



A NEWSLETTER OF THE FEDERATION
OF VERMONT LAKES AND PONDS

SPRING

2026

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MAY 2026

cover photo: Lake Fairlee (S. Brown)

Message from President Pat Suozzi

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds

“To preserve and protect Vermont's lakes, ponds and their watersheds for the benefit of this and future generations.”

What a winter we have had – so cold, so snowy, just like years gone by. But neither cold, nor ice, nor snow slowed down FOVLAP. January marked the beginning of the legislative ses-

sion and this has been a busy one for us. The session began with several members of the Legislative Committee spending a day at the Statehouse to meet and talk with legislators about lake health issues. Hearings were held by the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee on two lake related bills, [S.224](#) and [S.223](#) and I had the honor of testifying on both. While [S.223](#) advanced and is currently in a conference committee, [S.224](#) did not make it out of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee. For details on these and the other bills we have been following, see the legislative update on page

5.

In December, the Agency of Natural Resources opened formal rulemaking on revisions to the [Use of Public Waters Rules](#). Several public meetings were held which were attended by FOVLAP board members. In addition, we submitted a statement and a set of written comments during the public comment period and posted them on our website [here](#).

Throughout the winter, our lunch time webinar series continued with webinars on the “model my watershed” tool, phragmites control, and dirt roads. (See page 12 for more on the phragmites control webinar.) You can find recordings of these and all of our webinars on our [website](#).

As we do every year, we begin the summer with the [Lake Seminar](#) on Friday, June 5. This year the theme is

Hidden Worlds: Life under the Surface. Learn about all that is going on in your lake. We'll gather in person at the South Burlington Public Library and there will be a zoom option. More details and

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FOVLAP BOD members at the Statehouse in January. Left to right: Vince Pisegna, Kent Hendersen, Jay White and Jeremy Jones (Photo: FOVLAP)

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registration information can be found on page 27.

A few years ago, we brought together representatives from lakes working on controlling Eurasian watermilfoil infestations to share information and discuss the trials and tribulations of managing this invasive. These conversations were so fruitful that this group has been meeting regularly since as the Milfoil Solutions Discussion Group. As a result of this, we started two more discussion groups: 30 Lakes Discussion Group for lakes currently eligible to host wake sports and the Dam Discussion Group for lakes concerned about and/or dealing with dams. These groups are informal – no set agenda or necessary deliverables. They are a chance for people from our member

associations who are working on that particular issue to get together to share information, learn from each other, and provide help and advice. Send me an email (pat.suozzi@vermontlakes.org) if you are working on one of these issues and would like to receive notices of meetings, or if you have an idea for a specific topic for a discussion group that might be of interest.

Summer means a return to the lakes for many and it also means a chance to have a FOVLAP board member visit your lake associa-



Lake shore buffer (Photo: D. Miuccio)

tion. We're happy to come out and talk about what FOVLAP is doing, discuss the various issues facing our lakes, and answer questions but we also want to hear from you and your members about how FOVLAP can help and support you and your work. Visits can be with your board, or a presentation or Q&A at your annual meeting, or an informal chat with interested community members. We are already scheduling visits for the summer so if you would like to have us come out, please contact Deborah Miuccio at deborah.miuccio@vermontlakes.org.

I have been reading the recently released draft of *The Nature Record*. I highly recommend you take a look at this report, especially Chapter 7 "Inland Water Ecosystems of the US". It is enlightening, disheartening, and

deeply concerning. It is a reminder to us of how valuable our work here is and how important it is to keep spreading the word that these resources are precious and cannot be taken for granted.

All of the work we do is thanks to you, our members and supporters, our dedicated and knowledgeable board, and our amazing staff person and Outreach Coordinator, Deborah Miuccio. Most of all, your hard work, your dedication, and your passion make hope possible in these difficult times.

[FOVLAP Committee Reports](#)

Updates From Some of FOVLAP's Standing, Permanent and Ad Hoc Committees

AIS Committee

The AIS Committee reviewed and discussed the draft revisions to the Use of Public Waters Rules along with the VTDEC document, "Aquatic Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Program Alternatives." The committee plans to create an AIS resource database and develop a dedicated AIS resource section for the FOVLAP website. Stay tuned for more updates!

FOVLAP Board of Director Beth Torpey chairs the AIS Committee.

LEGISLATIVE Committee

Members of the Legislative Committee spent Thursday, January 8th at the State House as we try to do each year. We set up a display in the Card Room that provided information and handouts. This is an important opportunity to meet legislators and bring their attention to lake and water quality issues and concerns at the beginning of each legislative session.

The Legislative Committee posts bills relevant to lakes and water quality regularly on the FOVLAP website [Legislative Updates page](#) throughout each legislative session.

The following three bills have been of special interest this session. Click on the name of each bill for details.

[S.218 An act relating to reducing chloride contamination of State waters](#)

Passed the legislature but unfortunately the Governor vetoed the bill on May 8, 2026.

Kent Henderson's testimony on this bill (when it was previously numbered as S.29 and H.86) can be found here: [Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee](#) and here: [House Environment Committee](#).

[S.223 An act relating to water quality of the waters of Vermont](#): Creation of a study committee to address lake reclassification and anti-degradation rule implementation.

Passed the Senate and then the House with an amendment which referred it back to the Senate. On 5/13/26, the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee sent the bill to a conference committee.

Pat Suozzi's testimony on this bill can be found here: [Senate Natural Resource and Energy Committee](#) and here: [House Environment Committee](#).

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S.224 An act relating to the management of the State's lakes: Included a home lake rule for wake boats and designating AIS prevention as an authorized use of the public accesses.

Introduced January 8, 2026, and referred to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. Tabled by the Committee on March 13, 2026.

