



Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

**CVRPC Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC)
Meeting Minutes – 9 May 2024**

CWAC Members: ✓

Commissioner Representatives	
✓	John Brabant
	Royal DeLegge
✓	Ron Krauth
	Rich Turner
✓	Alice Peal

Municipal Representatives	
✓	John Hoogenboom
✓	Joyce Manchester
	Emily Ruff
	Jeff Schulz
✓	Joseph Whelan

CVRPC Staff: Brian Voigt, Lincoln Frasca, Nikki Sabado

Other Attendees: Ira Shadis (Friends of the Mad River), Michele Braun (Friends of the Winooski), Lauren Jenness (Lake Champlain Basin Program), Roman (unknown)

Call to Order & Roll Call

B. Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:55 PM.

Approval of November minutes (action)

J. Hoogenboom moved to approve the minutes of the 14 March 2024 meeting. R. Krauth seconded the motion. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates to agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Watershed Organization Roundtable (see presentations)

I. Shadis, Executive Director, [Friends of the Mad River](#):

Presented on the Friends of the Mad River mission and their summer work plan. Water quality monitoring work is ongoing through the “Mad River Watch” program. A Conservation and Recreation Visioning Project is underway in collaboration with Arrowwood Environmental. This work is part of a Department of Forest Parks and

Recreation Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) grant. There will be a public forum on 29 May 2024 at Lareau Farm in Waitsfield to showcase progress and get comments on desired conditions when considering balancing recreation and ecology in the Mad River Valley. I. Shadis highlighted a Spring Buffer Restoration in Moretown that is a collaborative effort with Friends of the Winooski River and homeowner-led volunteers. Damage from the July 2023 flood at another Buffer Restoration project in Moretown was also reviewed. A final Riparian Buffer project over Mill Brook was mentioned that includes students from Harwood High School volunteering to help with site preparation and invasive plant removal. Friends of the Mad River is working with Evan Fitzgerald to identify water quality restoration projects throughout the Mad River Valley.

Friends of the Mad River has formalized a partnership with the Waitsfield Conservation Commission to collaborate on knotweed mitigation and removal strategies. The Conservation Commission received a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, in partnership with UVM for removal, restoration, and monitoring of knotweed. They will be experimenting with goats as a knotweed mitigation strategy. Friends of the Mad River is also engaged in the [Storm Smart](#) & [Stream Wise](#) programs to help landowners slow, spread and sink water across the landscape. These assessment programs are free and open to the public. Potential projects resulting from a site assessment include planting trees, diverting water from driveways, and building rain gardens. I. Shadis also highlighted the evolution of the [Ridge to River](#) program, a five-town coalition working towards clean water, flood resiliency and climate resilience. There will be a symposium this summer to bring together climate groups focusing on challenges and possible actions in the Mad River Valley.

M. Braun, Executive Director, [Friends of the Winooski River](#):

M. Braun discussed the organization's efforts towards improving the health of the Winooski watershed and addressing ongoing and emerging environmental challenges. She highlighted challenges faced by the Lake Champlain Basin, including high phosphorus levels, sedimentation, disconnected rivers and increasing chloride levels. Priority solutions include ecological restoration, reconnecting floodplains, stormwater management, tree plantings and the removal of barriers such as dams and undersized culverts. Friends of the Winooski partners with federal, state and local governments, as well as other non-profit organizations. Local volunteers assist with water quality monitoring across the watershed.

M. Braun highlighted two restoration projects in the Town of Northfield. The 2020 Camp Wihakowi Dam removal project successfully reconnected the river for aquatic organism passage and restored natural fluvial processes. The 2017 Dog River Park project reestablished historic floodplain connections in the Village of Northfield. During

the July 2023 flood the Dog River Park project lowered floodwaters by 6 inches in the Village and limited flooding of basements for nearby homes. M. Braun also discussed a culvert replacement in Fayston on German Flats Road that was a collaborative effort with Friends of the Mad River.

M. Braun highlighted the ongoing collaborations and availability of grant funding for community-led initiatives to improve stormwater management and flood resilience. Lastly, she gave an update on the Stream Wise program and announced plans for several new projects in 2024, including staff expansions and two upcoming paddling events.

L. Jenness, Environmental Analyst, [Lake Champlain Basin Program](#)

L. Jenness detailed the organization's functions and initiatives, emphasizing their role in coordinating efforts among federal, state and local entities to manage the Lake Champlain watershed. She highlighted the organization's various programs, including long-term monitoring, grants to local organizations, and educational and outreach initiatives. Lauren invited the attendees to get involved at the local level and utilize the organization's resources and campaigns. L. Jenness described long-term monitoring efforts that can be reviewed in the [State of the Lake Report](#), released every three years. The 2024 State of the Lake will be available on 5 June 2024.

The Lake Champlain Basin Program has awarded more than eight million dollars in grants since 1992 for a range of activities, including: clean water project implementation, invasive aquatic species control, Stream Wise assessments, artist-in-residence and cultural heritage & recreation-based initiatives. Depending on the grant requirements, eligible applicants include municipalities, non-profit organizations and educational institutes.

