

**Missisquoi Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC)**

**Wednesday, February 4, 2026**

**11:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

**Regular Meeting**

Meeting video posted at <https://youtu.be/Jwre3STI3oo>

**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), Ted Sedell (Q), Heidi Britch-Valenta (Q), Lindsey Wight (Q), Beth Torpey (Q), Kent Henderson (Q), Sarah Downes (Q), Allaire Diamond (Q). Tucker Malone (Q) during portion of meeting before Allaire joined.

Q= towards quorum [q= towards quorum when representative has recused, when applicable]

Staff: Dean Pierce

Others present: Bridget Butler (FNLC), Ellen Fox (MRBA), Mel Auffredou (FCNRCD), Dorothy Kinney-Landis (FCNRCD), Kerry Brosnan (FCNRCD), Josh Serpe (FNLC), Karen Bates (DEC)

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Lindsey opened the meeting at 11:00 as Chair. A round of introductions was made.

**2. Meeting protocols**

Lindsey reviewed norms for meeting on Zoom.

**3. Conflict of interest declarations, if any**

Lauren, Lindsey, Kent, and Tucker declared conflicts of interest and intent not to vote on proposed projects from their respective organizations heard later in the meeting.

**4. Review/adjust and approve agenda**

No changes to the agenda were made. Sarah motioned to approve. Lauren seconded. Agenda was approved.

## 5. Approval of minutes

No changes were made. Sarah motioned to approve. Heidi seconded. Minutes were approved.

## 6. Public comment not related to items on agenda

No public comments were made.

## 7. Seating of new RPC Representative (if any)

No new representatives were seated.

## 8. Report on budget adjustments (if any)

No adjustments were made.

## 9. Review of Applications

Dean showed a map of locations of all the proposed projects and provided an overview table of all the applications.

Josh presented on the **Swanton Hill Road Floodplain Reconnection** project. This project is on Fairfield Pond and the application. The project received some expedited project development funding. The goal is to connect the stream back to the floodplain and lower an existing berm, as well as doing some plantings. The request was for \$22,000 for final design with a P-reduction of 6.18 kg/year. The landowner is very supportive of the project. Lauren asked clarifying about the requested cost and doing alternate analysis, and Josh said that the alternate options included talking to the town of Swanton about digging up the road. **Lauren motioned to approve. Ted seconded. Kent abstained. Motion passed.**

Lindsey presented on the **Trout River Project**. The project is in the final design stage and MRBA requested about \$21,500 with a P-reduction of 49 kg/yr. The project would involve expansion of a tributary and plantings. Lauren clarified that final design projects should include funds for the contractors to do bid phase service work instead of the implementation phase. **Sarah motioned to approve. Ted seconded. Lindsey abstained. Motion passed.**

Dorothy presented on the **Cooks Brook Planting Project**. The property is conserved with VLT and is part of a wetland protection zone. The project cost was about \$17,000 with a P-reduction of 3.72 kg/yr. This project will increase riparian buffer width with planting of 400 stakes/acre, and the landowner is very supportive of the project. Ted asked about the cost of the stakes, and Dorothy said that FCNRCD is working through different options. Kent asked about the species to be used. Dorothy and Mel shared that they would use Balsam Firs, Red Maples, Yellow Birch, Silky Dogwood, Red Osier Dogwood, Tamarack, Speckled Alder, etc. **Sarah motioned to approve. Ted seconded. Lauren abstained. Motion passed.**

