

# River Access Task Force 2024 Strategic Plan

April 2024

## Overview

River access was identified as a top priority by the Barre City community in the fall of 2021 as part of the All In For Barre event led by Barre City and the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD). As a result, the Barre City River Access Task Force was created. The task force is made up of a group of local residents who meet monthly to promote and increase river access through community engagement, access development, education, grant opportunities, local partnerships, and outreach activities.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to set overall goals for 2024 and describe our plan to achieve them.

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### OUR VISION

*The people of Barre City are connected to their local river through access areas and river corridors that are friendly, safe, and accessible to everyone.*

### OUR MISSION

*Promoting and increasing river access, through community engagement and understanding, creation of river access areas, education, and outreach activities.*

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The 2024 goals of the River Access Task Force are:

- To continue to familiarize community members with our vision and mission through social media and local in-person events.
- To continue to learn more about how our community feels about their local rivers and share information we have to answer their questions.
- To continue to learn how the community has interacted with our rivers in the past and would like to interact with our rivers in the future.
- To continue to engage the public and encourage community participation through water quality monitoring, river clean-ups, and education and outreach events.
- To begin steps to enhance and create new river access sites in Barre City.

- To continue and grow collaboration with local partners.

## Objectives

- By the end of 2024, coordinate with local groups and committees to build relationships and partnerships for river access and awareness by attending at least four meetings with local groups with similar or related goals.
- By the end of 2024, complete two river clean-ups (Green Up Day in May & the Annual River Clean-up in September).
- By the end of 2024, through a local watershed liaison partnership with Friends of the Winooski River we will provide the community answers to their questions about boating, fishing, water quality, and more through a Facebook & Instagram video series and outreach event.
- By the end of 2024, hold at least one education and outreach event to grow community connection with local partners like the Vermont River Conservancy.
- By the end of 2024, complete ten days of monitoring events at five river sites and provide a water quality report to the community summarizing the past three years of water quality monitoring (2022-2024).
- By the end of 2024, work with the Friends of the Winooski River to complete 2024 grant deliverables for the Barre City River Access Community Connection Project and Barre City Supplemental Environmental Project.

## Strategies

- Continue targeted education and outreach events that appeal to a diversity of community members and river users.
- Increase communication about the River Access Task Force via Front Porch Forum, social media, and stakeholder/partner collaboration.
- Increase ways of interacting with people to make input easier and inclusive.
- Get people excited about Barre's rivers through fun, interactive, and engaging exhibits.
- Carry out grant and other funding responsibilities.

## List of Actions

### Annual Activities

1. River clean-ups (May & September)
2. Water quality monitoring for chloride, nitrogen, and phosphorus working with the LaRosa Partnership Program, and *E. coli* monitoring working with Stone Environmental
3. Report to City Council of 2023 Activities and 2024 Strategic Plan

## Outreach

4. Educational and local event(s) social media posting
5. Outreach material development (water quality handout, social media pages, update of Friends of the Winooski River webpage)

## Education

6. Partner for river events with the Vermont River Conservancy, Friends of the Winooski River, VT Trout Unlimited, and other organizations as opportunities arise
7. Watershed Liaison Grant

## Collaboration & Building Capacity

8. Continue to build a local network with city groups and join Watersheds United Vermont

## Access Site Development

9. Scoping through VOREC Grant for new access area in downtown Barre City
10. Upgrades to existing access areas at the Granite Museum and Rotary Park
11. Water quality monitoring for *E. coli* to evaluate swimming safety
12. Spring planting on Brook Street along Gunners Brook

## 2023 Objectives and Outcomes

- **By the end of 2023, coordinate with local groups and committees to build relationships and partnerships for river access and awareness by attending at least five meetings with local groups with similar or related goal:**
  - Attended meetings of the Barre Rotary Club and the Lions Club and provided members with information about the RATF and their accomplishments. Formed connections with members to help with clean ups and spread the word about events.
- **By the end of 2023, complete two river clean-ups on Green Up Day in May and the Annual River Clean-up in September:**
  - Completed a Green Up Day trash pickup along Boyton Street on the Jail Branch.
  - Participated in the August 26 Green Up Day after the flood and cleaned up at Boynton Street and at Rotary Park along the waterfall trail and the ball field.
  - Partnered with the Vermont River Conservancy on the Rotary Park Trail day to rehabilitate the trail to the waterfall after the flooding.
  - Water levels were too high to safely host the September Clean-up.

- **By the end of 2023, provide the community with answers to their questions about boating, fishing, water quality, and more through a Facebook & Instagram video series and Annual Public meeting event:**
  - Provided expertise to the Barre City Council after flooding about Hazard Mitigation Planning and flood analysis and planning.
  - Provided feedback to flood forums and other community conversations around water quality and flood resiliency.
  - Shared information about river related events on our social media platforms. Gained an additional 80 (185 total) followers on Instagram and an additional 60 (134 total) followers on Instagram.
- **By the end of 2023, hold at least one education and outreach event to grow community connection.**
  - Hosted “Take Me to the River: Outdoor Mindfulness Experience” led by Susan McDowell on the summer solstice at Rotary Park.
  - Board members marched in the September Heritage Festival Parade to raise awareness of our group.
  - Collaborated with the Vermont River Conservancy for the [Barre Art for Our Rivers](#) event at Rotary Park
- **By the end of 2023, complete monitoring at 5 river sites across 10 sampling events and provide a water quality report to the community.**
  - Monitoring for 2023 completed at all 5 sites across 10 sampling events.