

2023 Watershed Update

Hello again! Yet another Vermont summer has passed us by and as the leaves have changed, there are new leaves branching out here at the MRBA. In this 2023 edition of our MRBA Watershed Update, we want to share with you our project successes from this year, updates on events, and big plans that the MRBA has in the upcoming year. 2023 has exemplified the Missisquoi River's resiliency while weathering through an interesting and unique summer. We want to thank our donors, local watershed community members, and change makers, as yet another year comes to its inevitable end. Take this opportunity to take a break in a comfortable place, kick your feet up, and read on about what the MRBA has been up to throughout our Missisquoi watershed.



Sheldon



Richford



Enosburg



Westfield



Berkshire



Lowell



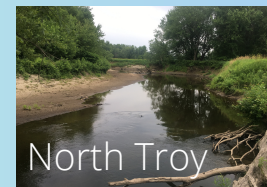
Richford



Sheldon



Montgomery



North Troy



Westfield

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Follow us on facebook & instagram for updates about what's happening in our watershed!



@mrbavt



Staff Updates

We are thrilled to welcome Sarah Lunn as our Field Coordinator! You will recognize Sarah from the previous two years, when she served with us as an ECO AmeriCorps member. We are over the moon that she has now officially joined our staff! Sarah grew up in Georgia, VT and has been involved with ski patrol at Jay Peak since her childhood. In her new role as Field Coordinator for both the MRBA and the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers (UMATR) Wild & Scenic Committee, Sarah will be connecting with members of our communities about projects, events, and all things river-related. Give her your congrats when you see her planting trees, conducting surveys, and battling Japanese knotweed with the MRBA, or at one of the many wonderful UMATR events that she plans and coordinates! Contact her at sarah@mrbavt.com for any MRBA needs and look out for her and pup Pearl in our watershed!



2023 LEAP Interns

During this past July, MRBA yet again hosted two high school interns to help MRBA staff with projects around the Missisquoi watershed. Charles Daniels of Richford, and Aine Remmers of Montgomery, joined us for some great work including monitoring tree planting sites, helping with water sampling, expanding our knotweed knowledge with growth experiments and cutting, and planning their own river clean-up along the Missisquoi. The LEAP internship program is a great opportunity to get local young people involved in conservation and restoration work in Vermont while also providing professional development. We love participating in this program and plan to again in 2024. Do you know of any local Missisquoi high school students that want this experience? Reach out to us about next year to learn more! Thank you to Charles and Aine for a fantastic year - MRBA staff will miss working with you!

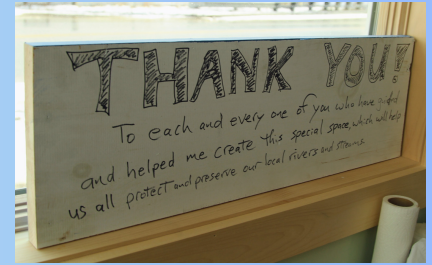


*The Lake Education & Action Program provides an opportunity to marry facilitating stewardship projects and providing professional development opportunities to high school and college-aged students.

Learn more at: www.uvm.edu/seagrant/programs/lake-education-action-program-leap

Office Open House

As MRBA has continued to grow, so has our office space! We want to thank everyone who was able to join us for the opening of our new office space in East Berkshire early this year in March. It is so wonderful to have such a beautiful space to share with our watershed community. Since the Open House, the MRBA has become more settled in our new space. We will be hosting another community gathering next year in our office and we hope that you will be able to join us and see the finished space. Look out for more information next year, and join our mailing list on our website for event updates! Hope to see you there!



River Community Soirée

The Missisquoi watershed is full of amazing community groups that make our work easier. During our 2023 River Community Soirée in March in Enosburg Falls, we enjoyed presentations, lively discussion, and a delicious catered meal with residents and leaders from more than seven of our mid-Missisquoi towns. This gathering gave us and our local partners and opportunity to discuss projects and issues within our watershed that affect all community members. We love hosting events like these in

our community to incentivize and enable collaboration between our towns! Thank you to those that could join us at the Enosburg Opera House back in March!





