

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

Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
1:00 – 3:00 pm  
Zoom

## Approved Meeting Summary

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

Members absent: Jane Gregware, Laura Klaiber, Charlotte Staats, Fred Woodward

Public Guests: Aude Lochet, Jenny Patterson, Elizabeth Swan, Michele Fafette (EPA Region 2)

Presenters: Jonathan Kramer, Laura Logozzo, Jim Lodge, Colin Powers, Stephanie Larkin

LCBP Staff: Mae Kate Campbell, Katie Darr, Colleen Hickey, Eric Howe, Meg Modley, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (NYSDEC), Sonya Vogel

Meeting summary prepared by Katie Darr, Lake Champlain Basin Program

### 1:00 – 1:15 pm

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

Eric Howe shared that former longtime NYCAC member Bill Wellman passed away in August. His obituary is available at <https://www.rwwalkerfh.com/obituary/colonel-william-wellman>.

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

No public comments were made.

#### 3. **ACTION ITEM:** Review and vote on September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting summary (5 min) – Walt Lender, Chair

Motion to approve by: Ricky Laurin

Seconded by: Jim Dawson

Abstentions: None

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor, motion carried

### 1:15 – 1:45 pm

#### 4. **Champlain Hudson Environmental Trust** – Jonathan Kramer, President; Laura Logozzo, Associate Scientist; Jim Lodge, Director of Environmental Programs – Hudson River Foundation

Jonathan, Jim, and Laura provided an overview of the Hudson River and Lake Champlain Habitat Enhancement, Restoration and Research/Habitat Improvement Project Trust also known as the Champlain Hudson Environmental Trust. The presentation is available with the meeting materials ([here](#)).

The Hudson River Foundation administers and manages the trust and is charged with facilitating the governance committee and assisting in the selection of projects, prioritization, and management of contracts. There is \$117.15M over the lifespan of the trust. It is not an endowment, it is funded on an annual basis of ~\$3M/year. Up to 75% of funding for the first 15 years of the project is allocated to “priority projects.” The process and plan for

allocating the remaining 25% is under development. Laura introduced the priority projects relevant to Lake Champlain: Project I. Lake Champlain Fish Population Assessments, Project H. Academic Research Focused on Lake Champlain Fish Habitat Assessments, and Project G. Lake Champlain Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Management.

#### *Discussion*

- Walt asked about the process for accessing project funds. Jonathan shared the priority projects were identified long ago. The goal is to identify the best contractors to perform the work through an RFP or utilize cooperative agreements to leverage existing capacity. The governance committee will determine the process for allocating the remaining 25% of funds. HRF will share opportunities broadly as they arise.
- Erin asked if the project outcomes will be shared publicly as they progress. Jonathan confirmed that part of the Trust's purview is to have a database of the work that has been completed and he anticipates broad communications about the work so the data and results do not exist in a vacuum and the science is actionable.
- Elizabeth asked for an explanation of acoustic telemetry monitoring. Laura shared that UVM has systems set out in Lake Champlain that acoustically identifies tagged fish that pass by these devices. With a big acoustic telemetry network, researchers can triangulate the location of different fish species in the lake, identify preferred habitats, etc.
- Tom asked about the round goby and how that is being considered in this work. Meg shared that AIS monitoring data from USGS, USFWS, NYSDEC, and the Quebec Ministry of the Environment will be available for the priority project studies.
- Jim asked for an explanation of the project lead. Jonathan shared that the project lead is usually an individual or team that is taking the general scope of the priority and refining it into an implementable scope of work. Sometimes this will lead to the development of an RFP, other times a cooperative agreement to complete the project.

#### **1:45 – 1:55 pm**

##### **5. Boquet River Association Update – Colin Powers, Executive Director**

Colin reviewed the previous year of work at the Boquet River Association (BRASS), initiatives on the horizon, and CAC engagement opportunities. The presentation is available with the meeting materials ([here](#)). After a competitive search, Colin was hired as the new Executive Director of BRASS. In this year of growth and rebuilding BRASS facilitated a FEMA buyout for a repeatedly flooded Westport home (application made it through the first screening and is headed to DC), conducted a tree planting on the Wadhams floodplain with Trout Unlimited and Essex County Soil & Water, and led a floodplain trash clean up along county route 8 in Elizabethtown with 2 tons of trash pulled from a half mile area. BRASS also advanced the removal of a fish weir that has been identified as a fish passage obstruction in conjunction with multiple partners. The July and August storms heavily impacted the Boquet watershed, BRASS is working with homeowners to help them assess how to manage that in the future. BRASS participated in FEMA floodmap workshops and created a cheat sheet for supervisors and town and county employees to comment on areas that should be in or out of the floodplain. BRASS conducted workshops with all 5 communities in the watershed. The map will ultimately impact flood insurance rates for residents. It was encouraging that FEMA is using better data sources, but the maps still require ground truthing. BRASS participated in several tabling events including the Otis Mountain Festival and the Adirondack Harvest Festival. In the fall, Vic led the rebuilding of the Willsboro Cribbing, popularly known as salmon hole, with support from NYSDEC. This work improved safety and access. LCBP funds are being used to support the Executive Director position and a strategic planning process. Earlier this year, Vic and others organized a Salmon Symposium which was well attended and featured partner presentations. There is ongoing discussion with DEC, US Fish and Wildlife, and homeowners about upcoming lampricide treatments that are being proposed up river.

