurrent with veto, Gov. Scott issued an executive order focused on improving the Act 250 process for certain recreational trails and directed his Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation to continue work on the alternative oversight framework. FPR will report back on that work in March of 2021. It is unclear what appetite the Legislature will have to revisit a broader Act 250 reform during the 2021 session.

Agency and Staff Updates

- The majority of State of Vermont employees will continue to work remotely at least through March 31, 2021. ANR field work activities have continued in a manner that mitigates risk presented by COVID-19.

State of Vermont Clean Water Budget Updates

- The Clean Water Board made its final State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 budget recommendation to the Governor during the December 2, 2020 Board meeting, after posting the budget for public comment October 1-30, 2020. The SFY 2022 clean water budget anticipates \$18.4 million from the Clean Water Fund and \$11 million from the Capital Bill. Visit the Clean Water Board webpage for more information: <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/cwi/board>. The State of Vermont continues to monitor COVID-19 impact on revenues and Clean Water Fund revenue updates will be available in January 2021 following the State of Vermont's Emergency Board meeting.

Rule Updates

- Act 76 of 2019 Clean Water Service Provider rulemaking: Clean Water Service Providers (CWSPs) have been identified for all 6 Lake Champlain watersheds and Lake Memphremagog. CWSPs will have a lead role in prioritizing and supporting the implementation of natural resources restoration projects necessary to achieve the water quality goals of the Lake Champlain TMDL. After substantial public engagement, DEC has filed the draft Rule into the formal

rulemaking process and has just yesterday (December 14, 2020) received approval from the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules to the public input stage. Information and the draft Rule are available at: <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/statutes-rules-policies/act-76>.

- Vermont Wetland Rules: ANR continues to work on a draft rule update to improve the rule's clarity, efficiency, and protection. A draft will be distributed to stakeholders this winter.

Regulatory Program Updates

- Stormwater General Permit 3-9050 (i.e., "3-acre permit") went into effect 12/1/2020. Under the terms of the permit, all landowners in the Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog watersheds with three or more acres of impervious surfaces must submit a notice of intent (NOI) to install stormwater retrofits, based on a phased schedule with the last applications due by the middle of Calendar Year 2023. After filing the NOI, applicants will be given 18 months to complete their engineering design work and obtain updated permit coverage. Permitted landowners will then have up to five years from permit coverage to construct the approved stormwater treatment practices. Work is underway to develop funding/financing programs to assist landowners in complying with the permit.
- The Wastewater Management Program continues to issue permits under the Phase 1 TMDL implementation plan. The Winooski Basin is nearing completion and Otter Creek is up next.

Planning Updates

- The North Lake Champlain Direct Basin 5 Tactical Plan is in queue for approval.
- The final Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Program Plan, covering FFY 2021-2025, was approved by USEPA on September 22, 2020. DEC appreciates the ongoing assistance of Eric Perkins, MaryJo Feuerbach, and many other EPA Region 1 staff whom helped to improve the plan during its drafting.

Reporting and Accountability Updates

- The final draft of the *Vermont Clean Water Initiative 2020 Performance Report* is under review by ANR-DEC leadership and is due to the Legislature January 15, 2020. The Report fulfills the statutory investment report requirement (part 1) and serves as a progress report to the EPA on implementation of the *Phosphorus Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Vermont Segments of Lake Champlain* (part 2). In 2020, the South Lake Champlain watershed is due for an interim report card from EPA. Appendix B supports this determination by providing interim status of priority actions from Tactical Basin Plan "Implementation Table" for Southern Lake Champlain basin.

Other Initiative Updates

- Clean Water State Revolving Fund: Thanks to four major new initiatives, the "CWSRF" is experiencing one of its largest years of activity ever. Four notable initiatives include: Village Wastewater Initiative to support development of decentralized treatment for underserved villages; Lakes in Crisis Initiative to support design and construction of nonpoint source clean water projects in the watershed of a designated Lake in Crisis; Lake Champlain TMDL Affordability Program to assist municipal borrowers in financing wastewater projects where multiple pollutants are required by permit to be treated, and where the post-implementation user rate will exceed four percent of median household income; and, a Farmland Futures Fund to create a revolving loan fund that can be accessed by Vermont Land Trust to purchase conserved farmland, effectuate all needed water quality improvements, and re-sell that farm into a new generation of farmers while securing water protections permanently.

