

Winooski Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC)

Draft Meeting Minutes – 15 January 2025

Winooski Basin Water Quality Council Members: ✓

NRCDs	RPCs
Peter Danforth, Lamoille NRCD	✓ Garret Mott, CCRPC (Chair)
Emily Porter-Goff, Alternate	Lisa Cicchetti, CCRPC alternate
✓ Daniel Koenemann, Winooski NRCD	✓ Royal DeLegge, CVRPC
✓ Lucas Goldfluss, Alternate	✓ Rich Turner, CVRPC alternate
Land Conservation Organizations	Municipalities
Erin De Vries, VT River Conservancy	✓ Annie Costandi, Essex
Remy Crettol, Alternate	Vacant, Alternate
Watershed Protection Organizations	
✓ Sam Puddicombe, Friends of the Winooski River	✓ Alice Peal, Waitsfield (Vice Chair)
Michele Braun, Alternate	✓ David Stapleton, Moretown, Alternate
Taylor Litwin, Alternate	
Ira Shadis, Friends of the Mad River	
✓ Julie Frost, Alternate	
Kinny Perot, Alternate	

CVRPC Staff: Brian Voigt & Lincoln Frasca

Guests: Keith Fritschie (Department of Environmental Conservation)

Call to order & Roll call: G. Mott called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.

Updates to agenda: None

Public comment: None

Review & approve minutes from 18 December 2025 meeting (action)

A. Peal made a motion to approve the minutes of the 18 December 2025 meeting. R. Turner seconded, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Project Proposal Preliminary Review (see slides)

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission: Waitsfield Lower Fairgrounds Floodplain Reconnection – Preliminary Design

B. Voigt introduced the Lower Fairgrounds project proposal to complete a preliminary design for a floodplain restoration and riparian buffer planting project on a 9.5-acre site along the Mad River. The project proposes to restore 9.5 acres of floodplain and reduce an estimated 50.7 kg/yr of phosphorus. The preliminary design budget requested is \$18,499.20. This site was prioritized during a previous project development effort completed with CWSP funding. The floodplain is located on town owned land. Both the Conservation Commission and Selectboard have expressed their support. The Conservation Commission is working on a Master Plan for this site and will benefit from the completion of this preliminary design work. There is no direct road access to the site so the river will need to be crossed during excavation. The VT Department of Historic Preservation has indicated that the archeological review for this project will be complex.

A. Peal commented on the identification of this project during development of the Waitsfield Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. This project also has support from the Waitsfield Road Crew. D. Koenemann asked what the archeological review will involve. B. Voigt replied that the entire 9.5 acres will have to be tested due to the amount of sediment being removed. There are still questions about what this work will involve and how much it will cost. S. Puddicombe asked if the preliminary design budget includes the cost of the archeological review. B. Voigt said the estimated budget would only be spent on design work. CVRPC would coordinate with the State to better understand the review work that would be required as part of subsequent project phases. He noted the archeological costs for the John Fowler Berm removal, a much smaller project, were around \$12,000. The review needed for this 9.5 acre project could be \$100,000 or more. If the phosphorus reduction estimate remains accurate then this project could still be cost-effective even with high archeological costs. S. Puddicombe asked if it is possible to go directly to final design for this project. B. Voigt responded that due to the scale of the project DEC will want to see multiple design phases and CVRPC stills needs to better understand the actual costs of implementation. A. Peal asked when the archeological work would be performed and mentioned Abenaki cultural remains found during other earthwork projects in the area. B. Voigt indicated the work would be performed as part of the final design phase. D. Stapleton asked if the archeological review process is required. B. Voigt responded yes, it is a required step. D. Koenemann mentioned draft legislation for a potential restoration permit that may ease restrictions for projects providing flood resilience and ecological co-benefits. S. Puddicombe noted that Army Corp of Engineer permits can also satisfy the state's requirement for archeological review. The BWQC will vote on prioritizing funding for the Waitsfield Lower Fairgrounds during the February meeting.

Friends of the Mad River – Hanks Road Culvert Replacement (see slides)

J. Frost presented on the Hanks Road Culvert replacement project. Friends of the Mad River has scoped this project with Fitzgerald Environmental Associates. They were denied a Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) Clean Water Grant in 2025 but local support for the project persists. Friends of the Mad River is investigating the possibility of reapplying for funding from LCBP and CWSP. The total project budget is estimated to be \$300,000 with an original phosphorus reduction estimate of 5.5 kg/yr. B. Voigt added that after meeting with the Basin Planner the phosphorus credit for replacing only the Hanks Road Culvert would be closer to 2 kg/yr due to the Functioning Floodplains Initiative temporal deduction. There is a possibility of two other upstream structures that could be replaced to achieve a higher phosphorus reduction. If these additional structures are assessed, are undersized, and are also replaced then the total credit for replacing all three structures would be 4.1 – 5. kg/yr. Friends of the Mad River will reach out to the landowner regarding access for the assessment of the two private culverts in question.

D. Koenemann brought up the problem with cofunding a project between two reporting partners if the phosphorus credits need to be split. B. Voigt responded that DEC is currently working on updating the Clean Water Initiative Policy and changes to incentivize CWSP cofunding are anticipated (*See Announcements Section for Draft Policy Updates released at 4:00pm on 1/15/26*).

