

**Lake Champlain Basin Program**  
**Technical Advisory Committee meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 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, Bryan Dore, Laurie Earley, Michele Fafette, Curt Gervich, Peter Isles, Neil Kamman, Steve Kramer, Margaret Murphy, Bridget O'Brien, Andrew Schroth, Jamie Shanley, Daniel Tremblay

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

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

- Neil (VTDEC): I welcome our friends from the federal government and express the strongest level of support I can.
- Margaret (VTFWD): March 15<sup>th</sup> will be the State of the Lake Fisheries meeting, to be held at the Miller Community Center in Burlington from 9am-1pm. Come hear about the fisheries of Lake Champlain.
- Neil: In Vermont, our general assembly is in session. I want folks to be aware that the State of Vermont is having a dialog around mechanisms to alleviate anxiety around the 3-acre general permit and phosphorus control permits. The State has been getting pushback over the financial implications of the 3-acre permit requirement, so the general assembly wanted to have conversations. I'd like to chat with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about what this could mean. The permit program is not going away, we are not asking for that, but we may need to reconsider the rollout timeframe and mechanisms to raise more funds to support the program.
  - Bryan (EPA): We look forward to connecting and appreciate the update.
- Neil: In terms of federal funding, many things have happened including notifications that open awards have been shut down. At one point DEC had over 100 million in open awards that were labelled suspended – but all are re-opened now as a result of court orders suspending those actions. If you have stakeholders that are notified that they have a grant award that has been shut down, please flag that to my attention. The Vermont Attorney General is keeping track of where awards are turned off and was part of legal action on behalf of those affected. We are keeping an eye on federal budget reconciliation processes to see if they move forward. Reductions in Inflation Reduction Act spending have been proposed - including climate change, electrification. I spoke with Tom Berry, and he thinks a Continuing Resolution could be possible. LCBP is still in Committee markups on House and Senate side for \$25 million so that is good news for now. There's a tremendous amount of uncertainty currently.
  - Laurie (USFWS): If partners are coming to us, we should send them to you to document this in Vermont?

- Neil: Yes, absolutely. I'm working to make our Attorney General's office aware when Vermont constituencies are impacted.
- Laurie: Are Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds included?
- Neil: Yes.
- Laurie: We are getting that feedback from partners and will share.
- Neil: I just heard that the Regional Partnership Planning funding will be resuming – this is important for the agricultural sector.
- Meg (LCBP): LCBP has been able to access BIL funds so work is continuing. Love the Lake series is on, it runs in late winter to spring and showcases speakers on various topics. Tomorrow night's speaker will be Sam Dixon from Shelburne Farms discussing conservation practices. We will be hosting an event at the Champlain Center Mall on March 22<sup>nd</sup> for World Water Day. The seasonal Boat Launch Steward interview process has started. 18 aquatic invasive species workshops at NY libraries are being coordinated by Beth to provide round goby education. Our new staff member Anna Vold has been on for 5-6 weeks working on the administrative side. Katie Darr has moved on - she coordinated the Citizen's Advisory Committees and Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network initiatives. We are sad to see her go. We are gearing up for the field season, including strategizing about 3 new water chestnut population with our management team. We did have to re-issue a number of requests for proposals to comply with Executive Orders.
  - Neil: What kind of additional time was offered for folks?
  - Meg: 3 weeks. Applications in our system just need to be submitted with criteria removed, and new applications are being accepted as well. The re-issued awards are scheduled to be approved by the Steering Committee in April - most of these projects are not dependent on the field season.
- Matt: We are also working on getting the Long-Term Monitoring Program and Cyanobacteria Monitoring work up and running for the field season as well. We will be re-deploying the buoy network and will have a new buoy going in to the Northeast Arm this season. Equipment is in hand.

*Review and approve summary of previous TAC meeting*

Motion: To approve the summary of the December 2024 TAC meeting

By: Peter

Second: Margaret

Discussion: None

Vote: All in favor

Abstentions: Margaret

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

- Matt: Thank you all for your effort to review these proposals. It was great to have your expert opinions. We released this Request for Pre-Proposals (RFPP) in September and following the December Steering Committee meeting we solicited full proposals from 17 applicants. I want to clarify that because of Executive Orders we had to revise the

application and scoring criteria. We communicated these changes to applicants but did not clearly communicate that to reviewers, apologies. The next step in the process is reviewers will form a recommendation for projects to be funded, focusing on knowledge gaps that need to be filled and relative ranking. We do not have a solid total funding availability amount at this time, so we are not sure how much we will be able to support, but we can compare to past budgets. It will be important to focus on prioritizing, ranking, and being clear on what TAC does and does not support. The Steering Committee will review TAC's recommendation in April.

- Sarita: Have we reviewed the projects themselves to ensure alignment with Executive Orders?
  - Neil: Is that something the TAC would conduct, or would that review take place on the administrative backend?
  - Sarita: I am just asking if it was done. It would be a shame to have to nix a project after TAC has recommended it. I want to ensure full alignment is there. If someone was to do a search on us, I don't want to be highlighted.
  - Neil: I think I saw one mention of one thing in one proposal, so we can flag. To contextualize - there's a difference between awards that have been issued and signed off on and awards we have not yet made. I have strong reservations on making changes to existing awards unless absolutely necessary, but these new ones will need to be reviewed. None of us are expected to be experts in what those Executive Orders say.
  - Sarita: There was some positive news today – the Supreme Court rejected the administration's bid to reject paying United States Agency for International Development contractors since those funds had already been appropriated. For money that has already been allocated, I'm feeling better about us being okay.

Motion: To enter executive session

By: Margaret

Second: Peter

Vote: All in favor

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

Exit Executive session