



# LAKE CHAMPLAIN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2022, 9:45AM - 3:15PM**

(HYBRID MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE / IN PERSON AT THE  
HILTON BURLINGTON LAKE CHAMPLAIN HOTEL IN BURLINGTON, VT)

## ATTENDANCE:

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Julie Moore (Meeting Chair, VTANR), Nathalie Provost (Quebec MELCC), Joe Zalewski (NYS DEC), 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), Antony Tseng (EPA R2 for Rick Balla), Rifat Salim for Jennifer Curran (USACE), Andrew Milliken (USFWS), Breck Bowden (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Travis Thomason (NRCS VT), Ryan Cunningham (NYS Dept. Ag & Markets for Brian Steinmuller), Steve Hunt (NYS Empire State Development), Steve Garceau (Quebec Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs), Laura DiPietro (VT AAFM for Alyson Eastman), Laura Trieschmann (VT ACCD), Craig DiGiammarino (VTRANS)

**STAFF:** LCBP: Eric Howe, Jim Brangan, Colleen Hickey, Kathy Jarvis, Ryan Mitchell, Elizabeth Lee, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Matthew Vaughan, Lauren Jenness, Mae Kate Campbell, Katie Darr, Heather Radcliffe (NEIWPPC), Daniel Tremblay (QC MELCC), Lauren Townley (NYS DEC), Erin Vennie-Vollrath (LCBP NYSDEC), Sarah Coleman (LCBP VT ANR), MaryJo Feuerbach and Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Michele Fafette (EPA R2),

**GUESTS:** Tom Berry and Maya Cohn (Sen. Leahy's office), Rebecca Ellis (Cong. Welch's Office), Scot George (USGS), Annick Drouin (QC MFFP), Cathy McGlynn (NYSDEC), Dave Wick (Lake George Park Commission)

*Julie Moore (VTANR) Chaired this meeting.*

## MEETING BEGINS

**10:00 AM**

### INTRODUCTIONS

*Julie Moore welcomed everyone to the meeting and led a round of introductions.*

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

### ACTION ITEM: APPROVE MEETING SUMMARY FROM APRIL 12-13, 2022 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

- **Motion By:** Joe Zalewski
- **Second by:** Andrew Milliken
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

## PUBLIC COMMENT

**10:20 AM**

No members of the public were on the call to provide comment.

## BRIEF UPDATES

**10:30 AM**

- **Tom Berry (Sen. Leahy's office):** The fiscal year 2023 (FY23) budgets have been adopted by the Senate, and we are expecting adoption of a continuing resolution by the end of the year (mid-December). Having FY23 bills adopted by the end of the year is Senator Leahy's top and final priority before his retirement. There is pressure from the Republican party to delay the continuing resolution into next year after elections, however, so stay tuned for that possibility. The FY23 bills as adopted by the Senate include \$25 million for LCBP in addition to the \$8 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation funds allocated per year, \$10 million for Great Lakes Fisheries Commission work in the Lake Champlain Basin, and \$800,000 for the US Fish and Wildlife Service sea lamprey control program. Eric Howe will be joining delegation officers for Lake Champlain in DC later this week for a briefing.