- **Functioning Floodplains Initiative:** The Rivers Program continues to lead the Functioning Floodplains Initiative to create tools for evaluating, prioritizing, and tracking floodplain and wetland restoration opportunities in the Lake Champlain Basin. Methodologies for evaluating and scoring lateral, vertical, longitudinal, and temporal floodplain disconnection are largely complete and have been integrated into a web-mapping tool in a pilot watershed under Phase 1 of the project. The selected contractor initiated work on Phase 2 of the Functioning Floodplains Initiative in August 2020, which will include further integration of novel research on floodplain/wetland phosphorous attenuation and economic valuation of floodplain/wetland restoration into the tools.
- **Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Wetland Acquisition:** The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) continues to make significant progress with this important natural resources restoration initiative, recently closing on three land acquisition projects totaling 360 acres, and include an estimated 60% restorable wetland acreage or approximately 215 acres. Restoration plans for all three properties have been drafted with active restoration slated to start in FY21 and FY22.
- **Waterbury Dam project:** DEC has executed an agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers to engage a major refurbishment of the Waterbury Dam spillway. This new agreement follows the near completion of the Risk Assessment study supported by the Corps and LCBP, using Section 542 funding. Execution of this new agreement locks in \$40M in Federal support for the project, and ensures retention of a rarely-granted “New Project Start” within the Corps workplan. ANR is grateful for the support of the Corps and Congressional Delegation for the support provided for this major and important project.
- **Lampricide Treatment:** The VTDEC Lakes and Ponds program issued permits for lampricide applications on the Lamoille and Missisquoi rivers, as well as a permit amendment for the LaPlatte River. Lampricide treatments for these three rivers, as well as an approved treatment on the Winooski River under an existing permit, took place in October 2020. All four treatments were carried out successfully, and reports on non-target impacts were submitted to the DEC. Observed mudpuppy mortality on the Lamoille and Winooski River was limited to 38 and 26 individuals respectively.
- **Water Chestnut Harvesting:** The VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program harvested over 80 tons of water chestnut during July and August 2020 across numerous sites in Lake Champlain (Southern Lake, Sand Bar State Park, Missisquoi Bay), thirty inland lakes, and the Connecticut River, which was a slight decrease compared to previous years. DEC also began to use drones to map the extent of water chestnuts in Lake Champlain, an effort that will provide georeferenced maps of all harvesting sites.
- **Vessel Incidental Discharge Act Rulemaking:** VTDEC participated as a state member in the EPA-led proposed rulemaking for Vessel Incidental Discharge National Standards of Performance under the 2018 Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA). Through this effort, VTDEC is exploring how to strengthen the department’s presence within the Lake Champlain Basin to mitigate aquatic invasive species introductions related to vessel incidental discharge.
- **Wetland Mapping:** The Wetlands Program and the assigned contractor are halfway finished updating wetlands mapping for the Otter Creek, Lewis Creek, and Little Otter Creek watersheds. The contract has been expanded to include mapping of the Winooski and Pike River watersheds by 2022. The improvements will detect more wetland areas than previously, allowing for improved resource avoidance during project planning stages.
- **Lake Champlain Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Grant:** DEC was awarded an additional \$10 million to its RCPP grant and will be continuing this work through 2025. The new project will be very different from the first 5 years, with more opportunities for creative funding that can address gaps in traditional programs with new practice combinations and easement flexibilities.

- The Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Program: The CAFO Program is in the process of revising and reissuing the Medium CAFO General Permit and will be initiating a stakeholder and public process in the coming months.
- Clean Water Service Delivery Act (Act 76 of 2019) Technical Development: Contractual work is underway to support implementation of Act 76 of 2019, including:
 - Development of standard costing per clean water project output (e.g., cost per acre riparian buffer restored) to inform the Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant program;
 - Establishment of standard operation and maintenance best practices based on project type to inform operation and maintenance funding and verification programs; and
 - Establishment of accounting methods to estimate phosphorus reductions associated with forestland, floodplain/river, and wetland clean water projects.

Communication and Outreach

- Wetlands Roundtable: The VTDEC Wetlands Program continues to convene a biannual meeting of restoration partners to aid in coordination of the many restoration initiatives across the state.
- Vermont Clean Water Lecture Series: CWIP Eco AmeriCorps member Rachel Wood has reinstated the Clean Water Lecture Series, highlighting efforts to improve Vermont's water quality across land use sectors. Monthly talks feature scientists and state officials from the DEC, the Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets, and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. Events are free and open to the public. For more information visit the Clean Water Lecture Series webpage: <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/cwi/outreach/lecture-series>.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Regional Director, Region 5

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LCBP Steering Committee Update December 15, 2020

- The new NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Lake Champlain Coordinator, Erin Vennie-Vollrath, started on November 30, 2020. Erin will work closely with the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) team and partners to provide ongoing coordination and collaboration with all NYSDEC program areas to achieve the goals of the LCBP detailed in the Opportunities for Action. Erin can be contacted at erin.vennie-vollrath@dec.ny.gov or 518-897-1267.
- It was another successful season for the DEC's Adirondack Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Program, which is operated by Paul Smith College's Adirondack Watershed Institute. In 2020, the stewards inspected 122,988 boats and performed decontaminations on 4,523 of them. The boat wash station at the Adirondack Welcome Center was again the most popular location for the most boats treated with 538 boats in 2020.
- The DEC and partners treated approximately 2,500 hemlock trees in the Lake George area to kill any present Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) and to protect the trees from any future infestations. DEC confirmed the HWA infestation in August and the treatment was conducted over a three-week period starting in early October. DEC footage taken during the fall treatment efforts are available here: [Video](#) and [Photo Album](#)
- On November 7, Lake George had its first ever harmful algal bloom (HAB). The Lake George Association collected the algae samples which were subsequently confirmed by the DEC to be a HAB with toxin levels below detection limits. The DEC hosted a virtual meeting on December 14, 2020, from 2:00pm-3:30pm for Lake George stakeholders to discuss the recently reported HAB on Lake George. Stakeholders were asked to review the progress made to date, and to propose potential updates to the [Lake George HAB Action Plan](#).
- On November 25, DEC released the final statewide trout stream management plan. This science-based plan with angler input will improve management of wild and stocked trout statewide. Significant aspects of the plan are the result of more than 20 public meetings held with anglers in 2017 to identify desired outcomes for the state's numerous and diverse trout streams. The plan covers a broad



Department of
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Conservation

spectrum of management areas and angler interests associated with trout stream management in New York. To [view the plan and the categorization of managed trout stream reaches](#) visit DEC's website.

