

Northern Lake Champlain Basin Water Quality Council

Regular Meeting, August 17, 2023 10 a.m. (Virtual) Approved Minutes

See meeting materials at:

<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/northern-lake-champlain-basin-water-quality-council/>

1) Introductions, Changes to the Agenda and Public comment on items not on the agenda

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Vice-Chair Tom Briselden. Varner asked that Briselden chair the meeting as she was driving currently. A quorum of 8 seats out of 9 were represented as noted in Bold. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

(# seats)	Members Present	Alternates Present
Watershed Protection Organizations (2)		<<<Don McFeeters, Friends of Northern Lake Champlain
NRCDs (2)	Casey Spencer, Winooski NRCD Molly Varner, Grand Isle NRCD, CHAIR	
Municipalities (2)	Tom Briselden, North Hero, VICE-CHAIR Dave Wheeler, South Burlington	Lisa Schaeffler, Milton
RPCs (2)	Dean Pierce, Northwest RPC Karen Adams, Chittenden County RPC	
Land Conservation Organizations (1)	Emily Alger, South Hero Land Trust	
Primary Clean Water Service Provider Staff		Secondary CWSP Staff
Dan Albrecht, Manager		
Guests		
Karen Bates, DEC, Watershed Planner		Maddie Yandow, Northwest RPC

The agenda was amended by unanimous consent to add Overview of CWSP FY24 Annual Report after consideration of the NRPC proposal. No public comments were made on non-agenda items.

2) Review and approval of Minutes for Meeting of July 20, 2023

After a brief recap by Albrecht, on a motion by Pierce, with a second by Adams, the 7/20/2023 draft minutes were approved unanimously.

3) Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Molly Varner and Tom Briselden indicated that were willing to continue as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, but would be willing to step aside should others wish to serve. *On a motion by McFeeters, with a second by Adams, Molly Varner and Tom Briselden were elected unanimously with Varner and Briselden abstaining from the vote.*

4) Action on applications received by 8/4/23 deadline.

a) **Project Development: Champlain Islands Low Volume Road Project Development Initiative (NRPC)**

i) Overview by applicant Mollie Yandow of NRPC described the project (see attached slides). NRPC will apply a decision tree to identify priority projects based upon an initial screening that identified 15 locations. The projects would reduce sediment and phosphorus runoff (AKA loading). The selected areas were preliminarily identified using a GIS-based screening analysis. The Project development work includes confirming presence of erosion, identifying source and next steps towards project development. They have already identified the landowners and will reach out them directly. Conceptual designs, with the assistance of a consultant, are

Northern Lake Champlain Basin Water Quality Council August 17, 2023 APPROVED Meeting minutes

proposed to be drawn up in locations where landholder support is most evident. At the end of the project, which would go from September 2023 through April 2024, at least six sites will be fully developed with basic design, rough construction cost and phosphorus reduction estimates prepared along with landowner commitments / O&M agreements secured.

ii) CWSP staff comment: Albrecht thanked Yandow for the presentation and that it definitely helps to show the bigger picture. He displayed his formal staff comments which had been posted to the Council page. He stressed that this project is scored on a qualitative basis as it is a identification/development proposal. He noted that we need projects, and this project would get us there. He displayed NRPC's response to his questions. Work on the RFP of 10 hours seems appropriate given that the RFP will procure a contractor not only for the work at hand but also secure them for future design or construction oversight work. He did had some concerns about having enough time allocated for consultants. He asked why outreach was necessary given that the landowners have already been identified?

