

**Lake Champlain Basin Program**  
**Technical Advisory Committee meeting**  
**Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM**  
**Held in-person at the LCBP office with remote sign-in option**

**Approved TAC meeting summary**

**TAC Members:** Jennifer Callahan, Laura DiPietro, Bryan Dore, Laurie Earley, Michele Fafette, Curt Gervich, Peter Isles, Neil Kamman, Steve Kramer, Bridget O'Brien, Helen Polanco, Jamie Shanley, Daniel Tremblay

**LCBP + Lake Champlain Staff:** Mae Kate Campbell, Corrie Miller, Meg Modley, Matthew Vaughan, Sonya Vogel, Sarah Coleman, Sarita Croce, Erin Vennie-Vollrath, Colette Ward, Theresa Vander Woode, Karyn Hanson

**1. Updates, announcements, public comments**

- Peter (VTDEC): Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory (VAEL) sample costs are increasing - something we will need to contend with for the Long-Term Monitoring Program (LTMP). Current budgeted analysis costs for the LTMP are \$85K, they're expected to jump to \$150K or more. This change comes into effect Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, and it will affect most of the 2025 field season which has an already approved budget. If we need to reduce sample numbers, we should discuss with TAC. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC) has a new Lakes manager, Jenny Austin, who has asked about the potential for her involvement with TAC.
- Matt (LCBP): The VT appointed position is currently vacant, though we have VTDEC members filling that role unofficially. If you have thoughts about TAC membership in general or know of colleagues who could fill a gap in the committee's areas of expertise, please let me and Neil know. Appointee positions are appointed by the Governor or Commissioner, which is a different process than members at large.
- Neil (VTDEC): Oliver filled an important role in carrying the state's perspective. The individual who sits in the Lakes Manager job is well positioned in the state to represent VT interests. It would be up to Julie or Pete to recommend a new appointee. The state is aware of cost drivers with VAEL and there is a game plan for meeting some of those costs in the short term.
- Laura (VTAAFM): I am on the VAEL board and am aware of the concern, but costs of doing business are rising and causing issues.
- Theresa (EPA): The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) region 1 Lab in Chelmsford has let us know they're looking for proposals for short-term projects (not sustained monitoring) scheduled for the upcoming field season that they could assist with processing at no cost.
  - Neil: Does that offer extend to the whole basin, or just the region one side?
  - Bryan (EPA): I believe it is limited to region 1. If VT state has a priority outside of the Lake Champlain basin, that could be a conversation also.
  - Theresa: They also have a new mobile lab that could support flood analyses.

- Sarah (VTDEC): The Green Schools initiative is underway; requests for bids just went out for next field season. We are expecting bids right before the holiday.
- Neil: The Deputy Commissioner of VTDEC has signaled that she will be retiring at the end of this year. I've had the pleasure of working with her for 30 years and we will miss her at the department.
- Bridget (VTDOH): The Vermont Department of Health (VTDOH) has finalized a dual-sided fish card that updates the information on fish you buy and catch with communications on healthy eating practices. We are planning to have an accompanying tool where we can add fish you catch to fish you buy to have a holistic look at your diet.
  - Neil: New data is in there?
  - Bridget: It does have updated data.
  - Meg: Is this information put in a publicly digestible format on the website?
  - Bridget: When posted, yes. New design card that is intended for the public to use.
  - Meg: Mae Kate and I have been working on making this info available to new American and disadvantaged communities. When it's time to take the next step, I would love to connect.
  - Bridget: Sounds great. I know they are working with Kris and University of Vermont (UVM) partners working with anglers and were aware of the Fish and Wildlife Department's efforts to work with new American communities and best practices for consumption. We can loop you in to communications.
- Meg (LCBP): We have posted a position for a Grants Administrator, replacing Logan's position. We are seeking applications with a preference for applicants who apply by 12/1 but will continue to accept applications. In the boat launch steward world, we are getting ready to start recruiting for field season 2025. It sounds like we will have a good number of returners this year, but we are especially looking for coverage in the south and north lake areas on the VT side. Please share with your networks. The Quebec Ministry did a rapid response for the positive eDNA detection for round goby – they have no fish in hand and no other positive detections to date. 2 positive detections above lock C2 in the Champlain canal have been documented, but there are no fish in hand from monitoring efforts there either. The Ministry has been doing grass carp work in response to fish seen in a view finder on the St. Ours dam. We had the first discovery of golden clams (previously referred to as Asian clams) at the south lake boat launch at Whitehall through a LCBP/NEIWPCCEPA funded monitoring program to the Lake Champlain Committee. There are 3 surrounding areas with golden clam in inland lakes in the south lake region. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) collected dozens more specimens at the South Bay site. The rapid response task force is doing extra surveys. This is a discovery, it's too early to say if it's an established population.
  - Neil: This discovery got press!
  - Meg: It did. However, some media misinterpreted some impacts – there is not a link between golden clam and cyanobacteria.
- Neil: I am aware of a new school of thought around the nomenclature of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

- Meg: Institutions are rethinking the common names of nonnative and invasive species, working to eliminate militaristic, harmful, or region-specific language from common names. They are trying to find characteristics of species that will help with identification.
- Neil: I've also observed the term introduced vs. invasive.
- Meg: Introduced was used because we can't establish a species is harmful until we have more data.
- Matt: The next Lake Champlain Steering Committee meeting will take place on 12/17 and will include review of the recommendation TAC forms today. We've moved away from discussing core projects with the TAC since the technical aspects do not change year-to-year. If technical changes are proposed in future years, we will discuss here, otherwise we will continue to do an annual budget review with the Steering Committee. Thank you for your effort in reviewing pre-proposals for the research program; I also wanted to mention that Clean Water implementation and planning grants have been moving through the review and award process. The land acquisition/conservation program is also getting underway.
- Corrie: Tomorrow with Vermont Natural Resources Council, Watersheds United Vermont, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, LCBP is hosting a practitioner workshop focused on dam removal. Over 100 attendees are expected for a full day meeting with 3 tracks.
- Matt: On 12/11 at 9am the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is hosting a Lake Champlain research breakfast with networking time and lightning talks.

*Review and approve summary of previous TAC meeting*

Motion: To approve the summary from the November 2024 TAC meeting

By: Jenn

Second: Laurie

Vote: All in favor

Abstentions: Neil

## **2. Executive session: Review and discuss recommendation for FY25 research pre-proposals for Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems**

- Matt provided an overview of the review process for research priority development, TAC proposal review, and Steering Committee approval. He noted that there is approximately \$2 million available to support FY25 research projects.

Motion: To enter executive session

By: Peter

Second: Jenn

Vote: All in favor

Abstentions: TAC members with conflicts of interest on submitted pre-proposals did not participate in the ranking or discussion of affected projects

*Exit Executive session*