

# **Vermont Fish Contaminant Monitoring Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Location: Microsoft Teams

Meeting ID: 298 487 396 350 Passcode: cDyatM

### **1. Commencement**

Wadman commenced the Spring meeting of the Fish Contaminant Monitoring Committee (FCMC) at 1:05, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### **2. Introductions**

Wadman asked those present to introduce themselves, persons present:

FCMC Members:

Pam Wadman, Health  
Anna Gallagher, DEC  
Margaret Murphy, F&W  
Matt Bodnar F&W

Guests:

Sarah Owen, Health  
Peter Emerson, F&W  
Vivien Taylor, Dartmouth College  
Kathryn Crawford, Middlebury College  
Ariana Chiapella, University of Vermont  
John Barrows, Don't Undermine Memphremagog's Purity, (DUMP)  
Peggy Stevens, DUMP  
Francois Belanger, DUMP

### **3. Approval of June 8, 2023, FCMC meeting minutes**

Murphy proposed amendments: Pete Emerson affiliation is incorrect, change to F&W. Bodnar suggested two corrections: change bullhead tumor from melanoma to carcinoma, change project partners: U. Virginia to U. West Virginia and add U. Vermont  
Vote to approve minutes, with amendments as suggested, forwarded by Wadman, seconded by Murphy.

### **4. DEC Agency Update: Fish PFAS monitoring**

Gallagher presented the findings of the 2022 PFAS fish sampling results and recommendations for the 2024 sampling season. The 2024 sampling effort will target the two locations where the highest fish PFOS have been detected on the Winooski River the mouth below the Burlington WWTP and Salmon Hole. Owen inquired if these same fish may be tested for mercury, Gallagher will assess feasibility within the budget.

Arianna Chiapella studies fish consumption practices at Lake Champlain and potential at-risk populations including Nepali, Arabic and Indigenous people, who may consume data-poor species such as eel, sunfish (bluegill, pumpkinseed) and crappie. Investigation of these species is part of the Lake Champlain fish PFAS study now underway.

## **5. Health Agency Update:**

Wadman presented the “Do Not Eat” poster that resulted from the collaboration of DEC, F&W and Health. The poster was developed for Great River Hydro LLC for site-specific advisory postings at the Commerford and Moore Reservoirs of the Connecticut River,

Wadman reviewed the status of the Fish Mercury Report which is in final review to be published online in June. Wadman presented the current version of the drafts of the Eat Safe Fish Card, also expected to be completed in June. Wadman reiterated the target audiences for the new fish card and risk communication goal of increasing all fish consumption. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Fish Card will be accomplished utilizing partners.

## **6. FCMC discussion**

FCMC and partners collectively recognized the popularity of the F&W fishing clinics and potential to distribute the Fish Card at these events. Murphy expressed concern that this would result in discouraging fish consumption. Wadman stated the communications are expected to improve angler confidence in estimating their mercury exposure from eating sport caught fish. Murphy agreed that the Fish Card can be made available at the F&W fishing clinics.

Dr. Chiapella discussed progress for the Lake Champlain Angler Contaminant Exposure Risk project. Important for health equity in fishing information communication to at risk populations: identifying ways to overcome barriers to safe eating of VT fish.

## **7. Public Comments**

Wadman recognized the PowerPoint presentations prepared by Mr. Belanger, that were shared with the FCMC by Mr. Barrows, as support for a request to Dr. Levine to issue a fish consumption advisory due to PFAS contamination. Mr. Belanger thanked Dr. Owen for providing the latest EPA PFOS RfD. Wadman stated that while Dr. Belanger’s presentation did not have any apparent errors, fish consumption advisories are established differently. Wadman agreed to share with Mr. Belanger the procedure Vermont uses to establish fish consumption advisories. Together the representatives from DUMP suggested that there should be a precautionary “Do Not Eat” fish advisory due to the presence PFAS in fish.

Further discussion of PFAS in fish, Wadman mentioned PFAS concentrations in many other high protein foods. Dr. Owen mentioned other sources of PFAS exposure and responsibility to use caution in issuing advisories. Dr. Crawford discussed the findings of their 2024 publication reporting on PFAS concentrations in commercial seafood from New Hampshire.

## **8. Adjournment**

Wadman adjourned the Spring meeting of the FCMC at 2:30 pm.