



FINAL REPORT

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STREAM WISE PILOT YEAR IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, VT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD) participated in the 2023 Stream Wise pilot year in partnership with the Stream Wise Project Team and other Stream Wise pilot year partners using Stream Wise program materials in accordance with the Stream Wise Assessment Protocol. FCNRCD staff conducted Stream Wise Assessments for 12 streamside property owners across Franklin County, VT. FCNRCD collaborated with other area partner organizations selected for the 2023 Stream Wise Pilot Year Program, including the Franklin Watershed Committee and the Missisquoi River Basin Association, to ensure that priority areas were covered without duplicating efforts.

FCNRCD staff attended Stream Wise meetings and required trainings to learn how to conduct outreach efforts and perform Stream Wise assessments according to the Stream Wise Assessment Protocol. FCNRCD conducted a Stream Wise marketing campaign in accordance with the Stream Wise Media Kit to reach streamside landowners and schedule Stream Wise assessments with streamside landowners in Franklin County.

FCNRCD staff conducted assessments for 12 Franklin County streamside property owners in summer and fall 2023. These assessments included desktop assessments completed in the Fulcrum Stream Wise app, field site assessments, and landowner reports with best management practices and recommendations tailored to each individual landowner's needs. Streams assessed include Beaver Meadow Brook, Black Falls Brook, Black Creek, Mill River, Bogue Branch, Loveland Brook, and tributaries to the Lamoille River, Trout River, Dead Creek, Cold Hollow Brook, and Stone Bridge Brook. Seven landowners received Stream Wise Awards. Five landowners were not eligible for Stream Wise Awards. All landowners received subsequent Stream Wise Landowner Reports in accordance with the Stream Wise Report template provided by LCBP. A diverse array of streamside properties participated in the Stream Wise program. Observed sites included undeveloped, forested streams, and streams with a significant amount of development within the riparian buffer. Landowners included private homeowners and farmers. Common best management practice recommendations included widening the riparian buffer, planting trees to increase vegetation diversity, and monitoring the riparian buffer for invasive species spread.

Once all Stream Wise assessments had been completed, FCNRCD reached out to all 12 participants to determine interest in riparian tree/shrub orders. Four landowners responded with interest, and trees/shrubs vouchers were distributed according to need observed by FCNRCD staff in the field.

Through this project, FCNRCD educated landowners on the benefits of riparian buffers for streambank stability, water quality, and wildlife habitat. Through Stream Wise advertisements, site assessments, and reports, landowners throughout Franklin County became familiar with the Stream Wise brand and Stream Wise practices. Streamside property owners received multiple recommendations for best management practices and options to restore or improve riparian habitat, manage stormwater runoff, and protect water quality in the Lake Champlain Basin.

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1. PROJECT SYNOPSIS

LCBP funded the development of a Stream Wise Award Program in the Lake Champlain Basin, modeled after the Lake Wise Award Program in Vermont, to educate and incentivize communities to engage in riparian stewardship activities with a consistent marketing message and brand. The award program was developed in 2020-2021 with federal, state, and provincial input (governmental and non-governmental non-profit organizations), incorporated practices from existing programs, and was specifically tailored to respond to the needs and capacities of local watershed organizations to the greatest extent possible.

FCNRCD participated in the 2023 Stream Wise pilot year in partnership with the Stream Wise Project Team and other Stream Wise pilot year partners using Stream Wise program materials in accordance with the Stream Wise Assessment Protocol. FCNRCD staff conducted 12 desktop and field Stream Wise assessments and distributed 12 Stream Wise reports to participating landowners. FCNRCD collaborated with other area partner organizations selected for the 2023 Stream Wise Pilot Year Program to ensure that priority areas were covered without duplicating efforts.

Three FCNRCD staff members attended four Stream Wise Training sessions this spring, including the Introduction to Stream Wise Training, Stream Wise Branding and Communications Training, Stream Wise Desktop Assessment and Atlas Training, and Stream Wise In-Field Assessment Training. If a staff member could not attend one of the above trainings the day of, they watched subsequent recordings at a later date. FCNRCD staff members participating in Stream Wise this year attended the required in-person Stream Wise training.

FCNRCD conducted a Stream Wise marketing campaign to reach streamside landowners in Franklin County. This media campaign included 5 social media posts, 3 blog posts on the FCNRCD website, 1 email blast to FCNRCD contacts with streamside properties, and the distribution of flyers to multiple locations throughout Franklin County. Marketing materials were created in accordance with the language and design outlined in the Stream Wise Media Kit.

