



Friends of the Winooski River

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Sustainability Roadmap RFP for an Organizational Development Consultant

Questions & Answers

1. What factors are driving the timeline? Is the October 15 completion date firm?
 - a. The final report for the supporting grant is due December 31, 2026.
 - b. We have a little flexibility on the completion date, but recognizing how demanding November and December can be, we want to see the effort largely wrapped up before then.
2. Would you be open to a firm that would work remotely to accomplish the scope of services?
 - a. Entirely remote services would not be our preferred approach to the project. We are a small, community-based organization with a volunteer board of directors who would like to keep the process friendly and fun.
 - b. That said, our community extends from Cabot to Winooski, and our board meetings are often hybrid, so we do anticipate that, especially in the winter, this process will include both hybrid and fully remote meetings.
3. Would it be acceptable to schedule some or all of the stakeholder conversations virtually after an initial in-person kickoff with the staff?
 - a. See above; we would prefer to have more in-person time with the board, but we expect the process to include a mix of in-person, hybrid, and remote meetings. We are able to host hybrid meetings.
4. Is there an expected timeframe for the Sustainability Roadmap to cover (eg, 5 yrs)?
 - a. There is no set timeframe. We are interested in consultant recommendations as to what would be most effective format for our organization.
5. Are there previous strategic planning or capacity efforts in this organization to build from?
 - a. We have a document with the title Strategic Plan. It is neither strategic nor a plan. It is a list of activities that a watershed group might like to do. It had a five-year timeframe, indicated by the inclusion of “2018-2022” in the title, but without any subsequent reference to time.
 - b. We are working with Structural Integrity to improve our organizational policies and procedures, especially with regard to human resources and

financial management, and can provide SI's recommendations memoranda if those are relevant.

- c. We are working with an independent consultant on a development plan, and we'll plan to coordinate that effort with this one as appropriate.
6. Are there any report requirements or specifications dictated from your funding sources?
 - a. In the RFP, there is an outline of Tasks, and each Task's description includes an indication of that Task's deliverable(s). These are the same deliverables required for the supporting grant, and they are described exactly so in the grant agreement. Any further details regarding the nature/content/format, etc, of the deliverables are negotiable. All administrative grant reporting will be FWR's responsibility.
7. What internal capacity is available to support the consultant's work?
 - a. We have 62 hours of staff time to work with the consultant on this effort.
8. Will FWR staff handle recruitment, scheduling, notetaking, outreach, etc., or is that expected of the consultant?
 - a. FWR staff can work with the consultant on planning and scheduling of board engagement, and will facilitate connections with external stakeholders. Since staff would not expect to participate in engagement with external stakeholders, that would seem like an entirely consultant-managed process, once initial connections are made, if needed. Staff would like to participate in most internal engagement in such a way that we are focused on representing our perspectives, not needing to facilitate or take notes.
9. Are the funds in-hand with Friends of the Winooski or the Lake Champlain Basin Program? How would you assess the risk of this project being defunded?
 - a. Funds from EPA have been awarded to Friends of the Winooski River by the Lake Champlain Basin Program of NEIWPC, and we have a contract in place with NEIWPC. As with all NEIWPC grant agreements, it is cost reimbursable, meaning the grantee must complete Tasks and present Deliverables in order to be reimbursed for expenses incurred.
 - b. It is not possible to assess the risk of defunding. This grant, along with all of our LCBP grants, was frozen briefly in February 2025. We have been assured, repeatedly, that EPA's LCBP funds have been screened and cleared, and that LCBP grants are as secure as any contract can be. LCBP has told us that they have continued to have full access to all of their federal funding streams and are proceeding with normal operations.
10. Has the Friends of the Winooski River conducted public outreach efforts of this scale in the past?

