

# Winooski Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC) Meeting Minutes – 19 December 2024

**Winooski Basin Water Quality Council Members: ✓**

<b>NRCDS</b>		<b>RPCs</b>	
✓	Peter Danforth, Lamoille NRCDS	✓	Garret Mott, CCRPC
	Emily Porter-Goff, Alternate	✓	Lisa Cicchetti, CCRPC alternate
✓	Daniel Koenemann, Winooski NRCDS		Royal DeLegge, CVRPC
	Macie Broussard, Alternate	✓	Rich Turner, CVRPC alternate
<b>Land Conservation Organizations</b>		<b>Municipalities</b>	
✓	Erin De Vries, VT River Conservancy	✓	Annie Costandi, Essex
	Remy Crettol, Alternate		Vacant, Alternate
<b>Watershed Protection Organizations</b>		✓	Alice Peal, Waitsfield
	Michele Braun, Friends of the Winooski River		Vacant, Alternate
	Taylor Litwin, Alternate		
✓	Sam Puddicombe, Alternate		
	Ira Shadis, Friends of the Mad River		
	B. Shupe, Alternate		
✓	Kinny Perot, Alternate		

**CVRPC Staff:** Brian Voigt & Lincoln Frasca

**Guests:** Lucas Goldfluss (Winooski NRCDS)

**Call to order & Roll call:** B. Voigt called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.

**Updates to agenda:** None

**Public comment:** None

**Review & Approve minutes from 21 November 2024 meeting:**

*D. Koenemann moved to approve the minutes of the 21 November 2024 meeting.  
R. Turner seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.*

**Project Proposal Final Review (see slides):**

B. Voigt explained how CVRPC coordinated with the Friends of the Winooski River to separate out the operations and maintenance costs from all four of the following final project proposal budgets. As a result, the budget for all projects is less than the original amount proposed.

### **Friends of the Winooski River Riparian Buffer Planting – Fecteau, Huntington**

After the removal of operations and maintenance costs, the budget for this project is now \$14,379.00. The total project score was 92.36 out of 100. The CWSP staff recommended funding be prioritized for this project.

D. Koenemann asked about the relationship between the operations and maintenance phase being removed from the application and the cost decrease.

B. Voigt clarified that the budget changed because the operations and maintenance costs were removed. One of the four planting projects did have a discrepancy in the acreage and the rate which changed the budget by a couple hundred dollars. The current budgets reflect the implementation request separate from the operations and maintenance.

*E. De Vries made a motion to prioritize funding for the Friends of the Winooski River Riparian Buffer Fecteau Planting in Huntington. A. Peal seconded. S. Puddicombe abstained, all others were in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.*

### **Riparian Buffer Planting – John Fowler Road, Marshfield**

After the removal of operations and maintenance costs, the budget for this project is now \$14,288.00. The total project score was 93.91 out of 100. The CWSP staff recommended funding be prioritized for this project.

E. De Vries asked if this project is the one related to the Vermont Land Trust Berm Removal project?

S. Puddicombe confirmed that this is the same project location. The planting would occur at the earliest this spring immediately following the berm removal. However it may be in the fall if the berm removal project is delayed.

*R. Turner made a motion to prioritize funding for the Friends of the Winooski River John Fowler Road Buffer Planting in Marshfield, D. Koenemann seconded. S. Puddicombe abstained, all others were in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.*

### **Riparian Buffer Planting – Huntington Acres, Huntington**

After the removal of operations and maintenance costs, the budget for this project is now \$10,501.00. The total project score was 92.67 out of 100. The CWSP staff recommended funding be prioritized for this project.

E. De Vries asked where this project is in relation to the Fecteau farm?

S. Puddicombe explained the planting is located a five-minute drive downstream from the farm in the Huntington Acres housing development. These are three buyout sites that have been decommissioned and will be planted.

E. De Vries asked how many trees are being planted?

S. Puddicombe responded that 400 stems across 1.25 acres will be planted.

A. Peal asked if there is a particular type of tree that is used regularly for riparian buffers? What is the success rate of trees planted?

S. Puddicombe explained that different plants are used statewide but there is a list of native trees that are good riparian species. From that list of trees Friends of the Winooski River chooses species that are well suited for the site based on local conditions such as soil type.