- **Rebecca Ellis (Cong. Welch's office):** Congressman Welch's office is continuing coordination with Senator Leahy's staff to receive updates on the budget process
- **Joe Zalewski (NYS DEC):** I will primarily defer to our [written update](#) but will share a few highlights. A new law has been passed that requires operators of motorized watercraft to have their boat inspected before launching in Adirondack Park. They can visit a boat inspection station or complete a self-inspection form. In November, voters will be asked to weigh in on a bond act that would fund climate change mitigation, restoration and flood risk reduction, open space land acquisition and recreation, water quality improvements, and capital projects to restore and enhance natural spaces.
- **Julie Moore (VTANR):** See our [written updates](#). For highlights, Vermont is making significant investments in water infrastructure improvements. We have a healthy Clean Water Fund balance (generated by unclaimed bottle deposits, rooms and meals tax revenue, and property transfer tax revenue). We've seen a 30% increase in property transfer tax revenue, which we do not expect to continue into the future, but it presents opportunities currently. There has been an uptick in aquatic invasive species concerns around the state, including new outbreaks of Eurasian watermilfoil on inland lakes and new areas of water chestnut infestation in Lake Champlain. We are hoping to eradicate these new infestations and increase our outreach about aquatic invasive species. We have received a petition to regulate the use of wake boats, which the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is currently reviewing.
- **Nathalie Provost (QC MELCC):** Québec is in the midst of our election season. The environment has been a main issue in the election, particularly air quality, and has caused us to think about how to handle old infrastructure (pulp and paper mills, smelters, chemical industries). The Ministry is working with L'Organisme de bassin versant de la baie Missisquoi (OBVBM) and the Memphremagog team to develop a new 30-year strategy for water quality in Québec, broken into 5-year segments. The current plan ends in 2023, so we are beginning work on the 2023-2028 plan. I am excited to share more information as it becomes available.
- **Bryan Dore (EPA):** See the [written updates](#) for EPA regions 1 and 2 for more detail. Most of our awards for this year have been finalized, with over \$27 million in funds for the Lake Champlain program. The Build America, Buy America regulations are going into effect, and are likely to impact our work in Lake Champlain. The Lake Champlain Program is covered by the Justice40 initiative, which is a whole-government approach to secure environmental justice and spur economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities. We are working to develop an equity plan that will identify how much funding has gone to disadvantaged communities in the past, and how we intend to reach 40% of our funding or benefits being allocated to disadvantaged communities. The match waiver on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation funds will be tied to this equity plan.
- **Andrew Milliken (USFWS):** See our [written updates](#) as well. Our salmon restoration and development or river run restoration plan was just approved. We continue to work at national fish centers in Vermont to raise and stock salmon in Lake Champlain. There are 18 different genetically marked groups that we will be able to track and measure their success in order to target future efforts. We've onboarded anew lead for our salmon program. The habitat restoration team completed 25 different riparian restoration projects this year. The sea lamprey program is working on 9 treatments this fall. The Missisquoi National Wildlife refuge experienced low water levels this year, which has caused impacts on waterfowl migrations. The refuge also experienced significant cyanobacteria blooms this summer, which may affect wildlife through toxicity.
- **Breck Bowden (LCSG):** The new director of Lake Champlain SeaGrant will be starting on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Kris Stepenuck is on sabbatical this year; she is studying how European scientists incorporate community science in water quality monitoring. SeaGrant supported the development of an app that allows boaters to find the nearest pump-out facility. Our fall webinar series is coming up, and will feature presentations on topics including wetlands, the impacts of cyanobacteria on fish, winter mercury, and legacy phosphorus in Lake Carmi. There is a new and important cooperative institute for research to operability in hydrology that was just created by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Their work will be focused on improving the National Water Model. UVM has received funding through this institute to add

sediment and nutrient movement dynamics to the National Water Model. See the [written updates](#) for more information.

- **Rifat Salim (USACE):** The Lake Champlain program at the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will be managed by Jennifer Curran moving forward. It has been a pleasure working with you all. We are currently working on 2 studies: the St. Albans study, which we hope to complete by the end of December, and the Champlain Canal barrier feasibility study phase 2.
- **Travis Thomason (VT NRCS):** See the [written updates](#). The quarterly Natural Resources Conservation Service state technical advisory committee meeting will be held on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Sign-up deadlines for producers are fast approaching. The Inflation Reduction Act funding includes \$20 billion for conservation programs nationally.

## ROUND GOBY STATUS UPDATE

10:45 AM

(ROUND GOBY MANAGEMENT TEAM PARTNERS, INCLUDING NYSDEC, LCBP, QC MELCC, USGS)

Meg prefaced this update by reminding Steering Committee members that the last time the Committee spoke together on this issue was in April. The Executive Committee requested a round goby- specific meeting in July to review early detection monitoring and mitigation measures. Today, a number of folks are gathered to give an update about where we are at in our response. The Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Task Force (AIS RRTF) has been meeting every two weeks or more often to review efforts.

