

Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District

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PMNRCD provides educational outreach, technical assistance, and financial support to communities and landowners to protect healthy soil and clean water and preserve the ecological integrity and economic vitality of communities. The District brings together the efforts of citizens and organizations that share the common goals of conserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of the watershed.

PMNRCD conducts assessments of local natural resources, provides coordination between landowners and other conservation partners, and implements projects that address local natural resource concerns. We provide watershed-based environmental science education to local elementary and secondary schools and outreach to landowners and towns about practices that protect and enhance local natural resources including water, soil, air, and ecological communities.

This project was funded by an agreement awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission in partnership with the Lake Champlain Basin Program. NEIWPCC manages LCBP's personnel, contract, grant, and budget tasks and provides input on the program's activities through a partnership with the LCBP Steering Committee. Although the information in this document has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under agreement LC96187501 to NEIWPCC, it has not undergone the Agency's publications review process and therefore, may not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency and no official endorsement should be inferred. The viewpoints expressed here do not necessarily represent those of NEIWPCC, the LCBP Steering Committee, or U.S. EPA, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or causes constitute endorsement or recommendation for use. The provisions of this Clause shall survive the expiration or earlier termination of this Agreement.



For more information or to set up a visit contact PMNRCD at info@pmnrcd.org or 802-287-8339. www.pmnrcd.org

The Poultney Mettowee watershed encompasses an area of 373 square miles in fourteen towns within portions of Addison, Rutland and Bennington counties. The Poultney River originates in the town of Tinmouth and flows northwesterly into New York State. The Mettowee River originates in the town of Dorset and also flows northwesterly into New York State. Both rivers enter the New York Barge Canal near Whitehall, NY.



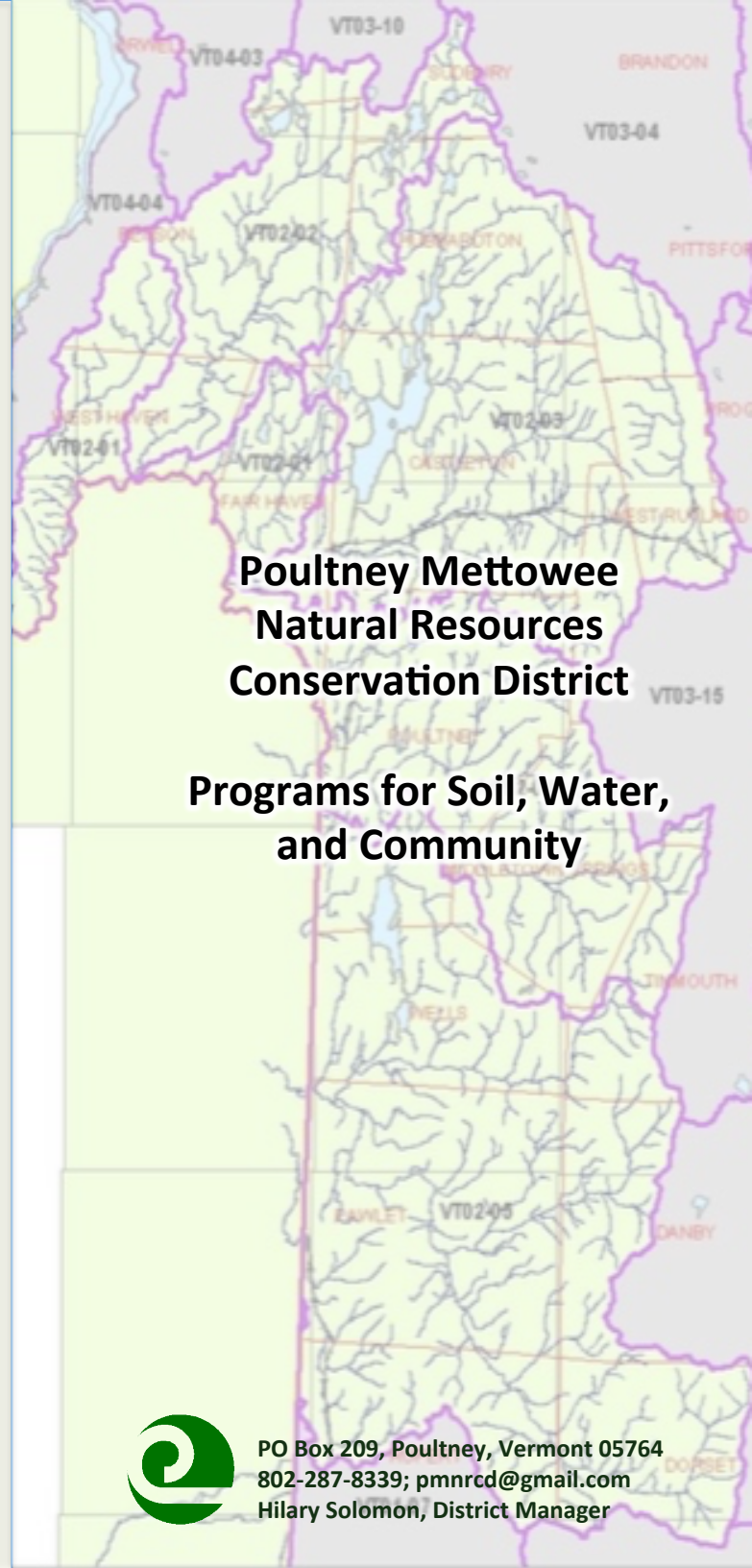
Rivers, field, forest, pasture and village together give the Poultney Mettowee watershed its charming character and provide communities within the watershed an economic base. Only a small percentage of the basin has been developed into roads, homes and businesses. Agriculture has been an active force in the valley for over 200 years and forms much of the watershed's cultural identity. Forested land provides recreation, timber harvesting, as well as a myriad of outstanding wildlife habitats and significant natural communities. The watershed drains some of the most productive uplands and riparian lands in the state.



