

Northern Lake Champlain Basin Water Quality Council Regular Meeting, January 18th, 2024 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 & Public comment on items not on the agenda

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Chair Molly Varner. A quorum of 8 seats out of 9 were represented as noted in Bold. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom. New attendees introduced themselves, Rebecca Roman – Vermont Land Trust, Caroline Foley – Friends of Northern Lake Champlain, Parker Eversoll – Friends of Northern Lake Champlain

(# seats)	Members Present	Alternates Present
Watershed Protection Organizations (2)	Kent Henderson, Friends of Northern Lake Champlain	<i>Don McFeeters, Friends of Northern Lake Champlain</i>
	Andrea Morgante, Lewis Creek Association	
NRCDs (2)	Molly Varner, Grand Isle NRCD, CHAIR	
Municipalities (2)	Tom Briselden, North Hero, VICE-CHAIR	<i>Ken Mirvis – Grand Isle</i>
	Dave Wheeler – South Burlington	<i>Lisa Schaeffler – Milton</i>
RPCs (2)	Dean Pierce, Northwest RPC	
	Brett McCreary, Chittenden County RPC	
Land Conservation Organizations (1)	Rebecca Roman – Vermont Land Trust	
Primary Clean Water Service Provider Staff		Secondary CWSP Staff
<i>Dan Albrecht, Manager</i>		<i>Chris Dubin</i>
Guests		
<i>Tyler Knapp – Knapp Environmental</i>		<i>Karen Bates - DEC</i>
<i>Bridget Butler - FNLC</i>		<i>Caroline Foley – FNLC</i>
<i>Parker Eversoll - FNLC</i>		<i>Patrick Hurley - Windenwater</i>
<i>Mariaa Hatseliuk – Town of Milton</i>		<i>Joe Bartlett – Fitzgerald Environmental Assoc</i>
<i>July Medina-Trina – Town of St. Albans</i>		<i>Ron Rodjenski – Town of Westford</i>

2) Review and approval of Minutes for Meeting of November 16th, 2023 (ACTION)

Dan reviewed the proposed agenda and asked about public comment. Dave Allerton – We want to get a project on the list. Dan Albrecht – we can talk about this during the updates. Dan reviewed minutes for Nov 16th. *Dave Wheeler made a motion to approve minutes, Tom Briselden seconded. Minutes approved unanimously with no abstentions.*

3) Current Project Updates (INFORMATION)

Falls Trail Gully Repair, Final Design (Georgia Conservation Commission), Dan Albrecht

This is the gully erosion site off of a legal trail in Georgia. The Archeological Resource Assessment was completed a few weeks ago. The Consultant recommended a phase I field investigation which consists of a series of test pits. Dan, Andres Torizzo of WCA and Ken Minck of Georgia met with Scott Dillon with Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. The consultant will send along an area of disturbance document so that VDHP can then provide advice on the scope of work needed for the Phase I investigation. This very well may not prevent this project from moving forward, it is more of just documenting what is there.

Mill River SE Infiltration, Final Design (FNLC), Kent Henderson

Caroline is on board and will be taking over this project moving forward. This project met with resistance from one landowner, and we had to reduce the scope of the project. This was successfully reflected in the 60% design and the start of O & M agreement with the town of Georgia. The required Archeological Resource Assessment work will happen this April or May but another agency will conduct that work free of charge. Progress is slowed a bit due to the ARA, as well as staffing challenges with the Engineering firm. Dan Albrecht – Is it the landowners on both the north and south side of the road? Kent – Just on the south side of the road had resistance. The rest of the work is done in the town right of way. Dan – this is infiltration above and beyond MRGP requirements? Kent – Yes. Karen Bates – When the project changes – make sure the project description still is valid that they have in the WPD. Specifically – the gully restoration is just part of the project description, as it is about the land use.

