



LAKE CHAMPLAIN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

OCTOBER 26, 2020 9:45AM - 12:30PM
(VIA WEBINAR/TELECONFERENCE)

PARTICIPANTS:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joe Zalewski (Meeting Chair, NYS DEC), Pete Laflamme (VT ANR for Julie Moore), John Krueger (Chair, HAPAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), Vic Putman (Chair, NY CAC), Mark Naud (Chair, VT CAC), Pierre Leduc (Chair, Quebec CAC), Bryan Dore (EPA R1 for MaryJo Feuerbach) Mario Paula (EPA R2 for Rick Balla)

ADDITIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Stephanie Mikesell (NYS Empire Development), Daniel Mackay (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation), Christina Marts (NPS) Rifat Salim (for Maya Dehner, USACE), Laura DiPietro (VT AAFM)

STAFF: LCBP: Eric Howe, Colleen Hickey, Jim Brangan, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Matt Vaughan, Ryan Mitchell, Elizabeth Lee, Kathy Jarvis, Lauren Jenness, Mae Kate Campbell; Sarah Coleman (LCBP VT Coordinator, VT ANR)

GUESTS: Tom Berry (Sen. Leahy's office) Haley Pero (Sen. Sander's office), Susan Sullivan (NEIWPC), Julie Berlinski (NYS DEC), Koon Tang (NYS DEC)

Joe Zalewski (NYS DEC) Chaired this meeting

MEETING BEGINS

10:00 AM

INTRODUCTIONS. *Joe Zalewski, NYS DEC chaired this meeting.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 14, 2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

- **Motion By:** John Krueger
- **Second by:** Neil Kamman
- **Discussion on the motion:** Neil offered a correction regarding his comments on the USACE Section 542 program.
- **Vote:** all in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

PUBLIC COMMENT *None offered.*

10:15 AM

FY21 BUDGET REVIEW

10:30 AM

BUDGET PROCESS CALENDAR (*ERIC HOWE*)

- Eric briefly reviewed the current and next steps in the FFY21 LCBP budget process. The LCBP Technical and Cultural Heritage RFPPs were released and will be closing mid-November. The pre-proposals will then be scored by review committee members and the proposals and their ranking will be made available to Steering Committee members prior to the December 15th Steering Committee meeting. At this meeting Steering Committee members will have time to ask questions and voice support for the proposals that will move to full proposals. We will not be going over each proposal as was done in the past.
- The next two agenda items will review the new Education and Outreach RFPP priorities and where we are at regarding the State line items.
- The last piece of the budget process calendar is that VTDEC is working on developing projects for the TMDL priorities. These priorities will be reviewed with the TMDL Subcommittee in January.



EDUCATION & OUTREACH RFP PRIORITIES (BUZZ HOERR, COLLEEN HICKEY)

