

## Lake Champlain Sea Grant Program Advisory Committee

May 12, 2021

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET

### DRAFT MINUTES

*(to be reviewed/approved at next PAC meeting)*

**Participants:** Kris Stepenuck, Ashley Eaton, Erin Vennie-Vollrath, Lori Fisher, Dan Lerner, Julianna White, Breck Bowden, Chris Navitsky, Marc Companion, Mark Malchoff, Gary Deziel, Caroline Blake, Sonal Patel-Dame, Ahren von Schnell, Dan Kelting, Aude Lochet, Kara Lenorovitz, Emily Bird, Shari Halik, Alison Adams, Margaret Fowle, Holden Sparacino (for Jill Arace), Linda Patterson, Theo Willis, Crea Lintilhac, John Kowal, Dan Albrecht, Phelan Fretz. Chief Don Stevens in consultation with Kris.

**Unable to attend:** Leigh Walrath, Eric Howe, Nate Trachte, George Burill, Heather Furman

**Meeting Goals:** Lake Champlain Sea Grant's (LCSG) Program Advisory Committee (PAC) will build awareness of efforts of new LCSG staff, new LCSG PAC members, and LCSG's efforts with diversity, equity and inclusion; LCSG PAC members will inform LCSG's proposed 2022-2024 workplan and contribute ideas to inform future outreach efforts related to municipalities and hazard resilience.

#### Objectives:

- LCSG PAC members will share information about their roles and organizations to build professional networks with new PAC members and LCSG staff;
- LCSG PAC will hear from and have an opportunity to converse with new LCSG staff about their efforts;
- LCSG PAC will share feedback with LCSG staff about the proposed 2022-2024 workplan;
- LCSG PAC will learn about LCSG's efforts to engage in efforts related to diversity, equity and inclusion, and about a potential new DEI training opportunity;
- LCSG PAC will share ideas about municipal needs and opportunities as related to hazard resilience

#### Notes:

10:00 AM Welcome and [PAC member](#) introductions

- Mark Malchoff – new PAC member
- Lori Fisher (she/her)- Executive director LCC
- Ahren von Schnell - Congresswoman Stefanik's science liaison
- Chris Navitsky – Lake George Waterkeeper, Merging organizations in Lake George Region

- Crea Lintilhac- Lintilhac Foundation
- Dan Kelting – new PAC member, Adirondack Watershed Institute
- Dan Lerner – Associate Director for UVM Extension
- Emily Bird – Clean Water Initiative Program Manager at VT DEC
- Erin Vennie-Vollrath – new PAC member NY DEC Lake Champlain Coordinator
- Holden Sparacino – standing in for VACD
- Kara Lenorovitz – VT Virtual Learning Cooperative and Colchester High School
- Margaret Fowle – she/her Audubon Vermont
- Rebecca Certner – National Sea Grant Office, Federal Program Officer
- Tom Berry – Senator Leahy’s office
- Sonal Patel-Dame – NY Teacher Science
- Dan Albrecht - Chittenden County Regional Planning Committee
- John Kowal – Institute for Advanced Manufacturing, Clinton Community College

10:25 AM Meet Dr. Theo Willis, Aquaculture Education Specialist, and learn about his work with aquaculture outreach in the basin

- Some aquaculture growers with restaurant connections were impacted by COVID
  - Some lost all business and some went to direct marketing as a result
- Some growers in the basin and in Vermont had excellent business during COVID (e.g., those who stock ponds were in high demand).
- New proposal focuses on providing community education about aquaculture to help to drive people’s awareness and interest in aquaculture
- Also focuses on how to get people to not be afraid of aquaculture?
- Theo has been working with Great Lakes Sea Grant aquaculture program
- He has developed two grants...one for COVID relief through LCSG and another NOAA one, which focused on science cafes, mobile aquaponics display and engineering challenges. Both are in partnership with ECHO, the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain
- Q/A
  - Can aquaculture happen in Lake Champlain? Mark M. says no. Theo agreed likely the case but there are in lake aquaculture systems in Lake Huron
  - How many fish stocked in the lake? Fish and Wildlife Depts would know better.
  - Scale of these businesses? Most are 1 person or a PT contracted person. Largest is Danaher in southern VT maybe 200,000 systems? Varies across businesses.
  - Lori Fisher asked about waste impacts? How are these addressed?
  - Crea: What about blooms in stocked ponds due to the stocking? Theo: not a lot of info on this. Danaher selling bacillus that consumes excessive nutrients.

