

**Lake Champlain Basin Program  
Technical Advisory Committee meeting  
54 West Shore Rd, Grand Isle, VT  
Wednesday, November 6, 2019, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

**TAC meeting summary**

**Attendance:** Neil Kamman, Angela Shambaugh, Bernie Pientka, Curt Gervich, Eric Perkins, Jenn Callahan, Fred Dunlap, Stéfanos Bitzakidis, Bridget Obrien, Ryan Cunningham, Mark Malchoff, Andrew Schroth, Dennis DeWeese, Jim Jutras, Bryan Dore, Laura DiPietro, Bethany Sargent

**Guests:** Lori Fisher, Chris Navitsky, Matt Coon, Brian Fitzgerald, Emma Spett, Shannon Thayer

**Staff:** Eric Howe, Lauren Jenness

**10:00 AM Updates, announcements, and public comments**

- Angela Shambaugh announced that the Lake Carmi aeration system was shut off early November. One last set of water quality samples will be taken and then data analysis will be completed. Once complete, Angela will share with the group.
- Angela also announced that the VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program has a new Program Manager - Oliver Pierson. He will be at the NALMS meeting next Tuesday if people are interested in meeting him. Neil Kamman added that he has an international water resources development background.
- Stephanos Bitzakidis announced that Marc Simoneau from the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques. He was closely involved in Missisquoi Bay water quality work. A new person will be appointed to his position soon.
- Curt Gervich announced that SUNY Plattsburgh is hosting a Green Party presidential candidate visit on November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. He will send details to the group.
- Mark Malchoff announced four research projects that Lake Champlain Sea Grant has funded for 2020-2022.
- Neil Kamman provided a few announcements. The draft Otter Creek Tactical Basin Plan is open for public comment. Neil would like to have a presentation about the new VTDEC Water Investment Division at a future TAC meeting. There was a VT Clean Water Board Meeting at the end of last month that recommended \$34.5M in expenditures for water quality work. A dam in poor condition on Tenney Brook in Rutland was further demolished by the recent flood event. The 3-acre general permit is in a public comment period until the end of November. Two dam-related rules are going to be proposed at the beginning of the year. Neil drove past the Hinesburg Beecher Hill Rd dam removal and

floodplain restoration project after the flood event and was glad to see the river setting stage for a new floodplain.

***Review and approve summary of previous TAC meeting***

- **Motion:** Angela Shambaugh moved to approve the October 2019 TAC minutes. Seconded by Jenn Callahan. All were in favor. Neil Kamman noted that he wasn't there for the first half of the meeting.

***LCBP updates, LCBP staff***

- Eric Howe provided a (Vessel Incidental Discharge Act) VIDA update. Draft recommendations incorporated into a report to congress that highlight existing programs, gaps and recommendations relative to the eight purposes identified in the legislation for the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain systems include:
  - For monitoring and early detection: Develop a comprehensive tracking system (Great Lakes ANS Information System) and monitoring at specific benthic, nearshore, and high-risk sites
  - Adopt a basin-wide watch list similar to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers “Least Wanted” list
  - Utilize USFWS Ecological Risk Screening Summaries (ERSSs) for watch list development
  - Genomic tools for the early detection of ANS and species- and vector-specific control and management technologies be upgraded
  - Expand monitoring programs into canals and waterways and to support more robust boat inspections at high-risk locations
  - Support for State ANS plans should be continued and enhanced. This includes states that are at high risk to Lake Champlain, even if not physically connected to the LCB
  - Increase in State support is also recommended for the implementation of education and outreach programming across all species and vectors to encourage ANS spread and prevention at the individual level.
  - Continued and enhanced support is critical in both basins for States’ compliance in monitoring pet and aquarium, nursery and water gardens, and bait shops, utilizing the Great Lakes Detector of Invasive Aquatics in Trade (GLDIATR) tracking system. GLDIATR searches the web for vendors where banned ANS can be purchased and shipped to the region, allowing Great Lakes jurisdictions to assess species risk based on prevalence in live trades.

- Lake Champlain and the Great Lakes should continue to provide opportunities for stakeholder input from State, local, and Tribal partners when prioritizing monitoring efforts.
- Mark Malchoff asked Eric if NOAA staff were involved in the process. Eric replied that he and Meg are letting the GLNPO people take the lead but hope they will involve the other partners like NOAA.
- Jim Brangan provided a CVNHP update. He explained that the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) theme was a good link to the scientific and land-use planning community in the area. The seven IYS panels were displayed at almost 30 locations and has received great feedback. 3 IYS-related grants are working toward completion. Jim explained that next year's theme is Making of Nations – Women's suffrage and reviewed grant list.

**10:45 Workplan review: LCC Lake Champlain Cyanobacteria Monitoring, Lori Fisher**

- Lori Fisher presented her workplan and discussed changes from last year's workplan.
- Neil Kamman asked about their Cyanobacteria communication strategy. He asked if they have different messaging strategies for mid versus late season blooms for the media and public. Angela Shambaugh replied that consistent messaging is in place all season long. The dots on the map are pointing people to areas on the cyanotracker and do try to do outreach with consistent messaging. Late season cyano remains an issue. Even though bloom presence does not indicate toxin levels the messaging has to be consistent. Bernie noted that it is a balancing act and mentioned the tick and Lyme disease messaging analogy.
- Fred Dunlap questioned if LCC considered doing the NY HAB report because the system in place doesn't guarantee that the reports will go into the NY HAB tracker. Lori noted that she would be happy to explore adding the LC data into the NY tracker but did not want to dedicate time to it if the program will not be continued into the future. Monitors would then have to submit a 3<sup>rd</sup> report. The strength of the Lake Champlain system is it reports for NY and VT and it is in one database for both jurisdictions.
- Bridget questioned the budget of using the toxin test strips for the 2021 budget. Lori noted they are for internal use only.
- Neil ask for clarification of the insurance budget item in the workplan. Lori noted that it covers all volunteers and a portion of the LCC organizational insurance.
- Motion: Fred moved to approve the LCC Lake Champlain cyanobacteria monitoring work plan with consideration of conversation through NY and use of test strips, seconded by Jim, all in favor. Angela and Bridget abstained.