Pat Suozzi's testimony on this bill can be found here: [Senate Natural Resource and Energy Committee](#).

FOVLAP President Pat Suozzi and Board of Director Jay White chair the Legislative Committee.

SCHOLARSHIP Committee

FOVLAP VSAC Scholarship 2026: FOVLAP's Scholarship Committee oversees the application and selection process for this annual scholarship. We received 26 applications from VSAC to support two \$1,000 scholarships in 2026. The energetic and thoughtful committee selected two candidates and an alternate. The VSAC Scholarship Committee reviewed FOVLAP's first and second recipient choices, agreed with the selections, and sent the award letters to both recipients. Candidate and alternate specifics follows.

Jacob Mason: Attends Randolph High School, participated in the Governors' Institute in Environmental Studies. Plans to attend UVM and major in Environmental Studies.

Maxwell Wagner: Attends Missisquoi Valley Union, is an Eagle Scout and received a Vermont Land Trust Award. Plans to attend UVM and major in Environmental Engineering focusing on sustainability.

Cali Sprague (alternate): Cali received a FOVLAP VSAC scholarship award last year and is attending Paul



A happy fisherman! (Photo: J. Bergdahl).

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Smith's College. She is majoring in Natural Resources, Conservation Management and has a goal to become a Fish and Wildlife Warden.

FOVLAP Board of Director Jackie Sprague chairs the Scholarship Committee.

WATER QUALITY Committee

At its October 4, 2025 meeting, the FOVLAP Board voted to create a new ad hoc Water Quality Committee. This represented a split of the former AIS-Water Quality Committee. The argument for this split was that there are multiple, non-overlapping issues in both areas that challenge Vermont's lakes and ponds.

The new committee has yet to prioritize its focus, but there are several areas that it will likely consider.

- Having recently obtained grant funding to support clean water educational webinars and web content creation, the committee may support specific water quality topics for these events, and work with the events committee to engage speakers. Candidate topics include:
 - How Vermont uses watershed models to guide clean water strategies
 - Citizen science in Vermont to understand nutrient pollution
 - Lakeshore buffer projects to reduce direct stormwater runoff
 - How Lake Watershed Action Plans fit into Vermont's Clean Water Strategy
- Proposed [S.223 legislation](#), if passed in its present language, designates that a representative from FOVLAP be on the study group created by the new law. The study group is tasked with fixing the regulatory framework so that qualifying lakes can achieve the A1 status, which provides higher legal protection and priority access to restoration funding. The committee would monitor the progress made by the study group and support the FOVLAP representative.
- FOVLAP seeks to strengthen engagement with our member associations, and the Membership Committee is planning to arrange for FOVLAP board members to attend lake association meetings and events in the coming summer season. The Water Quality Committee may support these visits by creating handouts or by providing information on lake-specific water quality issues.

FOVLAP Board of Director Dave Johnson chairs the ad hoc Water Quality Committee.



Japanese Knotweed: A scourge for our lakesides and waterways

Jan Parsons, FOVLAP Board of Directors

When [Japanese knotweed](#) (*Fallopia japonica*) was introduced into the United States in the late 1800s as an ornamental plant, it was appreciated as a herbaceous perennial that could be used for erosion control and riverbank stabilization. It soon appeared in gardening catalogs in the 1890s and was found in New York, New Jersey and near Philadelphia. No one knew that by the year 2000, Japanese knotweed would be a growing invasive plant problem, aggressively invading natural habitats, outcompeting native plants and taking over waterfront areas throughout Vermont and other states.

In 2011, the floodwaters of Tropical Storm Irene tore through Vermont river valleys carrying knotweed fragments far downstream, causing a nuisance plant to become a “green

monster.” The plant’s spread exploded along Vermont’s waterways, colonizing the newly disturbed, sediment-rich soils. Instead of helping stabilize riverbanks, it can take over and damage flood defense structures, undermining the water channels’ ability to manage floodwater. A [2021 study](#) found that Japanese knotweed was associated with a significant increase in soil erosion. In addition, tall, dense stands of knotweed create a physical barrier preventing ac-

cess to fishing, swimming and other recreational activities along miles of Vermont waterfront property.

In recent years, Vermonters have fought back. A range of management tactics are now being implemented to reduce the impact of the plant known as *The Green Menace*. The town of Hyde Park orga-

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Japanese knotweed identification (https://www.nonnativespecies.org/assets/ID_Fallopia_japonica_Japanese_knotweed_Welsh.pdf).

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nized a committee, the [Knot in Hyde Park Committee](#) (KiHP), to train residents to identify the plant and learn [how to control it](#). Their motto is “Act Early and Persist.” Their efforts began in May 2021, working on 27 sites over the season, ranging from single plants to a long stretch of knotweed along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. In 2022, they added 30 sites, with 48 of the 57 under active management.

By 2023, KiHP’s fieldwork continued “mechanical control,” repeatedly cutting or hand-pulling knotweed, and/or smothering with recycled rubber roofing, combined with pulling at the edges. KiHP managed 60 sites with an emphasis on early detection and stopping small patches from becoming established. That year, the herbicide glyphosate was applied as an

experiment to evaluate whether chemical treatment should become part of the management program.

By 2025, the experiment with chemical treatment ended, with the assessment that the limited use of herbicides was effective, resulting in sites that were entirely free of knotweed or in a much diminished form (very short, multi-stemmed). An innovation for 2025 was the addition of three goats delivered to a site in North Hyde Park Village on May 31, to spend the season chewing on knotweed and rugosa roses. Volunteers monitored the goats daily. All of the *Knot in Hyde Park* detailed seasonal reports dating back to 2021 are available on the committee [website](#).