- Buzz: It was instructive to go through our E&O committee meeting with an analysis that Colleen suggested before we'd spoken about specific categories. We have a wide group of grants for watershed groups and then structured priorities for others. Colleen took the trouble to analyze what categories we'd received requests for grants in and found a pattern, so now we have a better idea of what we are getting in. We'd like to transfer that information out to the grantee group in general so that they can see what types of grants have been done in the past and learn. It educated us and we want to get that education to the grantee community so they understand what's going on. I don't think we can forecast how it will change things, but I feel like the information is important to distribute. We have a really functional committee; I'm impressed with the group. They listen and study beforehand.
- Colleen: The committee realized there might be somewhere in the vicinity of \$250,000-\$300,000 available for grants. The Committee wanted to keep the RFP open to all elements of Opportunities for Action (OFA), but we will figure out a way to introduce the concept of the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Grants could possibly go up to \$50,000. We were asked to set up a meeting for previous large grant recipients so the committee can hear results firsthand and allow them 20-30 minutes for Q&A. The meeting will be open to others who might be interested in hearing about those projects.
- Colleen reviewed the budget numbers for the grants from the last 3 years. Average requests ranged from 38K to 40K. Large grants always had a water quality component, the most frequent topics for large grants were education/STEM water quality, and overall water quality outreach. As a result, the committee leaned towards keeping the RFP open to all projects that reach across the broad range of topics in OFA. Of the 36 large grants that have been awarded, 17 focused primarily on students and 19 were adult/community based.
- Buzz: It's interesting how large grant categories overlap. Generally, this was really instructive. We have a wide variety of topics that get addressed, but all large grants deal with water quality.
- Koon: Very informative. Is there a preferred media of providing information by grantees? Are they pivoting to digital media as opposed to paper?
 - Colleen: our round of COVID grants mostly did figure out a way to pivot to social media. In the large category of grants there normally is some pivot to social media, but the focus has been hands on work in the community. The goal of E&O is to engage hands on and that's where a lot of our partners thrive. We also have the small grants category and those are wide open. This RFP would open the large grants to all categories.
- Pierre: There is currently a public survey project that has been funded by LCBP. Not sure when results are due, but that would inform the E&O committee to help target some audience, correct?
 - Colleen: We want to get that sense of where people are at these days compared to 15 years ago when we last did a survey.
 - Buzz: I think that goes to the higher structure of the Basin Program. Important to know what people view us as and what we are doing. There are people that are directly affected by Lake issues, others who are indirectly affected. Will be interesting to maybe confirm some things we are doing well and identify areas where we can do better.
- Eric: E&O RFP will not have specific priorities identified, will highlight 50th anniversary of Clean Water Act. Would be interesting to see proposals that address that topic, but those applications will not receive bonus points.
- Buzz: we've already had a group meeting and did an abbreviated session to try to figure out where our niche is so we can support that project but not overlap.



- Eric: Good approach, hopeful will be a nice complement to what we're supporting in the heritage area. Proposals that come in through this RFP will be reviewed by E&O, EC in Feb, and SC in April.

LINE ITEMS FOLLOW UP FROM STEERING COMMITTEE CONVERSATION (ERIC HOWE)

- Committee members may recall from the end of the September Steering Committee meeting that there was support for ag practices and how those would be supported if approved and there was some discussion on Stormwater planning & Inland Lake action plans. The group decided that these planning elements would be added to Technical pre-proposal. Will know by the end of Nov or Dec if we received any of those applications. If so, they can be discussed at the December Steering Committee. If not, then we will go back to Steering Committee on whether to proceed with the line items as originally requested.
- The Steering Committee also discussed whether to add \$400k to enhanced BMP grant program to support agricultural BMPs. That RFP typically solicits stormwater BMP-related projects, but not so much for agriculture. After talking more with the states, it seems they are interested in running those projects on their own. Eric will move forward with Steering Committee review of this line item in April and will ask NY and VT if there is anything to add to the proposal.
- Pete said good summary of decisions that were made. One question on Inland Lake watershed topic, if they were to receive proposals, what is the funding timeline or process? Evaluated by TAC, then what is timeline?
- Eric: If SC approves at meeting in April, we would work to initiate those projects about this time next year. Tech team would work to get workplans ready over the summer to start projects after October 1st 2021 when funds are available.
- Koon said he did not have anything additional to offer. He talked to Pete after the last Steering Committee and feels we are good.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION] ENHANCED BMP GRANT AWARDS

11:00 AM

MOTION: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **Motion By:** Vic Putman
- **Second by:** Buzz Hoerr
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** all in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

Exit Executive Session.

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE GRANT AWARD DECISION FOR 2020 ENHANCED BMP GRANT PROGRAM

- **Motion By:** Buzz Hoerr
- **Second by:** Mark Naud
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** all in favor
- **Abstentions:** Vic Putman



BRIEF UPDATES

12:15 PM

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES

- **Sen. Leahy's Office (Tom Berry):** Looking at November 3 results and on continuing resolution until December. Committees are poised to move on appropriations if the political winds favor that at the conclusion of the continuing resolution. Supreme Court confirmation vote this afternoon. Seems to be preordained. Committee to be chaired by VP who was recently exposed to COVID. The Senator did make a definitive statement regarding the SCOTUS process this weekend, can be reviewed at www.leahy.senate.gov if interested.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

