

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

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Public Meeting Notice

**Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation Schedules Public Forum Meetings for the
Draft South Lake Champlain Tactical Basin Plan and
Draft North Lake Champlain TMDL Phase II Plan Update**

MONTPELIER - A series of public comment meetings will be held in November to gather feedback on the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' Draft South Lake Champlain Tactical Basin Plan and North Lake Champlain TMDL Phase II Plan Update. The public is encouraged to attend the meetings, hear a presentation and offer their comments and suggestions. Meetings will take place in the evening in the following locations:

Basin Draft South Lake Champlain Tactical Plan Public Meetings

November 28th Poultney (4 – 6 PM)

Southern Vermont Office of TNC
The Bentley House
348 Bentley Ave,
Poultney, VT

November 29th – Orwell (7 – 9 PM)

Orwell Free Library
473 Main St,
Orwell, VT

The South Lake Champlain Tactical Basin Plan (TBP) was developed with the purpose of both improving and protecting water quality and aquatic habitats, and presents the recommendations of State and Federal resource agencies, watershed partner organizations, planning commissions, municipalities, and individual citizens.

The Plan provides an overall assessment of the health of the “South Lake” Champlain Basin, which covers approximately 500 square miles through 24 towns from Greensboro to Charlotte, and defines on-going and future actions and strategies to address high-priority stressors. An additional goal of the plan is to set priorities for meeting targets for phosphorus loading from the South Lake and all of the waters in its drainage basin that contribute to the South Lake “A” and “B” and Port Henry segments of Lake Champlain.

The central component of the Tactical Basin Plan is an implementation table summary with targeted actions to protect very high quality waters and to address the water quality issues in the South Lake watershed. To address the myriad of complex surface water challenges and opportunities in the Basin, dozens of actions are identified in the plan with hundreds of individual related projects included in the VT Watershed Projects database.

Top priority actions in the plan include:

- protecting very high quality surface waters by monitoring, assessment, and reclassification;
- promoting implementation of agricultural water quality practices in high phosphorus loading watersheds by mapping, outreach and implementation of conservation tillage and cover cropping in floodable soils;
- protecting river corridors and supporting stream equilibrium by implementing high priority projects identified in River Corridor Plans;
- inventorying, prioritization, and implementation of municipal road erosion features that discharge into surface water;
- engaging priority communities in stormwater master planning and implementation;
- improving lakeshore zone habitat by evaluation, protection, and implementing projects identified in lakewide assessments;
- identifying and implementing wetland and floodplain restoration projects; and
- increasing understanding of water quality conditions through water quality monitoring.

The Agency has coordinated with two Regional Planning Commissions and two Natural Resource Conservation Districts along with watershed groups to identify and begin to scope and implement projects identified in the plan. Ethan Swift, Watershed Coordinator with the Agency of Natural Resources explains, “Working with the partners has been crucial in spreading the word about new regulatory protections for water quality in the VT Clean Water Act and getting priority projects in motion.”

“Kevin Behm, Addison County Regional Planning Commission Assistant Director comments that “The South Lake Champlain Tactical Basin Plan is an important tool for protecting our valuable water resources. Implementation of the projects identified in the plan will ensure the reduction of phosphorus in Lake Champlain is achieved in a timely manner under the Lake Champlain TMDL and the Vermont Water Quality Standards.”

Hilary Solomon, District Manager for the Poultney Mettowee Conservation District (PMNRCD), shares that "the South Lake Tactical Basin Plan is where information from all water quality assessments and reports is organized and where project opportunities are shared with the groups working in the Watershed. All of the PMNRCD projects are listed in the plan, as well as the concerns and issues identified by others. PMNRCD networks with other partners (state, federal, and private) to implement projects outlined in the plan to protect and restore the healthy waters that flow throughout the region.”

Copies of the draft plan may be obtained on November 18th, 2017, on-line at <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/map/basin-planning/basin4> or by requesting a copy from Ethan Swift by email at Ethan.Swift@vermont.gov or (802) 490-6141. Comments can be directed to Ethan Swift at above email address or by mail at 1 National Life Drive, Main 2, Montpelier VT 05620-3522. Comments will be accepted through end of business day (4:30 pm) on December 18th, 2017. Comments received by this date will be addressed in a responsiveness summary.

Draft North Lake Champlain TMDL Phase II Plan Update Public Meetings

Public Meetings will be held for the Draft Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages Tactical Basin Plan with TMDL Phase II Update

November 30th 5:00 to 6:30 pm, Essex Junction

Fish and Wildlife building in the Act 250 conference room,
ANR Essex Junction Regional Office, 111 West Street

November 28th 5:00-6:30pm, St. Albans City

Northwestern Medical Center, Conference Room #2
133 Fairfield Street

The Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages Tactical Basin Plan (Basin 5 TBP), a plan to protect and restore the basin's surface waters, was completed and signed by the Agency of Natural Resources in 2015

The Agency is in the process of updating the 2015 Basin 5 TBP to include the Phase II content for the Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL. The update will establish targets for phosphorus loading from the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Drainages to Lake Champlain. The Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL Phase I Implementation Plan and the TMDL both point to issuance of these plans in 2017 as components of the accountability framework.

The Phase II content includes high-resolution phosphorus-load modeling and projected phosphorus reductions for smaller sub-watersheds as well as by types of sources (wastewater treatment plants, developed lands stormwater, roads, forestry and agriculture).

The plan also describes strategies relating to the development of new regulations associated with the Vermont Clean Water Act. Future iterations of the Basin 5 Tactical Basin Plan will provide augmented specificity regarding phosphorus reductions achieved, reductions planned, costs, and as appropriate, success stories documenting incremental water quality improvement

Copies of the draft plan may be obtained on November 17th, 2017, on-line at <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/map/basin-planning/basin5> or by requesting a copy from Karen Bates by email at Karen.Bates@vermont.gov or (802) 490-6144. Comments can be directed to Karen Bates at above email address or by mail at 1 National Life Drive, Main 2, Montpelier VT 05620-3522. Comments will be accepted through end of business day (4:30 pm) on December 18th, 2017. Comments received by this date will be addressed in a responsiveness summary.

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