L. Jenness introduced the VT Citizens Advisory Committee, a fourteen-member committee made up of community members and legislators. They serve as a forum for stakeholders and community voices in the management of Lake Champlain Basin. They also present an annual action plan to the governor and legislative committees. The Lake Champlain Basin Program runs multiple online outreach campaigns to improve water quality. These include the Clean Water Commitment and Lawn to Lake initiatives. Stream Wise is another Lake Champlain Basin Program to engage property owners along rivers and streams to maintain buffers, increase flood resiliency and benefit water quality and habitat. Stream Wise assessments are completed by both Friends of the Mad and Winooski Rivers. L. Jenness also presented on the Champlain Canal Aquatic Invasive Species initiative and [Aquatic Invasive Species Guide](#).

Presenter Q & A (discussion)

J. Manchester initiated a discussion about the partnership between various groups and municipalities, and the potential for information dissemination via municipalities to citizens. I. Shadis explained that Friends of the Mad River works primarily with municipalities often coordinating with their Conservation Commissions to identify projects on municipal lands. M. Braun and Friends of the Winooski coordinates with all thirty towns in the Basin depending on interest and capacity of municipal staff and Conservation Commissions. L. Jenness explained that Lake Champlain Basin Program primarily works with towns through grants and public outreach such as the "Raise the Blade Campaign."

J. Manchester asked about the best practice for Knotweed mitigation. I. Shadis mentioned the [VT Invasive Website](#) as a resource and that conservation practices in the Mad River Valley are evolving. M. Braun suggested the [Watershed Forestry Partnership](#) with UVM Extension as another resource that coordinates stakeholders engaged in riparian buffer work.

J. Brabant referenced the recent rains that caused an overflow at the Barre Wastewater Treatment Facilities and asked how these issues relate to the work of watershed organizations. M. Braun responded that wastewater treatment plants are regulated, and Friends of the Winooski River only has access to funding for work on non-regulatory projects. They do not do advocacy work. She is aware of the Barre Wastewater Facility expansion project. This may create an opportunity for natural resources projects through the state's [Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program](#) that allows communities with a state loan for wastewater infrastructure projects to sign over their interest payments for natural resources projects. Friends of the Mad River do get involved in public forum planning discussions. The Town of Waitsfield is discussing a potential wastewater treatment facility project and working to create paths for public awareness and involvement in the planning process. Historically, Friends of the Mad River has focused on illicit discharge and failing septic systems. This could be an area of focus that they return to address the need for monitoring older septic systems and the possible wastewater treatment facility. L. Jenness commented that the Lake Champlain Basin Program is a non-regulatory and non-advocacy group. However, the VT Citizens Advisory Commission does engage in advocacy work. M. Braun stated that Friends of the Winooski has done a lot of illicit discharge detection monitoring in Montpelier and Barre. They discovered that a main source of river pollution in Montpelier is from the pigeons that roost under the Rialto Bridge.

J. Hoogenboom shared the success of the Ridge to Rivers program in the Mad River Valley in bringing road crews together to share ideas. He would love to see those

meetings start again. I. Shadis responded that there is also a desire to bring the agricultural community together in a reoccurring roundtable to discuss Best Management Practices and challenges in the Mad River Valley.

A. Peal emphasized the importance of municipalities as a resource for grants and their ongoing work on a local hazard mitigation plan. She also highlighted potential issues with the wastewater project in Waitsfield, including the possibility of contamination from leach fields and the need for an emergency preparedness plan. Furthermore, she mentioned a new chemical treatment plan for the wastewater facility aimed at improved pollution control and environmental friendliness. I. Shadis stated that the proposed treatment field is outside of the river corridor.

Water Quality Development Block Grant (see slides)

L. Frasca and B. Voigt presented on a Request for Proposals issued by CVRPC for project scoping and development services for fifteen projects in the Upper Winooski Basin. The project's deliverables will include a list of three to five high-priority projects on municipal lands whose design and implementation phases can be supported with Formula Grant Funding.

Clean Water Service Provider Municipal Outreach (see slides)

B. Voigt and L. Frasca led a discussion on their process prioritizing and implementing water quality restoration projects in cooperation with the Winooski Basin Water Quality Council. Staff have reviewed Town Plans in the Region and identified potential projects that may be eligible for Department of Environmental Conservation Formula Grant Funding. They discussed upcoming strategies to promote these projects to Planning and Conservation Commissions. They encouraged CWAC members to use and distribute to municipal staff a [link](#) for scheduling meetings with L. Frasca and B. Voigt to discuss local project opportunities.

J. Manchester asked if this funding source could be applied towards a potential wastewater system in Moretown. B. Voigt responded that the emphasis for this funding is phosphorus reduction.

Announcements (see slides)

[FEMA Bylaw Updates](#): CVRPC assistance: schedule meeting here

[Emergency Watershed Protection Program](#): Middlesex & Marshfield

[Community Tree Planting Grants](#): Round 1 applications due 17 May 2024

Green Mountain Water Environment Association: Annual Meeting 23 May 2024.

[Register here.](#)

B. Voigt announced the final walk-through of Moretown Stormwater Implementation project. J. Hoogenboom expressed satisfaction with the project's progress, mentioning plans for paving and preparation work throughout the summer.

Adjourn: *J. Brabant moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:54 PM. J. Hoogenboom seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

The next meeting is scheduled for 11 July 2024.

DRAFT