



FRIENDS OF THE

*Winooski*

**Working to  
restore and protect  
the river that  
supports us**

FRIENDS OF THE

*Winooski*

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## Why you need the Winooski River!

Chances are if you live in or near the Winooski River watershed, you have enjoyed time on or near the river or its tributaries—paddling, fishing, swimming or simply enjoying the scenery. The Winooski watershed has many special places that not only soothe our souls but fill practical needs in our lives—drinking water, transportation, irrigation and industry. The Winooski River is as diverse as it is large. It includes steep wooded valleys, rich agricultural land, ski resorts and Vermont's most urbanized areas along with many small towns and villages. To take care of ourselves, we need to take care of our rivers and watersheds.

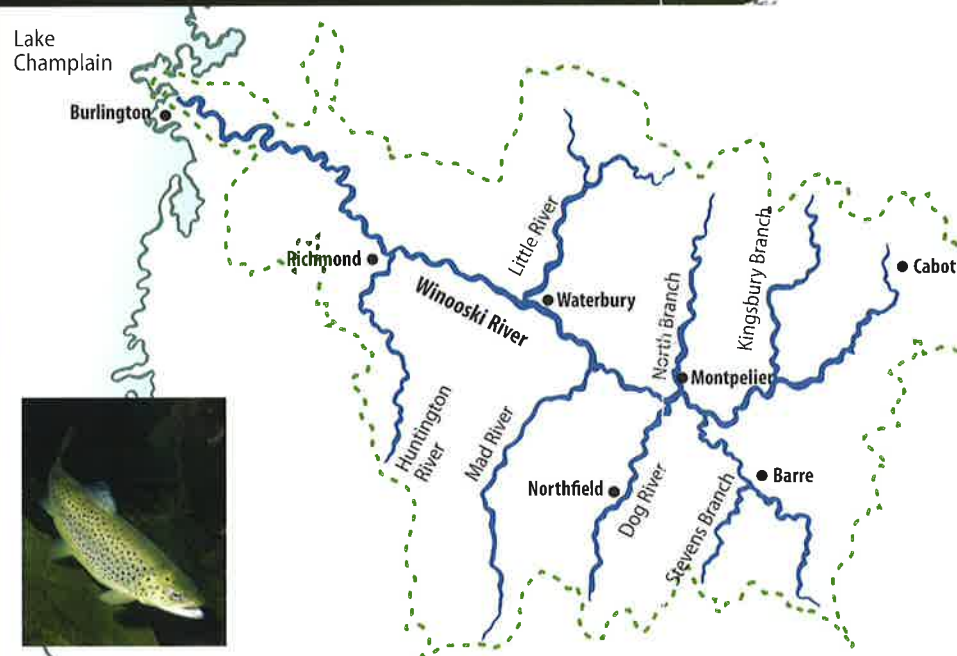
### Why the Winooski River needs you

Whenever we alter the landscape, we impact the health and habitat of the river. The clear vegetation along streams and on steep hillsides causes erosion and sedimentation. The hard surfaces of areas such as roofs, parking lots and roads generate runoff which has caused flooding and carries pollutants. We have also physically altered the Winooski and its tributaries by building dams and straightening river banks. All of this activity impacts water quality and animals that call the watershed home.

### What you can do

- Help plant trees, monitor water quality, participate in river clean ups and maintain rain gardens
- Write articles for our newsletter or website; submit photos or videos
- Become a member and support our work financially
- Join our email list or engage with us on Facebook

Lake Champlain



### What's special about the Winooski

- At 1080 square miles, it's the largest watershed in the Lake Champlain basin
- It is 12% of Vermont's total land area
- One in three Vermonters live in the Winooski watershed
- The main stem river stretches 90 miles from Coits Pond in Caledonia County to Lake Champlain

# Our Work in the Winooski Watershed

From managing stormwater runoff to restoring streamside vegetation, the Friends of the Winooski River are helping to keep the river healthy.

**Protection:** The Winooski watershed has experienced the effects of land development, deforestation, and agriculture. The loss of streamside buffers causes sedimentation; increased erosion; damage to stream banks; and degrades water quality and aquatic organisms. Each year we work with volunteers to plant between 100 and 200 trees and shrubs to improve stream banks.



**River Protection:** Over the years, we have developed a number of river corridor plans. These plans describe the physical characteristics of the stream and riparian landscape and provide a holistic view of the watershed. They prioritize actions that can be taken to reduce our impacts on the river.



**Stormwater Management:** In a natural environment with trees, shrubs and tall grasses, water soaks into the ground. This natural process filters the water. In our built environment with hard surfaces such as parking lots, roads, roof tops and even lawns, water is collected and conveyed quickly to streams. Stormwater is a problem for two reasons. One is volume. Rapid runoff causes localized flooding and erodes and destabilizes stream channels. The other is that it carries pollutants to the streams such as phosphorus, bacteria, hydrocarbons and more.



We address the stormwater problem in many ways including construction of mitigation facilities including rain gardens as depicted in the photo above; working with towns to reduce runoff from dirt roads; and educational programs for homeowners.

**Fish Passage & Habitat:** Many culverts in Vermont are barriers to fish passage, causing fragmented habitat and isolated populations. These structures may damage habitat by causing erosion and sedimentation. We work with municipalities and private owners to replace or repair structures. We also work on dam removal to restore natural flow and to connect and improve habitat.



These two photos show the same culvert, before (top) and after, repair work. If you were a fish which would you prefer?

**Water Quality Monitoring:** The Friends monitor water quality and test the outflow from stormwater drains. Water quality monitoring educates the public about water quality issues and promotes stewardship of water resources. Monitoring also identifies specific problems, measures progress toward water quality improvements and shapes public policy.



Stormwater drainage systems are designed to collect and convey only precipitation and snow melt. However, contaminants may enter the system. We work with municipalities to identify and correct sources of pollution through their stormwater systems.

**Watershed Education:** We integrate education into our volunteer opportunities, particularly with students. We host workshops, give talks and provide information via our website, newsletter and local media.



**River Clean Up:** Rivers are a magnet for trash and debris that is not only unsightly and dangerous for recreation but can impact water quality and habitat. The Friends hold annual river clean-ups that remove scores of tires and other trash and metal from the river and its tributaries.



**River Access:** We want people to enjoy the beauty of the Winooski River and we believe that people will want to protect what they enjoy. For that reason, we work with volunteers and communities to improve river access.

