

# WPP NEWSLETTER

January 2024



## THE WATERSHED PLANNING PROGRAM

Greetings from the [Watershed Planning Program](#) team! At WPP, we support clean water project implementation in the State in a variety of ways. One of the main tools we use to organize clean water project prioritization is through watershed management plans, called Tactical Basin Plans. These plans summarize current water quality conditions and prioritize surface water protection and restoration. In this newsletter, we have a little bit of everything -- announcements, updates, projects, and more. Enjoy!

## THE CLEAN WATER SERVICE NETWORK SUMMIT



The Watershed Planning and Clean Water Initiative Programs are excited to announce that the Clean Water Service Network Summit will take place on Friday, 5 April 2024 at St. Leo's Hall (109 Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05676), from 9:00 AM to around 3:30 PM. We intend to have virtual options for those who cannot attend in-person. We are still assembling the agenda. Free refreshments and lunch will be provided, so keep your eye out for the RSVP form. We hope to see you there!



## **BASIN 5 (“NORTHERN LAKE CHAMPLAIN”) UPDATE**

During 2023, the [Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission](#), the Basin 5 Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP), issued four [Calls for Applications](#). Through December 2023, in consultation with its Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC), the CWSP has selected three proposals for further design work and decided to partially fund one construction project (floodplain restoration at the [University of Vermont’s Horticultural Farm](#)) which will be built in 2024. These four projects, if fully constructed in the future, should reduce phosphorus loading by about 35 kilograms annually. The Basin 5 CWSP however has now been given two Formula Grants in total with a combined obligation of 87 kilograms. Knowing that we are running “behind schedule”, the CWSP and the BWQC are also funding two “project development” efforts to identify and conduct preliminary scoping of potential, non-regulatory phosphorus reduction projects. In December 2023, the CWSP recently received a report from Fitzgerald Environmental who analyzed more than 50 potential stream sites in the Mill River, Stonebridge Brook, Malletts Creek and Allen Brook watersheds and identified 20 of those sites as having good potential for projects like stream buffer plantings, conservation easements, floodplain reconnection, culvert replacement and gully stabilization. Additionally, in spring 2024, the CWSP will receive a report from the [Northwest Regional Planning Commission](#) identifying potential projects to reduce phosphorus runoff from private lands and private roads in several Champlain Islands towns.

With a current target of 87 kilograms and the anticipated addition of another 40+ kilograms to the Basin 5 non-regulatory phosphorus reduction target in FY25, the Basin 5 CWSP has its work cut out for in the coming years. However, through following up on current and recently identified projects and bringing them to fruition with the help of key partners like the [Friends of Northern Lake Champlain](#), [Franklin County NRCD](#), [Grand Isle County NRCD](#), the [Lewis Creek Association](#), the Northwest RPC, the [Town of Georgia Conservation Commission](#), and others, the CCRPC is confident that working in partnership with the Basin 5 BWQC its targets will be met.



## TRAINING: CLEAN WATER PROJECTS FROM START TO FINISH

To assist you in locating new projects, we have a [video from former planner Danielle Owczarski](#) on using the [Clean Water Projects Explorer](#) to find projects. Moreover, we have a [video from current planner Karen Bates](#) on how projects move from identification to implementation and, also, on the importance of partners in ensuring project success.



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Watershed Planning Program has released its [2023 Legislative Report](#). To summarize, WPP has approved two basin plans (Memphremagog and the Black & Ottauquechee River) and finalized one (Winooski). By the end of 2024, WPP expects to approve another five. Moreover, in December 2023, WPP submitted the Northern Lake Champlain Interim and the Winooski River Basin Final Report Card in Vermont's Clean Water Performance Report.



## GUIDANCE CHAPTER UPDATE

Work on Guidance for Act 76 is moving along. [Chapter 5 on Conflicts of Interest](#) has been finalized, while work on [Chapter 9 \(on Adequate Annual Progress\)](#) is almost complete, with final comments having been received by DEC. Work on Chapter 7 (Operations and Maintenance) is proceeding with lots of helpful input from stakeholders, and a goal for finalizing the chapter later this spring.





## PROJECTS: LOOKING FORWARD

We have a long way to go toward adapting our infrastructure to the size our new climate requires. Even though this bridge (located in Reading, VT on Route 106) caused massive damage to the road, the white house, and the property in Tropical Storm Irene, it has yet to be up sized. Instead, after TS Irene, the right bank of the river was hard armored, and a stone wall was built along the top of the bank. This forced the water in this flood to the left side, eroding the land for about 50' and damaging the houses on both sides of the bridge.

Watershed planners are doing what they can to reduce the destructive impact of flooding and storms within Vermont. They have created a [database](#) of over 11,000 proposed projects statewide to protect our water quality and help mitigate the impacts of flooding. These projects are identified through river assessments and cover a number of project types. Planners use all the data available to understand what can be done and where to mitigate the impacts of flooding. Yet, they need individuals, towns, and businesses willing to have these projects completed on their land. It is up to the community to protect the community.



## WINOOSKI (BASIN 8) TACTICAL BASIN PLAN

The [Final 2023 Winooski Tactical Basin Plan \(TBP\)](#) is ready to implement! All public comments received within the comment period were considered and addressed in the responsiveness summary included in the final plan, Appendix C. The TBP serves as the guidebook for water quality protection and restoration efforts in this watershed for the next five years.





## THE RICH EARTH SUMMIT

This past November, over 50 people in-person and 200 people online attended the 9th annual [Rich Earth Summit](#) hosted in Brattleboro, Vermont. This three-day event brought together scientists, educators, designers, and entrepreneurs from across the peecycling movement. Peecycling is the process of transforming urine from waste to a value-added product. Containing 70-80 percent of the body's nitrogen, a nutrient essential to plant growth, urine is "liquid gold". Currently, it is neglected and flushed away to pollute our watersheds and waste potable water in our toilet bowls. This nutrient crisis can be solved by reforming how we handle waste to make something productive rather than damaging.

The Summit hosted by the Rich Earth Institute challenged traditional methods of waste treatment through collaborative new solutions and facilitating connections. Over three days, participants hosted panels and workshops on topics varying from lighthouse projects, peecycling startups, urea-based fertilizer in agriculture, sociotechnical research, and portable nutrient-recovery toilets. Virtual and in-person tours of urine processing facilities were shown in Oregon, Arizona, California, Vermont, Germany, France, and Australia, demonstrating the global movement to solve key environmental and sanitation problems. The [Rich Earth Institute](#) has released [recordings](#) of the panels on their website.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Dan Albrecht, Marie Caduto, and Jennifer Mynard for their contribution to this month's newsletter. If you have any information or materials that you would like to present in a future newsletter, reach out to Jack at [Jack.Reed@Vermont.gov](mailto:Jack.Reed@Vermont.gov).

### LANGUAGE SERVICES

If you speak a language other than English or need reasonable accommodation for effective communication, [ANR offers free language assistance](#) for its programs and materials. You may also upload this document into [Google Translate](#) for a translation.