

WATERSHED PLANNING

>>> ACT 76 NEWS <<<



A STATE OF VERMONT NEWSLETTER

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TO RING IN 2025...

PRI NEW YELD

We are honored to thank all of our Watershed Partners for another year of hard work and dedication. No matter how the year has looked for each of us, your work has contributed to making our environment a little better for all of us.

ANR'S WATER QUALITY SOLUTIONS CENTER ON LAND STEWARDSHIP

>>> FROM KAREN BATES, WATERSHED PLANNER

The health of our rivers, lakes, and wetlands reflects the community's commitment to land stewardship practices. The State of Vermont's approach to protecting and enhancing surface waters is focused on improving the community's management of the land to reduce soil erosion, increase stream flows, and reduce use of pollutants. The approach includes support for the use of a suite of practices for each land use. Vermont requires these specific practices to meet regulatory compliance or awards Clean Water Funds to support voluntary adoption of these stewardship practices.

Identification of land management practices that avoid degrading surface water has been a collaborative process between government and academic institutions to identify best practices that are informed and validated by research. For example, the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center's research supports stormwater management practices that Vermont incorporated into its stormwater manual. Other evidence-based

management practices can be found in the <u>Vermont Better Roads Manual</u> to address stormwater from roads, or Vermont Department Forest, Parks and Recreation's <u>Acceptable Management Practices for Logging Professionals</u>.

These best practices for managing land to reduce pollutants are included as project types eligible for CWF (see Appendix B of the Clean Water Fund Policy). New practices are added over time as research and land managers add to our understanding. Using the most suitable tools helps to ensure responsible spending of public funds while promoting land stewardship practices over the long term, for a healthy watershed and climate resilient communities.



NEW YEAR, NEW WINS

>>> FIVE NEW TACTICAL BASIN PLANS

Five tactical basin plans have been finalized that will guide efforts to protect and restore waters in their respective basins. The final plans are now available on the basin planning webpages at:

- Otter Creek Tactical Basin Plan
- Northen Lake Champlain Tactical Basin Plan
- White River Tactical Basin Plan
- Deerfield River Tactical Basin Plan
- Passumpsic River Tactical Basin Plan

>>> ACRPC REAPPOINTMENT

Addison County Regional Planning Commision (ACRPC), the CWSP for Basin 3 - Otter Creek, submitted <u>a request for reappointment</u> to DEC. After DEC's review of the submission and performance of the CWSP, paired with public input, the Addison County Regional Planning Commission has been reappointed. The official statement can be found in the <u>Basin 3</u> <u>Reappointment Memorandum</u>.

JANUARY UPDATES

>>> CHANGES TO JANUARY 30TH FFI TOOL TRAINING

Hello Partners and FFI Users. The FFI tool training is being modified from a half day training to a 2-hour Teams meeting from 10am - 12pm. Unfortunately, we have had some unexpected issues with the software platform that supports the FFI tool's functionality, so we will not be able to fully roll out the new version of the FFI tool by the end of the month. However, we do have several updates to the tool's interface and functionality that we are able to share at a higher level that will help prepare users for what is to come when the new version of the tool is released later this winter. As part of the training we will showcase, through slides, the new user management system capabilities for saving projects and calculations, options to add new projects and stream reaches into FFI, updates to culvert projects identified in the tool, and some other functionality we are working on. When the FFI tool is fully ready to be released later this winter, we will offer another training to do a more hands on walk through of the new tool capabilities. In addition to the updates to the FFI tool, the training will provide updates around Strategic Wood Addition and Culvert crediting methods, and the updates in the Interimcalculator to reflect the crediting methods for SWA and culvert crediting that have been developed and updated since the release of the FFI tool in 2023. We will walk through examples of these projects for crediting consideration and methods. We look forward to seeing you at the end of January.

Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 260 663 328 520 Passcode: 4pJ3hf6h Dial In: <u>+1 802-828-7667,,419000128#</u> Phone conference ID: 419 000 128#



RESOLUTIONS IN PROGRESS

>>> DRAFT CLEAN WATER ACTION PLAN

The DEC Watershed Planning Program and Clean Water Initiative Program have developed the first draft of the "Clean Water Action Plan" which is intended to address the current challenges and opportunities within the Clean Water Service Delivery framework. The 'Plan' serves as a workplanning tool for DEC and our partners that we will use to prioritize these actions into short-term and longer-term 'buckets' of work. The Plan was informed by and incorporates input received from the Clean Water Service Network Summit that was convened in April 2024, as well as other listening sessions related to how to enhance the delivery of Clean Water Funds available through the Water Quality Restoration "Formula Grants" and related programs. The Summit and additional listening sessions provide useful input and creative suggestions for how to improve the efficiency of Formula Grant program delivery. The Plan is still a work in progress and our programs will be reaching out to stakeholders soon to talk about next steps for input.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST!

>>> WISPR OVERVIEW

For 2025, WPP will continue to assist the Water Infrastructure Finance Program in coordinating programmatic support to provide municipalities and partner organizations with access to Clean Water State Revolving Loan (CWSRF) funding to implement priority clean water improvement projects. This will address the growing need to provide expanded access to CWSRF for nonpoint source pollution reduction through implementation of natural resource projects to meet programmatic restoration goals and TMDL pollution reduction targets. In 2024, WPP supported the development of several natural resource restoration projects under the Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program (WISPr), which can be used to sponsor natural resource projects that extends the value of conventional CWSRF loans. A notable accomplishment was the approval of Sustainable Woodstock's Barnard Brook Bank Restoration project which is being sponsored through the Town of Woodstock's CWSRF loan. Final design for this project is underway, with a projected implementation for the 2025 field season.