- Breck: Why is LCSG involved in aquaculture? NSGO heavily involved. We are exploring opportunity as part of food system – local food movement. Still in the process of exploring how our work will develop.

10:40 AM Meet Dr. Aude Lochet, Aquatic Resources Extension Specialist, and learn about her past work and expected work for LCSG

- Aude is taking over where Mark Malchoff left off – and is based at the Lake Champlain Research Institute at SUNY-Plattsburgh
- 3 stages in career: fish ecologist studying fish migration using ear stones (including sea lamprey in LC), education at Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies running two undergrad research programs and teaching undergrad courses at Vassar College, current position working on hazard resiliency, outreach on invasive species
- Dan A: Encourage to work with regional planning commissions on hazard mitigation/resiliency. Most issues in terms of resilience are too much rain, too fast on mountain roads. Challenge to address people on lakeshore.

10:50 AM Meet Cassie Wolfanger, Conservation Fellow with Vermont Audubon, and learn about her past work and potential directions for her research

- Newer partnership with LCSG and Audubon. LCSG: Watershed resiliency, riparian buffers, water quality. Audubon: Bird conservation, sustainable farming, education and outreach, policy. Focus on landowners. May look at habitat restoration.
- Crea: Lyn Munno said there is a dearth of trees to plant in buffers. Intervale is only organic tree nursery. Alison is working on this shortage – surveying to understand shortfall and find solutions.
- Ahren: Rep Stefanik introduced HR 1548 to establish program in National Park Service to introduce native plant species materials.  
<https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr1548/BILLS-117hr1548ih.pdf>
- Kara: it sounds like there could be a good opportunity to enhance/increase having students working through UVMWA stream water quality analysis to also focus even more on the riparian conditions of the streams they sample. And, this could offer a good public service project opportunity for HS and MS students too.
- Caroline and Breck: Education and Workforce Development components to this need for native tree materials.

10:57 AM Feedback to LCSG on omnibus work plan elements and proposed initiatives

Kris: Provided a summary of process and high-level overview of content

The proposal includes six multi-faceted outreach initiatives

1. Building environmental awareness and promoting stewardship – outreach to local motion, Indigenous education
2. Strengthening community resilience - Working with communities to increase action of Municipal officials to share tools, resources and knowledge
3. Workforce Dev't to enhance watershed knowledge and skills - real estate professionals on homeowner land mgmt and regulations. Potential incarcerated individuals
4. Watershed education and prof dev for students and teachers - Watershed Alliance and Teacher education and college-student education
5. Stormwater mgmt thru nature-based solutions - stewardship, BLUE
6. Watershed health and sustainability - partnership with VT DEC on Lay Lakes Monitoring program, road salt education to municipalities and private contractors

## Comments

**Mark M:** Great job. Well done. Will send over tracked changes

**Crea:** Workforce development. Belongs to Watershed Caucus of 12 environmental groups in contact with VT State (Julie Moore, Neill Kamman). We are hiring engineers from out of state to implement new programs (3-acre rule) because we don't have the people here. Can universities provide degrees or certificates?

**Dan:** Support the omnibus and draw linkages between AWI and LCSG and Dan will send back a copy with some specific edits. Highlights: workforce development AWI – AIS spread prevention program work with over 100 seasonal workers (2-week training, AIS ID and boat inspection) there are a lot of opportunities from LCSG that could be added to the AWI-AIS training. Second idea, wonderful education initiatives, and AWI has some smaller educational initiatives and headwaters of ADK's - streets to streams connecting road salt to water quality (working with Lake Placid). Certificate program for AIS spread prevention – have a series of training videos, which are now for the public. Junior Steward Badge, to engage with youth, do certain things to get a badge (e.g., go to a boat launch site, interview a steward and career pathways). Watershed Protection: AWI involved with Lake Placid and Upper Saranac to develop upper watershed management plans around lower impact development and healthy shorelines.

**Chris:** Great document! Will send a track changes doc. A lot of references to VT DEC, little NY representation. Design standards for storms – looking at how design packages can be used to tighten up this and consider climate change. (talk with him for more details about this).

