

## Lake Champlain Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 12, 2018  
Valcour Conference Center, Peru, NY

### Draft Meeting Summary

**Attendees:** Bob Stegemann (Chair; NYS DEC), Julie Moore (VT ANR), Brian Steinmuller (NYS Ag& Markets), Jennifer Lambertson-Bechtol (NYS Empire State Development), Vic Putman (Chair, NY CAC), Mario Paula (EPA R2), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), Andrew Milliken (USFWS), Breck Bowden (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Dan Dutcher (VTRANS), Laura Trieschmann (VT ACCD), John Krueger (Chair, HAPAC), Dan Mackay (NYS OPRHP), Mel Cote (EPA R1), Daniel Leblanc (QC MDDELCC).  
Phone: Lori Fisher (Chair, VT CAC), Pierre Leduc (Chair, QC CAC/OBVBM), Dennis Deweese (NRCS-NY), Daria Mazey (USACE), Renee Rouleau (Clarenceville, QC)

**Staff:** LCBP: Meg Modley, Jim Brangan, Colleen Hickey, Elizabeth Lee, Ryan Mitchell, Ellen Kujawa, Fred Dunlap (NYS DEC), Jane Ceraso (NEIWPPC),

**Guests:** Koon Tang (NYS DEC), Cathy Pedler (Adirondack Mountain Club), Matthew Keagle (Fort Ticonderoga), Erick Tichonuk (Lake Champlain Maritime Museum), Joel Wood (Cong. Stefanik), Aisha Sexton-Sims (EPA R2), Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Matt Cosby (USACE)

**9:30 AM**      **Arrive, meet and greet** (*coffee etc. provided*)

**10:00**      **Meeting Begins** *Bob Stegemann, Chair*

- Welcome and Introductions  
Bob Stegemann welcomed participants to the Steering Committee meeting.
- Draft Meeting Agenda review
- **ACTION ITEM:** September 2018 Steering Committee meeting minutes approval
  - Motion By: John Krueger
  - Second by: Andrew Milliken
  - Discussion on the motion: None
  - Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
  - Abstentions: Dan Dutcher

**10:05**      **Public Comments** – none offered.

**10:15**      **Presentations from recent grant recipients**

Cathy Pedler, Director of Government Relations and Conservation, Adirondack Mountain Club: *ADK Backcountry Water Monitors*

- Cathy provided an overview of their recent grant to monitor Adirondack backcountry waters for invasive species. Cathy noted that when new records of invasive species are found, they inform the APIPP, who is responsible for formulating a response.

Matthew Keagle, Curator, Fort Ticonderoga: *Preservation of the Camp Colors for the Royal Highland Emigrants*

- Matthew reviewed a recent CVNHP grant awarded to Fort Ticonderoga to restore the camp colors of the Royal Highland Emigrants. Very few of these

camp colors survive today. This is likely due to the fact that the Royal Highland Emigrants were mostly held in defensive positions rather than active campaigning.

Erick Tichonuk, Executive Director, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum: *2019 Lois McClure voyage promoting the International Year of the Salmon*

- Erick reviewed the premise of the 2019 voyage, to highlight 2019 as the International Year of the Salmon. Outreach materials will be developed, along with banners similar to those on display around the room. The *Lois McClure* will stop at ports-of-call around Lake Champlain to promote the history and importance of Atlantic salmon in the region.

**10:30**

**Brief Jurisdictional Updates (NY, QC, VT, US Federal Partners)**

- *Please provide written updates to be circulated in advance. Each speaker will be limited to two minutes.*
- New York (Bob Stegemann): Hemlock wooly adelgid monitoring and control opportunities are being explored. \$16.8 million from the State for agriculture and water projects across the State; \$1.2 million will be awarded to eight farmers in the Lake Champlain Basin (all proposals from Lake Champlain Basin were funded). The Governor also announced grants to North Country communities for drinking and wastewater, and an additional \$3 million to reduce flooding and ice jams. Town of Jay received a grant to remove the Rome Dam; several other dams are being lowered for safety, with added fish habitat benefits. Developing strategies in NYSDEC to add technology-based phosphorus limits for wastewater treatment facilities. Sea lamprey treatments were conducted this fall.
  - Dan Mackay added that both Commissioners from NYSDEC and State Parks are stepping down; new commissioners will likely be appointed in January.
- Quebec (Daniel Leblanc): Quebec has elected a new Minister of the Environment, **Marie Chantal Chassé**. We have changed the name of the MDDELCC and government email addresses. New regulations are in effect to pay for damage to wetlands. (See written update). Received authorization to appoint a new coordinator for the Lake Champlain Basin; the job description was sent to Human Resources yesterday.
- Vermont (Julie Moore): Vermont Phosphorus Innovation Challenge is underway (27 applications received, six were selected for funding). Work continues in Lake Carmi – it is the State’s first “Lake in Crisis”, and will be receiving aeration treatment. Stormwater rule for mandatory retrofits for properties over 3 acres was out for public comment this fall, and will likely be released this spring. Working through EPA funding for TMDL efforts: several RFPs are currently out. January 26<sup>th</sup> will be the annual ice-fishing day at Knight Point State Park.
- Mel Cote (EPA R1): US Federal government is on a continuing resolution through next Friday; contentious issue that is hard to predict the outcome. All EPA regions are mandated to reorganize to headquarters structure. R1