Scott George (USGS) presented recent round goby surveillance monitoring work, done in partnership with LCBP. He reviewed the surveillance monitoring site locations and the results of three rounds of eDNA testing done in April, June, and July which showed positive results immediately downstream of Lock C1 of the Champlain Canal. Results of two tests of benthic trawling and electrofishing work suggests about 3-miles of upstream expansion, the first documented upstream expansion of round goby. VHS disease testing results showed one weak positive on one brain sample - inconclusive findings. Next steps include repeating eDNA samples at seven routine and four supplemental sites run by USFWS partners. The data should be in by the end of October. All existing evidence suggests that the round goby invasion front is stuck below the Lock C1 dam, 57 miles from Lake Champlain with the next 36 miles being upstream expansion. The data might suggest that the double flush protocol helped deter lock passage, but densities at the C1 site are low and the fish might not be attracted to the stagnant lock channel. Lock C1 dam gates are pulled the first week of November, will that allow gobies to pass through? USGS, using Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding, will be starting a national READI-NET eDNA network program with the goal of having an automated eDNA robot network. USGS is also in a new partnership with NYSDEC for fall electrofishing work.

Meg reminded the Steering Committee that the AIS RRTF has an emergency rapid response fund that is resupplied frequently in order to put contracts in place quickly for necessary response or monitoring work started. The approval to use the funds emphasizes the importance of partnerships. NYSDEC came in with the Canal Corp to do additional electro fish shocking. 2023 and 2024 work is being funded using rapid response funds.

Cathy McGlynn (NYSDEC) summarized work of the partnership. NYSDEC has completed and distributed round goby watch cards. Rack cards and bait signs will be printed shortly. A poster/brochure combo is being worked on. They will keep LCBP, USGS, and the Canal Corp in the loop.

Meg explained to the Steering Committee that Steve Pierson is part of the Champlain Canal Phase 1 study. The Rapid Response plan specific to round goby is now online, linked from the [LCBP website](#). The Plan defines Lock C2 as the critical control point for round goby. The Canal Corp is double flushing locks C1 and C2 and also did scheduled locking this season. The effectiveness of these methods needs to be evaluated. READI-NET eDNA network will give us a lot of additional information. Education and outreach materials created to date were passed around the room.

Steve Garceau (QC MFFP) provided an update about the presence of round goby in the Richelieu River. Since being detected in the St Lawrence River, MFFP and partners have been following the round goby's expansion. In 2021 data showed positive eDNA result near the United States/Canadian border, but this does not mean that round goby is present. MFFP is conducting public outreach to inform the public what to do if they find round goby. No valid observation has been noted since it was posted in August. Parcs Canada has also been involved in the AIS RRTF.

Meg added that over 90 eDNA sampling sites are located in the Richelieu River. 2021 enhanced seine sampling data from Missisquoi Bay was reran. The pressure remains on to continue this effort and the partners will continue to sample. Parcs Canada is working to expand their sampling into the Chambly Canal.

- Buzz Hoerr requested that the Canal Corp be invited to the next meeting to provide an update on what they are doing and how they are participating in the AIS RRTF. The Canal is such a critical vector for round goby.
- Pierre Leduc asked what the response should be if round goby crosses the St Ours dam. Steve replied that Parcs Canada is involved in the effort. What has been seen in the St Lawrence is that once round goby get into the system there isn't much to do as they will colonize large parts of the system. The site is monitored every year and no round goby has been found at the fish ladder that goes around St Ours dam, even at its entrance. Meg described how the AIS RRTF is focusing resources on different pathways. Baitfish is a pathway and education and outreach efforts are underway.
- Andrew Milliken spoke about a parallel round goby detection effort. The USFWS Lake Champlain Office received a proposal for a broad metabar coding surveillance effort. It would allow us to take a water quality sample and identify AIS and native fish species using a eDNA reference library. Currently 11 invasive fish and 12 native fish species are in the library and the work is planned at 70 sites, including two on Lake George.

Steering Committee members discussed the education and outreach efforts and when the Lock will close for the season. Rack cards will be handed out to lock tenders, placed in kiosks at boat launches, and distributed through the new LCBP AIS Specialist, Erik Reardon. Mark Naud suggested gathering data just upstream of the dam and Meg Modley said to make sure the location is discussed with the AIS RRTF. Eric Howe concluded the discussion by saying that this is a perfect example of collaborative effort. Nice job to Meg and the rest of the group.

