

Lake Champlain Basin Program
Draft Agenda - Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 15, 2018 9:30 AM – 3:15 PM
LCBP Office, Gordon Center House, Grand Isle, VT

9:30 Arrival and Networking

10:00 AM Meeting Convenes – *Chair: Emily Boedecker (VT ANR representative)*

- **Introductions** around the room,
- **Committee Members:**
 - **Phone:** MaryJo Feuerbach (EPA R1), Sara Hart (NYS OPRHP), Pierre Leduc (QC CAC), Mario Paula (for Rick Balla, EPA R2), John Krueger (HAPAC Chair), Vic Putman (NY CAC Chair), Daria Mazey (USACE)
 - **Present:** Kari Dolan (for Emily Boedecker, VT DEC), Alyson Eastman (VAAFAM), Mike Winslow (TAC Chair), Martin Mimeault (for Daniel Leblanc, QC MDDELCC)
- **LCBP Staff:** Eric Howe, Meg Modley, Ellen Kujawa, Jim Brangan, Matt Vaughan, Ryan Mitchell, Colleen Hickey, Phone: Jane Ceraso (NEIWPC), Bethany Sargent (VT DEC)
- **Public Comments** – none provided.

ACTION ITEM: Approve Meeting Minutes from February 13, 2018

Motion to Approve by John Krueger as amended, second by Mike Winslow. All in favor. Alyson Eastman abstained.

- **Partner Updates:**
 - Jurisdictional:
 - NY – no update provided.
 - QC – Martin announced that this would be his last Executive Committee meeting, as he is retiring in May. MDDELCC has had some staff turnover, and he is working with the Ministry to identify new contacts for LCBP within the Ministry. Renee Rouleau will continue to serve on the Steering Committee as the voting member representing the municipal seat for Québec, but Gilles Rioux, who represents a different municipal region for the Missisquoi Bay watershed, also will attend when he can. The Québec and Canadian budget development process is underway, we will find out more next month. Québec has a new law around wetland protection that will be going into effect on March 23 that will include 22 regulation changes, which are going through public comment period now.
 - VT – Kari is serving as a proxy for Emily today, who is recovering from illness. DEC just completed the 3rd (of 4 for this fiscal year) grant round of ERP grants. DEC will be supporting 21 projects ranging from stormwater to natural resource restoration. VT ANR worked with VAAFAM to release to EPA on March 7 the Vermont Accountability Framework report. This report will be available on the VT DEC website. DEC is resuming the monthly water quality seminars. This month will focus on the accountability report mentioned above. DEC continues to move forward with work on the Lake Carmi TMDL. This effort will focus controls on stormwater, road runoff, and agriculture, but also they are looking at in-lake treatment options, including an aeration system. The VT-NRCS CREP program is subject to an interpretation of new State RAPs (Required Agricultural Practices) that require grass setbacks. The federal interpretation is that this practice counts as a buffer, and because it is now required by

the State the practice is no longer eligible for support in Vermont under the CREP program. VAAFm also provided a March Water Quality Division Program update highlighting recent efforts completed to this end.

