



LAKE CHAMPLAIN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

DECEMBER 14, 2022, 9:30AM - 3:30PM

(HYBRID MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE / IN PERSON AT THE
LA CACHE DU LAC CHAMPLAIN HOTEL IN VENISE-EN-QUEBEC, QC)

ATTENDANCE:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Nathalie Provost (Meeting Chair, Quebec MELCCFP), Kristopher Alberga (NYS DEC for Joe Zalewski), Julie Moore (Meeting Chair, VTANR), Vic Putman (Chair, NY CAC), Pierre Leduc (Chair, Quebec 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), Jennifer Curran (USACE), Chris Smith (USFWS for Andrew Milliken), Breck Bowden (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Travis Thomason (NRCS VT), 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, Mae Kate Campbell, Kerry Crowningshield, Stephanie Larkin, Erik Reardon, Katie Darr, Heather Radcliffe (NEIWPPC), Daniel Tremblay (QC MELCC), Erin Vennie-Vollrath (LCBP NYSDEC), Sarah Coleman (LCBP VT ANR), MaryJo Feuerbach and Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Michele Fafette (EPA R2), Michel Patoine (QC MELCCFP), Isabelle Mongrain (QC Municipal Affairs)

GUESTS: Tom Berry (Sen. Leahy's office), Rebecca Ellis (Cong. Welch's Office), Francis Mailloux (OBVBM)

Nathalie Provost (Quebec MELCCFP) chaired this meeting.

MEETING BEGINS

10:00 AM

INTRODUCTIONS

Nathalie Provost welcomed guests and invited them to present themselves and their roles. Eric Howe followed and welcomed guests as well, and thanked retiring members, including Heather Radcliffe and Kathy Jarvis, for their tireless efforts. Meg Modley then invited LCBP staff to share their roles. Pierre then introduced guests from OBVBM. Pierre would like to see more members of the public at meetings and to become more engaged in the work of LCBP.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE MEETING SUMMARY FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2022 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

- **Motion By:** John Krueger
- **Second by:** Buzz Hoerr
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

PUBLIC COMMENT

10:20 AM

Pierre noted that he would like public engagement and comment with LCBP to improve.

BRIEF UPDATES

10:30 AM

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES:

- **Tom Berry (Sen. Leahy's office):** Tom thanked guests and reported expectations that funding would be realized in full by the end of the year, as this has been Senator Leahy's priority. Important items of note in the bill included the LCBP being funded at \$25M, which they believe would hold. Specific text for the spending bill should be out by the end of next week. Tom noted added that Senator Leahy also introduced a bill to reauthorize the LCBP for five years and \$35M in funding, noting that a shorter version of the bill should be added to the omnibus. Tom next shared that Great Lakes Fishery Commission provides support for many functions and their funding should increase from \$9.5M to \$10.5M. He shared that aquatic plant control activities are

slated for an increase and that US Fish and Wildlife Service have earmarked \$118,000 for sea lamprey control. He added that it will likely fall out of funding next year unless another funding agency takes it over. Tom then noted that heritage tasks are expected to be level funded, and the International Joint Commission, flood study, and NOAA drone activity are expected to be funded at \$500,000. He added there is a strong push to designate Lake Champlain as a marine sanctuary. Tom noted that overall, funding for actions to protect Lake Champlain is a priority.

- **Rebecca Ellis (Cong. Welch's office):** Rebecca was happy to report that the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 passed the House last week and expected it to pass the Senate. This legislation authorizes flood control, navigation, and ecosystem restoration projects for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She reported that for Section 177 the Waterbury Dam cost share will be used, and that a provision under Section 542 will allow the scoping of the canal project. She also noted that Great Lakes Fishery Commission funding is at \$10.5M which includes work in Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog.

