

Hi Friends,

It feels like spring is finally here, with all the beauty of new life and the yard and garden work that go with it!

Heather has gotten off to a running start by setting up this summer's volunteer water quality monitoring, and the first samples were collected last week. We have volunteers in Stowe, Waterbury, Montpelier, Barre, the Dog River area and the Headwaters area, and there are a thousand details to coordinate for a successful season.

Shawn also has her hands full, with both riparian (stream-side) and upland (not stream-side) planting sites this year. By the end of this week, we'll have planted 2,230 young shrubs and trees to improve habitat, water quality, and flood resilience in Stowe, Waterbury, Montpelier, East Montpelier, and Cabot.



Michele is managing two projects in construction this year. The Barre Town Public Works Garage stormwater retrofit project started last week, and is going smoothly. The replacement of the culvert where German Flats Road crosses Lockwood Brook should break ground later this summer, but needs additional archaeological assessment.

We are now scheduling Storm Smart assessments, getting geared up to start Stream Wise assessments later in June, and continuing to move restoration projects through their design phases. We have sewer separation, culvert replacement, dam removal, and stormwater treatment projects underway throughout the watershed.

Read on to learn more about Vermont's bees, Storm Smart assessments, and notice that today (May 22) is the last date for early bird pricing on the Onion River Race & Ramble.

Enjoy the sun & the green green landscape of our watershed

Michele

Let's Talk about World Bee Day!

Saturday, May 20, was World Bee Day, and we noticed a lot of information sharing about honeybees. Did you know that Vermont has *hundreds* of different kinds of **WILD** bees? More than 50 of our native bee species are in trouble, and need our help in restoring habitats. A great resource for learning about our wild bees is Vermont Center for Ecostudies, which recently completed a survey of our bee populations. Check it out here:

<https://stateofbees.vtatlsoflife.org/>

What does a river group have to do with bees? One of the many benefits of the native trees and shrubs that we plant is that native plants support native bees (& other pollinators, too). The plants and insects in our region evolved together over millenia, and some of their relationships are super specialized. A healthy ecosystem needs a healthy roster of diverse native life. Learn more about these special plant & pollinator relationships here:

<https://val.vtecostudies.org/projects/vtbees/specialists/>

Would you like to help with the health of our wild bees? If you have a place to plant, plant native flowers, shrubs, trees. We have resources to help with finding plants. Please do not purchase bees that are not Vermont bees. Learn more about the recent trend of bees for sale here:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/apiary-program-blog/spring-feed-bees-dont-buy-them>

What about keeping honeybees? Doesn't that help bees? Honeybees are what most of us think of when we think of bees, and they are important for agricultural pollination, but they are a European insect imported for agricultural purposes. We have heard an analogy that keeping honeybees because you want to help pollinators is like keeping chickens because you want to help birds. Learn more about the concerns with honeybees here:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-problem-with-honey-bees/>

While you're outside today, stop and notice who is visiting the flowers in your yard or your park or your community. You may be amazed at the many different types of bees to be seen if you pause and look more closely.



Are You Storm Smart?

Sign up today for a Free assessment of your home and yard. We'll look at things like rain gutters, drainages, and driveways, and we'll send you a report with recommendations.

Reply to this email, or write us at info@winooskiriver.org, and we'll reach out to schedule a convenient time to visit your home.

Register today for the 2023 Onion River Race & Ramble!

ONION RIVER RACE & RAMBLE



Join us on the Winooski on Sunday, June 4, bright & early! The Onion River Race and Ramble is a 10.5-mile paddle from just below the Bolton dam to Richmond's town green. The Race and Ramble is for serious racers as well as paddlers looking for a fun time on the water. Check out the [class descriptions](#) here. Following the paddle, participants can enjoy lunch together.

Please note: After a few mishaps last year, we want to better describe the skill level for this event. There is a section of Class II rapids running through rocks in the railroad trestle at the start, and then ten miles of unmonitored river with a strong current and potential hazards like downed trees and boulders in some channels. [Click here for a map showing some of the trickier spots.](#)

We do scout the course prior to the start, and we have safety boaters on the course to assist paddlers who get into trouble at the trestle, but we ask that you please consider whether your level of experience and ability to maneuver your boat in strong currents with significant obstacles is a fit for this course. For experienced and skilled paddlers, this is a fun event that should not be overly challenging, but it is not the right event for folks still learning how to handle their boats.

Info re 2023 Shuttling

1. Please drop off your boat(s) and check-in for the Race at the starting line, Bolton Falls Dam, Bolton, VT.
2. One team member will then drive to Richmond to park your vehicle. Parking is located in Richmond at the Richmond Town Hall lot.
3. IF YOU LEAVE YOUR CAR AT BOLTON DAM, YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING BACK TO YOUR CAR AFTER THE RACE.
4. If you can organize with friends to shuttle each other, that will help reduce pressure on our shuttle. Priority for the shuttle will be given to paddlers who register by May 28th. Some paddlers will need to self-shuttle; please arrive early to allow enough time: the distance between points is 11 miles.

Please read all of the event information below before registering.

- [2023 Schedule](#)
- [2023 Rules and Cancellation Policy](#)

- [2023 Maps and Directions](#)
- [2023 Waiver Form](#) -- *Note that online registration does not include an online liability waiver this year; participants will sign paper waivers on the day of the event. Please read the waiver before registering.*

2023 Registration fees

\$35 per person (\$15 for youth) if you register by May 22nd

Paddlers who register by May 28 will have priority for the shuttle.

On May 23rd the fee increases, \$40 per person (\$20 for youth)

RACERS must register by June 2. No same-day registration for RACERS.

Online registration will close end of day June 2.

Ramblers may register on the day of the event (June 4);

the price increases to \$45 per person (\$25 for youth).

With each registration, there is an option to add \$5 for lunch, which will be a fresh spread of deli platters with lots of options for making your own sandwiches, plus snacks and drinks.

Proceeds benefit the Friends' work to protect and restore the Winooski River watershed.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

We need volunteers to make this event run smoothly for everyone. Please let us know if you're able to help with registration, shuttling, timing, overseeing the lunch table, recording scores, etc.

2023 Events Update & Volunteer Opportunities

[Race and Ramble: June 4](#)

[River of Light: August 1](#)

[Capital River Clean-up: September 10](#)

[Barre City Stevens Branch Clean-up: September 24](#)

We always need volunteers to make the paddling and clean-up events possible. Please contact us if you're able to help out with jobs such as taking photographs, directing parking, shuttling paddlers between parking areas, selling raffle tickets, serving snacks: there is a job for everyone!

Other volunteer opportunities this summer include [Water Quality Monitoring](#) and [Public Access Sites Stewardship](#). Volunteers do not need any special skills or scientific training, just willingness to visit one spot on the river several times during the summer season to fill a few bottles of water, or take note of maintenance needs.

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