- a. We are not sure what is meant by “this scale” as no metrics were included in the RFP, and the scale is undetermined.
11. What are the organization's current sustainability goals?
- a. No goals have been established
12. For Task 6, is the organization open to online or mail-in surveys as a method of public engagement, or is the preference for in-person engagement?
- a. We expect this question to be answered in consultation, and will rely on the consultants’ recommendations as to what might best help us achieve our goals within time and budget constraints.
13. Approximately how many internal and external stakeholders does the organization expect to engage during the outreach process?
- a. Internal: [we have five board members and three staff members](#)
 - b. External: see #12, above
14. Has the organization facilitated public engagement efforts previously? If so, how many public responses were typically received?
- a. We distribute an e-newsletter to about 1600 people, and have a similar number of followers of our social media accounts. We have not asked for their input in the way we envision doing as part of this effort. We promote numerous public events each year, with varying levels of turnout.
15. How much time does the organization anticipate allocating for each workshop?
- a. See #12 above
16. Will the organization require any audio/visual support during the workshops?
- a. We are not sure what A/V support could be required. We do have equipment to support hybrid meetings (large monitor and meeting owl).
17. How many staff or board members does the organization expect to attend each workshop?
- a. We have five board members and three staff members, and will aim for full attendance
18. Will the same participants attend each workshop, or will attendance vary between sessions?
- a. See above

Friends of the Winooski River

Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Introduction

The Winooski watershed is the largest in Vermont and the largest tributary to Lake Champlain. It begins at Coits Pond in Cabot and flows 90 miles to Lake Champlain at Colchester, VT. The watershed drains approximately 1,080 square miles, encompassing nearly all of Washington County, 35 percent of Chittenden County, and portions of Lamoille and Orange counties. It is represented in more than 30 towns. The major tributaries to the main stem are: Dog, Huntington, Little, and Mad rivers; Kingsbury, North, and Stevens branches; and Alder, Allen, Mill, and Muddy brooks.

Founded in 1998, the vision of the Friends of the Winooski River is:

The natural resources of the Winooski River watershed are enhanced and safeguarded, and function in harmony with the human communities in this region.

The Friends is dedicated to the protection and restoration of the watershed. Goals include reducing pollution, improving habitats, increasing river stability, and encouraging sustainable enjoyment of the river. The strategic plan for the years 2018-2022 has three overarching goals.

- A. Create a community of stewards working to improve watershed health.
- B. Reduce pollution, improve habitat, and increase river stability.
- C. Encourage sustainable enjoyment of the river.

These broad goals guide the Friends' work. However, many important matters such as priorities, timing, and resources are subject to changing circumstances and cannot be determined in the plan itself. Please refer to operations plans for more detail.

Goal A. Create a community of stewards working to improve watershed health.

Objectives and strategies

1A. Increase the public's connection to the watershed through participatory events

- Offer a variety of events throughout the year for people to engage with the river and its tributaries
- Include an educational message in conjunction with all volunteer and other participatory events

- Strive to have events self-fund
- Organize and/or support clean-up events along the mainstem
- Offer field programs and events at schools and/or with teachers to establish a network of water-smart schools

2A. Improve information and distribution of information

- Provide general information about the ecology and health, as well as the natural history, of the Winooski watershed with emphasis on human impacts on the watershed
- Provide local information about flood resiliency and water resource protection
- Expand access to scientific, technical, and policy resources
- Create a website resource page with links to watershed studies, assessments, and reports
- Maintain an inventory of landowner assistance resources for watershed protection
- Provide information via website and e-newsletters on new and pending legislative and regulatory changes

3A. Educate state and local officials and community leaders about policies and practices that will protect and restore the watershed

- Develop and maintain contact with local officials
- Improve town level information and tools with respect to flood resiliency
- Speak at civic organizations' meetings on a regular basis
- Identify opportunities to have a presence at the Statehouse during the legislative session

4A. Broaden recognition of the work of the Friends

- Use multiple media outlets and community networks to publicize Friends' projects and programs
- Network and forge partnerships with state and federal agencies, municipalities, and other organizations, especially those representing subwatersheds of the basin
- Provide board members and other volunteers with enough information to ensure confidence when speaking with local officials, community leaders, and civic organizations
- Keep public affairs policies and procedures up to date, including the policy governing the Friends' advocacy role

5A. Increase membership in the organization

- Keep up to date a brochure that tells about the group, the watershed, and how people can support the Friends
- Create a recognition program for volunteer groups and individuals
- Maintain a presence at community events or other organizations' events throughout the watershed
- Make available watershed promoting- merchandise such as t-shirts and hats

Goal B. Reduce pollution, improve habitat, and increase river stability.

