



# OTTER CREEK BASIN

clean water service provider

## 2022-10-26 Otter Creek Basin Water Quality Council Minutes

**Present:** Ellen Cronan (ACRWC), Hilda Haines (Danby), Arabella Holzapfel (ACRPC, chair), Kate Kelly (LCA), Pam Stefanek (OCNRCD, vice-chair), Gioia Kuss (Weybridge), Barbara Noyes-Pulling (RRPC)

**Absent:** Nanci McGuire (RCNRCD),

**Vacant:** Land Conservation Organization Seat

**Public:** Angie Allen (VTDEC), Chris Robbins (ACRWC), Erin De Vries (VRC)

**Staff:** Mike Winslow, Adam Lougee, Zach Roberts

1. Amendments to the Agenda
  - a. Mike asked that item 4 - Chapter 6 review - be incorporated into item 5 - project funding walk through
  - b. Ellen asked for two items to be added: 1. Clarification on the role of the ACPC Americorp intern in interacting with the BWQC, and 2) Anticipated activities before the January BWQC meeting
2. Approve [Minutes](#) of September meeting. Moved by Gioia with a change at the Top of page 2, 5b change I to all. Second by Kate. Barbara abstained. All others in favor.
3. Announcements
  - a. Open seat - land conservation organization. Steve Libby no longer works with Vermont River Conservancy, so his seat on the Council is currently vacant. Erin DeVries has offered to fill the seat and Mike and Erin spoke yesterday about the process for doing so. According to DEC guidance, the representative is, "to be selected by the land conservation organizations in each Basin (in consultation with each CWSP)." Mike has asked Erin to reach out to other land conservation organizations and volunteer her services. In the meantime, she is attending this meeting as a member of the public.
4. Walk Through of Project Funding Process and Review Chapter 6 Guidance on Project Selection - Mike reviewed his sense of how projects would be identified and brought before the BWQC, but with the caveat that the process is ever evolving and the review was meant to generate discussion and questions.



# OTTER CREEK BASIN

clean water service provider

- a. Gioia asked if land purchases or easements are eligible for funding. The answer is complicated. Under the [Clean Water Initiative Funding Policy](#), which the CWSP must abide by, land acquisition is an ineligible expense, though funds may be used for leverage. Gioia asked if this applied to easements. An answer was not given at the meeting, but subsequent investigation suggests easements are eligible, as they are considered a form of leveraging.
- b. Adam pointed out that conflicts may arise between the CWSP and the BWQC if the BWQC chooses to forward projects with a high cost and low P reduction potential. Ultimately, the CWSP is responsible to DEC for meeting P reduction targets.
- c. Gioia asked if the P calculator takes into account predicted increases in precipitation. It does not. The basis for the calculator is laid out in the Standard Operating Procedures for [Agriculture](#), [Natural Resource](#), and [Developed Land](#) projects
- d. The [Watershed Projects Database](#) is an important potential source of projects. It contains projects from many sources, but the list may be out of date. New projects can get into the database in two ways: 1. For multiple projects (e.g. through a Stormwater Master Plan) a batch import file can be uploaded via a formatted excel spreadsheet; 2. For individual projects, DEC is developing a new in-form which is currently in Beta testing. The form would allow direct input with later review by the Tactical Basin Planner so that the Planner does not become a bottleneck.
- e. Gioia asked for clarification about the eligibility of projects identified in Stormwater Master Plans. New projects with less than ½ acre of impervious surface do not require a permit and are thus eligible for CWSP funding. Existing projects with less than 3-acres of impervious surface that do not already require a permit are also eligible for CWSP funding. Lewis Creek Association is working on a Stormwater Master Plan that will only cover projects eligible for CWSP funding.
- f. Ellen asked for clarification about the screening process for projects. Draft Chapter 6 guidance indicates projects need to be pre-approved by DEC. Does the Tactical Basin Planner have the capacity to provide that approval? Angie answered that she does, but it's incumbent on the CWSP to have a project list far enough in advance to allow that review. Adam asked how far in advance would Angie need a list for review and approval? Angie answered, as soon as possible, but it depends on how big the list is and what types of projects. The important part will be regular check in between the CWSP and Planner to manage the



# OTTER CREEK BASIN

## clean water service provider

workload. She may need to follow up with other DEC staff depending on the type of project.

- g. The run through of project identification and selection was tabled in the interest of time. Mike can email the rest of the presentation from today's meeting for BWQC review. The presentation is an idea of how to proceed meant to prompt discussion, not an authoritative approach.
  
5. ACRPC Americorp intern - Zach is working on project identification-- going through master plans, the watershed database, etc. to find existing projects that may be eligible for funding. He's also using the tools developed by the DEC to run the numbers on projects for cost-efficiency and phosphorus reduction so the BWQC has that to use when looking over projects to fund. He's also figuring out an outreach plan for this funding so the CWSP and BWQC can start getting a more steady stream of projects coming in once people are informed of the funding. The outreach efforts will primarily be directed at municipalities, conservation commissions, and nonprofits (and possibly private entities) that are within our circles and then the hope is that those groups will then spread the word to their circles so we have a good variety of groups sending in projects. He's also been working with ACRWC with mapping priority areas for buffer planting, which would be another possible source of projects.
  
6. To do before January meeting
  - a. Based on Zach's work and review of existing information. How much does the BWQC want to be involved in outreach and review of existing projects? Adam - CWSP wants to hear about projects from representatives of watershed organizations and anyone else that might have projects to bring forward.
  - b. Mike will share [a link to you tube video on Watershed Projects Database](#)
  - c. The BWQC asked the CWSP to work on scheduling another meeting before January
  
7. Next Meeting - January 25, 2023 at 2PM or earlier if a time can be point
  
8. Move to adjourn - Ellen Second Arabella 3:09