

2012 LAKE CHAMPLAIN ACTION PLAN

Otter Creek flows into Lake Champlain after Tropical Storm Irene, August 2011.

Bill Howland, Lake Champlain Basin Program

HIGHEST PRIORITIES

1. Strengthen river corridor, floodplain and wetland protection through increased purchase of channel management rights via easements, community-based river corridor protection, and expansion of conservation programs.

The ability to purchase channel management rights and other riparian protections is essential to reducing future conflicts between Vermonters and our rivers and streams. Available state and federal funding, such as the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, should be leveraged to increase easement purchases. Land trusts should make river corridor and floodplain protection priorities.

2. Establish a dedicated, sustainable funding source, beyond annual state and federal appropriations, to finance water quality improvement and flood resiliency projects, and foster a shared responsibility for watershed protection. Potential funding mechanisms that merit consideration include: a statewide fee on developed land and farmsteads, clean water bonding, a clean water trust fund, and a tax on flushable products.

3. Ensure that all farms, regardless of size and type of operation, have a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) consistent with current federal standards.

Currently, Large and Medium Farm Operations are required to have NMPs at a federal standard, while Small Farm Operations are guided by the Acceptable Agricultural Practices, which follow state guidelines.

“As Lake Champlain and its tributaries recede, we realize that large rain events and snow-melt are major factors in our long-running efforts to improve water quality. New research shows the large role legacy sediments play in flood events, so our past activities haunt us when water overloads the system. We need greater floodplain retention to slow water flow, while limiting excess nutrient loading from all sources.”

— Buzz Hoerr, VTCAC Chair

4. Support community efforts to investigate potential stormwater utility configurations, their benefits and feasibility.

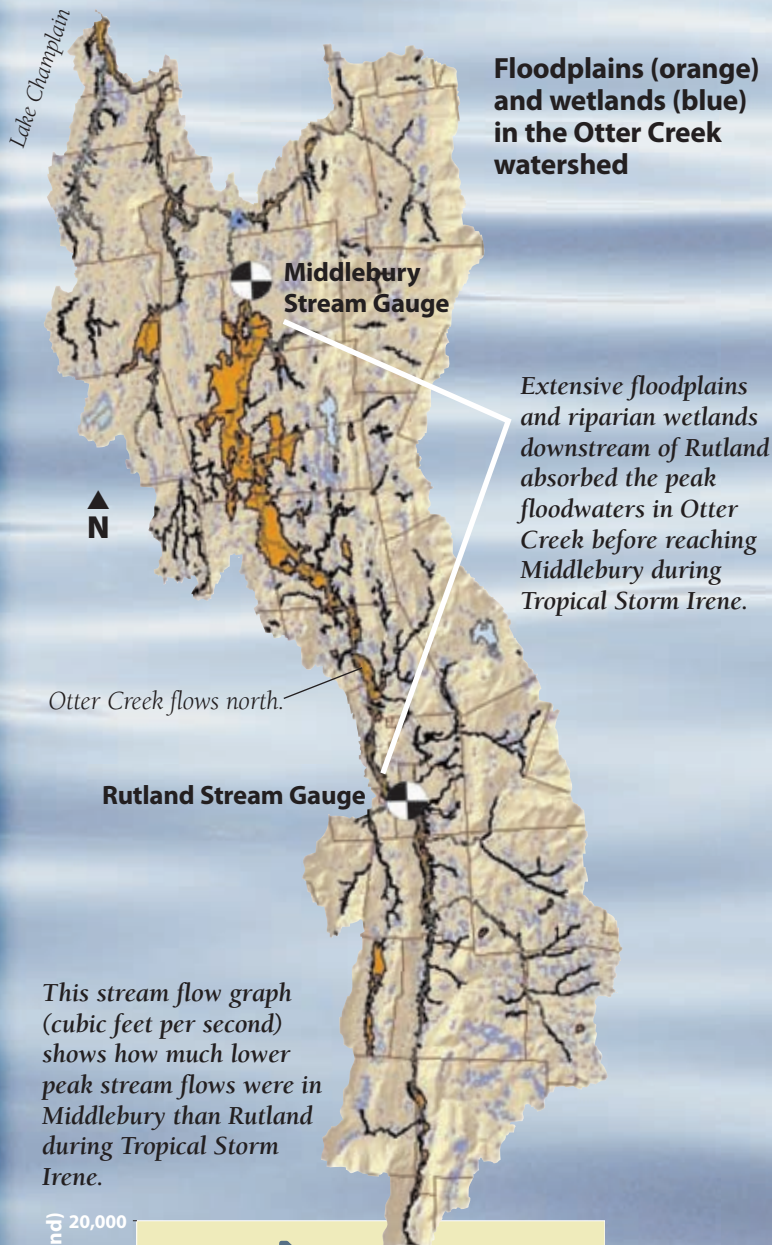
A stormwater utility can provide financial, planning, technical, or maintenance services for a community with stormwater management needs, within the built environment and transportation infrastructure. Determining the appropriate scale, type and financing of a utility requires substantial advanced planning to succeed.

