

# **New York Citizens Advisory Committee (NYCAC) on Lake Champlain's Future**

**Monday, October 25th, 2021  
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm**

## **APPROVED MEETING SUMMARY**

**Committee Members Present:** Vic Putman (Chair), James Dawson, Steve Kramer, Walt Lender, Tom Metz, Hannah Neilly, Charlotte Staats, Bill Wellman, Fred Woodward

**Committee Members Absent:** Jackie Bowen, Jane Gregware, Ricky Laurin

**LCBP Staff:** Katie Darr, Lauren Jenness, Colleen Hickey, Eric Howe, Meg Modley, Erin Vennie-Vollrath

**Presenters:** Jim Brangan, Kelly Cerialo, Katie Darr, Brian Houseal, Matthew Vaughan

**Public Guests:** Mark Naud

Meeting summary by Katie Darr, Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP)

### **1:00 – 1:15 pm**

**1. Welcome and Introductions** – Vic Putman

**2. Public Comments**

Tom Metz shared that Senate Bill S7010 which authorizes the establishment of aquatic invasive species inspection stations in the Adirondack Park; authorizes self-issuing certification; directs education and outreach; makes permanent certain provisions of law relating to aquatic invasive species spread prevention passed the NYS Senate and Assembly. The Adirondack Watershed Institute is helping to get this going, the NYCAC may want an update from them.

**3. ACTION ITEM:** Review and vote on Draft September 27th NYCAC Meeting Summary – Vic Putman

Tom Metz moved to approve the September 27th meeting summary; Hannah Neilly seconded. Motion carried.

### **1:15 - 2:15 pm**

**4. Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network (CABN) Overview** – Jim Brangan, Kelly Cerialo, Katie Darr, Brian Houseal

Jim Brangan and Kelly Cerialo (CABN Co-Chairs), Brian Houseal (Chair of the U.S. Biosphere Network), and Katie Darr (CABN Coordinator) provided an overview of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program, the US Biosphere Network, CABN's designation, strategic plan, and partnerships to support sustainable development in the Champlain Basin. The presentation is included with the meeting materials, highlights and questions are included below.

CABN is part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere Program. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves has 727 sites in 131 questions,

including 22 transboundary sites. Participation in the program is voluntary and cooperative. Biosphere regions have no regulatory authority and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of their countries, states, and local jurisdictions. Biosphere regions have 3 primary functions: (1) conservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity, (2) economic development that is socio-culturally and environmentally sustainable, and (3) logistic support underpinning development through research, monitoring, education, and training.

The U.S. Biosphere Network represents 28 biosphere regions, each with a strong sense of place. In coordination with the US National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NGOs, universities and other partner organizations, the Biosphere Network has been revitalized. To coordinate with this growing network, we have established working groups that focus on youth engagement, traditional ecological knowledge, climate change, agriculture, and communications and outreach.

CABN was awarded Biosphere Reserve designation in 1989, listed as “inactive” by UNESCO in 1995, and reinvigorated in 2016. CABN is an internationally recognized network that connects people and organizations working to build harmonious relationships between people and the environment. CABN promotes and supports a bioregional approach to sustainable development in the face of global climate change. Connected, A Journey Through the Champlain Adirondack Biosphere is a film that celebrates partners working to build a more sustainable future for communities across the Champlain Basin and the Adirondack Mountains. The film was directed by Lia Nydes and produced in partnership with the National Park Service and the Center for Environmental Filmmaking, American University. It can be viewed on the CABN website: <https://champlainvalleynhp.org/heritage/champlain-adirondack-biosphere-reserve/>

- Katie asked how the NYCAC can get involved with CABN or use its designation to further the work of the CAC. Brian shared that the CAC has displayed a long-term commitment to people and the environment through its work to support water quality and the shared environment between jurisdictions. These efforts contribute to the sustainable development goals of CABN.
- Fred asked how CABN is marketed, noting that SUNY Plattsburgh and their environmental program and the Miner Institute were not listed as partners. Katie is working on an inventory of current and potential partners and is happy to take suggestions to build out this network. Jim added that the CVNHP interpretive theme in 2024 will focus on conservation and community with an emphasis on the biosphere. This is an opportunity to get more organizations involved with funding available.
- Vic asked whether there is a way to influence programs, like the state revolving loan funds, to create a priority or improve funding access for projects within CABN. If communities within CABN could receive more targeted priority funding that would help communities justify doing more water quality improvement and sustainability projects. Brian noted that the Biden administration has the America the Beautiful Initiative under consideration. The U.S. Biosphere Network has been writing letters to Agency heads to emphasize that the biosphere network is a great model for addressing imminent threats of climate change and water quality impacts. Funding may result from this effort. The Northern Border Regional Commission is another avenue to pursue funds for rural communities and sustainable development.
  - Hannah shared that environmental justice was a big scoring criterion for the Consolidated Funding Applications this year. If there was a stipulation for having communities within CABN score higher, that would help communities.

