

WINOOSKI NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT RECEIVES FUNDING FOR TREES FOR STREAMS PROGRAM

Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District
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BERLIN, VT – The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District (WNRCD) has received funding to support six river restoration projects in the Lake Champlain Basin. Funding from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC) Ecosystem Restoration Program has been allocated to WNRCD to work with six landowners in Essex Junction, Milton, Shelburne, Jericho, Huntington and Bolton to plant a total of four acres of riparian buffer along Indian Brook, the Lamoille River, McCabe Brook, Lee River, Huntington River, Joiner Brook this spring.

Native trees and shrubs, planted in buffers of at least 35 feet in width along rivers and streams, serve important ecological functions. Forested riparian buffers protect water quality by filtering pollutants and sediment from waterways and help stabilize stream banks by holding soil in place to prevent the loss of land through erosion. Forested riparian buffers also improve habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife by keeping water temperatures cool and providing important habitat. Protecting water quality is a high priority for VTDEC, and the reestablishment and enhancement of riparian buffers has been identified by VTDEC as an effective tools to accomplish that goal.

Trees for Streams (TFS) is a program modeled after the Lamoille Conservation District's program by the same name started in 1999. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) program provides matching funds for the TFS program for planting buffers with widths 35 feet or greater. The Partners program began in 1990 and assists cooperating landowners to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat on their property. Staff from the WNRCD and the Partners program visit landowners interested in establishing a stream buffer to determine feasibility and longevity of potential projects. Landowners who participate in the TFS program contribute a small portion of the planting cost and commit to long-term stewardship of the buffers once planted. This includes agreeing to maintain the buffer for a minimum of 10 years, and allowing the replanted area to return to a more natural condition.

The WNRCD is always looking for landowners interested in installing riparian buffers on their property. If you are a landowner interested in obtaining more information about the TFS program, setting up a site visit, or hearing about other active soil and water conservation programs throughout the area, please call WNRCD at (802) 288-8155 Ext 104, or email info@winooskinrcd.org or visit our website at: www.winooskinrcd.org.

The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District is one of 14 conservation districts throughout Vermont. It encompasses all of Chittenden and Washington County as well as parts of Orange County (Orange, Williamstown and Washington). The district relies on grants and individual donations to complete its conservation work. The WNRCD focuses its resources on completing conservation projects within the areas of agricultural assistance, forestland enhancement, urban conservation and watershed stewardship. For more information on Conservation initiatives within the District, please visit: www.winooskinrcd.org