



Friends of the Winooski River

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Dear Friend,

How many people does it take to care for, protect, and restore nature throughout a watershed area of more than 1,000 square miles? Nearly five hundred this year.

The Friends who laid the critical foundation for this year's work were our 165 donors in 2021. Next came the tree planting crew: 220 volunteers planted 3,140 trees and shrubs. It took 15 more volunteers to manage the Onion River Race & Ramble. Our ECO AmeriCorps member, Bethany Smith, coordinated 23 volunteers in 8 towns to collect water samples all summer. In September, dozens of Montpelier and Barre residents turned out to pull junk from the rivers.



Photo credit: Hannah Towne, Barre Rivers, monitoring

"There's something uniquely satisfying about working together with your friends and neighbors to dislodge a tire from the mud." – Montpelier Clean-up Volunteer

We are **grateful** to the hundreds of Friends who are involved in our work, and we are **proud** to offer these opportunities for people who care about the watershed to get involved.

Today, as we look ahead to 2023, there is a lot of work for us to do! Friends of the Winooski can't do this work - to protect the health of the Winooski River - without you!

Your contribution will make a difference in restoring a clean, healthy, resilient Winooski River watershed. Specifically, in 2023, we hope to **hire another staff person**, so that we can do more projects: remove more dams that block fish passage, plant more trees, sample more locations, and engage more volunteers. **To realize this goal**, we need your support more than ever: private donations are the only unrestricted funds we have to support our operations.

Please donate today! Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at <https://winooskiriver.org/>

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

Sincerely,

Jared Carpenter
President

Michele Braun
Executive Director



Learn

FWR keeps up to date on priority challenges and strategies, so that we can be a resource for watershed residents, businesses, and municipalities. We had enough interest this year to expand our water quality monitoring program to **eight towns**: Barre, Cabot, Marshfield, Montpelier, Northfield, Plainfield, Stowe, and Waterbury. Our ECO AmeriCorps member, Bethany Smith, did a beautiful job supporting and coordinating **23 volunteers** who collected water samples on ten dates through the summer to learn about the levels of phosphorus, chloride, and *E. coli*.



*We continued to support **North Branch Nature Center's** project to connect more closely with the river. This summer's program included a series of naturalist-guided river walks and a self-guided tour this year.*



*FWR was the Vermont host organization for the pilot year of the new **Stream Wise** program developed by Lake Champlain Basin Program to **provide resources for landowners adjacent to streams and rivers** in Vermont, New York, and Quebec so they can learn how best to protect and restore stream health.*

*We visited five properties, and determined that three of them were eligible for a Stream Wise Award. Landowners were provided with a report, recommendations, and resources for maintaining and improving the quality and health of their stream side land. **Contact us now** if you would like a Stream Wise assessment in 2023.*



*The **Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan**, which helps to establish the priorities and guide the work for everyone in the watershed who hopes to improve water quality and ecological health, is being updated. Please keep an eye out for opportunities to provide input to this process throughout 2023.*



Restore

FWR works on public and private land to solve erosion problems, design and install green stormwater solutions, and improve fish passage. In 2022, we planted **3,140 trees** with the help of **220 volunteers!** That adds up to another **7 acres** that will not be mowed, and that will provide better habitat and reduce stormwater erosion and pollution of streams in our watershed.

*SunCommon employees (right) were once again a large part of the volunteer work force planting trees this spring. This is a small field that was no longer needed for crops, and will now be restored to a natural forest to protect the North Branch River as it flows through Worcester. We also had help from **Vermont Land Trust** staff, **Unitarian Church of Montpelier**, **North Branch Nature Center** staff, **ECO AmeriCorps** members, **South Burlington High School** students and teachers, and individual volunteers.*



Photo by Patrick McCormack, SunCommon



*We enjoyed watching the sequential sediment traps in Montpelier's **Hubbard Park** in action. The rain running off of the steep gravel roads in the park will no longer carry sediment into the frog pond. Instead, the sediment is trapped in the series of basins along the park road. This project will help keep the **North Branch River** cleaner. That's right: the frog pond overflow runs underground through the storm sewer system into the North Branch.*



We began the long process of dam removal at three sites on the Stevens Branch in Barre Town and City. Stone Environmental, Inc., is completing the preliminary design work right now, and we expect to work toward final design through 2023. If we succeed in removing these dams, it will reconnect several miles of trout habitat in the Stevens and Jail Branches, as well as improving water quality throughout the run.

*FWR receives **state, federal, and private grants** to work on these big construction projects that make a big difference in the health of the watershed. **Your donations build the foundation we need to operate, and enable us to secure the substantial funding required for high-impact projects.***



Paddle

FWR believes that people who enjoy the river will take care of it, so we sponsor responsible river recreation events, improve public access points, and provide opportunities for watershed residents to clean up their local rivers.

Onion River Race & Ramble returned in 2022 after two pandemic cancellations. We had support from **15 volunteers** to make the event run smoothly for the nearly 50 paddlers who participated.



Public Access Site Stewardship

More **volunteers are needed** to make monthly visits to our restoration sites that are accessible to the public. We want to take care of these areas to ensure they are healthy and safe for the long term.

Volunteers check on the condition of any foot paths, stairs to the river, signage, and sapling trees. Our Martin's Bridge volunteers sent us this photo (right) of people enjoying the access area.



Photo by Ellen Keene.

River Cleanups

Residents of Montpelier (above) have been participating in an annual river cleanup for more than 20 years. This year, **18 volunteers** in Barre turned out for their second annual River Cleanup (below).



Follow us on social media to keep up with the latest news!

