Lake Champlain Steering Committee

FINAL Meeting Summary

April 15-16, 2025 9:30AM – 3:00PM
West Side Ballroom
253 New York Road, Plattsburgh, NY 12903 518-324-4777

April 15, Day 1

ATTENDANCE:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joe Zalewski (Chair, NYS DEC), Stefanos Bitzakidis (Quebec MELCCFP), Julie Moore (VTANR), Walt Lender (Chair, NY CAC), Pierre Leduc (Chair, Quebec CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee), John Krueger (Chair, HAPAC), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), Rick Balla (EPA R2), Susan Sullivan (NEIWPCC), Maya Dehner (USACE), Laurie Earley (USFWS), Jean-François Ouellet (Quebec MELCCFP), Anne Jefferson (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Travis Thomason (NRCS VT), Brandon Olsen (NYS Empire State Development), Phil Giltner (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation), Laura Trieschmann (VT ACCD), Jenn Callahan (for Craig DiGiammarino VTrans), MaryJo Feuerbach (EPA R1), Antony Tseng (EPA R2),

STAFF: LCBP: Eric Howe, Mae Kate Campbell, Kerry Crowningshield, Colleen Hickey, Lauren Jenness, Elizabeth Lee, Corrie Miller, Ryan Mitchell, Grace Palmer, Meg Modley Gilbertson, Matthew Vaughan, Sonya Vogel, Erin Vennie-Vollrath (LCBP NY Coordinator NYS DEC), Sarah Coleman (LCBP VT Coordinator, VT ANR), Sarita Croce (NEIWPCC), Jim Brangan, Beth Whitmore-Stolar (NEIWPCC/LCBP), Anna Vold, Myra Lawyer, Michele Fafette (EPA R2), Theresa Vander Woude (EPA R1), Bryan Dore (EPA R1), Daniel Tremblay (Quebec MELCC), Steve Garceau (MELCCFP),

GUESTS: Tom Berry (GLFC), Rebecca Ellis (Sen. Welch's Office), Owen Doherty (Cong. Balint's Office), Todd Chaudhry (USGS), Karyn Hanson (NYSDEC), Guy Parenteau (QC MELCCFP), Veronique Connelly (MELCCFP), Karen Stainbrook (NYS DEC), Janelle Hangen (GLFC), Rifat Salim (NY District USACE), Joance Martin (MELCCFP)

MEETING BEGINS **9:30 AM**

INTRODUCTIONS: Joe Zalewski, NYS DEC will Chair this meeting. Joe led a round of introductions.

- Tom congratulated Janelle Hangen, GLFC, on a great year of contributions to the Program and the Commission.
- Eric introduced Anna Vold, the newest LCBP full-time staff member.

Approval of Summary of previous meeting

<u>ACTION ITEM:</u> Approve Meeting Minutes from **December 17, 2024** Steering Committee Meeting

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: John Krueger
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: **none**

<u>ACTION ITEM:</u> Approve Meeting Minutes from **February 25, 2025** Steering Committee Meeting

- Motion By: John Krueger
- Second by: Julie Moore
- Discussion on the motion: none
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: **none**

PUBLIC COMMENT **10:20 AM**

- None

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATES **10:30 AM**

1. FY2026 Budget Process & Funding Outlook

Rebecca Ellis (Sen. Welch's Office) reported that the FY2026 budget process is roughly halfway complete. Most Lake Champlain funding requests are routed through the appropriations subcommittee, with a Senate deadline of **May 21st**. Programmatic request portals are still open, while **Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)/earmark portals are now closed**.

- Senator Welch plans to advocate for continued funding across key programs: **EPA Section 120, LCBP, CVNHP, USFWS, and GLFC** — all expected to be at **level funding** similar to FY2025.
- While operating under a **continuing resolution** for FY2025, funding for LCBP appears likely to come through, though some uncertainty remains.
- A concerning national trend includes **agency de-staffing**, and a potential future Trump Administration may pursue **regulatory rollbacks without public comment**, which is legally questionable.

2. House Programmatic Requests (Rep. Balint's Office)

Owen Doherty noted that **programmatic requests are due by Friday, May 18th**. The CDS process has closed. He encouraged participants to keep the office informed of any federal funding freezes or grant delays, particularly involving **EPA, FEMA, and other major agencies**.

3. Vermont Project Coordination

- Neil Kamman referenced last year's efficient process for reviewing Vermont projects and recommended continuing that model.

- Rebecca Ellis confirmed close collaboration across Vermont offices. Senator Sanders did **not open his CDS portal** and will likely revisit projects from last year.
- Owen Doherty added that **Rep. Balint's office reopened for a few CDS applications**, but is primarily advancing projects from last year, with some new additions. Selected applicants have been notified.

4. Farm Bill & NRCS Funding
Travis Thomason inquired about **Farm Bill-related funding** via NRCS for water quality initiatives. Rebecca Ellis did not have an update at the time but committed to following up with colleagues in Washington, DC.

FFY25 LCBP/CVNHP Budget Presentation 10:50 AM

Eric Howe opened with an overview of the meeting agenda, including the draft FY2024 Annual Report, the FY2025 budget outlook, and a review of key LCBP functions.

- FY2025 Funding Outlook: Appropriations are expected to be level-funded at approximately $35 million, consistent with FY2024 levels. However, final confirmation is pending.
- Next Steps: Minor adjustments will be handled by the Executive Committee, while major changes will be brought to the Steering Committee in June.

Federal Funding Streams

- IIJA Funds: Mary Jo confirmed these funds are already in-house with no current indications of issues.
- TMDL Funds: Still unconfirmed; awaiting an EPA operations plan due to Congress by April 29.
- GLFC Funds Flow: Tom clarified that GLFC funds are directed by the Steering Committee and processed via an MOU with NEIWPCC—not directly from Congress.

Staffing and Capacity Trends

- Staff Growth: Staffing has increased by 4–5 positions since 2016. Additional roles discussed in previous budgets are still under review, awaiting appropriation clarity.
- Staff Cost Differences: Differences between Lowell and Grand Isle costs are due to increased hours for Lowell staff—not higher individual salaries.
- Vacancies & Recruitment: Two key positions—Grant Administrator (E&O focus) and Education and Outreach Coordinator—are expected to be posted in the next two weeks.
- Capacity Constraints: Eric and Susan highlighted the need to expand staff capacity for project management due to growing workloads and delays caused by uncertainty in budget timing.

