

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Partnering for Conservation Solutions in Vermont



RCPP Project Overviews

2017

Cold Hollow to Canada (CHC) Woodlots Program

This regional conservation partnership, operating in seven towns along the western spine of the Green Mountains, will expand an existing cross boundary management initiative. The *Cold Hollow Woodlots Program* initially engaged twelve landowners spanning over 2,000 acres in the town of Enosburg. RCPP will help expand this work to 50 landowners and 8,000 acres by adding woodlots in **Richford and Montgomery**, as well as serving the existing woodlot group in Enosburg. The effort will encourage Vermont's private forest owners to manage wildlife habitat, find solutions for the effects of climate change, and develop ways to help forests adapt to changing conditions. By securing resources for conservation practice implementation for the pilot group in Enosburg and two new groups in the towns of Richford and Montgomery, the project seeks to expand the base of engaged landowners in this target region and foster the stewardship of forest health, integrity and resiliency into the future. This is a state RCPP project with funding of \$640,000.

2016

Memphremagog Long-term Water Quality Partnership

With an emphasis on target sub-watersheds where water quality sampling indicates significant contributions of phosphorus loading from agricultural lands to the phosphorus-impaired **Lake Memphremagog and a nutrient-impaired stream within the Tomifobia River watershed**, partners will plan and implement key conservation practices on agricultural land to improve water quality. The project will implement NRCS-approved practices on farms, focusing on Nutrient Management Practices (NMPs), smaller Best Management Practice (BMP) production area practices and field and pasture practices to address water quality, soil erosion and soil quality decline. Success will be evaluated using multiple performance measures including: water sampling results, NMPs completed, practices installed, phosphorus reductions per practice, acreage treated and social measures, such as changes in farmer behavior and establishment of an ongoing farmer workgroup. This state RCPP project is spearheaded by the Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District with funds totaling \$674,000.



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2016 *continued*

Young Forest Initiative for At-Risk Species

This project will help increase technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forestland owners who implement practices outlined in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that result in an increase in the quantity and quality of young forest habitats. This support is critical, since young forest habitat is necessary to meet the critical needs of several recognized at-risk species. This is part of a multi-state RCPP project and includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire (lead state), New York, Rhode Island, and **Vermont**. The lead partner of this nationally funded RCPP project is the Wildlife Management Institute with local leadership through VT Department of Fish and Wildlife. The total amount of support is \$5.2 million, with \$550,000 dedicated to Vermont.

2015

Nutrient Management Planning Training Program for Farmers and Conservation Practice Implementation Follow-Up

The Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) in partnership with the fourteen Natural Resource Conservation Districts, University of Vermont Extension and VT NRCS will assist small farm operators in the development of nutrient management plans (NMPs). The purpose of this program is to improve water quality by

reducing phosphorus and other nutrient loading from small livestock farm operations in the Lake Champlain Basin and beyond. The program will be supported through an agreement with NRCS, as well as through partner contributions provided by VACD, UVM Extension and Conservation Districts. The primary deliverable of this program is 190 nutrient management plans certified to NRCS standards. This state RCPP project is led by VACD and funded with \$800,000.

Accelerated Implementation of Ag and Forestry Conservation Practices in the Lake Champlain Watershed of Vermont and New York

The project will provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural and forest landowners for five years, to help with development and implementation of site-specific farm and forest projects that will directly improve water quality in streams and rivers that flow towards Lake Champlain. RCPP funds will also help conserve important and environmentally critical agricultural lands, and restore and protect wetlands that are crucial to absorbing runoff and slowing floodwaters. The lead partner is the VT Agency of Natural Resources-Dept. of Environmental Conservation and this national RCPP project is funded with \$16 million.



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2015 continued

Long Island Sound Watershed- Development of Whole-Farm Management Certainty Program