- **NYSDEC, Joe Zalewski:** We are in the process of executing the contract for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Optimization and Technical Assistance project and implementation will begin early next year. The Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board is working on a Lake George Watershed Action Plan, a Drinking Water Source Plan, and an Isle La Motte Lake Segment Plan. CWICNY is in the process of finishing hydroseeding projects in Essex and Clinton counties. In Warren County three erosion and stabilization projects in Bolton and Hague have been completed. All construction work will continue as the weather permits.
 - **Koon Tang** added that NY DEC is are working actively with the state-wide drinking water source program. Hopefully we will be able to provide more detail in the upcoming months.
- **NYCAC, Vic Putman:** The NYCAC is scheduled to meet on Nov 30th.
- **QCCAC, Pierre Leduc:** The QCCAC had its annual general meeting last Thursday virtually and was well attended with 34 people participating. The number of farmers that attended means that our work with farmers over the past few years has increased interest. Last Thursday the QC Ministry of Agriculture announced a new program which I recommend be presented on at the next Steering Committee meeting. The program goal is to reduce the Province's use of pesticides and fertilizers by 15% over the next 10 years. There will be different programs that will support various aspects of this including programs for increasing cover cropping, widening buffer zones, etc. An impressive \$125Million has been allocated to use in this program over the next 5 years.
- **VT ANR, Pete Laflamme:** ANR Staff continue to roll out the new 3-acre permit which was issued in September. Staff are in the beginning stages of updating VT's Water Quality Standards.
 - **Neil Kamman** added that Progress continues on the creation of the Clean Water Service Providers, a requirement of Act 76. Stakeholders have coordinated and convened to receive Clean Water Fund formula funding to implement water quality projects in seven basins. The Clean Water Fund Board held their FY22 budget hearing last week which detailed a proposed allocation of funds. Public comment on the proposal is currently open and then the proposal will be sent to the Governor.
- **VT CAC, Mark Naud:** Last week we attempted to have our first joint CAC meeting as we work to better coordinate the work of the CACs. Jim Brangan presented a preview of the CVNHP's Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Hopefully continued discussions will build momentum. The next VTCAC meeting in November will feature presentations from Commissioner Walke and Secretary Tebbetts on agriculture updates including enforcement and the pay for phosphorus program as the VTCAC continues to educate ourselves on the impact and future of agriculture in the State of Vermont. We are also looking forward to having the CAC position filled.
- **VT AAFM, Laura DiPietro:** VT AAFM has recently been awarded two separate grants. The first one is a Conservation Innovation Grant that will involve modeling work to gear up for the new Pay for Performance Program. The second is a \$7 Million Alternative Funding Arrangement RCPP



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grant that will implement the Pay for Performance Program. This program will incentivize farmers to both input their data into the model and implement on-farm practices. Aligned with this new Pay for Performance Program is the Payment for Ecosystem Services workgroup which has a broad set of stakeholders that are continuing to evaluate the environmental benefits of reducing phosphorus for water quality.

