

Lake Champlain Basin Program
Draft Minutes - Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday November 29, 2018 9:45 AM – 3:00 PM
LCBP Office, Gordon Center House, Grand Isle, VT

Attendees: Emily Boedecker (VTDEC), Bob Steggemann (NYDEC), Tom Berry, Bryan Dore (EPA Region 1), Neil Kamman (TAC Chair), John Krueger (HAPAC Chair), MaryJo Feuerbach (EPA Region 1), Mario Paulo (EPA Region 2), Buzz Hoerr (E&O Committee Chair), Pierre Leduc (QC CAC), Vic Putman (NY CAC),

Staff: Meg Modley, Kathy Jarvis, Jim Brangan, Ryan Mitchell, Elizabeth Lee, Jane Ceraso (NEIWPCC), Bethany Sargent (VTDEC), Fred Dunlap (NYSDEC)

9:45 AM Arrival, Networking

10:00 AM Welcome, Introductions

10:05 AM Public Comments None

10:10 AM Review of summary from previous meeting

ACTION ITEM: John K. moved to approve October 17, 2018 meeting summary with spelling correction of his name, seconded by Buzz Hoerr. All in favor, no abstentions.

10:20 Updates from Committee Members (LIMIT of 2 MINUTES per person to highlight or emphasize comments provided in written updates)

(NY, QC, VT jurisdictional, Federal Partners, E&O, Heritage, TAC, CAC- NY, QC, VT)

- Emily Boedecker asked the group what the most effective way of sharing updates might be.
 - Buzz: Updates at the Steering Committee make sense, as many of the members may not have heard updates at previous Executive Committee meetings. Updates to the Executive Committee tend to be too long. In Japan, you have five minutes to speak and then the microphone is taken out of your hand. We should better enforce the two minute rule.
 - Bob: Keeping the updates short is very valuable, but the exchange of information is one of the most important outcomes of these meetings and shouldn't be limited. Keep updates short, but make exceptions when necessary.
 - MaryJo: The updates can get into a high level of detail that isn't necessary, but it's important to have time to ask questions about updates and allow the group to discuss if necessary.
 - Tom Berry: Questions and further discussion could be at the discretion of the chair; there should continue to be substantial time at the Steering Committee meetings for updates.
 - The group agreed that keeping updates short and reserving time at the end of the updates for questions was the most efficient way to proceed.

- **New York:** Bob Stegemann announced \$6.8 million for ag water quality projects around the state; \$1.2 million will come to farms in the basin. Earlier this month, Cuomo announced grants for drinking water projects and wastewater projects in the Basin. The Governor also announced \$3 million in funding to study ice jams and flooding; some of the rivers in question are in the Basin. \$2.9 million awarded to the Town of Jay for the removal of the Rome Dam. Sea lamprey treatments will occur on several rivers in the basin this fall.

