

Introducing the new Vermont Clean Water Initiative Program

By Madeline Cotter, ECO AmeriCorps, Department of Environmental Conservation

DEC is pleased to announce the transformation of the Ecosystem Restoration Program into the new Vermont Clean Water Initiative Program. The change reflects a re-invigorated commitment to collaborate with municipalities, state agencies, local and regional



partners, farmers, businesses and the public to take action to safeguard clean water across the state. Each change in the program name, from Clean and Clear, to Ecosystem Restoration Program, and now Vermont Clean Water Initiative Program, represents significant growth in funding, opportunities and nutrient reductions in direct response to Vermonters' concerns.

Jumpstarted with the signing of Act 64 – the Vermont Clean Water Act – in June of 2015, the Vermont Clean Water Initiative Program's primary mission is to effectively implement clean water restoration activities throughout Vermont. The Program is housed in DEC's Watershed Management Division and carries four major objectives associated with the Division's mission to protect, maintain enhance and restore surface waters throughout the state. They are to: (1) Coordinate implementation by working closely with municipalities and other partners; (2) Provide funding, such as the Ecosystem Restoration grants, to support implementation; (3) Track progress; and (4) Report on our progress, communicate outcomes and engage the public.

The Initiative will continue to focus on reducing sediment and nutrient (phosphorus and nitrogen) pollution across the State, the most common cause of water quality degradation facing Vermont. It will also support the Clean Water Fund Board governing the allocation of the new Clean Water Fund.

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