

Natural Resources Committee

DRAFT Minutes

Sep 11, 2019

Committee Members:	Barrie Bailey, Peter Grant, Stan Grzyb, Wendy Sue Harper (Chair), Arabella Holzpfel, Ashley Laux, Ed Payne, Ron Payne, Jim Pulver, Paul Wagner, Kent Wright
Present:	Arabella Holzpfel (Acting Chair) , Barrie Bailey, Ron Payne, Jim Pulver, Paul Wagner
Staff:	Kevin Behm
Guests:	Angie Allen, DEC Basin Planner

Arabella opened the meeting at 6:00.

Kevin provided an introduction to Angie Allen, DEC Basin Planner, who will be overseeing the 2019 update of the Otter Creek Tactical Basin Plan (TBP). She had met previously with the NRC to introduce the process and is back to report on progress. The NRC will provide a recommendation to the ACRPC full Commission with regard to the TBP's conformance with the Regional Plan.

The plan covers portions of Bennington, Rutland, and Addison counties and all surface waters within the Otter Creek, Little Otter Creek, and Lewis Creek watersheds. The plan provides an assessment of the health of the basin and identifies 55 water quality strategies across the following sectors: agriculture, developed lands—stormwater and roads, wastewater treatment facilities, and restoration of forest lands, lakes, rivers, and wetlands.

Angie said that the draft TBP was close to its final form. It has been reviewed by upper ANR staff and will be formally available for public comment shortly. Angie noted that the format of the TBPs has been totally revised to be more approachable by the lay public, but still be factual and scientific. She briefly reviewed the Plan Chapters –

- Chapter 1 – Basin Description and Conditions
- Chapter 2 – Priority Areas for Surface Water Protection
- Chapter 3 – Priority Areas for Surface Water Restoration
- Chapter 4 – Strategies to Address Pollution by Source Sector
- Chapter 5 – The Basin 3 Implementation Table

Jim noted that the current contents page is a little jumbled, with Chapter 5 starting with item (C). Angie asked for other review comments as she discussed the plan. Paul said Cornwall was currently considering a change to the Cornwall 'Swamp' designation – is this in the plan? Angie pointed out that re-designation of that wetland complex is recommended in the TBP as a restoration strategy.

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Barrie was concerned with increasing support for water quality monitoring and enforcement of strategies. She felt that it isn't effective to require Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented, but then to have little or no monitoring of their effectiveness. Angie replied that BMPs constructed under a permit are monitored by the enforcement staff. The Plan has a Monitoring Priorities Table that addresses monitoring needs, but she noted that there is not enough staff to addresses all the needs and prioritization is needed. She also said that a lot of monitoring is undertaken by the Lakes and Ponds lay monitoring program as well as the Addison County River Watch Collaborative (ACRWC). Kevin added that if the state is relying on ACRWC for monitoring, a small budget should be allocated to support the activity. He suggested that funding for monitoring should be allocated as a part of the BMP implementation cost. Barrie would also like to have the manure ponds identified, so water quality testing downstream was aware of upstream pollution sources.

Committee members generally thought that the map graphics were very dense with information and they would probably benefit from using 2 maps instead 1 for clarity in several cases. Jim also asked for the caption font to be larger and more readable.

Kevin asked about a financial discussion of the costs of phosphorus reduction strategies. There are several tables showing estimated phosphorus reduction over time but no information on the costs over the plan timeframe. The State Treasurer's report had some good graphs of the benefit of funding improvements now rather than later.

Angie acknowledged that there was a lot of information to digest in the plan and that she had the benefit of working with the data on a day-to-day basis. She encouraged the members to send herself or Kevin comments on any of the chapters. She will provide a newer draft of the plan as soon as she is able. She thanked the ACRPC and Allie for providing information to include in the plan.

The Committee adjourned at 7:00