

Lake Champlain Basin Program
Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday September 14, 2011

St. Armand Municipal Office, St Armand, QC

Approved Minutes

Members: Daniel Leblanc, *Chair*, David Mears, Betsy Lowe, Erik Beck, Jolinda LaClair (for Chuck Ross), Vicky Drew, Louis Hak, R  al Pelletier, Christina Marts, Ron Jackson, Buzz Hoerr, Breck Bowden, Mary Watzin, Gina Campoli, Catherine Brooks, Marilyn Stephenson (for Astor Boozer), Mario Paula (for Mario Delvicario via phone), Steve Garceau (for Jean-Phillipe D  tolle)
Staff: Bill, Eric, Stephanie, Meg, Colleen, Kathy, Michaela, Fred, Martin, Beth Card, Jim
Guests: Tom Berry, Kari Dolan, Lynne Hamjian, Jeanne Voorhees, Eric Smeltzer, Jason Stockwell, Phelan Fretz, Isabelle Gregoire

Welcome and Introductions – R  al welcomed everyone to St Armand.

ACTION ITEM: Ron moved to accept the draft minutes of Steering Committee meeting of June 29. Buzz seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

ACTION ITEM: Buzz moved to approve the concept of the draft resolution on the **International Year of the Forest**, leaving some minor wording adjustments to be finalized by the Executive Committee at its next meeting. Breck seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Brief Updates from the Regions

Vermont – David reported on the flood issues in Vermont. The flooding from the Irene storm required much of VT DEC to move out of the Waterbury facilities to new temporary offices in Winooski. The Department has been focused on the critical flood related problems in central and southern Vermont. Debris management, hazardous waste disposal, and water quality issues are combined with immediate need to shore up bridges, stabilize homes, and allow for the fastest manageable reconstruction of roads that washed out. Gov. Shumlin has provided staff the authority to give approval to get immediate work done, but there also is an emerging challenge, because many structures may be rebuilt in the same way that caused them to be exposed to damage by the flood. David introduced Kari Dolan, the new Ecosystem Restoration Program director. For past six years Kari has worked with VT DEC on floodplain management, and previously she worked for NWF on watershed management projects. Lake Champlain TMDL work continues in a good partnership with EPA. In October there will be meetings with stakeholder groups on TMDL policy matters throughout the region.

Qu  bec - Daniel reported that the Draft Regulation released on 8/19 declared a special planning zone in municipalities of the Richelieu Valley, and Brome-Missisquoi and Rouville counties. In response to the flood, Premier Charest announced that the Governments of Canada and US will make a referral to IJC, asking them to establish a task force for Lake Champlain and Richelieu River. Tom asked if NY has asked to be added to this request to IJC. Bill noted that Congressman Owens has made a similar request of the State Department, from which the reference would be issued. The Province issued health advisories for drinking water in Bedford and St Armand for one month during the summer, due to BGA toxins.

New York - Betsy reported that NYS DEC also has been focusing on the effects of Hurricane Irene, in communities hit by the storm, and also dealing with extensive recreational trail damage. Governor Cuomo has come to the region three times in the past few weeks to view and assess damage. A lot of work went into Route 73 to make it passable again. Betsy described a number of

invasive species management initiatives including the Lake George Asian Clam response. Larry Nashett has retired from NYS DEC; he was on rapid response team and will be replaced by Scott Durkee.

Federal Partners – Erik Beck introduced Jeanne Voorhees, who will be new Lake Champlain Coordinator as Erik moves to other tasks. Buzz noted that Erik has always worked to make things happen and always been able to find a way and expressed the appreciation of the Steering Committee for his careful and helpful work. Mario welcomed Jeanne and also noted stated he had learned a lot from Erik and would miss him in this role. Vicky Drew reported on the America's Great Outdoors program in VT side, where efforts will include a water quality program, and the installation of edge-of-field equipment and monitoring through fall and spring. NY has worked in wildlife habitat management and stream bank management under the same program.

Brief Updates from Committees

VT CAC - Buzz reported on the August Northern Lake meeting and the recent VT CAC and E&O meetings. All meetings included discussions on the flooding. Buzz had flood problems this spring and coined the term “new normal” together with a question about what exactly that is. Eric Clifford, dairy farmer, gave very passionate and scary account of what is happening in the world of agriculture as a result of the flooding - a flood, late planting, then a drought, and a flood again - this all has hurt farmers greatly. Julie Moore is now vice-chair and an active member of the VT CAC.

EO - Buzz summed up the emerging issues of the E&O Committee and circulated a one-page description of issues. In particular, the committee encourages funding for local grant programs and hands on pollution prevention.

NY CAC - Ron reported that the NY CAC has not met since the last Steering Committee meeting, but will meet soon in Crown Point near the new bridge. The CAC is prioritizing better management practices to reduce phosphorus load associated with large storms and floods.

