

**Lake Champlain Basin Program
Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday June 9th, 2010
The Grand Isle Lake House, Grand Isle, VT**

Final Minutes

Members: Julie Moore, Betsy Lowe, Daniel Leblanc, Erik Beck, Gene Brickman, Kip Potter (for Rob Allen), Marilyn Stephenson (for Astor Boozer), Laura DiPietro (for Roger Allbee), Steve Lanthier (for Mike Latham), Roseanne Murphy, Louis Hak, Seth Ausubel (for Mario DelVicario), Roseanne Murphy, Rolf Diamant, Mary Watzin, Dave Tilton, Mike Winslow, Real Pelletier, Bob Kiss, Gina Campoli, Ron Jackson, Buzz Hoerr

Staff: Bill, Colleen, Eric, Meg, Nicole, Kathy, Michaela, Fred Dunlap, Martin Mimeault, Beth Card, Mario Paula

Guests: Lynne Hamjian, USEPA (via phone); David Borthwick-Leslie; Jason Shea, USACOE; Kevin Beattie, Northern VT RC&D; Gary Sabourin, VT Forest & Parks; Elysia Korbet, ANR Intern; Macedonian and Albanian Delegates for Shkora Lake Forum and Lake Preska.

Welcome and Introductions *Julie Moore (chair)*

Draft Meeting Agenda review No changes

Action Item: April, 2010 Steering Committee meeting minutes approval

Roseanne motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Gene seconded, the motion passed by unanimous approval

Public Comments & Dialogue

Kevin Beatty, VT RC&D project coordinator for the portable skidder bridge project spoke. A skidder bridge is a wooden, moveable bridge for logging operations to protect stream crossings. VT has had a loan program for 1.5 years. Kevin provides technical assistance to this work. He supports the proposal in the draft LCBP budget to expand and enhance the program. Several NRCD programs do not have technical assistance for this work, so this project, which includes an expansion to NY for this program supports a very effective technique for stream protection and preservation of water quality.

Reports

Ron - NYCAC- A meeting was held in May with Congressman Owens about CAC and LCBP hopes and issues.

Buzz-VTCAC- Buzz reported on a well attended Tyler Place event. The CAC has been working with citizen groups and many individuals to determine what should be in the Action plan. The plan presented ten recommendations, and 9 of the 10 requests were taken care of within the legislature or through budget actions this year. The date for Northern Lake informational meeting is Aug 14 at North Hero House Dock. South Lake public involvement is picking up steam (thanks to Julie) and there will be a meeting there in September.

Real-QC CAC- A Missisquoi North sub-watershed council is being created to help stakeholders in this area work on local issues, modeled after OBVBM. A \$10K grant was received to help maintain buffer zones along streambanks in the Basin. The CAC has decided to collaborate with a Concordia University researcher to participate in a Climate Change project to create green corridors on Rock River so that it can migrate more naturally. A West Marsh viewing area is being opened. Nearly 10,000 trees have been distributed to citizens to be planted for windbreaks and on riverbanks especially. There has been a good response from farmers for program available in LCB for environmental improvements.

Mike Winslow –At TAC’s last two meetings it approved the CSA workplan and the Internal Phosphorus workplan. The Roadside ditch and climate change adaptation proposals now are being reviewed. TAC also reviewed the latest *OFA* chapter revisions. The Lake Champlain Research Conference was recently held and it included a USGS presentation on P loading trends. It is now possible, using new statistical techniques, to detect downward P trends in some parts of the lake.

Buzz – E&O has been working on the draft budget and the plan revision

Bill- CHRAC has not met this year. However, the CVNHP Plan, following release by the Steering Committee, is out for public comments. This followed many meetings around Basin to present plan, which generated mostly positive feedback. All SC members should have received copies and are encouraged to comment. The plan will be submitted to NPS for review and approval later this summer. A heritage summit meeting was held in Montreal on May 17th and 9 SC members attended. We thank our friends at the law firm Faskin-Martineau and Quebec Labrador Foundation for their tremendous support in making this meeting happen, with funding support from the NPS. We update the Steering Committee on the plan development at a later meeting.

