

Lake Carmi BMP Project Kickoff Meeting

June 29th, 2022

Franklin Homestead (in-person) and Zoom (virtual attendance option)

Discussion Transcript

Question: Are there other efforts across Vermont doing similar types of work in other lakes?

Lauren Weston (Franklin County NRCD): Yes. There's a big push right now for Lake Watershed Action Plans. I know of probably seven other Conservation Districts that are doing those with camper associations and involved stakeholders. They're also working with DEC. A lot of them are launching in the next coming months as well, I know Evan's worked on several. It's a very similar idea, the Lake Watershed Action Plan might be a little more holistic because other pieces of it haven't been done already.

Evan Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald Environmental Associates): I think that's right. There's been a lot of work in the Lake Carmi watershed, but as Lauren was saying, the Lake Watershed Action Plan is a holistic look at the watershed of the lake, and that's exactly what Katy described. We're looking typically at three different things. Road runoff, often our rural lake watersheds don't have a lot of concentrated urban development so we're not focused on stormwater like we typically are in a bigger town, it's really often the gravel road, the network of gravel roads both public and private that we're focused on slowing that water down, preventing significant erosion, which is complementary to what a lot of towns in Vermont are doing right now for regulatory purposes. The Lake Watershed Action Plans have been non-regulatory and complementary to some of the permit work that's happening in the Lake Champlain watershed. So roads, ditches, lakeshores, and then streams and floodplains. Better naturalized streams that have been manipulated, getting them connected back to their floodplains and wetlands. We know that streams and their connected wetlands and floodplain are very effective at slowing water down, containing those sediments and nutrients. And that's been the focus of the other LWAPs. I see the Lake Carmi approach as very similar, but with some work that's already been done.

Q: Can you confirm the timeline and when actual work will be on the ground?

Katy Dynarski: My understanding is that phase we're doing now is figuring out what's already been done and then planning for the future and being ready for future cycles of funding by having those 30% designs that we can put forth.

Lauren Weston: I do want to clarify, our timeline is ending in August of this year for this study. So nothing in this study will be on the ground in 2023, it will probably be 2024 construction season. We at the Conservation District and Franklin Watershed Committee have access to state clean water funds. And so the way that we see the next step post this study happening is that we will take those prioritized projects, make sure the landowners are on board with them, and then we will apply for funds, either for a final design if we get to the 30% design during this study, if there's more design work that needs to be done. Or we'll apply for implementation funds to get the projects on the ground. It's a regular funding mechanism that we've been using for years, and it is changing a little but we're involved in that process too. And so we will apply for those funds and then we will either hire the engineers or the contractors to

get those on the ground in the prioritized order. We fully expect to be able to get funding for the priorities. There's some money coming.

Q: How many 30% designs?

Lauren Weston: We have 4 contractual definite 30% designs that are going forward. I will note that a lot of the projects that we'll identify will be very similar in scope so those 30% designs might apply broadly to other streams. A tree planting kind of looks like a tree planting wherever you plant the trees.

Q: Can you clarify what a 30% project is?

Lauren Weston: A 30% design gets you the land layout, it gets you the proposed practice, what you're going to put in, where you're going to put it in. And it tells you what permits you're going to need. Sometimes you don't need a permit. For many of the practices there are well-established detail designs, so there's already drawings and specifications about how to actually do it that we would just apply to that project. So it's kind of like a step one, and then there's a final design and then there's implementation. Depending on how complicated the project is, sometimes you can go from that 30% design, mush it up a little bit, and go into implementation, and you don't need that final design phase.

Evan Fitzgerald: It also gets you a cost estimate.

Q: Can you give us a concrete example of something you might recommend on a shoreland project?

Lauren Weston: We're actually currently working on a project on Lake Carmi with a private landowners to design the removal of two concrete blocks that are falling into the lake, and they want them removed and some stone placed up against the lakeshore and then having it planted with some native vegetation to stabilize it that way, as opposed to having the concrete, which is an impervious surface, so when the rain hits it, it goes directly down into the lake instead of going into the soil first. So that's one thing we're currently designing. That's a totally different project not related to this that just happened to fall into our plate.

