

# Problem Definition in Lake Champlain

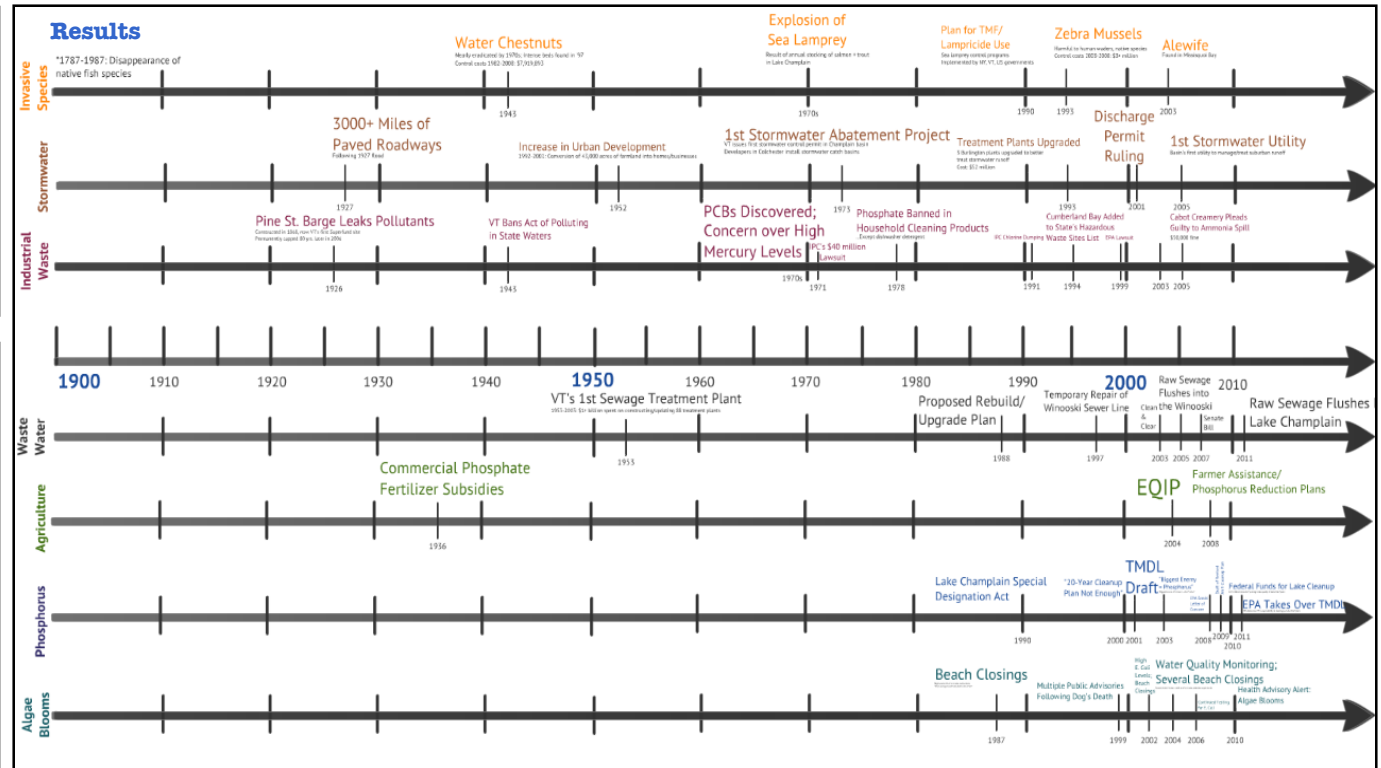
> Framing analysis is a transdisciplinary research method found to be especially favorable in social science-based research. This particular method is an effective way to measure the way people understand certain situations and choose to describe and/or categorize them. In terms of water quality, framing analysis helps researchers evaluate *how* both public and private individuals and organizations are defining the problem.

## Research Questions

*How have problems of water quality of Lake Champlain been defined over the years? What responses emerged from these frames? What's driving some of these transitions?*

## Methods

Implementing document research, data collection focused on how government documents, reports from various organizations addressing Lake Champlain water quality, and local newspaper articles and media defined the conditions of Lake Champlain. After determining seven different categories in which these problem definitions fell, the same sources were used to gain information on the kind of actions that followed the different frames in hopes of finding a pattern or most effective 'problem definition.'



## TIMELINE

Invasive Species  
Stormwater  
Industrial Waste  
Wastewater  
Agriculture  
Phosphorus  
Algae Blooms

## Discussion

Throughout the history of Lake Champlain, the progress in learning about new environmental issues transformed the ways in which water quality issues were being described by private and public organizations alike. In the context of a timeline, seven distinct frames could be described. The emphasis on phosphorus and algae blooms in the past few decades shows the significance in how quickly and/or effectively solution-based actions emerge from the range of actors based on their specific definitions. An effective frame may not only help bring quicker action, but can also help unify the way water quality is perceived by all actors involved.

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**References**  
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