

**Wantastiquet Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions**
Wednesday, November 19, 2020
Video Conference Call
Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Walpole	Samantha Loch	✓	Westminster	Paul Harlow	
Walpole			Westminster	Jim Calchera	
Westmoreland	Perry Sawyer	✓	Putney		
Westmoreland			Putney		
Chesterfield	Roland Volbehrr		Dummerston	Daniel Marx	
Chesterfield			Dummerston		
Hinsdale	Mike Darcy	✓	Brattleboro	Kathy Urffer	✓
Hinsdale			Brattleboro	Michael Fairchild	
Vernon	Andy White				
Vernon					

Marie Caduto (VT ANR); Margo Ghia (WRC); Olivia Uyizeye (Staff)

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Sawyer called the meeting, conducted via conference call, to order at 6:10 PM under the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A, New Hampshire’s Right-to-Know law, as allowed by Emergency Order 11 under Executive Order 2020-04 in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Sawyer conducted a roll call of LAC members, invited any guests to introduce themselves, and welcomed all present.

2. Presentation on the VT Basin 11 Plan covering CT River tributaries from Herricks Cove down to Brattleboro with Marie Caduto, VT Agency of Natural Resources

Caduto introduces herself as the watershed coordinator for the state of VT (see slides for further details). These basin plans are done on a 5 year rotating basis. The 5 year cycle starts with monitoring, moving into assessment, and considering what steps to take, then review those plans through public input, and finally implementation where funding is available. This planning is done on 5 sectors – agriculture, developed lands stormwater, developed lands roads, wastewater, and natural resource restoration.

Basin 11 includes the Williams, Saxtons, and other minor tributaries that run into the Connecticut River. Areas in the basin with poorer water quality tend to be focused around villages with more impervious surface and ski areas. All collected data can be found on the Natural Resources Atlas for VT.

- Some of the tributaries have no data, including Mill and Fullam Brooks in Westminster. The basin plan will recommend that these get assessed as funds are available.
- Chase Brook (crossing Putney and Westminster) has some issue around fish. There are no fish and it is unclear why that is.

- East Putney Brook where there is a beautiful culvert. Due to under sizing there is a significant pool that people do swim in and it is safe to do so.
- Sacketts Brook passes right through Putney village. Sampling is done in different locations over time. There is some issue down in the village where there is also some agriculture. There are concerns about Sacketts Brook because of really high bacteria levels in the village. This could be from wildlife impacts in the wetlands, or possibly from the village waste water system, or failing septic systems. ANR has been monitoring the past couple summers to try and figure it out.
- Salmon Brook needs some more recent assessments done.
- Crosby Brook is an impaired stream between I-91 and the Connecticut River, largely due to sediment. The upper reaches are doing ok, while the developed areas not so much. A lot of work has been done to address this, including a dam removal most recently. That area for the highway will get redone and many improved stormwater practices will be installed at that point.

Long Island Sound Nutrient modeling shows that there is more septic system effluent Nitrogen coming off this watershed than that from agriculture or urban areas. Caduto will be focusing on this and working to do outreach. Septic systems are often on very small lots that can have limited space for replacement. A significant issue to start addressing and look at potential solutions like small municipal systems.

Clean Water Project Explorer is an interactive map where you can look at the different projects that are in that watershed. You can then select projects and learn more about it. Projects by in large come out of some sort of assessment. These types of assessments are not often done on many of the smaller tributaries discussed this evening.

Since the last 2015 basin plan, 75% of the recommended actions have been undertaken to some extent. Currently the Basin 11 plan is in the planning stage and Caduto will soon be looking to partners for feedback and input. There are a lot of different options for protections and restoration needs. There are dams that are no longer in use and often are not listed anywhere. Caduto welcomes members to reach out to her directly by way of marie.caduto@vermont.gov and (802) 490-6142, or through Uyizeye.

3. Permit Reviews

a. Recap of Public Meeting - Industrial Discharge Permit NorthStar Nuclear Decommissioning Company, LLC

Urffer attended the meeting and shares highlights. There is leaking ground water moving through an area where it can be impacted by radiation. The permit request to capture that water before it is impacted. There are likely other potential permits coming up.

b. Grafton Village Cheese Company – Brattleboro VT pretreatment discharge permit 3-1522

Sawyer asks if the permit has any change from previous.

Urffer says it looks like the facility no longer is making cheese so it is meant to update the information to accurately reflect these changes.

4. Approve Meeting Minutes from July

Darcy makes a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Urffer seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimous by roll call vote.

5. Updates & Other Business

a. Water Quality Testing – 2021 Season

Uyizeye informs the groups that CRJC will be applying to the NHCF Environmental Opportunity Grant to support Subcommittee water quality testing efforts through material support and recruitment. Uyizeye welcomes input on what to include in the proposal.

Urffer suggests making a presentation to garner support at the Brattleboro credit corps that has a group of young leaders. Urffer suggests connecting efforts to the broader activities to improve awareness to fill open spots. Getting people out on the river and they enjoy it, can get them engaged. Targeting younger families and community gatherings in the area. The select boards might not be well aware of the subcommittees. Some sort of annual marketing or outreach would be useful. This is more of a CRJC effort. Fall Mountain has a couple of students that have a water quality team, perhaps it is something they do on a larger scale. Hinsdale hosts a yearly (and perhaps bi-yearly) "Outdoor Hinsdale" event, which could be a good pull in interest

b. Town Report & Commissioners Update

Uyizeye informs members that Jack Lilly (Dummerston) and Joe Grutta (Putney) have resigned. The commissioners have not met since the last update. Uyizeye will be submitting the annual subcommittee town report to communities shortly. Uyizeye will share this with members for any comment and their knowledge.

6. Rotating Chair – Nomination for Next Meeting

Sawyer volunteers to chair the next meeting.

7. Adjourn

Urffer makes a motion to adjourn. Sawyer seconds the motion. The vote passes unanimous by roll call vote.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye