

Lake Champlain Basin Program
Approved Executive Committee Meeting Summary
May 14, 2020 9:45 AM – 1:00 PM
VIA WEBINAR/TELECONFERENCE

Attendance:

Executive Committee members: Joe Zalewski (Meeting Chair, NYS DEC), John Krueger (Chair, HAPAC), Vic Putman (Chair, NY CAC), Mark Naud (VT CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee), Jean-François Cloutier (Quebec MELCC, for Nathalie Provost), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), MaryJo Feuerbach (EPA R1), Pierre Leduc (Chair, Quebec CAC), Pete Laflamme (VT ANR), Mario Paula (EPA R2)

Additional Steering Committee members: Brian Steinmuller (NYS Dept. Ag & Markets), Stephanie Mikesell (NYS Empire State Development)

Staff: LCBP: Colleen Hickey, Lauren Jenness, Jim Brangan, Ryan Mitchell, Matthew Vaughan, Mae Kate Campbell, Elizabeth Lee, Eric Howe, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Kathy Jarvis; Heather Radcliffe (NEIWPCC), Fred Dunlap (LCBP NY Coordinator; NYS DEC), Koon Tang (NYS DEC), Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Bethany Sargent (VT ANR)

Guests: Tom Berry (Sen. Leahy's office) Haley Pero (Sen. Sander's office)

Joe Zalewski (NYS DEC) Chaired this meeting

Introductions

Joe welcomed all participants.

Public Comment

No public comments were offered at this meeting.

Approval of minutes from previous meeting

ACTION ITEM: Approve Meeting Minutes from March 24 2020 Executive Committee meeting

- Motion By: Vic Putman
- Second by: Buzz Hoerr
- Discussion on the motion: MaryJo sent a comment to Eric Howe, an EPA R1 update, that has not yet been incorporated into the minutes.
- Vote: All in favor of approving the minutes once MaryJo's comment is incorporated. None opposed.
- Abstentions: Joe Zalewski (was not present).

Brief Updates

Congressional Updates

- Tom Berry - Senate is proceeding on the usual schedule for FY21 budget development. The House has presented the next coronavirus response bill, which was rejected by Senate leadership. The bill is still focused on emergency response and immediate relief but does include more stimulus-related features than the last bill.

- Haley Pero – Senator Sander’s staff has done a quick review of the bill, which includes \$1.5B for low income housing wastewater and drinking water systems and has a strong focus on social justice. The focus is on immediate response and recovery, but their office is discussing potential features of a future stimulus bill, so please reach out to their office if you have any ideas.

Updates from partners

- *NYDEC*: Joe Zalewski stated that in New York, effort is going into the planning process for re-opening. The Governor has laid out a phased regional approach, and implemented a set of metrics that each region needs to meet before re-opening. Currently, 4 regions have met the metrics and can start re-opening in 4 phases, beginning with the lowest risk, most essential activities. They will be monitoring the rate of transmission and adjusting the re-opening process as needed. The State agencies are developing plans for re-introducing staff to their offices.
- *NYS Dept. Ag & Markets*: Brian Steinmuller said that his office is working closely with conservation districts to phase-in a re-opening plan, beginning with fieldwork. He is hoping they’ll be able to resume field operations.
 - Joe added that farming is included in phase 1, and Brian noted that construction is too, although they are anticipating extensions and cancellations.
- *VT ANR*: Pete Laflamme stated that Vermont’s plans are similar to the New York re-opening plans. The Governor is announcing a gradual reduction of restrictions. Fieldwork has resumed and is nearing full operations. Demand for permits has not been reduced, now we are able to complete field reviews. Behind the scenes work is also being completed to ensure permits will flow smoothly, removing hurdles and ensuring that stimulus projects can be responded to. In terms of TMDL implementation plan, the Winooski waste water treatment permit is out for public notice. There are a number of permits due on the TMDL rollout plan this year, we are on track to have them out by the end of June. Remote operations are running smoothly, including public meetings. Currently there is no firm date for returning to offices.
- *Quebec MELCC*: Jean-François Cloutier said that in Quebec, the Ministry of Health has requisitioned inspectors for public gatherings. The Ministry of the Environment has sent all their N95 masks to public health authorities for use in hospitals. The Ministry is trying to increase the responsibility of requestees for authorization; they have new powers that allow them to refuse incomplete or environmentally unacceptable projects. The Ministry has reacted to the IJC recommendations to put together a cross-ministry committee with representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Wildlife and Forests, Transportation, and Municipal Affairs to create an action plan to better water quality in Lake Champlain.
 - MaryJo asked if the IJC recommendations reflect the recommendations in the Study’s final report? Jean-François responded that he was not sure for Lake Champlain, but they did for Memphremagog. Eric Howe said that the final recommendations basically align with what was in the final report. Pierre Leduc added that the IJC stated they support the recommendations that were in the initial reports, but that they added some of their own recommendations as well.
- *EPA RI*: MaryJo noted that similar to the states, they are now available to hold public meetings virtually.
 - Bryan Dore added that for the competition exemption of Lake Champlain, the exemption was to sunset at the end of this fiscal year but they have re-applied and have been given an