While KiHP added goats to their arsenal of weapons in 2025, they had already joined the battle against knotweed in the towns of Warren, Waitsfield and



Goats graze knotweed (<https://www.valleyreporter.com/index.php/news/local-news/19888-goats-return-to-graze-the-mad-river-valley-this-summer>).

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Fayston, whose conservation commissioners decided to try unconventional approaches to address the issue. With support from the [Friends of the Mad River](#), in 2024 the commissioners engaged the “goatscaping” service, The MAD GOAT LLC, co-founded by Mary Beth Herbert and Carole Parker. Goats have a voracious appetite for knotweed leaves and young shoots to the extent that Japanese knotweed became over 50% of their diet that summer. They foraged over ten acres of riverside land in three separate parcels from mid-June to mid-October. In 2024, each parcel was grazed three times during the season, roughly equivalent to cutting down the knotweed stands three times per growing season.

In 2025, goats were brought into the parcels in early May when the shoots are young and succulent. This process interrupts the regrowth cycle of knotweed and other invasives without the use of herbicides. (Similar programs are underway in New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire.) Mary Beth Herbert owns the goats and works as an independent grazing manager (shephard3.142@gmail.com). Mary specializes in invasive species removal and has nearly a decade of experience using sheep and goat grazing techniques to manage invasive species and restore lands. The fields in Warren and Waitsfield were chosen especially for

their heavy infestation with mature knotweed.

The success of these experiments in 2024 and 2025 is providing optimism that goatscaping will evolve into a viable, successful business model that supports Vermont farmers and protects Vermont rivers and streams.

A new approach to containing and destroying knotweed comes from Britain, where Japanese knotweed is the most destructive and expensive invasive plant to treat and control. The new approach involves hardware cloth. Simple instructions call for clearing the area to be treated, and covering it with ½-inch mesh hardware cloth suspended slightly above the ground on stakes. The knotweed stems will grow through the mesh and become girdled, fall over, and die while



Japanese knotweed growing along a river (<https://www.vtinvasives.org/invasive/knotweed-japanese>)

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eventually exhausting the rhizomes' energy over multiple years. This method requires significant time, up to five years, and consistent monitoring to catch any new sprouts.

As a new approach in the US, it will take time to see whether this method is useful in the long term. There are numerous posts on Facebook, both pro and con, about this method. In Vermont, members of [the Southeast Vermont Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association](#) are experimenting with [hardware cloth control of Japanese knotweed](#) in Windham County. [VTInvasives.org](#) features an [article](#) by Andrea Short-sleeve, the director of Operations for the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, about this new approach.

Although Japanese knotweed remains a serious invasive plant problem for Vermont's waterfront landscape, it is clear that several measures can be taken to treat and even control this particular threat.

Resources for more information:

www.uvm.edu: for intern experiences

[Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets](#): for general information

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' [LIEP](#) Invasive Species Program

[Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife](#): for detailed descriptions and images of the plant, and treatment and management options

www.vtinvasives.org: for treatment methods

The YouTube channel of the [Vermont Land Trust](#): for management

got ideas???

FOVLAP produces a bi-annual newsletter in electronic format. Sharing information through our newsletter is supported and funded by our amazing community of members and collaborative work, and is made possible by membership dues and donations.

The newsletter committee seeks member ideas on newsletter content and also welcomes

article contributions. Have some? We want to hear from you! Reach out if you can help: deborah.miuccio@vermontlakes.org

Thank you to all that submitted articles for this issue and a shout out to our newsletter committee!

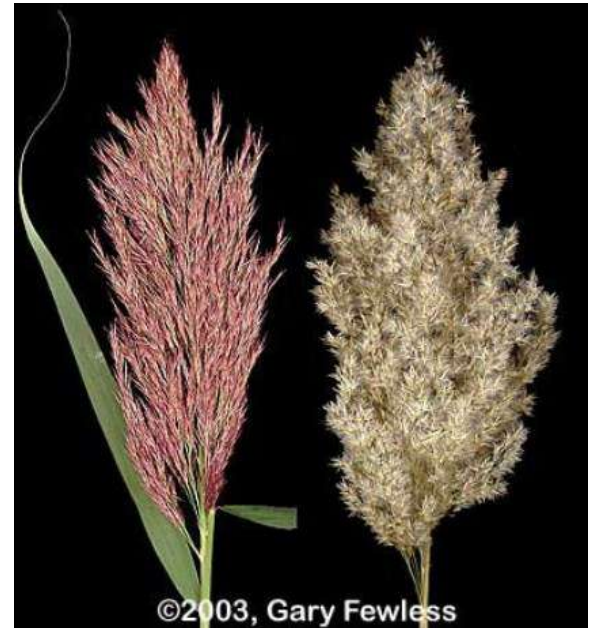
FOVLAP Board of Director Christine Cano chairs the Newsletter Committee.

Non-chemical Control of the Invasive Grass, Phragmites

Deborah Miuccio, FOVLAP Outreach Coordinator

In February, FOVLAP hosted an engaging [webinar about hand-harvesting methods of *phragmites* \(*Phragmites australis*\)](#) which have shown to be successful in controlling this highly invasive grass species around the Great Lakes.

The speaker was Annie D’Alton, avid amateur botanist, citizen scientist, and volunteer with the [Lake Champlain Committee Cyanobacteria and Aquatic Invasive Species monitoring programs](#). Annie described hand-harvesting methods conducted at Nichols Pond (Woodbury) in 2025, with citations for the resources and tools she used. This webinar was inspiring, well-researched, and received high praise from attendees. Her slideshow is available for download and includes valuable links and resources. You can watch the presentation on our [YouTube channel](#). PDFs of the presentation are available [here](#).