JURISDICTIONAL UPDATES (STATES, PROVINCIAL, US FEDERAL):

- **Julie Moore (VTANR):** Vermont ANR provided a written report. Julie highlighted the Vermont Clean Water Board that directs clean water funding. Funding for FY24 is \$50M. \$10M in ARPA funding has been allocated, and also derived funding through real estate tax. The charge for the Clean Water Service Providers is to work on non-regulatory clean water projects, and have executed grant agreements to conduct their work. The other role of the CWSP is to provide non-regulatory maintenance of projects, which would protect investments going forward. Julie noted issues at Lake Carmi are ongoing for HABs, so included in the budget is alum treatment to address the issues. There is an impact study and draft legislation underway looking at the use of wake boats on VT lakes and ponds. AIS transport and control is also addressed in the rulemaking process.
- **Kris Alberga (NYS DEC):** The Environmental Bond Act in NY is wide ranging and addresses funding for Water Quality, infrastructure modernization, and facility restoration. Also announcing of \$300M in clean water revolving fund. Part of this was awarded to 5 communities in the basin to improve facilities of WWTP.
- **Nathalie Provost (QC MELCCFP):** MELCC is now MELCCFP, which now incorporates wildlife and parks as well as previous roles. The merger should increase collaboration and reach for the Ministry. The Quebec water strategy is avenue for receiving funding in the Lake Champlain Missisquoi Bay work. We are currently in the last year of the MOU funding budget - have great hopes that this funding will be protected and even increased moving forward. We work closely with OBVBM on the budget to strategize actions to use all funds. Steve Garceau shared that as of March 2023, testing has been conducted to determine if there is a presence of round goby in Richelieu. eDNA sampling showed no populations in upper sections of the river. The lower part is where two positive samples were collected, which is an indicator that the species may be present, but cannot confirm without collection of an actual specimen. Extensive sampling is being conducted (eDNA, sampling) as well as trolling efforts will continue in 2023.
- **Mel Cote (EPA R1):** Thankful to hear of infrastructure funding for basin efforts. Deb Szaro, the EPA R1 Deputy Regional Administrator is retiring at the end of December. Karen McGuire is replacing her in that position. One position has yet to be filled in clean water. MaryJo added that the equity plan for Lake Champlain is underway. Approval of this plan is particularly important because it is connected to receiving a waiver in the Section 120 non-federal match requirement for the BIL funding.
- **Michele Fafette (EPA R2):** No additional updates.
- **Chris Smith (USFWS):** We have been busy working on salmon this fall, including spawning on White River Junction fish hatchery on stocks going back to Lake Champlain last week, and in the Boquet River, higher water temperatures caused later spawning. eDNA testing is happening in the NY tributaries to inform future work in the upper reaches of NY watersheds. Sea Lamprey treatment of 3 deltas was completed. In the salmonid assessments, for the first time in 30 years, sea lamprey wounding targets were met (under 25 wounds for lake trout, and under 15 for

salmon). It is great to see positive results coming from the sea lamprey treatments. FY23 BIL funding for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is \$34B nationwide. This work will be to identify dam removal and fish passage work. The Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge reports that waterfowl hunting numbers are down for birds harvested, but a bit above the long term average. Vermont Abenaki artifacts found on the Refuge are being assembled as part of an upcoming display at the museum. Pierre asked about the sea lamprey TFM treatment on Missisquoi River. Chris noted schedules for 2023 and 2024; the NY tributaries were completed this year.

- **Breck Bowden (LCSG):** Ann Jefferson coming to be the new Lake Champlain Sea Grant Director in January. Her background is as geologist, but working extensively on microplastics and mine restoration. Will have more detailed update coming for the LCBP file.
- **Jennifer Curran (USACE):** The Champlain Canal Barrier program is coordinating with dam safety and NYS Canal Corporation. Work is ongoing.
- **Travis Thomason (VT NRCS):** Highlighted the Inflation Reduction Act; \$20B over the next 5 years for climate smart agriculture. NRCS is seeking public comment - link in program update materials.
- **Written updates submitted by Committee members may be viewed at [this link](#).**

LCBP DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES DEFINITION

10:45 AM

(ERIC HOWE, MAE KATE CAMPBELL)
PRESENTATION

Eric and Mae Kate provided an overview of the draft disadvantaged communities definition. The definition is intended to identify disadvantaged communities, it will not encompass every disadvantaged community in the Basin. The public comment period closed on December 12th. Several public comments pertained to including race in the definition. EPA advised LCBP not to include race as EPA has been sued several times over including race as a criterion. Following approval of the definition by the Steering Committee and EPA, LCBP will hold a second public comment period with direct engagement with the underserved communities identified by the definition. The presentation is available in the [meeting materials](#).

REVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED

Public comments available [here](#).

DISCUSSION

- Mel Cote clarified that an equity strategy about how the Justice40 goal will be achieved is required to maintain the match waiver, not attainment of 40% benefits accrued by environmental justice communities. The 40% benefit will be achieved across all programs.
- Julie Moore asked what the base year for housing burden analysis was. Mae Kate shared that this data came from the American Community Survey (ACS) which is collected by the Census Bureau and is currently using 2016-2020 data.
- Breck Bowden noted that the renters graph makes it appear like there's a number of areas in Chittenden County that qualify as disadvantaged communities. Mae Kate clarified that this criterion applies to renters specifically who spend $\frac{1}{3}$ or more of their income on rent.
 - Pierre Leduc asked the source of the indoor plumbing criteria. This data also came from the American Community Survey (ACS).
 - Breck Bowden asked if this data was limited to primary residences. Mae Kate believed it counts all houses and might include vacant houses but did not think it included camps.
 - Julie Moore asked if that data could be ground-truthed with data from Vermont's replacement program for failed wells and septic systems. This is likely information people are not reporting in the census. Mae Kate noted we would need to figure out how to do something similar in New York.
- Julie Moore asked if the environmental quality dataset is one of the maps. Mae Kate shared that it is not currently a map, LCBP intends to provide a list of environmental quality datasets for applicants to refer to. Environmental quality criteria will not be part of the disadvantaged communities definition but will be provided to applicants to help grantees justify their qualifications and need for work in a particular area.

- Tom Berry asked if it is possible to run a model of how implementing this definition affects overall projects the program addresses noting the definition is limited by geography because that is how the data is available. Based on this definition, what kind of projects will be funded, will it draw funding away from the lake and into the watershed communities that may be less related to Lake Champlain?
 - MaryJo Feuerbach agreed that we do not want to limit funding for work that the program is doing on the lake now.
 - Julie Moore asked if these indicators are aligned with the areas of impact that LCBP funding tends to have. The criteria speak to disadvantages, but they may be things that LCBP's work is unable to affect.
 - MaryJo Feuerbach added that EPA in Washington has given guidance that the definition should be based on socioeconomic factors; environmental factors can be considered as an additional layer but not part of the definition criteria. Mae Kate has identified several environmental datasets that relate to LCBP's work.
 - Buzz Hoerr expressed concern that without the environmental factors, the definition is not relevant to what LCBP does. He was interested in seeing the overlay of water quality criteria and the definition criteria to see where they intersect.
 - Pierre Leduc suggested considering who the applicant is and if the grantee is from a disadvantaged community or intends to hire people from disadvantaged communities to do work related to water quality in the basin. This could be strong for LCBP's mission and help disadvantaged people who need work and resources.
 - Antony Tseng clarified that Justice40 is not looking to move us away from meeting the challenge of restoring Lake Champlain. This is an added layer to all the activities we have committed to in OFA and how we're going to distribute funds. This is a way to identify who the underrepresented voices might be and bring them to the table. The environmental issue itself cannot be the only deciding factor. With limited resources, we should be working to help those who cannot help themselves. Breck Bowden endorsed Antony's comment. This is not a matter of walking away from our mission, but about getting those voices that aren't at the table currently and adequately representing them.
 - Nathalie Provost shared that municipalities in Quebec have a disadvantaged communities definition that is based on socioeconomic factors. When the departments distribute funding, it is linked to the disadvantaged communities status. For example, disadvantaged communities do not need to pay for environmental analysis. This concept is used to provide resources to communities that would not otherwise have the capacity to propose environmental projects. MaryJo Feuerbach added that this is aligned with the envisioned process for Justice40.
- Chris Smith noted it would be helpful to overlay where the last 20+ years of LCBP funding have gone to identify if we are hitting some of these communities already. Mae Kate clarified that the next part of the process is to figure out how much LCBP funding has gone to these disadvantaged communities in the past.
- Tom Berry asked if applicants would have an opportunity to make their case outside of what's included on the map. Mae Kate clarified that the intent of this work is that 40% of the benefits go to disadvantaged communities, there will be an opportunity in the application to justify that the project benefits disadvantaged communities even if they do not appear on the map.
- Julie shared ANR's concerns: Act 154 requires ANR and others to develop defining characteristics to be used in order to serve historically underserved populations and the Act specifically identifies race as a factor to be considered in the definition. Race was taken off the table for LCBP's definition for concern of legal risk, not for a substantive reason. The aggressive timing required to create this definition is a challenge. ANR has concerns about moving forward with a round of funding without getting public comment from the communities identified.
 - Heather Radcliffe shared that NEIWPCC, as the fiscal agent of LCBP does not want to be put at risk of liability with the inclusion of race in the definition.
 - MaryJo Feuerbach clarified that EPA is not prohibiting geographic programs from including race as a factor in places where the program is not directly implemented by