Budget Considerations & New Roles

- Potential New Position: Eric estimated $150,000 would be needed for a new position in Matt's team to manage increased project workloads.
- CAC Coordinator Role Expansion: A 0.2 FTE increase is planned to balance 80% coordination work with 20% project management support.
- Additional Capacity Needs: Members expressed support for expanding capacity even with the risk of future budget cuts, citing substantial existing workload.

Office Space & Infrastructure

- Workplace Capacity: Susan expressed concern over physical office space—particularly in Grand Isle—and mentioned plans to assess and potentially reconfigure space to accommodate additional staff.
- Outreach Office in NY: Tom shared that GLFC is exploring new outreach office space in New York and will coordinate with LCBP as plans develop.

CVNHP Budget – John Krueger, HAPAC Chair and Jim Brangan, CVNHP Assistant Director

FY24 Project Highlights

- Jim Brangan shared key accomplishments from FY24 for the *Thriving Communities* initiative under OFA, including historical context and progress of Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (CVNHP) projects.

FY25 CVNHP Core Projects

- Jim presented funding allocations for core FY25 CVNHP projects, including the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network (CABN).
- John inquired about the number of wayside exhibits: Jim noted there are nearly 400 across all jurisdictions, many of which are bilingual.
- MaryJo asked about funding sources for the biosphere initiative: Jim confirmed funding comes from the National Park Service (NPS).

Competitive Grants and Strategic Alignment

- Tom posed several questions regarding competitive grants:
- Projects discussed are previously implemented and nearing completion.
- The current FY25 budget figures relate to future projects.
- Tom emphasized aligning CVNHP project-seeking with GLFC's strategic priorities, such as social-impact projects.
- Jim expressed willingness to collaborate on strategic alignment.

Overhead Rate and Funding Policy Discussion

- Tom raised concerns about indirect (overhead) rates and clarified GLFC's strict 5% cap.
- Eric confirmed NEIWPCC uses a standard indirect rate approved annually.
- Susan stated that NEIWPCC cannot meet the 5% cap, as this would reduce funds available for programming and partners. Current NEIWPCC indirect is 18.5%, though actuals for LCBP projects are around 11%.
- Tom insisted on adherence to GLFC's policy moving forward, suggesting possible models such as direct partner funding or more strictly defined direct costs.
- Neil requested clarification on the definition of overhead: Tom offered to provide a written explanation and emphasized GLFC will only fund up to 5% in indirect costs.

- Janelle noted past success using hybrid models where GLFC utilized LCBP expertise in project selection, despite routing funding through existing GLFC contracts.

Budget Clarifications and Forward Planning

- Anne asked for visibility on indirect rates in the budget spreadsheet; Susan clarified these are calculated and embedded in the overall figures.
- Anne confirmed that once competitive grants are funded, they are secure unless affected by federal rescissions.
- John and Eric clarified that $160K has been allocated from GLFC for FY25 competitive grants, with an additional $220K from NPS, consistent with prior funding patterns.
- Tom reiterated that GLFC's overhead rate concerns apply to FY25 and beyond.
- Susan emphasized that indirect costs support all NEIWPCC activities, including FTEs and administrative overhead, and must be part of future planning discussions.

Next Steps:

- Further dialogue is needed between GLFC, NEIWPCC, and CVNHP to resolve differences on indirect rate policies.
- Explore alternative funding models (e.g., direct-to-partner, hybrid funding) to comply with GLFC's 5% overhead cap.
- Begin aligning FY25 project proposals with both CVNHP and GLFC strategic goals, especially around social impact.

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session **to consider CVNHP FY2025 Competitive Proposals**

- Motion By: Buzz Hoerr
- Second by: Anne Jefferson
- Discussion on the Motion: None
- Vote: All in favor

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Exit Executive Session.

LUNCH BREAK **12:00 PM**

FFY25 LCBP Budget Presentation (Continued) **1:00 PM**

Clean Water & Healthy Ecosystems Budget – Neil Kamman, TAC Chair, and LCBP Technical team

- **FY24 Project highlights – LCBP Technical staff & NYS DEC staff**

The Technical Team presented an update on the Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems program, outlining the program's goals, active grants, and project highlights within each grant category.

Key Discussion Points:

- **Low-Impact Recreation:**
  Neil inquired about the definition of "low-impact recreation" in the context of land acquisition projects. Matt explained that these projects aim to maintain existing trail networks and improve basic park facilities (e.g., restrooms) while upholding the clean water and ecosystem conservation goals.
- **Stewardship and Public Engagement:**
  Buzz shared a personal anecdote about being stopped for a watercraft inspection and emphasized how staff's respectful communication creates educational value for the public. He commended the team for their efforts.
- **Staff Training and Partnerships:**
  Meg responded with appreciation and highlighted the critical role of partnerships, training (including harassment and public interaction training), and ongoing work with the State of Vermont on wake boat regulations and program expansion.
- **Program Metrics and Reach:**
  - Meg reported over **40,000 public contacts** and **20,000 watercraft surveyed**.
  - In response to Travis, Meg detailed staffing coverage:
    - PSC AWI now manages staffing for the entire Adirondack region.
    - Basin Program staff cover the northern NY side of Lake Champlain.
    - Other areas are supported via contracts with OBVBM and Vermont agencies.
- **Site Prioritization and Risks:**
  - Travis asked about data used to determine future site coverage.
  - Meg explained that staffing is prioritized by the busiest launch sites due to resource constraints.
  - Both Travis and Meg noted the increasing threat posed by boats arriving from across the country, underscoring the importance of stewards in educating visitors and preventing the spread of invasive species.

Travis praised the team's efforts, noting the significant impact of their work on protecting Lake Champlain and its surrounding ecosystems.

- **FY25 Core Projects – LCBP Technical staff**

The team presented updates on key implementation and planning grant programs, invasive species management, and agronomy and outreach efforts across the Lake Champlain Basin.

Core Projects & Program Highlights:

- **Implementation & Planning Grants:**
  Matt and the team presented a summary of core projects, which were provided as a separate document in the meeting folder.

- **New York Core Projects:**
  Erin presented on NY-based projects, including work led by Myra Lawyer and associated grants.
- **Invasive Species and Stewardship Programs:**
    - **Water Chestnut Program:** Meg provided an overview and FY25 budget request.
    - **AIS Rapid Response:** Meg outlined the project summary and budget needs for FY25.
    - **Boat Launch Steward (BLS) Program:** Meg reviewed the program structure and proposed FY25 budget.

