

New York Citizens Advisory Committee (NYCAC) on Lake Champlain Management

**Monday, March 6th, 2022
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm**

APPROVED MEETING SUMMARY

Committee Members Present: Walt Lender (Chair), Jackie Bowen, James C. Dawson, Steve Kramer, Ricky Laurin, Tom Metz, Vic Putnam

Committee Members Absent: Jane Gregware, Fred Woodward, Charlotte Staats

LCBP Staff: Katie Darr, Sue Hagar, Colleen Hickey, Eric Howe, Lauren Jenness, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (NYS DEC)

Presenters: Nicole Balk (NYS DEC), Jim Lodge (Hudson River Foundation)

Public Guests: Michele Fafette, Peter Hagar, Zachary Matson, Mark Naud, Colin Powers

Meeting summary by Katie Darr, Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP)

1. Welcome and Introductions – Walt Lender

Walt welcomed attendees.

2. Public Comments

Tom shared that he spoke to the Town of Plattsburgh Supervisor to ensure the town was aware of the Climate Smart Communities program.

3. Lake Champlain Draft Watershed Implementation Plan – Erin Vennie-Vollrath (NYSDEC)

Erin provided an overview of the [Lake Champlain Draft Watershed Implementation Plan](#) (WIP) which was released on February 15th and is accepting public comment until March 17th. The WIP is a bridge to the 2026 TMDL update. The presentation is included with the meeting materials on the NYCAC's webpage ([here](#)). Comments can be submitted to waterlog@dec.ny.gov and questions or comments can also be sent to Erin (erin.vennie-vollrath@dec.ny.gov) or Lauren Townley (lauren.townley@dec.ny.gov).

- Walt asked if the lake segments are based on subwatersheds. Erin confirmed that the segments are mostly based on river watersheds.
- Tom asked for clarification on the Otter Creek segment, noting Otter Creek is in Vermont. Lauren shared that that segment is exactly where the Otter Creek watershed ends on the Vermont side.
- Walt asked if there is consideration to reduce the allocation of the wastewater sector since they seem to be producing less load than their current allocation. Erin believes this will be assessed and updated in the 2026 TMDL.
- Jim asked where to find a list of the 303d waterbodies. The list is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/31290.html>.

4. Champlain Hudson Power Express Project & Environmental Trust Update –

Nicole Balk (NYSDEC), Jim Lodge (Hudson River Foundation)

Nicole and Jim provided an overview of the Champlain Hudson Power Express Project and the Environmental Trust, the presentation is included with the meeting materials on the NYCAC's webpage (<https://lcbp.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/NYCAC-LC-CHET-Briefing-3-6-23.pdf>). Nicole is on the Technical Working Group for Lake Champlain and will provide the CAC with updates as the project moves forward. The Hudson River Foundation serves as the administrator of the Environmental Trust. In 2013, priority projects were identified to be included within the Certificate. 75% of funding is directed to identified projects with the remaining 25% to be allocated to new projects decided by the nine-member Environmental Trust Governance Committee (ETGC). The Lake Champlain priority projects are \$1.5M for AIS Prevention and Management, \$500K for fish population and recreational fisheries surveys, \$1M for fish habitat assessment, and \$5M for critical habitat restoration.

- Walt asked if those projects will supplement existing projects or be new projects and if the funds are dispersed through different agencies or groups. Jim Lodge shared that how projects get implemented is still to be determined, it may go through an open RFP process or directed funding to supplement ongoing work. There is nothing in the Certificate that would limit the way funds are allocated.
- Vic asked if habitat improvement is in-lake only or applies to tributaries as well. Jim Lodge reiterated that the language in the Certificate is vague. It is possible that it might apply to tributaries depending on the priorities set by the Governance Committee. Ideally, projects will have a strong connection to the impacts from cable construction and existing operations.
- Walt asked if there are limitations to how the funding is awarded. Jim Lodge noted that the only limitation in the Certificate is members of the Governance Committee cannot be paid for their time.
- Mark asked if there has been any coordination in Vermont in any of the priority projects. Nicole shared that the technical workgroup is constantly changing and they are looking to add a few members, connect any interested prospective members with Nicole.
- Jackie asked if there is a geographical component to the funding allocation. Jim Lodge noted that there is nothing in the Certificate that specifies allocations by geography. Those types of in-depth conversations have not yet happened with the governance committees.
- Jackie asked if agencies in the working groups are allowed to apply for the funds. Jim Lodge confirmed that agency representatives are not excluded from competing or receiving funds outside of being ineligible to be reimbursed for meetings.
- Jackie asked how to get engaged with the process through respective organizations and the CAC. Email or call Nicole (P: (518) 897-1312 | nicole.balk@dec.ny.gov), she is the lead of the technical working group for the Lake Champlain watershed and is seeking input from any and all groups.
- Walt asked what the timeline is for getting funding out the door. Jim Lodge shared they currently have \$2.5M in the bank and hope to move the money as quickly as possible following the appropriate processes. The goal is for the 5-year plan to be finalized by the end of 2023 and then contracting for the projects will take place.