Q: How would you arrive at something like that through this study?

Lauren Weston: Our goal this summer is to get out on the lake on a boat with our lovely engineer and look at some of the lakeshore properties and see if there's any areas where it's very obvious that additional trees would be helpful, or hey that entire lakefront is paved and it just doesn't look healthy. So we're going to go do some looking, and then we'll do some landowner contacting to see if they're interested in talking to us, and if they're not, move on to the next one. And then doing that analysis of areas where it looks like some of these best management practices could be implemented based on current conditions. And if a landowner that we don't identify wants to talk to us about what they see on their land, we would love to just do a separate site visit for that as well.

Katy Dynarski (Franklin County NRCD): This is also where all the people in this room come into play. If you have lake shore property and it's not looking the way that you want it to, if you want it to be vegetated and it's not, come talk to us. We'd be happy to come out and take a look, and we can make recommendations and figure out what some of those best management practices might look like on your land.

Pete Benevento (Franklin Watershed Committee): One of the areas that I hope this project will address is the ditches and the roads around the lake. They are in need of attention. I can tell you numerous areas where we can go and hopefully you can identify and correct all of these things, because this is something that we've been trying to do for years. I've seen ditches where the water comes in and it's just like a brown plume going into the water. Those are the things we've got to stop.

Evan Fitzgerald: Would you say it's private roads as well as public roads?

Q: They're all private. There's one road on the lake that's managed by the town, and then there's 120 which is a state highway. But the majority of the roads are dirt roads, private roads. We've done some culverts individually over the years as the watershed committee, but there are a lot more that need attention, and I would bet that on the majority of private roads, there's not proper ditching on the side of the road before the water gets into the culvert.

Lauren Weston: There has been some work done on the private roads. The Northwest Regional Planning Commission spent the last two summers doing a private road erosion inventory. They do really focus on the roads. We do plan on talking and sharing with them and making sure everything's connected, but they have done a lot of the walking of the roads and we'll get their help.

Q: I'm aware that there have been studies and assessments on the private roads. I'm not aware of any changes or improvements.

Lauren Weston: My understanding of the private road erosion inventory that was done by NRPC is that they have designs for 4 or 5 projects and they are currently in conversation with the landowners to get those done this summer and fall, the ones that were prioritized and funding. My next understanding is that the projects from that study that were prioritized but the planning commission doesn't have funding for is that DEC has another pot of money for in the coming construction cycle. Soon is what I've been told. Our intention is to turn the projects identified into this study into implementation. I will not say that it's going to be the fastest.

Q: What are the timelines for these projects?

Lauren Weston: A 30% design can take a year, the final design can take a year to get all the permits in place, so then you're looking at the implementation that third year. That's a typical timeline and I don't want to say that it's not. If the permits are really complicated, it might take longer, and you might lose your window to do that work in a given year, because there are some restrictions with when you can work in a stream, when you can be in the lake. The lakeshore project that Katy and I are working on right now is a pretty straightforward one, with the concrete blocks. We applied for it July 4th last year, we are almost done with the 30% design, hoping to be done with the final design this fall, and really hoping to do the implementation as soon as the construction window opens up again next year, depending on when the lake ice is over. It's not a quick turnaround, but it's because there are so many important checks on the designs and the projects to make sure that we're not doing anything that has unintended or ill-thought of consequences.

Q: What can landowners do to facilitate the completion of these projects?

Lauren Weston: Reach out to us as early as you have an idea so we can come out. Be very clear with us about what your goals for your land are. That is the most important thing in any of these designs. If we

design something that you're not going to want to actually do, that can set us back a couple of years. I think other things are just being open to hearing new ideas. You might see someone else's property and how they do something and think that's perfect, and the best management practice might be a little different from what that person does. Typically the way most of our projects work is we'll do the design, and then at the next stage we need landowner signoff to go to the next stage. If you know a contractor that is good at doing lakeshore work or that you like and would want to work with, that's important too. Knowing where your septic system is and your leach field are really important with all these projects too, so if you have those drawings, keep them handy.

