

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

Monday January 25th, 2021

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendance: Vic Putman (Chair), Bill Wellman, Steve Kramer, Charlotte Staats, Ricky Laurin, Fred Woodward, Walt Lender, Peter Hagar, James Dawson, Allison Gaddy, Tom Metz, Alice Halloran, Corrina Aldrich, Anita Deming, Joe Giordano, Julie Berlinski, Mark Naud

LCBP Staff: Erin Vennie-Vollrath, Meg Modley, Colleen Hickey, Eric Howe, Lauren Jenness

Presenters: Rob Breault, Andrew Waite, Dana Allen, Holly Greenleaf

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

1:00 – 1:10 pm

1. Welcome and Introductions – Vic Putman

2. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

1:10 – 1:30 pm

3. Introduction and Update on the development of a new Stream Wise Award Program for the LCB – Lauren Jenness and the Stream Wise Project Team

Lauren Jenness, the LCBP staffer who is managing phase 1 of the program's grant funding, and Dana Allen and Holly Greenleaf of the Stream Wise Project Team provided an introduction and update on the development of the new Stream Wise Award Program for the Lake Champlain Basin. The program, part awareness campaign and part property assessment and award program, is designed to inform and incentivize communities to engage in activities that enhance and protect water quality, aquatic/riparian habitat, and increase flood resiliency. Their presentation can be found in the meeting materials.

1:30 – 2:10 pm

4. Discussion on the Stream Gauge Network in NY-LCB – USGS Staff

Rob Breault, Director of the USGS New York Water Science Center, supported by Andrew Waite, provided an overview of the NY-Lake Champlain Basin stream gauge network. Specific topics covered included: a summary of why the stream gauge system was developed and how that rational feeds into what exists now as stations are being deleted or added; how the stream gauge network is funded and future funding scenarios; and future plans to improve functionality and utilization of the gages. Their presentation can be found in the meeting materials.

- The NYCAC asked about the decreased stream gauge coverage in the NY-LCB (there are currently five funded through USGS) and what they could do to increase the number of stream gauges in the basin as major streams have limited or no gauging capabilities. Rob explained that the stream gauge network is the life blood of the USGS and stream gauges only get discontinued

if a gauge's funding partner decides to stop funding the gauge or if the Federal Priority Streamgages (FPS) funding doesn't keep up with inflation. The NYCAC members could reach out to the NYSDEC and their local and congressional representatives to ask for support for the NY-LCB stream gauge network.

2:10 – 3:00 pm

5. CAC Membership Exercise and Discussion – Vic Putman, Lauren Jenness, Erin Vennie-Vollrath

Vic Putman, Lauren Jenness, and Erin Vennie-Vollrath led the NYCAC members on the call through a CAC membership exercise and discussion in preparation for a reinvigoration of the NYCAC when the new LCBP CAC Coordinator, Katie Darr, starts work on February 8th. Once Katie is onboard at LCBP, she will work with Vic, Erin, LCBP, and the NYCAC members to review committee rules, regulations, membership appointments, the topics of interest to the members, etc. and begin to plan future work of the CAC.

Colleen Hickey detailed Katie's background and explained how Vic, as Chair of the NYCAC, has been regularly serving on LCBP's Steering and Executive Committees.

Mark Naud, Chair of the VTCAC, was on the call and discussed how the VTCAC is currently structured differently than the NYCAC. The VTCAC was formed of statute and predates the Lake Champlain Basin Program. They have a statutory requirement to annually present an Action Plan to the Vermont State Legislature and has four members of the Legislature appointed to serve on the CAC. The VTCAC also receives nominal stipends from VTANR to cover meeting and travel logistics as well as the printing of their annual Action Plan to the State Legislature. He explained that the VTCAC sees a real opportunity with the New CAC Coordinator to increase the effectiveness and collaboration between the three CACs.

Corrina, Tom, Jim, Charlotte, Fred, Ricky, Steve, Pete, Joe, Bill, Vic, Allison, and Anita each spoke to the following prompt: What brings you to the CAC, what are your issues of concern facing the CAC region, and are there areas you feel should be covered through representation on the CAC?

The NYCAC expressed that they are glad to begin these discussions and are looking forward to actively participating in the CAC to grow and evolve its activities and outreach. Topics discussed for action include: the creation of a committee member manual, introducing a small NYCAC marketing, branding, outreach effort including increasing their presence on the NYCAC website, reflecting diversity equity inclusion and perhaps State or county representatives in membership, and focusing future CAC meetings on prioritized topics.

The conversation will be continued and expanded upon at upcoming NYCAC meetings.