The Poultney and Mettowee Rivers, their tributaries, and associated lakes, ponds, and wetlands support aquatic life and habitat and provide recreational opportunities through its fishery, swimming holes, boating, and aesthetics. In addition, the surface waters provide drinking water and irrigation supplies. Overall, PMNRCD envisions this watershed as a diverse and sustainable land-based economy with a resilient and ecologically-functioning natural landscape joined by soil, water and community.

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PROGRAMS FOR SOIL, WATER, AND COMMUNITY

ASSESSMENT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Agronomy and Conservation Assistance Program

Through ACAP, the District provides support to animal operations within the Lake Champlain Basin. Staff is available to visit area farms, discuss required agricultural practices, identify/discuss potential water quality issues, assist in finding funding solutions, and provide technical support for implementing new practices. District staff are non-regulatory and provide information about techniques and equipment available to improve water quality and soil health.

Water Quality Improvement Program

The District writes Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) Grants to the Agency of Natural Resources to assist farmers with water quality improvement practices. These practices include: livestock exclusion fencing, alternative watering facilities, roof gutters and other clean water diversions, and stream crossing improvements. Other practices may be available on a case-by-case basis.

Nutrient Management Planning

In partnership with USDA/NRCS, and through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, the District assists farms with nutrient management plan development. Included are soil and manure sampling, farm maps and data sheets, a nutrient management class, first year membership to UVM's GoCrop/GoGraze web-based application, and three years of follow-up support.

Tree Planting for Soil Health and Crop Diversity

The District has received funds to plant trees over the next five years. These trees can be located in riparian buffer zones or elsewhere and may include native trees and shrubs, nuts, and fruit trees. We are currently visiting interested landowners to discuss this program and how trees can improve soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on your land.

Portable Skidder Bridge Program

The District built a heavy-duty portable skidder bridge that may be rented for use on local logging jobs. The bridges help protect streams from mud and streambank disturbance as logs are skidded through the woods.

Water Quality Monitoring

The District monitors over 40 sites in the watershed for Phosphorus and Bacteria concentrations. This information is used to identify and prioritize sites for remediation projects.

South Lake Champlain Monitoring

At the request of local landowners, the District collects samples at the mouths of the Poultney and Mettowee Rivers and at several locations in South Lake Champlain to measure phosphorus levels in the water.

Landscape Assessments

The District analyzes the topography, soils, forest quality, and natural community types in the watershed to determine areas that are phosphorus sources and areas that are phosphorus sinks. The analysis helps in outreach efforts with landowners who manage their lands for timber.

Aquatic Organism Passage

Through Landscape Restoration Partnerships with the US Forest Service, NRCS, Trout Unlimited, and the town of Dorset, PMNRCD is participating in the removal of multiple barriers to fish passage in the Mettowee River headwaters.

PMNRCD ranks culverts in the watershed for replacement based on their potential for increasing local flood risks and their lack of ability to pass fish and other aquatic organisms.

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND IMPLEMENTATION

Flood Resiliency

PMNRCD and various South Lake Champlain partners work with towns within subwatershed boundaries to identify and build community support for flood resiliency planning and implementation projects. The project involves many public outreach events, educational programming around flood resiliency, and projects to improve flood preparedness.

Stormwater Project Identification

Through the Stormwater Master Planning process and in conjunction with local towns and partners, the District identifies and prioritizes stormwater infiltration and flood resiliency projects which reduce sources of sediment draining to local steams and waterbodies.

Stormwater Project Implementation

A recently-completed stormwater planning project helped identify twelve stormwater mitigation projects in the Village of Pawlet and three road drainage projects in Danby. Both towns are moving ahead with the projects and participating in additional flood resiliency project planning in conjunction with neighboring towns.

A similar project was recently completed in the Lake Bomoseen Watershed and is underway in the Castleton River Headwaters.

Ecosystems Exposition

The District has held the Eco Expo for over twenty years, inviting local fifth and sixth graders from within the watershed to a day of workshops and field work showcasing our local environment. The Expo focuses on watershed science and helps the students identify both resources and threats on our local landscape, focusing on solutions that they can implement in their own homes or backyards.

Watershed Alliance

Watershed Alliance South is run in partnership with Lake Champlain SeaGrant at UVM. The District works with 4-6 schools per year, spending several days with each in a local stream measuring the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the stream and determining its overall health. Interns from the Environmental Education program at GMC participate.

Lake Education and Action Program

Under Direction of the District, high school and college interns work with shoreline property owners to identify water quality threats and implement mitigation projects, such as shoreline plantings and rain gardens. Students distribute information about current water quality issues and supporting programs and participate in dialogue with local lakeside landowners.

Water and Art Summer Camp

New in 2016, the District hosted a water science and art summer camp at the South Lake Education Center. Students learn about aquatic wildlife, watershed science, and employ their creative powers to turn science into art.

Nature Trail

The District, with help from many partners, restored the Educational Loop of the Poultney Education Trail and has provided associated curriculum to local schools to encourage its use.