Q: Do you want to talk about septic?

Lauren Weston: That will be part of our work, is identifying places where folks knew they had a bad septic system and did do an improvement, and making sure there really was an improvement. I think that's not the main focus of most of our work, but it will be a part of the lakeshore sector. We will make sure to bring in the right experts to be able to evaluate those, because we are not septic experts.

Q: How long will you be working, and what is your schedule for work? Will you be at the lake every day?

Lauren Weston: We will come do as many site visits as people invite us to do. We're not going to go on private property without permission and landowner contact. If 400 people want us to come, we'll figure out how to divvy that up. Luckily Julia is also working with us on that from FWC and she's up at the lake a lot. Our office is in St Albans so it's not far. It will really depend on the response we get from the community. There will be a few days where we're on the lake in a boat. There will be a couple of longer days where we try to get permission all the way along a certain stream so we can walk the whole thing and see how that's going. We want to do the lakeshore work while the campers are here, so it will be a big push before the end of the summer to get that lakeshore existing BMP analysis done and get ideas for new projects. Some of the stream stuff that's on year-round land may take place in the fall when campers are not necessarily the priority. We have a lot of projects, which might actually be helpful. So many of the projects we do have the same kind of design, ideas, analysis, so being able to see other parts of Franklin County as we're doing this work and bringing it back with the Lake Carmi watershed and making sure everything's in line and cohesive will be part of the next year for us.

Pete Benevento: Stream walks are very important. We did one on Marsh Brook and it was educational for me, the coordinator at the time, Tucker. Staci came with us, Karen Bates from DEC. We went from the mouth at the lake all the way up to Towle Neighborhood Road. I don't know what the status of the projects from that, but if we could do that with all the tributaries that'd be way ahead of the game.

Lauren Weston: That is our intention, and Staci has kindly given us a report from that walk, and Katy has turned that into an Excel file of projects, so we'll be seeing if any of those projects have been done already. So we'll have a nice list. We think there's a lot of great work that's already been done here, we want to acknowledge and recognize that and we also want to build upon that. The lake is important and we all want to be building towards a cleaner lake together.

Katy Dynarski: If you're interested in having us for a site visit at your property, there's a sign-up sheet for a site visit, so you can fill that out with your contact information and we'll get in touch with you.

Pete Benevento: We can also advertise the schedule in our newsletter and on our email list that reaches hundreds of people.

Lauren Weston: One thing we've learned in Franklin County is that word of mouth is important. If you think this is a good idea, or a bad idea, tell your neighbors. If you have an event that you host that a lot of people come to and you want us to come and do a ten minute spiel, we'd be happy to do that. If there's other events on the lake that you know about, invite us and we'll come give our two cents and hand out some fliers. We want this to be a holistic project that involves the whole community and builds on work that's already been done.

Q: How did this project come to pass now and how long is this expected to last?

Staci Pomeroy (VT DEC – Rivers Program): It's been recognized with some of the Lake Carmi Lake in Crisis funding that this was an important step in bringing together the various reports and information, identifying the gaps in area. This type of project has come out of the work and discussions that have been going on with the Lake Carmi groups and the DEC groups trying to move this effort forward. It's been collaborative work over the years saying this is an important next step. As the watershed action plans have been developed more, this project builds on that same type of structure and information to set the framework for how the various studies get linked together to move projects forward.

Lauren Weston: In terms of future work, the way that clean water funds in the Lake Champlain basin work, they're going to be coming in through the Northwest Regional Planning Commission now, and projects will be submitted to that group and a water quality council, and that is the planned funding for these projects moving forward.

Q: Why did that change?