FCNRCD staff conducted assessments for 12 Franklin County streamside property owners in summer and fall 2023. These assessments included desktop assessments completed in the Fulcrum Stream Wise app, field site assessments, and landowner reports with best management practices and recommendations tailored to each individual landowner's needs. Streams assessed include Beaver Meadow Brook, Black Falls Brook, Black Creek, Mill River, Bogue Branch, Loveland Brook, and tributaries to the Lamoille River, Trout River, Dead Creek, Cold Hollow Brook, and Stone Bridge Brook. Seven landowners received Stream Wise Awards. Five landowners were not eligible for Stream Wise Awards. All landowners received subsequent Stream Wise Landowner Reports in accordance with the Stream Wise Report template provided by LCBP. A diverse array of streamside properties participated in the Stream Wise program. Observed sites included undeveloped, forested streams and streams with a significant amount of development within the riparian buffer. Landowners included private homeowners and farmers. Common best management practice recommendations included widening the riparian buffer, planting trees to increase vegetation diversity, and monitoring the riparian buffer for invasive species spread.

FCNRCD staff also participated in the end-of-season meeting with LCBP and other Stream Wise partners, where staff shared feedback about this season's successes and areas for improvement.

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Project Timetable

Task #	Task title	Objective	Deliverable or Output	Timeline
1	Attend Stream Wise Outreach Materials/Content Sign-up Meeting	Participate in group discussion about outreach material needs/updates for 2023. Create outreach supplies ordering list.	Attendance recorded. Outreach supplies list submitted.	March-May 2023
2	Attend three Stream Wise training sessions. Order Stream Wise Supplies. Develop a QAPP with partners.	Attend introductory webinar, marketing campaign training, desktop assessment training, and field assessment training. Describe quality assurance procedures that will maintain Stream Wise Assessment performance.	Attendance recorded. Approved QAPP for program.	April – June 2023
3	Conduct Stream Wise Marketing Campaign	Create and distribute social media and print awareness campaign to <i>spread the word</i> and provide <i>outreach</i> to engage with stream and river property owners to participate in Stream Wise. <i>Celebrate</i> successes to engage more property owners.	5 Social media posts, 3 blogs, 1 email blast, 300 printed messaging distributed 500 landowners reached through outreach	May – September 2023
4	Conduct Stream Wise Desktop and Field Visit Assessments	Conduct an estimated 12 Stream Wise Desktop and Field Visit Assessments (Steps 1-5 in Stream Wise Assessment Protocol)	12 Landowners participating in Stream Wise 12 Entries of Stream Wise assessments within Fulcrum App Summary of riparian tree/shrub orders	June – October 2023
5	Participate in end-of-season meeting and survey to record and discuss pilot year program	Record and share feedback on pilot year program material	Participation recorded	November 2023
6	Reporting	Complete quarterly reporting requirements. Compile project summary and all project deliverables (plans, maps, articles, photographs, etc.) in a final report.	Quarterly Reports Approved Final report Data and photos submitted Project metrics report	Quarterly reports submitted throughout contract period. Final Report due December 10, 2023

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2. TASKS COMPLETED

Task 1 – Attend Stream Wise Outreach Materials/Content Sign Up Meeting

- FCNRCD met with Lauren Jenness for the Outreach Materials/Content Sign Up Meeting.

Task 2 – Attend Three Stream Wise Training Sessions

- Three FCNRCD staff members attended four Stream Wise Training sessions this spring, including the Introduction to Stream Wise Training, Stream Wise Branding and Communications Training, Stream Wise Desktop Assessment and Atlas Training, and Stream Wise In-Field Assessment Training. If a staff member could not attend one of the above trainings the day of, they watched subsequent recordings at a later date. FCNRCD staff members participating in Stream Wise this year attended the required in-person Stream Wise training.

Task 3 – Conduct Stream Wise Marketing Campaign

- FCNRCD created a Stream Wise webpage on the franklincountynrcd.org website. This website provides a link to a Google Form through which interested property owners requested a Stream Wise assessment specifically with FCNRCD. FCNRCD has also shared several posts from other partners and Stream Wise on their Facebook page. FCNRCD staff posted Stream Wise tear-off flyers on bulletin boards across Franklin County. FCNRCD staff have written and published three blog posts and published five social media posts on Instagram and Facebook.

Task 4 – Conduct Stream Wise Desktop and Field Visit Assessments

- FCNRCD staff completed 12 Stream Wise desktop assessments, 12 Stream Wise site visits, and 12 Stream Wise landowner reports. FCNRCD staff also coordinated with the 12 Stream Wise participants to distribute riparian trees/shrubs based upon landowner interest and needs observed in the field.

Task 5 – Participate in end-of-season meeting and survey to record and discuss program feedback.

- FCNRCD staff attended the end-of-season meeting with Lauren Jenness on November 13th, 2023. FCNRCD staff compiled and shared feedback about season successes and areas for improvement.

Task 6 – Reporting

- FCNRCD staff have completed two quarterly reports and one final report.

3. METHODOLOGY

Task 3 – Conduct Stream Wise Marketing Campaign

- FCNRCD conducted the Stream Wise Marketing Campaign in accordance with the directions provided in the Stream Wise Branding and Communications Training. Marketing materials were developed using phrases, colors, fonts, logos, and photos from the Stream Wise Media Kit.