Discussion Highlights:

- **Cross-Jurisdictional Coordination & Benchmarking:**
  Jean-François asked how the team benchmarks approaches and balances education versus enforcement.
- Meg explained that regulations differ across the three jurisdictions in the basin (NY, VT, QC). Staff inform the public but are not enforcers. The program collaborates with law enforcement, and the transport of invasive species is illegal.
- Lake George was cited as an example of mandatory inspections, but similar enforcement on Lake Champlain is more complex.
- Meg emphasized the need for improved data integration across jurisdictions to better inform deployment of stewards.
  Data-Driven Decision-Making:
- The team uses comprehensive quality-controlled data from interactions at boat launches to guide decisions on new decontamination station placement and stewardship priorities.
- Jean-François stressed the importance of data in justifying funding. Meg agreed and highlighted the strategy of prioritizing based on launch traffic and likely next waterbody.

NYS DEC Region 5 Presentations:

AIS Education & Outreach:
Beth shared current strategies and efforts implemented by DEC Region 5 to increase awareness and prevention.
Agronomy Updates:
Myra presented updates on agricultural programs and challenges, noting that regional differences across the basin make the work complex. She suggested additional staffing would be beneficial.

- **Technology and Innovation in Agriculture:**
- **Wireless Pasture Fencing:**
  Neil and Travis expressed interest in innovative tech for livestock management.

        - Myra explained how Gallagher's satellite-enabled cow collars allow for virtual fencing, real-time tracking, and mobile cattle management.
        - Compared to a traditional fence costing $600,000, the collar system costs around $60,000 for an entire herd.
        - Travis noted NRCS can help fund this technology, reducing labor needs and increasing flexibility for farmers.

        - **Closing Remarks:**
          Tom acknowledged he had not previously understood the full scope of Myra's work. The meeting reflected strong cross-program collaboration, innovation in conservation agriculture, and a data-informed approach to invasive species management and stewardship planning.

- **FY25 <u>Line Item</u> Projects – VT DEC, NY DEC**
    - Sarah and Erin presented the FY25 state line item funding requests for Vermont and New York, detailing proposed initiatives and budget priorities related to stormwater infrastructure, wastewater operator support, agricultural programming, and culvert/streambank stabilization. Additional detail was provided in a separate document in the meeting folder.

    - **Stormwater Infrastructure Support:**
      Sarah outlined the primary funding request from VTDEC, aimed at supporting the design and implementation of regulatory stormwater infrastructure related to MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) and 2-acre stormwater regulations.
    - **Operator Training and Support:**
      Erin emphasized the intention to offer training opportunities that bridge both drinking water and wastewater operator needs, acknowledging the interconnected nature of water infrastructure and regulatory requirements.

    Discussion Points:
    - **Connecting Funding to Water Outcomes:**
      Tom expressed difficulty seeing direct connections to drinking water, clean water, and wastewater benefits. Erin clarified that operator training aims to enhance performance across both systems.
    - **Workforce Challenges:**
      Neil and Joe discussed the declining interest among young people in wastewater operations, reinforcing the importance of focusing on discharge management as a key environmental priority.

    - **New York Agricultural Funding Request:**
        - Travis inquired why agriculture-related requests were presented only for New York.
        - Erin explained that agricultural programs are coordinated collaboratively through the CWICNY (Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York) partnership.

            - Sarah clarified that Vermont's agriculture-related funding is included under its TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) request.

    - **Additional Questions and Clarifications:**
        - **PBT Testing Project:**
          Laurie requested clarification on the proposed PBT testing initiative. Sarah recommended following up with subject-matter experts such as Bernie Pientka for project-specific details.
        - **Streambank Stabilization and Culvert Assessment:**
          Janelle noted the lack of past funding for culvert work and asked if a standardized assessment method was used.
            - Erin responded that rural road assessments and existing evaluation tools guide streambank and culvert prioritization, although the process is still evolving.
            - Janelle mentioned a similar program in her area and suggested an opportunity for shared learning and collaboration.

FY25 <u>IIJA projects</u> – LCBP

Eric provided an update on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding for Fiscal Year 2025, marking the fourth year of a five-year funding cycle. The LCBP expects to have over $7 million available in FY25. A summary of program grants and funding allocations from FY2022 through FY2025 (proposed) was presented.

Discussion Highlights:

- **Strategic Land Acquisition Program:**
    - Julie raised concerns about the complexity of land acquisition and questioned the feasibility of allocating an additional $2 million to the effort.
    - Eric noted that a second Request for Proposals (RFP) is nearly ready for release and that the program is awaiting execution of one subaward to inform the second round.
    - Matt reported that the first round was undersubscribed by approximately $1.5 million, despite $6 million being available.
    - Susan emphasized the complexity of using IIJA funds for land acquisition, especially due to reimbursement mechanisms and differing interpretations from EPA Regions 1 and 2. She recommended convening a focused team to reassess the program's direction.
    - Anne acknowledged earlier hesitation but recognized the value of the proposed projects. She suggested refining the RFP and goals before proceeding.
    - Rick Balla and Antony Tseng acknowledged the challenges, with Antony proposing consideration of reallocating funds to more immediate priorities.
    - Tom suggested block grants to organizations with expertise in federal land acquisition.
    - Anne and Neil proposed redirecting funds toward Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) restoration staffing, a currently underfunded but high-impact priority.

    - Antony reiterated that IIJA funds are designated for construction-related work and suggested flood resilience as a possible refocus.
    - Eric agreed to reassess the funding structure overnight and present updated FY25 budget recommendations, encouraging states to consider aligning their own EPA agreements with evolving priorities.
- **Next Steps:**
    - Eric and team will revisit the FY25 budget to explore alternative allocations for the $4 million in question.
    - States are encouraged to review their own IIJA priorities and prepare to discuss them further.
    - Coordination with the Steering Committee will continue to ensure shared agreement on overarching priorities and avoid potential conflicts between state and partner proposals.

FY25 TMDL projects – VT DEC, NY DEC

Erin and Sarah presented updates on Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) projects in New York and Vermont, outlining key funding requests and project goals in alignment with phosphorus (P) reduction targets.

New York:

- New York is requesting **$3 million** to support the ongoing implementation of projects under the **2024 Watershed Implementation Plan**, aimed at helping meet phosphorus TMDLs.
- During the discussion, **Travis** inquired about the agricultural sector's projected phosphorus contribution.
    - **Erin** responded that agriculture accounts for **9% of the land area**, contributing an estimated **27%** of the phosphorus load in the New York portion of the watershed.