Staci Pomeroy: Act 76 was passed, which described that clean water funding would be strategized to work through clean water service providers distributing the clean water funds. The funds would go from being centralized within DEC to be more distributed throughout the state in order to have more local control over what priorities in the various basins should be prioritized for implementing projects. So the clean water service providers are made up of, in general it's six different regional planning commissions, in Lake Champlain basin and the Lake Memphremagog basin. Currently watersheds outside of those are continuing their current block grant format, but within our basin the funding will be decentralized and go out through Clean Water Service Providers. They help organize Basin Water Quality Councils that are kind of a subgroup of those service providers, and those are made up of conservation districts, watershed groups, municipalities, land trusts, the regional planning commissions. There's a group designated under the law of who participates in that council. That council will be able to facilitate looking at the range of projects across their watersheds that may be prioritize for funding. Projects that get brought forward from this kind of effort may get vetted against other projects in this basin versus against a statewide pool, so there will be more opportunity for funding within a basin.

Lauren Weston: If you do want to learn more about that, there's a zoom call tomorrow. If you want to know more about that, find me after this meeting and I'll get you the link.

Q: So the funding for projects that you identify, that would come through the Clean Water Service Provider for Basin 6?

Lauren Weston: Nine times out of ten. If it's a really unique project, maybe we find a different funding source. Literally, Katy and my job is to find that funding and make a good project packet to submit to get projects done, and our other two co-workers as well.

Katy Dynarski: I feel like that's an important strength of this particular project with this team. We're not just creating a list of projects that will go out into the abyss that we hope that someone will look at in the future. Our organizations can apply for funds to do these projects, and we know great engineers who do great design work, so we're positioned to move these projects forward.

Q: You also said we're vetted against other projects. Are we up against St. Albans Bay?

Lauren Weston: Franklin County is very beautifully positioned in three of those different major watersheds. There's the Missisquoi Bay, which is the whole Missisquoi River, the Rock, and the Pike. St. Albans Bay and Georgia Shore are a different one, they're part of North Lake Direct. And then there's the Lamoille that some of the southern part of Franklin County goes into. So we'll be competing in theory against other projects in the Missisquoi Bay Basin. Nothing is written in final form, but the prioritization of those projects will be based firstly on phosphorus reduction. There are some other categories that get taken into consideration, but they're not finalized yet. In general, there's a good amount of funds coming to our watershed that we don't even think we have enough projects for at this point. We think there's going to be more money than there are projects. We're trying to turn that around and find the projects!

Q: So phosphorus is king as far as the priorities to be funded. But you're not looking at agriculture?

Lauren Weston: The Clean Water Service Providers are for non-regulatory projects. There are other funding mechanisms for the required agricultural practices work. Our staff's role is also to be working with farmers on required agricultural practices knowledge, best management practices, but it's not part of this study and this mechanism of funding. But it is the same people sometimes, it's just not part of this project.

Q: Is it fair to say that this source of funds for this work is separate and distinct from the state of Vermont DEC, Agency of Agriculture, their water quality investments?

Lauren Weston: No. The Conservation Districts and the watershed groups exist to be the local contacts and the on-the-ground folks to implement some of the ideas and finding that DEC and Agency of Ag have. Agency of Ag can come out with a new program, for instance Pay for Phosphorus, and we may be the ones on the ground finding farmers who are interested in that program, helping them sign up, and doing some of the work. For DEC, some of our work can be looking at streams, doing stream walks, and finding projects that need clean water funding. Conservation Districts in Vermont are a little different than other states. We are part of and separate from state government. We're not regulatory, so we're not going to go enforce anything. We're just going to go help people on the land, usually private landowners which includes farmers, who want to do conservation projects. And the funds that we get to do those projects are usually DEC and Agency of Ag at the headwaters of that funding trickle. We're working in collaboration all the time.

Q: I know that there was a great study on Marsh Brook that you guys have taken a look at. I don't know anything about stream management and I'm sure they did a wonderful job. When I read the report, they talked about little or no soil erosion, the banks looked pretty good. However, there's a tremendous delta at the bottom of that stream. We've seen satellite pictures where it grows every year. I don't know where it's coming from, but I think that Marsh Brook has to be one of the top priorities.

