

Keeping Water Local

What we all do on the land – anywhere across the watershed – has an effect that often shows up in our river and streams. Poorly managed logging or home construction or countless other practices can contribute to problems across the landscape and in our surface water. But, the reverse is also true – your property can be part of the solution.

Imagine each property is a sponge or a filter that soaks up stormwater runoff. Instead of rain and snow running off your land to a neighbor's or to the closest stream – gathering pollutants, volume and erosive power along the way – imagine you return water to the ground. It is simpler and more cost effective to protect groundwater before it becomes polluted. And, in so doing, we also slow down and reduce the amount of water on its way to the streams, lessening our downstream neighbor's flood vulnerability. Keeping water local by helping it infiltrate where it falls is an important part of land stewardship.

Read about some recent projects where Friends of the Mad River is working with our watershed partners to be good stewards and keep water local!

Cleaner Streams and Longer Lasting Roads

Thanks to the Fayston road crew and a grant from Vermont's Ecosystem Restoration Program, three problematic road segments are no longer eroding sediment and pollutants into our watershed's streams. Fayston, like other Mad River watershed towns, has countless steep, high elevation roads where erosion problems cause water quality problems. Roughly six percent of the Winooski River watershed's phosphorus contribution to Lake Champlain comes from rural backroads, and this percentage is likely higher in the Mad River Valley due to the steepness of our terrain compared to that of the Champlain Valley.

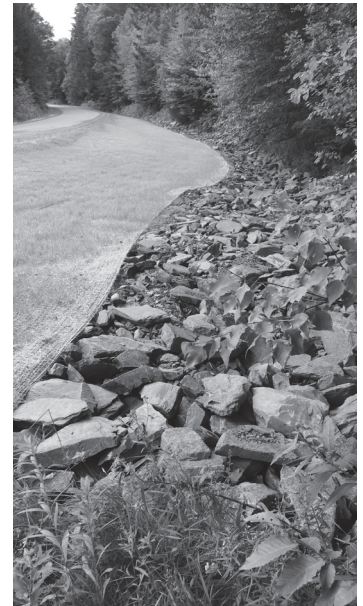
With assistance from Friends of the Mad River and Vermont's Better Backroads Program, the Fayston road crew used best management practices (BMPs) to stabilize thousands of feet of roadway along Center Fayston, Kew Vasseur, and Tucker Hill Roads and reduce damaging runoff. A 2012 FMR inventory identified the sites as top priorities. At each site, the road crew: reshaped ditches so that they are wider but less steep; lined ditches with large rocks or erosion fabric to slow and filter water; reshaped the road's crown (its cross-sectional shape) so it sheds water appropriately; and narrowed over-widened road sections to reduce the amount of impervious surface.

Before



Kew Vasseur Road: Note over-widened road and steep, eroding ditch full of sediment.

After



Kew Vasseur Road: Note narrowed road and wider, less steep ditch lined with rock.

The good news is that fixing erosion problems not only promotes clean water but it also helps roads last longer, reduces costly maintenance, and reduces flash flooding. Thanks to the Town of Fayston for being good watershed stewards. If you live in Fayston, make sure your Select Board and road crew know you appreciate their efforts.