- The Village of Whitehall and DEC are currently working with the consultant and contractor on Phase II of the USACE Section 542 funding. The second phase calls for an extension of stormwater mains and rerouting storm laterals that are connected to the sanitary system. DEC recently met with the Village and their consultant to refine the scope of the next phase of the project.
- DEC selected a contractor (New York Rural Water Association) to initiate New York's Wastewater Treatment Facility Optimization and Technical Assistance program, which is funded with several funding sources including LCBP funding. DEC expects to finalize the contract in early 2021.

Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board (LCLGRP) Updates

- Drinking Water Source Protection Plan – Updating and consolidating six existing Source Water Assessment Programs for community water supplies that utilize Lake George as a water supply. This document will identify potential contaminants and buffer protection areas for each water source as well as protection measures that can be implemented at the municipal level to protect water quality.
- [Isle La Motte Lake Segment Watershed Plan](#) – plan funded by LCBP, identifies water quality issues and concerns within the watershed as well as proposed project to mitigate these issues and protect and improve water quality.
- Village of Whitehall Green Infrastructure Plan – funded by LCBP, LCLGRP has contracted with Chazen Companies to do engineering analysis for this project.
- Mud Creek Stabilization Project – Town of Whitehall – funded by LCBP. This project is complete, LCLGRP worked with the Town to implement a streambank stabilization and stormwater reduction project on Mud Creek. The Town partnered with Washington County DPW to implement the project which included 175 feet of stream stabilization, the installation of three drywells and the creation of a vegetated swale to reduce stormwater runoff into Mud Creek. Willows were planted along the bank of the stream to improve the riparian habitat and aid in soil stabilization.
- LCLGRP is in the process of updating the Town and Village of Lake George MS4 Stormwater Management Program Plans. Estimated completion in February 2021.

- Beatty Road stormwater improvements in the Town of Lake George – working with the Town and their consultants to complete planning and begin implementation.
- Completed and closed the Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant for 11 NY counties.

Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York Updates

Essex County: The Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District completed 12 hydroseeding projects. The District also worked with the Town of Crown Point to replace a failing culvert on Narrowtown Road that was severely eroding. The District worked with the Town of Essex to complete drainage improvements on Leaning Road, which included using stone and fabric to stabilize the ditch.

Clinton County: Clinton County completed hydroseeding on 28 sites in six towns totaling 12.75 acres. Below are the locations addressed.

- Town of Ausable: Hydroseeding on the Mitchell Road; $\frac{3}{4}$ acre
- Town of Black Brook: Hydroseeding on Fern Lake Road, Silver Lake Road, Dry Bridge Road, Soucy Road & Nelson Road; 2 acres
- Town and Village of Champlain; Creek Road, Rapids Road, Southwick Road, Tallman Road, South Street, Prospect Street; 3 acres
- Town of Peru: Maiden Lane, Davey Drive, Cross Street; .5 acres
- Town of Saranac: Cringle Road, Priest Road, McCutcheon Lane, Bucks Corners Road, Cold Brook Road, Burnt Hill Road, True Brook Road, Lampkins Road; 6 acres
- Town of Schuyler Falls: Staley Road, .5 acres

Warren County: Completed three stabilization and erosion control projects on Padanarum Road and Trout Falls Road in the Town of Bolton, and Silver Bay Road in the Town of Hague.

Québec Citizens Advisory Committee December 2020 Highlights

- Held our Annual General Meeting on Zoom on October 22nd
 - 34 people in attendance
 - Board of directors re-conducted
 - As a reminder, the Board is composed of representatives as follows :
 - 3 from Farmer's union (UPA)
 - 4 from MRCs (2 Brome-Missisquoi, 1 Haut-Richelieu, 1 Memphrémagog)
 - 2 from economic / business community
 - 2 from watershed organisations
 - 2 citizens
 - + non-voting members from :
 - AAC (Agriculture Canada)
 - MELCC (Environment – Québec)
 - MAPAQ (Agriculture – Québec)
 - MFFP (Forests, Wildlife and Parks – Québec)
 - MAMH (Municipal Affairs and Lodging – Québec)
- Our proposal for the « Development of a Binational Mass Balance for Phosphorus Imports and Exports – Rock river watershed » has been accepted
 - Will pave the way / remove obstacles for the Binational Missisquoi Bay watershed model
 - Priority recommendation # 2 of IJC report
 - Thanks to all for your letters of support
 - LCBP
 - UVM
 - VTDEC
 - MAPAQ
 - MRC Brome-Missisquoi
 - MELCC

Vermont Citizens Advisory Committee (VTCAC) on Lake Champlain's Future

Update for 12/15/2020 Steering Committee Meeting

The VTCAC has met three times since the last Steering Committee meeting.