Phragmites australis inflorescences – the collection of flowers or the seedhead of a plant – in summer (left) and late fall (right).



Harvesting *Phragmites australis* from Nichols Pond. (Photo: A. D’Alton)

For more information on identifying this highly invasive grass, see the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center’s, [Guide to Identifying and Reporting Non-native Phragmites australis](#) by Jan Bohnen.

Navigating Stewardship: Pursuing a Watershed Action Plan for Lake Bomoseen

Lisa Beroud, FOVLAP Board of Directors

We expect our lakes to serve many masters. We want to live around their perimeters; enjoy the public beaches; catch beautiful fish year-round that are also safe to consume; spend time quietly observing native flora and fauna; and take to the waters in all manner of crafts. For those looking to steward these activities, a [Lake Watershed Action Plan](#) (LWAP) is one of the ways to make sure the health of a given lake is not in jeopardy or to make a long-range mitigation plan if trouble areas are detected. Hang on to your acronym hats ladies and gentlemen as we begin to break this down.

Lake Bomoseen, spanning approximately 2,400 acres,

holds the title of Vermont's largest lake located entirely within state borders. This 9-mile stretch of water in Castleton and Hubbardton is more than just a recreational hub; it is a complex ecosystem.

An LWAP is an assessment tool established by the [Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation](#) (VTDEC) to identify the most significant threats to a lake's water quality and wildlife habitat. For Lake Bomoseen, the primary focus is on phosphorus and nutrient runoff, which can fuel harmful algae blooms and nuisance weed growth. Unlike previous efforts that may have sought immediate fixes, the LWAP is a long-term planning guide that prioritizes restoration

projects based on scientific data.

Pursuing an LWAP is a partnership involving volunteers and professionals. In this case, it is the [Lake Bomoseen Association](#) (LBA) led by Rob Mealey and [Fitzgerald Environmental Associates](#) (FEA), an engineering firm hired to handle field assessments of shorelines, tributaries, and road networks

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Aerial view of a cove of Lake Bomoseen (Photo: L. Beroud)

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within the Lake Bomoseen Watershed. The LBA and FEA work in conjunction with [The Rutland Regional Planning Commission](#) (RRPC) and the [Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District](#) (PMNRCD) who provide oversight and administrative support for the LWAP grant.

Vermont's LWAP grants help local communities protect their lakes. Funded by the state—including those "Conservation" license plate sales—these grants allow municipalities and nonprofits to identify water quality threats and fund projects to restore shorelines and surrounding ecosystems. Specific to the Lake Bomoseen grant, the VTDEC funds clean water projects to



Lake Bomoseen (Photo: L. Beroud)

meet pollution reduction targets. The Clean Water Service Provider for the South Lake Champlain Basin, a partnership of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District, allocates the funds.

The engineering team evaluates three distinct sectors within the watershed: the lake shoreline area, streams and tributaries to the lake, and roads and developed areas. Challenge areas are identified in each of the sectors, and data is collected in the field to characterize the severity of each site.

After the water quality problem areas are identified in the field, they are compared using a method adapted from the VTDEC Unified and Non-Unified Prioritization Matrix. This method prioritizes potential projects at the sites based on factors including water quality impact, cost efficiency, landowner support, habitat protection, and numerous others.

Managing Vermont's largest inland lake brings unique hurdles. Beyond the technical challenges of monitoring a vast watershed, there is the social task of "reaching across the aisle" to unite a community that has occasionally seen turmoil over lake management strategies, such as the debate over the control of the invasive species, Eurasian watermilfoil.

Successful implementation relies heavily on landowner buy-in, volunteers and the cooperation of all who enjoy our lakes. The LBA is actively recruiting community members to join its LWAP Project Committee to

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ensure the process is transparent and reflects local concerns. An informed and involved community is essential for the long-term impact of an LWAP and the long-term health of any lake.

An LWAP represents a shift toward a holistic watershed-scale approach. The potential projects identified in the LWAP aim to address nutrient pollution at the source as opposed to treating the symptoms of nutrient pollution within the Lake. By identifying problems today, the Lake Bomoseen community can lay the groundwork for remediation projects that will protect this public resource for future generations.

Rob Mealey tells me, "One of the real pleasures of being part of this process was to join FEA on its tours of Bomoseen and the other lakes in the watershed: Beebe, Echo and Glen. We were joined by homeowners and hearing their stories about the issues and history of their lakes was tremendously interesting."

Are you interested in joining the LBA's LWAP Project Committee or learning more about the upcoming progress reports? The Federation of Lakes and Ponds is also a great resource to call upon for more information about LWAPs; learn more [here](#).

Thank you to Rob Mealey of the Lake Bomoseen Association and Frank Piasecki, a Watershed Scientist & GIS/CAD Specialist at Fitzgerald Environmental Associates for their insights and science based assistance with this article.



**Clean
Drain
Dry**

Stopping aquatic hitchhikers is *THAT* simple.

Clean Boats Clean Waters

Before Launching AND Before Leaving

Clean off any mud, plants, and animals from boats, trailers, and equipment.	Drain your boat and equipment away from the water.	Dry anything that comes into contact with the water.
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Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water



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Clean all recreational equipment.
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Under Vermont Law, you may be fined up to \$1000 for transporting any aquatic plant or plant fragment, zebra mussels or quagga mussels.
(pursuant to 10 V.S.A. 1454, 23 V.S.A. 3317, 6 V.S.A. 1034, 1037 & 1038)

VERMONT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Please report suspected aquatic invasive species sightings to:
(802) 828-1535 www.vtwaterquality.org

Photo: J Rathert

Who's Doing Your Lake Wise Assessment?