Objectives and strategies

1B. Minimize erosion and provide shade by restoring streambank and streamside (riparian) vegetation

- Use existing conservation plans for the basin, corridor, stormwater, and towns to guide selection of high priority sites for planting projects
- Restore riparian vegetation at high priority sites throughout the watershed
- Implement best methods of planting
- Provide demonstration areas in coordination with educational efforts

2B. Minimize runoff and resulting erosion through stormwater management efforts

- Support road erosion mapping projects throughout the watershed
- Use town stormwater maps/plans and road erosion maps to identify high priority projects
- Identify and implement stormwater controls in coordination with municipal public works departments
- Continue outfall monitoring by contributing to or conducting evaluations in select towns
- Provide demonstration sites, such as rain gardens and barrels, in coordination with educational efforts

3B. Identify, monitor, and treat problem areas using water quality monitoring projects

- Coordinate volunteer efforts in the lower Winooski (through the Chittenden County Stream Team), the Four Rivers area (Stevens-Dog-North-Winooski), and the headwaters
- Identify pollutant sources where possible
- Expand and/or re-direct volunteer monitoring programs to problem areas
- Report data, including trends, to the public as a land use and educational tool
- Develop program to work with schools using loaner water quality equipment

4B. Promote wildlife by improving instream habitat and stream geomorphic structure

- Develop and implement projects to improve passage of fish and other aquatic organisms at high priority stream crossings, including replacement of undersized culverts
- Maintain and expand contact with dam owners and pursue removal when possible

Goal C. Encourage sustainable enjoyment of the river.

Objectives and strategies

1C. Improve and steward river access sites to facilitate paddling, fishing, and other activities

- Facilitate work by volunteers, conservation crews, and community partners to complete access and portage trail improvements guided by priorities identified in our Winooski

River Watershed Public Access Inventory and Assessment (2012) and summarized in Appendix D

- Improve signage and educational messages at access sites where needed
- Explore opportunities to establish primitive campsites to facilitate multi-day trips
- Recruit volunteer site stewards to ensure adequate upkeep of sites improved by the Friends

2C. Provide recreation guides for the Winooski

- Expand distribution of the Winooski Watershed Map and Guide
- Work with students to develop an interactive, online map of recreational access sites

Appendix A: Friends of the Winooski River staff

Michele Braun, Executive Director

Shawn White, Program Manager

Appendix B: Friends of the Winooski River board members and officers

Appendix C: Annual Budget

Appendix D: Potential Access Projects on the Winooski River Main Stem

- **Plainfield Access:** *Improve wayfinding signage for visitors behind school,*
- **Twinfield Access:** *Work with students to create interpretive signage for the kiosk installed at the access site.*
- **Hidden Dam Access, East Montpelier.** *Partner with VT FW and Cross VT Trail to establish a formal access on this under-utilized public property,*
- **Waterbury Rec Fields Access:** *Work with the town to create a formal access at the recreation fields.*
- **Bolton Dam Take Out:** *Work with Green Mountain Power (GMP) to identify an appropriate take-out site above the Bolton Dam,*
- **Bolton Falls** *Advocate for improvements to the Bolton Falls portage as part of the relicensing process.*
- **Volunteer Green Access, Richmond** *Stabilize eroding access path.*

Appendix E: Strategies for organizational structure and effectiveness

Structure of the organization

- Keep updated the governance and codifying policies and procedures, including by-laws and board participation requirements
- Maintain a board education program
- Broaden board recruitment and diversity
- Review and update personnel policies and processes as needed

Financial security and diverse funding sources

- Execute a comprehensive strategy for fundraising efforts
- Pursue unrestricted funding sources and grants from high probability private foundations
- Develop project-based donation campaigns
- Expand business partnerships to develop initiatives similar to the Winooski Headwaters Community Partnership
- Develop fundraising events and merchandise
- Maintain updated procurement (services and materials) and related practices
- Maintain financial policies, processes, and reporting