Staci Pomeroy: So, we did do the stream walk on Marsh Brook and yes, there is erosion on the brook, but it's expected. It's not large, excessive amounts of erosion. If you look at historic photos of the brook, it had been straightened through many sections of the stream. Over time, that channel has re-meandered, and there was significant amounts of erosion as that stream re-created its planform. So the delta has grown over time as the channel readjusted to a more stable planform. While we look at satellite change, part of it is also understanding the depth or height of flow when those pictures are taken, which may change how the delta looks. So it's difficult to use that as our only comparison. But that delta likely changed a lot between the 60s and the 90s, where you can see historic photos of a stream straightened along many sections with intense agriculture. The agriculture has now greatly reduced in those areas, and the channel has picked up much more sinuosity. It has corrected itself but has taken decades. There are areas with opportunities for improvements, some floodplain protection, and some of those projects are getting started as we begin to talk to landowners. This will be something we can look at with this team of if there are other sites where we want to go back and explore for potential restoration activities or protection. If you dig into Vermont Center for Geographic Information, they have historic photos available from the 60s where you can really see how straight that channel was compared to how it looks now.

Q: Since they've done all this marvelous work and you're kind of wrapping it up in yours and looking at 2024, would you call that study on that creek 30%? Could you carve that out and prioritize that first since all that work is done?

Lauren Weston: The report doesn't get you to a full 30% but we can certainly start on that project sooner. We can try to get to some of those 30% designs as part of this project or with different funding.

Staci Pomeroy: I've already actually gone to the District with a project from this report. That has been an opportunity. Those projects also were put in the Lake Carmi Lake in Crisis Plan. What we don't want to lose track of for those 30% designs is, we do want to catch some of those other tributaries. We did already take one of the higher priority projects out of that report, because I had a landowner who was willing to start on the 30% design. So it has been a good opportunity with the District, because they are a team who is neutral and is able to cross between many sectors of our funding areas, and we don't have many other groups who can do that.

Q: Will you be putting something on a web page or somewhere where we can see what you're doing? So we don't have to wait two years to find out what you've decided? Will it be transparent?

Lauren Weston: There's no hard and fast way that we have to do it, so if it's posting on the Facebook group, if it's a newsletter, we're happy to add a page to our website. This project is funded by taxpayer money, it's from the DEC, so it's public money, public information. One of the things we'll talk about with each landowner we visit is how the information will be shared back publicly. There's a couple of different levels of how public you want it to be, but it will be public on some level. We're definitely looking for this to be a transparent process, and we also think this creates more buy-in. If you know what we're doing, you might be more willing to let us come doing. And that's why we're partnering with Franklin Watershed Committee, who have the connections on the ground that we're still working to build. We are committed to a reasonable amount of updates. Especially if you want to be on one of the project teams. We need some allies in the watershed.

Pete Benevento: Doing this type of work, we run into people who are resistant. Do you have any method or formula or suggestions for how we convince people that this is the right thing to do?

Lauren Weston: It really is word of mouth, we know your neighbors listen to you better than us. And it is all voluntary. So, we're not going to force anyone to do something they don't want to do or let us on their property. I think once people understand the benefit and see that other people are doing it too, that's a really good peer pressure trigger. That's kind of the whole model of the Lake Wise program, which is hey, I got a certificate because I'm doing so good at water quality, don't you want one too? They've actually duplicated that same model too for urban areas, they're doing a pilot program this year for properties on streams. And so it's a community thing. We can come in and talk at you for as long as Katy wants to, but until a landowner is ready to make a change it's just us talking at you. And if they see what somebody else is doing and they want those trees, hopefully that moves people forward but there are certainly some people who don't want to do it and we're not here to force people. We want to work with people who want to do good for water quality and help improve the lake.

Pete Benevento: I think that we as camp owners can convince people to listen to you, and that's what I've been trying to do. That's proven very effective. It's all win-win!

Lauren Weston: Our goal in everything we do is to go meet people where they are. Yes, we hosted this meeting and asked you to come, but we hosted it in the Lake Carmi watershed. And if people couldn't make it, they could email Katy and ask for more.