Alison Marchione, VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program

[Lake Wise Assessments](#) are available to lake shore owners as free, voluntary, non-regulatory, storm-water, erosion prevention, and land management assessments that provide technical assistance to landowners for managing their lakeshore properties. The program also awards well managed properties with the [Lake Wise Award](#). The Lake Wise Program is run

by the [VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program](#). Assessments are most often performed by VTDEC staff, either Alison Marchione or seasonal employees. VTDEC staff perform 50-70% of all assessments in the state.

There are other regional groups that perform

Lake Wise assessments, sometimes as a VTDEC contractor via other methods of funding. What groups are working on which lakes are subject to change based on timing or the limits of grants and contracts. All assessors are natural resource professionals and are required to attend VTDEC Lake Wise Assessor Training. If you have a [Lake Watershed Action Plan](#), or LWAP, in progress on your lake, there are most likely some Lake Wise assessments funded as a part of that contract. In that case, the contractor performing your LWAP will have a set number (usually 5-10) of Lake

Wise assessments that they must complete. Current VTDEC funded LWAPs are happening at Carry/Pelots Bay (Lake Champlain), Sabin Pond/Woodbury Lake (Woodbury, Calais), and lakes Amherst, Echo, Pauline, and Rescue (Ludlow).

In other cases, VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program may have funded a Lake Wise contract at a specific lake.



(Photo: J. Jones)

For these contracts, a contractor is funded to perform up to 20 assessments over a 2-year period. These contracts are currently in progress at lakes Salem, Memphremagog, Harveys,

Crystal, Sunrise, Sunset and Perch.

There are other groups who have funding sources other than VTDEC to support Lake Wise Assessments. Sometimes these are time limited grants, other times they may be limited in the number of assessments they can perform or there are no limitations. These groups include: [Essex NRCD](#), [Winooski NRCD](#), [Poultney Mettowee NRCD](#), [Lake Champlain Committee](#), [Franklin Watershed Committee](#), [the Lake Dunmore](#)

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and [Fern Lake Association](#) (with hired staff), [Orleans NRC](#), [Friends of Northern Lake Champlain](#), [Black River Action Team](#), [Windham NRC](#), and [Rutland NRC](#).

If a group was previously working on your lake and now they aren't any longer, this does not mean that Lake Wise Assessments are not available to you or that you must fund a group to perform an assessment. Assessments are always available to the public and

free of charge directly from the VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program.

To find out who may be conducting a Lake Wise Assessment on your lake or for more information, reach out to Alison Marchione at alison.marchione@vermont.gov. Alison is happy to point you in the right direction.

Organizations Performing Lake Wise Assessments	Funding Source	Persons Assessing
VTDEC	VTDEC	VTDEC staff (Alison Marchione and seasonal staff)
VTDEC LWAP and Lake Wise contractors	VTDEC	VTDEC-trained staff of LWAP contractors
Non-VTDEC contractors	Non-VTDEC grants and funding sources	VTDEC trained staff of regional groups (NRCs, watershed groups, lake associations)
*Landowners never fund Lake Wise Assessments		



July is Lakes Appreciation Month!

“You work and play on them...but do you really appreciate them? Growing population, development, and invasive species stress your local lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. All life needs water; let’s not take it for granted!”

<https://www.nalms.org/lakes-appreciation-month/>

Curtis Pond Dam: One Community's Long Road to Renewal

Jamie Moorby, Curtis Pond Association

Curtis Pond has always been more than a body of water for the town of [Calais](#). For generations, it has been a gathering place, a swimming hole, a skating rink, and a quiet anchor for the Maple Corner community. Its dam - first built more than two centuries ago - was the unassuming structure that made all of that possible.

Unfortunately, by the late 20th century the aging dam had become a recurring concern. As early as the 1990s, state inspections identified safety issues, and over the next three decades, the community cycled through studies, engineering assessments, and urgent conversations about how to preserve the pond for future generations.

The turning point came in the 2020s, when the dam's deterioration could no longer be deferred. [The Curtis Pond Association](#) (CPA), a volunteer-run organization

that helps steward the pond's health, partnered closely with the Calais Selectboard to chart a path forward, which would allow the dam to be rebuilt and the town to take ownership.

After years of planning, in March 2023 the town voted to approve a \$450,000 bond, a decisive moment that signaled Calais's commitment to rebuilding the dam. Additional funding came from [ARPA](#) allocations, over half a million dollars in private donations, and a remarkable \$200,000 bridge loan from a local family - an act of trust that allowed construction to begin in 2024.

The timing could not have been better. The dam, heavily damaged in the flood of 2023, simply wasn't up to the task of holding back Curtis Pond for much longer. Calais had come to a now or never moment for Curtis Pond.



Curtis Pond dam, before (left) and after (right) reconstruction. (Photo: J. Moorby)

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Reconstruction was not simple. When crews broke ground in July 2024, they discovered that the expected stone foundation wall did not exist. Engineers had to design and build a new concrete “waste block” wall to use as a form for pouring the new dam. A massive cofferdam - 550 one-ton sandbags topped with swamp mats - held back the pond while the new dam took shape. Despite these challenges, the project moved steadily forward, and by late 2024, the dam was essentially complete.

The celebration that followed in October 2025 captured the spirit of the entire endeavor. Neighbors gathered at the Maple Corner Community Center for cake, ice cream, and a walk to the dam, where [Rep. Marc Mihaly](#) led a toast to the newly reconstructed structure. Longtime residents, volunteers, donors, and even “Bucky the Beaver” - a beloved hand puppet - took part in honoring what had truly been a community-wide achievement.

As one speaker put it, Curtis Pond is “that one house

in the neighborhood where everyone goes,” and saving it had required exactly that kind of collective effort.