- **Vermont:** Emily Boedecker announced two new tactical Basin plans for the White River and Winooski have been completed; the communications aspect of these plans is very much improved and the team hopes that it will be more accessible as a result. Comments on the plans are welcome. The Vermont Clean Water Board has four public members, who have been on a steep learning curve. There is another working session tomorrow and the FY20 budget will be proposed in December. Please forward links to accept public input on FY20 budget.
- **Quebec:** no update available
- **EPA Region 1:** MaryJo noted that EPA Region 1's Regional Administrator has been nominated for a new position in DC. She's meeting with the Environment and Public Works Committee today and if she's appointed to this potential new position, we will be looking for a new Region 1 administrator.
- **EPA Region 2:** Mario said they were looking for additional funds for the wastewater treatment optimization study. There's an item for \$150,000 on a two-year basis for the states; funding should be on its way.
 - Bob: That will help with our new technology-based limits on phosphorus.
- **E&O Committee:** Colleen Hickey noted that CBEI continues to proceed – there was a session focused on the Northern Lake in October and did stormwater tours with city engineers and planners. In January, we'll be working with Fletcher Free Library's special collections. On December 3rd, we'll be meeting to outline our 2019-2020 plans. We mailed several thousand Healthy Soil brochures out recently and will have a Healthy Soils exhibit at the flower show. Ryan and Elizabeth are working on videos, one for Atlantic Salmon. The Resource Room saw over 8,000 people last quarter; Ryan Mitchell will be working with ECHO to design their new State of the Lake exhibit supported with LCBP funding from previous budget cycles.
 - Buzz: We've received a large number of E&O grant applications this year – 20 applications for \$750,000 for large E&O applications, plus the regular small E&O grants.
- **HAPAC:** John Krueger noted that at their last meeting, HAPAC recommended approval of 20 implementation grants summing to around \$107,000. Earlier this month, HAPAC held the Heritage Summit in Burlington – the largest and most diverse crowd seen to date. We've received 49 pre-proposals, many of which will not be funded. When the Steering Committee meets in December, they will be able to approve a list of pre-proposals to go to full proposal stage. Salmon exhibits have been prepared and we've received good feedback on them.
 - Buzz: We're getting flooded with requests for funding and it's a good reminder that the CVNHP grant program is much needed.
- **TAC:** Neil Kamman introduced himself as the interim TAC Chair. One of his goals is to work on smoothing out the relationships between the TAC and the Executive and Steering Committees. The Committee will benefit from new TAC member's expertise. TAC has reviewed a Vermont-specific dam removal project and we're seeing dams coming out, which is excellent. Two additional technical projects in progress are fundamental to understanding phosphorus: floodplain phosphorus dynamics and wetlands and restored wetlands. The TAC is reviewing the importance of wastewater treatment optimization and has invited speakers to broaden their understanding. LCBP received 29 applications for the technical pre-proposal process, totaling \$5.8 million. TAC will be reviewing these proposals next week.
 - Emily: When will the wetlands and floodplains projects be finished?
 - Matt: Currently at the workplan stage, wrapping up in 2020.
 - Bob: Have you gotten a good representation of projects this year?
 - Neil: Yes, they address various themes that were identified in the RFP.
- **NY CAC:** Vic Putman noted that the committee has met twice since the last Executive Committee meeting. In October we heard from Curt Gervich on the IJC's flooding study; also

attended the IJC's public meeting in Whallonsburg on November 8th, which was informative. Other meeting topics include LCBP's budget, the Champlain Canal Barrier Feasibility Study, and dam removal. We had a presentation from Myra Lawyer on agriculture.

- **QC CAC:** Pierre Leduc reported that the IJC water quality reference has been keeping them busy, and more details will be provided at the Steering Committee meeting. The owner of one of the boat launches on Misissiquoi Bay has been approved to dredge part of the channel, with the additional provision that they install a boat wash station. We are considering applying for funding from the QC government to control Eurasian watermilfoil. QC has a new Minister of Environment, and he will be meeting with her in January to discuss the IJC water quality study in Misissiquoi Bay.
- **VT CAC:** Bethany Sargent reported that the State of the Lake information sessions were held in October in Rutland, St. Albans, and Burlington. Attendance varied from location to location. The questions and discussions varied by community – Rutland was focused on CSOs, while St. Albans wanted to talk about water quality and cyanobacteria blooms. The October 3rd session was recorded by CCTV. VTCAC is working to draft their 2019 action plan, to be presented to the legislature.

10:45 Legislative Updates

- Tom Berry: There is a continuing resolution through December 7th. As of Monday it is unclear where we're headed next; the biggest question is whether funding will be appropriated to the border wall. Most of the relevant funding for LCBP has yet to be finalized. If issues are not resolved by December 7th, we're probably headed for another CR or a potential shut-down. Farm Bill expired at the end of September; Senate Farm Bill has strong bipartisan support, the House less so. There may be a conference Farm Bill by the end of the week, hope for it to be finalized by December 7th. The border patrol will be establishing check-points on Route 2 soon.
 - Bob: What's the difference between the House and the Senate budget versions?
 - Senate has \$5 billion, house has \$1.6 billion.
 - MaryJo: Can you say anything about VIDA? Vessel Incidence Discharge Act?
 - Tom noted that VIDA has more to do with Coast Guard and Great Lakes programs and he would check on where it landed.

