

FOVLAP Annual Meeting Minutes

July 22, 2019

I. Welcome (Don Weaver, President)

Meeting opened at 9:00 am, Don welcomed all
Tracey introduced VSAC Scholarship winner Addison Broome

II. Minutes of 2018 Annual Meeting (Don Weaver, President)

Minutes of 2018 Annual Meeting were unavailable. President Don Weaver apologized and told the group he would make them available to all attendees

III. Treasurer's Report (Bruce Tanner, Treasurer)

* DEC helps sponsor the Annual Meeting, Lake Seminar, newsletter & scholarship

* Our total income was \$7,523.09, total expenditures \$4,473.94

* Inactive funding sources with leftover funds: ERP 2014 \$1,614.17, F&WC 2015 \$2,211.49, NECNALMS \$384.63. Our plan is to apply funds to publication of Lakescape booklets, the Buffers for Blue Lakes project and this year's NECNALMS conference in November

* Registration fees do not cover costs of Lake Seminar

* Sue Martin asked if it would be appropriate to have FOVLAP members vote on how these funds could be used. Don described the restrictions to spending.

* Interested participants signed up to receive a Lakescape booklet when they are published again

* a request was made to place our total savings on future Treasurer's Reports (eg. Balance for Money market account, what we have in reserve).

IV. Clean Water Funding (Julie Moore, Secretary of ANR)

* ANR received a letter from the EPA congratulating VT's work on S96 (Act 76)

* Secretary Moore a snapshot of where we've been:

>2015 Act 64 Clean Water Act passed, created regulatory architecture to improve water quality focusing on provision for stormwater runoff from roads, enhanced nutrient removal, agriculture and logging impacts to improve soil health and water quality

>Voluntary projects will achieve one third of the improvements, such as natural resource restoration projects, stormwater retrofits on smaller projects, etc. It is expected that these voluntary projects will achieve one third of the expected changes. These are more cost-effective measures to impact water quality. The state needs to develop funding programs to incentivize projects. The agency is studying ways to do this.

>Phase 1 (2015-present) focused on establishing regulatory programs, phase 2 focuses on technical assistance and implementation support

>State resources will grow to 50-60 million dollars per year, will be sustained for the next 15-20 years, this is in stark contrast to 2007 funding that provided 10 million per year. However this amount is only half of what is estimated by the State Treasurer needed to achieve clean water goals statewide.

>There are 175 grants and open contracts managed by 43 staff persons

>Additional funding from 6 points from the rooms and meals tax (12 million dollars per year) will go for clean water

>After Oct. 1, nickels from unclaimed bottle deposits will flow into Clean Water efforts if bottles and cans are placed in recycling programs instead of redemption centers. This will provide \$2 million of revenue for clean water.

Secretary Moore would like to see FOVLAP and other organizations advertise this

> Two year transition process in place

> They are setting up clean water service providers who will receive funding to manage voluntary projects

> They will create practice specific performance standards and regional targets for pollution reductions

* Secretary Moore opened it up for questions:

Q: What about the decision not to replace Josh Mulhollem?

A: We haven't fully decided how staffing will change. We recognize the importance of AIS Management and Prevention. The agency is facing structural budget challenges. The agency and state government is looking for ways to restructure using staff because of budgetary constraints.

Q: Economics always seems to win over environmental concerns in our state. Montpelier pretends they are environmentally conscious. With concerns about municipal spills, and building permits, do you sense any change on the horizon? What can VT residents do to help?

A: The governor and I agree that the environment is our economy. Sewer overflows - we are in the process of issuing a 1272 order, a long term compliance schedule to every community that has a combined sewer system and should eliminate the stormwater overflows. These relics were designed to carry wastewater and sewer water in the same pipe. Most can treat 3-5X the average flow. When you separate stormwater from sewer, the stormwater is directed to a local water body. The public health concern is great. Estimates from EPA are that there are 6 pounds of phosphorus in a million gallon overflow. LChamplain sees 2 million pounds of phosphorus per year. It is a public health issue when folks can come in contact with untreated waste and pathogens contained within. The focus is to eliminate sewer overflows.

Q: Will you publicize the fact that a portion of the rooms and meals tax and bottle refunds will go toward clean water?

A: I would love to engage FOVLAP and other watershed organizations to help spread the word. If folks would place their cans and bottles in a recycling center instead of a redemption center, we estimate we could generate \$2 million per year for clean water. This begins October 1. Estimate, that should generate 2 million dollars per year.

Q: Will that be expanded to plastic bottles?

A: Redemption centers cannot handle new sorts. Point well taken though.