With construction complete, the final step was ensuring long-term stewardship. The Town of Calais has almost completed the process of taking ownership of the new dam, which will ensure long term local control over the structure that protects the pond and the village downstream. This transfer marks the culmination of decades of advocacy and years of intense fundraising, planning, and volunteer labor. It also affirms a simple truth: Curtis Pond endures because the people of Calais choose, again and again, to protect it.

Today, the dam stands not just as critical infrastructure, but as a testament to what a small community can accomplish when it refuses to let a beloved place slip away. The pond remains full and crowded with joyful laughs, and the future of this cherished landscape is secure because Calais came together to rebuild something worth keeping.

Good News on the Green River Reservoir Dam

Sally Laughlin and Michael Wickenden, [Friends of Green River Reservoir](#) Board

Green River Reservoir, home of the crown jewel of the Vermont State Parks system, GRR State Park, is a true Vermont treasure, wilderness-like and scenic, with a shoreline unmarred by development. A comprehensive Settlement Agreement announced February 12th at Governor Scott’s press conference lays the groundwork for preserving the Green River Reservoir

dam (and thus the GRR State Park) while allowing for the continued production of green energy. This ends 26 years of legal wrangling over the relicensing of the local utility’s dam which creates the reservoir. It is heartening that, in these difficult times, leaders can come together to work out such issues and come up

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with a proposed solution. Congratulations to all involved from all of us who treasure this place from the Friends of Green River Reservoir.

For years, the problem of relicensing the dam has threatened the reservoir’s continued existence. Unfortunately, the ongoing multi-year Green River hydroelectric facility federal relicensing process created a major financial strain for the dam’s owner, [Morrisville Water and Light](#) (MWL), a town-owned utility.

MWL felt forced to petition the [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#) (FERC) for permission to remove the dam.

Governor Scott intervened and encouraged the parties - [Vermont Agency of Natural Resources](#) (ANR), [Vermont Natural Resources Council](#) (VNRC), [American Whitewater](#), [Vermont Council of Trout Unlimited](#), and MWL - to find a new way forward. As a result, the

hard work of those involved, including Scott Johnston of Morrisville Water and Light; Julie Moore, Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources; Jon Groveman of the Vermont Natural Resources Council; and Susan Bartlett,

FGRR member who played a major role in the creation of the GRR State Park, the “Settlement Agreement” was reached. For the full text of the Settlement Agreement click [here](#).

“The settlement provides a responsible path forward for our ratepayers and for Vermonters who value the Green River Reservoir,” said Scott Johnstone, General Manager of Morrisville Water and Light. “It resolves the immediate uncertainty around decommissioning, supports relicensing, and lays out a clear compliance schedule aligned with Vermont’s water quality requirements, without placing an unfair financial burden on MWL’s 4,000 ratepayers for a resource that serves the entire state. Importantly, it also creates time and structure for the state’s review of reservoir draw-down standards, an issue that has been central to the long-term future of the Reservoir.”



View of Belvidere Mountain from Green River Reservoir (Photo: R. Kelly)

Several hurdles remain before FERC will be petitioned to revise the new 40-year operating license for the Green River hydroelectric facility. The most important one is the estab-

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ishment by ANR of a new two-year public process, culminating by January 1, 2029, that examines the requirements for managing the drawdown of bodies of water created by impoundments (reservoirs) to comply with the [Vermont Water Quality Standards](#). These water drawdown requirements, especially those in the winter months, determine the future financial viability of the GRR hydro facility.

For those who love the reservoir, paddling on those clear waters, enjoying bird song and the calls of the loons, the projected outcome is most welcome and reflects a shared commitment to stewardship and sustainability on behalf of those involved. The Friends plan to actively monitor the public process and ask all who value GRR to support this process.

VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program Update

Jenny Austin, Program Manager

Spring greetings from VTDEC's Lakes and Ponds Program! After a long winter, our lakes are beginning to stir from their frozen stillness. While things may have appeared quiet on the surface, there was a great deal happening beneath the ice. Winter plays a vital role in the nutrient cycle, and many animals, microbes, and algae remain active despite the cold.

Our Lakes and Ponds team has been just as active during the colder months. Winter is a busy time for entering and analyzing data, writing reports and grant proposals, advancing rulemaking, organizing resources, and setting priorities for the season ahead. Now, a little over a year into my role as program manager, I've gained a deeper understanding of the breadth of our work and am beginning to look more intentionally toward our future goals.

At the heart of everything we do are the people who make it possible. Our team—along with the many

partners and volunteers we collaborate with—is made up of dedicated, passionate individuals who truly care about protecting our lakes. If you are one of those partners or volunteers, thank you. With a staff of just 15, our impact depends heavily on your contributions, from collecting critical data to implementing best practices that protect and restore lake health.

Before sharing updates on our work, I want to acknowledge an issue that has been front and center for our program: wakesports. Over the past few years, our team has devoted significant time to rulemaking and public engagement on this topic. It has become a polarizing issue in many communities, often framed as a simple divide between opposing sides. In reality, it's far more complex.

From my experience working on this issue over the

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past year and a half, I believe that most people—regardless of where they stand—share common values: healthy lakes, public safety, respect for neighbors, protection of wildlife, and a balance of recreational uses. Achieving these shared goals will require collaboration, not division. Too often, progress stalls when perspectives harden into opposition and discussions become entrenched. I believe Vermonters can take a different path.

The connection between people and the natural landscape here is remarkable. It's evident not just in the scenery, but in how deeply communities engage with their environment—whether hiking, skiing, fishing, boating, or simply enjoying time outdoors. This shared connection is a powerful foundation for building effective lake management strategies.