Vermont:

- Vermont is requesting a total of **$8 million** to support two initiatives:
    - **$3 million** for the **Enhanced Agricultural Practices** program.
    - **$5 million** for the **Green Schools Initiative**, aimed at improving stormwater management and environmental education in school communities.

NEIWPCC Presentation – Budget Update & Contracting update 3:15 PM

- **Federal Funding Landscape:**
  Susan Sullivan provided an update on the status of federal funding and its implications for ongoing projects:
- **Temporary Funding Freeze:** Federal funds were frozen in January 2025, prompting immediate contractor notifications and work stoppage. Though funds were quickly unfrozen, contractors were advised to proceed with caution.
- **Improved Compliance:** Past challenges with timely submission of invoices and reports have improved significantly.
- **Administrative Priorities:** While the federal administration's focus may have shifted, clean water remains a core priority.

- **EPA's Five Pillars:** Current grant awards and activities must continue to align with EPA's framework. Timely document review remains a critical expectation.
- **Federal Audit:** The **FY2024 federal audit** of NEIWPCC and LCBP funds was completed with zero findings. Pete Laflamme, VT DEC, serves on the audit committee.
- **Grand Isle Office Concern:** Susan expressed continued concern over staffing levels at the Grand Isle office, aiming to avoid past contract management challenges.
- **Financial and Grant Oversight:**
    - Susan reviewed the grant status as of March 31, 2025. NEIWPCC continues to manage fiscal oversight for LCBP, despite no increase in NEIWPCC resources relative to LCBP's expanded funding.
    - NEIWPCC's NICRA (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement) has ranged from 18.5% to 20.5% over the last five years. However, actual indirect costs as a percentage of total expenses remain significantly lower (9.15% to 12.61%), primarily because indirect cannot be charged on contracts over $150,000. This creates a financial imbalance, as both small and large projects require similar administrative support.
    - Susan clarified that while NICRA sets the maximum allowable indirect rate, the budgeted rate (e.g., 9%) may underutilize the full rate, leaving funds unspent unless reallocated later.
    - Discussion with Rick Balla and Neil Kamman clarified the challenges of indirect vs. direct cost classifications, emphasizing that although certain administrative costs could logically be direct, EPA's strict accounting rules require their classification as indirect unless formally changed through a process.
    - Notably, many recent grants issued were over $150,000, reducing the proportion of recoverable indirect costs and affecting financial sustainability.

  Recognition and Personnel Updates:
    - Susan recognized key team members for their service:
        - **Eric** – 15 years of service
        - **Sue Hagar and Mae Kate** – 5 years of service each
- **Other Notable Items:**
    - Susan referenced ongoing questions about the necessity of a specific NY office from NEIWPCC's perspective and mentioned asking GLFC to take the lead on the matter. She noted that if modeled like the Resource Room at ECHO, the office could cost approximately $400,000 annually.
    - Susan confirmed that $3.8 million has been disbursed over the past few months.
    - Laurie raised a question regarding $400,000 in FY2025 funding for Lowell, which Sarita will address during her presentation.

Sarita Croce, NEIWPCC Water Resources Protection Division Director, provided an update on Contracting:

- **Contracting Team and Resources:**
  Sarita clarified the staffing related to contracting activities, explaining that the team consists of herself, an attorney, Shelley, Shelly, and QAPP support, amounting to

approximately 3.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs), with 75% of Sarita's time dedicated to contracting. This represents an increase of about 2 FTEs from 2024 to 2025, driven by the need to improve contract processing timeliness, prompted by an EPA letter and a funding drawdown assessment.

- **Process Improvements and Metrics:**
    - Contract processing timelines have improved, with 40 contracts issued in Q2, alongside 10 no-cost extensions and 4 amendments.
    - Projects under $20,000 are now issued purchase orders (POs) with a streamlined subaward agreement to expedite smaller contracts.
    - Regular office hours with Grand Isle administrative staff have been established to facilitate communication.
    - The average time from award issuance to contract execution currently stands at 147 days.
    - Since October 1, 2023, a total of 213 invoices have been processed.
    - Sarita reported significant progress and recommended to EPA that invoice tracking could potentially be discontinued. Susan highlighted the hard work of the Grand Isle team in ensuring contractors are paid timely.
- **Outstanding Work and Challenges:**
    - Laurie inquired about projects still pending in the contracting queue; Sarita estimated approximately 20 in Lowell and 40 in Grand Isle with awarded but unapproved workplans.
    - Laurie noted ongoing financial difficulties among partners due to contracting delays, especially in land acquisition, urging expedited processing.
    - Susan acknowledged staffing shortages and noted that delays sometimes stem from partners not submitting workplans promptly, but affirmed efforts to accelerate project progress.
- **EPA and Internal Coordination:**
    - Laurie asked about a planned group meeting in March with EPA to review contracting processes. MaryJo explained the meeting was postponed due to travel restrictions for the Grand Isle team but will be rescheduled, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration for consistency and streamlining.
    - Rick thanked all involved for progress made, noting improvements in drawdown speed and reduced timeframes, while recognizing ongoing work.
- **Process Enhancements for Large Projects:**
    - Sarita highlighted the goal of reducing processing times for streamlined subaward POs to 5–10 days, addressing contractor concerns about delays.
    - MaryJo raised concerns from local partners about funding pauses and cash flow for large projects, such as the AOP, requesting clarification on how restructuring addresses payment timing.
    - Sarita explained that amendments will now include subcontractor task schedules to allow phased payments, improving responsiveness.
    - Neil confirmed this remains a milestone deliverable-based contract but with flexibility for step-wise amendments.

    - Anne suggested exploring options to mitigate seasonal workload spikes by distributing contract approvals more evenly throughout the year.
- **Workplan Requirements and Funding Timing:**
    - Susan noted some awarded projects won't begin until October 2025 due to federal fund drawdown schedules.
    - Discussion clarified that workplan requirements come from NEIWPCC as a necessary guide to define scope and deliverables.
    - Eric and MaryJo emphasized the importance of workplans in ensuring clarity for federal funding, with MaryJo noting NEIWPCC's approach is somewhat more flexible than EPA's, balancing accessibility with accountability.
- **Billing and Payment Methods:**
    - Neil asked if NEIWPCC would consider issuing two-party checks with NET-30 terms to help contractors front project costs, as is done by VT DEC in the SRS program.
    - Susan sought clarification that the contractor would approve invoices for equipment purchases.
    - Neil confirmed invoices would go through the subrecipient entity rather than directly through the contractor.