5. Provide stricter oversight of agricultural and municipal polluters by publicizing offenses.

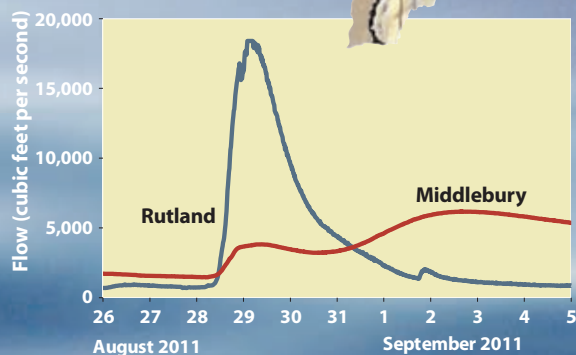
It would be effective to post monthly enforcement actions in local media and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Foods and Markets newsletter, *Agriview*.

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6. Sustain a minimum of \$150,000 to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for the water chestnut management program. In 28 years, more than \$10 million have been spent to eradicate nearly 50 miles of dense water chestnut beds in southern Lake Champlain. The program is on the cusp of shifting from expensive mechanical harvesting to maintenance hand-pulling once the remainder of dense plant beds are harvested seven more miles south to Whitehall, New York.



This stream flow graph (cubic feet per second) shows how much lower peak stream flows were in Middlebury than Rutland during Tropical Storm Irene.



Bill Howland, Lake Champlain Basin Program

When Lake Champlain flooded in spring 2011, wetlands filtered sediments from the rivers and lakes.

VTCAC Members

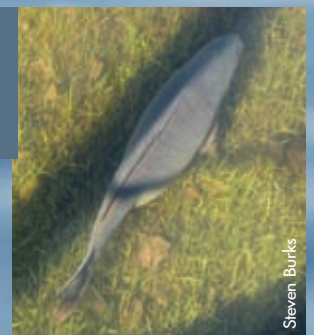
- Buzz Hoerr, Chair, Colchester, Business Owner
- Julie Moore, Vice-Chair, Middlesex, Water Resources Engineer
- Sen. Claire Ayer, Addison County and Brandon
- Eric Clifford, Starksboro, Dairy Farmer
- James Ehlers, Colchester, Business Executive
- Lori Fisher, Burlington, Lake Champlain Committee
- Paul Hansen, Alburgh, Business Owner
- Peter Kreisel, Burlington, CPA/Business Consultant
- Sen. Ginny Lyons, Chittenden County
- Rep. Bert Munger, South Burlington
- Mark Naud, South Hero, Attorney
- Ted Tyler, Highgate Springs, Resort Owner
- Rep. Kate Webb, Shelburne
- Sheri Young, Orwell, Septic Design & Environmental Consulting

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This carp lazily swam on someone's flooded lawn during the historic spring flooding.



Steven Burks