- Federal partners
 - MaryJo – EPA Region 1 expects to issue their second report card on TMDL implementation plan by end of month. The EPA R1 Regional Administrator (Alexandra Dunn) was briefed yesterday on LCBP and Lake Champlain. Administrator Dunn is interested in visiting the region to learn about projects underway. MaryJo noted that the FY18 budget is still not final. The current Continuing Resolution expires March 23. From what MaryJo understands, there may be another continuing resolution, which may make it difficult for the Steering Committee to decide on the FY18 budget.
 - Mario – echoed MaryJo’s comments regarding the possibility of another continuing resolution. There may also be an impact on federal travel.
 - Daria – USACE – the NY District office has received a few comments back on the General Management Plan. Daria hopes to have this wrapped up by the time of the Steering Committee meeting in April. The District Office is working on the Champlain Canal feasibility study and is hoping to have a contractor on board in the near future help move the project forward. The Regional Office has been doing some workload sharing across Districts. Engineering work for the Waterbury Dam project will be run out of the New England District. The next Section 542 Informational workshop has been scheduled for April 9. Look for a formal announcement soon.
- Jane Ceraso - NEIWPCC update – there continues to be major concerns regarding the prevalence of PFOA in source waters. A task force appointed by Gov. Cuomo recommended that NEIWPCC work with public water suppliers and municipalities across the State to look at source water protection plans. NEIWPCC will be hosting their annual Non-Point Source conference in Glens Falls, NY. The conference theme is around innovation. NEIWPCC also is hosting a conference in Colorado Springs this fall for State, Federal, and Tribal staff working on water quality issues.
- Advisory:
 - NY CAC – Vic Putman reported that the VT CAC last met on February 26, and hosted the Lake Placid Land Conservancy, who provided an overview of their citizen science monitoring program. Bill Wellman provided a tour of the Salmon in the Classroom aquarium that is set up in Westport. The NY Governor’s HAB summit is next week. There was a NYS DEC public hearing in Plattsburgh last night, on the proposed \$80 million coal tar clean-up project in the Saranac River. Designs for the Rome Dam removal in Ausable Forks and permits on the Quarry Dam removal also are approved.
 - QC CAC – OBVBM is filing today the interim report for the second year of soil erosion control projects along the Pike River. The project worked with 60 farmers over the 2-year study to identify projects for water quality improvements. One farm set aside 40,000 square meters for conservation. OBVBM is looking for an extension of this project for 5 more years from the QC MAPAQ. OBVBM is also very involved with the IJC studies, both the flood reference and the water quality reference. The 2017 water quality mandate is moving forward, and the IJC has contracted with OBVBM to provide support for this reference. Québec fiscal year

ends March 31, and there still is no confirmation of approval for the budget. They are hoping to have level funding from the previous year, but this is uncertain. Government mandate may change their mandate and ask people to do more, new things to help with water quality projects. The OBVBM Annual meeting will be on June 18 in St. Armand. Martin commented that he appreciated the 2018 Annual Report summary document, including the references to work in Québec.

- VT CAC – Bethany reported that the VT CAC met last Monday, and heard updates from Matt Vaughan and Ryan Mitchell on the new State of the Lake graphics. The CAC is still working on identifying ways to make their meetings more accessible to the public. Next month’s meeting will feature a panel of experts to speak about the new RAPs and other water quality regulations. The CAC may postpone their May meeting in lieu of attending the release of the State of the Lake report in June. They are interested in holding a joint meeting with QC and NY CAC groups. The 2018 CAC Action Plan has been published. Eric Howe will circulate a link to this report. The CAC also is developing a roster of new potential members to review with Julie Moore.
 - E&O – Colleen reported that Don Lee of the Lake Champlain chapter of Trout Unlimited, will be speaking about Atlantic salmon at the final LCBP “Love the Lake 2018” series tonight. World Water Day will be celebrated on March 20 at ECHO Leahy Center this year. Schools from NY and VT will be participating. Students from Jericho connected with water.org to sell bread to raise funds for World Water Day. Ryan is working with a videographer to develop the next LCBP “Dive In” video. The “Raise the Blade” campaign will be publishing several new materials over the next few weeks.
 - HAPAC – John Krueger reported that he had hoped to be able to offer support for the Spitfire restoration effort in this LCBP/CVNHP FY18 budget cycle. Unfortunately, the Spitfire project has not moved forward quickly enough to offer a proposal to LCBP in this budget cycle. John hopes that there may be opportunities for LCBP support in this project in the future. The HAPAC has been thinking about their budget development process and the amount of funding available for HAPAC. Jim noted that the HAPAC has a very robust budget development process, but unfortunately the funding levels for the CVNHP do not merit this process. In recognition of this, the HAPAC has developed a process similar to the pre-proposal process developed by the TAC this year, which Jim outlined in the HAPAC handout. This new process would discontinue the existing Regional Stakeholder Coordinator Program, with the exception of the Québec coordinator, which is just getting underway and still building the network there.
 - TAC – Mike reported that TAC heard a project report from RPI DFWI mercury and cyanobacteria study. Main results indicated that they did not find cyanotoxins in fish tissue. TAC also reviewed the full proposals that were submitted for the FY18 budget. Martin reported that the group also has been developing an RFP for work on geomorphic assessments in the Rock River, both in Vermont and Québec.
- **Legislative Updates** – Tom Berry submitted an update to Eric Howe via email. He reported that Congress is still working toward an omnibus bill for the FY18 budget ahead of the March 23 deadline for the current Continuing Resolution. Lake Champlain funding will likely be at least level funded from FY17 in the EPA appropriation, and we may still see an increase up to \$8.4

million. The GLFC appropriation for Lake Champlain will likely go up to \$5 million. The CVNHP appropriation may see a small increase to \$315,000.

