

Lake Champlain Basin Program
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday January 4th, 2017
10:00 AM – 2:45 PM
LCBP Conference Room, Gordon Center House, Grand Isle, VT

TAC Meeting Summary

Attendance:

TAC attendance: Jamie Shanley, Mike Winslow (left after Exec session due to illness), MaryJo Feuerbach, Neil Kamman, Laura DiPietro, Martin Mimeault, Mark Malchoff, Fred Dunlap, Breck Bowden, John Kanoza, Bob Brower, Kip Potter, Eric Perkins, Angela Shambaugh, Bernie Pientka, Bill Ardren, James Jutras, Eric Young, Curt Gervich, Mario Paula (phone), Andrew Schroth, Jennifer Callahan (phone)

LCBP Staff: Matthew Vaughan, Stephanie Castle, Eric Howe, Meg Modley

Guests: Andrew Milliken, David Borthwick Leslie

I. 10:00 AM Executive Session: RFP Review

II. 10:30 AM Updates and Announcements

Martin – QC MDDELCC wishes to establish a collaboration with LCBP and partners in Vermont and New York to work on a blue-green algae project (ATRAP) at the University of Montreal. Hopefully there will be a presentation at TAC next fall. Daniel LeBlanc is on new IJC study board for Lake Champlain-Richelieu River flood study, set to begin on January 20th.

MaryJo F – There is a hazardous material rapid response plan meeting for the Vermont portion of Lake Champlain tomorrow at 11am in Shelburne. The EPA is in a continuing resolution through April, but will be discussing its budget.

Neil K.– New regulations and permits are coming out of the state of VT to implement Act 64 and the TMDL. They may come forward to the TAC to share the updates. Four new class 1 wetlands are being designated in the state. The Vermont Stormwater manual was approved by legislative committee, TS4 permit also been issued in 2016 and two basin plans completed public review. Response plan for TMDL implementation plan is finalized. A new secretary, Julie Moore, was appointed for the Agency of Natural Resources.

Laura D. – The Agency of Agriculture’s tile drain final report due mid-January and the clean water fund will come up. The new secretary of Agency of Agriculture is Anson Tebbetts and Deputy Secretary Allyson Eastman.

Bill A. – The USFWS has a new blog series coming out on salmon restoration, which will be a 5 part series shared on the LCBP website. Partial funding through this program supported the Willsboro dam removal.

Jamie S. – The IJC Lake Champlain Richelieu flood study is underway January 20th. Keith Robinson, from USGS, will be co-chair.

Bernie P. – New Vermont fishing regulations will be published soon. This is the first year to split fish and wildlife information. There are a lot of feature articles about AIS and eating the fish you catch to make it more than just the regulations and that was done with VT Life.

III. 10:35 AM Summary of Previous TAC Meeting

James J. moved to approve the December 7th meeting minutes, Angela S. seconded, unanimous approval.

Revisions:

BGA new project from Canada is called ATRAPP and the first task is a diagnostic tool for drinking water and then Marc Simoneaulook into abbreviations for clarification.

Eric Perkins provided written changes to EPA comments.

Section 8 downscaled SWAT model a few minor edits to send from Neil.

IV. 10:45 AM LCBP updates, Eric Howe, LCBP

Eric provided updates at LCBP since the last TAC meeting. Dr. Andrew Schroth was appointed to the TAC by LCBP Steering Committee. Andrew Milliken is the new project leader for USFWS for the LC office and he is here today to observe the TAC. USFWS working to develop some Atlantic salmon displays for Lake Champlain with LCBP staff. Opportunities for Action (OFA) was formally approved by the Steering Committee in December, but turned over to the Executive Committee for final review. Three public meetings will be held and public comment period (for 30 days). Tentative dates are January 24th QC CAC, January 30th NYCAC, Feb 13th VT CAC meetings. The document is still in review with the office on International and Tribal Affairs. Boat Launch Steward data is in from the 2016 season and has been shared with this committee. AIS grant applications and Pollution Prevention applications are in and have external confidential reviewers working on rankings. Draft RODs will be presented to the executive committee.

V. 11:00 AM Discuss FY17 budget tasks, Matt Vaughan

The group rank average presented. If Continuing Resolution holds, then we would be \$4M from EPA to support everything. EPA and GLFC typically puts roughly \$2.2M for technical projects.

TAC discussion and comments:

Bob- selling CREP is the problem in NY because it is hard to get folks to sign up.

Combine the two projects and try to make the NY agronomist focus more on buffers.

Move #17 up above #13 and reduce #13 to \$60k. #17 will now have same ranking as #13.

Change #13 from \$200,000 to \$60,000 to include Phase 1 and Phase 1a. It could be folded up above the line into a #5 project and moved #17 up to be ranked also as a #13.

Breck moved to approved budget recommendations as amended, kip seconded, unanimous approval, no abstentions.