Vermont Green Schools Initiative, Sarah Coleman, VT DEC 3:45 PM

Sarah presented an overview of the Green Schools Initiative, highlighting the current status and opportunities associated with the program. She emphasized ongoing efforts to implement stormwater management projects within school districts.

Targets and Outcomes:
In response to a question from Buzz about measurable targets for these projects, Sarah explained that the initiative focuses on stormwater implementation through permitted designs, which ensure reductions in phosphorus (P) runoff are captured. She also noted the importance of storytelling to communicate successes, mentioning collaboration with Sea Grant and the use of LCBP-related Environmental Opportunity (EO) grants to help report on project outcomes.

Long-Term Agreements and Maintenance:
MaryJo inquired about long-term agreements or maintenance responsibilities following construction. Sarah confirmed that maintenance and tracking are part of the permitting process. She also highlighted that training for school district staff or managers to sustain the projects is under consideration, though permit requirements generally supersede funding program obligations.

Program Impact and Future Directions:
Neil praised Sarah's efforts, emphasizing the significance of the 3-acre stormwater project in Vermont, which addresses some of the most challenging aspects of achieving TMDL goals. He shared that the program is currently gaining attention in the state legislature regarding its costs and benefits. The initiative has also served as a model for

developing similar programs. Looking ahead, there is interest in expanding the program to include low-income housing communities, which are also subject to regulatory requirements for stormwater management.

Review of FY25 Research proposals for Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems

- Matt provided an overview of the Research RFPP development process -- from soliciting research tracks from Steering Committee members to releasing the RFPP and evaluating proposals with the TAC.

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session **to review the competitive proposals for the FY2025 Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystems Research program**

- Motion By: John Kreuger
- Second by: Neil Kamman
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: Anne Jefferson

EXECUTIVE SESSION:
Exit Executive Session.

Adjourn for end of Day 1 **4:30 PM**

Group Dinner at Olive Ridley's in Plattsburgh **6:30 PM**

April 16, Day 2

ATTENDANCE:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Joe Zalewski (Chair, NYS DEC), Stefanos Bitzakidis (Quebec MELCCFP), Julie Moore (VTANR), Walt Lender (Chair, NY CAC), Pierre Leduc (Chair, Quebec CAC), Buzz Hoerr (Chair, E&O Committee), John Krueger (Chair, HAPAC), Neil Kamman (Chair, TAC), Rick Balla (EPA R2), Susan Sullivan (NEIWPCC), Maya Dehner (USACE), Laurie Earley (USFWS), Jean-François Ouellet (Quebec MELCCFP), Anne Jefferson (Lake Champlain Sea Grant), Travis Thomason (NRCS VT), Phil Giltner (NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation), Daniel Tremblay (Quebec MELCC), MaryJo Feuerbach (EPA R1), Antony Tseng (EPA R2),

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Arrival at the West Side Ballroom room, webinar open 8:30 AM
INTRODUCTIONS: Joe Zalewski, NYS DEC will Chair this meeting. **8:45 AM**

FFY25 LCBP Budget Presentation (Continued) 9:00 AM
Buzz Hoerr opened the meeting by introducing Colleen, who led the presentation on the Education and Outreach (E&O) budget. Buzz highlighted the significant impact of the Boat Launch Steward Program, noting its strong outreach leverage and effectiveness in engaging the public.

FY24 Project Highlights:
Colleen, Ryan, and Lauren presented an overview of key E&O projects from FY24:

- Colleen reviewed major initiatives including the Watershed Education Collaborative (WEC), E&O Stewards, Love the Lake, and the Resource Room.
- Lauren highlighted the 2024 Stream Wise program.
- Ryan shared updates on the Summit to Shore storymap, video series, Lake Log, Place in the Basin, social media outreach, e-newsletters, and interpretive exhibits developed by Elizabeth.
- Grant-funded projects were also discussed, showcasing support and impact.

- **FY25 Education and Outreach Budget Proposal:**
  Colleen, Ryan, Lauren, and Sarah proposed a total budget of $1,967,700 for FY25 to support core and line item projects spanning LCBP, LCSG, and VT/NY DEC initiatives. Colleen acknowledged Lauren and Jill Sarazen for their significant contributions to the property assessment program.
  - **Discussion Highlights:**
    - Julie inquired about phosphorus (P) fertilizer bans in other jurisdictions and outreach messaging in Vermont, where such products are less available. Colleen explained ongoing collaboration with partners to promote P-free messaging and store signage, with consideration of expanding efforts to Quebec (QC) with available budget support.
    - Stefanos and Jean-Francois noted regulatory focus differences, with agricultural P being a primary target and household products also regulated in certain cases.
    - Buzz mentioned the potential to reinvigorate the "Don't P" marketing program with support from former contributor John Bare.
    - Susan suggested exploring options for external management of mini grants due to recent policy changes by NEIWPCC on purchase orders (POs). Eric agreed this would be a valuable future discussion but recommended finalizing the budget first.
    - Neil expressed interest in the property assessment program's scope and funding for implementing small Best Management Practices (BMPs). Lauren clarified that funding could support BMP implementation depending on applicant proposals, with training led by Jill Sarazen of Sea Grant.
    - Sarah added that the program is foundational and expected to evolve into a pathway for additional programming.
    - Tom asked about outreach collaboration with communities operating stormwater utilities; Lauren noted the current focus is on non-regulatory private properties but acknowledged the need to engage regulatory communities in the future.
    - Julie raised the idea of leveraging block grants to share administrative responsibilities for small but impactful grants, highlighting both benefits and workload concerns. Eric and Joe emphasized the need to finalize the budget now and address block grant conversations at a later date, with a commitment from Eric to schedule this for the executive committee in May.
    - Colleen noted the importance of small grants in strengthening partnerships, hoping recent PO policy changes will ease management.
    - Neil and Julie agreed that a block grant pilot could maintain strong stakeholder connectivity while allowing more time for contractors to build capacity.
  - **Next Steps:**

        - Executive Committee to discuss block grant management and potential pilot programs in the upcoming May meeting.

- FY25 Organizational Support Core Project
    - Eric presented the organizational support grant program along with a budget request totaling $275,000.
    - Susan expressed support for the program and inquired about the potential to include program management skills development, noting that many partner organizations face challenges in this area.
    - Eric agreed with the suggestion and confirmed that program management skills will be incorporated into the grant program.