Pierce recapped his replies to Albrecht's comments (which he had sent directly to the Council members earlier via email. Based upon prior project development work that NRPC has conducted wherein they investigated 11 sites at cost of \$40,000, this proposed project seems right in line at about \$4,000 per site. He noted that this is not the kind of project that requires a seasoned designer. We will be doing the field measurements so the time needed for the consultant is reasonable. If we have to do a formal presentation to the Council for a check-in, we would need additional dollars for that. Albrecht stated he was just thinking of a check-in between him, Pierce and Yandow. Regarding outreach, Yandow felt that outreach was needed as we will be in the private world not the town right of way. Spreading the word early on will be important. Albrecht stated that NRPC knows their area the best so if that is the outreach you feel you will need he is fine with that. Yandow noted that they are somewhat piggy-backing on Grand Isle NRCD's outreach work on private roads.

iii) DEC comment Albrecht noted that we all are still learning what aspects of water quality project phase work on private roads is or is not eligible to be funded with Clean Water dollars. In that vein, Bates noted that it has been entered into the Watershed Projects Database and will result in phosphorus reduction. The Project Development category is pretty wide whether in the end the projects will be a road right-of-way project or stormwater treatment practice on adjacent land. The proposal will result in the identification of projects which is similar to other types of assessments.

iv) Deliberation Briselden asked each of the members if they had any comments. McFeeters noted that we need projects, and this is a way to find some projects and we should proceed. Wheeler echoed McFeeters' comments. He said he used to be more critical of projects in the beginning of projects with an unknown amount of phosphorus reduction and known cost but given the situation of not many such projects identified he supports this approach. Varner noted that based upon experience that landowner outreach is key especially in the Islands. Briselden said he is supportive of the project but noted that Savage Road has reported as significant problem but it did not make the initial list of investigation locations. He recommended talking to the zoning administrators as a good source of information. From a proposal standpoint, he would have liked to have seen an example of potential costs and p-reduction estimates, e.g. for a ditch, and finally, he asked what her prior experience was. Yandow noted that her prior work was in stormwater consulting, and she did do a lot of these types of site visits and has done lots of MRGP road assessments since working for NRPC.

Albrecht noted that the following 7 persons who can vote on the proposal are: McFeeters, Spencer, Briselden, Alger, Wheeler, Adams and Varner. NRPC is recused and the 2nd water conservation seat is not represented. *McFeeters moved to accept the NRPC proposal with a second from Wheeler. The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.*

5) Action on final edits to "Co-Benefits Scoring Matrix for Basin 5"

Albrecht walked through and displayed the proposed final version of the scoring matrix which incorporates edits from the July 17th meeting.

Co-benefits scoring matrix for Basin 5

Proposed Final Edit: for August 17, 2023 meeting

Co-benefits of water quality improvement projects	Score (Variable, 0-4)	Weighting (Fixed, 1 or 2)	Score
Hazard Mitigation Benefit 1 point: likely reduces impacts from a known hazard 2 points: definitely reduces impacts from a known hazard or likely reduces impacts from two or more hazards 3 points: definitely reduces impacts from a top three hazard in town's All Hazards Mitigation Plan 4 points: part of a larger Hazard Mitigation project		2	#_ Max 8
Education Benefit 1 point: creation of simple video, powerpoint, storymap, or etc. for permanent hosting on landowner website 2 points: community gathering for ribbon cutting plus additional 3 points: educational display (e.g. kiosk, interpretive panel, etc. on site 4 points: long-term, embedded educational interaction with public (e.g. school curriculum, regular tours, adjacent to path, etc.)		2	#_ Max 8
Ecosystem Improvement (water supply, carbon sequestration, pollutant filtration, pollination, climate regulation) note: WQ improvement is a given Range: 1 point to 4 points: Measurably improves 1 to 4 of the services		2	#_ Max 8
Habitat Improvement (restores habitat and/or connectivity, promotes native species and/or removes non-native species, protects RTE species, protects significant natural communities) Range: 1 point to 4 points: Improves 1 to 4 of the services		2	#_ Max 8
Environmental Justice (engagement, honors knowledge, access to clean water & food, protects sacred resources) for Vulnerable communities 1 point: disadvantaged populations informed early about project 2 points: disadvantaged populations meaningfully involved in design and/or construction 3 points: disadvantaged populations will definitely benefit 4 points: disadvantaged populations will receive permanent benefit		2	#_ Max 8
Community Support 1 point: Identified in existing community planning effort (Comprehensive Plan; Open Space Plan; Natural Resources Inventory; etc.) 2 points: Same as above plus involves local community in design, construction and/or maintenance 3 points: either of above + involves major local, non-Water Quality partner in permanent role (e.g. housing group, Boy Scouts, School, etc.)		2	#_ Max 6
Other Benefits not captured above (e.g. aesthetics, mental health, recreation/tourism, also aids permit compliance by municipality or non-profit, etc.) 1-4 points [these must be clearly defined and be used sparingly.]		1	#_ Max 4
Note: some co-benefits are only achievable if the applicant secures or provides other sources of funds. The primary purpose of grant funding provided by the CWSP is and must be phosphorus reduction.		Score =>>	
		MAX	50