10:55 LCBP Updates – Meg Modley/LCBP staff

- Eric Howe is currently on family medical leave and will return in January. LCBP is co-hosting the 2019 North American Lake Management Society meeting in Burlington next November. LCBP is planning to hire an entry-level environmental analyst to assist with our high workload; Meg will be supervisor and the position will be posted next week.
 - MaryJo: What kind of qualifications are you looking for? Meg noted that the position will cover a broad range of work across the E&O, HAPAC, TAC teams and will work on projects such as the Healthy Soils programs, some technical work with the IJC and the Boat Launch Steward program, and some work with the CVNHP. It's an opportunity to do quite a lot of diverse work and a minimum of a Bachelor's is required with a master's degree preferred.
- Many local and technical grant RFPs have just closed or are about to close; we're working on forming review committees and reviewing proposals. We visited the Champlain Canal for a site assessment for the barrier feasibility project with the USACE and Prince-hydro and were grateful for Fred's boat shuttling between Lock 8 and 9 as well as the Canal Corporation's assistance in accessing the infrastructure and review of known hydrology of the system. LCBP also hosted the USACE Invasive Species Leadership Team in Grand Isle and had good discussions about water chestnut, hydrilla, and the canal barrier.

11:00 FY19 Budget: Education and Outreach Committee Priorities – *Buzz Hoerr, Chair and Colleen Hickey, LCBP E&O Coordinator*

- Colleen Hickey and Ryan Mitchell provided an overview of the FY19 E&O budget tasks.
- Colleen answered a few questions confirming that E&O project tasks are coordinated with Lake Champlain Sea Grant's priorities so they are complimentary. One project under consideration is an \$100,000 evaluation of education and outreach programming which is identified as an *Opportunities for Action* priority. The E&O committee will have further discussion about the cost of the project and what programs would be evaluated. Colleen reminded the group that E&O will move to the project budget pre-proposal process for FY20. FY19 projects were solicited for projects from watershed groups, staff, and E&O, and once the money is appropriated LCBP does much of the work in-house.

12:00 PM Lunch

12:45 PM Technical and TMDL Budget Process discussion, *Meg Modley & Matthew Vaughan, LCBP*

- Discussion of proposed process for approval of projects proposed for **TMDL implementation funding for FY19**: Before reviewing the TMDL budget process Tom Berry provided an overview of EPA funding for this purpose.
 - Tom Berry reviewed that the House and Senate have approved their interior appropriations bill; the hope is to finalize this bill by December 7th. The House bill has \$8.399m (level funding from last FY17); the Senate bill has \$11m. The Senate bill also includes the same language as FY18, wherein the money above \$4.33m goes to 2016 TMDL implementation. A CR could be implemented, level funding with TMDL language from last year; the House bill could be implemented with level funding from last year; or the Senate bill could be implemented, with a funding increase and some devoted to TMDL implementation.
 - Bob Stegmann: If the \$11m budget is passed, will the funding increase go to the Vermont TMDL?
 - Tom: Yes, \$6.6m to the 2016 TMDL.

Meg then reviewed the draft FY19 TMDL process. The Executive Committee noted that the only way a project will be reviewed is if it is proposed by ANR. Members suggested that projects of merit reviewed under the LCBP technical budget process that were not funded be considered. EPA supported the LCBP partnership collaboration and input to usage of the funds and LCBP TAC and other committee review of projects. Tom was asked when the funds will be available and when projects will need to be initiated. The FY18 TMDL funding was on a very tight turn around and Tom said they hope to have the FY19 budget out before April 2019. New York expressed concerns that for the Lake TMDL to work that there needs to be progress on both sides of the lake and this funding is slated for VT. EPA noted that there will be the usual funds for competitive Vermont and New York projects. The additional money is really for VT TMDL implementation; the money New York has access to remains the same. VT asked if implementation projects should come before LCBP committees as appropriate. EPA reiterated that the TMDL funds are for implementation and not for research and outreach. The group agreed that other LCBP committees should be involved in project review as appropriate, if there happens to be an education and outreach and/or cultural heritage/recreation component of a project.