## **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION: LAKE GEORGE HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM PLAN (LAUREN TOWNLEY, NY DEC & DAVE WICK, LAKE GEORGE PARK COMMISSION) 11:30 AM**

Lauren Townley and David Wick presented an overview of the updated Lake George Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) Plan. Following a statewide initiative, the first HAB Action Plan for Lake George was released in 2018 and targeted watershed management and reducing nutrient sources to prevent HABs. The first HABs were observed in Lake George in 2020 following dry, warm weather. Additional blooms occurred in 2021. Blooms have human health implications as ~75% of lake residents draw drinking water directly from the lake. Following the blooms, NYSDEC and the Lake George Park Commission updated the HABs action plan to include updated water quality data, a review of grants that have been awarded, identification of changes in priorities, and updated priority projects to be implemented over the next several years identified through public input. Priority projects and next steps are summarized in the PowerPoint presentation (available [here](#)). Modeling in the Finger Lakes shows the presence of dreissenids impacts nutrient cycling and may contribute to HABs in low nutrient lakes. The proposed septic inspection regulations would require all properties that have septic systems within 500 feet from the lake shoreline and 100 feet from all DEC regulated streams flowing into Lake George to be inspected once every five years, along with a pumpout of the septic tank by a certified hauler. There are upcoming public hearings in November to review the proposed regulations, the public comment period is open until [November 14th](#).

- Andrew Milliken asked for clarification about how nutrient cycling through mussels might be contributing to blooms. Lauren Townley noted that the model developed in the study included a subroutine that quantified the amount of mussels in the lake. The model showed that the

presence of mussels impacts nutrient cycling as mussels excrete phosphorus in a form that is more bioavailable to algae. The presence of mussels can provide ideal conditions for cyanobacteria.

- Eric Howe noted the water chemistry in Lake George is not optimal for zebra mussels and asked whether the population of zebra mussels has grown to the point where it could impact nutrient cycling in the lake. David Wick replied that researchers think calcium levels are too low to create anymore localized populations of zebra mussels beyond the 8 known locations. They are working with researchers to continue this monitoring.
- Meg Modley added there are more Asian clams than zebra mussels in Lake George. David Wick confirmed that additional sites of Asian clam populations were found this year and they appear to be expanding throughout the lake ([2022 Report](#)). Prior studies have not determined impacts from the higher level of Asian clam populations, that may change in the future.
- Breck Bowden noted Asian clams also need calcium and asked whether they are better at sequestering calcium than zebra mussels. David Wick responded that asian clams have a robust ability to pull calcium out of the sediment while zebra mussels pull it out of the water column.
- Pierre Leduc commented that the Lake Champlain Committee has a robust volunteer monitoring and training program. He suggested connecting with them to see if they could include Lake George in their reporting.
- Julie Moore shared there may be opportunities to find synergy between the LENS Tool and the Phosphorus Reduction Tool that is under development in Vermont to ensure consistent methods are being used to measure phosphorus throughout the watershed. Sarah Coleman shared they recently held a meeting about this to ensure the states are aligned in methods for water quality accounting.

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## LUNCH BREAK

12:15 PM

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## COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

1:15 PM

- **Vic Putman (NYCAC):** pointed to [written update](#) provided by Katie Darr.
- **Pierre Leduc (QCCAC):** pointed to written updates, which includes the [OBVBM annual report](#) and [presentation](#) provided at the annual general meeting. The report provides a great overview of the breadth of action we take as an organization. The main focuses of our work include agriculture, erosion control, green infrastructure, biodiversity and habitat preservation, education and outreach, aquatic invasive species spread prevention, and gathering benthic health baseline data in streams. We currently have 2 open positions.
- **Mark Naud (VTCAC):** pointed to [written updates](#). The VTCAC had a great annual retreat meeting over the summer. We are working towards finding alignment and opportunities to share the work for the Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) wherever we can. We had an informal joint CAC meeting in conjunction with the Champlain Valley National Heritage Program (CVNHP) annual summit.
- **Colleen Hickey (E&O Committee):** pointed to [written updates](#). It was a busy summer for LCBP staff. Over 9,000 people visited the Resource Room, and we reached over 1,700 people through tabling events. See ClearWaters magazine for a 3-page spread on the Clean Water Act 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and LCBP's involvement. I'd like to give a shoutout to the StreamWise program; the pilot program has given tremendous visibility through partner watershed organizations, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, and Lake Champlain SeaGrant. SeaGrant was also a great partner on the teacher education workshop on aquaculture that we supported. I'd also like to highlight the Senator Leahy Lake Champlain photo contest; the winners will be announced by Senator Leahy on October 8<sup>th</sup>.