EPA. The Executive Committee did discuss this and had some reservations about using race due to lawsuits that could shutdown program actions.

- Nathalie Provost added from Quebec's point of view, they would be very uncomfortable if LCBP added race as a criterion.
- Antony Tseng shared his mixed feelings about the inclusion of race as a criterion. The thought behind including race would be to counterbalance years of injustice experienced by communities of color. However, he does not want to risk the work LCBP is doing to have a fight on race, especially considering whether we would survive a judicial challenge. He would prefer not to include race at this time.
- Kris Stepenuck commented on the cancer prevalence indicator. There is a question of the granularity of data and whether that's sufficient. It seems like the body of available data draws a stronger correlation between cancer mortality and disadvantaged communities, as one of the aspects of disadvantaged communities is that you don't have access to the treatment you need. If the feeling of this group is that cancer is an important indicator, it seems cancer mortality would be a stronger indicator.
 - Antony Tseng noted that PCB contamination (a carcinogen) is an issue in Lake Champlain, he was not opposed to removing or replacing it with something more relevant but this is the only dataset we have. The prevalence of cancer indicator comes from air quality data so it's not a perfect fit.

The Steering Committee was supportive of keeping the thresholds broad, trying the definition for one round of grant funding, and revisiting the definition in the future and revising the definition as needed.

APPROVAL OF DEFINITIONS

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE DEFINITION OF DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES (AS PRESENTED WITH THE CONDITION TO REVISIT THE DEFINITION IN THE FUTURE AND REVISE AS NEEDED)

- **Motion By:** Buzz Hoerr
- **Second by:** John Krueger
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** Julie Moore

LUNCH BREAK

12:15 PM

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION: UPDATE ON RECENT QUEBEC MELCCFP 1:30 PM ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES (DANIEL TREMBLAY, QC MELCCFP)

Nathalie introduced Michel Patoine who shared Quebec's roles in the MELCCFP and identified new/additional ways it hopes to work on different issues. He presented a PowerPoint presentation on "Water Quality Monitoring Strategy for the Missisquoi Bay Territories in Quebec." He shared information on monitoring programs. The River Network has been in operation since 1979 and its objectives are to characterize water quality through bacteriological, biological and physical/chemical testing, including utilizing other monitoring projects conducting chemical (metals, pesticides and toxic contaminants) and biological testing. He shared that there are a number of monitoring stations on Missisquoi Bay; eleven in the River Network are sampled monthly and as many as eight additional samples can be monitored during high flow conditions for total phosphorus. Michel then presented a graph of sampling on the Pike River over the past two decades and shared trends for phosphorus (P), (total P load for Quebec tributaries flowing into the Missisquoi Bay by load (ton/year)) over time. He next presented trends for P (total P, dissolved P, and particular P) for a number of tributaries by variation of flow adjusted concentrations. Michel noted that overall, there was a decrease in P in the river network by 50% in most, but not all, of the river systems. He also shared that the annual input of total P in watersheds has decreased over time, and that use of phosphate in swine feed and decrease use of chemical fertilizers accounted for most of the reductions.