unofficial green light, they expect to have positive news. Will keep them operating as usual in terms of funding.

- *EPA R2*: Mario thanked MaryJo and Bryan for their funding work. He said that R2 is basically in the same boat as R1, their offices are in Manhattan so they are not sure when they will be returning.
- *NY CAC*: Vic Putman did not have any updates to report.
- *VT CAC*: Mark Naud reported that the group has not been meeting after an initial attempt in March that was not well attended. The CAC will try to regroup to plan a teleconference or socially distant virtual retreat in July, but they have essentially been on hiatus since March.
- *QC CAC*: Pierre said that the staff is still working from home but planning to move office to larger location during the summer. Employees have received guidelines for re-convening in office spaces. Projects are moving along with constraints; they expect that fieldwork may resume in June. They are postponing boat launch stewards until July so far. June is the month of water; they are pushing this year's projects to next year. The City of Eastman will get a vulnerability analysis for their source of drinking water. They have funded a project for control of knotweed in the Missisquoi north area. The government is looking for people to submit projects for a green re-launch of the economy, they have submitted projects including a revamp of water treatment projects and green infrastructure for stormwater control, improved channel maintenance techniques. There is interest in the region for barley for breweries, it is likely that an economic feasibility study will be launched to investigate replacing corn with barley. They are answering media inquiries from the IJC nutrient study, and working with government officials to push forward recommendations.
- *TAC*: Neil Kamman said that the TAC has had 1 meeting since the Steering Committee meeting. At this meeting, they moved the water chestnut project forward, received an update on the NY agronomy program, and reviewed the final report on the Farm-PREP tool for modeling cost/nutrient optimization of BMPs on farms. The TAC is continuing to talk about upgrades to LTMP, and recommend Mallets Bay/Lamoille River as the location for implementation. The TAC heard an interesting presentation from Jason Scott on oil spill emergency response planning for Lake Champlain. They identified next steps for the development of response tools and environmental sensitivity maps, and also talked about hydrodynamic modeling for spill response.
 - Buzz Hoerr stated that he was involved with the previous effort to begin a response plan, and asked if it was possible to get a copy of Jason's report or continue to be involved?
 - Pierre noted that oil spill response was a big concern of the 3 CACs a few years ago, and asked if it would be possible to have this presentation at the Steering Committee sometime?
 - Neil stated that we could ask Jason, or that the presentation could also be given at a joint CAC meeting. Lauren Jenness noted that the presentation was also recorded and is on the Sea Grant page.
- Neil said that at the next meeting the TAC will be diving into the IJC nutrient report, will start talking about State of the Lake, and will listen to presentations about lake trout and evaluating floodplain potential for sediment retention, a modeling analysis that will evaluate potential to reduce P and implement TMDL.
 - Matt added about Farm PREP - this was phase 2, project is wrapped up in terms of outreach but web/technical support will continue through the end of 2022.
- *HAPAC*: John noted that 245 years ago this past Sunday, Ft. Ticonderoga was captured from the British. He said that Susan McClure is spearheading an effort to lobby partners to write letters to Congressional representatives to keep the Partnership going. Jim has put together fact sheet to show match generated from funding received for the CVNHP.
- Jim stated that the Heritage Area is set to sunset. It has been a major supporter of events, interpretive displays in the Valley and portions of Quebec. 40 other heritage areas are facing sunset, some are lobbying for all Heritage areas to be extended. Award letters for approved projects have been sent out,

they are working on revising workplans due to COVID. Museums are being hit hard and many are expected to go under. Two in the Champlain Valley have already closed for the 2020 season.