**11:30 Presentation: Evaluation of a Woodchip Bioreactor Pilot Project for Denitrification of Tertiary Effluent from the Bolton Wastewater Treatment Plant (Lake George, Warren County, New York) – Chris Navitsky, Lake George Waterkeeper and Matt Coon, Bolton WWTP operator**

- Chris Navitsky and Matt Coon presented. Matt noted the Bolton WWTP has a 300,000 gallon capacity and an average flow of 171,000 gallons/day. In the winter Bolton WWTP has 100,000 gallons/day and 250,000 gallons/day in summer. Other questions were asked about manifold pipe distribution. Matt noted there is a permit requirement to maintain 10mg/L of Nitrogen.
- Bernie asked if there is a life expectancy for the woodchips. Chris said woodchip life expectancy is 15years and this is the first in the ground operation that will be studied.
- Mark asked if the woodchip availability could be a deal breaker for this technology and Chris said it is mostly about timing as you need to cut without leaves in the winter. A local operator went out of their way to accommodate the woodchip demand. Angela asked about publishing the work in a peer reviewed journal. Jim Sutherland is involved and that is one of the outreach goals, however they will wait for state review and then share the results on the website etc.
- Mark noted the opportunity to get Sagamore involved in some green initiatives and there is also some road salt work that Chris would like to engage with them on.
- Neil had a chemistry question and asked about any smells with the process and cautioned that there is likely a methyl mercury factor. Chris noted that they were aware of the issue and Matt noted that they are trying to maintain 3-5mg/ of nitrate.
- Angela asked about managing temperature for the process during the winter. There was discussion of using snow and Jim mentioned maintaining heat using blueboards to raise the temp to 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **12:15 PM Lunch**

### **1:00 Workplan review: VNRC Removing Dams in the Vermont portion of the Lake Champlain Basin – Brian Fitzgerald, VNRC**

- Neil finds budget table to be helpful to understand the budget. Suggests adding it to the workplan. Bernie shared additional photos of Mill Pond Dam in Colchester, VT.
- Curt questioned where the sediment went from the dam removal project. BT noted that it is sent to Milton, VT where it is contained. Bernie commented that the situation of the regrow would help in large sediment excavation at places like the Swanton dam, etc. where it may look bad at first but will restore itself.
- Neil questioned the budget's flexibility as a budget amendment was needed for last year's workplan. Jim would like short form then long form budget details in the workplan, also for next year.
- Motion: Jim moved to approve the VNRC Removing Dams in the VT portion of the Lake Champlain Basin with the budget summary in the workplan, Jenn seconded, all in favor, Bernie abstained.

### **1:45 Presentation: IJC Flood Management Study: An Update from the Social, Political and Economics Technical Working Group - Curt Gervich, Emma Spett, Shannon Thayer**

- Curt Gervich began the presentation and Emma and Shannon continued. Neil asked if the governance analysis in task 8 related to the governance analysis that BREE completed. Curt noted that BREE's work is being integrated.
- Bridget asked if the Hazard Mitigation plans are focused at the State or local level and they are focused at the State level plan. There are also planning efforts looking at the municipal and county hazard mitigation plans.
- Mark asked about the public flood risk survey methodology. Neil recommended that the Castleton University polling institute could push the survey out.
- Stephanos asked how many responses you need to consider the survey valid. A 10-14% response rate would be required, but the goal is 17%. He asked if NY was more vulnerable than VT. The map presented could be misleading because there are more orange and red in NY due to isolated small populations with significant impacts. Neil noted in NY the landforms and road networks adjacent to river networks where impacts occur. In VT the impacts are further up in the watershed.
- Mark had a few questions about nonresponse bias and getting that information at a high school education level.
- Eric asked why there was a question about political affiliation. The response was that it is a point of interest for political feasibility, not a primary analysis touchpoint.

**2:30 Discussion: LCBP FY20 State line-item requests (discussion only) and review/discussion of OFA priorities**

- Bethany Sargent, Eric Howe, and Fred Dunlap presented the discussion of LCBP FY20 State line-items. Eric Perkins asked about potential overlap with the other VT state funded forestry RFP. Bethany responded that the goal is to cover at least part of phase 1 with state money and then use LCBP funding for phase 2. It is not clear how much can be accomplished with the amount of funds available, which is why the project has a broader scope of work.
- Eric Howe and Fred covered the rest of the requests. Eric Perkins asked where the funds come from for private sector engineering. Ryan Cunningham replied that it is partially landowner partially grant/State funded. Bridget asked if they could have call-back support.
- Fred asked how the ag coordinator position ties in with the work with the crop teams. Laura said this project is broader for everyone who works on farms and is a more strategic effort.
- Neil noted that state line item requests are following a revised process to avoid any project surprised from the SC to the TAC. TAC input on these projects will be provided to SC.

**3:00 Adjourn**