VI. 12:00 PM Lunch

VII. 1:00 PM Update on Agricultural BMP Database project, *Mike Middleman, VAAF*

Mike provided a progress report with potential to continue funding of this project. He gave some background information of project, goals, screenshots of the database, challenges, current work, and future work. In 2012, an MOU was signed between 8 agricultural partners (including LCBP) to share information while protecting privacy concerns, and increase coordination among partner field staff. The database also tracks BMP implementation (without double counting). The project originally started with \$50,000, a Request for Information (RFI) in 2013 called for \$300-\$500k required for ongoing maintenance. LCBP funds were used as match for existing funds. Stone Environmental won competitive RFP to develop the database, which has been functional since summer of 2016. Goals of database: increase consistency in data collection among all users, allow field staff to quickly see work of other organizations, allow easy conservation planning. Wanted to assist with flexible reporting to meet implementation reporting requirements of TMDL. Can create maps and export data within MOU partners. Screenshots: can search for farms, conservation practices or areas. Many different map layers. Has field info, practices, interactions and staff associated with each farm. Can specify crop, management, planned and implemented practices, and other parameters. Meets information requirements for TMDL reporting. Records interaction history across partners for the first time. Map layers include most ANR atlas layers. Can create maps very quickly to alleviate bottleneck for farmers getting NRCS funds for implementation. All info included in mapping portion can be accessed through reporting function (can be filtered by practice or geography, etc.). Challenges: took a long time to get off the ground due to state oversight. Data sharing restricted by national NRCS. Secured additional funding through LCBP/VAAF for another year to allow for more data sharing. Users will have visibility criteria (signed off by NRCS). Will allow more users (such as watershed groups) access. Will discuss future continuous funding with partners. MaryJo: If a practice is implemented once, is it counted later? Mike showed the practice database, with implementation dates. User can set the end date as well. Neil is interested in how we can plug these data into the tactical basin planning tool. Mike said he's been working with partners to ensure all the necessary data is there to use across tools. Laura interested to know if it can be used in NY. Brower says it would be useful, but there has never been a statewide effort. Mike said that partners could set geographic boundaries, and can extend into NY portion of the Lake Champlain watershed. Could at least use data from NEIWPC NY Agronomist. Must be careful not double-counting implementation if not all partners in NY are involved. Difficulty in tracking systems because NRCS does not track systems. Still a hole in database. Breck interested in how much effort it requires for one farm. Mike said it can be time consuming depending on conservation efforts on farm, etc. Could bring in interns to enter old data on farms.

VIII. 1:45 PM Discussion of FY18 TAC budget process, *Eric Howe & Matt Vaughan*

Eric has been wanting to change TAC budget process. Outlined in handout to start conversation. Wants better projects with more specific outcomes and outputs to align

with LCBP, EPA goals. Would like to move towards pre-proposal process that bigger funding sources use, which would replace the current 1 pager system. Eric/Matt will review this process (after TAC feedback) with Exec Committee in January. Proceed to Steering Committee in February. Could be in place for FY18 budget process (starting this fall). Matt ran through brief vision for new process: Every September, TAC would develop priority areas based on newest version of OFA. No dollar amount would be assigned (could have broad dollar guidance), so authors of projects could assign proper budgets. There would be one call for pre-proposals. LCBP will form review committees for each priority area. Parallel track for continuing projects (Long Term Monitoring, Boat Launch Stewards, Water Chestnut, Local Grants) that would go straight to workplan (local grants would have separate RFP). 6 weeks for pre-proposals (TAC agreed enough time). Ranked list "ROD" sent to TAC, and would decide what should be full proposals. Can decide how selective full proposal stage would be. There would be 6-8 weeks for full proposals and external reviews (might bump against SC February meeting). Laura said SC meeting has always been problematic for the state (should push back to March). Would help to get projects off the ground by the field season. Martin suggests we start earlier in the year to have process done in time, and would be able to reference OFA. Eric clarified that wanted to keep it open to allow more project ideas.

Bernie: Where is line of "recurring" projects- something funded for 3 years, 5 years or 20 years? Need to create a process that gives public a view that these projects are vetted every year if they are removed from the pre-proposal track.

Neil: Envisioning two calls for proposals? One call for pre-proposals with separate sections, or separate calls for each category. Reviewed externally.

Martin: Want to attract people to submit proposals, even in small budget years. Looks like closed room if we only fund the same things every year. Could we bring in other money to fund these recurring projects?

Gervich wants to enhance transparency of process. Right now, we have control over combining projects. We would lose that if PI's were submitting own projects. LCBP could still work with applicant to broaden scope or change, etc.

Breck supports this process. Advocate, for simplicity, having one RFP with references to OFA. Takes load off of staff and PI's because they will be writing pre-proposals, not entire proposals. Can't share intellectual property across proposals.

Mark: Every TAC member could see pre-proposal and could recuse yourself from ranking a project if you have a conflict. Would need more structure by time it gets to full proposals stage. But TAC could balance out portfolio at pre-proposal stage. External review would happen at full proposals.

Angela is concerned the process is too long for PIs. Not unusual timeframe, but be sure that applicants are aware of the timeframe.

Bill Ardren suggested that if we don't get acceptable pre-proposals for given themes, LCBP can still release an RFP. Breck disagrees and says that if one area is needed in a given year, then they should be funded.

Would TAC members be eligible to submit pre-proposals? Perhaps could submit a pre-proposal to a different category than that which TAC member sits on review committee. Neil suggests that we release pre-proposal plan the day after we release OFA. Splashy public appeal.

Steering Committee needs to weigh in on priorities. That won't happen immediately after OFA.

IX. 2:45 PM Adjourn