

**Lake Champlain Basin Program
Steering Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday November 14th 2012
Town Meeting Center, St. Armand, Quebec**

Approved Minutes

Members present: Daniel Leblanc, David Mears, Marilyn Stephenson, Mike Winslow, Breck Bowden, Real Pelletier, Louis Hak, Ron Jackson, Lynne Hamjian, Buzz Hoerr, James Ehlers, Gina Campoli, Bob Stegemann, Laura DiPietro (for Chuck Ross), Vicky Drew, Roseanne Murphy (by phone), Mario Paula (by phone); **Staff:** Bill, Jim, Colleen, Ryan, Elizabeth, Eric, Stephanie, Kathy, Michaela, Martin, Fred; **Guests:** Clair Ryan, Jeanne Voorhees, Kari Dolan, Tom Berry

Meeting Begins – *Daniel Leblanc, Chair*

Welcome and Introductions – Daniel and Real welcomed all present.

Public Comments - none

ACTION ITEM: *Ron moved to approve the draft September 2012 Steering Committee minutes with one correction noted by James, (VTCAC report was verbal, not printed). Buzz seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.*

Brief Updates of Jurisdictions

VT David reported that the Better Back Roads program no longer is eligible for federal funds and is being absorbed into the Agency of Transportation. Gina reported that there will still be grant money made available and that VTrans will have staff to maintain the program. DEC is working on the Act 138 report which assesses non-point source pollution and explores potential revenue sources. A primary focus of the report is the cost challenges we face in addressing stormwater runoff. VTDEC is continuing to work with EPA on the TMDL for Lake Champlain. As the new TMDL plan is finalized, there will be a number of public meetings. In preparing for the next LCBP budget, NYDEC and VT DEC have been working on joint project recommendations to give the TAC.

NY Bob described the impact in NY of Hurricane Sandy, and the devastation in New York City and Long Island; about 44 staff from Region 5 have gone there to help. The Lake George Commission released a report on invasive species and NYDEC is reviewing the recommendations it contained. The agronomist position interviews were held and a new hire is now being negotiated. There is a proposal for International Paper to receive natural gas from Vermont through a pipeline that would be buried under Lake Champlain. David said this would involve directional drilling under the lake about 30 feet below the surface and would start about ½ mile from shore.

QC Daniel reported on the recent lampricide treatment in the Missisquoi River in Swanton. Quebec has been in close communications with the USFWS in monitoring the application and its effects. David distributed a written summary update of other recent activities in Quebec. Daniel also reported that the IJC Study Group presented a preliminary plan of study to the IJC in November and the Commission has decided to expand the document, and provided additional time for that purpose.

Federal Partners Jeanne reported on the recent meeting of US Federal partners, and the status of the draft MOU on partner cooperation. It is again circulating among agencies for review and signatures. Partners also discussed plans for an inter-agency kiosk at Missisquoi Wildlife Refuge.

Brief Reports from Advisory Committee Chairs

- **HAPAC** (handout) The committee met in November and a written report was distributed to members. Among recent events, the CVNHP has facilitated an International Wine Trail and launched the program at a recent event in South Hero. A number of LCBP staff worked on hosting the fall meeting of the nation-wide Alliance of National Heritage Areas, and NEIWPC assisted with handling registrations. The 3-day event was well attended and by all accounts very successful. Work has started on interpretive displays at Valcour, which should be completed by early 2013. An RFP has been issued for implementation grants up to \$5,000 pertaining to art and folk life, fishing and historical camps. Réal stated that the idea of a wine trail was initiated at a CVNHP heritage summit in Montreal, and the launch was very well received in Quebec.
- **E&O** (handout) Buzz reported that at the committee's recent meeting, they had guest presenters on combining classroom and field work. LCBP has completed work on the design of several new exhibits now produced and installed at ECHO. The partners involved in the Don't P meeting yesterday had a presentation by Clair Ryan, concerning NEIWPC's program to reduce lawn fertilization in other New England states. The re-designed LCBP website is now about 40% complete and will be launched in the spring of 2013.
- **TAC** (handout) Mike reported that TAC has met twice since the last SC meeting, primarily to review final reports and RFPs, and to develop FY13 task proposals. They received an update on the Asian clam invasion, and finalized RFPs for aerial seeding of cover crops and for municipal stormwater assessments. TAC heard a report from Philip Halteman on adaptive management process and structured decision making, and is trying to incorporate aspects of this technique in the development of budget and task recommendations.
- **NY CAC** – Ron reported that the committee will meet in two weeks on Nov 27th for a presentation from Dave Wick, (L. George Park Commission) on regulations relating to preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. CAC also will discuss plans for bringing natural gas across the lake to Ticonderoga.
- **VT CAC** – James reported that three CAC workgroups have been developing draft priorities on governance and preparing the CAC's annual report to the legislature. The committee will meet again in December and hopes to have the annual report ready for January.
- **QC CAC** – Martin reported on a project to conserve 38 hectares near Walbridge. \$30,000 has been made available to complete a land use assessment. This area is strategically important as it is in the middle to agricultural land, and the landowners have decided to donate it for conservation. MRC Brome-Missisquoi has hired a firm to make a study within Lake Champlain towns of near-shore lots that would need management to reduce their impact on water quality. Martin described an initiative in five towns that will make bylaws on how to build better roads, how to better conserve land, and related to this are plans for a new enforcement position. An inspector will be hired for the 21 towns in the region to make sure everything is done right.