- **Jim Brangan (HAPAC):** The CVNHP currently has an open request for pre-proposals. We just held our annual summit in Saranac Lake. The summit featured a field trip that over 40 participants attended. Stops included the Saranac tuberculosis laboratory, the Six Nations Cultural Center, the Paul Smith's Visitor Information Center, and BluSeen Studios. The summit included three keynote presentations on the Champlain Canal, the American Revolution Semi-quintennial, and the Champlain Adirondack Biosphere Network. We facilitated Knowledge Cafes after each presentation, to support brainstorming around future grant project priorities, collaboration, and outreach.
- **Neil Kamman (TAC):** pointed to [written updates](#). The TAC has reviewed and approved two final reports recently, one on tile drainage and the effectiveness of filters, and another on phase 2 of the St. Albans Jewett Brook treatment train project. TAC has been busy reviewing workplans for the large suite of projects beginning in FY22. New projects include an extension of the Functioning Floodplains Initiative, a de-icing salt infrastructure comparison project in Mirror Lake, a dam removal project focusing on 4 dams around the Winooski River in Montpelier, and a project on the East Branch of the Ausable River to look at stream geomorphic assessment results and improving stream equilibrium, then examining the biological effects of those projects.
  - **Matt Vaughan (LCBP):** TAC is working on an unprecedented number of projects, as the technical budget has nearly doubled since FY21. We have a request for proposals for Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems planning and implementation projects open currently, which includes a new category focusing on aquatic organism passage. We will be releasing our FY23 request for research pre-proposals next week. I'd like to plug the [LCBP Science Blog](#), which provides distilled findings of the latest research LCBP and our partners are funding. I'd also like to plug [data.lcbp.org](http://data.lcbp.org), a site which displays real-time, high0frequency data from our pilot water quality monitoring buoys and other sources.
- **Eric Howe (LCBP):** pointed to [written updates](#). LCBP is working with Senator Leahy's office, ECHO, and UVM on an event to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Clean Water Act and acknowledge Senator Leahy's support for Lake Champlain. LCBP has welcomed several new staff members, including Erik Reardon, Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator through NYSDEC. The Aquatic Organism Passage Restoration Specialist will begin in mid-October. We are currently hiring for a Grants Manager, Office Manager, and Aquatic Biologist. USACE representatives visited Vermont and New York in early August for a tour.

## LCBP FY23 BUDGET PROCESS FY22 REVIEW (ERIC HOWE)

1:45 PM

Eric reviewed the funding breakdown for the LCBP FY22 appropriations, including \$20M through EPA Section 120 (\$12M for Opportunities for Action Management Plan priorities and \$8M for Lake Champlain TMDL projects), \$8M in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Funding, \$600K from the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission, \$500K from the National Parks Service for the CVNHP, and \$750K from NOAA monitoring funds (provided by Senator Leahy's Congressional Directed Spending). To date all agreements have been executed, except for the NOAA funds.

- Breck Bowden asked if the NOAA funds are intended to be competitive or support an existing program.
  - Eric responded that it is both. LCBP plans to support/ramp up grant categories for AIS management, an enhanced cyanotoxin testing program, in situ water quality monitoring with a new buoy, and an award for the FY22 technical project for a contaminant monitoring program.
  - Breck stated that this is a tremendous opportunity. Recommend discussing synergies with a new research project being led by UVM for water quality sensor work.

Eric concluded by stating that all signs are pointing toward at least level funding for FY23 appropriations. He believes Senator Leahy is pursuing another congressional directed spending request through NOAA for monitoring. LCBP is in the current president's FY23 budget at an additional \$5M.

## REVIEW CALENDAR FOR BUDGET PROCESS (ERIC HOWE)

Eric reviewed that the budget process for FY23 will be about the same as for FY22, except that LCBP did not hold a budget summit in June this year, as we did last year. The budget development process begins

at this meeting with the review of RFPP priorities for LCBP Research Grants coordinated through the Technical Advisory Committee and the RFP priorities for LCBP Large Education and Outreach Grants coordinated through the Education and Outreach Committee. During the December Steering Committee meeting we will review core projects of the technical and education and outreach components of the LCBP budget as well as State line-item requests. In January the Executive Committee will review the LCBP key functions budget. In February and March the Executive Committee will review the proposals submitted to the LCBP Research Grants category, Large Education and Outreach grants category, and the CVNHP grant categories. In April the Steering Committee will approve the full FY23 budget.