Q: It sounds to me like the town managers cut to the front of the line and are given 10-12 million dollars to make their infrastructure improvements. What I understand, it contributes less than 1% of the phosphorus loading in LChamplain giving less money for the real sources of phosphorus loading.

A: Waste water treatment plants contribute 3-5%. They are a small but extensive source. The auditor's report seemed to suggest that the 50-60 million \$ could be spent on anything we want. That is not the case. A sizable portion of that money comes through the state revolving fund program and those dollars give priority to municipalities (15 million \$). The legislature has told us we must invest in wastewater facilities, the rest can be invested in stormwater facilities. S96 will help us know where to make our investments and get to higher impact projects sooner.

Q: Would a legislative change bring more money to ANR?

A: The state revolving fund is about 20% state dollars that we use to capitalize 80% of the federal dollars. EPA has a significant role in telling us where money can be spent. The state revolving fund program was what followed on the construction grants program so EPA paid 90% of the cost of most of VT's wastewater facilities. The state revolving fund is that fund commitment.

Q: According to the auditor's report, more than half the phosphorus load is coming from agriculture. How is ANR working on this?

A: 40% of all phosphorus in LChamplain is from agriculture. We need to reduce this by 67%. The Ag agency has established permitting for farms. Act 64 implemented programs for certified small farm programs (over half the farms in VT are in this category). Economy for dairy farmers is poor. Programs establish best practices, for example cover cropping, treatment of silo leachate treatment systems, use of manure pits, conservation projects etc. There is significant work being done with farms. We are moving in the right direction.

Q: Are you working with your counterpart in NY?

A: Yes, we meet quarterly; the staff meets more frequently. The Lake Champlain Basin Program coordinates the effort. VT is responsible for 2/3 of the watershed and load in LChamplain. We make sure we are offering a single a single data set.

Q: You mentioned that there would be some money for Outstanding Waters. It was enacted in 1987 but there has never been a lake in VT given that distinction. I understand the application process is undergoing change. Can you tell us the status?

A: I don't know. There is 20% of the Clean Water fund (\$3-5 million a year) that will be given to protect high quality water, they do not have to have the Outstanding Water designation to qualify. We don't want to focus on just restoring but protecting what is still in good shape. Secretary Moore will get back to us on this answer. Don Weaver was asked by a participant to share her information with everyone.

V. Association Insurance (Jackie Sprague)

* we have been collecting information about what associations are paying for director/officer liability insurance, we have received enough information to make cost comparisons and have found that some people are paying 3-4X more than others

* we met with a representative from Dennis, River & Brown and were told we could create an umbrella policy, but we would need information about the type of activities on each lake (eg. diving)

*we will send out a Survey Monkey to see if this strategy will be advantageous for lake associations

VI. Election of Officers and Directors (Stew Arnold)

* Tracey Shadday was thanked for her two years of service as a VP. Don Weaver explained that she would continue to fulfill her commitments as an auxiliary member.

* we need to replace the VP, Secretary and 5 directors

* Jackie Sprague agreed to the VP position. Director Jay White agreed to take a 3-year term as director. Two new candidates - Jan Parsons (Harveys Lake) and Pat Suozzi (Lake Iroquois) complete the proposed slate.

A motion was made to accept the slate of officers & directors by Roger Crouse. Susan Martin seconded. 16 FOVLAP members were in favor. None opposed. The motion passed.

* The floor was opened for nominations for three more director positions and a description of expectations was provided. Directors help with sponsored events, who explained that directors are expected to do committee work, attend 10 meetings per year and remain committed during their term and one face-to-face meeting in September. One perk, he said, is the chance to network with DEC staff.

* *Susan Martin* from Woodbury Lake (filling a 3-year term) and *John "Jack" Widness* from Lake Raponda (filling a 2-year term) nominated themselves.

* One question from the floor asked what involvement we have with lobbying. Don explained that as a 501C-3 we do NOT lobby

* A motion to accept these two as new directors was made by Roger Cartree. Roger Crouse seconded. 15 FOVLAP members were in favor. None opposed. The motion passed.

* Stew asked the new directors for a brief, 6-sentence bio to be submitted to the board.

* Don asked if anyone was willing to be secretary to speak to Jackie, Stew or him. If no one volunteers it will be discussed at the September meeting

* Peggy Barter suggested that everyone look for those on their lakes who might fulfill the role of secretary

* Jackie asked all current board directors to stand and be recognized

VII. Proposal for Student/Young Adult Addition to the Board (Roger Crouse)

* the proposal expands membership to include students/young adults older than 16.