Legislative Update – Tom Berry reported that none of the federal appropriations bills has gone to subcommittee mark up yet. Staff expect that appropriations may not be passed until after the November elections –and this can lead to some uncertainty about the final outcome.

Manager's Report – Bill reported that we have an enhanced overall budget for FY10, reflecting partnerships with EPA, USACE, USFWS, GLFC, NPS and the states of NY and VT. USFWS has been approved to do a number of projects with GLFC funds, reflecting legislative intent. The budget presented is now over \$11.5M where as a couple of years ago we were looking at closer to \$2M. *OFA* has been developing and we hope for signatures in the end of September. We are working on the revisions of *OFA* with a large commitment of staff time. We have also hired Molly Michaud to work on the management plan for the summer. We will embed some of the process that we need to follow for budgeting and operations into the framework chapters of into *OFA*. Bill circulated a timeline and outline for the budget process in FY11. The SC will receive emerging priorities from the advisory committees, and will provide guidance back to the advisory committees for budget development purposes. E&O, HAPAC, TAC and management will send up proposed tasks in the fall. In January the SC will discuss the projects and finalize the budget.

Gene noted that much of the work done through the Section 542 program is not listed in the budget. This support augments and leverages many projects. In general, there is underutilization of Section 542, which is another vehicle to accomplish the *OFA* goals, despite there being many great projects underway. It would be easier to increase funding for this section if it were more fully used.

Bill noted that we can take several steps to increase use of Section 542. One important move with regard to programs in Section 542 to start the Champlain Canal feasibility study as it is an important vector for AIS. That study is authorized under WRDA 2007 and, while there are no funds available for that now, we have \$200K set aside in the draft budget to begin that feasibility study. In subsequent years this project may not have to be under section 542. in future years. We hear the message that we are underutilizing Section 542.

Mary noted that it would be useful if more of the federal partners Champlain tasks were outlined in the budget with information about the tasks. Beyond that, it would be helpful to hear from the federal partners themselves before the budget is set, so we may be better informed and there is more dialogue.

Marilyn agreed, noting that NRCS funding does not come through the SC, but the Service can be influential as to how the dollars flow on respective side of the basin. The federal partners should be sharing what they are accomplishing and how they are addressing priorities in *OFA*. This should be through a more formal annual process.

Lynne noted that this is similar to what Chesapeake Bay now is trying to do. The concept is great and we can look at the Chesapeake program and scale back the model. Erik agreed that the synergy that we have can work better under this recommended model.

FY10 Executive Committee FY10 Budget Recommendations

Bill reviewed the draft budget and the Steering Committee focused on tasks that were identified for discussion by the Executive Committee. This included finding \$30,000 to augment the funds available in NY for the NY Champlain Coordinator. This was done by cutting the overall recommended EPA total of \$4,030,000 back to \$4,000,000. The Committee adjusted the draft budget, reducing \$5,000 from office operations #6, \$10K from CBEI #18 (GLFC will cover 2 years instead of 3), \$5,000 out of LiDAR #39, and \$10,000 from WASCOB #47.

The Budget spreadsheet was updated over lunch.

Approve Farm Awards in NY & VT

Colleen reported nominations for awards in recognition of WQ improvement projects. The QC farm award was made earlier this year, and site visits have now been completed for NY and VT. The VT nominee is the David Hartshorn farm in Waitsfield and Warren, and organic vegetable farm. The NY nominee is the Lurkey Farm in Essex Co, a CAFO level farm that is practicing intensive rotational grazing, has a NYS DEC approved plan to apply sludge from wastewater treatment facility, established 25 foot buffers along its creek, and has only one stream crossing for cattle.