The Executive Committee discussed that the projects that are proposed by the Watershed Innovations Team (WIT) come with a full list of projects considered so there is context and understanding of what was considered. The group also agreed that the Executive and Steering Committee are more appropriate to recommend which projects would be coordinated by LCBP or the state of Vermont. In order for the LCBP Steering Committee to have input at the beginning of the process they could recommend priority areas or categories to be addressed in the selection criteria for projects considered by the WIT.

Buzz noted that it is a deficiency that the VT state funds can't be used for education and outreach initiatives and he suggested incorporating education and outreach initiatives into all implementation projects.

ACTION ITEM: Buzz H. moved to establish a subcommittee (State of Vermont, EPA, Senator Leahy's office, and LCBP) to finalize the FY19 TMDL funding process and bring the recommendation to the Steering Committee, seconded by Neil K., all in favor with no abstentions.

- Update on process for **Technical Budget Development for FY20:** Matt reviewed the technical budget development process and Meg noted that there is a small subcommittee working to improve coordination and communication between the TAC and Executive and Steering Committees and anyone interested is welcome to join.

Matt Vaughan provided an update on the technical budget process. Matt clarified that technical projects go through the TAC before going to Executive and Steering Committee because the TAC is an advisory body.

Tom asked for clarification about whether the states have special opportunities to move projects forward compared to other partners and wanted to make sure that all partners have an equal opportunity to recommend projects for funding. EPA suggested that the Steering Committee be the group that sets the priorities and discusses them first before projects come in. TAC priorities could be gathered in June and all SC members bring their priorities for discussion at the September SC meeting.

Currently LCBP has one RFPP that goes out for technical projects that the states are not eligible for and a parallel track for state priority projects to be considered. There could be one RFPP for all organizations. New York and Vermont reiterated the importance of meeting and collaborating on project priorities.

1:45 PM EXECUTIVE SESSION: Grant Award Decisions and Committee appointments, LCBP Staff

Motion: Buzz H. moved to enter into executive session, MaryJo seconds. All in favor. Emily declared the Executive Committee out of Executive Session.

ACTION ITEM: Neil K. moved to approve the nomination of Ryan Cunningham to the TAC, seconded by Bob S. All in favor, no abstentions.

ACTION ITEM: MaryJo F. moved to approve Amy Overstreet to the E&O Committee, seconded by Buzz H. All in favor, no abstentions.

ACTION ITEM: Neil K. moved to approve the record of decision for the Rock River Geomorphic Assessment project, seconded by Bob S. All in favor, no abstentions.

ACTION ITEM: MaryJo F. moved to approve the record of decision for the 2018 AIS spread prevention grant awards for projects 1-15, seconded by Bob S. All in favor, no abstentions.

3:00 PM Adjourn

Anticipated Outputs for this meeting may include:

1. Approval of meeting summary from October 15, 2018 LCBP Executive Committee meeting
2. Approval of Record of Decisions for Grant Awards for:
 - o Rock River Geomorphic Assessment
 - o Local Grants: AIS Spread Prevention
3. Advisory Committee Membership nominations

Upcoming Meetings:

- December 12, 2018: Lake Champlain Steering Committee ([Valcour Conference Center](#), Peru, NY)
Topics: FY19 pre-proposal technical, heritage budget review, Grant awards
- January 17, 2019: LCBP Executive Committee ([Gordon Center House](#), Grand Isle, VT)
Topics: Grant Award decisions
- February 21, 2019: LCBP Executive Committee ([Gordon Center House](#), Grand Isle, VT)
Topics: FY19 Budget preparation (Key Functions, E&O, HAPAC), Grant Award decision
- March 21, 2019: LCBP Executive Committee ([Gordon Center House](#), Grand Isle, VT)
Topics: FY19 Budget preparation (Technical), Grant Award decisions
- April 9-10, 2019: Lake Champlain Steering Committee ([Auberge West Brome](#), West Brome, QC)
Topics: FY19 Budget review & approval