

New York Citizens Advisory Committee (NYCAC) on Lake Champlain Management

**Monday, December 5th, 2022
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm**

APPROVED MEETING SUMMARY

Committee Members Present: Vic Putman (Chair), Jackie Bowen, James Dawson, Steve Kramer, Walt Lender, Tom Metz, Ricky Laurin, Bill Wellman, Fred Woodward, Charlotte Staats

Committee Members Absent: Jane Gregware

LCBP Staff: Mae Kate Campbell, Katie Darr, Eric Howe, Lauren Jenness, Elizabeth Lee, Ryan Mitchell, Meg Modley, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (NYS DEC)

Presenters: Mae Kate Campbell, Eric Howe, Ryan Mitchell

Public Guests: Laura Klaiber, Michele Fafette, Colin Powers

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

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – Vic Putman
- 2. Draft LCBP Disadvantaged Communities Definition Overview** – Mae Kate Campbell, Eric Howe

Mae Kate provided an overview of the draft LCBP disadvantaged communities definition and process to develop the definition. The presentation is included with the meeting materials ([here](#)). The [public comment period](#) is open until December 12th. LCBP is required to direct 40% of its Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to projects with outcomes that benefit disadvantaged communities in the Lake Champlain basin. To waive the non-federal match requirements for the funds, LCBP needs an interim disadvantaged communities definition approved by EPA. Disadvantaged community status will be used as an additional lens when evaluating projects that meet the objectives outlined in Opportunities for Action. Communities that meet one or more of the criteria will be considered an underserved community. LCBP and EPA are working to develop maps that will make it easy to determine where communities that meet these criteria are located. In developing the draft definition, LCBP tried to be as consistent as possible with relevant Vermont and New York State definitions and criteria.

- Tom suggested the following criteria for consideration: eligibility for public assistance and social aid programs, modification of the housing cost burden criteria to include housing and energy cost burden, and internet and communications access. Mae Kate noted that there are a few economic-centered criteria in the proposed definition. Public assistance program eligibility is not currently in the definition but will be brought up for consideration by the LCBP Steering Committee. She added that LCBP received another public comment specifically identifying the lack of access to cell phones, wireless, or internet as potential criteria.
- Jim asked for clarification on the granularity of data. Mae Kate clarified that they are utilizing block group data which is the smallest area the data is available at. Block groups contain

between 600 and 3,000 people in one block group. For reference, there are approximately 522 block groups in the state of Vermont.

- Walt suggested considering indicators related to businesses like closures, vacancies, and abandoned businesses. Mae Kate was not sure what datasets are available to speak to those points, but it could be something applicants self-identify in their justification.
- Jackie asked how communities get added or delisted if this definition exists in perpetuity. Mae Kate clarified that the goal is to use this as an ongoing definition with periodic review and updates.
- Jackie asked about the inclusion of health impacts or proximity to a health facility. Mae Kate clarified that they included cancer prevalence as a criteria. Many health metrics are more related to air quality work. Charlotte suggested salt in drinking water as a criteria as that is a health and environmental indicator. Since there may not be enough data on this to apply the criteria across the basin, this may be another instance where applicants can take advantage of the open-ended justification to share what challenges their community faces. Tom added that every town and city water supply agency is required to test and publish public record water quality information which may be a way to identify some of the water quality criteria.
- Vic commented on the challenges of census block group data to capture criteria in small communities. Census data was intended to count people, not necessarily to capture the demographic data and other criteria relevant to LCBP's mission. Mae Kate clarified that LCBP intends for the maps to be a helpful starting point for communities. The funding does not need to be directed to a whole block group. If there is a community that does not qualify based on the definition and map, but has additional data for their town, they can use that data to help justify how they qualify as a disadvantaged community. The open-ended part of the definition is intended to help communities who don't show up on the map qualify.
- Laura asked if per capita income would be useful or if it is sufficiently addressed by other economic criteria. Mae Kate agreed that per capita income might narrow it down a little more, but it might not result in more geographic coverage than the existing data set.
- Ricky shared his wife is a social work professional and she shared that the poverty level will go up, likely the beginning of next year.

3. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

4. Clean Water Commitment Website Overview – Ryan Mitchell

Ryan walked through the Clean Water Commitment website (<https://cleanwatercommitment.org/>) which launched on November 1st. The website grew out of a suggestion from LCBP's education and outreach committee to develop digital media to explain the Lake Champlain TMDL. Currently, it is Vermont-centric, but they hope to add more information relevant to New York as the NY Lake Champlain Watershed Implementation Plan is finalized. They hope to get shorter versions of the videos and animations in theaters as pre-screening ads as one mechanism to share the site and information.

5. Clean Water Commitment Website Overview – Ryan Mitchell

Ryan provided an overview of the Lake Champlain Basin Public Awareness Survey conducted by Lake Champlain Sea Grant, UVM Extension, and Lake Champlain Committee. The goal of the study was to better understand the public's knowledge of watershed issues and their level of engagement. The survey assessed knowledge, attitudes, engagement, and preferred information sources, and audiences and communication channels to target. The survey had limited responses from New York. Respondents tended to skew older, well-educated, homeowners. For future iterations of the survey, they will explore different ways to administer the survey to reach other demographics and characteristics. 53% of respondents indicated they get information from TV, newspaper, and radio, this result may be related to the respondents' demographics. Websites, brochures or informational documents, and information on TV or radio were the respondents' preferred ways to get information. A long-term goal is to include public knowledge and engagement in the State of the Lake Ecosystem Indicators Scorecard to assess changes in the informed and involved public goal. The [presentation](#) and [final report](#) are both available in the meeting materials. The research team is also working on developing a 1-2 page summary of results.

- Walt asked if there was anything the CAC could do to promote responses to the survey. Ryan shared that the survey was statistically randomly distributed via email. In the future, they will utilize a multi-modal approach to survey distribution. The next time it is distributed, the CAC and partners could share that the survey has been distributed and reinforce the importance of responding if you receive it.
- Vic noted the difficulty of administering surveys, many people don't trust the government and do not want to respond to surveys especially if it is an unsolicited questionnaire. Ryan agreed and thought having it distributed by trusted local sources might overcome that barrier in the future.
- Vic suggested filtering the information by subwatershed.
- Ricky suggested tapping into local organizations in towns, like the Lions Club to help communicate about the watershed and future survey opportunities.

6. ACTION ITEM: Review and vote on Draft April 25th, June 27th, and October 31st NYCAC Meeting Summaries

- Motion to approve meeting summaries by: Fred Woodward
- Seconded by: Jim Dawson
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: None

7. CAC Coordination – Vic Putman, Katie Darr

- Motion to approve the letter supporting the Vermont and Quebec CAC's request related to public reporting on phosphorus reduction in Missisquoi Bay by: Tom Metz
- Seconded by: Jim Dawson
- Discussion on the motion: Katie will send the draft letter for Committee review.
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: None

8. Committee Governance Discussion – Vic Putman, Katie Darr

Committee Leadership

After serving as the NYCAC chair for 7 years, Vic Putman announced he is resigning from chair effective at the end of the year. He will remain on the committee and will be working to support the reinvigoration of the Boquet River Association. Vic identified Walt as a successor. The Committee members and Lake Champlain Basin Program staff thanked Vic for all of his work to support the NYCAC, the LCBP, and the Lake Champlain Basin.

- Motion to nominate Walt as Chair of the NYCAC by: Jim Dawson
- Seconded by: Ricky Laurin
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor

The motion was approved unanimously. Walt will start his term as chair starting January 1, 2023.

Bylaws

The committee discussed the edits to the 1991 bylaws.

- Motion to approve the bylaws as amended by: Fred Woodward
- Seconded by: Ricky Laurin
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor

Membership

In early 2023, the Committee will focus on recruitment of new members to fill the open seats. Laura Klaiber has expressed interest in joining the committee. Katie will include membership application details and recruitment materials with the meeting follow-up materials.

9. Updates

Jackie shared that construction has started on the Champlain Hudson Power Express Line. The Environmental Bond Act passed. On December 19th, the Climate Action Council will be voting on the final Scoping Plan to be delivered to the governor and legislature.

The Lake Champlain Basin Program is accepting applications for Small and Large Education and Outreach, Organizational Support, and Stream Wise grants. In addition, the Professional Development and Educator Mini-grants are open. More information available at <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/request-for-proposals-rfps/>

10. Meeting Wrap-up Discussion

The NYCAC meets next on **Monday, January 30th from 1-3:30pm via Zoom.**