

Memphremagog Basin Water Quality Council

Friday, February 6, 2026, 9:00am - 11:00am

Attendees:

BWQC members: Ted Sedell OCNRCD, Sam Mayne ECNRCD, Eric Pope Morgan Selectboard, Patrick Hurley MWA, Meg Carter NWSC, Doug Morton NVDA, Beth Torpey NVDA, Tom Bernier City of Newport.

Absent: Remy Crettol VRC

Alternates: Gabryel Gianoni

DEC: Ben Copans

VHCB: Trey Martin, Rebecca Williams

Introductions and Agenda Review

Public Comment (None)

Review and Adoption of December meeting minutes (action)

Patrick made a motion Sam second approval of minutes. Motion passed

VHCB Updates

VHCB has heard from partners about challenges with VHCB having a procurement policy that is more stringent than the current DEC procurement process. Changing the procurement policy requires a board conversation and there are ongoing discussions to consider an update that would say something that matches DEC guidance for the formula grant program, but this is a board approval process, and the board will ultimately make a decision on this matter. VHCB hears partners' concern with this issue.

Funding is shifting around with the wind down of GLFC Leahy funding. Trey wanted to share other funding opportunities through VHCB.

- Option to pay up to \$30,000 for a conservation easement
- Organizational development grants
- Board meetings listings include grants that are due for that meeting

The Vermont Conservation plan is being presented and there is an opportunity for public comment.

The next CWSP grant round is due March 13th with a meeting of the BWQC on April third and there was a question about the timing of board meetings for approval, but this is only for the larger projects that are above the cap for requiring board approval.

The sticking point on the procurement policy is in the \$3000 to \$10,000 range that the VHCB procurement policy requires 2 bids. There were questions about procuring materials and this is included but there is an exception for items that are only available from one source. VHCBs policy allows for some flexibility with a written explanation of why this is needed.

9:30am DEC Updates

DEC has requested feedback on the second batch of funding policy updates. DEC is also looking to understand future funding demand as there are some discussions around shifting some funding from CWSPs that are using up funds vs those that have a lot of funding in the bank.

9:40am Johns River Beebe Floodplain Restoration Implementation (Patrick Hurley – MWA)

The Johns River has historically been straightened at this site when it was moved between 1942 to 1962 pushing the stream to the hill slope. MWA has decided not to put the river back into the old channel because of the amount of earthwork that would be required. MWA did modeling to show good floodplain access in the lower portion of the property but not at the top for the biannual flood. The proposal is to put notches through the natural berm along the river to allow these smaller floods to access the floodplain adding 2-3 acres of floodplain reconnection.

The project also includes plugging the northern ditch with notch spoils, adding beaver dam analogs, removing pump house, and removing fill and wellheads in a Beebe parcel being acquired from Stanstead. The project will include planting 5.8 acres that includes cluster plantings in the upper area along with willow plantings. There is 1500 ft between wood and downstream structure and MWA did a lot of assessments to evaluate movement and the low water velocities help reduce the ability of the wood to move.

The wetlands and cultural resources approvals are in hand and MWA is in the middle of public comment for Stream alt and flood hazard permits. MWA has cost estimates for plans from Redstart and Abraham Ames, and the cost opinion is based on Vtrans cost lists.

Fish and Wildlife is matching funding that is through GLFC to support the well decommission. Total cost is about \$200,000 of the funding with about 40% being the costs for buffer planting. The total estimated p reduction for the project is 16 to 17kg for the projects, but overall a pretty efficient project

There was a question about the Derby Road culvert which is in process for being replaced probably with 2 year timeframe. The culvert replacement would if anything make this

project more important as it may reduce the backwater effect. The timeframe for the project would be spring plantings except for .1 ac and buffer so they would probably run the grant through 2027 for some as-built design finalization and adaptive management.

Project Deliberations and Vote

Sam made motion to approve the project with 2nd by Beth Torpey. Motion passed – Patrick Hurley abstained

Partner/Project Pipeline Round Table – Timeline and Cost Estimate(s)

Orleans County

- Implementation grant for LaCross – restoration on Liz tucker property – waiting for final report on this with an estimate of 100k for implementation
- Brighton Brook Robillard flats and Lorts Creek with a cost estimate of about 50k for design and implementation of ditch plugs, BDAs and buffers.

MWA

- Valley Brook phase 2.1 done in May once pavement is complete and tree planting – some money left over
- Phase 2.2 Leahy project final designs expected next week to go out to bid for a bridge and plate arch
- Comes O’Brien completed this spring with some money left over
- Barton stormwater kick off in April
- VELCO is complete and has been working as planned
 - o Barton and Black project development grant to get a sense of projects to move forward. This project is in early days but MWA will have better idea after a meeting with DEC staff
- Sucker Brook may be applying for funding next year.
- Weyesses shore waiting on engineers and considering cost sharing maybe 100k in funding would be needed but lots of moving parts and uncertainty.
- Whetstone Brook VLT project moving along next summer 2027 implementation

ECNRCD - Sam doesn't anticipate any formula grant projects in the next year

Other Topics

Private road threshold meeting will be organized by Rebecca to discuss setting a threshold and will invite BWQC but Patrick, Ted, and Ben expressed interest in participating in this discussion.

Meg Carter made a motion to adjourn seconded by Beth Torpey. Motion passed.