

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

Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024  
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

## Approved Meeting Summary

Members Present: Walt Lender (Chair), James C. Dawson, Laura Klaiber, Colin Powers, Vic Putman, Ricky Laurin, Charlotte Staats

Members Absent: Jackie Bowen, Steve Kramer, Tom Metz, Jane Gregware, Fred Woodward

Public Guests: Helen Polanco (NYSDEC), Blake Neumann (Adirondack Council), Elizabeth Rogers (Adirondack Council), Michele Fafette (EPA R2)

Presenters: Stephanie Facchine, Madeline Silecchia, Lauren Jenness Kneen

LCBP Staff: Katie Darr, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (NYSDEC)

### **1:00 – 1:15 pm**

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions** (5 min) – Walt Lender

Walt welcomed attendees, led a round of introductions.

#### **2. Public Comments** (5 min)

No public comments made.

#### **3. ACTION ITEM:** Review and vote on Draft December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting summary (5 min) – Walt Lender

Motion by: Jim Dawson

Second: Ricky Laurin

Discussion: None

Abstentions: None

Vote: All in favor

### **1:15 – 1:40 pm**

#### **4. Lake Champlain Source Water Protection Plan Update** – Stephanie Facchine & Madeline Silecchia (NYSDOH)

Stephanie and Madeline reviewed the Drinking Water Source Protection Program and the status of the Lake Champlain Source Water Protection Plan which is a joint plan between the town of Chesterfield, Essex, and Willsboro. The plan has been drafted and is under review by the stakeholder group, it will be reviewed by the State next. The public document is expected to be released in the Fall. The presentation is available with the meeting materials on the NYCAC webpage ([here](#)). The Drinking Water Source Protection Program Framework is available at <https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/water/water-quality/dwsp2>.

#### *Discussion*

- Walt asked who is eligible for the program? Stephanie clarified that any water supply serving a year-round community is eligible for the program. Generally, municipalities apply for the program, but other organizations usually join the stakeholder group. More information about eligible communities is available [here](#). Walt asked if a community water supply that serves an HOA would apply through a town or

municipality. Stephanie noted it depends on how the public water supply is set up, the HOA might be able to apply on its own.

- Walt asked if this process sometimes results in changes in zoning or land use. Stephanie noted that communities often build that into the management recommendations in the plan. Some communities choose to pursue a critical environmental designation.
- Colin asked how these processes start, do applicants reach out directly to the Drinking Water Source Protection Program? Stephanie noted the program presents at many conferences across NY State and is always looking for more outreach opportunities. Local health departments recommend known systems with issues to the program. They recently held an open application period and communities applied directly through that.
- Colin noted that presumably those communities have reason to believe their water sources are challenged or need some assistance. Stephanie clarified that is not always the case. There are some that do not have much to be concerned about but are taking proactive steps to protect their water supplies.
- Ricky asked about the slide with the three columns, noting that raising awareness of the program should take place before implementation in order to create buy-in. Stephanie clarified that those pieces are not in any particular order, they encourage communities to broadly share information throughout the whole process. Once the plan is public, increasing awareness will be a big part of the process.
- Walt asked Stephanie to let the CAC know if there is a role they can play in raising awareness of the plan once it's released.
- Jim asked if there are any funds for implementation of the recommendations. Stephanie noted that there are no direct funds from the Drinking Water Source Protection Program, but the program provides additional technical assistance in the implementation phase including identifying grant sources for municipalities.
- Vic shared he is involved in the Willsboro/Essex stakeholder group and thanked Stephanie and Maddie for their work. Aside from stakeholders' time, this is essentially a free program. In assessing the strategy, he has brought up emerging contaminants, particularly PFAS. Does the program have an idea of how to address the cost of emerging contaminants? Stephanie noted the details on that are evolving and they are working on this issue with the emerging contaminants team.
- Blake asked what priority issues were identified by the stakeholder group. Maddie shared the main priority issues identified were transportation related spills (oil runoff), septic system awareness (updating systems), future development around the lake, designation of critical environmental areas, and sediment control.

### **1:40 pm – 2:10 pm**

#### **5. Boat Launch Stewards Program: 2023 Season Results– Lauren Jenness Kneen (LCBP)**

Lauren provided an overview of the LCBP Boat Launch Stewards aquatic invasive species spread prevention program and summary of the 2023 season. Her presentation is available with the meeting materials [here](#). LCBP is now hiring Boat Launch Stewards for the 2024 season, more information [here](#).

