

Missisquoi Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC)

Thursday, June 18, 2026

12:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

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

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: Lindsey Wright (Q), Lauren Weston (Q), Ted Sedell (Q), Heidi Britch-Valenta (Q), Lindsey Wight (Q), Beth Torpey (Q), Kent Henderson (Q), Dan Seeley (Q), Allaire Diamond (Q), July Medina-Triana (Q)

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

Staff: Dean Pierce, Lorna Peters, Nora Brown

Others present: Ben Machin (Redstart), Mel Auffredou (FCNRCD), Kerry Brosnan (FCNRCD), Chris Rottler (DEC), Sadie Preece (FCNRCD), James King (Redstart), Karen Bates (DEC),

1. Welcome and introductions

Lindsey opened the meeting at 12:02 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 declared a conflict of interest and did not vote on proposed projects from FCNRCD.

4. Review/adjust and approve agenda

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

5. Approval of minutes

No changes were made. Ted motioned to approve. Dan seconded. Minutes were approved.

6. Public comment not related to items on agenda

No public comments were made.

7. Seating of members/alternates

July Medina-Triana with the Town of St. Albans will be taking over as Sarah Downes's alternate. She replaces Dave Allerton.

8. Report on budget adjustments/Budget adjustment request

A request for a budget adjustment of >20% was discussed. The request pertains to project development work for the Montgomery Flood Resilience Project. The project sponsor is with the FCNRCD. The project cost would increase from roughly \$14k to \$18k. Lauren explained that this portion of the project went over budget but has resulted in good outcomes for the project as a whole. Ted motioned to approve. Kent seconded. Lauren abstained. Motion carried.

9. Review of Applications

a. Design Projects

Lauren and Ben presented on the strategic wood addition project funding request. Preliminary design just wrapped up, and the funding request seeks around \$13,000 for final design. Ted commented on the high P-reduction for a strategic wood addition. Ben clarified that the wood addition is from on-site wood and the sections of the stream were selected for addition because of their high reduction potential through floodplain access. Allaire commented on her hopes for an increase in efficiency for securing design funding with strategic wood addition projects. Dean shared that P-reduction varies by basin for these projects, which is why the P-reduction for this project looked so high. **Allaire moved for approval of the request. Ted seconded. Lauren abstained. Motion carried.**

Kerry presented on the Trout River Floodplain Restoration project. This final design project is a combination of two projects studied in the Montgomery Flood Resiliency Study done by SLR. This project will restore floodplain access along the Trout River by collecting data and refining modeling to present to landowners. The NRCDC will try to align work on the town-owned parcel with planned work being done in 2027, and the rest of the implementation

will hopefully be done in 2028. The NRCD is hoping to explore options for floodplain restoration along different sections of the river. Kerry shared a table of the final design timeline, with the town-owned parcel having a different timeline. The final design budget is \$231,270 for an overall estimated P credit of 13.5 kg/yr. Ted and Lauren commented on the success working with multiple landowners. Kent asked whether the project will retire any farmland. Kerry said that SLR's projection included some farmland but this could change depending on landowner permission and on-the-ground data points. Dean pointed out that P-reduction credits will potentially not be claimed until 2028 when the full project is completed and not when the work will be done on the town-owned portion in 2027. **Ted moved approval of the request. Allaire seconded. Lauren abstained. Motion carried.**