- Buzz added that ECHO is part of the museum community, and that the summer season is not looking great. He thanked LCBP for providing COVID relief grants to watershed groups.
- *E&O*: Colleen Hickey stated that a new sail is going into the sailing center. A Raise the Blade graphic is being added to the backs of busses in Plattsburgh. The Resource Room staff have been looking at professional development opportunities including working on re-opening museums. Meg Modley will be featured in the Zoom a Scientist series in early June. Sea Grant is holding a long-term monitoring workshop for teachers using databases. Education and Outreach is bringing on a new education and outreach steward.

LCBP Updates

- Continuous Process Improvement update - the core group had their first meeting on Monday this week to review the current conditions, goals, and scope for this project. The idea is to look at the LCBP budget development process, from the initial steps through to approval of the budget by the Steering Committee at the April meeting. The focus of most of the effort will be on the technical elements, but the group will consider all the elements. The next steps will be to dive in and map out the more complicated processes and then ideally develop some recommendations for the Steering Committee to consider in June. Then the core group will develop an action/implementation plan for LCBP to move forward with. Eric is anticipating additional steps to involve staff and other partners along the way.
- COVID grants – paperwork for all 14 grants, for \$57,115 is complete and projects are moving forward. We will revisit again if COVID situation does not improve.
- IJC Missisquoi report – IJC formally published this report at the end of April. Suggestions and recommendations will be reviewed by the TAC at their next meeting, including recommendation to develop a binational Phosphorus Reduction Task Force for Missisquoi Bay. Link to report: <https://www.ijc.org/en/lclm/nutrient-loading-and-impacts-lake-champlain-missisquoi-bay-and-lake-memphremagog>
- Boat Launch Stewards will be entering the field after training next week. The training includes COVID and stewards will be hands-off and not handing out materials like they usually do.
- Eric asked EC members about the June 11th SC meeting being another videoconference. Neil expressed he is willing to do a videoconference in June as the April SC went well.
- Heather added that NEIWPC is figuring out how to start working in an office again as MA is doing a phased approach like VT.

ACTION ITEM: Approve Meeting Minutes from April 30, 2020 Executive Committee meeting

- Motion By: Buzz Hoerr
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: Koon Tang expressed concern that the EC discussion about using the remainder of the COVID allocated funds in the upcoming months was not captured in the meeting minutes. Eric Howe explained that this discussion must have happened while the meeting was in Executive Session. The result of the discussion was the recommendation for the EC to revisit this in the next couple of months if watershed groups are still struggling financially. Mark Naud spoke to the need for an accelerated timeline, particularly for NY organizations. This agenda item will be added to the June 11th SC meeting. There is roughly \$60-70K left to award if needed and the funds will not be redeployed to their original sources at this time. Neil Kamman added that the

State of Vermont is working to get all of their agreements approved in May and this may take some pressure off of VT organizations.

- Vote: All in favor. None opposed.
- Abstentions: None.

Local Grant Eligibility Criteria discussion – fiscal agents for small watershed groups, support for grant writing capacity