- **October 19th** – The agenda featured a presentation by Jim Brangan on how the CVNHP will focus on the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act. The presentation and following discussion provided a first attempt for the three CACs to coordinate around a central aligned issue that is of importance to the basin. The NY and VT CAC members in attendance discussed ideas on networking and partnerships, education, interpretation, and marketing.
- **November 9th** – The agenda featured three presentations focused on agricultural enforcement updates in Vermont and the new NRCS/VAAFM RCPP Pay for Phosphorus Program. VTDEC Commissioner Peter Walke, VTAAFM Secretary Ansen Tebbetts, VTAAFM Deputy Secretary Laura DiPietro, and VTAAFM Deputy Director Ryan Patch presented.
- **December 14th** – The agenda featured a “Views on the Future and Economic Sustainability of Dairy Farming in Vermont” panel of seven speakers. This was the first in a series of meetings as the CAC considers a diversity of voices on the future of agriculture in VT, and its impacts on water quality in the Lake Champlain Basin. Speakers included Roger Allbee of the VT Water and Dairy Collaborative Action Plan; James Maroney and his advocacy to move to organic dairy and a VT branded processor; both of the CO-OPS (DFA and organic); Marie Audet and Scott Magnan for farmer perspectives; and Maddie Kempner at NOFA-VT. The CAC hoped to hear perspectives on where we are in the industry, challenges and opportunities, especially with any insights from the Covid impacts, and their vision for a sustainable economic and environmental agricultural sector in VT.

Past approved **meeting summaries and materials** are posted at <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/committees/citizen-advisory-committees/vermont-cac/>

TAC Updates for the Steering Committee, December 15th, 2020

TAC held three meetings since the last Steering Committee meeting in September.

Reviews and Recommendations

- Project workplans reviewed and approved:
 - Efficacy of the 2017 Vermont Stormwater Management Manual Bioretention Soil Specification in Removing Pollutants and Supporting Plant Health
 - Uniform Accounting of Soil and Sediment Phosphorus Reductions in Evaluation of Water Quality Project Benefits in Vermont
 - Conservation of the Lamoille River Mudpuppy (*Necturus maculosus*) Population Using Translocation and Monitoring
 - Lake Champlain Basin of New York Dam Screening Tool
 - Water Quality Conditions and Trends for Lake Champlain and its Tributaries
 - Consequences of Winter Perturbations on Nutrient Export to Lake Champlain
 - Volunteer Coordination and Training for the Lake Champlain Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program, 2021 Season
 - Forest phosphorus load allocation project RFP
- TAC reviewed the technical pre-proposals submitted for the FY21 technical budget. The committee formed a recommendation for which pre-proposals should advance to the full proposal stage.

Discussions/Presentations

- TAC held two discussions to provide feedback for the *State of the Lake* 2021 report. At the first discussion, TAC members provided guidance on updating the Lake Champlain beach closure graphic and reviewed/discussed ecosystem indicators. In the second discussion, TAC provided guidance on the development of an infographic addressing combined sewer overflows, gave feedback on the in-lake phosphorus graphic, and reviewed a new concept for the tributary phosphorus loading graphic.
- TAC received a presentation on the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Reserve.

Upcoming Work

- TAC will convene a special meeting in January 2021 to review topics related to the *State of the Lake* 2021 report. Discussions will focus on the Healthy Ecosystem section, and a few water quality graphics and messaging outlines will be revisited.

E&O Committee Report to the Steering Committee December 15, 2020

E&O ADVISORY COMMITTEE

E&O Committee members met in October and November to review the new RFP to be issued soon regarding E&O proposals up to \$50,000. This process will begin to make the E&O proposal process more parallel to TAC and HAPAC processes. On November 16th the Committee hosted a grants workshop to outline the changes that would be upcoming to the award process, and to provide an 18-month calendar for deadlines. The 11 large watershed grants awarded in 2018 - 2019 were summarized by recipients so that the committee and participants could ask a limited number of questions. About 35-40 groups participated during the workshop.

RESOURCE ROOM

The Resource Room expanded its hours to five days a week to match ECHO's expanded open hours. Resource Room staff continue to create new exhibit materials, hands on interactive experiences, and update public information. All E&O staff continues to field questions from the public. ECHO has installed a new exhibit on the other side of our common resource wall.



HEALTHY SOILS INITIATIVE-RAISE THE BLADE. Committee members continue to meet monthly. Sea Grant produced a weekly blog through the growing season that is also posted on the Lawn to Lake website. *The Other Paper* is promoting *Raise the Blade* and our team provides a weekly column for dissemination. Upcoming will be road salt impacts on watersheds and vegetation.



E&O STEWARDS AND OUTREACH

Hannah will continue a few hours a week now that her master's thesis is defended. Sue was assisting with the CVNHP inventory during October and November and is transitioning to grants and CBEI work.

PUBLIC AWARENESS SURVEY RFP The contract was awarded to the University of Vermont a few months ago. The project advisory committee has met once to guide development of survey questions and instrument.

STREAMWISE RFP The Project Advisory Committee has met multiple times with Fluid State Consulting. Community partners have also been participating in the process including representatives from NY, VT and Quebec. The contractor has gathered feedback from the

groups a few times and will soon be discussing the award system that will ultimately be put in place to recognize landowners who have protected the riparian buffers on their property. The first product, a resource document about exiting riparian programs, guidelines and outreach materials from the region has been collated and will eventually be available on the LCBP website.

CBEI The CBEI partners have released their second monthly e-news to Watershed for Every Classroom teachers. Each month a different partner will feature a new project or opportunity as part of ongoing outreach to support teachers during the pandemic. The third e-news which will be released this month features the Large Watershed Map project with the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.

