

Missisquoi Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC)

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Regular Meeting

Meeting video posted at <https://youtu.be/iplFo5COaNs>

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), Heidi Britch-Valenta (Q), Lindsey Wight (Q), Beth Torpey (Q), Kent Henderson (Q), Sarah Downes (Q), Allaire Diamond (Q). Dan Seeley (Q).

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

Staff: Dean Pierce

Others present: Bridget Butler (FNLC), Mel Auffredou (FCNRCD), Kerry Brosnan (FCNRCD), Josh Serpe (FNLC), Karen Bates (DEC), Peter Bernevento (FWC), Rob Evans (FWC), Av Walsh (FWC), Josh Serpe (FNLC), Sadie Preece (FCNRCD)

1. Welcome and introductions

Dean confirmed quorum was present. Lindsey opened the meeting at 11:03. A round of introductions was made.

2. Meeting protocols

Lindsey reviewed norms for meeting on Zoom.

3. Conflict of interest declarations, if any

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Review/adjust and approve agenda

No changes were made to the agenda. Sarah moved to approve the agenda, with Lauren seconding. Agenda was approved.

5. Approval of minutes

No changes were made. Sarah moved to approve the minutes. Lauren 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) - Biennial Renewal

No new representatives were seated.

Dean presented information about the membership renewal process for Basin Council members. He explained that members serve two-year terms per DEC guidance, with renewal process occurring every two years more than three months before fiscal year start. He added that all current members wish to renew except Dave Allerton, whose status is uncertain. Allaire noted Tucker Malone should be added as alternate for land conservation organization. The group also briefly discussed whether staggered terms should be considered.

8. Report on budget adjustments (if any)

No adjustments were made.

9. Presentation on Lake Carmi Alum Treatment

Pete Benevento, Rob Evans, and Av Walsh of Franklin Watershed Committee reported on the fall 2025 alum treatment for Lake Carmi. The presentation included:

- A summary of phosphorus loading challenges and internal loading dynamics;
- An overview of alum treatment as a phosphorus mitigation strategy (alum treatment was applied to 775 acres over 21 days in September-October 2025; some 412,254 gallons of alum and 206,106 gallons of sodium aluminate applied in three passes to seven treatment zones);
- Description of water quality outcomes, including reductions in algal blooms and improvements in clarity;
- Issues related to treatment design, dosage, timing, and permitting; and
- Discussion of monitoring to evaluate treatment effectiveness over time.

Pete and Rob expressed thanks to the Town, State Agencies, and others who made the project possible.

10. Problem solving-focused updates for selected projects

Montgomery flood resilience project. Kerry from Franklin County NRCD presented update on Montgomery flood resilience project development. Discussion included progress on preliminary design, engagement with affected landowners, and identification of constraints and opportunities at the site. Next steps include advancing design work, refining cost estimates, and continuing coordination with partners and regulators.

Swanton Hill floodplain reconnection project. Josh from Friends of Northern Lake Champlain reported on ongoing planning and site assessment efforts that are part of the project. His comments touched on how project development funding can be used for landowner outreach after organizational turnover, site visits with consultant to understand constraints, and regulator outreach. He noted that funding enabled project prioritization, phosphorus crediting revision, and advancement to final design application stage.

Sleeper Pond dam removal project. Lindsey presented an overview of the Sleeper Pond dam removal project. She explained project started in 2017 when the landowner wanted to dredge pond, but dam removal was identified as most affordable option. A series of beaver dam analogs and post-assisted log structures were installed to stabilize sediments. While some of these structures were already showing signs of wear within a few months, they are still functioning as intended for now. The project also revealed a previously hidden bedrock cascade, which was well received by a neighboring landowner. Some residents were initially frustrated by lower water levels, especially during a drought year, but overall landowner relationships have remained positive due to consistent communication, public meetings, and a willingness to engage. There were also some unexpected challenges, including the need to install a retaining wall when bedrock conditions differed from expectations. The project appears to have generated some positive community engagement as well, including interest in wildlife activity (such as herons and turtle relocations), with the contractor's care for turtles being especially appreciated. Local newspaper coverage may have also helped keep tensions from escalating.

11. Updates

DEC policy updates. Dean provided overview of proposed DEC policy revisions. A key update is a revision to the co-funding policy that would allow CWISP funds to retain full phosphorus reduction credit, rather than splitting credit with other funding sources. He noted that defining what counts as a "regulatory project" remains an ongoing challenge and continues to affect project eligibility. There are also still some open questions around O&M policies—particularly what types of activities (like herbicide use and invasive species management) can be funded—though the guidance is improving. Continuing, Dean added wetland easements are now eligible for project development funding. He also highlighted the rollout of a more formal screening tool and updates to the historic preservation review form.

Funding outlook. Dean reported that the Clean Water Board recommended a funding level of \$50–60 million, and the House has already passed a budget aligned with that recommendation, with the proposal now under consideration in the Senate. He also noted the sunset of the property transfer fund restriction has been removed, which allows that funding stream to continue supporting clean water work.

Online invoice and progress report submission tools. Dean then walked through the transition from Word documents and Excel trackers to new web-based forms for invoices and progress reports. He noted that the system is still in a prototype phase and will likely be refined based on user feedback. He demonstrated the invoice form, which includes fields for project selection, reporting period, activity descriptions, and document uploads. He also showed a deliverables form that provides project-specific reminders about required submissions. Links to the forms will be posted on the website, included in task award materials, and shared via email. Dean emphasized that support is available, including one-on-one sessions.

12. Future Meeting topics/Conclusion

Dean previewed the next Basin Council meeting and upcoming timeline. The next funding round is expected to open in the coming weeks, with a May 20 deadline, and applications will be reviewed at the June 3 meeting. He also flagged a few administrative items, including potential nominating committee activity. Lauren requested more time at a future meeting to revisit the idea of staggering member terms, which had come up earlier in discussion. In response to questions about funding, Dean clarified that there are no strict caps per round, but funding decisions are guided by overall CWISP contract limits (roughly \$9–10 million over four years) and a strong emphasis on cost effectiveness. Allaire indicated interest in following up offline to discuss project structuring and bidding considerations ahead of the June decision timeline.

Meeting adjourned shortly after 1:00.