Successful rules depend not only on enforcement, but also on clarity, practicality, and the ability to influence behavior. In Vermont, where enforcement capacity is limited, strong community values play an especially important role. Most people follow rules not out of fear of penalties, but because they believe it's the right thing to do. Building on this culture—through approaches like community-based social marketing—can be highly effective in

encouraging behaviors that protect our lakes.

Looking ahead, my vision is for lake users to develop an even deeper understanding of what keeps lakes healthy—and what puts them at risk. When people recognize the impacts of their actions, they are far more likely to take steps to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species or to operate their boats safely and responsibly. Rules are essential, but they are most effective when supported by a shared sense of responsibility and pride.

Even after any new rules are finalized, our work will be far from over. Outreach and education will be just as critical as the rules themselves. We will need continued support from FOVLAP communities to raise awareness and help bring people back together around the values we all share...

Read the rest of Jenny Austin's update on the FOVLAP website [here](#).



Out of the Blue

Sign up to receive 'Out of the Blue'
the Lakes & Ponds Program Newsletter!

Click **HERE** to sign up for the newsletter.

An Impediment to Functional, Effective Watercraft Inspection and Aquatic Invasives Spread Prevention

Barry Cahoon, Joe's Pond Association

In the summer of 2024, the Joe's Pond Association (JPA) discovered that Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) had been introduced into Joe's Pond for which we serve as the primary stewards.

The JPA has operated a public access greeter program at the Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) fishing access area for over a quarter century, absent a boat wash station. Despite robust staffing levels and training, EWM avoided our minimal safety net and quickly became rampant and widespread.

The JPA immediately mobilized to contain the proliferation of this insidious, aggressive and persistent invasive aquatic plant, which has now infested over 100 Vermont waterbodies. Despite tremendous financial expenditures and efforts by the JPA membership, contracted suction harvesting, education, surveying and monitoring, establishment of SCUBA and a SCUBA supported dive team that expended hundreds of person-hours removing EWM, and more, EWM was more widespread around the lake in 2025 than it was at the end of 2024.

The invasive watermilfoil

infestation dramatically elevated the awareness of the JPA as to the critical need to prevent the introduction of additional aquatic invasive species (AIS) into the lake. The JPA also believes it is our responsibility to prevent the export of EWM from Joe's Pond to EWM-free waterbodies. A fully equipped boat inspection and wash station is absolutely essential to achieve these purposes.

The JPA worked with FOVLAP and the Lake Champlain Committee (LCC) to provide testimony and suggested amendments to [Senate Bill S.224](#). Unfortunately, [S.224](#) was tabled on March 13, 2026 and did not pass (see the FOVLAP Legislative Committee update on page 5).

We believe the JPA/FOVLAP/LCC recommended amendments to [S.224](#), would have provided a func-

tional and mutually beneficial relationship between DFW and state lake associations to minimize the likelihood of AIS proliferation and its associated social, economic, and ecological losses. Our ad-



Joe's Pond (Photo: G. Farnsworth)

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vocacy would have established AIS spread prevention as an authorized use of state-owned fishing access areas at a priority use level reflective of its vital importance to preserving the ecological health of Vermont lakes.

Early in 2025, the JPA reached out to the DFW with a proposal to establish a fully equipped boat wash station at the DFW fishing access. The JPA believed, naively as it turns out, that the DFW would share and embrace AIS spread prevention by collaborating with the JPA and our VTDEC-supported greeter program to establish a boat wash station.

But we immediately encountered push-back. The DFW stated that the loss of two parking spaces to accommodate the boat wash station was not acceptable and that our existing Greeter Program was “more cost-effective.” This assessment ignores the financial and human resources expended by JPA to contain the EWM infestation.

This issue is not just about Joe’s Pond. We believe the JPA’s experience mirrors other Vermont lake associations' interactions with the DFW on the issue of AIS spread

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VTDEC/VTDFW Collaboration on ANC Related Activities

[Vermont’s Act 67](#), effective June 8, 2017, aims to empower the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and law enforcement to take a stricter approach to preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil, in the state's waterbodies.

Enter a collaboration that began in 2019 between Vermont Department Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Game Wardens and Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Aquatic Invasive Species Program staff. This DFW and DEC aquatic nuisance species spread prevention partnership supports Vermont’s transport of aquatic plants and aquatic nuisance species law ([10 V.S.A. § 1454](#)).

DFW Game Wardens participate in training opportunities, assist in the development of education and outreach publications, and conduct watercraft inspections at waterbodies. Wardens actively patrol fishing access areas, highways, and roads throughout the state year round through their general patrols.

The data in Table 1. represents specific deliverables reported by Game Wardens through this partnership during recreational boating seasons for the period 2019-2025.

Table 1. DFW Game Warden ANC Spread Prevention Activities 2019-2025*

	Hours	Tickets	Warnings	Contacts	Outreach	Inspections
2019	202	3	21	1,196	323	782
2020	230	3	12	1,423	271	766
2021	299	3	19	1,279	189	936
2022	344	2	6	1,571	175	1,233
2023	202	0	2	1,556	133	1,046
2024	188	0	6	1,329	22	907
2025	189	4	8	1,349	46	1,014
TOTAL	1,654	15	74	9,703	1,159	6,684

* Activity represents the recreational boating season only

Funds to support these efforts come from a US Fish and Wildlife Service Aquatic Nuisance Species federal grant awarded to DEC.

Thank you to Kim Jensen, VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program for providing this information.

prevention facilities at fishing access areas.

Failing to collaborate in preventing the spread of AIS will have serious consequences. While water access may remain stable, infested water bodies will deteriorate, leading to declines in ecosystem health and fish populations. Ultimately, this results in fewer recreational opportunities, reduced community enjoyment, and decreased demand for parking at F&W fishing access points in impaired waters. When this situation occurs, the short-sighted nature of DFW disallowing a boat wash station in order to preserve a few parking spaces may finally become crystal clear.