Buzz shared that he observed that the trend analysis had a stop point and asked Michel if he anticipated the trend to continue? Michel responded that some analysis has been done, but they only saw a minimal decrease, clarifying that the trends were not significant over the past ten years. He followed by saying there was a little decrease less than it was previously.

Pierre then noted that the last chart showed decrease in P in general into the watershed by chemical fertilizer and swine and stressed the need to continue this trend. He shared that there is work being done with the State of Vermont on a phosphorus mass balance study. He about the imports and exports of phosphorus and storage areas identified in the basin, noting that there is the expectation of exporting more than importing. He followed by suggesting the need to find a way to achieve better balance while maintaining financial balance with the farms. To achieve the desired results, the amount of phosphorus that needs to be exported must decrease, and future activities should strive toward this by bringing together the best stakeholders.

Nathalie asked if there were any other questions or comments, to which there were none. She also apologized for running late in the meeting.

LCBP FY23 BUDGET PROCESS

2:00 PM

FY23 BUDGET PROCESS SCHEDULE (ERIC HOWE)

Eric provided an overview of the [LCBP budget development process](#) and the schedule for continued discussion and finalization of the budget.

CORE PROJECTS (MATT VAUGHAN, MEG MODLEY GILBERTSON)

Matt and Meg jointly presented [summaries of the Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems Core projects](#). These projects are funded annually by LCBP. They highlighted changes to the scope of work and/or associated budgets, if proposed.

- Water chestnut management program: There is a proposed increase in the budget from \$95,000 to \$110,000 to support continued hand harvesting and the purchase of a shallow-water outboard engine boat.
- Boat launch steward program: This year, the scope of work for the boat launch steward program includes the purchase of additional decontamination stations and funds to support 16-18 stewards, working primarily in VT but also NY and QC. Funds may be used to support job training development and housing support for prospective staff.
- Aquatic invasive species rapid response fund: \$150,000 request to replenish funds that were used for round goby monitoring work.
- The Lake Champlain Long-Term Monitoring Program: This program is a partnership between NYSDEC, VTDEC, and SUNY Plattsburgh to support continued monitoring that began in 1991. The scope of work is very similar to previous years. There is an increased budget request (26% from VTDEC portion of request) in this budget due to increases in direct, indirect, and laboratory management costs.
- Long-Term Monitoring Program Sensor Arrays: Funding will support maintaining existing monitoring buoys and UVM buoys already in operation.
- Cyanobacteria monitoring: Funds are distributed to the Lake Champlain Committee to manage a community science volunteer program to collect water quality and cyanobacteria bloom observations. There is an increase in the proposed budget from \$105,000 to \$121,000 due to inflation, cost of living, and staffing increases.
- New York agronomy program: Funding will support staff to work with agricultural producers on the NY side of the Lake Champlain Basin. Primary activities include raising awareness and implementation of BMPs for reduced phosphorus and erosion. The proposed budget is level funded.
- Pierre noted the opportunity to link core projects with DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) efforts, such as hiring boat launch stewards from underserved communities.

- Julie asked if there is an opportunity to move support of the agronomy program to state funds, as has been done in Vermont. Staff noted challenges associated with previous hiring freezes in New York and that this work is focused on non-regulated farms, but agreed to explore this option.

Jim reviewed the [CVNHP core projects](#).