********** 10 Minute Health BREAK************

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session **to consider competitive proposals for the LCBP FY2025 Education and Outreach program**

- Motion By: Buzz Hoerr
- Second by: John Kreuger
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: Pierre Leduc, Anne Jefferson

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Exit Executive Session.

FFY25 LCBP Budget discussion and approval **10:00 AM**

- **Eric** reminded the Committee that they needed to discuss reallocation of IIJA infrastructure funds to address gaps in Section 120 funding. Emphasis was placed on refining FFY25 budget priorities and potentially adjusting FFY24 allocations, specifically competitive grant programs.
- **2. Status of Current Infrastructure Fund Projects (FY24)**
    - Land Acquisition Program: $4M is currently set aside. A new RFP is ready, pending a decision to proceed.
    - Wetland and Floodplain Restoration (NY): $1M nearly fully obligated.
    - Tree Nursery Grants: A second round has closed; the Record of Decision is ready.
    - Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP): Proposed $3.3M in FY25; potential internal support for AOP Coordinator through September 2027.
- **3. Decision Points on FY24 and FY25 Infrastructure Funds**
    - Land Acquisition Program:

        - Broad support was expressed for moving forward with an additional round, with confidence in improved processes and clarity around lien, deed, and conservation criteria.
        - Julie proposed reallocating $2M from the $8M originally allocated, retaining $6M for land acquisition.
        - Eric supported a hybrid approach: reallocating $4M from current FY24 funds to support immediate priorities and setting aside $4M in the FY25 budget for a future round.
- **Easement vs. Fee Acquisition**:
    - No firm decision but broad recognition that both tools have merit depending on conservation goals and site characteristics.
    - Concerns about long-term stewardship and maintenance were raised, including monitoring and invasive species (e.g., emerald ash borer).
- **4. Additional Feedback and Considerations**
    - Matt confirmed deed language from EPA is now integrated into contracts and can be included in future RFPs.
    - Susan (NEIWPCC) and others emphasized the complexity of the program but supported continuing with improved implementation practices.
    - Buzz suggested drawing lessons from the Shelburne project as a model.
    - Stefanos and Neil raised questions about evaluating program impacts and distinctions between easement and fee acquisitions.
    - Tom and Julie discussed long-term costs and the need to avoid conflict with other public land agencies.
- **5. Budget Reallocation Options Discussed**
    - Suggestions to reallocate:
    - Up to $2.5M from AOP in FY25 to support other high-demand programs like Tree Nursery.
    - The remaining $2.5M (from the $8M) to be reassigned to other infrastructure priorities, potentially including "treatment train" or related initiatives.
    - Theresa confirmed some flexibility exists if categories remain generally aligned with approved infrastructure funding types.
    - Eric highlighted the need for quick decisions on FY25 allocations, but acknowledged FY24 reallocations could be deferred slightly for further review and a possible Executive Committee vote in May.
- **6. Next Steps and Voting**
    - Votes are needed today on reprogramming $4M from current FY24 land acquisition allocation and on the $7.5M FY25 budget allocation.
    - One research program proposal still needs review in Executive Session before finalizing the full FFY25 budget.
    - Eric suggested deferring the final vote until after the Tree Nursery presentation and budget revisions are completed.

Dr. John Kreuger, HAPAC Chair **11:00 AM**
The Semiquincentennial is Upon Us! The Spring of 1775 in the Champlain Valley

John recounted events from the spring of 1775 in the Champlain Valley, focusing on early Revolutionary War movements. He noted being frozen in for two days before traveling overland—common given the conditions. He described how quickly people mobilized during that time, highlighting that John Brown departed for Philadelphia just eight days after the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, traveling overland despite the season.

John emphasized that even in 1775, there was already cooperation between New York and Vermont, exemplified by Ethan Allen sharing strategic needs with Philip Schuyler.

Jurisdictional Updates **11:45 AM**

- Joe Zalewski- NYSDEC to resume eDNA sampling and electrofishing in Champlain Canal next week. Will collect data biweekly once the Canal opens for the season. DEC recently awarded over $225 mil under water quality improvement. Over $28 mil awarded to projects in LCB that address wastewater, road salt, stormwater projects
- Julie Moore, VT ANR - clean water budget and clean water initiative performance report, both in legislature. Other legislative updates: changes to 3 acre stormwater permit program, chloride reduction program modeled after NH program under consideration, mentioned update on Lake Carmi alum treatment. Also acknowledging challenges under regional conservation partnership program. Emily Bird, leader of clean water initiative, stepping into Neil's former role.
    - Colleen - Emily was formerly a NEIWPCC volunteer, continues to move up.
- Jean-Francois Ouellet - On Monday April 14 2025 the wildlife management department joined meeting held by GLFC. Noted origin of GLFC. At that meeting there was discussion of Chambly Canal and measures to prevent AIS spread through canal. Department will also be part of AIS rapid response for next year with Meg. Also joined advisory group for Champlain Hudson Environmental Trust (related to CHPE project). Department to undertake field study: eDNA sampling in upper Richelieu. Noted river protection program for copper redhorse, with a goal to improve understanding of fish community. Will also deploy teams on field for raccoon rabies prevention
    - Anne: More on rabies vaccinations of raccoons by airplane?
    - Jean-Francois: We drop cups of materials similar to ketchup that raccoons eat. We target areas where raccoons are frequently present.
- Phil Giltner, NYS OPRHP- Crown Point State Historic Site to hold commemorative event for the 250th anniversary of the capture of Crown Point on May 11, 2025. Open to public. Fort Ticonderoga will also host events May 9-11. America 250 Commission will have quarterly mtg at Fort Ticonderoga on May 10.
- Tom Berry, GLFC - GLFC annual mtg will be held on May 28/29 in Traverse City. Partners welcome to attend. Regarding fishery commission work on Lake Champlain and Memphremagog - have established an oversight committee to focus priorities.Some people in room are part of committee. The committee is drafting a plan and will share when ready. The plan will provide formal structure for fishery work in the Basin.