We live in a far from perfect world. Navigating through life and achieving our purposes frequently results in conflicts and requires resolution through compromise. That the inability to accommodate 100% of desired parking 100% of the time is deemed and drawn as a red line represents a rejection of the opportunity for compromise and collaboration through which achievement of a higher purpose and a mutually beneficial outcome becomes possible.

The most profoundly distressing aspect of the current situation is that DFW's resistance to working affirmatively with lake associations to facilitate and enhance AIS spread prevention, is that it not only represents an abdication of their responsibilities under [10 V.S.A. § 1453](#) :

"The Agency of Natural Resources shall...work with municipalities, local interest organizations,

private individuals, and agencies of the state to develop long-range programs regarding aquatic nuisance controls..."

but then leaves all the staggering costs, efforts, sweat and tears associated with AIS containment and management to the lake associations in perpetuity!

Sacrificing a few parking spaces seems to be not a lot to ask nor a lot to give. Vermont lake associations are the primary stewards of many of Vermont's invaluable lakes and ponds. Lake associations and their members suffer disproportionately in this role and must shoulder the burdens associated with the social, financial and ecological costs of AIS proliferation and management. As the JPA works to discharge its responsibilities to our membership, Joe's Pond and other vulnerable waterbodies to implement a complete AIS spread prevention and containment program, we can more effectively accomplish our purpose when the departments within ANR, including DFW, are acting as collaborative and supportive partners.

The JPA appreciates the value of public access to Joe's Pond and all public waters and recognizes the constraints of limited space. But the current situation begs an honest assessment of our collective shared purposes and priorities.

Barry Cahoon is the Water Quality Director and Eurasian Water-milfoil Management Coordinator for the Joe's Pond Association. Joe's Pond is a 405 acre lake located in Danville. To learn more about the JPA's response to EWM, click [here](#) for an article in FO-VLAP's Fall 2024 newsletter.

FOVLAP Videos are now live!

Deborah Miuccio, FOVLAP Outreach Coordinator

I am excited to announce that FOVLAP's educational videos are now live!

Thanks to a grant from the [Lake Champlain Basin Program](#), we were able to produce these engaging and beautifully filmed and edited short form videos to inform the general public about what they can do to help preserve Vermont's lakes and ponds, and show how they can learn about and get involved in their care.

The three main topics of the video are: Who Takes Care of Vermont's Lakes?, aquatic invasives and cyano-

nobacteria blooms.

It was an honor for me to reach out, organize, gather, and oversee the filming of interviews of a fantastic group of speakers with diverse knowledge and expertise. We filmed the interviews last summer at several locations around Lake Iroquois and Lake Bomoseen. All interviewees shared their passion for protecting our precious resources.

A huge THANK YOU to the interviewees for sharing their time and passion for protecting Vermont lakes, and to the FOVLAP board members who helped with this collaborative effort.

The full video is available [here](#). For links to three video "shorts," click on the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/4qSmZOuN1U4>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/JjmoRk62Glk>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/OBxRF-mOBhA>

Please watch and share these videos so we can all help raise awareness on how to protect Vermont's most precious resource. If you have ideas for promoting these videos to a larger audience, please get in touch by emailing deborah.miuccio@vermontlakes.org

This video was made possible with a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program and the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission.



Video snapshot: Mark Mitchell, VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program demonstrates water clarity sampling (Photo: D. Miuccio)

LAKE SEMINAR 2026

Friday, June 5 9:30am - 3:30pm

HIDDEN WORLDS: LIFE UNDER THE SURFACE

*Do you know what's going on in your lake?
You might be surprised!*



IN-PERSON AT THE SOUTH BURLINGTON LIBRARY AND VIA ZOOM

To register for the event, visit the link available on the FOVLAP website [here](#), then scroll down to the “Tickets” section, add the number of tickets you’d like to RSVP for, and then click the orange “Get Tickets” button. Both in-person and Zoom tickets are available.

2026 Lake Seminar Agenda

Start	Duration Talk+Q&A	Topic	Speaker(s)
9:30	5		Logistics and Welcome – Pat Suozzi - FOVLAP President
9:35	40+10	Turning Stones: Discovering the Life of Water	Declan McCabe – Professor of Biology, St. Michael’s College, Author of <i>Turning Stones</i>
10:25	30+10	Mighty <i>Mysis</i> - How a Shrimp No Bigger than your Thumbnail is Key to the Lake Champlain Food Web	Jason Stockwell - Professor of Aquatic Ecology and Director of UVM’s Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory
11:05 BREAK (refreshments)			
11:15	20+10	Native Aquatic Plants	Izzy Anderson- Environmental Scientist – VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program
11:45	20+10	Bio-criteria Development Process for Vermont’s Lakes and Ponds	Kellie Merrell – Aquatic Ecologist – VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program
12:15	15+10	Underwater Surprises	Jeri Bergdahl – FOVLAP Director
12:40 LUNCH (on your own)			
1:40	10+5	Foam	Kris Stepenuck, PhD, UVM Extension Associate Professor and Dr. Lindsey Cookson, Water and Science Program Coordinator for the Lake Champlain Committee, LCC.
1:55	20+10	Native Mussels in Vermont	Mark Ferguson – VTFW Zoologist, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
2:25	5+5	FOVLAP Videos	Pat Suozzi - FOVLAP President
2:35	20+10	Lake Health	Julie Moore – Secretary, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
3:05 Wrap-Up Pat Suozzi - FOVLAP President			

Friday, June 5th 9:30am - 3:30pm



The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds

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