UPCOMING:

- **ARTISTS in RESIDENCE PROGRAM** The contractor, Friends of Winooski, has been chosen for the project which will also involve several schools throughout the Winooski watershed over the next two years.
- **DEADLINE for Large and Small E&O and Organizational Support grants is December 21, 2020. The new RFP for large grants scheduled to begin October 2021 was also issued in late November. The RFP deadline for grants ranging from 15-50K is February 1st.**
- **LCBP MAIN WEBSITE:** Ryan is leading this revision with the contractor. The website is expected to be launched this quarter.
- **AMERICAN REVOLUTION** brochure coordinated by Jim and the HAPAC was designed by Elizabeth.
- **FEDERAL PARTNERS** rack card has been drafted by Elizabeth and is under review.



Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership



Heritage Area Program Advisory Committee Report

December 15, 2020

CVNHP Requests for Preproposals

The request for preproposal deadline on November 2 generated 49 preproposals totaling \$573,700 (in 2019, the LCBP funded 22 projects for \$203,820). Preproposals included:

- 12 Collections Preproposals totaling: \$83,500
- 11 Local Heritage Preproposals totaling: \$62,500
- 10 Conservation & Community Pre-proposals totaling: \$68,000
- 9 Special Program Pre-proposals totaling: \$325,700
- 7 Internship Pre-proposals totaling: \$34,000

A team of five HAPAC reviewers evaluated and ranked preproposals. The Grant Review Subcommittee met on December 10 to discuss their findings. Their recommendations will be discussed at the December 15 LCBP Steering Committee meeting.

Knowledge Cafés

Every fall, the CVNHP convene dozens of partners, stakeholders and officials from Vermont, New York and Québec at locations around the region for its International Summit. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 meeting was virtual, with three facilitated virtual knowledge cafés. These hour-long virtual discussions included brief introductions and break-out sessions that allowed partners to build stronger networks and help them better utilize the CVNHP Interpretive Themes in the coming years. About 30 people attended each session. The first café focused on continuing to commemorate Women's Rights into 2021; the second was focused on Prohibition, Temperance and Smuggling next year; and the third introduced the concept of interpreting the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 2022.

Due to the positive discussions around the final Knowledge Café, the chairs of the HAPAC, the LCBP Technical Advisory Committee, the LCBP Education and Outreach Committee and staff met on October 14 to discuss how the LCBP and CVNHP could focus on the CWA in 2022.

Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network

The LCBP staff continues to work in revitalizing the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network (CABN). The National Park Service sent a documentary film crew to the area last month. The 10-minute film will highlight the work partners are doing (i.e. dam removal, salmon recovery, food programs, etc.) to achieve the UNESCO Sustainability Goals for the Man and the Biosphere Program. The crew interviewed partners from Lake Champlain Bikeways, Local Motion, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, South Hero Land Trust, Lake Champlain Chapter of Trout Unlimited, ADK Action, Paul Smith's College, and SUNY-ESF. The film will be completed in early 2021.



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December 2020 Update for Lake Champlain Steering Committee Meeting

General Updates

- NEIWPCC will be hosting our January Executive Committee and Commission Meetings virtually January 14-15 with topics to include our operating budget update, release of our annual state summaries, updates on legislation, research, and impacts related to PFAS, and a presentation for Matt Vaughan on results and takeaways from three decades of data on Lake Champlain tributary loading.
- NEIWPCC has updated [our Water Program Priorities](#) for the next five years with input from commissioners, staff, and other partners. Our clean-water priorities for the Northeast focus on the following topics:
 - Contaminants of Emerging Concern/PFAS,
 - Watershed Planning and Waterbody Protection,
 - Infrastructure and State Revolving Fund,
 - Clean Water Act Reauthorization, and
 - Training and Certification.
- Headquarters staffing
 - NEIWPCC recently welcomed new members to the senior team, [Mary Berner](#) and [Amy Magin](#) who have joined as NEIWPCC's Human Resources Director and Communications Director, respectively.
 - In January, Tom Groves will be moving on from NEIWPCC after 30 years, to serve as executive director of NOWRA, the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association. Dr. Christina Stringer will be taking on Tom's role as director of our Wastewater and Onsite Systems Division.
 - NEIWPCC has updated our Emergency Response Plan/Business Continuity Plan following the changes implemented as a result of the pandemic.

Some interesting topics

- NEIWPCC submitted a comment letter in response to EPA's updated Quality Policy (CIO 2105.1) and Procedure (CIO 2105.1-P-01.1). In it we request more time to review the updates, clarification on the definition of "environmental information," any potential changes in the scope of the policy, and expectations for implementation.
- NEIWPCC submitted a comment letter concerning the status of the USGS Federal Priority Streamgage (FPS) network. Over recent years the program has become more heavily state dependent for funding, from 50% in the early 1990s to 63% in 2018. The letter asked for additional funds to support the program as states face uncertain budgets in the future.
- NEIWPCC Wastewater and Onsite [Training Calendar](#): The Fall 2020 schedule has been updated to include additional classes including remote training for wastewater operators.
- NEIWPCC is holding a special joint work group meeting for state staff on Chloride contamination on 12/16 due to overwhelming interest.
- COVID-19 environmental surveillance in sewersheds has been a high-profile and rapidly developing topic during the pandemic. NEIWPCC provides continued review, updates, and analysis. Special meetings have been held on the topic and on NEIWPCC Executive Committee calls.