Q: When do you start?

Lauren Weston: We're kicking it off right now!

Staci Pomeroy: Another thing for landowners to think about is, if there are places where things have worked or not worked, if they'd be willing to be a demonstration site. If there's something that didn't work quite right, we might want to figure out what would work better. Demonstration sites can work really well, or as a learning opportunity for other people in the neighborhood.

Q: We did that with septic systems some years ago and it worked really well.

Lauren Weston: One of our other Franklin County Conservation District staff posted that there are additional ARPA funds for septic systems that are anticipated later this year. I will also share that Fairfield Pond is getting a Lake Watershed Action Plan. We're not managing that, that's Friends of Northern Lake Champlain, Kent Henderson's group, and they're working with similar partners doing similar work. So it's not just Lake Carmi, it's other lakes as well, including the only other lake in Franklin County.

Jeff Sanders (UVM Extension): How many private landowners own the roads around Lake Carmi?

Pete Benevento: Patton Shore, Dewing Shore, Camp Road, Shore Road, Kings Court, Vics Crossing, Blackwoods is a private association. One person owns Mullen and Westcott Shore. So five or six. Some landowners are more involved in maintaining the roads than others. For instance, on Patton Shore Road, the landowner doesn't do anything for the road and everybody on the road has a shared right of way, so it's up to us to take care of the road.

Jeff Sanders: On your road, if a project were identified, say a lined ditch or something, there's one landowner?

Pete Benevento: Our landowner has been very cooperative. I know of several spots on our road, I can show you where the bad spots are, because we've taken care of it ourselves.

Jeff Sanders: Your road wouldn't have any trouble getting projects approved?

Pete Benevento: I don't think so. This year, we had trucks come in and bring gravel and we shoveled it into the potholes. Then we collected money and had a fellow come in, and he couldn't crown the road but he had least dug up the road and smoothed it a little bit so we can have a navigable road. This is what we've had to do every spring. I write a letter in February and ask people to send me money so we can have a road come spring, and that's how we maintain the road.

Jeff Sanders: If a significant part of this project is working on roads, I would put money in there for a steak dinner for six people and sit them all down to talk about getting access. The other question I have is, before you go to 30%, what's the point of doing the engineering if the landowner's not going to let you touch the road? It seems like you have to get a very small set of people on board, and not even bother looking at the places where you're not going to go.

Evan Fitzgerald: So when we come back to you with a list of projects and request input, somebody said it earlier that phosphorus is king, but I would put landowner cooperation right behind.

Jeff Sanders: Put it before. The buy-in has to come first.

Staci Pomeroy: While roads might be a piece of this, they are not the major focus. Because there is the regional planning commission's private road erosion inventory work, and funding funneled in through that, that's where we'll tackle roads. There may be gaps where roads and culverts come in here, but we're not going to pull all those projects into ours to become a priority because the regional planning commission has other funds. Roads can be a part of it, but they won't be the focus because there's that other funding source and group leading that effort. We don't want to take away from this project identifying other natural resource or lakeshore or agriculture efforts, where there may be road aspects to it but not the focus of the effort.

Pete Benevento: Should we have a kickoff meeting with the major landowners throughout the watershed? Those people you have to contact first and get their permission as your foundation.

Q: The cottage that I have has been in my family since it was built in the 1940s, but the land is leased. You talk about landowners, but I'm not really a landowner. I own my cottage but not the land. If you're doing anything to the land, are you talking about getting my permission? I'm not the landowner, technically. I don't think the Pattons would have a huge deal with it, but is that a problem elsewhere? Are you asking me for permission, or the landowner?

Pete Benevento: Our landowner has been cooperative but not involved. Other areas, the landowners are more involved.

Lauren Weston: We will have to have that conversations for every camp we visit, and if there are multiple people, we'll need multiple signatures. If the person who owns the land is not in favor, that's a stopping point.

Q: Earlier you said you would take a boat ride and look for areas that need attention. How will you go from that to actually doing something?

