

**Lake Champlain Basin Program
Technical Advisory Committee meeting
Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 10 AM – 3 PM**

Approved TAC meeting summary

TAC Members: Jennifer Callahan, Bryan Dore, Michele Fafette, Peter Isles, Neil Kamman, Steve Kramer, Margaret Murphy, Bridget O'Brien, Ryan Patch, Andrew Schroth, Jamie Shanley, Daniel Tremblay

LCBP Staff: Mae Kate Campbell, Eric Howe, Meg Modley, Grace Palmer, Matthew Vaughan, Sarah Coleman, Sarita Croce, Erin Vennie-Vollrath

1. Updates, announcements, public comments

- Grace (LCBP): I just started at LCBP as a Communications and Publications Associate on the Education and Outreach team. Happy to be here and to learn more about the work of the TAC.
 - Neil: Welcome, Grace!
- Neil (VT ANR): On the state Clean Water budget – the Board met yesterday to adopt a massive budget, around \$46 million. This is the first year we no longer have American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds available for the Clean Water budget, so we've hit the climax of funding and are beginning to tail off. Over the course of ARPA time there has been extra state revenue which was put into the Clean Water fund and programmed by the board resulting in an unallocated bottom line. Those held-over funds are being drawn on now to avoid an abrupt drop-off in funding. The board did not get a tremendous amount of input, but the input they did receive was good. This budget will provide funding for Clean Water formula grants, matches to the state revolving loan fund, etc.
- Jamie (USGS): I'm sharing updates I received from Joe Ayotte. Todd Chaudry, who recently came to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Northeast Region, will be attending LCBP Steering Committee meetings to provide a USGS presence. The New England Water Science Center is working on a perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) model in soils.
 - Matt: I have meeting scheduled with Todd next week to catch up and connect before the Steering Committee meeting.
- Matt (LCBP): The next State of the Lake (SOL) report will be released by June 2024. The team has been working to develop that report. We sent request for data to many of you and your agencies, thanks for getting that to us quickly. The January TAC meeting will be dedicated to SOL, showing new concepts and getting your feedback in crafting our messages and improving our communications. It will be a virtual meeting. We won't have a lot of time after that to get SOL feedback from the TAC as a whole.
- Meg (LCBP): There's been a request from the federal partners to go over the Champlain - Hudson power express funding ideas. The fish technical committee has had a lot of input into the development of ideas. We are mired in contracts for working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) on the Champlain

Canal Phase 2 Study. Have local match, using 542 to move forward. The New York Power Authority (NYPA) Canals and NYSDEC have been working on interim solutions to prevent invasive fish from moving through canal ahead of all-taxa barrier. Lauren has worked really hard on the quality assurance/quality control process for the 2023 boat launch steward data. We wrapped that last week, and this week we began advertising for 2024 Boat Launch Stewards. We are expecting a decent return rate this year. We have compiled good summary data from the last 3 years that we will share with you in January.

- Margaret: Do you have an update on Lock C8 sampling?
- Meg: We are trying to collaborate with NYPA Canals for when they close and drain canals at the end of the year for maintenance. Ellen Marsden and USGS went out there to complete an assessment of what was present in the drained canal. Ellen will present at the next round goby rapid response task force meeting. There's corbicula in there – which is news, but something we expected. American shad in decent size were there. We are focused on round goby, but we need to keep our eyes on other species.
- Margaret: American shad have been stocked in Lake Champlain before, they did not take.
- Meg: They shouldn't do well, but it's interesting that they are using the canal.
- Neil: Are they not invasive?
- Meg: They are not native to our system, whether or not it's invasive here is not yet known.
- Grace: Send us social media content ideas if you have things you'd like us to focus on.

Review and approve summary of previous TAC meeting

Motion: To approve the summary from the November 2023 TAC meeting

Motion by: Margaret

Second: Jenn

Vote: All in favor

Abstentions: Ryan Patch

2. Brief review: Core projects for Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems (LCBP staff)

- Matt: The Long-Term Monitoring Project line item has no major changes to methods or scope of work. The budget reflects some personnel increases. We are working on contracting, but pieces of that process are moving slowly.
- Neil: Will the state still be supporting Carmi for another year?
 - Andrew: No, that was the last year of Carmi.
 - Peter: We are trying to get support for you for Carmi and think we can do that. Our preference is to leave aeration off this year to have a control year before we begin alum treatment.
- Sarita: Matt, you mentioned something about contracts moving slowly?