* benefits were listed on a handout

* three phases were developed, one to be implemented right away, the other two implemented based on the success of the prior phase

* Phase 1 - Offer general membership and reduce the membership fee 50% to \$13

* Phase 2 - Offer a one-year auxiliary position to allow a student FOVLAP member to work with the board, they can apply to serve a 2nd year and/or can be considered for a board position

* Phase 3 - Develop a youth board with their own bylaws

* Asked for a motion to begin Phase 1 Jamie Longtin, seconded by Susan Martin.

* Nothing in the FOVLAP bylaws restricts a student from becoming a member. There may be a bylaw change needed for phase 2 & 3

* 15 FOVLAP members voted to accept the proposal. None opposed. The motion carried.

* Discussion:

Q: Explain why VT residency is not required

A: We don't want to restrict anyone from becoming a member. Not all of our current board members are VT residents.

Q: Is there anything in the bylaws that prevents a student/young adult from becoming a FOVLAP member?

A: No. Phase 2 and 3 may require bylaw changes

Q: There is nothing in the bylaws that requires a board member to pay dues, correct?

A: No there is not.

* Jamie Longtin offered to sponsor our VSAC scholarship award winner as a FOVLAP member.

Motion made to accept proposal. 15 members approved, none opposed. The motion carried.

VIII. Dick Simpson introduced

* Dick's father began FOVLAP in 1972. Dick has made it to every Annual Meeting.

IX. DEC Updates (Angela Shambaugh, Acting Lake Program Manager of Lakes & Ponds)

* Perry Thomas and her husband were relocated to KY, her new position is similar to our tactical basin planner

* applications are being received for the replacement of Perry Thomas, they are hoping to introduce a new program manager by the end of September

* Angela is still managing the cyanobacteria program

* Handouts on AIS management and dam safety & water level management were provided

* DEC staff were introduced:

Kellie Merrell - Environmental Scientist, Monitors Trends & Conditions of Inland Lakes

Danielle Owczarski - Watershed Coordinator Lamoille River, White River and Ompompanoosuc Watersheds

Misha Cetner - Environmental Analyst, Statewide Permit Analyst, Lake Encroachment, Aquatic Nuisance Control Projects

Ben Copans - Watershed Coordinator Passumpsic River, Upper Connecticut River and Lake Memphremagog Watersheds

Karen Bates - Watershed Coordinator Winooski River Basin & northern L. Champlain watershed

X. Climate Change and its Effects on VT Lakes & Ponds (Dr. Dupigny-Giroux, UVM)

Dr. Dupigny-Giroux provided the basics for understanding climate as a non-linear, complex phenomenon effecting multiple parts of a system. When one factor affecting the system changes (eg. greater cloud coverage), multiple elements of the system are affected. She used excellent visuals including graphs, photos and video to show changes over time and to explain how to speak about climate change (process, impact & strategies). Climate change is not only observed through warming trends but through changing cycles, large jumps in records, fluctuations over time and variability in weather. For example we are observing later freeze over dates and stronger storms bringing greater precipitation to our area.

The change in average temperatures from 1880 to present shows a warming trend that accelerated in the 1980s. Low temps and night time temps are getting warmer and precipitation from 1895-2014 is more variable. Storms are stronger and tracks are more compact. These storms have brought very heavy precipitation to our state resulting in flooding and movement of sediments into lakes, rivers and streams.

* 1999 Tropical Storm Floyd brought flooding rains to much of VT, as much as 14 inches of rain to Mt. Mansfield

* 2011 Tropical Storm Irene, the state's worst natural disaster since 1927, brought 8 inches of rain affecting the Connecticut River Valley

Warmer temperatures at the surface of our lakes affects the mixing of nutrients; the bottom dwellers would be affected. This is just one of many effects we will have to mitigate and adapt to over the long haul.

Dr. Dupigny-Giroux was the leader of the Northeast Chapter of the National Climate Assessment. She encouraged us to get involved in public workshops sponsored by the 5International Join Commission.

