

FRIENDS OF NORTHERN LAKE CHAMPLAIN



**SUMMER NEWSLETTER
JULY 2009**

Friends of Missisquoi Bay has become Friends of Northern Lake Champlain !!

Our new name better reflects the work that we have been doing. No one part of the Northern Lake will be cleaned up without all of the parts being cleaned up-- and that is our goal. The new name also reflects the make-up of our Board of Directors who live in Grand Isle, St. Albans and the other Northern Lake towns in between.

REDUCING EROSION OFF OF FARM FIELDS

In late June Friends of Missisquoi Bay and the Farmers' Watershed Alliance held a farmer meeting/public meeting at the farm of Wayne and Nancy Fiske of Franklin. This was the finishing event of a grant that Friends of Missisquoi Bay (FMB) received to demonstrate the effectiveness of low-cost field practices that will reduce ag-related sediment and phosphorus pollution in the Rock River watershed.

60 people showed up at the Fiske's Farm, a good mixture of farmers, citizens, citizens' organizations, government employees and the media. Brian Jerose, a contractor for Friends of Missisquoi Bay, organized the event and spoke about the various practices that were used in the grant—covercropping, reduced tillage methods and critical source area seeding. Heather Darby of UVM Extension described her work with high-residue cropping systems and with short-season corn varieties that allow better use of the covercrop nutrients.

On hand were pieces of farming equipment that are being used to reduce ag-related water pollution. The Farmers Watershed Alliance (FWA) had one of the aerators that they have been using to aerate 11,000 acres of hay land in the lower Missisquoi in a project that will improve crop yields for farmers and reduce manure run-off. FWA also had a piece of equipment that is adaptable for no-till or zone-till planting of corn or soybeans- these reduced tillage methods can improve soil quality and will reduce erosion of sediment and phosphorus. These two pieces of FWA equipment were both used in the Friends of Missisquoi Bay project, another example of the cooperation between the two organizations. Also on hand were a manure incorporator and a manure injector, both of which have been used to reduce sediment and nutrient losses into the Rock River.

At the meeting, Governor Douglas signed the 2009 Vermont Clean Water Day proclamation. This is significant in that it shows that farmers are involved in the work to improve water quality, that they are proud of their work and that they are ready to exhibit their success. Included in the proclamation are these words: "The stewardship of Vermont's waters is everyone's responsibility- farmer and city dweller; year-round resident and seasonal visitor- and Vermonters take this responsibility seriously." It is important that this message be carried to all parts of Lake Champlain.

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain (FNLC) has received another grant (\$45,000) for similar projects in Rock River watershed for 2009-2010. We hope to be able to demonstrate additional practices, such as grassed waterways, contour plowing and strip cropping. The grant also includes work in the St. Albans Bay watershed so that FNLC can help bring this demonstration work to the farmers in the Bay and to the St. Albans Area Watershed Association.

More Action:

We are a leader in Northern Waters Partners, a collaborative of eight water quality groups pressing for more implementation action in the watersheds. We work with two Quebec organizations, providing us with new information and new ideas. We collaborate well with state agencies, but keep the pressure on for more focus, more implementation, more enforcement and more accountability.

Turning up the Heat:

State agencies and other organizations working on Lake clean-up finally have the good information and good management plans that are necessary to have focused, effective, cost-efficient implementation. Meanwhile, on the water, there are already big, bad blue-green algae blooms in Missisquoi Bay. We are turning up the heat on government in order to get Northern Lake Champlain cleaned up.

Fund Raising:

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain needs funds to do our work, and private dollars provide special muscle and leverage in the work to clean up Northern Lake Champlain. This month we are building our membership and our funds with a new-membership drive in West Swanton and on Maquam Shore.

FNLCC is a 501 (c)3 organization, and gifts are tax exempt. Please help by sending donations to:

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain PO Box 58 Swanton, VT 05488

Coming Up:

August 6th: Shoreline Stabilization Workshop,

Sponsored by Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) and Friends of Northern Lake Champlain. From 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge in Swanton.

Identify causes of Lake shoreline erosion, learn to identify the best stabilization methods, and more. For information, contact NRPC at 524-5958 or Paul Madden, pmadden@together.net.

September 1st: Annual Meeting of Friends of Northern Lake Champlain.

From 7:00 to 9:00 pm at Swanton Village Complex.

More information soon, or contact the executive director of Friends of Northern Lake Champlain, Paul Madden at pmadden@together.net

Soon: Our website! Soon as we can. You will find us at NorthernLakeChamplain.org

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