- **LCBP Updates –**

- Eric recognized and thanked Kathy Jarvis for her 25 years of work at the LCBP. Her support and institutional memory has been extremely helpful for Eric!
- Eric reminded the group of their request to discuss the concept of a satellite office for the LCBP located in the Burlington area, to accommodate staff who have frequent meetings in the Chittenden County area, or points south, and it is inconvenient on those days to commute to the Grand Isle location. Daria commented that she likes the idea. Kari asked about whether the LCBP should consider moving the office to Chittenden County. Martin added that from Québec, the drive down the highway to Burlington would not be much farther. Martin suggested we have this conversation with the co-chairs. Kari suggested that LCBP put together a series of options for the Steering Committee. Pierre suggested looking at the costs and also how the staff generally feel about the different options.
- LCBP/CVNHP staff visit to Washington, DC – Eric and Jim had a very successful 2-day trip to Washington, DC on February 28-March 1, where they visited with staff from the all US congressional delegates representing the Lake Champlain watershed, as well as staff from the National Park Service, International Joint Commission, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Of particular note, Eric and Jim had a very good conversation with Congresswoman Stefanik, in which she conveyed her continued support for Lake Champlain.

11:15 AM 2018 State of the Lake – LCBP Staff

- The LCBP Staff reviewed the new material for the 2018 State of the Lake report
- Eric asked for Executive Committee members who are interested in reviewing the report, to let him know and he will send a link to the text. MaryJo and Mario indicated they would like to review the text in advance.
- Ryan presented the updated graphic for the mercury in sport fish graphic. New data coming in from the recent study in Lake Champlain indicate that mercury concentrations are increasing in the tissue of the indicator species in the Lake. The mercury concern is a complicated process, and includes both local and regional sources of mercury. Kari asked about atmospheric deposition, and the delay of upgrades to power plants in the Midwest. Matt responded that there also could be more mercury being delivered to the lake from the landscape caused by acid rain deposition, rather than what is delivered to the landscape. The group reviewed the sea lamprey wounding graphic. Lake trout wounding has increased substantially since 2015; fisheries biologists are unclear as to the cause of this increase in wounding on lake trout, particularly as wounding on Atlantic salmon has remained stable.
- Alyson commented on the phosphorus loading land cover slide. She asked about whether the bar chart could be presented on the left rather than the right. It is important for folks to understand the phosphorus coming in from different sources. Matt added that we are leaning toward inclusion of numbers and percentages and using the term “developed lands” instead of urban. Kari suggested that VT DEC is now using river corridor instead of streambank, because the restoration efforts are really focusing on the full river channel, rather than just the streambank. Pierre commented that some of these terms are confusing to people, in terms of how much phosphorus belongs to the different land use sectors. Kari noted that VT DEC is trying to achieve targeted reductions through river corridor easements. This approach has been

approved by EPA, even though it will take a long time to achieve loading reductions through these approaches. The strategy is about long-term equilibrium restoration. Kari noted that the forest cover mis-represents the quality of this land use in that forested lands are not continuous; there are rural roads, clear cuts, etc. The group agreed to move the bar chart to the left of the illustration, and to change the bar graph to columns for review at the next Steering Committee meeting. The group looked at the “Ten most recent & next visited waterbodies” graphic. Kari noted that this graphic provides extremely important message regarding invasive species and the potential sources of AIS to the Lake, as well as other waterbodies that could receive AIS from Lake Champlain. Pierre noted that the timeframe for the data should be identified on the figure. Pierre asked if we should consider changing this to waterbodies where we exchange boats to make it clearer.

- Mario suggested providing an “executive summary” for the Steering Committee that highlights the major changes since the 2015 report, and the rationale behind the changes.