- Janelle Hangen, GLFC - Eric mentioned $200K was being pulled back to GLFC for NY resource room. Presented on NY resource room timeline. Aren and Jonathan from Rep. Stefanik's office are working to support this effort. Janelle to meet with each of them and Tim Mihuc about how to work together, and formally invites anyone from LCBP to join this process. Goal is, by late spring/summer, to be working with realtor to assess possible spaces. $200K will jumpstart process, won't keep space afloat forever. Toured ECHO Resource Room last week, wealth of knowledge there. Many resources could be reproduced.
- Laurie Earley, USFWS: regional director wendy weber and others to retire. Likely a restructuring in the future. Refuge: refuge has been working on 3 land acquisitions, working with Friends of the Missisquoi on habitat/AIS initiatives. Brad Young has moved on, Steve Smith now working on sea lamprey control. Sea lamprey treatment to take place in Boquet River this spring, could not be completed last fall. LC Fish Wildlife Management Cooperative celebrating success story: decided to stop stocking lake trout. VT was only agency still stocking, but overall program has seen success in natural reproduction. Working on a plan in case stocking needs to be reinitiated.
- Travis Thomason, NRCS-VT – NRCS is also restructuring. Won't go into plans but reducing workforce and relying on partners. May 14 is state technical committee mtg, embarking on collaboration with conservation districts. Using framework called locally led conservation delivery. Conservation districts are prioritizing delivery at the local level. This mtg is where those districts will share local priorities. Some districts in LC, others in CT river and elsewhere. Invitation to group to join and learn about local priorities.
- Maya Dehner, USACE- planning point of contact for USACE. Found small error in agreement with NYSDEC for canal? project. Error has been corrected, back with DEC. Need to sign updated agreement with NEIWPCC. Sec 542 - new 90/10 cost share arrangement for low income/high unemployment communities. Have been in discussion about possible projects, looking at projects in Swanton and Chittenden. Two other projects under consideration. Aquatic plant control for LC - looking to expand to whole state of VT. No funding yet. Still waiting for funding for feasibility study for Winooski flood response/management.
- Bryan Dore, EPA R1 – Region 1 has announced Mark Sanborne, new regional administrator. Comes from NH DES. Mark spent many years in fed govt - US dept house development, USDA rural development, US dept transportation. For those who have worked with water division, Thelma Murphy retiring this summer.
- Richard Balla, R2 – Region 2 also has a administrator on board, Michael Martucci. Background in agriculture, have engaged him on many water initiatives: wetlands, Long Island Sound, will fill in on Lake Champlain soon and try to arrange visits.
- Anne Jefferson, Lake Champlain Sea Grant - LCSG has a request for research proposals due Friday. Contingent on FY26 funding. Site review June 23-27, some people here have already been asked to participate. Will recertify programs and possibly increase funding depending on Congress.
- Sarita Croce, NEIWPCC - NEIWPCC submitted a comment letter on PFAS Human Health Water Quality Criteria (letter attached in folder). Upcoming: National Tanks Conference (Sept 22-25, 2025 in Spokane, Washington), Natl Nonpoint Source (NPS)

Training Workshop (Oct 27-29, 2025 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana). Have hired 14 BLS, 2 more in queue, looking to hire 6 more for 22 total. Emma Dannenberg has rejoined LCBP. Evaluating applications for AIS field assistants. May or may not fill this role depending on the candidate pool. Introducing EA Anna Vold.

Lunch Break **12:00 PM**

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session for additional discussion on Clean Water Research Proposals

- Motion By: John Kreuger
- Second by: Neil Kamman
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: Anne Jefferson

EXECUTIVE SESSION.
Exit executive session.

IIJA funds for AIS Decontamination Unit in NY **1:00 PM**

Meg presented a proposal developed in collaboration with New York State Parks and NYSDEC to address a gap in aquatic invasive species (AIS) decontamination coverage north of Plattsburgh. The Point au Roche boat launch, a high-traffic site long staffed by LCBP's Boat Launch Stewards (BLS), has seen intercepted hydrilla on boats originating from as far as Texas. Currently, the nearest decontamination station is located in Plattsburgh, creating logistical challenges.

To improve AIS spread prevention in this area, Meg and partners have developed a budget of **$75,000** to purchase and install a decontamination unit at Point au Roche. The budget includes costs for the unit, a storage shed, delivery, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other essentials. The unit would be **operated by LCBP staff** but **owned, stored, and maintained by NYS Parks**.

The proposal is to fund this effort through **FY2024 IIJA AIS funding**, which has been **undersubscribed**, making this a timely and strategic use of available resources.

Phil expressed support for the proposal, indicating no concerns and openness to receiving available funding.

ACTION ITEM: Motion to approve up to $90,000 from FY2024 IIJA funding to support acquisition of AIS decontamination unit equipment and supplies for NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

- Motion By: Neil Kamman
- Second by: Buzz Hoerr
- Discussion on the motion: Neil remarked that this is a fantastic project.
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: none

ACTION ITEM: Motion to enter into Executive Session to consider grant awards for IIJA Tree Nursery, New York Organizational Support and Workforce Development, LCBP Organizational Support grants, and the Economic Valuation Community-Level grants.

- Motion By: Anne Jefferson
- Second by: Laurie Earley
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Exit Executive Session.

Open Session:

ACTION ITEM: Motion to approve Large Education and Outreach, IIJA Native Tree Nursery, NY Organizational Support and Workforce Development, and the Economic Valuation – Community-level grant awards as presented, revised and discussed in Executive Session.

- Motion By: John Krueger
- Second by: Buzz Hoerr
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: Pierre Leduc and Anne Jefferson for Large EO grant award review only.

FY2025 Budget Discussion continued:

- Matt presented proposed adjustments to the IIJA portion of the LCBP budget.
- Matt shared two versions of the revised budget. Building on prior Steering Committee discussions, he outlined a revised approach for the remaining $4 million in land acquisition funds:
  - Reallocate $2 million to support the Tree Nursery Program,.
  - Redirect the remaining $2 million toward Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) projects, acknowledging the time-sensitive nature of AOP implementation relative to land acquisition.
  - Budget also includes support for additional staff resources to facilitate project delivery.
- Eric proposed creating a new entry-level Environmental Analyst I position to support the Clean Water team. This role would be 50% funded by Section 120 base funds and 50% by IIJA funds, with a projected cost of $65,000. The position would be included in the FY2025 agreement.
- Eric also proposed to fully fund the AOP Coordinator position through the end of 2027, ensuring continuity and long-term planning capacity for AOP work.