b. Adoption Projects

Mel presented on the Scott Property Riparian Buffer Planting project in Enosburg Falls. She explained that many of the original plantings suffered from significant deer browse and the follow-up plantings had a difficult time with wind. The estimated annual cost per kilogram is about \$3,000. Dean commented about the upfront investment exceeding ordinary maintenance, especially with past history of deer browse. Mel explained that issues with tree tubes were likely user error and they are hopeful that these will be more successful the second time around. The NRCD is hopeful that once the upfront costs are out of the way, the project will significantly decrease in cost annually. Lauren and Allaire wanted clarification on the 18-year cost estimate. Mel clarified that the 18 years came from 20 year implementation, minus 2 years since the project started in 2024. The budget came from an estimate of a few site visits and plantings per year. Dean clarified that question before the BWQC is whether or not it recommends adoption of the project, not a specific cost for the CWSP to spend. Allaire commented that the format of adoption with an open-ended O&M cost is difficult to get around. Chris replied that continuing projects is generally cheaper than starting new ones and that is the incentive with adopting projects. Allaire explained that her experience with tree plantings has shown that sometimes implementing and maintaining projects can far exceed initial cost estimates. Chris followed up by saying that the BWQC can always come back to a project and abandon it if costs become too high. Dean shared the calculations behind cost projections, and Lindsey asked if this money is set aside in case it is needed over the next 18 years. Dean said it is not. Dean also presented an alternative version of the cost projections for the BWQC to see what the cost could be like if there were minimal additional costs after 5 years as opposed to 18. Lauren asked about the process for abandoning a project if it does not work in the end and Dean briefly shared the process. Heidi asked why the site access agreement would auto-renew after 20 years. Dean explained that these commitments are not permanent, so the agreement renews until it is terminated by the landowner. Mel also clarified that the

agreement is only between the CWSP and the landowner, not the NRCD. Heidi asked how the CWSP would plan for an increase in adopted projects and Chris replied that only 15% of projects can be adopted. **Heidi motioned for the recommendation of project adoption. July seconded.** Kent shared that he would feel better about an annual review of the project. Chris asked questions about the cost effectiveness of the project to reassure the BWQC on adopting projects. Allaire shared that the skepticism around this process comes from the 20 year projections and confusion around what the vote is on. Chris emphasized that every riparian project that goes through the BWQC is approved for 20 years. **Dan and Lauren abstained. Motion passed.**

Kent requested that Chris's comment on DEC reviewing the adoption process as more of these project adoptions happen was included in the minutes as it influenced his vote. [automation based transcript is attached.] Mel shared that she would be happy to discuss this process with anyone as the NRCD goes through it.

10. Staggering of Member Terms

Dean explained how staggering of members would work. Half of the BWQC would be renewing their terms every other year to ensure that no more than half the BWQC would not be renewing. Kent added that this could help protect around a "clean sweep" and learning curve with so many new members. Lindsey shared that she was happy to have this be a smaller conversation between Dean, the chair, and the vice chair.

11. Updates

Dean shared a few updates. Invoices need to be in by June 30. There is a trending idea of approving multiple phases of a project at once and Dean asked that the BWQC be thinking about that. MRBA's work is featured in a video on Vermont Public. There is a Forest and Road Training on June 29th and a Three Acre Permit Info Session on the 23rd. The CWSP is also having internal conversations on Site Access Agreements and land with conservation easements.

12. Future Meeting topics/Conclusion

The next meeting is August 5th with an in-person option in Enosburgh at the Emergency Services Building. This meeting will include the election of officers but could also include project updates/site tour/other suggestions.

Lauren motioned to adjourn. Allaire seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:44.

Chris.Rottler13:29:30

I put this in the chat, but just to emphasize, every single project that you vote, you are voting to commit to do O&M. This is a conversation not just for adoption, but for every single project you support.

...

Chris.Rottler13:29:44

because you are committing to do O&M.

for its design life, and so it is an open-ended commitment.

And the state.

Recognizes that dynamic, and early in the system.

Uh, the O&M costs are not clear to you, they're not actually totally clear to us, but we want to keep the system moving forward, and we don't want those costs to be a barrier to forward progress. So, if and when, in the next 3 to 5 years, he's...

O&M costs start to accumulate, we'll have more data, and we will adjust targets, and we'll tweak the policy so that it doesn't become a barrier to future progress.

We will incorporate this into the cost rate methodology so that, um.

It's a rational system. TBD how it looks, but yeah.

For what it's worth.