



Friends of the Winooski River

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Dear Friend,

What makes us resilient and *able to recover quickly from difficult conditions*? The support of our community, strength of our relationships, and our ability to navigate uncertain situations, withstand turbulence, and continue to operate effectively.

Increasingly dramatic weather events are affecting our rivers and communities. Our resilience has been tested, and we have seen the devastating effects. Friends of the Winooski River is playing a critical role in supporting our communities' efforts to become more resilient as we must continue to navigate these challenging conditions.

We are working on effective projects in your neighborhood that will make us all stronger, and **we need your support**. Friends of the Winooski River is the only organization focused specifically on our watershed, looking at the problems we face across communities built along the Winooski River. Rivers and floods don't follow city limits or property lines, so we must look across the full watershed and collectively respond to our challenges.

Now, for the good news about your investment in our work. For each dollar donated in 2023, we brought in \$20 in grant funds. That's a 20-times match to every donation, meaning that if you give us \$100, we can turn it into \$2,000 toward solving some of our most urgent problems. That's a powerful impact that you can make.

Today, as we look ahead to 2025, there is a lot of work ahead! Friends of the Winooski River invites you to help protect the health of the Winooski River and our future!

Your contribution will have a major impact in restoring a clean, healthy, resilient Winooski River watershed. Private donations build the foundation we need to plant trees and shrubs, hire experts to design dam removal projects, and improve culverts in our communities.

Please donate today! Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at winooskiriver.org

Thank you for working with us toward a clean, healthy, resilient Winooski watershed!

Sincerely,

Jared Carpenter
President

Michele Braun
Executive Director

Core Focus on Restoration



Culverts & Dams

This year, we managed 7 projects in design phase that will open miles of streams for fish and other aquatic organisms who need cold, forested headwaters to thrive. These large, engineered projects also reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and roads.

The photos at right show a culvert where Lockwood Brook flows under German Flats Road in Fayston. We used grant funds to replace the old undersized pipe with a new open-bottom structure that is better for brook trout and ensures this important road stays open. More projects like this are in the works!



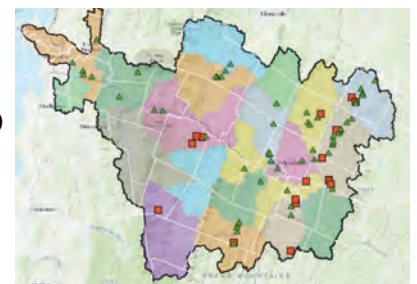
Tree Planting



We planted over 1,800 trees with volunteers from the Mad/Dog Chapter of Trout Unlimited, SunCommon, National Life Group, UVM Rubenstein School, Audubon Vermont, Vermont River Conservancy, and a Project Harmony student group from Myanmar!

Through a partnership with Audubon, we are adding best practices for enhancing bird habitat to our planting program.

NEW! All of our projects are shown on an interactive map on the home page of our website: winooskiriver.org



Outreach in Communities

Water Quality Monitoring

We continue to manage the largest water quality monitoring program in the state, keeping track of stream conditions at 36 sites across the headwaters, the capitol region, the Dog River, Stowe, and Waterbury. We appreciate the time and effort of our dedicated volunteers: we could not do this without them!



Home Consultations

We visited dozens of landowners across our watershed, providing free consultation and recommendations for managing their land and water. Our Storm Smart and Stream Wise programs help landowners effectively manage stormwater runoff and enhance their riparian buffers to improve water quality and promote a more resilient watershed.



Bringing Resources to Events

You could find us at events throughout the watershed this year, sharing our resources at Do Good Fest, Women Can Do, Northfield Night on the Common, and the Winooski Onion Fest, just to name a few. You can't miss it when we bring the stream table: an engaging educational tool to demonstrate river processes. When we all understand how rivers behave, we can learn to be better neighbors.



On the Water

River Cleanups

We hosted 4 successful river cleanups this year: in Montpelier, Huntington, Plainfield, and Barre. We were joined by numerous individual volunteers, plus groups from DEC's Clean Water Initiative Program, Dealer.com, Vermont River Conservancy, and the Barre River Access Task Force. From appliances and scrap metal to toys and tires, we removed several tons of flood debris and junk from our rivers.

Rivers for Everyone

FWR kicked off a new and exciting initiative in September, funded by VOREC, to develop a River Access Master Plan for Barre City. This project aims to make river recreation more accessible for *all* residents. We'll be bringing similar efforts to Northfield and Winooski in 2025.



Paddling



The rain didn't stop the Onion River Ramble and River of Light from returning for another summer of fun on the Winooski River. From Bolton to Richmond and Colchester to Lake Champlain, we enjoyed rambling down the Winooski!

Growing our Impact

A Stronger Team

We brought on new project managers Taylor Litwin and Sam Puddicombe (both at right) in January, and they hit the ground running. Our small but mighty team is the only group solely focused on the Winooski River Watershed. Our partners and community leaders look to us to bring the resources and expertise they need to achieve their goals for safer, healthier landscapes.



New Staff



Our 3 full-time professionals completed over 150 hours of training in 2024. This included Vermont DEC's Rivers and Roads program, a SeaGrant Stormwater BMPs program, Common Good Vermont's

Non-Profit Management Certificate, and North Branch Nature Center's BioU Woody Plants course with professional field botanists (above), and more.

New Space

We moved! Our bigger, brighter office space on the Vermont College of Fine Arts campus enables us to more readily host meetings, comfortably welcome interns, and easily access our resources. Drop by for a visit!