#### **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH FY23 LARGE GRANTS RFP (BUZZ HOERR, COLLEEN HICKEY)**

Colleen reviewed the FY23 priorities for the Large Education and Outreach grants, as discussed by the Education and Outreach Committee. Priorities include road salt reduction efforts, climate change education and interpretation, phosphorus/cyanobacteria reduction efforts, interpretation of watershed science and its application to implement solutions within local communities, stream and river health, and habitat protection and restoration.

The Steering Committee members provided the following feedback. They requested the Executive Committee review the final list of priorities for approval at the October Executive Committee meeting.

- Neil Kamman asked if the phosphorus/cyanobacteria reduction efforts and habitat protection and restoration priority would include implementation work as well as communicating the benefits of such work. Colleen responded that many grant applications do both.
- Pierre Leduc suggested including a priority about education of the impacts of improper, old, malfunctioning septic systems. Colleen responded that it was a priority listed in last year's RFP. Sarah Coleman added that a FY22 State line-item request is for supporting education and outreach efforts for on-site wastewater systems, although this work wouldn't take place in Quebec.
- Breck Bowden stated that an important audience would be community members that have a very big impact on what is on the land, including real estate agents, builders, and insurers. It's important to reach them with interpretations of watershed science. Colleen agreed that the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Realtor workshops have been very successful and a key audience to reach homeowners on the ground. Breck also mentioned efforts to reach out to New American communities, especially those who utilize the lake resources for subsistence. Meg Modley stated this is a key audience targeted through the fishing workshops.
- MaryJo Feuerbach spoke to the need of reaching communities who don't live right on the lake, an important way to reach underserved communities. Using E&O funding to target organizations that work with underserved communities in order to build relationships and trust is important.
- Julie Moore stated that VTANR is looking for ways to amplify the availability and distribution of Aquatic Invasive Species materials, considering the new AIS infestations in Vermont, especially. Meg Modley responded that LCBP is using base funding and USFWS funding received through having an approved management plan in place. It would be great if there are State funds available to supplement. We want to print signs to go on the decontamination stations at the launches. More resources could definitely be used. Julie said that we are at a moment where it feels like AIS pressures are significant. Adding AIS to the priority list raises the profile of the importance of the work.
- Pierre Leduc asked about the Justice40 initiative and if the E&O Committee has considered how to spend the budget in this area. Colleen responded that DEI efforts will be covered in a separate grant category but also rolled into the E&O grant application process. The committee has discussed and have two broad thoughts to start. One is exploring the need for a part time circuit writer to help groups in underserved communities identify priorities that align with LCBP funding priorities. LCBP is also ready to look at grants going specifically to underserved communities and perhaps they would compete within their own grant category. It's a broader conversation to have, not just with the E&O budget. We are also exploring French language translation for local grants.

#### TAC FY23 RFPP RESEARCH PRIORITIES (NEIL KAMMAN, MATT VAUGHAN)

Matt reviewed the FY23 Research RFPP priorities, as discussed by the Technical Advisory Committee. FY23 marks a transition where research projects and planning and implementation projects are separate LCBP RFPs. Priorities include 1. Support research to understand the root causes of environmental trends in the Lake Champlain basin, including in-lake trends and tributary loading trends. 2. Support research to increase understanding of groundwater transport of nutrients and contaminants in the Lake Champlain basin through monitoring and modeling efforts. 3. Support research to develop innovative watershed or in-lake management approaches likely to improve water quality, including cost-benefit analyses. 4. Research new and innovative AIS spread prevention programs and control technologies capable of addressing real and potential AIS impacts, including sea lamprey, to the Lake Champlain ecosystem and fishery, human health, and the regional economy. 5. Research to improve understanding of AIS impacts to the Lake's ecosystem and economy under climate change predictions. The TAC recommends supporting the LTMP as a priority but not as a priority for the RFPP. Matt also reviewed three other priorities to consider, including 1. Support research and understanding of predicted impacts of a changing climate on the Basin including frequency of flood and drought (lake levels), increased air and water temperatures, and changing land use on the lake's ecosystem. 2. Research to assess local and state policies to determine their alignment and compatibility with Clean Water and/or Healthy Ecosystems goals in the Lake Champlain Basin; identify local and state policies that create obstacles to achieving these goals; and/or to identify or envision policies that support these goals. 3. PFAS research, for example what are legitimately achievable local practice or management approaches to meeting new PFAS criteria promulgated by EPA?