McCabe's Brook Process-Based Restoration, Prelim Design (LCA) Dan A. reading Kate Kelly's Email

Kate Kelly, LCA – they are finalizing details of the design and submitting project review form request to historic preservation office. Its basically a fake beaver dam project but they could also lower the floodplain to give access to the floodplain better. They are reaching out to Act 250 folks to make sure there are no triggers. The main consultant SLR still hopes to finish up in the spring of 2024.

Karen Bates – we don't know how to assign P reduction ahead of time, because we don't know what the solutions are. Floodplain connection is pretty good already. LCA may want DEC to look at the P reductions to make sure they are OK. Dan Albrecht – this is just the preliminary design phase. Its relative efficiency was right around the average last time.

Grand Isle County Private Roads Identification and Assessment (NRPC) – Dean Pierce

Only 1 response from a consultant solicitation but it was a bit high. We were able to administer a budget increase. Dean reached out to property owners to let them know that the project is still ongoing. Next step is next round of field work.

Basin 5 streams project identification, (CCRPC) – Dan Albrecht

Got behind a little due to summer 2023 flooding. Project was completed early January 2023. Report looked at all resources available with better data. Identified 20 sites. 1/12 meeting to review top 20 projects and talked about who may want to take these on. Using pass through block grant money via ACRPC to do further research to identify 12 of these sites for feasibility, and if there is buy in we can do design level. Andrea Morgante – Does Ag have any money to put towards these projects? Dan Albrecht – not really but certain farms that are part of the CREP may have an opportunity for supplemental work. Take home was that they were supportive of finding non-regulatory work on farms. Andrea Morgante – Should we be concerned that farms are not complying with RAPs? Dan Albrecht- they should be – but we can go above and beyond. Caroline Foley – FNLC did some time doing some outreach on feasibility of projects with landowners. Dan Albrecht – We want this to happen, and we as the CWSP can fund it. Rebecca VLT – we do river corridor easements and there may be some opportunity for collaboration. Kent Henderson – I have 7 farm owners but I don't know who is part of VLT, and I want to learn more about the resources that Rebecca can bring to the table.

Andrea Morgante – Can we put on the future agenda – buffer plantings on streams and rivers – where we are actually doing the plantings and how much information we are bringing into about the condition of these streams? Dan Albrecht – This may be a bit abstract conversation. Andrea Morgante – What criteria do we use to do buffer plantings? Dean Pierce – if you were to put this in the form of a recommendation about specific projects, what would it be? Andrea Morgante – If we don't understand the stability of the watercourse will our planting efforts may not last? Karen Bates – Stacey Pomeroy would be the person to talk to. Dan Albrecht – We may want this to be a larger discussion with all CWSPs and DEC, but we could get Stacey at the next meeting. Kent Henderson – I agree with Andrea, we need more information so we can show how plantings will be successful on persons' properties. Karen Bates – We could have Franklin County NRCD help facilitate this discussion and share resources. Dan Albrecht – will follow up via email

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UVM Horticultural Farm Dam Removal and Floodplain Restoration (UVM) – Adam Frazier

Met with Grace from VT Fish and Wildlife and we developed a plan to avoid impacts to a plant species that they were concerned about. UVM has been moving master agreement and O and M docs through admin channels. Evan Fitzgerald has provided maintenance documents. Still on track for May/June start. Paperwork should be completed March/April. Dave Wheeler – we have some ponds at the top of your property. Adam Frazier – that’s why we are hung up in legal – we just need to do things right.