XI. Piloting a Strategy for Turning Significantly Increasing Phosphorus Trends on VT's Clearest Lakes (Kellie Merrill, Ben Copans, Danielle Owczarski)

* VT participated in the 2007 National Lake Assessment comparing lakes around the country, more smaller lakes randomly selected for study

Findings:

* VT has more proportion of natural lakes than manmade lakes compared to other states

* VT has a higher proportion of oligotrophic lakes (low in nutrient & algae)

* We scored well compared to other states in phosphorus & nitrogen levels

* We scored 100% for oxygen in surface waters

* VT ranks 4th in the nation for clearest lakes (after Alaska, Montana and Maine) with average 4.0 meter secchi

Comparison of 2007 with 2012 National Lake Assessment finds

* a lowered percentage of oligotrophic lakes throughout the US over a 5-year period

* VT phosphorus data goes back 40 years, After glaciers receded lakes were oligotrophic with very little nutrient, over centuries there is a natural discharge of phosphorus into lakes, algae and plants begin to grow, high end nutrient loading leads to eutrophic lakes

* humans accelerate this process by our activities on watershed

* Ginny Garrison began studying phosphorus at spring turnover and we now have data on 153 lakes (1/2 of lakes over 20 acres in VT)

* 1980s VT lakes we have 40 years of data on showed: 23 olig, 89 meso, 41 eutrophic

* eutrophic lakes are showing good trends for decreasing phosphorus

* Lake Iroquois showed best trends for phosphorus

* 96% of oligotrophic VT lakes have increasing phosphorus trends, that is alarming, yet they are still some of the cleanest and clearest waters in the US

* there is evidence we can turn these trends around but staff is looking for lake leaders

* 79% of VT lakes do not have an increasing phosphorus trend, 21% do listed below*

* Phosphorus comes in on sediments even through wooded areas and this is brought to our lakes through rains. It is a natural element but is added to the natural environment through pet waste, construction, tree removal, etc. The more we manipulate the environment the more it is impacted.

*13 Lakes Targeting to Pilot a Strategy to Turn Phosphorus Trends Around on Oligotrophic Lakes: Forest (Calais), Willoughby, Caspian, Maidstone, Fosters, Long (Westmore), Shadow (Glover), Bald Hill, Holland, Crystal (Barton), Buck, Little Averill, Great Averill

Seymour Lake Case Study (Ben Copans)

* The Problem

In 2006 Seymour Lake first noticed phosphorus was trending up

* Actions Taken

1. Tributary water quality sampling begun through LaRosa. One stream was a standout

2. Partnerships created between the lake leader, DEC, partnerships (Northwood Stewardship, Resource Conservation District, FOVLAP, MWA, other lake associations) and the lake community

3. Tributary Water Monitoring Assessments (2007-2008) all major tributaries leading into Seymour, one found to generate a lot more phosphorus

4. Lakewise Assessments initiated - 44 awards given, over 25% of total awards in VT, expectations and mindsets have changed
5. 22 BMP projects were installed (eg. rain gardens, culverts, infiltration steps)
6. Roads were assessed and better road projects
7. Farms were assessed (County Conservation District, water quality measurements)
8. Community outreach involving forestry, septic socials, shoreline walks & Lakewise practices, all to change the culture of the expectations of homeowners

* The Result

There is no longer a statistically significant upward phosphorus trend.

- * The 3Cs - community, commitment & continuity make things happen
 involves working together without finger pointing
 commitment involves following up and continuing over time
 continuity involves getting different people involved

* Actions to Take for a Healthy Lake

1. Establish a lay monitor, they help establish the trends
2. Establish a cyanobacteria monitor (Angela trains)
3. Establish a tributary monitoring program
4. Talk to your basin planner & learn what is being monitored
5. Initiate Lakewise assessments
6. Initiate private road assessments
7. Hold a septic social
8. Develop a lake watershed action plan. A basin planner can help
9. Implement and monitor changes

- XII. Reduce Your Watershed Footprint (Emily Porter-Goff)
 Emily provided a flyer listing specific ways to reduce your watershed footprint. Signage that labels the best practices throughout the watershed can change the culture. Discussion about the positive things seen around the watershed helps.

A resource given: WikiWatershed (<http://www.wikiwatershed.org>) is a web toolkit designed to help citizens, conservation practitioners, municipal decision makers, researchers, educators and students to advance knowledge and stewardship of fresh water

- XIII. Legislative Update (Jackie Sprague)
 * FOVLAP would like to create better advocates; we are producing a document to give tips to FOVLAP members. Thanks to New Hampshire for giving us permission to use their information. It should be approved in September then sent out.
 * Lake Carmi created buttons identifying their group wherever they advocated for their lake. Without saying anything, their buttons spoke of solidarity and concern.
 * Jay North presented everyone in attendance with a FOVLAP button to promote our organization
 * Don Weaver invited everyone to attend our face-to-face meeting in September

- XIV. Lake Issues
 * 16 lakes presented their successes and issues, information is included in a separate document

- XV. Door Prizes and Evaluation

XVI. Meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm

Minutes submitted by Tracey Shadday, August 15, 2019