- Nathalie Provost asked if the LCBP TAC has a working network with different states regarding PFAS. How will the TAC handle a new proposition from the EPA? Matt responded that the work LCBP is doing is to first wait to hear back from EPA and the States. Julie Moore stated that it seems to early for the LCBP TAC to wade into a very complicated space. VTANR is waiting for the standard to determine their approach. A roadmap has been developed and foundational sampling work is taking place. Although VTANR doesn't want to interfere with research that would be beneficial to Quebec, the EPA standard first has to be finalized and then NYSDEC and VTANR have to react. Nathalie summarized sentiment by saying continual conversations on this topic should take place between agencies, we will have to work together to answer the question and our positions will have impacts on each other.
- Andrew Milliken advocated for more definition around and increased prioritization of climate change work, including for the Lake and also its tributaries, wetlands, and floodplains. The priority should be to not only study the impact of climate change but include management and restoration approaches for adaptation and mitigation efforts. This is timely and USFWS would hate to not have it get the attention in the near term, especially with federal funding.
- Breck Bowden stated that it is great to see the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority and its relation to groundwater. Its almost a statement of what the New Cooperative Institute for Research to Operability in Hydrology (CIROH) is focused on and there seems to be the opportunity for collaboration. Breck's first reaction to the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority is that it should include socioeconomic research, something that the TAC has talked about a lot over the years, but has never quite made it in as a priority. The priority would support research on how we make behavior change that leads to water quality improvement.
  - Matt and Neil clarified that this was not the original TAC intent behind the priority. Matt said the idea was more to address advantages of innovative practices versus what is currently used. Neil said the inclusion of socioeconomic research is a good idea, it would change the priority to focus on packages of interventions that people can get behind, instead of for example, St Albans aeration.
  - Mark Naud tied this to the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority not to make the TAC's final prioritized list; he amplified the policy alignment component. It would be a really great project for UVM, Law School, SUNY, etc. to make sure we are heading toward the same north star. Discussions could be about mandatory boat inspections, 500ft septic system buffers, etc.



To prioritize a project like this would be valuable. Neil Kamman stated the priority came from Curt Gervich at SUNY Plattsburgh and more focused on local policies, interesting.

- Pierre Leduc built on Breck's statement. The biggest obstacle to BMP adoption is socio-economic factors. The Quebec Citizens Advisory Committee keeps hearing all the time: farmers will not change practices because of economic, but social reasons. We have to find ways to create pathways to increase the adoption rates of what we know works. Even though we have incentive programs, they are not very successful and are often run by volunteers. A lot of money is left on the table. There must be some threshold obstacles to be removed and we need to find out what the obstacles are with pilot projects. Pierre also recommended adding climate change to the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority related to groundwater. Management decisions need to be learned. With climate change we have observed a huge impact on groundwater the past 5-10 years. We need to study nutrients, contaminants, and how they are being moved through systems and what it means for the future. Pierre then asked about if the TAC considered DEI principles when developing the priorities. Matt said DEI has been incorporated into the scoring criteria and Justice40 criteria are in the process of being defined.
- MaryJo said that Breck brought up a really good point about socioeconomic research, but EPA R1 would like to support what is already listed as a priority. There is an enormous price tag to clean up the lake, and research can dramatically decrease the cost of practices through new technology for nitrogen. There's a real opportunity.

Steering Committee members discussed revisions to the TAC's priority list. Priority #3 was revised to read: "Support research to develop innovative watershed or in-lake management approaches likely to improve water quality, including engineering solutions, socio-economic studies, and/or cost-benefit analyses for proposed approaches. RFPP Scoring criteria for research that addresses the effects of climate change (up to 10 points) was added.