QC CAC – Réal reported that the QC CAC concerns are similar to those of VT and NY; the flooding was accompanied by wind damage. People want to fix their property after the flooding, and the CAC is encouraging stabilization of riverbanks and shorelines as a part of the flood response. They are making a map of every property and looking at opportunities for restoration of 2.4 miles of shore as a pilot project.

Legislative Update – Tom reported that Senator Leahy was able to bring Interior Secretary Salazar to the Basin in August, in a visit that addressed the new status of sea lamprey control within the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the announcement of the approval of the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership Management plan. The Secretary also visited ECHO, where Phelan hosted a discussion of USGS stream gages. In regard to the flooding conference to be organized by the LCBP, the funding to support that effort should be available soon from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. No appropriations bills have yet passed to fund the government for FY 12, so there will need to be a continuing resolution to keep things going.

Manager's Report – Bill Howland

Bill welcomed Christina Marts as the designee of Rolf Diamant who is retiring the end of the month, and he thanked Rolf for his great help at every step in the long process of preparing and obtaining approval of the CVNHP Management Plan. The visit from Secretary Salazar was a big event for LCBP although the details of the visit could not be determined until the end and therefore we were not able to make it a steering committee event. Bill introduced Stephanie Strouse, our new technical associate. She will be the LCBP's QA officer and will assist in the oversight of many technical tasks underway. Due to flooding, some of our contractors will need amendments of the timeframe and scope of work to reset the details of their tasks. Staff are working on the *State of the Lake* report, scheduled to be published in May 2012.

Flood Conference – Bill provided a handout intended to frame a discussion of the Potential Goals, Objectives, Timeline and Final Deliverable for the conference. The Steering Committee discussed the potential scope of the conference in some detail. David agreed to distill the many comments and return to the Executive Committee an updated potential planning framework for the flood conference.

Emerging Issues Reports from Advisory Chairs

- Bill reviewed the budget development process and timeline, providing a handout. Following the reports of Advisory Committee Chairs today, the Steering and Executive Committees will provide direction to the Advisory Committees to guide their efforts in developing specific budget tasks through the fall. Lynne thanked the staff for putting the timeline together early in the process and noted that processing the Federal allocations will entail a short turnaround time, due to increased pressure within EPA to get money out and working.
- **E&O** – Buzz, in the morning, explained the E&O discussion process and distributed a summary handout. E&O is particularly interested in providing adequate funds for local grant programs which allow partners to leverage volunteers to complete on-the-ground projects, providing technical and financial support to local watershed groups, and helping citizens to take hands-on roles for improving local watersheds. From an emerging issues perspective, LCBP is encouraged to continue to partner with local groups and governments to solve issues on the ground, such as stormwater and other flood related issues.
- **TAC** - Breck explained process used by TAC for identifying priority areas of interest, and circulated a list of TAC recommendations. Two types of projects were identified ongoing tasks and discrete (new) tasks. The Committee discussed several technical program priorities and began to refine the primary areas of interest for FY2012. Breck agreed to refine the list for distribution prior to the Executive Committee meeting of September 28th. Executive Committee will discuss and provide TAC with priorities and guidance for the next steps in budget development.
- **HAPAC** - Catherine recounted the HAPAC discussion of priorities and spoke from a revision (circulated) of the list of issues provided by HAPAC at the previous Steering Committee meeting. She described key priority issues that relate to *OFA* and the 3 themes within the *CVNHP* plan. The committee considered in preparing this list that the *CVNHP* budget could go to \$500K. The highest interests are in continuing the Wayside Exhibit Design Program, the Annual International summit, and Stakeholder Coordination grants. Also important are wayside exhibit mini-grants, grants for research and interpretation of arts and humanities, develop a marketing or branding plan for *CVNHP*, and developing new LC Bikeways loops.

State of the Lake Content Update

Eric presented the current stage of development of the *State of the Lake 2012* report, sharing with the Steering Committee some of the new graphics and content that are being developed to characterize new information. The same basic layout will be used, with content expanded to include the effects of the 2011 floods, and certain other topics of emerging importance. The release dates now is May, 2012. One key component will be direct links to updated information on our (or partner) website, and increased emphasis

on progress. Further information will be provided at the Steering Committee meeting in November.

Committee Appointments

ACTION ITEM: *Marilyn moved to enter Executive Session to review appointment nominations, Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

- The Steering Committee entered Executive Session to review Executive Committee's nominations for TAC appointments.
- Committee returned to Open Session per order of the Chair

ACTION ITEM: Committee Appointments

Breck moved to approve nominees Kevin Behm, Gary Meffe, Eric Young and Paul Sisson to three year terms on the TAC. Betsy seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Adjourn 3:30 p.m.