- Eric stated that issues have come up in recent grant rounds, particularly organizational support grants and other smaller grant categories. LCBP has had a policy that they only allow 1 proposal per organization. The idea is to allow LCBP to spread funding across many different groups. Often there have been certain groups that are able to develop more competitive proposals so presumably they would be awarded more grants. In recent years, LCBP has seen smaller watershed groups that are partnered up with larger groups where larger groups serve as fiscal agents (e.g., a small group in Addison County partnered with the Lewis Creek Association). This policy would not allow the smaller group to apply for grants when the fiscal agent is also applying. This issue came up in the recent emergency support grant program. Would the group be interested in clarifying the constraint to allow groups in these situations to each submit a proposal?
- Neil asked how common is the need for an organization to seek an independent fiscal agent?
 - Eric responded that it is not common, he is not aware of these situations in NY, but knows of a couple other groups in Vermont.
- Neil asked should we create an expectation where groups receiving these funds should be a 501(c)(3) instead of trying to make it work for this one-off situation?
- Colleen stated that from the E&O perspective it's only been Addison County that's applied under those circumstances. Not sure why they haven't sought out 501(c)(3) status yet.
- MaryJo asked in the situation where a small organization is using a larger org as their fiscal agent, the smaller org does not have 501(c)(3) status?
 - Eric responded yes.
 - MaryJo stated that her gut feeling is that we shouldn't be giving these awards to non-501(c)(3) organizations, since those organizations haven't been through the vetting process.
- Eric stated that his suggestion is that fiscal agents be allowed to submit 2 awards, 1 for themselves and 1 for their associated orgs.
 - Neil stated that he's not sure why we would do that instead of having them all be 501(c)(3)'s.
- Mark noted that there are some situations where 501(c)(3) status hasn't been granted but an organization is still doing good work. He asked if when LCBP issues an award to a 501(c)(3) on behalf of a smaller organization, does LCBP receive a copy of the fiscal management agreement? With the larger 501(c)(3)s, we need to make sure the funds distributed are following guidelines. He would hate to not allow emerging groups to not have access to funds in the work that they are seeking, and doesn't want to put up a barrier to citizen organizing efforts. He is concerned about a blanket requirement and stated that if there's a good document that controls how funds flowed; he would support allowing 2 grants to be issued.
- Buzz asked if anyone has brought up fiscal agent fees?
 - Mark noted that these fees are another reason for seeing what fiscal agent documents look like. A nominal administrative fee would be appropriate.
 - Buzz stated that those fees reduce the amount of money that gets to on the ground projects.

- Eric added that fiscal agent fee information is always provided in proposal budget, if there are fees for that arrangement.
 - Colleen said that in the budget in question there was no reference made to fiscal agent management fees.
- Eric asked if the group feels comfortable with LCBP adding some language to eligibility criteria that would allow an agent that serves as a fiscal agent to another group to submit 2 proposals, one for themselves and one for other group.
 - After some discussion, the group agreed to not change the current language for the implementation grant RFPs, limited to one proposal per applicant. LCBP should take care to ensure that organizations serving as fiscal agents on behalf of another group have an agreement with the group they are serving.
- Eric said that another topic he wanted to bring up is support for grant writing capacity. This issue came up in the COVID response grant applications and was not supported. LCBP has not supported grant writing capacity in a long time due to federal regulations on using funds for soliciting donors and development work. He asked if grant funds can be used for an applicant to pay staff to write grant applications that would fall under priorities outlined in *Opportunities for Action*?
 - The group discussed this concept, and agreed that LCBP grant funds should not be used to support grant writing capacity for other organizations. LCBP will be providing a series of grant writing workshops later this year to help build this capacity across all Lake Champlain-focused organizations interested in participating.

Executive Session – Grant awards for [StreamWise program](#), [Public Awareness Survey](#), TAC committee nomination

- **ACTION ITEM:** To enter into Executive Session
 - Motion By: Neil Kamman
 - Second by: Buzz Hoerr
 - Discussion on the motion: None.
 - Vote: All in favor. None opposed.
 - Abstentions: None.