Action Item: Farm Awards: *Buzz moved to approve the nominees and Ron seconded. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

Action Item: FY10 Budget Approval: *Buzz moved to approve the budget as finalized and Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

Opportunities for Action Draft Revision Review

Phosphorus Reduction Chapter

Eric reported that both TAC and the Executive Committee have signed off on the current draft. The tasks have not changed. Julie asked members to provide final content needed. Gina recommended more emphasis on urban runoff actions. Beth offered to provide a chart that could be used that summarizes all the New England legislation on P

reduction. Tom encouraged the Committee to emphasize the implementation role of the public, so that the plan doesn't imply that governments alone are going to provide the solution to pollution that is generated by society. The Committee agreed to provide final comments by June 30th.

General Plan Discussion

Mary noted that we need to have a statement that we are moving to a different (online) model of the plan. Also, the plan for 2010 will be obsolete in 2011 and people will be able to go on-line to find the updated info. She noted the need for better linkages between the action items and the expected outcomes we expect from the plan. This should be articulated and Mary will offer language. Julie noted that it would be useful next to have the true introduction to the whole plan would help us get a better idea. The intro and the strategies/framework chapters will be LCBP's top priorities. Bill noted that staff are trying to get the plan draft finalized so the SC can look at the full package of chapters at the August 18th meeting, and very soon after we can share the full draft with the regional administrators, the Governors and the Premier.

Betsy noted that one month's notice is not enough to get Gov. Patterson there, so she has begun the request for the 28th of September. Seth agreed, and the EPA members will start the necessary interactions for RAs to attend. The two Governors and the premier of QC will need a letter. Real – in each district we will have to review the document and make sure that we agree on it. Now our homework is to review the document and ensure that what we put in the chapters can and will be done. Mario noted that it is important to highlight progress. More needs to be pointed out about the degree to which loading targets are being met, from the LTMP. June 30th is the deadline to give us comments.

Other Chapters Discussed

Jon Erickson is working on the economics chapter, but action items have not yet been added to that chapter. E&O is almost ready for review. The infrastructure chapter is under review as well and Bill is adding more info about the LCBP structure and operations. Because there may be a number of SC member changes in the next year, the plan should provide direction from you for the next generation of the Committee. Eric noted that we will also have some more information about CVNHP for the cultural heritage chapter, but that timeline also involves additional NPS review steps. The Committee reviewed the Managing Fish and Wildlife chapter and concluded that more work needs to be done on the introductory text.

Update CVNHP Draft Management Plan Process

Jim – handed out bound copies of the draft management plan / Environmental Assessment. This document, still a draft, now includes a description of what the heritage area is and what plans are for it in this region. Organizations in the region did not want to compete with another management group and that is reflected in their recommendations about what should happen in the CVNHP. Since the Steering Committee finalized and approved the draft for public comment. It has been released and comments are being assembled. We will prepare a summary of comments and a responsiveness summary later this summer and bring back revisions of the document to the Executive and Steering Committee for final adjustments and approval, prior to submitting it for the required final review and approval of the Secretary of the Interior later this year. Dave noted that the EA will need some formal process for review and comments and suggested that the USFWS will consider a review and letter. Jim noted that the project will need a careful review by federal agencies involved in Lake Champlain, and that we have reached out to tribes and will soon to agencies for support. Erik B will take the lead at EPA to provide a review and to write a letter, to keep the process working.

Draft LCBP Committee Meeting & Work Schedule through January, 2011

Bill circulated a schedule of Committee meetings for 2010, including a review of the agenda tasks for each of these meetings. The next Executive Committee meeting will incorporate a webinar to finalize actions to-date for *OFA*. CVNHP comments/revisions can also be discussed at that meeting. The Steering Committee meets next on August 18 in QC, to finalize *OFA* text. Graphic design will come after that meeting. It will be very tight scheduling, but we are still aiming to have a full draft of the plan ready for signatures by late September. The Executive Committee on September 8th will provide a final review *OFA*, and transmittal to the Governors, the Premier and the Regional Administrators. As with the 2003 version, the Governors and RAs will sign the *OFA* document, which will include, embedded within it, a letter of support signed by the Premier of Quebec.

Other Business

Julie thanked Mike Winslow for his service as Interim TAC chair.

Adjourn 3:25 PM *Gene moved to adjourn, Erik Beck seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous approval.*