

**Missisquoi Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC)**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2025**

**11:00 AM -1:00 PM**

**Remote /Zoom meeting**

Meeting video posted at <https://youtu.be/V6DGcNluJUg>

**A VIDEO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE  
NRPC YOUTUBE CHANNEL (Link above).**

**THE WRITTEN MINUTES ARE A SYNOPSIS OF THE DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING.  
MOTIONS ARE AS STATED. MINUTES WILL BE SUBJECT TO CORRECTION BY THE  
COUNCIL. CHANGES, IF ANY, WILL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT  
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Council Members: Ted Sedell (Q), Lauren Weston (Q), Heidi Britch-Valenta (Q), Lindsey Wight (Q), Beth Torpey (Q), Kent Henderson (Q), Dan Seeley (Q), Sarah Downes (Q), Allaire Diamond (Q)

Q= towards quorum

Staff: Dean Pierce, Cliff Jenkins, Nora Brown

Others present: Mel Auffredou (FCNRCD), Julia Crocker (Franklin Watershed Committee), Karen Bates (DEC), Jim Pease, Jim's AI Notetaker, Daniel's AI Notetaker

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Lindsey Wight opened the meeting at 11:01 as Chair. A round of introductions was made.

**2. Meeting protocols**

Lindsey Wight reviewed the norms for meeting on Zoom.

**3. Conflict of interest declarations, if any**

Lauren Weston noted that she has 5 applications before the council as District Manager of the Franklin County NRCD, so she will be recusing her from any project approval voting.

Heidi Britch-Valenta noted that she is a neighboring property owner to the proposed dam removal project in Enosburgh but does not know if this creates a conflict of interest.

**4. Review/adjust and approve agenda**

Lauren Weston motioned to approve the agenda. Ted Sedell seconded. Motion carried.

#### **5. Approval of minutes**

Beth Torpey motioned to approve the minutes. Ted Sedell seconded. Motion carried.

#### **6. Public comment not related to items on agenda**

No public comments were made.

#### **7. Report on budget adjustments, if any**

No budget adjustments were reported.

#### **8. Seating of new RPC Representative (Heidi Britch-Valenta)**

Heidi Britch-Valenta has been appointed to fill the vacant Regional Planning Commission representative seat on the Missisquoi BWQC, replacing Barry Lampke following his retirement last year.

#### **9. Review of Applications submitted in response to Round 7 Call for Applications**

Dean Pierce provided an overview of the five applications received from the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD): four for implementation/design and one for project development. He summarized the total funding requested and the proposed phosphorus (P) reduction. He noted the importance of excluding funding for medium- and long-term Operations & Maintenance (O&M) activities in implementation budgets to avoid delays in P crediting. He also referenced the CWSP's "soft" cost-effectiveness thresholds, which he advised members will become more specific going forward.

Lauren Weston and Mel Auffredou of the Franklin County NRCD presented details on each project:

- **Giddings Brook Riparian Buffer Planting (Enosburgh):** This project aims to plant riparian buffers later this year, with scalable P credits and budget depending on the final acreage planted (up to 9.3 acres). The project was identified through a separate BWQC-funded project development effort to identify priority areas for tree planting, which is still open. The request is for \$67,484 for planting only, with future O&M costs estimated at \$3,173 per kg of P reduction (including previous project development costs). Discussion included planting costs per stem, the source of cost estimates, the possibility of future SWA involvement, farm conservation status. Discussion also touched on O&M budget considerations, site conditions, the possibility of additional projections, and consultation with the Agency of Agriculture regarding the project's location on a regulated farm field. It was clarified that no existing agricultural land would be taken out of production, which helped the project receive quick approval from AAFM.
  - **Motion:** Ted Sedell moved to approve the Giddings Brook Riparian Buffer Planting project. Allaire Diamond seconded. Lauren Weston recused herself. Motion carried.

