

1 **CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
2 **CLEAN WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
3 **October 10, 2019**
4 **Meeting Notes**

5
6 A meeting of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission’s Clean Water Advisory Committee
7 was held on October 10, 2019 in the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Office.
8

9 Committee Members Present:

- 10 Amy Hornblas – CWAC Chair, Cabot/Board of Commissioners
11 John Hoogenboom – Moretown Selectboard
12 Stewart Clark – Worcester Planning Commission
13 Larry Becker- Middlesex Conservation Commission
14 Dona Bate – Montpelier City Council
15

16 Committee Members Absent:

- 17 Michele Braun – Friends of Winooski River
18 Karen Bates – ANR
19 Corrie Miller – Friends of the Mad River
20 Brian Shupe – Friends of the Mad River
21 Gianna Petito - Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District
22 Rich Turner – Williamstown Planning Commission/Board of Commissioners
23 Ron Krauth – Middlesex/Board of Commissioners
24 Russ Barrett – Northfield Conservation Commission
25 Joyce Manchester – Moretown TAC
26 John Brabant – Calais/Board of Commissioners
27

28 Others Present:

29 None.
30

31 **CALL TO ORDER**

32 Amy Hornblas called the meeting to order at 4:13 PM.
33

34 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

35 None.
36

37 **CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

38 Stewart – Can we make the letter discussion longer? Changed to go until 5:30. Act 76 discussion start at
39 5:30.
40

41 **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 12 MINUTES**

42 No quorum so minutes could not be approved.

43 Larry just wanted to understand the comment regarding chemical fertilizers not being included in the
44 plan. Amy mentioned that it is not included in the modeling as far as she could see.
45

46 **CWAC RESOLUTION LETTER TO BOARD (DRAFT NUMBER 4)**

47
48 Amy provided the group with an updated letter (included in these minutes)

49 Stew – we need to not have just two bullets.

50 John H. – reminded us of John B.’s comment to KISS (Keep it simple silly).

51 Amy – wants to have consensus on all the points before we would vote on it and not having many folks
52 here may want to wait on this.

1 Stew – Power companies cutting of trees. John H. – his point is more about climate resilience and how
2 cutting forests relates to that not as much specific to power companies. Act 76 will help to strengthen
3 regulations and provide funding for it, including forestry management.

4 Stew – can we rewrite item #6 of the revised document to make it more related to climate change? John
5 did give some changes to Amy, which she will incorporate.

6 Dona – don't use apologetic language.

7 Stew – don't want to call it resolution, call it concerns.

8 Pam – do you want to say Basin Plans in general or keep it to the Winooski?

9 Stew and Amy – since our region is mostly in the Winooski, we should keep it to that.

10 The group had a discussion of which introduction of the letter to use.

11 They decided to go with C for the introduction.

12 Change "C" third sentence to "The CWAC charge is to mitigate and enhance all aspects of water quality
13 protection." Make this the second sentence and the sentence about the gaps be the third sentence.

14 Dona – can we add some clarifier to this sentence about the gaps, like significant.

15 John H. – change from "during the course of this review" to "our review revealed gaps"

16
17 **Bullet #1**

18 Stew – first bullet, change "recognize" to include.

19 John H – bullets do not have to be full sentences. The group simplified it. Make it in present tense.

20 Remove 2nd bullet

21 Remove the detail of the percentage of the agriculture load. Remove 1st sentence. Add an example.

22 Remove 4th, 5th 6th and 8th bullet points

23 Revised 7th bullet point.

24
25 #2 – Pam shared that Patti Casey told her that there 400 – 500 samples were monitored for Glyphosate
26 and they found no trace of it in surface water or groundwater. Stew reiterated that it still contributes
27 phosphorus to the soils which can then be eroded and transported to Lake Champlain.

28 Pam also mentioned that Jon Kim of VGS will be monitoring the interaction of phosphorus between
29 surface water and ground water in Lake Carmi watershed.

30
31 Change "Actions" to "practices".

32 The bullets were edited to be clearer and more concise. Bullets # 2, #3, and #4 was removed.

33 Bullets can become the numbers instead of bullets under numbers for simplification.

34
35 Before the next meeting, Amy will draft a paired down simplified a new letter based on the discussed
36 changes and will revise #3 through 7 with track changes.

37 Ron would like to include

38 39 **ACT 76 AND CLEAN WATER SERVICE PROVIDERS**

40 Pam – Act 76 – Pam went over that the legislature passed a new act for the provision of water quality
41 services.

42 43 **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

44 Pam announced Basin 14 (Stevens-Waits-Wells-Ompompanoosuc) Tactical Basin Plan Kickoff meeting
45 on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 4:30-6 PM Space on Main at 174 Main St. in Bradford, VT.

46

47

1 **SCHEDULE**

2 Next meeting November 14, 2019. Topic for next meeting - finalize letter and Act 76 if there is time.

3

4 Meeting adjourned at 6:09 pm.

10/6/19: Following is a working draft for consideration at the next CWAC meeting. These suggestions for our letter were submitted by members of the CWAC, and have been compiled circulated by email. All suggestions remain as they were submitted, although members have been trying various ways of sorting them to make our decision making process easier. Aside from adjusting the order, changes made since the packet version of this draft are written in red.