- **USACE, Rifat Salim:** The two projects currently in the USACE 542 program are progressing. The two projects that have recent approval from the Steering Committee are moving forward and being coordinated by the sponsor to get the information ready to submit the PPA packages. Unfortunately, USACE staff do not have enough funds in the FY20 budget to work on these projects and have to wait until FY21 funding is released before continuing. USACE does have funding for the Moon Brook Project in Rutland and staff have been coordinating to finalize the project plan which will be finalized and placed in the PPA before handing it over to division headquarters for approval.
 - **Meg Modley Gilbertson** added that the LCBP and USACE are hosting an informational workshop on the 542 program this Wednesday morning.
- **HAPAC, John Krueger:** Since the last Executive Committee meeting the HAPAC has had two meetings. The first one was the 3rd Knowledge Cafe for the virtual 2020 CVNHP International Summit which focused on how we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Thank you to Neil for presenting and generating interest. Jim and his LCBP colleagues did a great job hosting the knowledge cafes. The second meeting was set up by Nathalie Provost and Jean-Francois Cloutier with their colleagues in the Ministry of Culture and Communications. This was a 'first-date' meeting and a handoff from the scientists to the cultural people. It was a great discussion.
 - **Eric Howe** added that it was a great meeting and it was nice to meet partners from the Ministry of Culture and Communications. We were able to brainstorm a few projects and programs where we could collaborate across the border.
- **TAC, Neil Kamman:** First to complement what John said, one idea from the knowledge cafe was to coordinate content between the three committees. LCBP staff can coordinate heritage, education, and technical content around 50th anniversary. Depending on what we get from RFP, a flagship retrospective looking at 50-year context and use to develop info across all 3 committees will be really interesting. Moving on, TAC has met once. Looked at several projects including soil and sediment reduction project, a NY dam screening tool, an eDNA project, mudpuppy research project for sea lamprey management. There also was an interesting presentation about Champlain Adirondack Biosphere Reserve by Kelly Cerialo, co-Director of CABR. This may be an interesting topic for a future EC or SC agenda.
 - **Matt Vaughan** added that the LCBP team is working on SOL 2021. TAC has been engaged a couple times, with a few more times scheduled. Next meeting is November 4th and these meetings are always open to public and SC members.
- **NEIWPC, Susan Sullivan:** Heather Radcliffe submitted updates for NEIWPC. NEIWPC has finalized water program priorities for next 5 years. Last week testified to VT Sunset Advisory Committee for NEIWPC. Have 2 open LCBP positions, including the NYS Coordinator (starting Nov 30th) and the LCBP CAC coordinator posting closed on Friday.

LCBP UPDATES

- Thanks to LCBP staff and grant reviewers for a solid turnaround on the BMP grant review process. RODs are important work. New RFPS out for pollution prevention/habitat conservation and AIS spread prevention closes tomorrow, which will be the primary topic of the next Executive Committee agenda. LCBP will soon be issuing a similar grant program for E&O and



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Organizational Support grants, to be supported with existing funding. LCBP also will be issuing a new E&O RFP as part of the new budget process, which will create an overlap with the existing funding process. This overlap will occur in this cycle only, as we transition to the new process to identify projects in the next budget (FFY22).

- DEI - anticipate working with Adirondack Diversity Solutions for organizational assessment in DEI lens. \$5,000 set aside to do this from current LCBP budget. Also looking at translating key messages around public health and water quality issues. Likely will be requesting additional funding in 2021 Key Functions budget.
- Other items: Staff also have been working on updating the State of the Lake graphics for the 2021 report to be issued in June 2021. Also, would like to review topics brought forward for 50th anniversary of CWA. If we have time, we may also have a discussion around how we can fill an agenda for the June 2021 Steering Committee Summit. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for December 15th. This agenda will focus on topical issues, including a presentation on IJC Lake Champlain-Richelieu River flood study, a conversation about a request to the IJC for a feasibility study for an AIS barrier for the Chambly canal on the Richelieu River. There also will be informational presentations from Ryan Patch (VT Agency of Agriculture, Farms and Markets) on the Payment for Performance RCPP grant the Agency was recently awarded from NRCS, and a presentation on a dam removal and fish ladder project in the Saranac River system. Thanks to Lauren, Kathy and Mae Kate for taking notes today.
- **Koon:** Is there a way for LCBP to set up a database to look at what projects have been funded in the past, including project proposals? Is there an easy way to look this up on the LCBP website?
 - The LCBP grants database does have much of this information, which is current through all awarded projects. Please reach out with suggestions to make the tool more useful. Proposals will stay confidential but workplans and final reports are publicly available. Technical reports also are linked on website. LCBP also assembles an annual report with all projects for the fiscal year.