#### *Discussion:*

- Blake asked if LCBP is thinking of extending coverage at any of the launches as climate change is extending the growing season of AIS. Lauren shared the end of the season is mid-October, by that time staffing capacity has significantly decreased. They try to keep the highest priority launches (Mallets Bay, South Hero, and Shelburne Bay in Vermont and Point Au Roche Boat Launch in New York) staffed as long as possible. It is certainly a need to extend coverage into the shoulder seasons, but it is limited by staff capacity.
- Charlotte asked if there has been an increase in the number of people stating they've been participating in cleaning, draining, and drying their watercraft and equipment. Lauren noted those numbers are still being finalized with data from Paul Smith's College. The 2024 State of the Lake report will have an accurate report from the past 3 years. The specific question in the survey is "did you do anything before

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launching today to prevent spread of AIS”, it is an open-ended question and they are looking for clean, drain, dry. Some people just say yes or no to that question, and don’t get as specific as “clean, drain, dry”. It is an interesting data point that fluctuates each year. Some launches are consistently lower than others.

- Blake asked if there were any geographic trends as to who is taking preventative measures. Lake Champlain attracts a lot of out-of-state boaters. Lauren noted that she has not compared in-state vs out-of-state. Most often, kayakers and canoers have not heard of the program. Bass tournament participants often indicate they take measures. Katie added that anecdotally, she heard from the Steward at the Point Au Roche launch that he more frequently encountered out-of-state boaters who were not taking preventative measures.
- Walt asked if there was good cooperation from boaters or if there were conflicts. Lauren noted that most people are cooperative and estimated less than 5% of interactions to be problematic. There are definitely some people who don’t want to talk and blow right by the stewards.
- Walt asked if there has been any discussion of making this a mandatory program. Lauren confirmed that has been discussed, but due to Lake Champlain’s size we don’t have staff everywhere and it’s not something that could be considered any time soon. More likely we would rely on smaller lakes to have mandatory programs. Katie added that the Vermont CAC has included a mandatory inspection and certification system, and a high-profile boat wash on I-89 in their annual action plan they are presenting to the Legislature.
- Vic shared a thought about putting in video cameras at launches to promote compliance. Lake George has used video cameras and gates at their launches.

## 2:10 – 2:20 pm

### **6. Updates** – Walt Lender, Katie Darr

#### LCBP

- The Champlain Basin Education Initiative’s Watershed for Every Classroom professional development program for educators is accepting applications until February 12<sup>th</sup> <https://www.lcbp.org/our-goals/informed-involved-public/programs/educator-programs/>
- The Adirondack Explorer is holding an [event](#) on February 15<sup>th</sup> at the wild center to review what is in the road salt reduction report and discuss next steps for carrying out its recommendations.
- World Water Day at the Champlain Centre Mall in Plattsburgh will be held on Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup>. Katie plans to have a table for the NYCAC and invites members to participate as they are able.
- Additional Save the Dates that may be of interest:
  - [NYS Federation of Lakes Associations Annual Conference](#) on May 3-4 in Lake George
  - Adirondack Lakes Alliance Summit – August 9<sup>th</sup> at Paul Smith’s College
  - CVNHP Annual Summit will be held on September 15-16<sup>th</sup> in Quebec (location tbd)
- The EPA is withdrawing funding for the lake monitoring program that has tracked acid rain data <https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/stories/lake-monitoring-program-in-peril>

#### NYSDEC

- Erik Reardon has left NYSDEC/LCBP, he is moving on to a position in the Berkshires. NEIWPCC is hiring a replacement for the AIS Outreach Specialist position, more details at [https://neiwppc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/EA-AIS-Outreach-Specialist\\_Job-Description.pdf](https://neiwppc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/EA-AIS-Outreach-Specialist_Job-Description.pdf)
- Erin provided written updates, available [here](#) with the meeting materials.

#### Miner Institute

- Miner Institute will host the Northern NY Agricultural Development Program research update meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup> from 10-12:30 in person and online (if not live, recording will be posted). The meeting will feature a presentation by Laura Klaiber about the Agricultural Drainage Research at Miner Institute. More details are available at <https://nnyagdev.org/index.php/news/calendar/>
- NY and UVM Extension are co-hosting the North American Manure Expo this year in Auburn, NY on July 17 & 18, more details at <https://www.manureexpo.ca/>

#### BRASS

- BRASS hosted a webinar on low-tech process-based restoration which is a stream restoration process which can use a mix of volunteer workers to work on small, wading depth tributaries. Recording available on youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XoEjWkj1RI>

#### Adirondack Council

- Blake shared the Governor announced \$325M in grants for water infrastructure statewide, hoping to see money invested in Adirondack communities. The Governor did not opt to fund SCALE (Survey of Climate Change in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems), the Adirondack Council intends to follow up about this.

#### **2:20 – 2:50 pm**

##### **7. 2024 NYCAC Planning – Katie Darr**

The NYCAC reviewed a draft meeting schedule and agenda topics. Due to schedule conflicts, the committee elected to move the next meeting to March 4<sup>th</sup>. Vic shared on March 23<sup>rd</sup> USFW and NYSDEC will hold a fisheries symposium (last year it took place at SUNY Plattsburgh). Katie is working on planning a joint CAC meeting for June.

The committee will review a draft of the FOCUS 2024 document at the next meeting.

#### **2:50 – 3:00 pm**

##### **8. Meeting Wrap Up – Walt Lender, Katie Darr**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 4<sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm via Zoom.