12:45 PM FY18 LCBP Budget Development:

- Follow-up from budget discussions in February
- Key Functions – Eric quickly reviewed the Key Functions budget, that had been reviewed during the previous Executive Committee meeting. Kari reviewed the request from VT DEC for an additional Part-Time position for TMDL implementation.
- Heritage Budget: Jim reviewed the proposed HAPAC list of priorities. The first seven items ranked by the HAPAC have not changed since previous meetings. Item H, The Spitfire project, has been modified to include support for initial preparation for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. The budget request for this item remains unchanged. Jim introduced a new task proposal for support for a *Lois McClure 2019 Year of the Salmon* tour. This is an opportunity to highlight and showcase the International Year of the Salmon in 2019, and the vessel would travel from Lake Champlain up at least as far as the confluence of the Richelieu River and the Saint Lawrence River. Jim noted that the African-American heritage concept was removed from the list because some partners felt they needed more time to prepare to execute this task. The Year of the Salmon tour aligns with GLFC interests, as well as the CVNHP Corridor of Commerce theme. Pierre asked about the process of adding a task to the HAPAC budget after the committee has finished their process. Jim pointed out that this is a good concept to support, and we need to do it in this budget cycle if we are going to support the idea. It is up to the Executive Committee to decide if this project should be a priority to support in the FY18 budget. Pierre asked about whether we really need to provide funds this far in advance of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, which is still 7 years away. Jim explained that these funds would help LCBP/CVNHP facilitate some elements of the recovery, conservation, and permanent interpretation of the *Spitfire*. Kari asked if the Spitfire project were on track with our budget timeline, would these funds be going toward the Spitfire rather than re-focusing on the 250th anniversary recognition effort. Jim responded that by expanding the scope of this task, it would give CVNHP more flexibility to support the project in the near future. Kari asked what would happen if we delayed support until next year. Jim noted that it would be useful to have these resources in hand sooner rather than later as the conversations to coordinate the celebration get started. Mike would like to see where the Lois McClure tour lands after consideration by the HAPAC. Mike is concerned about how we can compare these priorities for GLFC funding to other priorities for E&O and TAC that would be competing for GLFC funds. He also pointed out that some of the grant programs could be expanded to offer more funding. Martin suggested that support for the agri-tourism trail would go a long way to gain favor in the agricultural

community. Alyson also supported the agri-tourism trail, and that this concept aligns with the Governor's VT Outdoor Recreation initiative. Jim suggested that the Steering Committee should be able to discuss the *Lois McClure* tour concept. Kari noted that the Steering Committee would look to advice from the HAPAC as to where the Lois McClure tour would fit into the ranked list.

- Education & Outreach: The E&O Committee has not met since the last LCBP Executive Committee meeting. There were not any further changes to the ranked list of projects submitted in early February.

Potential ACTION ITEM: Recommendation of support for FY18 budget priorities to the Lake Champlain Steering Committee.

1:30 PM FY18 LCBP Budget Development: LCBP Technical Budget – *Mike Winslow (TAC Chair) & Matthew Vaughan, LCBP Technical Coordinator*

- Matt and Mike will review the FY18 Technical budget development process to-date. Motion to enter into Executive Session by Alyson Eastman. Second by Mike Winslow. All in favor.
- **[Executive Session]** Review full proposal rankings recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee
- Advisory Committee Membership nominations (TAC, HAPAC)
- **Exit Executive Session.**

ACTION ITEMS:

- Motion to accept the Fy18 budget project rankings of the committees to forward the recommendation to the Steering Committee by Mike W., second by Alyson E. All in favor. Vic P. and Pierre L. abstained.
- Motion to forward the three nominations for advisory committees to the Steering Committee by Mike W. and Martin M. All in favor. No abstentions.

3:15 PM Adjourn Motion to adjourn by John, second by Alyson. All in favor.

Outputs for this meeting include:

1. Approval of meeting summary from February 13, 2018 LCBP Executive Committee meeting
2. Recommendation to Lake Champlain Steering Committee for FY18 LCBP-CVNHP Budget tasks
3. Committee nominations to Lake Champlain Steering Committee