



CRJC's mission is to preserve the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership.

## Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, April 25, 2022 - 2 PM

### ATTENDANCE

Officer	NH CRVRC		VT CRWAC	
Chair	Jennifer Griffin	X	Steve Lembke	V
Vice-Chair	Ken Hastings	X	Marie Caduto	V
Secretary / Treasurer	Ted Cooley	V	Jason Rasmussen	V

Note: P = present in person; V = present over remote virtual platform; X = not present

Additional attendance: Olivia Uyizeye, Staff Consultant

NO QUORUM.

### MINUTES

**2:00 PM Convene**

President Lembke convenes the meeting at 2PM.

#### 1. February Minutes Review

The minutes from February are reviewed.

*By motion of Cooley/Rasmussen, the February minutes are tentatively approved as written.*

#### 2. Financials

The March are not available at this time. Lembke asks Uyizeye to request them from Anne MacEwan.

#### 3. Revitalization & Assessment Plan

Lembke indicates that 5 of 13 Commissioners already indicated their lack of availability/interest to participate. This emphasizes the need for recruitment. The following updates are provided on each goal.

- #1 multi year funding – Caduto shares that VT state funding is in the budget - Same amount as last year.
- #2 contractual deliverables – Lembke shares that this is mostly done, and has been reviewed and confirmed with UVLSRPC.
- #3 admin services – Lembke shares that conversation has been started with UVLSRPC. A draft contract and budget are ready for review.
- #4 commissioner leadership – Lembke shares that he is waiting to see how some of the tasks pan out before engaging this goal.
- #5 bi-state discussion – this goal is discussed later in the agenda.



*CRJC's mission is to preserve the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership.*

- #6 CRJC-LRS relationship – Uyizeye shares that Hastings is taking time to call each of the LRS chairs.
- #7 communications – Uyizeye shares that a meeting is set with goal members to discuss this coming Thursday.
- #8 recruitment – Uyizeye shares that a meeting was attempted, but scheduling was a challenge.
- #9 climate migration – Lembke shares that no work has been done as he is aware.
- #10 watershed speaker – Cooley shares that a meeting is set with goal members to discuss this Tuesday.
- #11 strategic plan – Lembke shares that no work has been done as he is aware.

Lembke – asks Uyizeye to communicate updates via email as they happen.

Rasmussen – notes there has been some movement and indicates that some goals need to have more staff support if funding was available. Most of the movement is from Executive Committee members.

Cooley – notes that other members appear lukewarm to the plan. A general lack of enthusiasm.

Lembke – poses the following questions: what is the next course of action? Help other commissioners? See what happens? Rely on new funding? Lembke shares sentiment from Griffin who is hesitant to have anyone jump in on activities to “help” as this was not what the plan was established to do.

Rasmussen & Caduto – agree with Griffin’s sentiments.

Lembke – indicates that he does not see value for a Full Commissions meeting in May, and we should rather wait until June.

#### **4. Bi-state Discussion**

Rasmussen – expresses the priority goal of this goal is to bring the 2 states together to have important conversation about the CT River Valley.

Caduto – presents a potential topic for fiscal year 2022, as required in the VT state contract.

Caduto has consulted Ben Copans, basin planner, on the strategy. The topic would focus on areas that both states shares – monitoring, 303d listing, etc. A discussion on this topic has not occurred for 6-7 years. It would be important to use this meeting to establish some agreement on how to work together to ensure valuable information is available for EPA on the Nitrogen TMDL. This might prompt ANR/DES to do more on this Connecticut River. Caduto has drafted a letter, to be signed by the CRJC president and VT/NH chairs.

Lembke – appreciates Caduto for pulling together this information and who should be invited. Asks Caduto if this topic will be of interest to those invited? What would be the meeting format? When?

Caduto – yes. Better to come from Commissions and not one state or the other. It is likely the conversation would be better in person but virtual is more likely to happen at the moment. For timing, the sooner the better, especially given that many are out in the field during this time of year. First thing in the morning or end of the day is best - Wed at 9am or 3pm, ideally in May.



*CRJC's mission is to preserve the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership.*

Lembke – suggests this topic could be a first conversation that would ideally follow up with other topics, which could take place in person.

Rasmussen – who do we invite? Not for our annual meeting. Board members should be aware and can attend if they want to.

Lembke – asks if other organizations should be invited to attend?

Caduto – better to have a small, focused group.

Lembke – asks Caduto for an agenda to be attached to the invitation.

Caduto – has something started.