**ACTION ITEM: TO APPROVE AS AMENDED THE PRIORITIES FOR THE FY23 TECHNICAL RFPP PRIORITIES**

- **Motion By:** Breck Bowden
- **Second by:** Andrew Milliken
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

**REQUESTED LINE ITEMS (NYSDEC, VTANR, LCBP, OTHERS)**

This agenda item was tabled to be discussed at the October Executive Committee meeting.

**FY23 BIL/INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PRIORITIES**

This agenda item was tabled to be discussed at the November Executive Committee meeting.

**INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION: OWEN MILNE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2:30 PM  
LAKE CHAMPLAIN SAILING CENTER**

Owen Milne provided an overview of the Lake Champlain Community Sailing Center's (CSC) [Diversity Access Initiative](#), funded in part by LCBP. The initiative was featured on CBS Mornings (view [here](#)). In 2020, when creating strategic plans around dismantling systemic racism, CSC's board sought ways to address historic barriers faced by people of color. Work with BIPOC-led community organizations led to this Diversity Access Initiative: a long-term opportunity for BIPOC children to attend youth camps, learn to love and care for the lake, and explore the myriad of educational and career opportunities that come through sailing. The initiative provides campers between 11-15 who identify as BIPOC a 100% fully paid summer camp experience for up to 4 weeks, including transportation stipends, for up to 4 years. Prior to starting the initiative, 5 or 6 BIPOC campers participated out of 500 campers, this year 30 BIPOC campers participated. They are on track to reach their goal of 25% BIPOC campers in the next 5 years. Based on feedback from parents this year, they are looking to expand the age range to younger kids and



provide opportunities in the Fall. Parents have also expressed interest in learning how to sail so the families can participate together. They are exploring how to get the floating classroom and other programs to feed into the camp program.

- Neil Kamman asked what kind of engagement was done to reach the communities? Owen shared that the CSC worked with trusted community voices who were very plugged into diverse communities to find out what things should be kept in mind when trying to get BIPOC communities to participate in sailing camps. To overcome barriers to participation, the program is free for life starting at age 11, including 4 years of funded camp with the ability to start working at the sailing center at 15. Future job prospects, free lunch, and transportation stipends for parents were successful incentives. Communities have expressed interest in BIPOC sailing instructors and this initiative will help build that instructor base for the future.
- Pierre Leduc asked if they had to suspend or change activities in the summer because of water quality. Owen confirmed that over the course of the summer, there were 5 days when on-the-water activities were suspended due to cyanobacteria and 10 where they had to modify how they were getting kids out on the water. All staff are trained on cyanobacteria identification.
- Erin Vennie-Vollrath asked if the camp includes education about water quality issues. Owen confirmed that in all CSC programming, participants learn about the watershed, the importance of clean water, and the impact of individual choices on the environment.
- MaryJo Feuerbach asked if it was a tough sell to involve organizations to partner with or families to participate given the lack of diversity in sailing. Owen responded it was not a tough sell to families especially given what childcare looks like. They filled all available spots in 2 days. When it came to approaching foundations, a number of prior partners were excited to support a new program that has legs to grow into something. Following the success of the first two years of the initiative, it has been easier to secure partners.
- Mark Naud commended the depth and breadth of programs the CSC offers and encouraged the Steering Committee to support its work as it can. It is one of the few organizations that ties together everything LCBP does.
- Colleen shared that the CSC has been a partner for the Champlain Basin Education Initiative (CBEI) and their facility has been used to host World Water Day. They also have a nationally recognized curriculum that teaches about watersheds. CSC is a great example of crossover between education and thriving communities.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

3:00 PM

### ACTION ITEM: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

- **Motion By:** Neil Kamman
- **Second by:** Mark Naud
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

## EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION.

### ACTION ITEM: TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF EVE FRANKEL TO THE E&O ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- **Motion By:** Mark Naud
- **Second by:** Neil Kamman
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

### ACTION ITEM: TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF ALI THOMAS TO THE E&O ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- **Motion By:** Mel Cote



- **Second by:** Mark Naud
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** Julie Moore

**ACTION ITEM: TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF LAURIE EARLEY TO THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- **Motion By:** Neil Kamman
- **Second by:** Mark Naud
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** Andrew Milliken

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**ADJOURN**

**3:30 PM**

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