Missisquoi River Basin Association

Our goal is to restore and maintain the ecological integrity of the Missisquoi River system so that the uses and values desired by the community are supported by the river and the quality of its water.

Dear Friend of the MRBA,

We want to take this moment to thank you for your continued support. Without the strong partnerships and dedication of our friends, partners, towns, and community, the MRBA would not be where it is today. As the weather turns more unpredictable, such as what we saw with the flooding this past summer, the strength and resiliency of our community continues to hold us together. Reminders of previous efforts, and the work that is still to be done resonates throughout the waters in our watershed.

Trees that were planted along the Missisquoi twenty years ago withstood the high flood waters of July 2023. The restoration of some of our floodplains in our river basin worked as they should: they helped mitigate water as it rose above the rivers banks, which protected structures downstream. The Missisquoi fared much better than watersheds to our south, but there is remains much restoration work to be done. As the MRBA continues to expand our capacity, and with the addition of bigger projects like the establishment of our Orleans County-based native plant nursery, we know that through collaboration and hard work we can make big impacts.

Please enjoy the 2023 Watershed Update, and let us know if you would like more details about any of the projects we have highlighted in this issue. Looking ahead to 2024, the MRBA is thrilled about our upcoming projects and would love your assistance through any of our volunteer programs. If you have means, we'd also greatly appreciate your support through a financial donation. Your dollars are integral to our successes, and better enable us to pursue, expand, and refine projects that help our communities from the headwaters to Lake Champlain. Together, we can make a difference.

Thank you,

Lindsey Wight, Executive Director
Missisquoi River Basin Association

- ◆ Donations are tax deductible; donors will receive recognition on our website and in our Annual Report.
- ◆ Corporate sponsor? We appreciate the businesses that support us! If you would like to be recognized as a corporate sponsor, visit our website to select from the corporate sponsorship perks!



Donating Members:

- Creek \$10
- Brook..... \$35
- Stream..... \$100
- River..... \$200
- Corporate.....\$ _____

**Clean water is important to me!
I want to help protect and improve the Missisquoi Watershed.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Donations via PayPal available at: mrbavt.com/donate

Special project ---- I want to support a special project specifically; please put my donation toward \$ _____ the following activity:

- MRBA's **new** Native Plant Nursery & Tree Plantings
- Education programs in watershed schools
- Water sampling

Please make checks payable to:
Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA)
2839 VT Route 105, East Berkshire, VT 05447
Tel: (802) 933-3645 Email: lindsey@mrbavt.com



Community Water Walks

This summer, MRBA hosted four Community Water Walks in the towns of Bakersfield, Enosburg, and twice in North Troy. MRBA staff walked along two streams and along the Missisquoi River with local community members to discuss stream health, water quality projects, and future needs of the streams we walked. MRBA staff love opportunities like these to meet with our community members to learn directly how our waterways are being impacted and protected. Thank you to the members of the Bakersfield Conservation Commission, the Enosburg Conservation Commission, and watershed residents for joining us!

Stream Wise Visits

This year MRBA participated in the Stream Wise program hosted by the Lake Champlain Basin Program. MRBA staff visited four landowners in Orleans County that have streams which lead into the Missisquoi River. The goal of this program is to enable direct contact with landowners to discuss ways to improve their stream's health, potential projects on their property, and to learn about how our waterways are connected. If you are interested in learning more about the Stream Wise Program, read more about the program on their website, streamwisechamplain.org and reach out to Sarah at sarah@mrbavt.com if you have a stream that is in the Missisquoi watershed that you would like MRBA staff to walk with you next year!



2023 Lake Lessons

For the fourth year, the MRBA participated in and helped run Lake Lessons. This collaborative experiential education program brought 4th graders from six local schools on a half-day field trip to the shores of Lake Champlain. Seven local agencies and organizations set up learning stations at St. Albans Bay Park, and the visiting students learned about water quality, history, and more! This program establishes an understanding in students that their actions do impact their local environment, and that we can create positive change through the ways we interact with the world around us. MRBA staff had a blast teaching about soil health with our rainfall simulator. We look forward to participating in Lake Lessons again next year!