Exit Executive Session

- **ACTION ITEM:** Approve award decision for Stream Wise Program RFP
 - Motion to approve by: Neil Kamman
 - Second by: John Krueger
 - Discussion on the motion: none.
 - Vote: All in favor. None opposed.
 - Abstentions: None
- **ACTION ITEM:** Approve award decision for Public Awareness Survey RFP
 - Motion to approve by: Neil Kamman
 - Second by: John Krueger
 - Discussion on the motion: None.
 - Vote: All in favor. None opposed.
 - Abstentions: None.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Approve Margaret Murphy's nomination for TAC membership
 - Motion to approve by: Buzz Hoerr
 - Second by: Neil Kamman
 - Discussion on the motion: none.
 - Vote: All in favor. None opposed.
 - Abstentions: None

Upcoming Meetings: <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/meetings/>

June 3: Technical Advisory Committee (GoToMeeting videoconference)

June 11: Lake Champlain Steering Committee ([Doubletree Hotel](#), Burlington, Vermont or
Videoconference to be determined)

September 2: Technical Advisory Committee (Grand Isle, VT)

September 9: LCBP Executive Committee (Grand Isle, VT)

September 23: Lake Champlain Steering Committee ([La Cache of Lake Champlain](#), Venice-en-
Quebec, Quebec)

Lake Champlain Basin Program Updates

Lake Champlain Executive Committee meeting, May 14, 2020

- LCBP staff have been working remotely or in isolation since March 16 due to COVID-19. All staff have been set up with necessary tools to complete their work remotely for the foreseeable future. LCBP and NEIWPC continue to move forward with execution of grant agreements awarded from the FY19 appropriations. Timelines for all new grant agreements executed after late March have automatically been extended by 12-18 months in the likely event that the 2020 timelines are delayed due to COVID-19 stay at home orders.
- Boat Launch Stewards have been officially hired and will begin training next week, including COVID-19 safety training. Stewards will be positioned on launches for no-contact assessments. No physical materials will be distributed, for now.
- Continuous Process Improvement update - the core group had their first meeting on Monday this week to review the current conditions, goals and scope for this project. The idea is to look at the LCBP budget development process, from the initial steps through to approval of the budget by the Steering Committee at the April meeting. Focus of most of the effort will be on the technical elements, but the group will consider all of the elements. Next steps will be to dive in and map out the more complicated processes and then ideally develop some recommendations for the Steering Committee to consider in June. Then the core group will develop an action/implementation plan for LCBP to move forward with. Eric is anticipating additional steps to involve staff and other partners along the way.
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- IJC Missisquoi report – IJC formally published this report at the end of April. Suggestions and recommendations will be reviewed by the TAC at their next meeting, including recommendation to develop a binational Phosphorus Reduction Task Force for Missisquoi Bay.

TAC Updates for the Executive Committee, May 14, 2020

The TAC met once since the last Steering Committee meeting in April.

Reviews and Recommendations

- TAC reviewed and approved the interim report and workplan for the Water Chestnut Management Program.
- TAC received an interim report presentation for the New York Agronomy Program.
- TAC reviewed and approved the final report for the *Implementation of a Farm Phosphorus Management Optimization Web-based Tool (Farm-PREP) in the Vermont Portion of the Lake Champlain Basin* project. LCBP funds will continue to support the web-based tool through 2022.
- TAC discussed next steps for the upgrades to the Long-Term Monitoring Program that were approved by the Steering Committee. A sub-committee was formed to discuss deployment locations for the buoy and tributary monitoring systems. The sub-committee met on May 11 and agreed upon a ranked list of possible locations—they recommend deploying the buoy in Mallets Bay and installing the tributary monitoring station on the Lamoille River.

Presentations

- Jason Scott, a UVM MS student and active Coast Guard member, presented his thesis research, Oil Spill Emergency Response Planning for Lake Champlain. Recommendations from this research will be moved forward by the Federal Partners Working Group: the creation of Environmental Sensitivity Index maps for Lake Champlain, and the compilation of existing hydrodynamic modeling for the Lake. LCBP staff are leading coordinating efforts, and TAC members have been invited to participate.

Upcoming Work

- The following items are on the agenda for the June 3rd TAC meeting:
 - Discussion of the FY21 Priority and Core Projects
 - Review of the Boat Launch Steward program interim report and workplan
 - Review of the recommendations made in the [LJC report](#), *Nutrient Loading and Impacts in Lake Champlain—Missisquoi Bay and Lake Memphremagog*, and discussion of how to move those recommendations forward
 - Begin preparations for the *2021 State of the Lake and Ecosystem Indicators Report*
 - A presentation by Dr. Ellen Marsden on the growth evaluation and standardized assessment of juvenile lake trout in Lake Champlain
 - Dr. Rebecca Diehl will present a draft manuscript for TAC approval using results from the partially complete LCBP project, *Evaluating floodplain potential for sediment and nutrient retention*

E&O Committee Report to the Executive Committee May 14, 2020

E&O ADVISORY COMMITTEE

E&O Committee members have participated in recent grant/RFP processes over the past month but has not met as a full committee since the last executive committee meeting. A meeting will be scheduled in the upcoming weeks.

