



MEMO

Date: November 1, 2016

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Dan Currier, Program Manager

Re: Draft Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan Conformance with 2016 Central Vermont Regional Plan

Action Requested from the Commission

As part of the public engagement process, CVRPC is hosting a public hearing on the 2016 DRAFT Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan at its November 8 Board of Commissioner's meeting. Commissioners will be asked to:

- 1) make formal recommendation on the draft Plan's conformance with the goals and objectives of the 2016 Regional Plan, and
- 2) make recommendations regarding implementation project priorities. As part of the implementation project recommendation, the Commission will identify where there would be transportation, hazard mitigation, and other co-benefits and where additional resources may be leveraged.

Background

The 2016 Plan was released for public comment on November 1st. The Plan is available at <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/map/basin-planning/basin7> .

The Plan provides an overall assessment of the health of the Lamoille River basin 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 Lamoille River and all of the waters in its drainage basin that contribute to Mallets Bay in 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 Lamoille watershed. Over 140 actions are identified in the plan with over 1,000 individual related projects included in the VT Watershed Projects database.

2016 Lamoille Watershed Top Priorities

- Protect very high quality surface waters by monitoring, assessment, and reclassification
- Promote 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
- Protect river corridors and support stream equilibrium by implementing high priority projects identified in River Corridor Plans
- Inventory municipal road erosion features that discharge into surface water and prioritize and implement best management practices
- Engage priority communities in stormwater master planning and implementation
- Improve lakeshore zone habitat by evaluation, protection, and implementation of projects identified in lake-wide assessments
- Identify and implement wetland and floodplain restoration projects
- Increasing understanding of water quality conditions through water quality monitoring

Conformance with the Regional Plan

The *2016 Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Regional Plan* is guided by the following general purposes to:

1. create conditions favorable to transportation, health safety, civic activities and educational and cultural opportunities;
2. reduce the waste of financial, energy and human resources which result from either excessive congestion or excessive scattering of population;
3. promote an efficient and economic utilization of drainage, energy, sanitary and other facilities and resources;
4. promote the conservation of the supply of food, water, energy and minerals;
5. promote the production of food and fiber resources and the reasonable use of mineral, water, and renewable energy resources; and
6. promote the development of housing suitable to the needs of the Region and its communities."

The Draft Lamoille Tactical Basin Plan is largely in conformance with these purposes. The Lamoille River watershed covers a very small portion of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) only about 2% almost all of it in Woodbury. The land use and cover in this portion of the watershed is dominated by large tracks of forest, small hill farms, and single family residential homes. The largest Lamoille River tributaries in Woodbury are Cooper Brook, Nichols Brook, and Kate Brook with the largest ponds being East Long Pond and Nichols Pond. These areas of Woodbury provide many recreational amenities that play an important role in this rural community's character and the quality of life of its residents.

One potential area of concern is the reclassification of waters to a lower or higher class. The Regional Plans states under Strategy 3b. ***“CVRPC opposes the downgrading of surface water classifications unless such action is required to accommodate treated effluent from new or expanded municipal sewage treatment facilities. The Commission also opposes the upgrading of surface water classifications where such upgrading might be misleading or dangerous to users.”***

No waters in Woodbury have been recommended for reclassification so this need not be an actual conflict, provided that the Regional Planning Commission and its municipalities are involved in the reclassification of waters. Additionally the Regional Plan goes on to say ***“Central Vermont possesses "working landscapes" where people manage, nurture, and harvest the resources of nature. Farmlands, forest lands, and lands containing mineral resources are vitally important to the economy and character of our Region. This Plan encourages the protection of resource production lands and the livelihoods of the people who use them by recognizing their benefits, promoting their products, and rethinking the attitudes, policies, and land use patterns that threaten their existence.”*** The Basin Plan priorities the protection and conservation large forest blocks and riparian areas which can help maintain and improve water quality. It is important to note in the Basin Plan that these same areas provide for the resources of our working landscape and that they are an important piece to our economy and character.