Administrator Alex Dunn will be serving in the office of Chemical Safety and a new Regional Administrator will have to be appointed.

- Bryan Dore: New project underway to study the efficacy of drinking water residuals for phosphorus removal.
- EPA R2 (Mario Paula): Awarded \$150,000 to DEC for wastewater treatment optimization study; note that this is for optimization studies but not implementation.
  - Koon Tang added that the objective is to treat and remove more phosphorus from effluent. We're prioritizing the most cost-effective wastewater treatment optimization to get the biggest return on investments.
- USFWS (Andrew Milliken): Written updates in packet. In addition, USFWS conducted sea lamprey treatments at several nearby sites. They were very successful in terms of reduced non-target impacts on other species. USFWS worked with Ausable River Association and Trout Unlimited to remove the Quarry Dam on the West Branch of the Ausable River. USFWS also conducted salmon redd surveys on the Boquet River – about  $\frac{3}{4}$  below the cascades,  $\frac{1}{4}$  above, which means that adult salmon are likely able to make it above the cascades post-dam removal. Looking forward to the Year of the Salmon and collaboration with partners.
- USACE (Daria Mazey/Meg Modley): Champlain Canal Barrier Feasibility Study is underway, analyzing the possibility of using a hydrologic barrier. Lots of collaboration with partners on this project and are looking forward to moving forward. Moving forward with St Albans Bay phosphorus feasibility study as well, and hope to begin work in the next month. Waterbury Dam project will likely be funded through an alternate source of funding. Scheduling another workshop soon to solicit additional ideas for projects. Approval process for new projects has been delegated to regional office in Brooklyn, NY, which may allow the process to be sped up.
- NRCS (Dennis DeWeese): Continuing to rank projects for farm bill funding. NRCS has a new chief, Matt Lohr. NY has a new State Conservationist (Blake Glover) who will be starting in January.

#### **11:05 Legislative Update**

- Congresswoman Stefanik's Office (Joel Wood): Congresswoman Stefanik sends her appreciation for the hard work that the partners present today do for the Lake and watershed. She looks forward to seeing the work that will happen as a result of the increased funding last year. The Farm Bill is out of conference and is expected to pass this week. It includes increased funding and more opportunities for grant projects.
- Senator Leahy's Office (Tom Berry): The Senate passed the 2018 conference Farm Bill report, which will likely pass the House today. The most significant part of the Farm Bill as it relates to this committee is the authorization of the EQIP program. The implementation of the CRP program has been difficult in Vermont but this problem has been fixed in the current draft of the Farm Bill. The VIDA act may allow for work in Lake Champlain as it authorized EPA funding for monitoring and management in the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. FY19 appropriations: USACE bill was signed at the beginning of the fiscal year, so that work is underway. The rest of LCBP and Lake Champlain funding is stalled in the

continuing resolution. There's a strong FY19 appropriations bill in the Senate and a reasonably good bill in the House as well, ready to conference at a moment's notice; however, this will not happen if the President's wall-related shutdown happens. It's worth keeping in mind that even with shutdowns, appropriations bills do end up passing. May otherwise end up with more continuing resolutions throughout FY19, which would level fund LCBP from the FY18 appropriation, which was at a good level.