- Joe opened the floor for feedback on the proposed reallocation of previously approved IIJA funds.
    - Matt noted that proposed figures are estimates, as actual allocation will depend on proposal volume and SC approval.
    - Theresa asked for clarification on the distinction between staffing (personnel) and subawards, particularly regarding the 10% administrative cap.
    - Bryan requested confirmation that staffing falls under the personnel budget category.
    - Eric confirmed that AOP staff support is classified under personnel, and the total staffing allocation remains well below the 10% administrative threshold.
    - Joe concluded the discussion by noting that if challenges arise during implementation, adjustments can be made as needed.

Next Steps:

- Reallocation of IIJA funds to proceed with the proposed split:
    - $2M to reissue land acquisition RFP
    - $2M to support AOP.
- Eric will begin planning for new Environmental Analyst I position and update FY2025 agreement accordingly.
- Continue tracking IIJA fund performance and adjust allocations based on actual award and implementation outcomes.

<u>ACTION ITEM:</u> Motion to approve adjustments to the FY24 IIJA funding lines.

- Motion By: Laurie Earley
- Second by: Neil Kamman
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: None

<u>Review and Refinement of 2025 IIJA funding allocations</u>

- Matt provided an overview of updated budget figures totaling $7.5 million. Key adjustments included:
    - Addition of two years of staff support.
    - $500,000 reduction to the Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) line.
    - Tree nursery and Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) management lines held at current levels.
    - Inclusion of the new Environmental Analyst I staff position as previously discussed by Eric.
- Julie asked whether the current pipeline of AOP projects is sufficient to utilize the proposed funding. Matt responded confidently, noting that the five-year award window provides ample time for full expenditure and that FY2025 is a more comfortable timeframe for AOP activity.
- Neil acknowledged the longer timeline but raised the possibility of adding AOP staffing if needed, potentially reallocating from land acquisition.

- Neil noted additional years of IIJA funding may follow.
- Eric proposed holding the next Tree Nursery RFP for release in 2026, while retaining funding in the current year's budget.
- Julie raised a strategic concern about the rigidity of funding categories, which limits flexibility. She proposed creating a placeholder line item for an alternative priority—stormwater management—to enable future reallocation if other categories face implementation barriers. Julie suggested an initial allocation of $100,000 to keep the category active and fundable.
- Bryan agreed this approach is generally acceptable but would require further budget detail. Neil supported the idea, emphasizing the need for municipal stormwater implementation to meet MS4 and TMDL goals. Suggested drawing the $100K from land acquisition.
- MaryJo asked for clarification on whether this would require a new award, and Theresa confirmed it would. Anne cautioned that small municipalities may lack capacity for full-scale projects but would benefit from targeted stormwater support.
- Joe expressed some concern about emphasizing "TMDL," which may not align with New York's obligations. However, agreed that "municipal" and "stormwater" remain appropriate focus areas.
- Matt confirmed he adjusted the budget accordingly:
    - Redirected $50K from AOP and $50K from land acquisition to create a $100K stormwater implementation line.
    - Matt flagged the need for Steering Committee guidance on how to apply funding to the existing Clean Water large implementation category, or whether it should be considered distinct.
- Joe closed the conversation by confirming with Eric whether the team was on track with the $7.5 million IIJA allocation. Eric confirmed alignment.
- **Next Steps:**
    - Finalize updated budget with adjusted allocations, including stormwater implementation.
    - Prepare guidance on categorization of the new stormwater line relative to existing Clean Water programming.
    - Monitor project development pipelines, especially for AOP, to ensure full utilization of available funds.
    - Maintain flexibility for adjustments as applications are received and implementation progresses.

ACTION ITEM: Approve the FY25 IIJA budget.

- Motion By: Julie Moore
- Second by: Anne Jefferson
- Discussion on the motion: None
- Vote: All in favor

General FY2025 LCBP/CVNHP Budget Discussion

- Eric reported that the budget has now been fully balanced, incorporating the recently approved IIJA funding allocations.
- Eric also shared that LCBP will soon begin advertising for the Education and Outreach Coordinator position. The role will be posted as a management-level position, with expanded responsibilities in supervision and program leadership.
- Joe emphasized that the current decisions and figures reflect conditional approval, pending final approval by the funding agencies and based on the best available information to date.

Next Steps:

- Move forward with job posting for the Education and Outreach Coordinator.
- Update terminology in budget materials to reflect funding uncertainty.
- Await final confirmation from funding agencies to proceed with full budget implementation.

ACTION ITEM: Approve FFY2025 LCBP/CVNHP budget pending confirmation of anticipated funding levels. Authorize the LCBP Executive Committee to revisit and approve the budget if funding levels are different from what was considered in today's budget.

- Motion By: John Krueger
- Second by: Buzz Hoerr
- Discussion on the motion: Tom suggested a wording change which was accepted.
- Vote: All in favor
- Abstentions: Anne Jefferson

Advisory committee and LCBP updates **2:45 PM**

- NYCAC: see written update
- VTCAC: no updates to share today
- Buzz: See written update for E&O committee.
- John: See written update for HAPAC.
- Eric: The next Steering Committee meeting will be scheduled for the week of June 16th in Vermont.
- Julie: The Strategic Advisory Committee, composed of the Steering Committee Chairs, Mary Jo Feuerbach, Antony Tseng, Tom Berry, Susan Sullivan, and Neil Kamman, held its first meeting last week. The group began reviewing previously gathered information and has committed to meeting every two weeks going forward.
- The SAC plans to deliver a substantive update at the June SC meeting, with a final set of recommendations targeted for no later than the September meeting. These recommendations will address roles, responsibilities, and the relationship between the Steering Committee and NEIWPCC.

- Members of the Strategic Advisory Committee are available to answer questions about the process. The group expressed appreciation to Quebec for securing a neutral facilitator, whose support will help guide and manage discussions productively. Work is actively underway.
- Anne thanked Eric and his staff for putting all this together and making it work.
- Joe noted that he was pleased to hear that NEIWPCC's going to work to bring someone on board to shadow Colleen pre-retirement to facilitate knowledge transfer. And to bring someone on at the management level will be helpful.

Meeting adjournment **3:30 PM**

Anticipated Outputs for this meeting include:

1. Approval of Meeting Summary from December 2024 and February 2025
2. Approval of FY25 LCBP/CVNHP budget
3. Approval of IIJA funds for AIS Decontamination Unit acquisition
4. Grant Awards for the following programs:
   - IIJA Tree Nursery Support
   - New York Organizational Support and Workforce Development
   - LCBP Organizational Support grants
   - Economic Valuation Community-Level grants.