ADJOURN

12:20 PM

E&O Budget 3 Year Summary

	2020	2019	2018
Total E&O \$	\$878,280	\$910,000	\$857,933
E&O grants	\$488,000	\$550,500	\$391,333
Projects	\$390,280	\$359,500	\$466,600
- Internal	\$125,000	\$171,500	\$180,000
- External	\$265,200	\$188,000	\$286,600

Examples of Internal projects: E&O stewards, CBEi, Raise the Blade, Video

Examples of external projects: Public Attitude Survey, Stormwater community work, Streamwise, Lakewise, watershed group training workshops

Breakdown of large E&O grant requests 2018 + 2019

	Requested	# applications	\$ awarded	average request
2018	\$755,170	20 applications	\$120,237	\$37,759
2019	\$642,257	16 applications	\$230,385	\$40,141

Note: Of the 36 requested projects, 17 focused primarily on students and 19 were adult/community based

Topics for large grants (# in category)

(1) Erosion/WQ

(2) Soil Health/WQ

(4) Recreation/WQ

(2.5) Road Salt/WQ

(3) Stormwater/WQ

(9.5) Education/Stem WQ

(1) Plastics/WQ

(2) Riparian/WQ

(1) Ag/WQ

(1) Aquatic Plants/WQ

(9) Overall Water Quality Outreach



Wannalancit Mills
650 Suffolk Street
Suite 410
Lowell, MA 01854

mail@neiwpc.org
www.neiwpc.org
p: 978-323-7929
f: 978-323-7919

October 2020 Updates for LCBP Executive Committee Meeting

- General Updates
 - NEIWPCC has updated [our Water Program Priorities](#) for the next five years with input from our 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.
 - Fiscal: NEIWPCC closed out the fiscal year September 30th and the accounting department is working on end of year tasks.
 - 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.
 - NEIWPCC has updated our Emergency Response Plan/Business Continuity Plan following the changes implemented following the pandemic.
 - As of the close of the fiscal year, all staff performance appraisals have been completed and reviewed by supervisors and the Executive Director. Future training programs are often developed following the review process based on need and requests.
 - NEIWPCC's Executive Director testified on October 21st to the Sunset Advisory Commission in Vermont.

- 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 and any potential changes in the scope of the policy, and expectations for implementation.
 - NEIWPCC's [Wetlands Work Group will convene on Oct. 28](#) to address state implementation questions and challenges regarding the Navigable Waters Protection Rule and recent changes to CWA Sec. 401 Water Quality Certification.
 - NEIWPCC's [Source Water Protection Workgroup](#) convened September 21st to share state updates and discuss source water protection work being conducted by NRCS.
 - NEIWPCC's [Emerging Contaminants Workgroup](#) convened on September 30th to share state updates and discussion largely related to PFAS.





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Lowell, MA 01854

mail@neiwpc.org
www.neiwpc.org
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f: 978-323-7919

- 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 co-sponsoring, with EPA and other partners, [Building Resilience to Extreme Weather Events](#), on November 18, 2020 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST. This free resiliency training webinar will focus on resilience planning and adapting to current and future extreme weather threats to wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater utility infrastructure and resources.
- COVID-19 environmental surveillance in sewersheds has been a high-profile and rapidly developing topic during the pandemic. NEIWPCC's Executive Committee expressed immediate interest in and asked NEIWPCC to provide continued review, updates, and analysis. Special meetings have been held on the topic and the NEIWPCC Executive Committee call on November 6th will focus on the topic as well.
- NEIWPCC [Current Openings](#) include:
 - 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 completed:
 - Managing your 403B during volatile times (emotional investing)
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Quarterly report training
 - The Art and Science of Writing Comment Letters
 - Upcoming trainings include:
 - 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
 - NY State Coordinator: Following interviews, an offer was made and accepted for this position. The new coordinator will begin November 30th.
 - LCBP CAC Coordinator: This posting closed on October 23. Thirty-four applications are being reviewed. Interviews will be held mid-November.
 - Contractual Processes
 - 81 agreements drafted since January 1, 2020 for a total of \$2,793,002 (as of 10/15/2020)
 - 15 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
 - 23 QAPPs approved (21 by Lowell staff, 2 by delegated review) since January 1, 2020 (as of 9/9/2020)