#### *Discussion*

- Walt thanked Colin for his presentation and BRASS' work. He asked about the funding structure for the Executive Director position. Colin confirmed that it is funded by LCBP and private donations presently. The LCBP funding provides a 2-year runway and BRASS has seen an uptick in donations.

### **1:55 – 2:10 pm**

#### **6. LCBP Education and Outreach Initiatives: Champlain Basin Education Initiative and Upward Bound Watershed Stewardship** – Stephanie Larkin, Resource Room Specialist, LCBP

Stephanie provided an overview of the Champlain Education Initiative (CBEI) and the Watershed for Every Classroom Program. Her presentation is available with the meeting materials ([here](#)). CBEI consists of the Lake Champlain Basin Program, Shelburne Farms, Lake Champlain Committee, Lake Champlain Sea Grant, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, and the Community Sailing Center. Watershed for Every Classroom (WEC) is a 10-day professional development experience for K-12 educators that features hands-on, place-based learning throughout the watershed. Stephanie also coordinates water stewardship focused trips with the Upward Bound Program which supports students who are their first in their family to go to college. These trips get students out of the classroom and into the basin.

#### *Discussion*

- Elizabeth asked if the program is only for teachers. Stephanie confirmed that WEC is targeted for teachers, but there are one-day CBEI courses that are more open to the public.
- Tom asked for the date of the upcoming World Water Day celebration. Stephanie shared it will take place on March 22, 2025 in the Champlain Mall in Plattsburgh.
  - Katie added that the NYCAC tabling activity might be gyotaku (fish printing).

Katie asked how the WEC course is typically advertised and how the CAC might be able to help promote it. Stephanie noted the program generally takes place every other year and the announcement is usually shared on social media, through the CBEI partners, and the ECHO Center. She welcomed CAC support to advertise future runs of **Draft Meeting Summary**

Members Present: Walt Lender

#### **7. NYCAC Outreach Discussion**

The committee debriefed about the 9/30 Love the Lake event. Over 40 people participated in-person and online, including many people who were new to CAC meetings. Several participants registered for the public meeting notice email list. Committee members agreed the event went well and the hybrid format seemed successful. There was a suggestion to repeat questions from the in-person audience so online participants could hear the questions or use microphones during the Q&A. Members were supportive of hosting two hybrid NYCAC x LCBP Love the Lake events in the Spring and Fall of 2025.

### **2:20 – 2:40 pm**

#### **8. 2025 Focus Areas Brainstorm**

The committee discussed potential updates and edits to the 2024 Focus Document.

- Tom suggested looking at how climate change is altering the Lake Champlain Basin's environment. Lack of snow and snowmelt would alter need for road salt. Climate change should be a major focus.
- Walt suggested mentioning the new FEMA floodplain maps.
  - Tom asked if the maps are updated everywhere.
  - Colin shared the current round is focused on Franklin and Essex counties and Clinton County has been completed.
- Colin supported a focus on floods and flood mitigation.
- Vic added that monitoring is seriously needed to help with early warning.
- Ricky asked about Chazy.
  - Colin shared that the SLR-DEC flood resilience project was just completed for that area but he was not sure where FEMA stands. <https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/water/water-quantity/resilient-ny>

- Little Chazy River Flood Mitigation and Resilience Report  
[https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/littlechazy.pdf](https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/littlechazy.pdf)
- Great Chazy River Flood Mitigation and Resilience Report  
[https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/greatchazypart1.pdf](https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/greatchazypart1.pdf)
- Vic commented that we should find out how FEMA chooses which area to update when.

Katie will circulate last year's document and the updated VTCAC Action Plan for CAC members to consider priorities before the next meeting.

### **2:40 – 2:50 pm**

#### **9. Updates**

- LCBP has several grant opportunities open including 2 economic assessments- one basin-wide and one community-level assessment on the value of clean water and healthy ecosystems. Large and Small Education and Outreach grants are also accepting proposals. <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/request-for-proposals-rfps>
- Aude shared that the Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resilience Network (ACORN) is have a listening session focused on Champlain Valley Communities at the Whallonsburg Grange on Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.adkwatershed.org/events/acorn-listening-session-lake-champlain-communities>
- Erin shared that NYSDEC is working on the Creel/Atlantic Salmon Spawning Surveys in NY tributaries and a survey about rock salt perceptions. Saranac and Boquet River Creel Survey report will be posted here when complete - <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/freshwater-fishing/fisheries-management-research/region-5>
- Colin shared that Free Vermont Rivers is hosting a *Reconnecting Waterways Workshop* in Burlington on December 5<sup>th</sup>. The workshop is targeted towards project managers, engineers, and excavation contractors working on, or interested in, dam removal and culvert replacements. <https://freevermontrivers.org/workshop/>

### **2:50 – 3:00 pm**

#### **10. Meeting Wrap-up**

The next NYCAC meeting will be December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1-3pm via Zoom.