Legislative Update- Tom reported on activity in the lame duck session - the Sportsman Act. Sen Leahy supports the package and it includes partners in Vermont for conservation work. LCBP has sponsored 3 NAWCA grant proposals in the past, and funding for acquisitions are again included in this act. (The Mud Creek wetlands state wildlife management area contiguous with Quebec land received a grant based on application funded by LCBP). A real problem is the uncertain state of the Farm Bill; the Senate passed the Farm bill and it needs to go through the House

Manager's Report- Bill reported that he and Meg have continued the dialog with Canal Corps and Army Corps of Engineers to support a barrier feasibility study. They hope to see an agreement soon, but all things have stalled due to Hurricane Sandy. They hope that by the Steering Committee meeting in February there is agreement on how this study will be conducted. Bill reported that Breck has resigned as TAC chair to accept new responsibilities as Director of Lake Champlain Sea Grant: the Steering Committee thanked Breck for his many efforts and careful work as TAC chair. Mike Winslow, vice-chair, has taken over as acting chair until the position is filled. Bill discussed the follow-up to the Adaptive Management presentation at the last Steering Committee meeting, and plans for additional steps with a consultant to plan how we might implement this tool. Robin Gregory who was here last meeting is a consultant that does provide the type of services we need. Bill noted that we do have funds available for the next step, once it is confirmed that the committee wants to move ahead. David said the presentations at last meeting were important and we need to discuss what we want to do to utilize the process for our purposes. David shared his strong interest in getting SC involvement and taking next steps. Lynne noted there was a lot of good conversation at last meeting that we should keep Structured Decision Making on the agenda for future meetings

Draft 2011 Flood Report - Eric and Stephanie presented a detailed update of the draft flood report and the committee discussed the draft policy recommendations. The committee decided that the best way for the flood report to be presented is for LCBP staff to present it to the Executive or Steering Committee, and the committee to accept the report, when it is finalized. In this way, the report will not need to be exhaustively reviewed and approved by all jurisdictions, but rather can be presented as an LCBP report accepted, but not authored, by the Steering Committee. A redraft of the report will be circulated to committee members following additional jurisdictional input, and a (virtually) final draft will be reviewed and received by the Executive Committee in January.

INVITED SPEAKER

Annie Larose, Dura-Club, Quebec

Quebec - Morpion Stream BMP Project

The Committee heard a presentation about Morpion Stream best management practices, and efforts to reduce Blue Green Algae blooms through watershed management in Quebec.

FY13 Budget Development Bill reviewed the budget process as an introduction to a review of key issues and developing task proposals being discussed in each advisory committee.

Heritage Area Partnership Advisory Committee - Key Issues, Catherine distributed a handout of key issues and tasks, adjusted to reflect SC guidance - provided at the summer meeting.

The Steering Committee provided comments including guidance for the committee to:

- Look for ways to integrate water quality into program initiatives wherever possible.
- Consider community water trails as a great way to get people on the water and to get communities involved one on one with their environment.
- Prioritize programs for young people where possible, looking for opportunities for both outdoor connections and hi-tech interactions.
- Keep the War of 1812 as a task priority in some way.

Education & Outreach Committee - Key Issues, Buzz distributed a handout describing E&O key issues. The E&O recently met to look at the issue of technology in schools with educators, as it's a major focus for us right now. E&O recommends continuing to work with watershed groups and key issues including:

- 1.) Measuring results from past initiatives
- 2.) Mass marketing to more general lay audiences vs. targeted audiences alone
- 3.) Other project suggestions were received by E&O and TAC- 4 new projects, 3 technical projects. E&O will review these tasks in December.

The Steering Committee provided comments including guidance for the committee to:

- Look to build a message into all of our projects to have the public give back information about which of our outreach efforts works most effectively.
- This helps us both know what the public is interested in and also know what works best.

Technical Advisory Committee - Potential Task List, Mike reported on the 31 project topics currently under consideration by TAC. These tasks will be developed into one-page descriptions. TAC will further discuss each proposal and will have a sticky-dot exercise in December to prioritize the list. TAC and LCBP staff are preparing a structured framework to assist in the rating of tasks. TAC is good at evaluating research projects but faced greater challenges in evaluating some of the implementation projects being proposed, in part because there is not a great deal of effectiveness information. Projects from VT/NY jurisdictions are categorically in the low-impact-but-need-to-be-done category.

The Steering Committee provided comments including guidance for the committee to:

- Think of Long Term Monitoring as a key part of the annual workplan for LCBP, although it may be possible at some point to shift monitoring budgets to the jurisdictions from the LCBP.
- Keep in mind the high priority of implementation tasks that reduce phosphorus, relative to research tasks
- To help advance the budgeting dialogue, it may help to have someone who sat on the committee of two-state DEC's attend the TAC meeting to explain the project.
- EPA members asked if the DEC's proposals for extra personnel out in the field were or should be part of the state's own budget priorities- the TAC should review task effectiveness rather than focus on the funding mechanism.
- Keep in mind the importance of the timing of when projects would be done, and how that might be coordinated with programs that it complements, like the TMDL.

DRAFT 2013 LCBP Committee meeting Schedule & Agenda reviewed

The next meeting is an Executive Committee meeting on Jan 9th in Grand Isle. At the meeting we will receive prioritized draft budget items, with descriptions, from advisory committees. Documents to review will be sent out about a week before meeting. The next Steering Committee will be Feb 12-13, 2013 in Lake Placid, NY.

Other Business - none

Adjourn 3:05 pm 😊