- Matt: I was referring to the contract between the State University of New York at Plattsburgh (SUNY Plattsburgh) and NEIWPC. There are new contract terms that SUNY was taking time with.
- Sarita: We are having some challenges with contracting with universities. What we are going to do to try to resolve the issue is create a template, and we will be inviting university partners to provide feedback and address some concerns. One of the big issues is that the universities, even though they're taking money from the Federal government, are not willing to indemnify NEIWPC for those projects. We are trying to limit liability. These are much bigger issues than just contact slowness. In some instances, universities are having issues with pass-through provisions.
- Matt: Thanks for that context.
- Matt: There are some personnel changes for the cyanobacteria monitoring core project, no technical changes.
- Erin: We are looking to increase funding slightly for NY Agronomy program to support a salary increase.
- Meg: We are hoping to adding \$240K to our rapid response fund. We have drawn funding in this pot down to respond to round goby and to the new Eurasian watermilfoil infestation in Lake Eden. We are also looking to do more work with Québec on grass carp. Raw data from the USGS is available online, but we want to write-it up into a report to help spread awareness.
- Meg: For the boat launch steward core project, we continue to look to support 18 boat launch stewards. A portion of this funding goes to L'Organisme de bassin versant de la baie Missisquoi (OBVBM) for the Québec boat launch steward program. We will be asking the Steering Committee if we can support the Québec project for 4 consecutive years, which could save us funds in indirect and contracting for that project. That brings this year's request up to ~400K.
- Meg: On the water chestnut core project - no increase in funding this year. We are concerned about a new population in Gander Bay and are working on getting a specific crew up there.

3. Executive session: Review and discuss recommendation for FY24 research pre-proposals for Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems

- Matt: In the past, we've discussed conflicts of interest in open session. With LCBP's new online proposal review system, we asked reviewers if they had a conflict on each proposal before they could access it, so we already did that check. The request went out in September and TAC helped develop research tracks. Projects will compete within specific tracks, including a general track. The Steering Committee accepted TAC's recommendation with a few minor edits, and added one additional track for general ecosystem/habitat and native species topics. Thanks TAC for reviewing these proposals, and to our admin team for coordinating the new review process. Next steps after this meeting are the recommendation will be presented briefly to the Steering Committee for questions on projects not moving forward. We'll then send invitations to submit full

proposals and turn them around for TAC's review and discussion at the March meeting. That recommendation will be moved forward to the Steering Committee at their full budget meeting in April, for projects that will come in for TAC workplan review in fall 2024. Feedback on the system or questions on the process?

- Neil: This was a different process than reading on your computer.
- Bridget: I didn't mind the system, but I didn't realize the proposals had come through since the email didn't come from Matt. The request for proposals (RFP) linked in email that was the implementation RFP, so I was confused about budget requirements until I realized that error. I like seeing all my scores in one place, so not having that ability without clicking through projects was not my favorite.
- Margaret: I agree, I liked seeing them all in the spreadsheet together. I print them all though. I found it really repetitive to have all the up-front information on every proposal, it would be nice to not have that in the future. The system was easy to use.
- Matt: What we've found is our admin team can usually find a way to do everything we've asked.
- Neil: I enjoyed using the system once I figured out that I just had to fling through the opening info. I liked the standalone document viewer, that system was very efficient. Having the split screen with the scoring and text allowed me to add notes to the section then go back and think through. Can you customize that dashboard screen to add or subtract fields? In the future, it would be helpful to see as I was working through system what was floating above what else in terms of scores.
- Jenn: One thing that I found that was a pain is that, since this was my 2nd time using this system, my old, closed proposals were still showing up on the dashboard. I would have liked to have only seen the research proposals.
- Bryan: For those of us who reviewed outside of the system, it would be cool to see how it looks inside. Also, it could have the advantage of having comments in the same system as the other reviewers.
- Neil: Why doesn't EPA submit scores?
 - Bryan: To avoid any implication of conflict of interest. Scoring isn't impacted by us, but we are part of the discussion.
- Margaret: I was not able to put 0 for any criteria.

Motion: to enter Executive Session

By: Margaret

Second: Jenn

Exit Executive Session