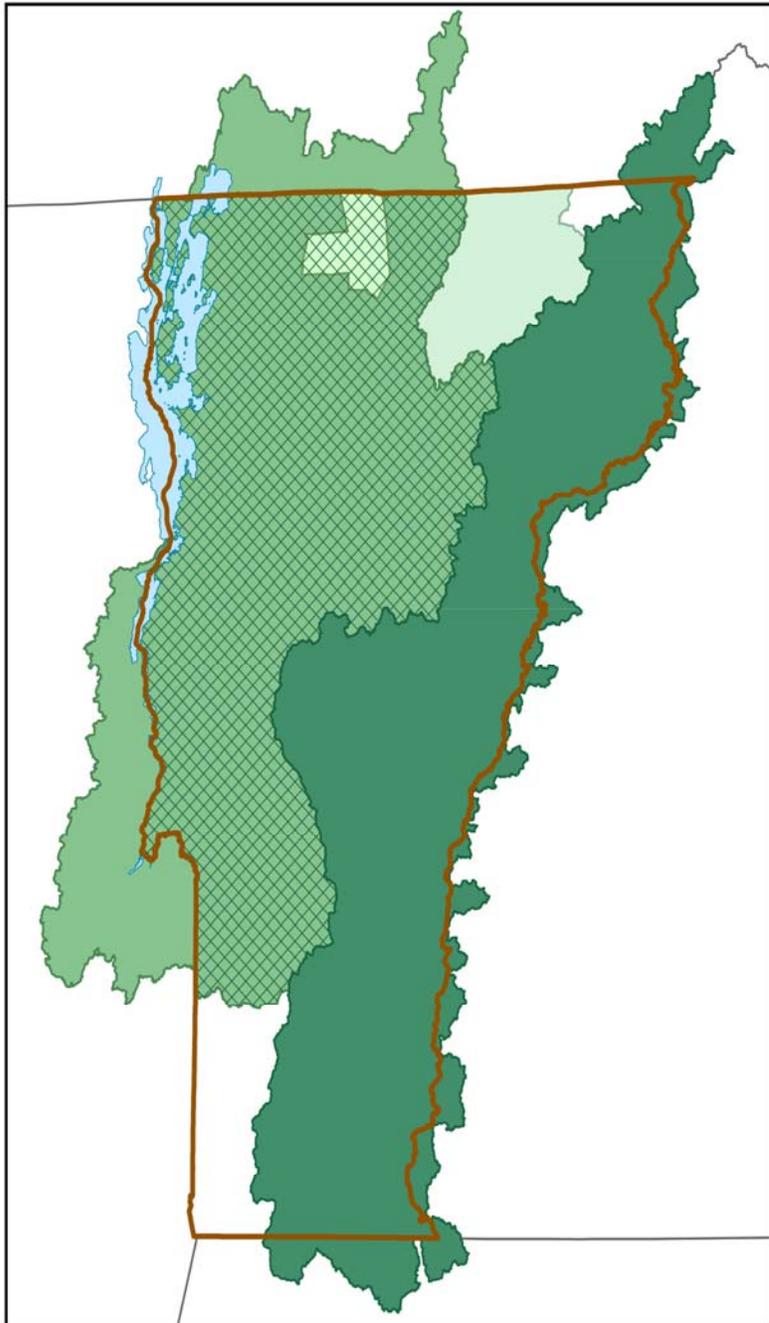
This RCPP project is led by the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation. The focus is on excess nutrients which were identified as the primary driver of hypoxic conditions in Long Island Sound and are also impacting upland water resources within the watershed, which encompasses areas of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and **Vermont**. This project will explore a comprehensive, whole-farm management certainty program for farmers in the area and use both working lands and easement programs to improve soil health and nutrient management, establish community resiliency areas with a focus on enhancing riparian areas, and institute a land protection program to protect agricultural and forestry areas. This nationally funded RCPP project is funded with \$10 million. The deliverables include:

- **Nutrient management planning**-on small farms, led by VT Association of Conservation Districts.
- **Advanced technical assistance**-to implement agronomic and grazing practices, led by UVM Extension.
- **Enhanced flood resiliency and stream stabilization**, led by Connecticut River Watershed Council.
- **Land protection through easement acquisition**, led by Highstead Foundation.



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(RCPP) in Vermont



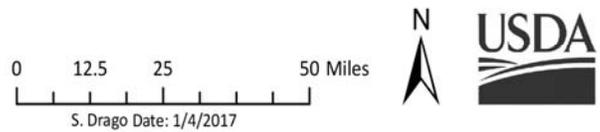
The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

State RCPP Projects

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The Memphremagog Long-term Water Quality Partnership (\$674,000), led by the Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District, target sub-watersheds where water quality sampling indicates significant contributions of phosphorus loading from agricultural lands to the phosphorus-impaired Lake Memphremagog and a nutrient-impaired stream within the Tomifobia River watershed. Partners will plan and implement key conservation practices on agricultural land to improve water quality.
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The Nutrient Management Planning Training Program for Farmers and Conservation Practice Implementation Follow-up (\$800,000), is led by the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts in Partnership with the fourteen Natural Resource Conservation Districts, University of Vermont Extension and VT NRCS. The project will assist small farm operators in the development of nutrient management plans in an effort to improve water quality by reducing phosphorus and the other nutrient loading from small livestock farm operations in the Lake Champlain Basin and beyond.
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Vermont's Cold Hollow to Canada (CHC) (\$640,000), will expand an existing cross boundary management initiative. The Cold Hollow Woodlots Program initially engaged twelve landowners spanning over 2,000 acres in the town of Enosburg. RCPP will help expand this work to 50 landowners and 8,000 acres by adding woodlots in Richford and Montgomery, as well as serving the existing woodlot group in Enosburg. The effort will encourage Vermont's private forest owners to manage wildlife habitat, find solutions for the effects of climate change, and develop ways to help forests adapt to changing conditions.

National RCPP projects that include Vermont

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Young Forest Initiative for At-Risk Species (\$5.2 million), led by the Wildlife Management Institute, will help increase technical and financial assistance to non-industrial private forestland owners who implement practices outlined in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The goal is to increase the quantity and quality of young forest habitats. This support is critical, since young forest habitat is necessary to meet the critical needs of several recognized at-risk species.
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Accelerated Implementation of Agricultural and Forestry Conservation Practices in the Lake Champlain Watershed of Vermont and New York (\$16 million), is led by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources-Dept. of Environmental Conservation. The project will provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural and forest landowners over the next five years, to help with development and implementation of site-specific farm and forest projects that will directly improve water quality in streams and rivers that flow towards Lake Champlain.
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Long Island Sound Watershed-Development of whole-farm management certainty program (\$10 million), led by the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation will address excess nutrients that have been identified as the primary cause of hypoxic conditions in Long Island Sound. The project will develop a comprehensive, whole-farm management certainty program for farmers in the area and will utilize both working lands and easement programs to improve soil health and nutrient management, establish community resiliency areas with a focus on enhancing riparian areas, and institute a land protection program to protect agricultural and forestry areas.



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