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Upcoming Events include

- Dec. 14, 2020, 1-3 p.m., [UST Inspector Training Webinar](#), "NLPA/KWA Standard 823– Preventative Maintenance, Repair and In-situ Construction of Petroleum Sumps"
- March 3, 5, 9, and 11, 2021, Virtual: [Northeast Aquatic Biologists Conference](#)
- May 20, 25, and 27, 2021, Virtual: [31st Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference](#)

NEIWPCC [Current Openings](#) include

- Environmental Analyst II – Water Resource Protection (Lowell, MA): assist the Director of Water Resource Protection Programs with various program issues, activities, and grants related to source water protection, emerging contaminants, and non-point source pollution. They will oversee NEIWPCC staff working in the New York Source Water Assessment and Protection Program. Closes January 4, 2021.
- Information Officer I – Communications (Lowell, MA): assist the Communications division in writing and developing outreach products and other appropriate tasks. Activities are generally water quality and water supply oriented, but can cover a wide range of environmental issues, according to program needs and the incumbent's areas of expertise. The incumbent will act as a technical advisor for NEIWPCC, state agency staff, and the public on those program issues. They will also serve as staff support, as a clearinghouse for information, and performing as a meeting chairman for state agency staff work groups for those issues. They may also represent NEIWPCC concerning those issues through public presentations, testimony, and participation in meetings and on various committees. Closes January 4, 2021.
- Environmental Engineer II (Kingston, NY): to perform all tasks associated with managing the assessment, replacement, and maintenance of certain wastewater treatment infrastructure that is required to be installed and maintained in the New York City water supply watershed

NEIWPCC staff training

- Some recent NEIWPCC staff training has included:
 - Managing your 403B during volatile times (emotional investing)
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Quarterly report training
 - The Art and Science of Writing Comment Letters
 - An Introduction and Refresher to NEIWPCC Contracts and MOAs
 - Anti-harassment training





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Some of NEIWPCC's LCBP-specific work

- **Hiring Processes**
 - 2021 boat launch stewards will be posted this week.
 - NY State Coordinator: Erin Vennie-Vollrath started on November 30th as the new New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Champlain Coordinator. Erin will be based out of the NYSDEC Ray Brook office.
 - LCBP CAC Coordinator: Candidate accepted position and will start in February.
- **Contractual Processes**
 - 87 agreements drafted since January 1, 2020 for a total of \$3,193,002 (as of 12/10/2020) [*includes 7 total executed this quarter]
 - 20 amendments executed due to COVID-19
 - Staff submitted subaward reports to EPA in fulfillment of the federal funding accountability and transparency act (FFATA).
- **Quality Assurance**
 - 28 QAPPs approved (25 by Lowell staff, 3 by delegated review) since January 1, 2020 (as of 12/14/2020)





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VT NRCS Update

December 15, 2020

LCBP Steering Committee Meeting

- Most all FY 2020 dollars were obligated by end of federal fiscal year throughout all programs. See attached summaries.
- With the hiring of 26 new employees in the last two years, continued to provide significant training to new staff to help them improve job performance and build necessary skills to become “certified conservation planners.”
- RCPP RFP closed on November 30 and the agency is in the process of reviewing multiple applications covering Vermont.
- Budget for financial assistance programs in FY 2021 is lower overall than previous year averages. EQIP funds reduced, but CSP funds have increased slightly. Technical assistance funds to support program implementation are down significantly, impacting our ability to partner with other organizations to assist with that implementation.
- Transition plan for USDA shows a renewed interest in addressing climate change, including capturing methane through anaerobic digestion. This may reduce the amount of dollars that are available to address water quality going forward.
- NRCS VT is going through a strategic planning process to chart our focus for the next 5-10 years. We are hearing from stakeholders that they want us to more evenly focus our efforts statewide vs. continuing to target funds to Lake Champlain.

Summary of 2020 NRCS Financial Assistance Programs - October 1, 2020 - FINAL

CART Ranking Pool		CART Category	Obligations	Number of Contracts	Percentage Funding
Statewide EQIP	Farmstead	Statewide	\$ 5,073,996	17	50%
	Cropland	Statewide	\$ 1,381,493	41	14%
	Grazing	Statewide	\$ 662,655	18	7%
	Forestry & Wildlife	Statewide	\$ 913,095	43	9%
	Specialty Crop	Statewide	\$ 78,987	3	1%
	Conservation Activity Plans	Forestry CAPs	\$ 277,627	126	3%
		All Other CAPs	\$ 53,713	14	1%
	Seasonal High Tunnel	Zone	\$ 270,836	23	3%
	Beginning Farmer	Beginning Farmer	\$ 373,386	19	4%
	Socially Disadvantaged	Socially Disadvantaged	\$ 85,925	3	1%
National EQIP	National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)	East Creek	\$ 443,006	2	4%
		Hungerford Brook	\$ 102,500	1	1%
	Certified Organic	Statewide Certified Organic	\$ 24,089	3	0.2%
		Statewide Organic Transition			
	On-Farm Energy	Statewide	\$ 33,718	1	0.3%
Conservation Innovation Grants	Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)	N/A	\$ 402,810	3	4%
	Total EQIP Obligated 2020		\$ 10,177,836	317	
	Total EQIP Received		\$ 10,615,000.00		
	Obligation Rate		96%		