- The CVNHP Annual Summit is typically held in September of each year to define the scope of work for the upcoming year.
- Wayside exhibits: Over 300 wayside exhibits have been produced to-date. This funding will support development of new exhibits and replacement of exhibits that need to be replaced.
- CABN Coordination: Supporting ongoing coordination related to the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Reserve.
- The Western New England Greenway: These funds support coordination and outreach efforts related to the greenway, a bicycle route that stretches from New York City to Montreal. This will likely be the last year funds are requested to support this initiative.

Colleen reviewed the [Education and Outreach core projects](#).

- E&O grants: \$760,000 in funding has been obligated for the large and small grants program, as well as mini-grants for educators and professional development for watershed organizations.
- Artists in Residence Program: This program supports three to four projects to illustrate and interpret watershed topics using arts. \$120,000 in funding has been directed toward this program. It has utilized EPA as well as GLFC funding, especially for Quebec projects. It has been a popular program and has served as a valuable tool to reach audiences through artistic interpretation.
- Video production: Produce 5-7 videos for public outreach about watershed issues.
- StreamWise, Phase 5: This is a growing project. This phase would support 75-100 site assessments to educate and incentivize private landowners to adopt BMPs to protect and restore riparian areas on their property.
- Shoreland Technical Assistance through sustained Lake Wise Program Outreach: This request is targeted for VT and includes support for a Lake Wise assistant to conduct field assessments, including some on inland lakes. It will also support demonstration projects in local communities.
- E&O stewards: Conduct outreach at public events in NY, VT, and QC and support Resource Room coverage.
- Neil commented that the Stream Wise website is a well-developed resource. He added that it might be beneficial to have grant recipients provide results to Clean Water Service Providers (CWSPs) so they can be aware of those implementation opportunities and offer funding/support.

LINE ITEMS – CONDITIONAL APPROVAL (VT DEC, NY DEC, LCBP)

Erin and Sarah reviewed the [four joint New York and Vermont projects](#) that are proposed.

- Road maintenance: Implementation of the VT municipal roads general permit (MRPG) and NY rural roads active management program on non-regulatory road networks. Roadside erosion is a highly recognized source of sediment in the basin. This would be year 4 of funding this project. The request is for \$200K, \$100K for each state.
- Onsite wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) projects: These funds will support education and in NY a maintenance incentive program. WWTFs can be a source of nutrient pollution, pathogens, and emerging contaminants. This would be year 2 of funding towards this project. This year's request is \$550K, \$200K for NY and \$350K for VT. The NY aspect would be focused on education and outreach around proper maintenance and upkeep of septic, and rebate program for homeowners to have their systems inspected or pumped out.
- Implementation of Clean Water Organizational Capacity Development Interventions: These funds will go toward work to ensure increased funding is distributed effectively and sustainably. VT is working to support clean water organizations in implementing projects. These funds would support implementation of identified interventions such as addressing gaps in technical capacity and workforce development, operational capacity building, and community engagement. On the

NY side there is a similar need to support partners through training and capacity building. The hope in NY is to follow VT's lead to complete an assessment and implement findings.

