

# Rethink Runoff and The Stream Team

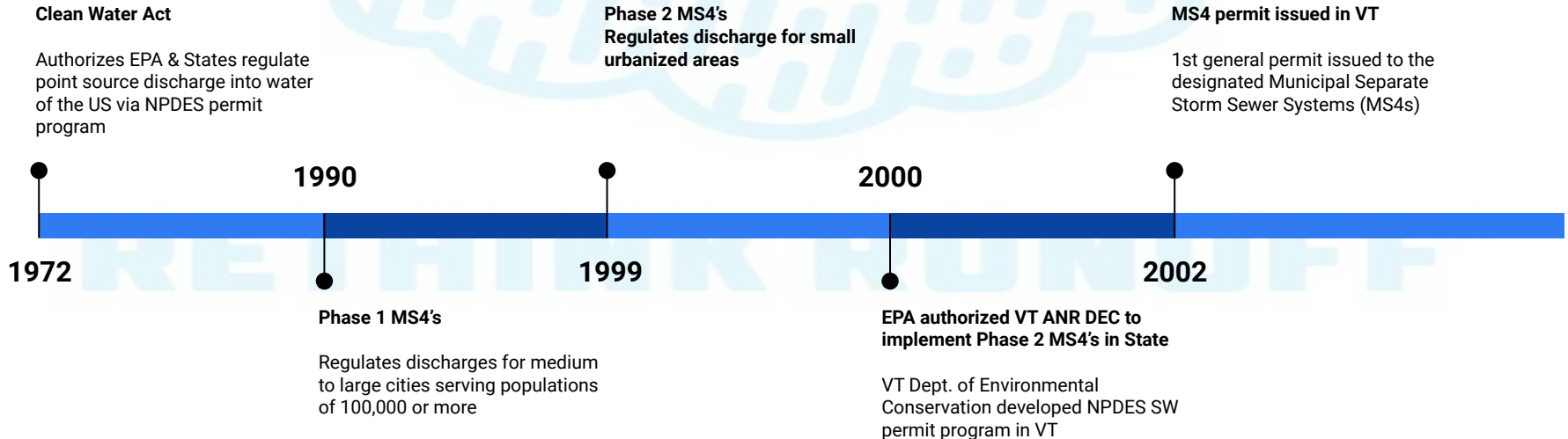
A regional stormwater education campaign to restore water  
quality in Lake Champlain

Presentation By:

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# Brief Background

- RSEP formed in 2003 to meet MM1 & CCST formed in 2011 to meet MM2 requirements of MS4 permit issued to Vermont Towns



# Regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems

## Nine Municipalities:

- Burlington
- Colchester
- Essex
- Essex Junction
- Milton
- Shelburne
- South Burlington
- Williston
- Winooski

## Three “Non-Traditional” MS4s

- Burlington International Airport
- University of Vermont
- Vermont Agency of Transportation

RETHINK RUNOFF

# Lake Champlain Basin



# Chittenden County



# Chittenden County Regional Stormwater Education Program (RSEP)

- Meets Minimum Measure #1- provide public education and outreach about the impacts of stormwater
- MS4s pooled their resources to develop a regional effort
- Contracted with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission as lead agency
- Developed Communications and Media Plans which were implemented through a combination of TV, radio, and online ads.



# Slow the Flow



## What you can do:

- Plant a rain garden
- Use a rain barrel
- Plant trees

Rain water from strong storms sheets over roofs and driveways, picking up debris along the way. Stormwater can pollute our streams and Lake Champlain. You can help slow the flow of stormwater and help keep our waterways clean.



Learn more about stormwater:  
[www.smartwaterways.org](http://www.smartwaterways.org)

A program of the Chittenden County  
Regional Stormwater Education Program

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# Chittenden County Stream Team

- Meets Minimum Measure #2 - public involvement and participation program
- Formed in 2011 as the hands-on event arm of the educational program.
- Utilize local events like Farmer's Markets to engage and connect with citizens.
- Work with municipal staff to develop projects like rain barrel workshops, stream clean ups, or riparian buffer plantings.