Rasmussen – another topic that was discussed pertained to ARPA funding coming down the pike. A conversation could be had on how to encourage communities for infrastructure improvements that would benefit the river.

Lembke – could send out a press release on that topic.

#### **5. CRJC FY2023 Budget & UVLSRPC Contract**

Lembke – mentions \$8,800 contingency funds and how this should be used. Might this be carried over or does it have a use now?

Caduto – as we are trying to revitalize this organization, CRJC could consider an outdoor, in person annual meeting with some sort of speaker. Bring commissioners to the table to reconnect.

Rasmussen – suggests a speaker's event vs. paddles in the water. Something fun to build connections. Possibly a media event.

Cooley – likes the idea of outreach that involves people. Low cost with broader audience.

Uyizeye – could put off to early next FY. No rush in planning. Prefers more fun, less business. Invite LRS chairs.

Lembke – suggests inviting new recruits to attend. Possibly early Fall.

Rasmussen – benefit from added staff support from some of the goals. Use some of the contingency for staff time.

Lembke – asks if UVLSRPC would be willing to do this.

Uyizeye – simple answer is yes.

Caduto – suggests kilowatt park.

#### **6. LISFF proposal – Marie (see attached invitation)**

Caduto – More money in grant funds for the upper watershed. The project is to find agricultural BMPs of most interest to farms, and then identify those most impactful for nitrogen reductions. Involve a whole lot of partners. Need academia involved. How do we find those practices and verify they are impactful? Appropriate for CRJC to be a part of it. Does not expect CRJC to have a whole lot of time on this. Endorsement and participation in some meetings. To be the bi-state voice to ensure they are working together on this. Compensation for anyone who will be working on this. Make that a position of someone would take on behalf of CRJC, specifically suggests a commissioner with the agricultural community. Request is endorsement, and possibly participation.

Lembke – offer to reach out to Torpey to ask if she would be willing to review.



*CRJC's mission is to preserve the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership.*

Caduto – will follow up with Torpey after having spoken with Lembke.

Rasmussen – hopes that when looking at BMPs, options will be considered broadly from grass strips to regenerative farming, etc.

Caduto – agrees with Rasmussen.

*By motion of Cooley/Rasmussen, the project is tentatively endorsed.*

## **7. NHCF Unrestricted Grant**

Lembke recommends that CRJC consider apply to the NHCF Unrestricted Grant. The grant provides unrestricted funds for recipients, \$20,000 each year for 3 years.

<https://www.nhcf.org/how-can-we-help-you/apply-for-a-grant/unrestricted-grant-program/>

Commissioners agree an application should be considered.

## **8. LISFF proposal – Lionel & Olivia (see attached concept)**

Uyizeye – shares the project concept focused on identifying stormwater control projects in NH and VT. The project will work to bring impactful projects as close to shovel ready as possible in a two-year timeframe. The request for CRJC participation includes multiple aspects. CRJC could agree to participation in one form and not all. 1) endorsement of the project; 2) contribution to match for the project based on work the CRJC already is doing, mainly outreach with LRS and water quality monitoring, including in kind time. This match does not require any adjustment or added task to the CRJC budget; 3) LISFF budget for a part time CRJC staff to participate in outreach and technical assistance for the project with a potential budget up to \$132,000. This budget was developed based off the UVLSRPC hourly rate assuming Uyizeye involvement through CRJC.

Commissioners agree to support the project.

Lembke – asks how much match is estimated from CRJC.

Uyizeye – indicates somewhere around \$30,000 but has not yet run the numbers.

Caduto – notes the match can be explained as “pending”.

Lembke and Rasmussen – express concern about committing CRJC to be a Key Partner. Agree that the Full Commissions would need to vote to ensure the project.

*By motion of Caduto/Cooley, the project is tentatively endorsed with participation as a Key Partner pending full proposal review and a vote by the Full Commissions.*

## **9. Other Business**

Caduto informs Uyizeye that the VT State FY ends shortly. All invoices should be submitted by May 27, otherwise reimbursement will need to wait until July.

## **4:00 PM Adjourn**

The meeting is adjourned.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.



**State of Vermont**

**Department of Environmental Conservation**

Springfield Regional Office  
100 Mineral Street, Suite 303  
Springfield, VT 05156-3168

Marie Levesque Caduto  
Watershed Coordinator

*Agency of Natural Resources*

[cell] 802-490-6142  
[Email] Marie.Caduto@vermont.gov

[www.dec.vermont.gov/water-investment](http://www.dec.vermont.gov/water-investment)

April 14, 2022

Hello .....,

I am reaching out to you to inform you and (org) about a grant funding opportunity that is being pursued for the VT and NH Connecticut River valley region.

