

Environmental diplomacy & community-based efforts to enhance resilience of the Lake Champlain Basin Ecosystem

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Abstract – The Lake Champlain Basin is a binational watershed on the US-Canada border that spans New York, Vermont, and Quebec (LCB Program 2013). Within the basin, indigenous Abenaki and other vulnerable communities reside and will be adversely affected under climate change scenarios due to deteriorating water quality. Binational basins along the US-Canada border present considerable water resource management challenges, and they also provide an opportunity to explore creative and alternate resource management regimes in contrast to hierarchical, unilateral management structures often deployed in a wholly domestic context (Brown 2010). Drawing on work of Garmestani and Benson (2013), we propose to conduct research to explore how best to enhance the resilience of the shared binational ecosystem within the basin. This work also deploys a combination of environmental diplomacy based alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms and participatory geographic information systems (PGIS – Bramford, Stroh, and Svivak 2009). The outcome of the work we propose has the potential to yield place and community-based interventions to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities, advance improvements in the quality of life of people living there, and contribute to an enhanced level of environmental quality.

List of references

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