B. Voigt mentioned that the issue of plant mortality could be addressed during the operations and maintenance phase.

S. Puddicombe stated he had originally included the operations and maintenance costs in the proposal because it is an essential piece of a successful planting project. It is reassuring to know that any CWSP funded planting project is eligible for operations and maintenance funding. Certain other funders require a 75% survival rate after three years. Survival can vary greatly and is influenced by environmental factors such as drought or flooding.

B. Voigt noted if plants were lost during a flood we would look to the DEC to bring the site back to pre-flood conditions.

E. De Vries asked about a situation with funders that require a 75% survival rate. If in year two, you know you are not going to meet that percentage requirement, would you return to the funder to request funding for additional plantings?

S. Puddicombe noted verification of these projects is a part of CWSP funded projects. Qualified verifiers will monitor plant survival rates over the course of the project design life. They will recommend corrective action such as replanting as necessary. Additional plantings are not included in the budget.

B. Voigt stated there is no need to factor in potential mortality into the project budget. Every project we fund comes with its associated risk. Species mortality is a risk for buffer planting projects. If a verifier observes that stem density has dipped below a cost-efficient phosphorus threshold, the CWSP and the BWQC would have a conversation about reinvesting or abandoning the site. If we decline to fund additional work at a site, based on repetitive losses, we would lose the phosphorus credit related to that project. If this scenario arises, we will include our DEC partners in making future project investments.

*D. Koenemann made a motion to prioritize funding for the Friends of the Winooski River Huntington Acres Riparian Buffer Planting, P. Danforth seconded. S. Puddicombe abstained, all others in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.*

## **Riparian Buffer Planting – Tyler Place, Jericho**

After the removal of operations and maintenance costs, the budget for this project is now \$17,534.00. The total project score was 82.07 out of 100. The CWSP staff recommended funding be prioritized for this project.

E. De Vries asked where this site is located?

S. Puddicombe responded the project is located right off Tyler Place on a Jericho Land Trust Land parcel owned as part of their Kikas Farm easement. This stream is a direct tributary to the Winooski. Restoration projects are going on up and downstream as well as within the farm field itself. A Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project will be planted on the North side of the drainage. CREP cannot plant to the south because it is not actively agriculture.

*E. De Vries made a motion to prioritize funding for The Friends of the Winooski River Tyler Place Riparian Buffer Planting in Jericho. R. Turner seconded. S. Puddicombe abstained, all others in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.*

## **Announcements (see slides):**

B. Voigt advertised two upcoming educational events facilitated by CVRPC:

- Clean Water Advisory Committee Meeting on *Municipal Wastewater Assistance*
  - 9 January 2025, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
  - Agenda & Zoom link available on the [CVRPC website](#)
- Mad River Valley Wastewater Workshop
  - Date TBD

The DEC operations & maintenance training and verifier certification reimbursement deadline is 14 January 2025. [Check the DEC website for more information.](#)

The Clean Water Initiative Program SFY2025 Funding Policy update process includes a [quick survey](#) (deadline: 17 January 2025).

B. Voigt announced CVRPC will be submitting a budget increase request for Final Design of the Marshfield Road Gully Project in Calais at the January BWQC meeting. Even with this proposed budget increase the project is still Phosphorus efficient.

E. De Vries asked if this gully stabilization project includes Strategic Wood Addition?

B. Voigt responded no this is not a Strategic Wood Addition project. This is a small project adjacent to a municipal road with a Phosphorus reduction of ~4.8 kg / yr. The issue is that we underestimated the final design estimate. DEC did not require a preliminary design due to the small size of this project and the contractor underestimated the final design cost during the project development phase. CVRPC is

still working with DEC to determine the eligibility of a potential culvert replacement as part of this project.

S. Puddicombe noted the Strategic Wood Addition projects Friends of the Winooski is working on are just for the design phase. The implementation will likely occur in the fall or winter of 2025 or 2026. The design deliverables are about ready, and they will be requesting implementation funds soon.

A. Peal inquired about the January Clean Water Advisory Committee meeting and Agency of Natural Resources ARPA funding for small individual septic systems. Will that program be available in January? Will you be addressing DEC regulations at this meeting? Septic systems have failed in Waitsfield and homeowners have begun digging their own ditches which is not allowed. Once a system is reported to DEC they follow it until the system is restored.

L. Frasca responded that our three guest speakers from DEC should be able to address these questions.

### **Adjourn**

*P. Danforth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:39 PM. E. De Vries seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Next meeting scheduled 19 December 2024.

*Minutes submitted by CVRPC staff member Lincoln Frasca*