

WATERSHED BRIEF



Back in March, we here at the Missisquoi River Basin Association weren't quite sure just what operating under a pandemic would mean. Along with everyone else, we cancelled events and educational programs, got a Zoom account, learned more than we ever wanted to know about remote meetings, and figured out what doing fieldwork safely would need to look like. And we have been so pleased with what came of all that scrambling! We miss our volunteers and getting together with supporters - but we are pleased to report that we've still managed to do a remarkable amount of good within our watershed this summer. As you enjoy these stories, know that we could not have pulled these projects off without your support - our

friends and donors have adapted rightalong with us, and have enabled us to continue to meet our goals, despite all the road bumps this year has provided. Thank you - always, but perhaps especially this year - for your continued support as we work to protect and improve the waters in the Missisquoi basin. Below you'll find some highlights of this summer's accomplishments, and also some new ways that you can connect with our work. And if you find yourself able to contribute financially, we gratefully accept donations - visit mrbavt.com/donate for more details.

Tree planting: Planting riparian buffers is an important part of the work that we do - trees and shrubs along streams and rivers help to stabilize banks, reduce erosion, reduce nutrients entering the waterway, and provide wildlife habitat. In a typical year, we plant alongside volunteers and school groups. This year, we sadly did not have access to those wonderful resources, but - following State safety guidelines - we still managed to plant 1,890 trees and shrubs along the Missisquoi and its tributaries!

Our thanks to the Vermont DEC, Watersheds United Vermont, PUR Projet, Redstart Inc, and our staff and Board for their support and assistance!



River Clean-Up: While we weren't able to open our annual river clean-up event to the public this year, our staff and Board did clean up a section of the upper Missisquoi, pulling trash and tires from ~4 miles of river between Lowell and Westfield.



Edible Rain Garden: Our ECO AmeriCorps member, Ranier Lucas, hatched the idea to use an edible rain garden to help students learn how plants are good not only for us, but also for our streams and rivers. While the educational sessions we had planned for this spring had to be delayed, the garden is installed and ready for learning!

Our thanks to the Lake Champlain Basin Program, Green Mountain Farm to School, the Jay/Westfield Elementary School, and - of course - Ranier!



Japanese Knotweed Monitoring: This summer, the MRBA hired a consultant to map Japanese knotweed along the upper Missisquoi. In addition to the mapping, we also installed some Japanese knotweed control experiments in public parks in both Montgomery and Enosburg Falls. As the knotweed grows up through the metal mesh, it should girdle itself, weakening the rhizome; after a few years of this, the rhizome should be too depleted to produce the plant.



Thanks to our partners in this project: Lake Champlain Basin Program, Arrowwood Environmental, the Montgomery Rec Department, and the Enosburgh Conservation Commission.

Adopt-A-Site: We are seeking volunteers to "adopt-a-site" along our rivers - a favorite spot that you love to visit, or we can suggest a spot that may just become your new favorite! A great activity for families, volunteers will receive a field tote and materials to collect data about water quality, invasive species, wildlife, and more. Adopters will visit their site once a month, and send the information back to us. Visit mrbavt.com/adopt-a-site for more details!

Thanks to River Network, the National Park Foundation, and the UMATR Wild & Scenic Committee for partnering with us on this project.



Water Sampling: The MRBA has been monitoring water quality throughout the watershed since 2005, in partnership with the Vermont DEC. When the DEC let us know that there would be no partnership program this year, we pivoted our water sampling to be more landowner-focused. Instead of collecting dispersed samples throughout the entire watershed, this year we have partnered with 2 landowners to get an intensive look at the water quality on their property. We hope the State partnership program will resume next year, but we also intend to continue our new program. If you're interested in learning how soil and nutrients are being transported on your property, reach out to us!

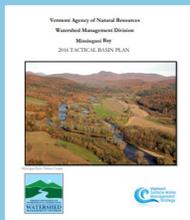
Virtual Programs: Spring is when we usually work most with schools, offering programs that will connect students to the waterways around us. With such visits and field trips cancelled this spring, we've looked to virtual platforms. Visit mrbavt.com/bug to experience a virtual Bugworks session, and find worksheets and guides that will help you get out and explore on your own. And watch for more virtual programming coming soon!



Tactical Basin Planning:

Each watershed in Vermont has a Plan, written and managed by the DEC, that gets re-written every 5 years. Our Basin Plan is currently under review and will be

re-written next year - which means that NOW is the time we can highlight both problems areas that we want to draw state funding for AND (new this year!) pristine areas that we want to protect. We'll be reaching out to our members and communities for input this winter, and are always happy to discuss our watershed with you!



We cannot express enough our thanks to you for your continued support. Thank you for your contributions, for partnering with us on projects, and for asking after ways to volunteer within our watershed. We love connecting with you and will continue to do so as we apply for funding and plan projects for this fall and into 2021. We hope you stay well and in touch. Check in with us via Facebook, Instagram, or at mrbavt.com.

Thank you! - Lindsey, Ellen, & the MRBA Board