A Long Island Sound Future's Fund grant application is being drafted by a partnership of Conservation Districts and VT DEC to undertake a planning project for addressing nitrogen inputs through agricultural BMPs. This planning project hopes to establish a bi-state team of partners who will select a set of on-farm BMPs, based on expressed needs of the agricultural community, plan for on-farm implementation trials and design monitoring and assessment studies to assist in answering which practices will have the greatest impact on Connecticut River nitrogen inputs based on local conditions.

We are attempting to pull together a team that will include state agencies (VT DEC, VT AAFM, NH DES, NH DAFM), federal agencies (VT & NH NRCS, EPA), university researchers (UVM Ext., UNH Ext., Dartmouth College), regional and NGO partners (CRWFA, CRJC, NOFA, CRC) and agricultural producers among other invitees. This partnership will work with valley farmers to hone a list of preferred BMPs to offer agricultural producers throughout the watershed; determine what monitoring studies would entail to track load reductions from these practices; ascertain the level of farmer interest on a broader watershed scale and determine the level of funding that will be needed to implement the on-farm practices and tracking studies.

It is intended that non-governmental partners will be paid for their participation once the grant is secured.

The goal of this work is to develop verification methods to document potential load reductions to address the coming nitrogen load targets for the Long Island Sound TMDL. Finding the most effective BMPs based on Connecticut River valley soils will enable implementation to be targeted to the most effective practices available to farmers.

I invite (org) to join in a preliminary discussion on this project to gain insight into your interest in participating and to gather feedback on how to make this work most applicable to the work that we are all trying to accomplish on improving water quality in the Connecticut River watershed.

I will follow-up with you regarding a date to hold this gathering and hope you will join.

Regards,

Cory Ross  
WCNRCD

Marie Levesque Caduto  
ANR-DEC-WID

Windham County NRCD  
[Ross.wcnrcd@gmail.com](mailto:Ross.wcnrcd@gmail.com)  
802-689-3024

Marie Levesque Caduto, *Watershed Planner*  
ANR / Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
Water Investment Division  
Cell: (802) 490-6142  
[Marie.Caduto@vermont.gov](mailto:Marie.Caduto@vermont.gov)



## Long Island Sound Futures Fund 2022

### *NH/VT Stormwater Controls Concept*

Stormwater is a primary conduit of nitrogen entering the upper Connecticut River. Structures and BMPs aimed at filtering stormwater nutrients have been thoroughly documented by the UNH Stormcenter, including the ability to measure their effectiveness at withholding and diverting nitrogen in particular.

A planning project will conduct targeted outreach to developed areas along the upper Connecticut River to set the stage for implementation of numerous stormwater control devices with Nitrogen reduction impacts. Goals of the outreach will include:

- a) Raising community awareness of Connecticut River Nitrogen loading from stormwater;
- b) Identifying high-quality sites for BMP implementation;
- c) Enrolling targeted landowners and municipalities to proceed to implementation (subject to implementation funding);
- d) Completing site assessments, conceptual designs, and modeled estimates of Nitrogen withholding for each proposed device;
- e) Anticipating all final design, permit requirements and timelines so that projects will be as close to "shovel ready" as possible, and;
- f) developing a grassroots vision and shared priorities for integrated landscape-scale stormwater control.

Project deliverables will be:

- 1) a robust database of 50 to 100 stormwater control projects ready for implementation, including well-informed local champions;
- 2) implementation of 2 to 3 high-quality projects situated in locations for public promotion, and;
- 3) the foundations of a grassroots, regional vision for high-impact storm water control devices with Nitrogen reductions. The vision will include and go beyond those in this initial database, establishing a framework to identify additional project, including identification of those with additional community benefits.

This is a New Hampshire Conservation District project with possible additional participation from Vermont Conservation Districts. The Sullivan County Conservation District will be the PI and applicant. Partners include:

- Participating County Conservation Districts along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire (Sullivan, Cheshire, Grafton and Coos)
- the NH Soak Up the Rain Program (NH Department of Environmental Services)
- the Connecticut River Joint Commissions
- the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

The proposed 2-year budget for this project is \$500,000, which would include funding for 2 full-time staff as well as additional staff time needed to coordinate, promote and publicize the program.

We appreciate feedback on this proposal. Thank you.

**CONTACT: Lionel Chute**, District Manager, Sullivan County Conservation District