

Vermont Fish Contaminant Monitoring Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Location: Microsoft Teams

Meeting ID: 255 159 575 213 Passcode: WZ3po76W

1. Commencement

Wadman commenced the Spring meeting of the Fish Contaminant Monitoring Committee (FCMC) at 10:03, May 21, 2025.

2. Introductions

Wadman asked those present to introduce themselves, persons present:

FCMC Members:

Pamela Wadman, Health
Matthew Bodnar, F&W
Anna Gallagher, DEC
Jim Deshler, DEC
Margaret Murphy, F&W

Partners:

Andrea Kirk, Health
Danielle Thorkildsen, Health
Celia Chen, Dartmouth
Ariana Chiapella, University of Vermont
Vivien Taylor, Dartmouth
Kris Stepenuck, University of Vermont (joined 10:44)
Kate Crawford, Middlebury College
Tim Clear, DEC
Peter Emerson F&W

3. Approval of June 4, 2024, FCMC meeting minutes

No proposed amendments. Wadman asked those present to review draft minutes from June 4, 2025 meeting and email her with any revisions. Wadman will accept changes and finalize minutes.

4. Health Agency Update: Presentation of new Fish Card

Wadman presented updates to Health's Eat Safe Fish program efforts.

Eat Safe Fish Card promotion and distribution:

- Wadman reported Health has updated the Eat Safe Fish web pages and printed 22,500 fish cards. Distribution to Vermont new parents is happening through the Family and Child Health Coordinators, 3,100 cards were delivered in the first month. Health Comms wants to promote the Fish Cards in conjunction with Free Fishing Day June 12th, perhaps to have the Fish Cards available at the State Parks. To make this happen a connection to the ANR Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation has been requested.
- Chiapella recommended promotion of Fish Card in schools with high immigrant populations to target language barriers, to be piloted in Winooski School District.
- Chen and Taylor recommended promotion at the school science symposium in Morrisville.
- Bodnar recommends promotion at the Grand Isle Family Fishing Festival June 12-14th.

Eat Safe Fish Communication Effectiveness Evaluation:

- Wadman and academic partners agreed to work together on evaluation of new Eat Safe Fish communication materials.

5. DEC Agency Update: PFAS Fish Sampling

Gallagher reported on the 2024 fish PFAS sampling results.

- Fish PFAS results from the two Winooski River sites sampled in 2024 were presented.
- A memo summarizing the 2024 results will be published when finalized, the 2024 fish PFAS data was delivered to Health May 15th.
- Chiapella, Gallagher clarified the timing of sampling efforts in relation to the June 21st accidental PFAS release to the Winooski and the Summer flooding events.
- Chen, Gallagher, Deshler discussed difficulty obtaining some species.

Gallagher reported on 2025 fish sampling goals.

- Fish sampling efforts for 2025 are in the planning phase with tentative approval for 4 days of sampling. Proposed locations are Winooski River, LaPlatte River Marsh Natural Area, Rutland area, and Bennington area.
- Emerson, Gallagher, Wadman, Chiapella discuss PFAS levels and brown bullhead carcinomas in Lake Memphremagog.
- Chen, Gallagher discussed methods and labs for PFAS testing. Chen informs Dartmouth has a new instrument to run the PFAS 1633 method, looking to collaborate with split samples.
- Chiapella recommends Lake Paran for 2025 sampling in Bennington and Winooski River in Waterbury.
- Crawford suggests regional health officials as resources for choosing fish sampling sites.

6. F&W Matt Bodnar Lake Memphremagog Update

- Bodnar presented on Brown Bullhead carcinomas in Lake Memphremagog from 2012 to now, with discussion of bullhead carcinomas in Hermon Pond, Maine, as well as other states in the northeast (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts).
- Bodnar hypothesized these tumors exhibit both internal and external metastasis, therefore evidence for a transmissible tumor, a thesis under active investigation. Certain waterbodies may have increased transmissibility due to immune suppression: fish tumors seem to correlate with areas that have high soil arsenic.
- Bodnar presented unpublished data from the bullhead tumor tissue's metals concentrations. Wadman has seen the data, and reported that the LM community has ongoing concern about the lack of a LM specific fish consumption advisory.

7. Other Business

- Clear, Emerson discussed optimal fish capture methods – rod/reel, electrofishing, nets
- Taylor, Gallagher, Emerson, Chiapella discussed sampling of lake trout or walleye in Lake Champlain. Emerson will help Taylor get walleye. Chiapella will put Taylor in contact with Rubinstein Center at UVM. Bodnar offered help with yellow perch.
- Crawford stated that Middlebury College is looking for state partners who have environmental studies projects they don't have capacity for, for students in the Capstone course study program.

8. Public Comments

Wadman asked for public comments. No public attended.

9. Adjournment

Wadman adjourned the Spring meeting of the Fish Contaminant Monitoring Committee (FCMC) at 11:26, May 21, 2025.