

Lamoille Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC)

Thursday, May 22, 2025

2:00 to 4:00 PM

Remote /Zoom meeting

Meeting video posted at <https://youtu.be/SZwSi0fQP8>

**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: Lauren Weston (Q), Meghan Rodier (Q), Brad Holden (Q), Peter Danforth (Q), Erin De Vries (Q), Christine Armstrong (Q), Ken Minck(Q), Richard Goff, Daniel Koenemann (q)

Q= towards quorum q= towards quorum when representative has recused

Staff: Dean Pierce, Cliff Jenkins, Nora Brown

Others present: Peter's AI Notetaker, Chris Rottler (DEC), Karen Bates (DEC), Marc Mastrangelo (LCPC), Conrad Becker (LCPC), Will Marlier (OCNRCD)

1. Welcome and introductions

Peter Danforth opened the meeting at 2:02pm as Chair.

A round of introductions was made.

2. Meeting protocols

Peter Danforth reviewed norms for meeting on Zoom.

3. Conflict of interest declarations, if any

Peter Danforth intends to recuse himself from review of applications he submitted on behalf of the Lamoille County Conservation District.

Meghan Rodier intends to recuse herself from review of applications submitted by the Lamoille County Planning Commission. Richard Goff will also recuse himself from review of these same applications because he sits on LCPC's board.

Ken Minck asked whether he would need to abstain from review of the Georgia project development proposal submitted by Cliff Jenkins (Ken has had prior involvement in the project). Dean Pierce indicated that DEC guidance directs applicants to remove themselves from voting. Ken could vote unless doing so makes him feel uncomfortable.

4. Review/adjust and approve agenda

No adjustments made. Brad Holden motioned to approve the agenda. Erin De Vries seconded. Motion carried.

5. Approval of minutes

Erin De Vries motioned to approve the minutes. Meghan Rodier seconded. Motion carried.

6. Public comment not related to items on agenda

No public comments were made.

7. Seating of members (if any)

No new members were seated.

8. Budget adjustment requests (if any)

No budget adjustment requests were made.

9. Application review (8 project applications received)

Dean presented an overview of 8 project applications totaling \$252,477 in funding requests and \$6.9 million in estimated implementation costs, with an estimated phosphorus (P) reduction of 202 kg/year. He noted that while only \$380,252 has been committed from Year One funds, full implementation costs for these projects are expected to range between \$2.76 million and \$3.73 million.

Meghan Rodier expressed concerns about making decisions based on speculative future costs, particularly for preliminary design projects. She also raised issues regarding CWSP's increasing focus on floodplain restoration, which, while well-supported, may overlook broader structural problems in the program.

The council decided to review applications by project phase

1. Silver Lake Road Project Development (Georgia):

Presenter: Cliff Jenkins (Water Quality Project Manager, Northwest Regional Planning Commission)

Funding Requested: \$5,986

Summary: This project seeks to explore options for pairing a culvert replacement with other floodplain connectivity projects at the site in Georgia. Culvert replacements are difficult for the CWSP to fund due to low phosphorus reduction value and issues with overlapping MRGP jurisdiction. The project site was previously identified by the Town of Georgia, but Cliff Jenkins filed the application and will be responsible for the project.

Outcomes would include assessing potential interventions, permitting needs, calculating P reduction, and conducting landowner outreach.

Discussion:

- Ken Minck asked whether floodplain work would be north or south of the road. Cliff Jenkins replied that the consultant would determine that.
- Brad Holden asked if there was a mapped floodplain and the culvert size. Cliff was unsure. Brad noted familiarity with the area and confirmed the presence of Class 2 wetlands and hydrologic connectivity.
- Ken Minck noted that 170 acres have been conserved north of the site.

Motion: Meghan Rodier motioned to approve the full amount requested. Ken Minck seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Wescom Road Floodplain Restoration Project: Preliminary Design (Johnson)

Presenter: Marc Mastrangelo (Assistant Planner, Lamoille County Planning Commission)

Funding Requested: \$58,565.86

Estimated P reduction: 22.5kg/yr

Summary: Marc Mastrangelo presented the application to the council. He reviewed the project area, which is located south of the Wescom Road mobile home park, which has experienced frequent flooding. The road also serves as primary access to the village's well head. He intends to seek CWSP funding for preliminary design and then CDBG disaster relief or hazard mitigation funds for implementation, neither of which claim phosphorus reduction credits. He also shared that LCPC believes estimated implementation costs totaling \$2.4 million are likely inflated. The project would involve improving floodplain access and flood storage through lowering and vegetating the floodplain.

Meghan Rodier added that south of the project area there is also an undersized culvert that has backed up and caused flooding and scouring, which would be looked at as part of this project.