A. Peal has reviewed the VT Culvert Database and noted the last inspection for Waitsfield and Warren was in 2014. She recommended working with the DEC River Scientist during the scoping of these culverts. J. Frost coordinated with the Fish & Wildlife Department and is referencing Stream Crossing Reports in her research. A. Peal asked how replacing culverts reduces phosphorus. B. Voigt responded it is partly because undersized culverts overflow during storms and can transport sediment through increased erosion. Replacing or right sizing a culvert can prevent overflows and reduce the amount of erosion and by doing so prevent phosphorus from transporting downstream. G. Mott mentioned culvert projects in Chittenden County that were prohibited from being replaced with a galvanized bottom structure due to the Department of Fish & Wildlife's concern for its health impacts on aquatic organisms. Instead, an open bottom culvert was needed. He asked if this may be the case for the Hanks Road Culvert. J. Butler is working with the state to determine what the requirements will be for replacing this culvert. S. Puddicombe said this looks like a priority project from an aquatic organism standpoint. He asked if the engineer provided the longitudinal profile as part of the scoping effort. J. Butler responded yes, Fitzgerald Environmental Associates created the profile drawing during the scoping phase.

Projects in the pipeline (see slides)

B. Voigt asked the BWQC if there are any projects in the pipeline worth sharing to help inform a longer-term budget strategy. He also asked questions about whether

there should be a maximum award value and if we should consider holding a special call for proposals where the phosphorus threshold could be further relaxed. D. Koenemann mentioned scoping work completed by the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District to identify old riparian buffer plantings that may soon be eligible for adoption in Basin's 5 and 8. This could include 8-10 projects of varying sizes in the Winooski Basin. K. Fritschie added that the DEC is conducting an internal review of the phosphorus calculation methodology for crediting riparian buffer plantings that are considered old because they were planted before Lake Champlain's Total Maximum Daily Load targets were set. B. Voigt mentioned the need to consider the CWSP phosphorus cap placed on adoptable projects. L. Frasca recommended prioritizing projects with expired operation and maintenance plans where the cap does not apply. K. Fritschie will send out a list of stormwater and buffer planting projects that are eligible for adoption in the Winooski Basin. J. Frost mentioned Friends of the Mad River are working to move 5-6 projects out of the project development phase. She will set up a meeting with the CWSP to discuss these efforts. S. Puddicombe asked what the timeline is for a potential special round of project proposals. B. Voigt responded we could be ready to issue a special call at any point. We just need to spend some time considering what types of projects we collectively want to be prioritizing and how best to solicit proposals from a broader audience.

Announcements

❖ **The Flood Safety Act and Beyond: Statewide and Local Efforts to Address Flooding in Your Region:**

Join regional organizations, The Nature Conservancy, Lake Champlain Sea Grant, and VT DEC for virtual conversations to hear about actions the state and local organizations are taking to reduce flood risk and protect our communities.

- ❖ January 22nd at 6pm – Southeast VT region – Info and registration here: <https://bit.ly/fsa-se>
- ❖ February 4th at 6pm – Northeast VT region – Info and registration here: <https://bit.ly/fsa-nek>
- ❖ February 5th at 6:30pm – Mount Ascutney region – Info and registration here: <https://bit.ly/fsa-mountascutney>
- ❖ February 12th at 6pm – Lewis Creek and LaPlatte River regions – Info and registration here: <https://bit.ly/fsa-lewis-laplatte>
- ❖ February 26th at 6pm – Central Eastern VT region – Info and registration here: <https://bit.ly/fsa-central-east>

❖ **Central VT Trail Manager Meet-up:** CVRPC and Vermont Trails and Greenways Council are bringing trail managers together to develop a stronger trail community, learn about current projects in the region, and identify areas of needed support and skill building. Wednesday, January 28 from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM at UVM Extension in Berlin. [Registration required](#)

❖ **CWSP Funding** - The deadline for consideration at the February 2026 Winooski River Basin Water Quality Council meeting is 12 February 2026. [Schedule a meeting](#) with Brian & Lincoln for project reviews & proposal development assistance.

❖ **New FEMA Floodplain Maps available for Orange County:** For more information see [Get Ready for New FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps | Flood Training](#) or contact Brian Voigt at voigt@cvregion.com.

D. Koenemann mentioned an upcoming meeting on 20 January 2026 with Stone Environmental to discuss the FEMA funded flood resilience study for the town of Washington.

❖ **The Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) is in the process of updating the [CWIP Funding Policy](#).**

Public comments regarding Batch 2 draft updates will be accepted through close of business **Friday, February 20th, 2026**. Please send your comments to the Clean Water Initiative Program at ANR.CleanWater@vermont.gov with subject line "Funding Policy Comments: Batch 2".

Batch 2: Policy Clarifications

1. [Co-Funding](#)
2. [What is Regulatory](#)
3. [Operation & Maintenance Updates Part 1](#)
 - CWIP Operation and Maintenance Clarifications Part 2: delayed to Batch 3. Aims to include enhanced definitions of Project Loss and options both inside and outside of the Water Quality Restoration Formula Grants.
4. [Updates to Project Development Findings Report Form](#)
5. [Project Development for River Corridor Easements](#)
 - A [Project Development Workflow Diagram](#) accompanies this document.
6. [Natural Resources Screening Tool](#)
 - NOTE: see "Changes to ANR Atlas" announcement above that may impact the tools use in assessing clean water projects. CWIP will update applicable policy and guidance to align with updates to the ANR Atlas as applicable.
7. [Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Review Form](#)
8. [Updates to State Historic Preservation Review Requirements](#)

Adjourn

R. DeLegge made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:32 PM. D. Koenemann seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Next meeting scheduled for 19 February 2026.

Minutes submitted by CVRPC staff member Lincoln Frasca.