**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY**

**Committee Members Present:** Mark Naud (Chair), Denise Smith (Vice-chair), Sen. Randy Brock, Eric Clifford, Karina Dailey, Rep. Kari Dolan, Wayne Elliott, Bob Fischer, Lori Fisher, Rep. Carole Ode, Hilary Solomon, Jeff Wennberg

**Committee Members Absent:**  Sen. Chris Bray

**LCBP Staff in Attendance:** Mae Kate Campbell, Sarah Coleman (VTANR), Katie Darr, Colleen Hickey, Eric Howe, Lauren Jenness, Elizabeth Lee, Ryan Mitchell

**Speakers:** Jane Lazorchak

**Public Guests**: Tom Berry (Leahy’s Office), Ricky Laurin, Ryan Patch, Vic Putman

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

**5:00 – 5:15 pm**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Mark Naud welcomed attendees and introduced recently appointed VTCAC member, Karina Dailey.

**Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

**ACTION ITEM: Review and vote on draft September 13th, October 18th, and November 8th VTCAC Meeting Summaries**

Sen. Brock moved to accept all of the meeting summaries; Rep. Ode seconded. The motion was approved unanimously, motion carried.

**5:15 – 6:00 pm**

**Vermont Climate Action Plan** – Jane Lazorchak, *Director of the Global Warming Solutions Act*

Jane provided an overview of the [Vermont Climate Action Plan](https://climatechange.vermont.gov/sites/climatecouncilsandbox/files/2021-12/Initial%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%20-%20Final%20-%2012-1-21.pdf), adopted on December 1st, 2021. Her presentation is included in the meeting materials, highlights and discussion are included below.

The Global Warming Solutions Act (Act 153 of 2020) created legally binding emission reductions targets and called for the creation of the Climate Council. The Act requires Vermont to reduce greenhouse gas pollution to 26% below 2005 levels by 2025. Emissions would need to be 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below by 2050.  The Council was charged with identifying, analyzing, and evaluating strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, achieve the State’s GHG reduction requirements, prepare for climate adaptation and resilience, and monitor the efficacy of these actions. The Initial Vermont Climate Action Plan adopted on December 1, 2021 will be updated at least every 4 years. The plan was established using an equity lens. The plan includes emission reduction requirements and strategies for different sectors including management strategies for agricultural and working lands to mitigate emissions and identify co-benefits for emission reduction, strategies for carbon sequestration and storage, and cross-cutting pathways that support emissions reduction and resilience and adaptation efforts. With the passage of the Initial Climate Action Plan, the Climate Council, state agencies, and the Legislature have a series of steps outlined to begin implementation.

* Mark Naud asked Jane if there are aspects of the plan that might overlap with and inform the prioritization of the VTCAC’s Action Plan. Jane noted that work in the clean water space is connected to keeping farms viable over the long term, including building resilience for farms to adapt to a changing climate. Clean water practices on farms have co-benefits for resilience, adaptation, and emissions reduction. Improving the tracking of agricultural emissions will help us document and understand the benefits of changes to management practices that farmers are already making. Ryan Patch echoed the opportunity for agriculture and farms to play a key role in mitigation, adaptation, and resilience to climate change and food security. Work happening in the clean water space on farms has co-benefits for climate.
* Rep. Ode asked about the future of agriculture in Vermont in light of climate change and climate migration. Jane clarified that the plan does not discuss climate migration in depth, it assumes modest population growth. Meeting the targets would be more difficult with an increased rate of population growth due to changes in land use. The [Vermont Pathways Analysis Report](https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/anr/climatecouncil/Shared%20Documents/Vermont%20Pathways%20Analysis%20Report.pdf) provides some more detail. The Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee had a strong focus on the connection between resilience and food security. Local food systems help reduce local and global emissions. The plan does not discuss what kind of farming is good or bad for the climate. The focus was on beneficial practices of farming as climate solutions.
* Jeff Wennberg asked if the plan included a cost analysis of the expected reductions in the plan. Jane shared that some of this is covered in the Cumulative Assessment of Action on Carbon Reduction for 2025 and 2030 Requirements section (p. 136). The Council is working with a firm to help track emissions and create a carbon budget. There are more details related to this in the Pathways report.  Additional economic work and analysis of assumptions are needed. Additional modeling to look at impacts of policy levers and associated costs is coming. Tracking is the next important question. Want to know how these policies are making impacts or not. Jane offered to follow-up once the Pathways Report is finalized. Jeff added that modeling fills provides guidance on how policies can affect job growth, incomes, tax revenues and it is important for policymakers to see as they are weighing priorities.
* Karina Dailey asked what definition of natural and working lands the Council followed. Jane noted that the term is articulated throughout the plan, but not defined. This was a point of tension when moving forward with the no-net loss of natural and working lands policy. The Council will consider definitions in their ongoing work.
* Bob Fischer shared that 55% of Vermonters are on septic. From a municipality standpoint, the next level is to use funds for flares. Biosolids are a huge issue in Vermont and looking at emissions reduction opportunities in these sectors will be important.

**6:00 – 6:50 pm**

**2022 VTCAC Action Plan Discussion** – Denise Smith

Denise walked through the Draft 2022 VTCAC Action Plan. Members were asked to add their comments and edits to the draft document in the SharePoint file shared by Katie. Suggested edits and comments include:

* Separate natural and developed infrastructure
	+ Frame natural infrastructure as a cost-effective way to achieve clean water goals
	+ Reference climate resilience benefits of natural infrastructure
	+ Clarify pollution load from developed lands to not conflate wastewater with septic pollution
* Is there a gap in knowledge we should advocate for related to biosolids?
* Include combined sewer overflows
* Promote opportunities for pretreatment of PFAS, leachate, and biosolids
* Better explain why there is an emphasis on access for non-motorized recreation
* Specify the need for a dedicated funding source for aquatic invasive species prevention and management
* The State does not have the capacity to carry out AIS work themselves. AIS grants from the State are restricted to municipalities and they tend to cover only ⅓ of the requested amount, making it difficult to secure funding for this work
* Strengthen references to the Climate Action Plan in the future of agriculture section. ARPA funding could be a significant part of this
* DEC does not have the budget or staff qualified to deal with enforcement, is it worthwhile to push this responsibility on an agency that does not want it?
* There needs to be a stronger line of communication between VTAAFM and DEC, the two agencies are providing inconsistent answers
* Many of the contaminants of concern are not emerging, we are just becoming aware of their persistence and impacts
* Rephrase the future of Vermont’s agriculture, without commodity agriculture there will not be enough to support organic and value-added agriculture

**6:50 – 7:00 pm**

**Meeting Wrap-Up Discussion**

The next VTCAC meeting is **Monday, January 10th from 4-6:30.** The time shift is to accommodate a presentation from the IJC Lake Champlain-Richelieu River Flood Study to assess public opinion about the social acceptability, feasibility, and obstacles to implementation of the study’s proposed recommendations. Denise will chair the meeting as Mark will be traveling.

**Action Item:** Please add comments and edits to the Action Plan document in SharePoint. Reach out to Katie, Denise, and Mark with additional comments or issues related to the draft Action Plan.