- **Lake Carmi Shoreline Bioengineering Final Design:** This project focuses on reducing erosion and increasing vegetation along 50 feet of shoreline on a Black Woods Association common lot using a variety of lake shoreline restoration methods (stone toe, encapsulated soil lifts, regrading, planting, and live stakes). The funding amount requested is \$16,125 (reduced from \$24,125 due to no required cultural resources review). Landowners were reported to be enthusiastic, and the educational value of the project was noted, given its prominent location on a common lakefront lot. Discussion centered on the project's low cost-effectiveness and the possibility of streamlining the design process. It was noted that landowner approval had been secured and discussions with regulators had taken place.
  - Allaire Diamond questioned whether a separate final design phase was necessary, or whether the completed 30% design could be used to secure permits and begin implementation. Karen Bates expressed support for streamlining the process in this way, so long as all other requirements for permitting and landowner support are met.
  - Allaire Diamond asked whether FCNRCD could use existing project development funding to apply for permits using the preliminary design. Mel Auffredou answered that no project development funds already secured by FCNRCD could be used for this purpose.
  - Referencing a memo contained in the meeting packet, Dean Pierce noted the low cost effectiveness of the project. Lauren Weston suggested that FCNRCD could work with Lakes & Ponds regulators to potentially eliminate the need for a distinct final design phase, thereby increasing cost effectiveness.
  - **Motion:** Allaire Diamond moved to approve the Lake Carmi Shoreline Bioengineering project as requested. Ted Sedell seconded. Motion carried.
- **Trout Brook Reservoir Dam Removal (Berkshire):** This project proposes dam removal in Berkshire (dam is owned by Enosburg Falls). The request is for \$688,946 from the CWSP, supplemented by \$116,000 in non-DEC money. The total cost estimate is based on an engineer's opinion based on prior work, rather than a bid from a contractor. Lauren Weston clarified that while FCNRCD had signed a contract with LCBP for the remaining \$116,000 needed to fund the project, the federal funding freeze makes this funding source uncertain. However, she also shared that she had secured WUV funds not subject to the freeze that could be used instead if needed.
  - Dean Pierce noted that, since both sources are P credit reporting partners, their funding doesn't impact cost effectiveness. He noted that the BWQC could consider funding more or all of the project if other funding was lost. The cost effectiveness is good, and the CWSP would receive more P credits in return.
  - Dean Pierce also clarified for members that CWSP funds are state-funded, with at least two more funding phases in place, meaning the federal funding freeze doesn't pose an immediate threat to the BWQC's source of funding.
  - **Motion:** Ted Sedell moved that the BWQC fully fund the project at \$800,000. Sarah Downes seconded. Lauren Weston and Heidi Britch-Valenta abstained. Motion carried.
- **Mid Missisquoi Riparian Buffer Planting (Enosburgh):** This project proposes a riparian buffer planting on land owned by the same landowner as the proposed Giddings Brook planting discussed earlier, except it is located on a different tributary of the Missisquoi River. The request is for \$14,381.

- Allaire Diamond asked if the project provides an opportunity for additional protections. Lauren Weston responded she will inquire about the landowner's interest in additional easements/protections.
  - **Motion:** Sarah Downes moved to approve the Mid Missisquoi Riparian Buffer Project as proposed. Kent Henderson seconded. Lauren Weston abstained. Motion carried.
- **Montgomery Flood Resilience Project Development:** This project seeks \$14,471 to conduct landowner outreach related to flood resilience projects identified in a prior Flood Resilience Study conducted by SLR Consulting. This study used Vermont Emergency Management Flood Resilient Communities funds to identify and prioritize projects in Montgomery, which led to 16 priority projects. Two projects on town land were approved by the selectboard for implementation. This project seeks to conduct outreach for eventual implementation on privately-owned land.
    - **Motion:** Ted Sedell moved to approve the project. Allaire Diamond seconded. Lauren Weston abstained. Motion carried.

## 10. Training (if time allows)

Members decided to push the training on Operations & Maintenance Site Access Agreements to the next meeting on April 2.

## 11. Project Sharing (if time allows)

Allaire Diamond shared an update on a dam removal project in North Troy, which also identified an upstream culvert located on a town road as an additional barrier to be removed. She asked for clarification about the CWSP's current stance on culvert road crossing projects, which have previously been avoided.

Ted Sedell shared that the P calculator used by DEC was changing in ways that might help culvert removals implemented alongside other barrier removals more fundable for the CWSP, although culverts on municipal roads still create complications for implementers.

Dean Pierce explained that the CWSP avoided these projects early on because they were expensive and were not associated with significant phosphorus reduction. But, their appeal might increase with recent changes to the tool used to estimate phosphorus reduction (FFI).

## 12. Updates/Announcements

The next meeting of the Missisquoi MWQC is scheduled for April 2 at 11am.

Dean Pierce notified members of a recent DEC newsletter asking for comments on a drafted Action Plan.

Karen Bates informed members of DEC's progress on the forest roads project type, for which they might soon be able to begin accepting applications for project development funds. Information and training on the project type should be released by April.

### **13. Future meeting topics**

Dean Pierce identified NRPC's recently adopted public participation policy and the process for adoption of projects by the CWSP as topics for future discussion.

### **14. Conclusion**

Allaire Diamond motioned to adjourn. Sarah Downes seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:54pm.