Lauren Weston: We will bring a notebook on our tour, and identify on a map where we're looking. We have a parcel map for who owns what, and we'll get contact information and start doing outreach. Hopefully that landowner will invite us onto their land. We'll start the conversation that way, that we were out on the lake and doing this project, and will you be interested in free projects to improve your land?

Q: Do you have the contact information you need?

Lauren Weston: We have Pete! What we do in other parts of Franklin County is see who owns the land and we'll write them a letter.

Q: Sometimes making that contact is the hardest part.

Lauren Weston: Completely agree. Hopefully, if we see one stretch, if you know anybody there and want to be a source of contacts, that would be a huge help if Pete doesn't know them.

Katy Dynarski: It can really be helpful if people get introduced to us through their neighbors, rather than us cold-calling. If you are willing to help make those connections, that can't be the difference between making contact and getting a project that we can push forward, versus something that doesn't go anywhere. And again, this is all voluntary, we are not trying to tell anyone what they have to do. We want to find people who are interested in working with us.

Q: Are all these projects 100% cost-share?

Lauren Weston: Voluntary projects that we bring forward to implementation, based on our past experience, we will get paid for. It will theoretically not cost the individual anything. Some projects may require some sort of match.

Jeff Sanders: What happens when you go to Joe's property and you see a problem that is regulatory in nature?

Lauren Weston: We would try to solve the problem voluntarily. We would bring resources and try to solve the problem before it becomes a regulatory issue, and a lot of problems can be solved voluntarily before they become a regulatory issue. So before someone comes out and gives a fine, a lot of things can be fixed. We can't use clean water funds to fix things that have already been dinged, but if we go out and we say "wow, that's pretty bad and if a regulator did come out, they would have to give you a penalty." Before that happens, we can give them some resources and non-regulatory contacts if we're not the right folks for the job, and fix this before it becomes a real problem for the landowner. And if they say "don't look at that," we'll look the other way. Our goal is to help people who want to make improvements, whether they be for really bad problems or less bad problems.

Jeff Sanders: If someone knows they have a problem, they probably don't want you to see it.

Lauren Weston: And that's fair, and we run into that in a lot of areas of our work. If you know someone who doesn't live in the Lake Carmi watershed, but who lives in Franklin or Grand Isle Counties and needs some help or would like a free consultation, that's us! We know a lot of people don't necessarily know about the Conservation District.

Pete Benevento: This is a tremendous opportunity on Lake Carmi and it's going to be up to us to get the word out. We're having a meeting of the campers association tomorrow night and we'll try to get the word out to every shore. We'll put it on the website and do everything we can to make it known throughout the watershed.

Q: There's a large part of our lake that is a state park and I'm just wondering how they're involved?

Emily White (VT State Parks): Yes, the state parks are absolutely involved in this as well from a couple of different angles. We recently have been developing some plans as they relate to the stormwater 3 acre rule for Lake Carmi State Park in that if you have more than 3 acres of impervious surface within your property, you have to either limit the amount of impervious surface or treat the runoff, so we've been working with our in-house engineers and we've been able to identify some areas where we can improve, and we're hoping that we will have some funding in the next year or two that's allocated to us to make some improvements, specifically in our boat launch and day use area.

Lauren Weston: It's almost 3 pm. If you would like to stay, we do have some discussion questions that we wanted to ask. If you wanted to get on with this beautiful day, we also fully understand. Katy will explain the sign-in sheets.

Katy Dynarski: Hopefully you signed in when you came into the room, but if not please sign in on your way out. There is a column on the sign-in sheet to write "yes" to wanting more information about this project, so if you want to be kept in the loop as this project progresses, definitely write yes or a check in that column, and make sure you have an email address put down. If you don't have email, put a phone number and we will make figure out how to get everyone information in the way that works best for you. There's also a separate site visit sign-up sheet on another clipboard, so if you're interested in having one of us come out to your camp or house and have us take a look either at practices that you may have already installed, so improvements that you've already made, or if you want us to take a look to see what opportunities exist for future improvements to be made to your property, you can sign up there, and we will be in touch with you as soon as possible to get all of those visits scheduled.

