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## **PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN LAKE CHAMPLAIN CLEAN WATER IMPLEMENTATION MEETINGS**

MONTPELIER – Whether it’s a favorite swimming hole, an iconic stream running through town, or a fishing spot along the shores of Lake Champlain, thousands of people use the Winooski River Watershed’s lakes, ponds, wetlands, and streams. Every one of the watershed’s residents can also play a meaningful role protecting or cleaning up Winooski’s waterways.

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) invites residents with connections to Vermont’s waterways to attend public meetings to weigh in on water quality improvement projects and hear updates on the overall restoration plans.

“The Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan is an important tool in protecting this valued watershed,” said Charlie Baker, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission Executive Director. “We’re asking Vermonters from all corners of the Winooski watershed to join us in reviewing the draft plan. Their ideas and feedback will help guide our work over the next five years and, ultimately, reach our clean water goals.”

DEC and associated Regional Planning Commissions are hosting a series of public meetings to provide updates and gather feedback on the Draft Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan. The Winooski River Basin includes all of Washington County, a little less than half of Chittenden County and small parts of Lamoille and Orange Counties. The plan outlines a series of actions the State, towns, and local organizations will take to improve the Winooski River watershed. It also provides information about how landowners, organizations, and communities can access clean water funding and technical assistance.

“Using this plan as our guide, we’ll be able to protect and restore water quality throughout the entire Winooski watershed – from the lakes and ponds to the rivers and wetlands,” said Karen Bates, DEC watershed planner. “The Plan lets us get a pulse on

the current health of the Winooski River Basin and allows us to determine which actions will deliver the greatest return on our investments.”

One of the most important pieces of the plan are the Basin’s phosphorus reduction targets across landuse types over the next 20 years. At the upcoming public meetings, DEC staff will share targets as well as regulatory and non-regulatory actions to achieve them. This reduction will translate to fewer algal blooms in the Basin as well as Lake Champlain. The plan also addresses other high-priority stressors like channel erosion and invasive species such as Eurasian water milfoil.

These plans are the result of collaboration with local, State, federal and non-profit partners. Public meetings over the next two months will bring these and other key watershed partners together with members of the public to discuss clean water implementation plans. Meetings will take place in the evening at the following locations:

Winooski | October 2 at 6:00-7:30pm  
Williston Police Department Conference Room  
7928 Williston Road

Berlin | October 9th at 7:00-9:00 pm  
the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce Main Conference Room  
33 Stewart Rd.

Essex Junction | October 17<sup>th</sup> 5:00 -6:30 pm  
Agency of Natural Resources Regional Office  
Act 250 conference room in the Fish and Wildlife Building  
111 West Street

For those unable to participate in the meetings, more information on both plans can be found at <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/map/basin-planning/basin8>

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