CART Ranking Pool		CART Category	Annual Obligations	Annual Contracts	Total Project Obligations
RCPP-EQIP 2014 Farm Bill	2015 - VT DEC - Lake Champlain	Farmstead Pool	\$ 1,871,048	25	\$ 6,808,543
		Forestry Erosion Pool	\$ 106,690	10	
	2015 - Long Island Sound	Soil Health	\$ -	0	\$ 675,600
		Resiliency	\$ 59,317	2	
	2016 - OCNRCD - Lake Mempremagog	Project Area	\$ 59,415	3	\$ 67,066
	2017 - Cold Hollow Woodlots	Project Area	\$ 35,510	1	\$ 229,943
	2018 - VACD Nutrient Management II	Project Area	\$ -	0	\$ 233,334
	2018 - TNC - Connecting the Connecticut	Project Area	\$ -	0	\$ 250,000
	Total RCPP Obligated 2020		\$ 2,131,980	41	

CART Ranking Pool	CART Category	Obligations	Number of Contracts	
Statewide AMA	Cropland	Statewide	\$ 353,104.00	30
Total AMA Obligated		\$ 353,104.00	30	
Total AMA Received		\$ 382,000.00		
Obligation Rate		92%		

CART Ranking Pool		CART Category	Obligations	Number of Contracts	
StatewideCSP	CSP - Grassland Conservation Initiative	Statewide	\$ -	0	
	CSP Renewals	Statewide	\$ 34,979.00	1	
	CSP Classic (all types)	AgLand	\$ 454,605.00	18	
		Forestry	\$ 157,773.00	18	
	Total CSP Obligated		\$ 647,357.00	37	
	Total CSP Received		\$ 770,000.00		
	Obligation Rate		84%		

Summary of 2020 NRCS Easement Programs - September 17, 2020

CART Ranking Pool		CART Category	Obligations	Number of Parcels	Acres Enrolled
Statewide ACEP-ALE	ACEP-ALE	Statewide	\$ 2,943,500.00	18	2,390
	ACEP-WRE (all costs)	Statewide	\$ 1,645,888.00	2	432
RCPP-ACEP 2014 Farm Bill	2015 - VT DEC Lake Champlain - ALE	Project Area	\$ 434,500.00	2	510
	2015 - VT DEC Lake Champlain - WRE	Project Area	\$ -	0	0
RCPP-HFRP 2014 Farm Bill	2015 - Long Island Sound - HFRP (all costs)	Project Area	\$ 204,228.00	2	388
	Total Easement Funds Obligated		\$ 5,228,116.00	24	3,720