- Kelly shared that CABN can also play a role in environmental justice. The film highlights two examples, ADK Action's Farmacy and South Hero Land Trust's work on food insecurity and local sustainable agriculture. CABN's work should be forward-thinking.
- Vic asked how CABN started its youth engagement. Kelly shared that the initial interest in youth engagement came from a study abroad program through Paul Smith's College. Sam Cuthell's capstone project focused on youth engagement in the biosphere network. Youth do not want to be tokenized; they want to be actively involved in decision making. The youth board provides a space for them to talk. How to engage youth depends on the age group you are trying to reach. For high school-aged youth, start with instructors, local school districts, etc. It is also important to look beyond academics and engage youth who may not be in college. To build youth engagement, it is necessary to ensure participation is mutually beneficial. CABN is starting a youth leadership workshop series for professional development.

## **2:15 – 2:30 pm**

### **5. LCBP Real-Time Data Website & Science Blog – LCBP Staff**

Matt Vaughan, LCBP Chief Scientist, reviewed the new [data.lcbp.org](http://data.lcbp.org) website that has a real-time data portal and serves as a home for all real-time data being collected in the Lake Champlain Basin. Most of the data is currently pulled from the USGS. Real-time buoy data from the Lake Champlain Monitoring Program will also be incorporated. Part of the new upgrade to the program includes the deployment of two additional buoys in Malletts Bay and the Lamoille River. The site will be continuously updated. If you have feedback about ways you wish to use the website or data you would like to see incorporated, email [mvaughan@lcbp.org](mailto:mvaughan@lcbp.org).

Matt also introduced the LCBP Science Blog ([www.lcbp.org/news-and-media/news/science-blog/](http://www.lcbp.org/news-and-media/news/science-blog/)). The intent is to make it easier for partners to digest and use key findings from research on Lake Champlain and its tributaries. The primary audience is practitioners. The Technical Team is happy to take requests for studies that the NYCAC and others would like to see summarized.

- Vic asked if Matt had any ideas about how the \$750,000 that could be coming from NOAA for monitoring might be used. Matt shared some of the options that have been discussed recently including: upgrades to the long-term monitoring program including integrating in situ monitoring, expanding real-time monitoring and buoy monitoring, aquatic invasive species monitoring like eDNA tracking, and expanded monitoring of tributaries. The interest from the CACs to support improved monitoring of pesticides was included in the request for preproposals as a priority for FY22.
- Vic asked if the water sample data reported by wastewater treatment plants to NYS DEC could be shared. Matt clarified that this data is included in the State of the Lake Report and his understanding is that data is collected and vetted and needs to be approved before they are shared (generally by the end of the year).
  - Erin added she was not sure how public that data could be made given the quality assurance and quality control requirements.
  - Matt also added that this data tends not to be very dynamic.
  - Vic noted that effluent has downstream impacts and information about individual plant statistics should be public information.

## **2:30 – 3:00 pm**

### **6. Governance** – Vic Putman, Katie Darr

The committee discussed edits to the bylaws. Members were generally not supportive of term limits for members or the chair.

- Mark Naud (VTCAC Chair) shared that in the Vermont CAC, there is no expectation that someone remains chair for more than one year or two unless there is no one available and the individual wants to continue. This provides active succession planning. Participation on the LCBP Steering Committee and Executive Committee requires a lot of work and time, but it is also an opportunity to bring more information from the CAC to these committees and vice versa. Other members miss out on this opportunity.
- Meg echoed Mark's point and added that it may be more appropriate to think about a term renewal or review rather than a term limit. If there are members that are not contributing regularly, this gives the committee something to lean on and the opportunity to open that seat to someone else.
- The Committee suggested a periodic review every three years.

The Committee was in favor of altering the quorum from 8 to half of the active membership + one (7 currently). The Committee requested a DEI statement be added to the bylaws. Katie will clean up the draft and share it with the NYCAC.

## **3:00 – 3:30 pm**

### **7. NYCAC Discussion “Where Do We Go from Here?”** – Vic Putman, Katie Darr, and Erin Vennie-Vollrath

The next meeting is on **Monday, November 8th from 5:00 -- 7:00 pm**. It will be a joint meeting with the Vermont CAC. The agenda will feature a presentation by Dr. Alissa White from the University of Vermont about soil health and climate change. Katie is working on securing speakers for updates from both the New York and Vermont Climate Councils.

- Jim Dawson suggested inviting someone from Quebec to give an update on their climate work at a future meeting.