5. LCBP Summary of Recently Funded Projects – Eric Howe (LCBP)

The summary of LCBP Fiscal Year 2022 Grant Awards is included with the meeting materials on the NYCAC's webpage (<https://lcbp.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/FY22-LCBP-Grant-awards-Summary.pdf>).

6. ACTION ITEM: Review and vote on Draft January 30th NYCAC Meeting Summary

There was not a quorum, this agenda item has been moved to the April 24th meeting.

7. NYCAC Outreach Planning – Walt Lender, Katie Darr

The NYCAC reviewed the formatted outreach materials and discussed a plan for tabling at the March 18th World Water Day event at the Champlain Centre Mall from 11-3.

- Tom recommended sharing resources from the “Don’t P on Your Lawn” campaign.
- Colleen suggested using the map in Erin’s presentation which shows the different subwatersheds in NY as a potential prop.
- Tom asked if the Coast Guard had been invited as they might have resources to share related to cleaning up oil and responsible boating. Sue noted that participation was limited to current partners to explore if the event was viable before extending to new partners.
- Ricky asked how the event was being advertised to the public. Sue noted the mall has a fairly robust advertising program, LCBP is issuing a press release, and partners are sharing the information. Numerous schools have been invited to participate in the World Water Day competition and several pieces of student work will go on display.
- Tom suggested advertising in Lake Champlain Weekly, the Sun, Press Republican, Wirey, and the Adirondack Almanack. Hometown Cable may also be a good place to advertise for the event.

8. Updates

LCBP is hiring for 2023 season Boat Launch Stewards and is in need of stewards on the Northern NY portion of Lake Champlain- Chazy Landing, Point Au Roche Boat Launch, Point Au Roche State Park, and Wilcox Dock. <https://neiwpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-LCBP-Boat-Launch-Stewards-position-description.pdf>

The State of the Lake Fisheries meeting will be held on Saturday March 25th from 9am – 1pm in Hudson Hall Lecture Room 106 at SUNY Plattsburgh. This meeting is an opportunity for agency and university staff to provide updates on the status and trends of the fisheries and to hear from anglers. Information will be provided on restoration, research, assessment, and other work that has been accomplished over the past year, as well as work planned for the coming year. Species to be discussed include lake trout, landlocked Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, muskellunge, walleye and bass. Time will be allotted for questions from the public.

Colin Powers submitted an application for NYCAC membership.

Vic shared the Source Water Protection Planning group met last week and discussed the need to educate boaters. There are rumors of trash being sunk in the lake by boaters. BRASS is having its annual meeting in the evening on April 24th, Lorie Earlie will present about salmon restoration work. BRASS is celebrating its 35th anniversary in May.

On March 14, the Adirondack Council and the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation are hosting a Clean Water Grants and Financing workshop in Elizabethtown. More information is available at <https://efc.ny.gov/CAT>

The Adirondack Planning Forum is taking place on April 26 & 27 at the Hotel Saranac. The conference will provide opportunity for discussion and learning about current Adirondack issues, ideas, and funding potential. More information and registration information is available at https://apa.ny.gov/Local_Government/index.html

The State Supreme Court blocked a permit issued for the Adirondack Park Agency for a marina expansion on Lower Saranac Lake, ruling the agency's interpretation of its own wetlands regulation goes against its "plain meaning" and "lacked a rational basis." In Warren County, a Supreme Court Judge ruled against 2 permits for use of ProcellaCOR in Lake George.

9. Meeting Wrap-up Discussion

The NYCAC meets next on **Monday, April 24th from 1 – 3:30pm via Zoom**. The agenda will feature a presentation from Brendan Wiltse about the Adirondack Watershed Institute's 2022 Lake Survey results. The NYCAC is currently scheduled for a joint meeting with the Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York on May 18th, Katie is checking to see if there is flexibility to move that meeting earlier in the week or to the following Thursday.