Proposed Introductions:

RE: **Resolution** Letter from CVRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee

RE: **Concerns** from CVRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee

- A. Members of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) would like to present to the Board of Commissioners a resolution of the following concerns:
- B. In 2018/2019, The Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) reviewed the Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan. During the course of this review gaps became apparent in water quality policies and practices. The CWAC charge is to address all aspects of water quality protection and enhancements. As the scope of water quality considerations is wide, at present, CWAC is concerned with the following:
- C. Members of the CVRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) would like to present the following concerns from our first year of work including items from our review of the Winooski Tactical Basin Plan.
- D. Items recommended for inclusion in the Winooski Technical Basin Plan that are omitted:

Proposed Bullets:

1. The Winooski Basin Plan is incomplete and thus contributes to ill-informed allocation of funds to improve water quality

- The Basin Plan set phosphorus load allocations and reduction targets for the Winooski River Basin but did not recognize the role of chemical fertilizers.
- Even without including the role of chemical fertilizers, the Basin Plan identifies agriculture as the sector with the largest phosphorus contribution at 48%.

Unfair Burden Bullets:

- The largest contributor of phosphorus in the Winooski Basin is agriculture, with 48% of the loads. The CWAC is concerned that funding allocated among land use sectors for phosphorus mitigation is not proportional to phosphorus loading contributions.
- Water quality improvement policies and strategies are focused on some sectors that make smaller contributions to the phosphorus problem.
- The expenditure for phosphorous mitigation is not proportional to phosphorus loading contributions and can place an unfair burden on Municipalities.
- Expenditures for phosphorus mitigation to date have been skewed toward sectors with relatively small phosphorus loading contributions; for example, municipalities have been asked to tackle unstable river channels (9% contribution), unpaved roads (6% contribution) and sewage treatment plants (4% contribution).
- The CWAC would like to see expenditures roughly proportional to a sector's phosphorus loading contributions.
- To address higher phosphorous load contributions requires additional funding so as not to reduce funds already available to Municipalities.

2. Actions to reduce phosphorus may exacerbate other water quality problems, **use of glyphosate as an example:**

- Management practices aimed at reducing sediment runoff and phosphorus by using no-till methods may increase the use of Glyphosate (aka Roundup) and other pesticides that reduce water quality and may lead to ecosystem damage.
- Management practices that are aimed at reducing one type of pollution, such as phosphorous, may result in the use of products that negatively impact water quality or aquatic organisms. For example, the use of Glyphosate (Roundup), will continue to increase as farms use it as part of no-till practice, which is recommended to reduce phosphorus transport associated with sediment runoff. The CWAC advises caution regarding policies and practices with associated negative impact.
- Water quality policies and practices could increase other impacts and possible ecosystem damage through the use of pesticides such as Glyphosate (a.k.a. Roundup)
- Farm use of Glyphosate will continue to increase due to practices such as no till, which is encouraged to reduce sediment and phosphorus runoff.

3. Other Pesticide / Herbicide Concerns

- Pesticides, neonicotinoids, remain and are re-cycled in surface water and groundwater as a significant contaminant threatening beneficial insects.
- The Statewide PFAS (including PFOA) contamination problem needs to be identified and described.
- Federal policies (subsidies) may encourage farmers to use nutrients, pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, and genetically modified seeds, none of which promote clean water.

4. Other phosphorous-related concerns:

- Reducing phosphorous input to Lake Champlain, while important, will not be a unique solution to the Lake's phosphorous problem. Residual, legacy phosphorous incorporated in Lake sediments must be identified as a factor limiting phosphorous reduction in Lake waters.

5. . Groundwater Concerns

- The interaction between ground water and surface water is not factored into surface water management strategies.
- Ground water quality and the interaction between groundwater and surface water is excluded from planning and strategies for surface water quality improvements.
- Groundwater quality and the interaction between groundwater and surface water is not factored into surface water management strategies. The CWAC recommends including the interaction of groundwater and surface water in the planning and strategies for surface water quality improvement.
- Homes in the CVRPC region are underlain by bedrock with varying chemical composition presenting varying radiologic hazard. 10% to 25% of homes sampled for airborne radon in our region have radon-levels that exceed the "safe" limit. (variation due to rock type) We advise additional testing of well water (groundwater) for radiological components in homes where significant airborne radon is present. We support active public education programs on this topic.

6. Commercial or infrastructure operations such as power companies may not always follow Accepted Management Practices (AMPs) when cutting trees.

- The CWAC is concerned that commercial or infrastructure operations, such as power companies, may not always follow Accepted Management Practices (AMPs) when cutting trees. Additional outreach and, if necessary, enforcement actions may be needed. (

Russ had some feedback about this item that he submitted before our last meeting:

I would like to recommend again that we remove item 4 from our letter to CVRPC. All commercial and infrastructure operations are presently required to comply with same AMP's as logging operations. Power companies, in particular WEC an GMP, have foresters on board to assure their operations comply with all State regulations. Simple call to these foresters should quickly resolve any noted infrations.

7. Climate Change

- Our changing climate is increasing precipitation intensity and volume. CVRPC needs to consider infrastructure changes to accommodate climate change effects as it plans for phosphorous mitigation in the Winooski Basin.
- Changing patterns of energy use promoted to lower release of CO2 will require support for a local economy including a shift to local small-farm agriculture. This action will provide better control of phosphorous release to surface waters.

Suggested Conclusions:

The Chair and members of the CWAC would be happy to attend a meeting of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to explain these concerns.....