Dorothy also presented on the **Rock River Tributary project**. This project builds upon another project in the final design phase. This project will hopefully increase flood storage capacity. The project will follow a two-stage channel design. P-reduction of 31.3 kg/yr with an implementation cost of \$456,348. The implementation phase will start in April and mobilization will start later in the summer/early fall. Heidi asked what work had happened previously in the area. Kent asked how sediment build up will be taken into account. The planting will happen along the length of the project in the “shoulder” of the stream. Dean asked for clarification on the width of the bench in the area indicated on plans as manure pit leak detection lines. Dorothy and Lauren said that the floodplain might be tapered to the culvert depending on what they find during excavation. Kent asked if plantings would succeed if inundated. Lauren explained that the downstream culvert has been widened and will hopefully alleviate some inundation, and CREP has survival requirements for plantings. Heidi asked about the amount of funding that has been given toward this one landowner’s property and what safeguards there are. Tucker provided some clarification on the conservation easement allowances. Dean said that given all of the involved parties there will be a lot of discussion around management plans between the CWSP and VLT. **Sarah motioned to approve. Ted seconded. Lauren abstained. Motion passed.**

Allaire presented on the **Raboin Stream & Floodplain Project** from VLT. This project is on a farm and the goals are to improve the floodplain in this area while continuing its agricultural use. The primary concerns are a farm bridge on the property that is interfering with river movement. The request was for about \$43,000 for preliminary design and modeling with a 9kg/yr P-reduction if the bridge is removed. Ted asked for clarification on what would be included in the funding request. Kent asked about what agricultural uses would be happening in the future given this is no longer a dairy farm; it would likely be used as a diversified vegetable farm. **Lauren moved to approve. Ted seconded. Allaire/Tucker abstained. Motion passed.**

Kerry presented on the **Trout River Tributary Forest Road Project**. The project aims to ensure that the trailside ditches have adequate capacity and reduce erosion along the trail. The waterbars and ditches on the trail already are in need of repair and not working as planned. The cost of this phase is about \$21,000 with about \$50,000 for the total project. Karen asked for clarification on the road attributes and whether or not a culvert is necessary. Mel clarified that the waterbars would be sufficient given the changes suggested. Karen also clarified that flat areas get less P-credit than sloped areas. Dean added to Karen’s point of removing the alternatives analysis. Dean asked about the history of the site and reminded the group that projects are non-regulatory only when that have not been used for logging or agriculture in the past 3 years. **Sarah moved to approve. Ted seconded. Lauren abstained. Motion passed.**

Mel presented on the **Sandy Bay Stream Restoration Project**. The goal is to install beaver dam analogs and post-assisted log structures along the tributary and replace an undersized culvert on Sandy Bay Road and review permitting needs. Budget for final design was \$26,563 with an estimated total cost of \$100,000 and a P-reduction of 2.2kg/yr. The project will include about \$5,000 of volunteer help. Dean clarified that the cost effectiveness threshold for stormwater projects is \$30,000. He encourage Mel to describe co-benefits/justification for funding this project given cost effectiveness does not meet the policy threshold. Mel shared that the project's location in the Lake Carmi watershed and involvement of community members make it an important project, regardless of the cost effectiveness being high. Karen asked if a stream assessment had been done; Mel shared that a Lakewise/Streamwise assessment and an existing conditions analysis have been done. Karen asked about the incision of the stream, Mel said that it was about 1.5 ft incised. Ted commented on other ways to improve the cost-effectiveness, and Mel explained that the high costs were from engineering analyses. Lauren emphasized that the overall cost of the project is pretty low, and that there are not many BDA projects in the Missisquoi Basin. **Sarah moved to approve. Ted seconded. Lauren abstained. Motion passed.**

#### **10. Problem solving-focused updates for selected projects**

Lindsey shared that there will be a presentation on this next meeting.

#### **11. Updates**

Dean mentioned that there will be a dedicated nomination for projects soon and that Catherine at NRPC was actively looking for funding for a river modeling project for the Missisquoi like what had been done with the Lamoille. A call might go out for a legislative representative to give a testimonial soon. New DEC policies are being explored, including herbicide use, updates to the natural resource screening tool, and historic preservation review.

#### **12. Future Meeting topics/Conclusion**

Dean shared that the next meeting will be April 1.

Meeting adjourned at 1:04.