



Vermont's Clean Water Initiative

Taking Action to Restore Local Streams and Lake Champlain

Vermonters love Lake Champlain and the streams that flow into it. Clean water and a healthy Lake protect the health, economy and natural beauty of Vermont. Along with a sustainable “farm and forest” working landscape, they are an essential legacy for Vermont’s future generations.

Phosphorus pollution poses the greatest threat to a clean Lake Champlain. Phosphorus can turn water green and cause algae blooms, which are disruptive to recreation and tourism, cause declines in property values, threaten the Lake’s ecological health, and can sicken animals and people.

The state of Vermont and its partners have worked for decades to reduce runoff and erosion that carry phosphorus pollution into Vermont’s waterways, including Lake Champlain. However, more needs to be done to restore the Lake and it needs to happen at the source of the pollution; agricultural lands, developed lands, gravel roads, logging roads, and eroding stream banks. Vermont’s Clean Water Initiative is a call to action for everyone — municipalities, farmers, loggers, and landowners — to do our part to restore local streams and ultimately Lake Champlain. Many of the actions are simple and cost-effective.

This factsheet summarizes actions to reduce phosphorus pollution from forest lands as part of the State’s Clean Water Initiative. See other factsheets that describe actions to reduce phosphorus from other sources.



Poor stream crossing practice



Portable skidder bridge protects water quality during timber harvesting



Actions to Reduce Phosphorus Pollution from Forest Lands:

- Enhance standards to improve stream crossing practices;
- Provide incentive financing for low-impact timber harvesting technologies to reduce polluted runoff risks on timber harvesting operations;
- Control soil erosion and reduce sedimentation along logging roads on private lands in partnership with the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service’s “forest legacy roads” cost-share program;
- Improve watershed health by supporting forest conservation, restoring river and lake-side forested buffers, expanding developed land forest cover and reducing invasive tree pests and their impacts;
- Develop and promote “climate-smart” forest adaptation strategies through the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative to support environmentally sound logging technologies.