Discussion:

- Erin De Vries asked about precise well head location, which Marc identified as northwest of the project site. She expressed support for the project, sharing that she knows of a parcel just upstream where floodplain will be lowered as well, pairing well with the proposed project.
- Ken Minck asked about material removal estimates. Marc replied that figures were not yet available.
- Dean asked Meghan about the full project costs mentioned in the application. Meghan estimated closer to \$500k, much lower than current \$2.4M projection. LCPC intends to seek much of this funding from other, non-reporting sources.

- Meghan Rodier noted the difficulty of estimating future costs at this phase. Lauren Weston agreed with this challenge. In the chat, Chris Rottler (DEC) suggested using previously implemented projects of a similar size to estimate a general range of expected costs. Lauren replied that without sediment removal estimates, there is no experience with “similarly sized” projects to draw from.
- Brad Holden asked about historic uses of the site and potential for contamination; Meghan stated LCPC believes it is historically green space. Brad recommended consulting historical atlas information to confirm this.
- Ken Minck asked about the source of the budget estimates for this project phase. Meghan answered that it comes from modeling done by Stantec through the state rivers program in 2019, which identified the project and provided a conceptual design.
- Christine Armstrong asked about floodplain study methods, sediment disposal, and floodway features. Meghan responded that modeling would look at different intervals of floodplain lowering to provide floodplain access, including potential restoration of historic flood chutes. This work would be done by a consultant chosen through competitive procurement, and the consultant would also identify an appropriate site for removed sediment.
- Erin noted a similar past project in Bennington had costs in a similar range for preliminary design.
- Dean mentioned potential collaboration with federal Economic Development Administration modeling; Meghan noted limited capacity to add more tasks to LCPC’s EDA grant.
- Brad brought up FEMA mapping of the watershed, which has recently completed cross-sections for the Lamoille River and anticipates releasing draft flood maps relatively soon. Erin expressed skepticism about FEMA timelines.

Motion: Erin De Vries moved to approve the full amount requested. Ken Minck seconded. Meghan Rodier abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Gihon Confluence Floodplain Restoration Project: Preliminary Design (Johnson)

Presenter: Conrad Becker (Assistant Planner, Lamoille County Planning Commission)

Funding Requested: \$57,967.61

Estimated P reduction: 24.4kg/yr

Summary: Conrad Becker provided an overview of the project. The project was also identified by modeling done in 2019 as an area for possible floodplain restoration to improve flood resiliency and water quality. Conrad shared that LCPC will also pursue CDBG funds for implementation. He reviewed the project’s P reduction estimates, timeline, and co-benefits.

Discussion:

- Meghan Rodier noted nearby flood buyout areas already in place near the confluence of the Lamoille and Gihon rivers.
- Erin and Ken asked clarifying questions about the project site.

- Ken asked about how the P reduction value was calculated; Conrad confirmed use of FFI (functioning floodplain initiative) tool.

Motion: Brad Holden moved to approve full amount requested. Christine Armstrong seconded. Meghan Rodier abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Caspian Beach Shoreland Restoration: Preliminary Design (Greensboro)

Presenter: Will Marlier (Lake Watershed Program Specialist, Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District)

Funding Requested: \$10,875

Estimated P reduction: 2.2kg/yr

Summary: Will Marlier provided an overview of the project scope, which will include shoreline stabilization and planting rain gardens. OCNRCD will use preliminary design funding to evaluate various BMPs. Stormwater treatment has been added since the original scoping phase. He shared that both Hardwick Electric and the Beach Committee are on board with the project.

Discussion:

- Christine Armstrong noted membership in the Greensboro watershed group at the time this project was identified. DEC guidance directs applicants to remove themselves from voting. The applicant is OCNRCD. Christine could vote unless doing so makes her feel uncomfortable.

Motion: Lauren Weston motioned to approve up to the full requested amount. Erin De Vries seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Stream Buffer Restoration: Final Design (Greensboro)

Presenter: Will Marlier (Lake Watershed Program Specialist, Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District)

Funding Requested: \$10,040

Estimated P reduction: 11.27kg/yr

Summary: Will Marlier provided an overview of the project, which involves a buffer planting along a tributary to Porter Brook. The area is currently hayfield and lacks an adequate vegetated stream buffer. The project was highly prioritized in the Caspian Lake Watershed Action Plan. OCNRCD also wants to explore addressing two failed culverts and on the stream and nearby tile drains. Will also shared that the Greensboro Association has earmarked up to \$1000 in match for purchasing buffer planting materials for eventual implementation.

Discussion:

- Ken Minck asked whether landowner permission has been received. Will Marlier answered that both landowners have given written permission, and that additionally, the Nature Conservancy holds an easement on the property, and their staff is also interested in this project moving forward. While the farmers haying the fields will be consulted, since they are doing so under an informal lease, the ultimate decision is the landowners.