**11:15      Advisory Committee Updates** CAC: QC, NY, VT; TAC, E&O, HAPAC

- *Please provide written updates to be circulated in advance. Each speaker will be limited to two minutes.*
- QC CAC (Pierre Leduc): We have applied for a three-year extension for Pike and Rock River projects. Work on IJC's Missisquoi Bay water quality project continued, and OBVBM has interviewed nearly 50 stakeholders so far. The Boat Launch Steward season was successful, though one launch needed to be closed early due to low water. Dredging permit has been issued for this station, which is unusual, and a boat wash station will be installed. An aquatic vegetation survey has been conducted; the results are currently being analyzed. This month represents two years since the Vermont-Quebec agreement has lapsed; would like an update on that and will continue to ask at every Steering Committee meeting until it is signed.
  - Daniel Leblanc: Given that we have a new government, a new agreement needs to be carefully presented. Waiting for an update from the new government.
- NY CAC (Vic Putman): Two meetings have been held since last Steering Committee meeting. Dr. Curt Gervich presented on the IJC's LCRR project; soon after, several NY CAC members attended the IJC's public meeting in Whallonsburg, NY. The CAC also received updates on several budgets and was glad to see the Champlain Canal Barrier project underway. Myra Lawyer attended the November meeting to present on NYSDEC's phosphorus reduction efforts.
- VT CAC (Lori Fisher): The VTCAC held three information sessions on the LCBP's State of the Lake Report; the meeting in Burlington was filmed and is now available on CCTV. VTCAC continues to work on action plan, to be presented to the VT Legislature. Next meeting is in January and we are looking to add additional members. Second Pierre Leduc's question about the QC-VT agreement on Missisquoi Bay and would look forward to movement forward on that subject.
- TAC (Neil Kamman): Written updates are available in packets. First, thanks to Steering Committee for appointing me to this position; hoping to harmonize the relationship between the Steering and Technical Committees during interim tenure. New, talented members of the TAC have been recently appointed. Two exciting projects to flag: study of sediment and nutrient retention of floodplains (workplan approved), study of sediment and nutrient retention of wetlands (workplan approved). Dam removals has been discussed in some detail; TAC is supporting a dam removal project as well. Koon and Bob mentioned wastewater optimization and TAC discussed this several meetings ago; several speakers were invited to present to the TAC on

phosphorus optimization in wastewater. 29 applications received as a result of the Request for Pre-Proposals, which will be discussed in more detail this afternoon.

- E&O (Buzz Hoerr, read by Bob Stegemann and Colleen Hickey): (written update regarding TMDL funds). Champlain Basin Education Initiative is partway through its watershed education effort and has held recent field days. Next meeting will be in January in Burlington. Healthy Soils Initiative will be present at the Vermont Flower Show (six members will be present and around 10,000 guests may see the display). 8,000 came through the Resource Room at ECHO in the last quarter.
- HAPAC (John Krueger): Written updates are available in packet. Andrew Milliken gave a fantastic keynote speech at the recent Heritage Summit. John offered his historical reflection in Champlain Valley history: On October 11<sup>th</sup>, a decision naval engagement took place on the Lake just off the shore. The surviving vessels head southward; sometime the next day, six miles to the south of here, sank to the bottom of the Lake, where it still rests to this day. Commander Benedict Arnold was sent down to Washington's Army in new Jersey; Anthony Wayne was left in command of Fort Ticonderoga. Likely the first professional revolutionary in Western history, Thomas Payne, writes the first of the Letters on an American Crisis, published just before Christmas in 1776. The soldiers defending Ticonderoga and under Washington's command are under one-year enlistments, and were beginning to feel undervalued; Thomas Payne's essay was read allowed to every regiment and camp under Washington. There's a surprise attack on the Hessian garrison in Trenton, NJ, soon after, and patriotism is rekindled, many soldiers reenlist. Some of those soldiers return to the Champlain Valley the next year.

**11:30**      **Director's Report – LCBP staff**

- Meg Modley: Eric Howe is back at home with his daughter, who's surgery went very well.
- Jim Brangan introduced the new interpretive display for Atlantic salmon. He noted that the first reference we have to salmon is in 1776, a mention of trading with Benedict Arnold. The nearby rivers here were so filled with salmon that horses refused to cross; by 1924, salmon were gone. The new interpretive displays cover the complex history of landlocked Atlantic salmon in the Lake Champlain watershed.
- Meg: Open entry-level position at LCBP will close on January 7<sup>th</sup>. This position would be to assist with all LCBP efforts. Several RFPs have closed recently, including local grants. Review committees have been hard at work to prepare draft records of decision. LCBP will be co-hosting the 2019 North American Lake Management Society meeting with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

**11:45**      **FY19 LCBP Budget Process – Meg Modley**

- Ellen briefly reviewed the FY19 Technical budget development process and current status for the Technical Advisory Committee.
- Meg Modley provided an overview of the current draft TMDL budget process. A TMDL Subcommittee will be developed, and will include representatives from LCBP, VTANR, EPA, and Senator Leahy's office. Approval of these funds by the Lake Champlain Steering Committee is necessary, as

they are appropriated through the LCBP authorization, and per the process outlined in Opportunities for Action, the Lake Champlain Steering Committee must approve priorities for funds appropriated through Section 120 of the Clean Water Act. Bob Stegemann added that allowing the committees to see these projects keeps the process as defensible as possible.