Workforce development: short videos and 90-second science, setup a committee of business advisors and resorts to show the clips/films and work with hotels and employees. (Stowe, Smuggs, Jay, Burke?) Maybe look for a NY DEC partnership position? (Kris would like this to be Aude's position... paid in part by NY)

**Emily:** in realm of workforce development, American rescue plan act and funding will feed into water infrastructure. Capacity question around environmental engineering and GSI skills (engineering, alternative certification for design). Set design standards for smaller scale GSI and how does that fit into the non-regulatory sector of GSI. Real estate training on 3-acre stormwater

regulations. Use the GSI roundtable to drive effort around certification and design standards. DEI and equitable distribution of funding. How to do?

**Breck:** Suggest Emily, Crea, Craig, Kris Stone to discuss what is needed to create a certificate. Emily said LCBP may have funding. UVM profs: Eric Roy, Mandu Dewoolkar.

**Erin:** stormwater certification – LCBP is talking about this as well so loop them in. Where can we plug NY DEC into the omnibus, happy to help try to find synergy. Flagged watershed stewardship program – Erin works on the LCBP citizen advisory committee and would like to bring youth representation (could this be their internship opportunity). Property and Lake Champlain Relators connection on how to talk about cyanobacteria blooms (future training op? Guides?).

**Dan:** Education program from Saranac high school – new visions, immersion year at hospital (geared towards), new program around STEM workforce around. Tami Morgan from Lake Placid high school is working on this – AE/NT will connect with her!

**Sonal:** New Visions is great. But we need a home base. On board to brainstorming ideas.

**Kara:** Vermont Governor's Institute of Vermont – college credit course, EPSCOR program (BREE) pool these programs together

11:30 AM Learn about and share input on LCSG DEI objectives and anticipated outcomes, including upcoming DEI learning opportunity.

- [“Can We Talk”](#) film viewing and facilitated discussion

## Comments

**Crea:** Noting the conversation around education new Americans on storyboards and signage. Kris shared - Signs with a QR code that present multiple languages.

**Kara:** I was thinking that in addition to partnering with Refugee Resettlement, there is an opportunity to also partner with English Language Learner Teachers and students to incorporate some of this education. It could be a good way to extend educational outreach beyond science teachers in K-12 schools, offer a way for younger new Americans to experience more of the natural resources, and to have their knowledge filter up from youth to adults.

*Note from Kara:* Ashley, the ELL teacher at CHS is Sue Rosato and I think she would welcome a connection. She excels at working with our school district's ELL learners over the summer as well as during the school year and really tries to get them engaged in the community. [Susan.Rosato@colchestersd.org](mailto:Susan.Rosato@colchestersd.org)

Ashley, another idea...Including the ELL students might present an opportunity for them to be part of creating some of the informational videos on the QR codes. It could be powerful both for them to create educational media for the community and might lend

further authenticity if the messages are coming from them to others in their families/communities. Just a brainstorm thought.

**Dan:** how to more broadly apply the JEDI plan. For example, AWI stewards are trained very generally around messaging. Is the messaging suitable? Initiatives around Science Communications to engage with a diversity of folks. Need for effective training and advisory group to hear and provide input on messages / help share messages.

**Emily:** engage liaisons to support community engagement. VT DEC is in the process of this!

**Action item:** send the DEI logic model in follow up email.

11:45 AM Share ideas about possible municipal needs and opportunities related to hazard resilience

Comments:

**Chris:** science to solutions package – e.g., road salt, needed something relatable (if you lead with science, you will lose some folks. Jim Lieberum - Director Warren County Soil & Water CD - hosts several of these in NY would be good outreach contact -

**Mark M:** municipal leaders that are newest present a good opportunity.

**Crea:** with vulnerable populations living in floodplains – there is funding to build housing through Vermont Conservation board. Underwood research can be used to identify vulnerable physical areas, then work with housing folks to provide alternative locations and housing options.

**Dan K:** village of lake placid would be interested in participating, very tuned in to the lake being an asset to the town, LEAD certified community – Dan will provide some contact information.

**Dan A:** Expand definition of hazard mitigation / hazard resilience so it is key to figure out what work is not being done, and figure out the language around it. What is the service we are providing that no one else is providing? Water quality, road salt, eligibility for grants, matching requirements....

Erin: Village of Saranac Lake is a Climate Smart Community. The contact is Erin Griffin - [egriffin@wildcenter.org](mailto:egriffin@wildcenter.org)

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