Katy Dynarski: We want to know what is important to you about the lake and what your vision is, if anyone is willing to host us at your neighborhood, we are willing to come to your neighborhood, we will show up to your block party. We will show up wherever. If anyone is willing to host us or there are community events that we should be attending and you want to let us know about that that would be great. If there are parts of the lake where there has been a lot of great work already done, we want to know about that, or if there are places with a lot of opportunities for work to be done, we want to know about that.

Q: Can you send the list of questions to everybody that's here and we can send you our answers?

Lauren Weston: Yes, we will do that.

Pete Benevento: One of the areas that's always been a concern of mine has been the north beach area, the town beach area, which has been a real challenge because it's maintained but its proximity to the road makes it a very challenging area to do any conservation work. I've always wanted someone to look at it and just give us an idea of can it be better. A lot of it is kept in high vegetation around the boat launch, but when you get down further where the beach area is, there's really not anything to prevent anything from coming into the lake. That might be an area to look at. Amy Picotte showed us one time

years ago, a beach that supposedly had remediation work done that was similar to what we wanted here. That would be an area that we could at least look at. We should get permission from the town to take a look at.

Staci Pomeroy: Are there any other town parcels that touch the lake?

Pete Benevento: That's the only one. The landowner that owned this (points to parcels on map) gave it to the town a number of years ago, and we split the legal costs of closing on the land with the town so the town would maintain it. We always thought, this is our front yard, this is what everyone sees, so we want it to be nice. It's so difficult to even get a sign with all the state regulations, to get a sign that says Lake Carmi, so people know what this body of water is. This road section (points to map) was identified by Northwest Regional planning as a road to be improved, and they have money to do that I think in the fall. And I believe on Patton Shore Road, they're going to come out to take a look and maybe have money to do some work there.

Staci Pomeroy: Besides Marsh Brook, do folks know any of the landowners along any of the tributaries who we might contact to do other stream walks?

Pete Benevento: Yes, we can contact them. We have permission from all of them to do the tributary sampling that we do. To do the stream walk I assume we would need permission. The only stream that's hard to identify is the one in the southwest corner. If you look on the maps, there's a stream called Prouty Brook. A few years ago I tried to sample it and you really had to walk pretty far into the marsh. We've had permission from one landowner. We've always tried to identify the mouth of the brook, but it seems to seep into the lake. There's no channel that you can identify. The landowner gave me permission, and I've tried to walk it several times, and I've fallen in. You see areas where duck hunters have gone, but they must have had waders, because you need waders to go through this section. This would be one area where we need to get permission from that landowner to walk that stream. That would be progress. All the other streams, we would let them know that we were going to be there and I don't think that would be a problem. And we have the parcel map too.

Lauren Weston: We have some feedback from Karen Bates who is the basin planner about the beach area, that Franklin Watershed Committee has funds to look at improving that area, you should check in with Dean. There's been some chat with VTrans about it, but someone is cutting the vegetation there. And you also have funds for Dewing Shore Road to do some plantings if the landowner was interested. It's a rain garden!

Pete Benevento: There's Dewing Brook, which we should go to the owner and get permission just to look and see. Most of these streams run on dirt. You walk up 30 yards from the lake, and the water is running on dirt into the lake. There are improvements that definitely can be made. The stream that's next to my camp, we've walked above it a few years ago and it was all dirt, so we had AmeriCorps people come in and put rock in, but I'm sure if you walked up you would find more remediation to be done.

Lauren Weston: Any other areas of interest or concern that we should be aware of? If there's no further discussion, I would be more than happy to let you all go to enjoy what's left of this beautiful Wednesday. If you know of anything to invite us to, invite us. We'd love to come. I just want to deeply

thank you for coming today. I know it's a beautiful Wednesday and during the day, so thank you for coming today and hearing us out, and hopefully you will invite us to your homes and properties.