

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

Monday, December 2nd, 2024
1:00 – 3:00 pm
Zoom

Approved Meeting Summary

Members Present: Walt Lender (Chair), James C. Dawson, Ricky Laurin, Colin Powers, Vic Putman, Fred Woodward

Members absent: Jackie Bowen, Jane Gregware, Laura Klaiber, Steve Kramer, Tom Metz, Charlotte Staats

Public Guests: Jenny Patterson, Elizabeth Swan, Michele Fafette (EPA Region 2), Helen Polanco (NYSDEC), Heather Dann

Presenters: Beth Whitmore-Stolar

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. **Welcome and Introductions** – Walt Lender, Chair

Walt welcomed attendees and led a round of introductions.

2. **Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

3. **ACTION ITEM:** Review and vote on November 4th meeting summary (5 min) – Walt Lender, Chair

There was not a quorum, this action item has been moved to the January 27th meeting agenda.

4. **Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach in 2024 and Plans for 2025** – Beth Whitmore-Stolar, AIS Outreach Specialist, NYSDEC/LCBP

Beth provided an overview of her Lake Champlain aquatic invasive species education and outreach work from the US/Canadian border down to Albany since she started in her role in June 2024. Much of her work focuses on round goby and her work spans New York from the US/Canadian Border down to Albany. Her 2024 education and outreach activities included distribution of baitfish signs, public events and fishing tournaments, and aquatic invasive management. Plans for 2025 include expanding the locations of baitfish signs, presenting AIS workshops at libraries in the Capital Region and the North Country, public events and fishing tournaments, Champlain Canal AIS response, and invasive species awareness weeks. Her presentation is available with the meeting materials ([here](#)).

Discussion

- Walt asked if Beth was involved with the discovery of the golden clam. Beth noted she was aware of it but not directly involved.
 - Jenny added that she volunteers with the Lake Champlain Committee's CHAMP program and one of their volunteers discovered the clam.
- Jim shared that Clinton County has a fair that might be a good fit for an outreach event.
- Elizabeth asked if NYSDEC works on the St. Lawrence River. Beth clarified that NYSDEC does not work directly on the St. Lawrence but coordinates with partners in Quebec who do.
- Colin asked about bait shops and wondered how many might be stocking problematic or invasive bait. Beth shared that shops selling live bait need certification from the state that the bait is non-invasive. Bait shops are regulated unless they are illegally selling fish. NYSDEC recommends fisherman purchase bait from registered shops.
- Fred noted the importance of engaging communities based in Northern Lake Champlain and shared the CAC can help distribute signs and information. Beth shared she is making concentrated efforts to engage Northern Lake Champlain communities in her education and outreach work.
- Fred asked what work is being done with Quebec. Beth shared Quebec is coordinating monitoring eDNA and electrofishing efforts in the Chambly Canal and are looking at potential invasive species barriers for the Chambly Canal.
- Elizabeth asked what should be done if someone finds a round goby in Lake Champlain. Beth shared if you think you have found a round goby do not release it back into the water. Take several photos of it from different angles including the lateral and underside, freeze it, and then dispose of it on land once the identification has been confirmed. If found in NY, report it to Beth and NYSDEC and they can verify the sample.
- Ricky suggested looking at the Miner Institute as a location for AIS education and outreach efforts in Chazy.
- Katie asked how the 2025 activities will be promoted. Beth noted they will be shared through LCBP, NYSDEC, and NEIWPC social media and newsletters where appropriate. The libraries will also promote the workshops through their social media and typical outreach efforts.
 - Katie will share on the NYCAC Facebook page.

5. 2025 Focus Document Drafting – Katie Darr, CAC Coordinator, LCBP

The committee walked through the latest draft of the 2025 Focus document and suggested additional edits.

Phosphorus Reduction

- Fred commented on some of the major phosphorus issues for the Northern part of the watershed, particularly related to drains from properties running down to the lake which is a particular concern with people fertilizing their lawns.
- Colin suggested including information about legacy phosphorus in the sediment and increasing outreach about how to identify and report harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the lake.

Invest in Critical Water Infrastructure and Tools for Resilience

- Fred suggested referencing the IJC Flood Study recommendations.

Support Habitat Protection and Connectivity

- Erin suggested nuancing the language about the pros and cons of removing a dam as there are some instances where removing a dam is not the best solution.

- Colin commented on the benefits of right-sized culverts for terrestrial animals and suggested including that.
- Vic suggested adding a section about species of concern (salmon, wood turtle, eels, brook trout, etc.) to draw attention to species that are of federal concern.

Aquatic Invasive Species

- Katie asked Beth about the status of Canal Corp's education and outreach and whether that sentence should be broadened beyond Canal Corp.
 - Beth confirmed that they have been improving and continue to support education and outreach efforts.
 - Erin recommended broadening beyond Canal Corp.
- Erin suggested mentioning greater monitoring efforts of invasive species in the lake.
- Colin asked if the CAC should include terrestrial invasive species, referencing knotweed in the Boquet.
 - Walt was supportive of this.
 - Colin asked if anyone had information about what Vermont is doing about terrestrial invasive species, specifically their management of knotweed.

Next Steps

- Katie will incorporate the edits as discussed and distribute an updated draft in advance of the January 27th meeting. Goal to vote on the final text at the January meeting.
- Fred suggested organizing a briefing for NY legislators, there are important issues within the document to discuss with policy and decisionmakers.
 - Katie will begin the planning for this.

6. Updates

- Colin, Jim, and Elizabeth attended the [Adirondack Climate Outreach and Resilience Network](#) (ACORN) listening session. There was a diverse group of ages present from teenager - 70+ and many perspectives about what resilience looks like. There was a lot of attention on affordable housing and sustainable development that eclipsed some climate specific things. It was a great listening session. Several people raised concerns about regional planning and how the Adirondack Park despite having APA does not have very powerful planning and zoning tools at the local level. There was concern that the park and the park's community need to be ready to deal with climate migration in equitable ways. Read more about the session [here](#) and respond to the North Country resilience survey [here](#).
 - In addition to the ACORN session, Jim attended the Common Ground Alliance meeting. There were lots of similar issues raised particularly around, housing, eldercare, and lack of services for older people that don't have families in the area. Many of these issues seem to be common to rural communities across the country.
- LCBP updates:
 - Open grant RFPs are posted at <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/request-for-proposals-rfps/>
 - Due December 12: Education and Outreach – Small
 - Due January 6: Organizational Support
 - Due January 9: Education and Outreach – Large
 - Due January 10: Lake Champlain Watershed Economic Assessment (lake-direct community & Basin-wide studies)

- Due January 16: NY Organizational and Workforce Support Development. Can be used to support new staff positions or trainings for existing staff.
- December 12: LCBP is hosting a Grant Recipient Information Session. Learn more and register here <https://www.lcbp.org/event/lcbp-grant-recipient-information-session/>
- March 22: World Water Day at the Champlain Centre Mall. The student artwork contest is accepting entries until March 12th. Please share with teachers or students ([entry form here](#)).
- BRASS: FEMA in DC has come back to BRASS on the buyout with a positive looking request for information.

7. Meeting Wrap-up

The next NYCAC meeting will be January 27th from 1-3pm via Zoom.