



Fact Sheet #4: River Corridor and Floodplain Protection

Vermont Lake Champlain Phosphorus Reduction Plan

Taking Action to Restore Local Streams and Lake Champlain

Vermonters love Lake Champlain and the streams that flow into it. Phosphorus pollution in these waterways poses the greatest threat to a clean Lake Champlain. Excess phosphorus can turn water green and cause algae blooms, which disrupt recreation, increase water treatment costs, create public health risks, and hurt the Lake's ecological health.

The state of Vermont and its partners have been working for decades to reduce phosphorus pollution to Lake Champlain. However, more needs to be done to restore a clean Lake Champlain and it needs to happen at the source of the pollution; eroded soil and runoff from parking lots, roads, farm fields, barnyards, logging roads, wastewater discharges, and unstable streams all contain phosphorous pollution. Rain running off hard or bare ground can pick up and deliver pollutants to waterways or cause erosion. Flooding from severe storms can also wash significant amounts of pollutants including phosphorus into waterways.

This factsheet summarizes actions described in the state's new phosphorus reduction plan to reduce the contribution of phosphorus runoff from unstable rivers and streams, while improving municipalities' resilience to future flooding. The plan is a call to action for everyone to get involved. Working together, we can restore and maintain healthy local streams and ultimately Lake Champlain. See other factsheets that describe actions to reduce phosphorus from other sources.



Excavating abandoned railroad bed (in black), restoring floodplain



Actions in State Plan to Reduce Phosphorus Pollution from River Instability:

- Adopt new state floodplain and river corridor rules to address developments exempt from municipal regulation, enhance flood resilience statewide, and ensure Vermont complies with the National Flood Insurance Program;
- Provide support to cities and towns, including financial incentives, to aid adoption of enhanced floodplain and river corridor protection standards and enhance flooding resilience;
- Increase floodplain and river corridor protection and restoration projects;
- Establish a "Flood Ready" website to promote municipal flood resiliency planning and actions;
- Provide education and training to municipalities on stream and river management practices as well as support prior to and during flood emergencies.