**Stream Monitoring**



**Adopt-a-Rain-Garden**



**Stream Clean-ups**



**Workshop & Events**



# Traveling Art Exhibits

Engagement activities that link stormwater runoff, water quality, and art

## **Connecting the Drops**

- Rain Barrel Art Exhibit with a kickoff event like a rain barrel workshop
- Partner with local artists to paint barrels
- KidsVT (branch of Seven Days) created story panels telling the tale of a stormwater drop, the effects of stormwater, and how to mitigate your impact.
- QR code included on the panels that directed residents to our website allowing them to sign up to win a painted rain barrel at a closing event

## **Storm Drain Murals**

- Call for submission to paint water quality murals on pavement or sidewalks surrounding selected municipally owned catch basins

# Connecting the Drops

Est. 2013 by Lake Champlain Sea Grant "Let it Rain" program

- RSEP was a sponsor
- 3 month exhibit with 19 Barrels, displaying 1 story panel/barrel
- Series of live music events and a final live auction event during South End Art Hop
- All remaining barrels were sold, raising \$2800 to offer financial and technical assistance to landowners installing GIS practices on their properties.





Based on its success, a traveling Rain Barrel Exhibit was created.

Partners:

- Local artists
- KidsVT
- Lake Champlain Sea Grant
- Various Sponsors

Number of People Reached:

- Over 600 people visited RSEP website from kickoff event
- 445 people reached following year events







# Storm Drain Mural Event

Goal - to raise awareness of the connectivity of storm drains to Lake Champlain.

Partnered with local artists to paint water quality murals on storm drains in high pedestrian trafficked areas.

Coordinated with volunteers who stenciled additional storm drains in areas throughout the community.

## Partners:

- Local Artists
- CampSTAR
- Village Parks & Rec Department
- Public Works Departments
- Shelburne Community School

## Number of People Reached:

- 216



# Storm Drain Mural Event



# Rebranding Rethink Runoff

April 2017 - RSEP and CCST launched as one

A collaborative program that both educates the public and gets them involved in hands-on activity.

Same message with new creative elements

Simplified messaging

- Linked messaging to Vermont's local culture, like incorporating Champ
- Created new mascot called Ms. Drop with Monthly Tips
- New website that acts as a one-stop shop - [www.rethinkrunoff.org](http://www.rethinkrunoff.org)



# Rethink Runoff Website



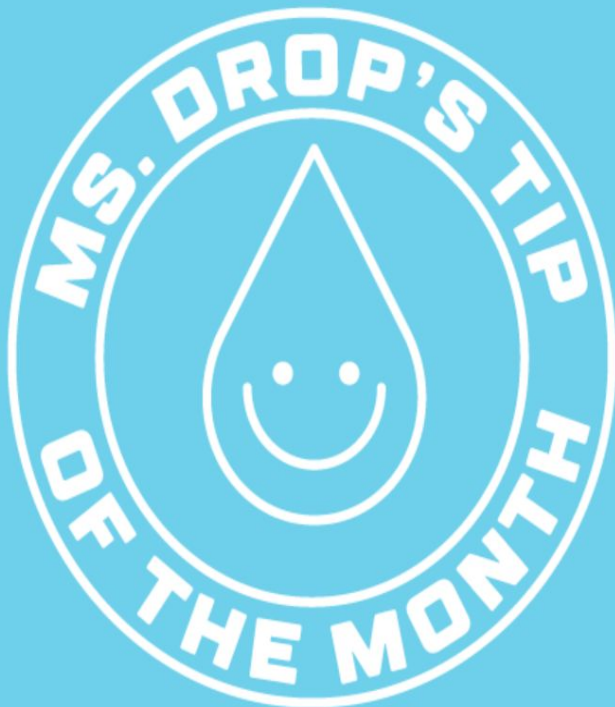
**RETHINK RUNOFF**

Explore & Learn

What Can You Do?

Get Involved

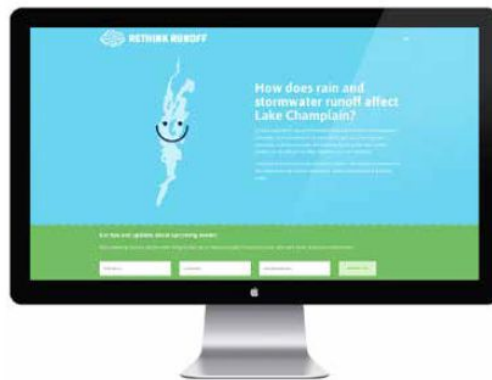
About



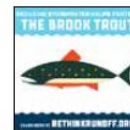
## Ms. Drop's Tip of the Month

Green Up Day is May 6. Help Vermont keep litter out of drainage ways and our rivers and streams. Join the state-wide event by registering here to take part!

