

KRISTEN SWITZER - ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICIAN



Kristen Switzer is serving at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation as a part of the Monitoring, Assessment, and Planning Program (MAPP). She has had an exciting fall with the program, both in the office and in the field. One of Kristen's main focuses is on the LaRosa Partnership Program, a water quality monitoring study involving lots of different partner sites. Kristen has been able to visit these partners to help collect samples for water quality monitoring or to speak with them about how to improve the program for the 2019 sampling year. This winter, she will be having more meetings with these partners in order to help them establish a water sampling plan for the coming year. Also, for the program, Kristen is developing GIS maps using the LaRosa data to present how water quality parameters (phosphorus, nitrogen, E. coli, turbidity, etc.) have been changing over time at the different sampling sites. Kristen had a particularly exciting October collecting stream samples, conducting habitat assessments around streams, and participating in electroshock fish sampling in order to count fish. Electroshock fish sampling requires two people, one with a long "shock" wand and the other with a net and buckets. The wand sends out shockwaves through the water, stunning the fish, and net scoops them up and places them into buckets once they break the surface so that they can be counted by species and then returned to the stream. Kristen has also been visiting high altitude acid sensitive lakes to take water samples for chemical analysis. Now and throughout the winter, she is picking bug samples in the BASS lab (Biomonitoring and Aquatic Studies Section). This involves sorting aquatic bugs into general taxa, including caddisflies, stoneflies, mayflies, beetles, and aquatic worms. Keep up the great service for Vermont's water, Kristen!