Motion: Erin De Vries motioned to approve up to the full requested amount. Christine Armstrong seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. 10 bends Floodplain Restoration: Preliminary Design (Hyde Park)

Presenter: Peter Danforth (Director, Lamoille County Conservation District)

Funding Requested: \$66,125.40

Estimated P reduction: 134.7kg/yr

Summary: Peter Danforth provided an overview of the project, which proposes restoration of a 59-acre floodplain site on formerly agricultural land (now wetland). He noted that the project has been in the works for a few years, and that previously secured funding fell through. The proposed site is referred to as “Phase 2” because a landowner vetoed another design made for another section of the area. The project aims to improve flood storage and has some recreational value as there is a fishing spot nearby. Some flood modeling has already been done by Watershed Consulting, and LCCD has an existing good relationship with landowners from past projects on the site. The project will result in up to 3 alternative designs to assess costs and benefits, including permitting needs and cost estimates for next phases.

Discussion:

- Ken Minck asked whether material will be removed. Peter replied that it depends on design outcomes.
- Peter shared that NRCS had previously considered interventions like plugging agricultural ditches on the site. He mentioned that a hazard mitigation grant might be pursued for implementation.
- Dean Pierce inquired about implementation costs, which total \$200k in the application. Peter answered that this figure comes from the consultant’s previous experience.

Motion: Meghan Rodier motioned to approve up to the full requested amount. Brad Holden seconded. Peter Danforth abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

Chat Suggestion: Lauren suggested a future meeting focused on CWIP project types.

7. Silver Ridge Stormwater Project: Final Design (Morristown)

Presenter: Peter Danforth (Director, Lamoille County Conservation District)

Funding Requested: \$24,000

Estimated P reduction: 6.72kg/yr

Summary: Peter Danforth provided an overview of the project, which involves connecting a stormwater pipe to a large rain garden. Former DEC staff member Jim Pease was involved with creating this project. He noted that the sole landowner of the rain garden site is in agreement with proposed plans. Designs potentially include an underdrain, which may not be necessary in the sandy soil on site. He also mentioned that implementation costs might be offset by state WISPr (Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program) funds.

Discussion:

- Karen Bates (DEC staff) noted that for WISPr funding, the project would have to be designed without pipes, as WISPr only funds natural resource projects. She recommended an alternative design that would fit these requirements. Peter noted that LCCD would also prefer not to need to use pipes.
- Karen also noted that if a pipe were used, designs would need to ensure that water wouldn't be directed back towards the house in case of a sudden thaw. Brad Holden agreed, noting the importance of overflow pipes in case of potential flooding. Peter agreed to consider these issues.

Motion: Brad Holden motioned to approve up to the full requested amount. Erin De Vries seconded. Peter Danforth abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Lake Elmore Fish & Wildlife Access Stormwater and Lakeshore BMP: Implementation (Elmore)

Presenter: Peter Danforth (Director, Lamoille County Conservation District)

Funding Requested: \$19,826.84

Estimated P reduction: 0.24kg/yr

Summary: Project will involve installing multiple bioretention areas and some plantings near the Fish & Wildlife access area on Lake Elmore. Identified as part of Lake Elmore's LWAP. He shared that LCCD is willing to match up to half of funds help the project meet P reduction efficiency requirements because of the project's high educational value.

Discussion:

- Dean Pierce suggested the council consider funding less than the project's full proposed cost due to this availability of match funds from LCCD.
- Dean also asked how the P reduction figure was calculated and whether Peter had received a second opinion from DEC staff, since he had seen other shoreline restoration projects have their P reduction figures cut. Peter answered that he calculated it himself, and since he isn't an engineer, it could change.
- Brad Holden suggested funding the project for \$10,000. Dean noted that cost effectiveness would then be \$41,000/kg, which, while high, is technically under the \$50,000/kg threshold for stormwater projects.
- Meghan Rodier asked about the source of match. Peter answered that it would come from LCCD's general funding (which comes from donations, memberships, and the like). His board has agreed to provide the funding due to the high educational value of the project.

Motion: Erin De Vries motioned to approve \$10,000 in funding for implementation. Ken Minck seconded. Peter Danforth abstained. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Expedited project development program

Agenda item skipped for time.

11. O&M program

Agenda item skipped for time.

12. Updates, including tabled item

No updates given.

13. Conclusion

Dean Pierce reminded members that their next meeting will take place on July 24. This is the annual meeting where elections will take place. He reminded members that the council is still looking for a second representative from a watershed organization.

The next funding round, round 9, will open on October 9th and close on November 13th, 2025.

Brad Holden motioned to adjourn. Christine Armstrong seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:09pm.