- Stormwater: Support MS4 communities in VT and stormwater plan implementation in NY. These funds will support developing and implementing stormwater practices. Programs will be designed to prioritize communities facing funding challenges and with the biggest demonstrated stormwater needs. Will leverage SRF dollars. For NY side, funding would go towards implementing master stormwater plans previously funded through LCBP.
- Jewett Brook Treatment Train: Sarah shared a VT-specific line-item request to support the Jewett Brook treatment train land acquisition project. Funds would be used to secure a site in the St. Albans Bay watershed to implement a series of constructed wetlands to address high nutrient inputs, most likely from legacy phosphorus.
 - Steering Committee members expressed interest in updates on the advancement of this project.
- Tom Berry asked if there is evidence that onsite wastewater treatment systems that are not properly maintained are a significant source of nutrient pollution to Lake Champlain?
 - Sarah and Erin noted that the focus of these programs is to broadly address water quality concerns, including nutrients, pathogens, and emerging contaminants. Erin noted that failing septic systems are more of an issue in some watersheds than others; houses would need to be within a specified distance from the lake or a tributary to qualify for assistance. Neil and Julie added that great need for these programs has been documented in Vermont, and Sarah added that the communities most in need are often underserved communities. Neil commented that while this area is understudied, he would expect to see results in terms of nutrient reductions over time.
 - Tom requested more information on the potential impact of these programs on nutrient reduction, and questioned if this was the best use of LCBP funds given the large increase in funding for State Revolving Loan Funds. Julie voiced the challenge that SRFs are not typically set up to assist private landowners.
 - Breck noted that Sea Grant has developed resources related to septic education for their real estate education program and offered to connect.
- MaryJo noted that there has been a large increase in the request amounts for state line-item projects in recent years and expressed concern about the number of multi-year projects. She thought the process was that typically LCBP funds are used to help initiate new projects, but the projects should be able to support themselves over time. She asked about the possibility of funding the treatment train project through the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) funding instead of through the line-item process. She suggested considering a threshold for project length or asking the states to provide more information about the expected length of time a project will last.
- Matt noted that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be reviewing a proposal for one additional potential line-item request. The USGS is proposing to develop a model of groundwater movement in the Lake Champlain Basin. The request would be for \$600,000 to support a 3-year project. If recommended by the TAC, more information will be provided in April.

BIL/INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PRIORITIES (ERIC HOWE)

Eric reviewed the [proposed funding priorities](#) for the FY23 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA/BIL) funds. The general proposal is to maintain the same priorities as last year, apart from the tree nursery projects. Funds will be added to the aquatic organism passage restoration priority, and additional funds can be allocated to support tree nursery work in future funding cycles if needed. Priorities include:

- Aquatic organism passage (AOP): Work to move dam projects to shovel-ready status and support a competitive grants program for AOP restoration projects.
- Strategic lands acquisition: Funds to support a competitive grant program for land trusts and/or communities to acquire and/or conserve land.
- Wetlands and floodplain restoration program in New York
- Aquatic invasive species (AIS) management and spread prevention: Funds would support ASI management work across the basin and a competitive grants program for AIS management.

- Julie asked to ensure that the strategic lands grant program specifies that applicants must have a long-term plan for stewarding the land.
- Chris expressed a desire to ensure the tree nursery program is re-visited in later funding cycles.
- Neil noted the need to coordinate between LCBP and ANR regarding AIS management grant programs.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: RESEARCH FOR CLEAN WATER AND HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS PRE-PROPOSALS
(NEIL KAMMAN, MATT VAUGHAN)**

ACTION ITEM: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PRE-PROPOSALS

- **Motion By:** Julie Moore
- **Second by:** Buzz Hoerr
- **Discussion on the motion:** none
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** none

EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION.

ACTION ITEM: APPROVE RECORD OF DECISION AS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **Motion By:** Buzz Hoerr
- **Second by:** Julie Moore
- **Discussion on the motion:** Discussion included Matt's notes on the proposal
- **Vote:** All in favor
- **Abstentions:** Breck Bowden

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

2:45 PM

- **Vic Putman (NYCAC):** Directed to written update provided by Katie Darr.
- **Pierre Leduc (QCCAC):** Noted that the geomorphic assessment on the Rock River shows opportunity for wetland restoration. A final report was issued in January that directs future work.
- **Colleen Hickey (E&O Committee):** Directed to written updates.
- **Jim Brangan (HAPAC):** Nothing to add.
- **Neil Kamman (TAC):** TAC has been very busy. The committee was in the process of reviewing the many projects that are moving forward and generating results.
- **Heather Radcliffe (NEIWPCC):** Submitted written updates. She stated that this was her last Steering Committee meeting (official end date of January 13) and her replacement was expected to start January 3.
- **Eric Howe (LCBP):** Directed to written updates, and expressed thanks to retirees for serving on the committee.
- Written Updates Submitted by Committee members may be viewed at [this link](#).

ADJOURN

3:30 PM