[Learn more here!](#)



REVISED RACK CARDS



Rethink Runoff is a campaign that raises awareness and educates citizens across a nine-municipality area in Chittenden County, Vermont about stormwater runoff and its effects on streams, rivers and Lake Champlain.

RETHINKRUNOFF.ORG

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# Tracking Program Effectiveness

Rethink Runoff has tracked the effectiveness of its efforts through periodic phone or mail surveys every 5 years. The most recent survey was conducted in 2018.

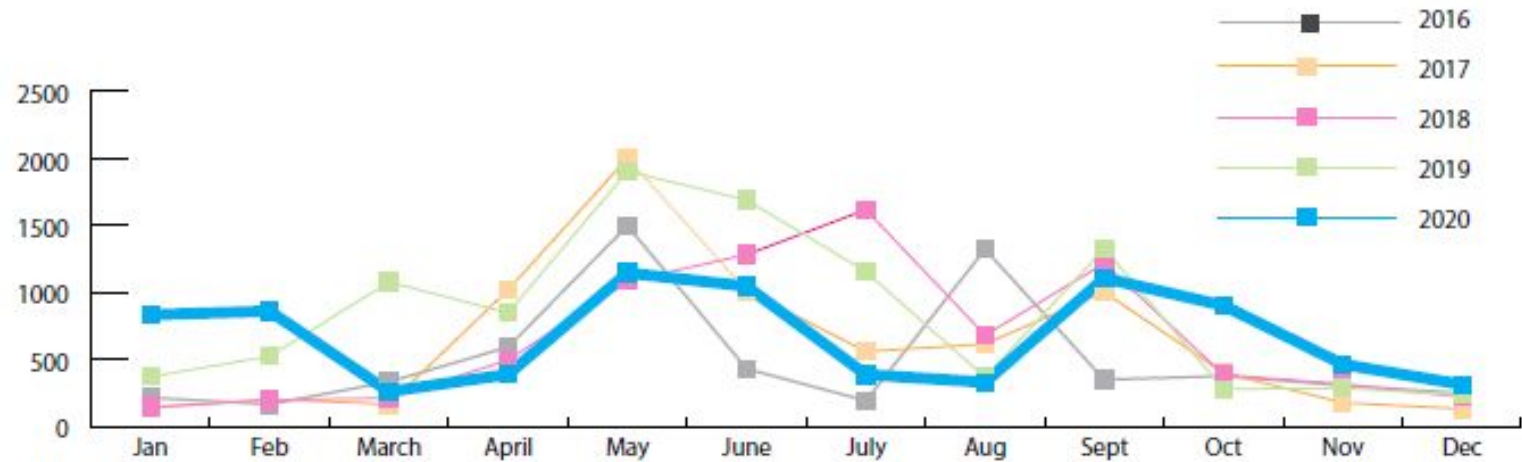
- 53% of those surveyed agreed that their personal actions affect the quality of Lake Champlain's water compared to 44% in 2013.
- 83% pick up pet waste compared to 62% in 2013.
- 21% use fertilizers on their lawn, down from 50% in 2013.

Rethink Runoff also tracks website visits as a measure of effectiveness.

- Number of visitors in 2012: 2,787
- Number of visitors in 2020: 8,908



# Website Visits from 2016-2020



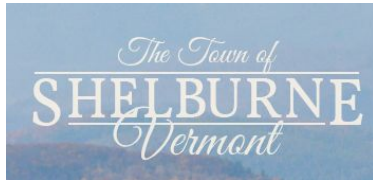
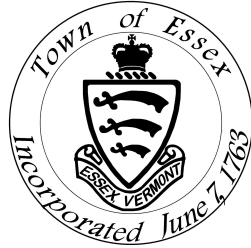
# Making an Impact During COVID-19 Pandemic

- Stream Team had to pivot and find new ways to engage with public
  - Rain Barrel Kits for pick-up and How to Build A Rain Barrel video on our website (Rethink Runoff branded)
  - Added “Book a Speaker” request to website
  - Stormwater and water quality related reading lists for libraries
  - Clean Water Challenge - online contest for month of July
  - Tree plantings along streams
  - Water Quality Volunteers became Stream Storytelling volunteers for chosen urban stream



*Figure 2: Participants in the Clean Water Challenge clear debris from storm drains in their neighborhood.*

# All of our Partners!



The University of Vermont



## **For more information visit:**

<https://rethinkrunoff.org/>

<https://rethinkrunoff.org/the-stream-team/>

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