- Bob asked if there are synergies between existing Vermont and New York projects that might help the States to leverage additional benefits, possibly helping New York as well?
  - Julie responded that there is an example of such a project – an analysis of phosphorus loading in Missisquoi Bay, which was flagged as a project that would be well run through LCBP, particularly as it's multijurisdictional.
- Koon asked if the focus of this funding should be the segments of the Lake that are contributed to by both New York and Vermont. Meg responded that the TMDL Subcommittee and Lake Champlain Steering Committee would need to consider this as a criterion for project selection.
- Jane asked if the TMDL subcommittee discussed education and outreach components for these projects?
  - Julie responded that this was not an explicit priority, but many of them may contain this type of work as part of their implementation. Meg added that the legislative intent for these funds is to prioritize projects that would result in a short-term measurable reduction in phosphorus loading.
- Andrew noted that if we're adding more criteria, then suggest considering TMDL projects that also address other OFA priorities. Leveraging funds for more than one purpose should be a co-benefit.
  - Julie responded that Vermont did propose allocating \$750,000 to wetlands restoration, and the state of Vermont has additional funds available for biodiversity – that isn't the focus of this pot of funding, but is a priority for the State.
  - Meg added that currently, we note that these projects need to address OFA priorities.
- Bryan asked if the Steering Committee and TAC could review the projects sooner in the process, so that they're able to provide earlier guidance.
  - Julie responded that this is addressed in the current version of the process description.

***Anticipated ACTION ITEM:*** Approval of process for consideration of TMDL implementation funds in LCBP appropriations, with the inclusion of projects that have multijurisdictional synergy receiving additional weight in the review process.

- Motion By: Breck Bowden
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions: None

**12:15**            **LUNCH** (*Provided*)

**1:00**            **FY19 LCBP Budget Process** *LCBP Staff*

**ACTION ITEM:** Move to executive session to consider FY19 CVNHP Pre-proposals, FY19 Technical Pre-proposals, Committee membership nominations, and Education and Outreach Grant awards.

- Motion By: Julie Moore
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion:
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions:  
Exit Executive Session.

**ACTION ITEM:** Motion to approve list of HAPAC pre-proposals to move forward to full proposal development.

- Motion By: Julie Moore
- Second by: Andrew Milliken
- Discussion on the motion: none.
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions: Laura Treischmann

**ACTION ITEM:** Motion to approve list of Technical pre-proposals to move forward to full proposal development.

- Motion By: Vic Putman
- Second by: Andrew Milliken
- Discussion on the motion: none.
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions: Daniel Leblanc, Breck Bowden abstained.
- Pierre Leduc recused himself from this discussion.

**ACTION ITEM:** Motion to appoint Ryan Cunningham, NYS Ag & Markets, to the LCBP Technical Advisory Committee.

- Motion By: Julie Moore
- Second by: Mel Cote
- Discussion on the motion: none.
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions: None

**ACTION ITEM:** Motion to appoint Amy Overstreet, VT-NRCS, to the LCBP Education and Outreach Committee.

- Motion By: Bob Stegemann
- Second by: Vic Putman
- Discussion on the motion: none.
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions: None

**ACTION ITEM:** Motion to accept the Education and Outreach Small Grants Record of Decision.

- Motion By: Julie Moore
- Second by: Andrew Milliken
- Discussion on the motion: none.
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions: Breck Bowden

**ACTION ITEM:** Motion to accept the Education and Outreach Small Grants Record of Decision.

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: none.
- Vote: All in favor; motion is carried.
- Abstentions: Breck Bowden

**3:00**

**ADJOURN**

**Meeting Outcomes:**

1. *Approval of September 11, 2018 Meeting Minutes*
2. *Approval of TMDL implementation funds process*
3. *Advancement of select Heritage and Technical Pre-Proposals to full proposals*
4. *Approval of Education and Outreach Small and Large Grant awards.*
5. *Appointments of new members to advisory committees*