TMDL OUTREACH TOOLS

The videographer has completed the 11 videos and the production of three 30-second animations is complete. They are posted to the website and press release was distributed last week. The *Williston Observer* gave it a nice shout out this week!

RESOURCE ROOM

The Resource Room will remain closed until ECHO has re-opening orders. Resource Room staff continue to create new exhibit materials and update public information. They have also been participating in on-line professional develop opportunities. This includes several workshops offered by the New England Museum Alliance which is working to define best practices when museums re-open. Some student interviews have occurred during this past month and all staff continues to field questions from the public.



HEALTHY SOILS INITIATIVE-RAISE THE BLADE. Monthly committee member work continues. Bus ads are ready for Plattsburgh as soon as the busses start running again. Lake George Association is also promoting the Raise the Blade campaign this spring.

E&O STEWARDS AND OUTREACH

A new outreach steward has been hired. She will begin to work with us on projects on June 1st.

WORLD WATER DAY Though the public event was cancelled on Wed March 25th, CBEI partners made awards to participating schools. Keene Central School just completed its award in early May, on-line programming with the Wild Center in Tupper Lake. They had a lot of fun learning about the top predator in the Adirondacks. Two other schools will receive programming from Bridget Butler, Bird Diva, this month.

PUBLIC AWARENESS SURVEY RFP The RFP for this project closed April 13th. A review panel met and the recommendations will be discussed at today's EC meeting.

STREAMWISE RFP The RFP for the Streamwise program closed April 13th. A review Panel met and the recommendations will be discussed at today's EC meeting.

UPCOMING:

- **ARTISTS in RESIDENCE PROGRAM** The review committee reviewed all of the proposals received. Several candidates were invited to submit full proposals which are due later this spring.
- **ART SAIL** project is underway.
- **E&O GRANT REVIEW** Twenty-four small E and O grants under \$10,000 and 7 large grants up to \$40,000 were funded this spring. Workplans are still coming in and being reviewed. The contract end dates will be extended one year due to COVID-19.
- **CBEI PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** CBEI partners had to cancel the Watershed for Every Classroom course for the summer. Planning is underway for two workshops later this summer.
- **LCBP MAIN WEBSITE:** Ryan is leading this revision with the contractor and is targeted for completion later this summer.
- **CVNHP WEBSITE** Ryan is currently working on this revision which should be completed in June.

Québec Citizens Advisory Committee May 2020 Highlights

COVID-19

- Work conditions
 - Staff working from home
 - Planning to move the office to larger location during the summer
 - Planning safe return following governmental recommendations – guideline documents for employees being prepared
- Projects moving with constraints or waiting for OK
 - Erosion control on farms – actions and funding on track – field work may resume in June
 - Boat launch stewards and Stormwater education in Bedford postponed to July
 - Activities for the «Month of the Water» (June) deferred to next year
- New projects
 - Mandated by Eastman to perform vulnerability analysis of drinking water source
 - Control of Japanese Knotweed in Bolton approved and funded

Re-launching the economy

- Submitted 2 projects through the «Canadian Freshwater Alliance»
 - Upgrading of the Frelishburg WWTP - \$ 1.3 M investment – 6000 hours of work
 - Green infrastructures in Bedford - \$ 350 K investment - 1400 hours of work
- Putting forward 3 projects through the ROBVQ
 - Green infrastructure in Bedford
 - Deployment of improved channel maintenance techniques
 - Economic feasibility study of growing «brewery-quality» barley in the watershed

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- IJC Missisquoi Bay water quality final report issued by IJC
 - Several media inquiries being answered
 - In contact with MP and MNA to push implementation