4) Potential Applications (INFORMATION)

Keeler Bay Lake Watershed Action Plan – Molly Varner

- Had public meeting on 1/17. Great attendance. Have 6 concept designs by FEA. Identified 3 we would like to fast track for 60% or final design to break ground in a year or so. We need to work with landowners and then put in an application to CWSP. 1. Keeler Bay fish and wildlife boat access point. Boat launch is eroding. SW treatment – vegetative planting. 2. Bioengineering project along 3 properties in the area. 3. Stream next to Two Heros Brewery – channel and floodplain restoration approach. Could be a great location for educational co-benefit.
- 3 other projects
 - South Hero town Garage
 - Culvert on private road
 - Folsom school gravel parking lot wetland restoration

North Hero town library bio-retention – Parker Eversoll and Tom Briselden

Originally identified in a DEC mapping exercise in 2022. We need a DEC project ID number. Project proposes to put a bioretention area in front of library. It is a 74 acre sub watershed – a lot of P reduction. Based on calculator – we are looking at 9-18 Kg per year, mainly as a result of the large drainage area and because its Ag land. This would be a great opportunity for education. Some design considerations – need to figure out where the septic field is, and water line. Hoping to get 30% design, final design and implementation at \$120,000. Would put P reduction to \$6-\$13k. Continue outreach to move project forward, and getting comments from DEC folks. Hopefully in a short time we will be back at BWQC with an application. We may want to pause at 30% design to make sure we want to move forward. Dan Albrecht – this sort of happened with our current grants and we double checked efficiency at 60% design. Karen Bates – you need to have a sense of how much things cost. A gravel wetland may be a better choice in this area. Each phase we should be checking in on cost, as solutions may shift. Parker Eversoll – We do have some other funding available to develop this project a little more. Molly Varner – What is the process for getting project IDs? I need IDs for Keeler Bay projects. Karen Bates – the ANR N forms are what you need. Tom Breselden – Selectboards want to see 30% so they can see what is happening. With that said – the general concept is getting attention from master planters and other people in the town. Should have good support in the community.

5) Set p-reduction threshold efficiency for proposal consideration (ACTION)

Dan reviewed ANR WQ grants with BWQC. Enhancement grants aren’t necessarily tied to P reduction (although it helps competitiveness). The question that DEC wants us to answer is – what is the threshold of P reduction efficiency for projects to just go straight to enhancement block grants and not to approach the CWSP. We don’t want to look at proposals that are very inefficient. Dan proposed \$30,000 /kg, which is double our ‘average’. Dean Pierce – I need to bring this question to the BWQC in my region. I am hesitant to say a number until there is more clarity. Hard to provide a meaningful answer. One of the councils – there wasn’t interest in coming up with an answer. We may not want to throw a number out with the request not being super clear. Tom Briselden – We have looked at several projects that had high cost efficiency numbers and weeded them out. We need more precedent/data on potential projects. We should wait 6 months. Andrea Morgante – I am still confused about why they want to do this and am reluctant to throw out a number. Dan Albrecht – the Water

Quality enhancement Grant guidance document asks CWSPs to provide such a number. Dean Pierce – it's a subjective exercise without knowing the real cost today. So much has changed. Maybe we give them a number but be clear that it is temporary and shall not be used for a statewide number. Tom Breselden – we have already done this via our scoring matrix. Dan – I will report back to Chris Rottier. Andrea Morgante – has DEC developed an application for the enhancement grants and how different will they be from the CWSP applications?

6) Updates from staff, members, DEC and guests (INFORMATION)

Dave Allerton – culvert project on Fairfax Street

Will be reaching out about this as a potential project. Dan Albrecht – we need to get the projects from Evan's study into the watershed projects database.

Karen Bates – Tactical Basin Project

We are currently pushing out information. Survey is out for focusing on priority areas. Links to story map to learn more about the process. I will be presenting the draft strategies in late Spring at the BWQC.

7) Affirm schedule of upcoming meetings & subgrant application deadlines (INFORMATION)

Dan noted the following:

- a) Next meeting scheduled for February 15; subgrant applications for that meeting due by February 5
- b) Following meeting scheduled for March 21; subgrant applications for that meeting due by March 11

8) Adjournment:

Molly Varner – asks for motion to adjourn. *Dean moved, seconded by Kent Henderson and the motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Dubin and Dan Albrecht.