

New York Citizens Advisory Committee (NYCAC) on Lake Champlain's Future

Monday November 30th, 2020
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Committee Members Present: Vic Putman (Chair), Hannah Jacques, James Dawson, Walt Lender, Peter Hagar, Tom Metz, Fred Woodward, Bill Wellman

Committee Members Absent: Anita Deming, Jane Gregware, Stephen Kramer, Ricky Laurin, Rocci Aguirre, John Zurlo

LCBP Staff in Attendance: Myra Lawyer, Jim Brangan, Mae Kate Campbell, Meg Modley, Colleen Hickey, Eric Howe, Susan Hagar, Lauren Jenness

Public Guests: none

Meeting summary by Lauren Jenness, Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP)

1. Welcome and Introductions – Vic Putman

- The CAC welcomed Erin Vennie-Vollrath as the new NY DEC Coordinator to the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Erin has most recently worked as the AIS project coordinator for TNC's Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP).

2. Public Comments

- None

3. Update on LCBP Programming and Initiatives - Eric Howe, Lauren Jenness, Colleen Hickey

- Impact of COVID-19: LCBP staff have been working remotely and have gone almost entirely digital since March, though our office is still open thanks to Colleen. In April LCBP issued a round of COVID-19 Emergency Organizational Support Grants to support our partners during that period of budget uncertainty and was able to fully fund all requests that came in, totaling roughly \$60,000. LCBP also was able to offer a grant writing workshop and workshops on video production best practices free of charge to our local partners.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative: LCBP is in the process of looking at our organization and programming with respect to DEI. A consultant has been recruited to help staff through this process. Current areas of focus include updating the LCBP mission and vision statements, thinking about representation on our committees, translating key outreach materials, and ensuring access to our grant programs.
- New CAC Coordinator Position: The new LCBP CAC Coordinator will begin work on February 8th. 80% of their time will be spent coordinating the VT and NY CAC meetings, building and strengthening connections with communities and elected officials, and increasing engagement with the QC CAC.
- 2021 State of the Lake Report: this report is in development and will be published in June 2021. Staff are currently working to update our interpretations of long-term trends and create new graphics. A more interactive report will be available on the SOL website and we are planning on adding a few additional indicators on climate change.

- LCBP Future Funding Outlook: In response to a question by the CAC, Eric explained that LCBP is happy to report that the future funding outlook is promising. LCBP has seen increases in our annual budget appropriations for the last 4+ years and have every indication from congress that we will see an increase in the upcoming budget year. Our EPA appropriation has more than doubled in the last 5-10 years which translates to an increase in our grant programs, outreach programming, etc. Senator Leahy has been extremely supportive of LCBP and continues to create a strong funding position for Lake Champlain in general.
- LCBP Budget Process: In response to a question by the CAC, Eric explained the LCBP budget process. The written explanation can be found in the meeting materials.
- NY-LCB Dam Task Force Update: a written update can be found in the meeting materials.
- Healthy Soils Campaign Update: The Raise the Blade Campaign is run by a collaborative partnership with 5 partner organizations. In 2020 our focus was to bring Plattsburgh and South Burlington into the program and we were successful. Sue Hagar was able to have Raise the Blade information included in the Clinton County annual report, bring in the Champlain Centre Mall as a business partner, and place campaign material within Plattsburgh's water bills. For 2021 we hope to bring the Lake George Association in on the campaign.
- Aquatic Invasive Species Art Sail: LCBP worked with the Burlington Community Sailing Center and a local artist to create an AIS sail that is now launched at the Burlington waterfront and is estimated to be seen by 50,000-100,000 people annually.
- Grants: LCBP's small and large education and outreach grant programs and organizational support grant program are currently accepting applications. Details are on the [LCBP website](#) and staff may be looking for a member of the CAC to serve on the confidential review committee.
- Champlain Basin Education Initiative (CBEI): LCBP staff work collaboratively with this program and are looking to get more NY teacher buy-in. A virtual meeting is being planned for February 2021 to provide information on what programming is available to teachers.
- Stream Wise Award Program Development: this basin-wide program in development was mentioned and can be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

4. Update on CVNHP Programming and Initiatives –Jim Brangan

- Jim's presentation covering the grant themes and work of 2019-2021, how the CVNHP plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act in 2022 (and how the NYCAC can help), an overview of The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network, and the potential sunset of the CVNHP in October 2021 can be found in the meeting materials.
- The Committee commented that the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere has been identified as resilient to climate change, hopefully to the benefit of native brook trout and salmon. Its good that the UNESCO goals of conserving biodiversity, clean water, life below water, etc. align and the shared goals may also enhance our work to maintain fish populations and ecosystem health in the Adirondacks.
- Both Jim Dawson and Tom Metz expressed interest participating in the meetings LCBP staff will be having with the congressional delegation.

5. Update on the work of the IJC – Mae Kate Campbell

- Mae Kate’s presentation that provided an overview and update of the Richelieu River Flood Study can be found in the meeting materials. Relevant links are located on the final page.
- Committee members discussed aspects of the study and asked clarifying questions to Mae Kate. Mae Kate will share the report of recommendations to the NYCAC when it becomes available.
- Committee members agreed that there is a need to discuss the funding and availability of stream gauges within the NY portion of the Lake Champlain Basin and decided to make it an agenda item at an upcoming meeting.

6. Update on Agricultural Programming in New York – Myra Lawyer

- Myra’s presentation that provided an overview and update on Agricultural Programming in NY can be found in the meeting materials.

7. NYCAC Discussion “Where Do We Go From Here?” – Vic Putman

- Committee members discussed CAC membership. While the CAC works to involve anyone who expresses interest in the committee, to become an official CAC member a person has to be appointed by the Commissioner of NYDEC. Erin Vennie-Vollrath will be looking into this process. Once the new LCBP CAC coordinator has started they can help with the paperwork, bylaws, etc.
- It was recommended that membership should be the main topic at an upcoming CAC meeting. The group should come prepared to think about the CAC’s mission, the communities the CAC is currently representing, and current membership. At the meeting the CAC can then discuss any gaps and think about options for appointments.
- The Committee agreed to plan upcoming CAC meetings for the last Monday of each month, 1-4pm.
- The Committee requested to be placed on the listserv of the VTCAC.
- As mentioned above, the Committee agreed that an upcoming CAC meeting should focus on the stream gauge network. They recommended having staff from the USGS and NYDEC on the agenda as presenters.