The 50 points would then be converted to the 20-point scale for use in final scoring. The last note reinforces that co-benefits are a byproduct of phosphorus reduction. He urged the Council to adopt it as it is supposed to be a formal policy of the Council. *Alger moved to accept the NRPC proposal with a second from McFeeters. The motion was approved unanimously, 8-0.*

6) Overview of CWSP FY24 Annual Report

Albrecht indicated he would be submitting the report today to DEC but wanted to provide an overview. He will email a copy to members. [Note: The Annual Report will be posted at <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/northern-lake-champlain-cwsp/>.] He then recapped the highlights of the report. This template will be used for future reports. He will formally transmit the report later today.

Briselden recommended that we put Outreach & Communications Policy on the next meeting agenda. The more we get the word out and how is important to talk about. Albrecht agreed noting that we need to do more outreach to town conservation commissions and for example learn from Georgia Conservation Commission and the RPCs.

7) Updates on other related non-regulatory water quality project work by partners and guests

- Albrecht noted that CCRPC had used some transportation planning dollars to assist Milton in identifying stormwater discharges into Allen (Petty) Brook. The project resulted in preliminary designs for five non-regulatory projects. We just need to think about who wants to do the project management for it. He indicated he will reach out to the Town and to Winooski NRCD.
- Wheeler noted that they are busy repairing sinkholes as well as looking into regionalizing efforts to achieve efficiencies. Sinkholes are being formed due to rusting out of old corrugated metal pipes and the City is spending thousands of dollars on private contractors to repair them. Albrecht asked Wheeler to circle back with him and DEC staff on the potential instream erosion project near the Champlain Water District plant as it addresses runoff from both the regulatory and non-regulatory sectors.
- Albrecht noted that he is still in communication with UVM regarding their stream restoration proposal related to their dam removal project on the Horticultural Farm property in South Burlington.
- Varner reported that they are expecting to receive a draft of the Keeler Bay plan next week and can share more at the next meeting. They anticipate submitting a proposal(s) for final design soon.
- Alger noted that there was a great Water Quality Block Party in North Hero last night. Bates noted that this makes her think of developing more action plans such as one for Pelots Bay.
- Albrecht noted a chat message from Lisa Schaeffler saying she used to live in North Hero, was on the VFD there and is happy to help with outreach.

8) Affirm schedule of upcoming meetings and project solicitations

Albrecht noted that there will be no September meeting. The Council will meet on October 19th and meet on November 16th. He will issue a 4th Call for Applications with pre-proposals due October 13th and full proposals due November 3rd. Bates asked what people need in terms of trainings. Albrecht agreed that on the October 19th meeting when we talk about outreach that we also circle back to project lists (that will be linked at the CWSP website via <https://ccrpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/8d2efecc8251406da4a648ab43a9e823>) as well as two documents he created earlier: one was a list of stream-based projects based upon conversations with Bates and Pomeroy at DEC and the other was a list generated at a Council meeting where Bates discussed hotspots throughout the Basin. Alger noted that she does not feel equipped to talk about the work that is happening, she desires some base level training on how the plans work and how to talk to property owners. We need to know how to match-make land owners and organizations.

9) Adjournment:

On a motion by Pierce with a second by Wheeler, a motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 11:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Dan Albrecht.