Task 4 – Conduct Stream Wise Desktop and Field Visit Assessments

- FCNRCD staff completed 12 Stream Wise desktop assessments via Fulcrum in accordance with directions provided in the Desktop Assessment in VT Tutorial. FCNRCD staff completed 12 Stream Wise field visit assessments according to directions outlined during the Stream Wise In-Field Assessment Training. In-field assessments were completed using field sheets and input into the Fulcrum Stream Wise app. FCNRCD provided a Stream Wise landowner report to each participating landowner. Landowners that met all Stream Wise requirements were given Stream Wise Awards. Landowners that did not meet all Stream Wise requirements were given Stream

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Wise reports and best management practices recommendations. Landowner reports were based upon the Stream Wise report template provided by LCBP. Each landowner report included information and recommendations specific to the property owner's stream.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE TASKS COMPLETED

FCNRCD staff members read and signed the Stream Wise Award Program Generic QAPP.

5. DELIVERABLES COMPLETED

Task 1 – Attend Stream Wise Outreach Materials/Content Sign Up Meeting

- Three FCNRCD staff met with Lauren Jenness.
- Communicated supply needs to Lauren Jenness concerning signs, rack cards, and post cards.

Task 2 – Attend Three Stream Wise Training Sessions

- Three FCNRCD staff attended four Stream Wise trainings.
- FCNRCD staff signed the Stream Wise QAPP.

Task 3 – Conduct Stream Wise Marketing Campaign

- 5 social media posts
 - 5 Original Instagram Posts
 - [Stream Wise Advertisement 1](#)
 - [Stream Wise Advertisement 2](#)
 - [Flanagan Stream Wise Award](#)
 - [Stream Wise Advertisement 3](#)
 - [Miller Stream Wise Award](#)
 - 3 Original Facebook Posts (corresponding to Instagram Stream Wise Advertisements 1, 2, and 3)
 - 11 Facebook Reposts
- [Stream Wise page on FCNRCD website](#)
- 3 blog posts
 - [Be Stream Wise, Franklin County!](#)
 - [Tips to Be Stream Wise](#)
 - [Stream Wise Into the Fall and Winter](#)
- [1 email blast](#)
- 300 printed messages distributed
 - [Stream Wise tear-off flyers](#) distributed to bulletin boards in municipalities across Franklin County.
- 500 landowners reached through outreach
 - 500 landowners reached through social media, email blast, blog posts, and paper flyers.

Task 4 – Conduct Stream Wise Desktop and Field Visit Assessments

- 12 Stream Wise desktop assessments submitted on Fulcrum.
- 12 Stream Wise field visit assessments submitted on Fulcrum.
- 12 Stream Wise landowner reports completed and sent to landowners.
 - [Landowner Reports Folder on Google Drive](#)
- Summary of riparian tree/shrub orders (see Appendix)

Task 5 – Participate in end-of-season meeting and survey to record and discuss program feedback.

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- FCNRCD staff attended the end-of-season meeting with Lauren Jenness on November 13th, 2023.

Task 6 – Reporting

- FCNRCD submitted two quarterly reports and one final report.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This Stream Wise season was successful and provided an opportunity to reach and guide streamside property owners across Franklin County. FCNRCD's Stream Wise marketing campaign and interactions with landowners has helped to build the Stream Wise brand in this region. FCNRCD has used Stream Wise as an opportunity to communicate with landowners and answer their questions about streams, riparian buffers, and water quality. Stream Wise has provided a chance to build relationships with landowners that may not be reached by other stream and water quality programs. As a result of building these relationships, multiple landowners have expressed interest in increasing riparian vegetation along their streams and ordered riparian trees and shrubs from FCNRCD. Other landowners have expressed interest in future buffer planting and invasive species removal projects. FCNRCD staff are committed to further pursuing these projects with interested landowners. FCNRCD hopes to continue participating in Stream Wise in future years to further development landowner relationships and take steps to improve water quality in Franklin County.

7. REFERENCES

N/A

8. APPENDICES

Appended Documents:

1. Stream Wise Generic QAPP
2. 1st page of Stream Wise Generic QAPP – signed
3. FCNRCD Blog Post 1
4. FCNRCD Blog Post 2
5. FCNRCD Blog Post 3
6. Riparian tree/shrub list - final

Photos:

STREAM WISE PILOT YEAR IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, VT



Stream Side zone in Enosburg, VT. Photo Credit: Mel Auffredou



Stream side zone in Richford, VT. Photo Credit: Mel Auffredou

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Buffer zone in Enosburgh, VT. Photo Credit: Mel Auffredou



Stream in Cambridge, VT. Photo Credit: Kate Wettergreen

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Stream side zone in Enosburg, VT. Photo Credit: Mel Auffredou