Thank you to MRBA's talented Community Relations Coordinator, **Corrina King**, for taking the heavy hitting lead on running this year's program! This year wouldn't have been so smooth if it wasn't for you!



River Clean-Up Round-Up

In 2023, the MRBA hosted three river clean-ups along **11.5** river miles of the Missisquoi in Sheldon, Richford, and Westfield. We got **43** people out on our river and collected **14** tires, **2** traffic cones, large pieces of old metal, and what seemed like endless amounts of plastic totaling to approximately **800 lbs** of trash! Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers that made this possible! Interested in joining us on a river clean-up next year? Join our mailing list by visiting mrbavt.com!



2023 Tree Plantings

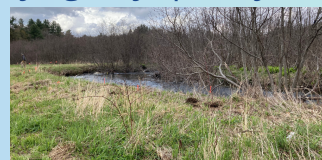
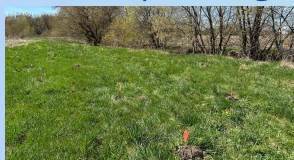


Restoring and replenishing the riparian buffer is one of the best methods to enhance flood resilience, strengthen river banks to battle erosion, and provide habitat to our local native wildlife and fauna. The MRBA has been planting trees since our very beginning (1996!) with the incredible help of local watershed volunteers and community members. In

2023 alone, MRBA staff, 16 local volunteers, and two very helpful pups planted 905 trees along the banks of the Missisquoi and three tributaries in Bakersfield, Sheldon, and Enosburg Falls during the spring. These trees, and those from previous plantings, will continue to help protect and preserve the banks of the Missisquoi river and watershed streams. As was made apparent during this year's July Flooding, flood resilience and stormwater management is heavy on everyone's mind. To keep up with demand, and

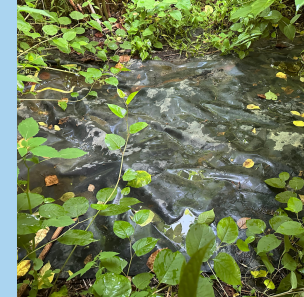


ensure that the MRBA has healthy viable stock within our watershed, **we are ecstatic to announce that we have received funding through the Lake Champlain Basin Program to begin a native plant nursery in our watershed!** In this upcoming year, there will be big actions here at the MRBA as we begin the next step in our journey to increase and improve riparian buffers in the Missisquoi watershed. As the MRBA has expanded, so has our capacity and opportunity for more riparian plantings within our watershed. Sourcing of planting materials can be a challenge, and one that has increased in difficulty as we - and other partners - have begun planting more and more trees each year. With the establishment of this new nursery, we can ensure that our tree stock grows in local conditions that will better prepare them for a healthy rooting along our rivers. Look out for more information in this upcoming year about this exciting new adventure, and opportunities to assist with or benefit from our expanded riparian buffer planting programs! Want to volunteer with the MRBA? Stay tuned for updates by joining our mailing list on our website at www.mrbavt.com, or reach out to our Field Coordinator, Sarah Lunn, at sarah@mrbavt.com, to learn how you can get involved! As always, the MRBA wants to express a huge thank you to our volunteers! Due to our wonderful community volunteers, our planting days go by quickly and are always a blast. **Thank you!**



Knockout Knotweed

During the summer of 2023, MRBA staff continued the Knockout Knotweed project for the third season in a row. MRBA staff are treating two sites in Montgomery and North Troy, and continuing to expand our knowledge on how to battle this pesky invasive! Initially, we were planning on planting native trees over some of our plots at the end of this season. However, due in large part to the extreme weather this summer, some of our plots were disrupted and required extra care. The MRBA plans to continue treating into next season, and reevaluate species for planting. Read more about this project's updates on our website at www.mrbavt.com/knockout-knotweed.



Register for our mailing list and events on our website, and follow us on social media to stay up to date!

  @mrbavt
www.mrbavt.com

Want to receive regular updates about MRBA activities and other regional events? Make sure you're on our digital mailing list - contact us at corrina@mrbavt.com or visit our website at MRBAVT.com

Missisquoi River Basin Association
2839 VT Route 105
East Berkshire, VT 05447