Total of all funds obligated in Fiscal Year 2020

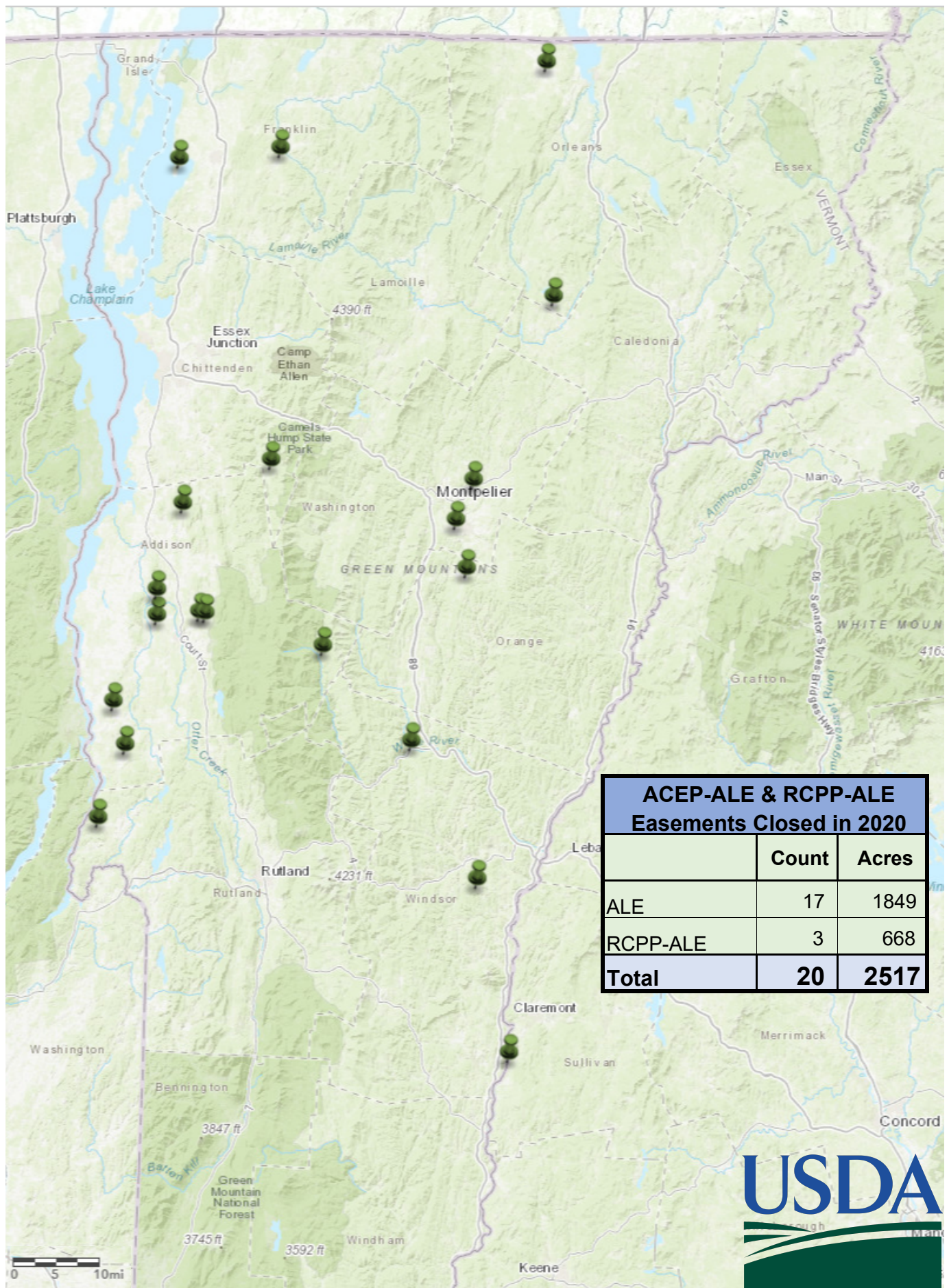
\$ 18,538,393.00



United States Department of Agriculture
10/1/2020 OSR



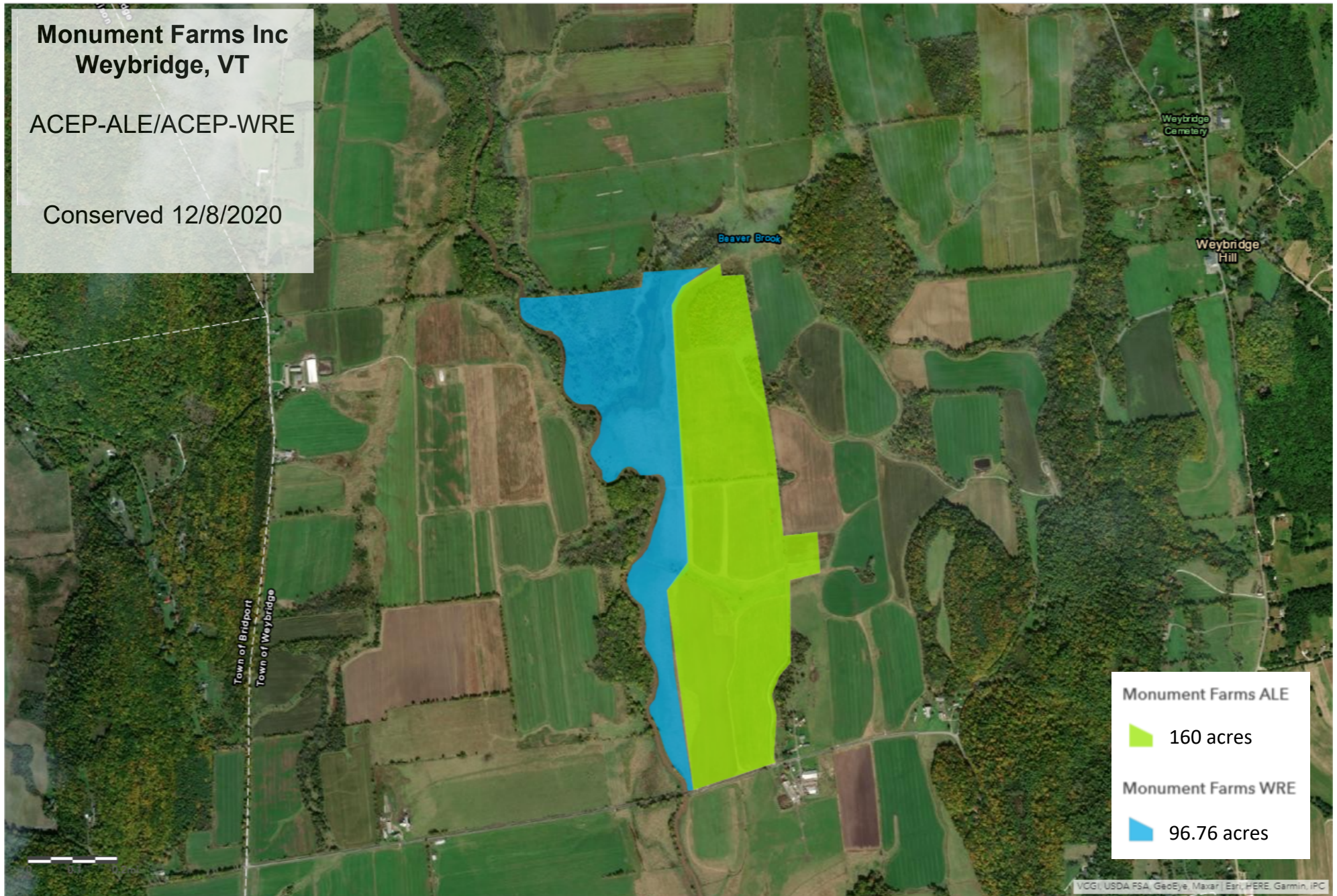
ACEP-ALE EASEMENTS CLOSED - 2020



**Monument Farms Inc
Weybridge, VT**

ACEP-ALE/ACEP-WRE

Conserved 12/8/2020



United States Department of Agriculture

ACEP-WRE EASEMENTS CLOSED - 2020

