February 13, 2026

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Trout Brook Reservoir Dam Removal

- Why did the dam need to be removed:
    - Safety hazard, in poor, deteriorating condition, no longer serving a useful purpose, liability on the books for the Village
    - Removing the dam improved public safety - were it to fail uncontrolled, likely would have impacted both the access road to the wells and Reservoir Road
    - Reduced future flood risk - were it to fail uncontrolled, likely would have led to a ton of sediment plugging up culverts downstream and contributing to flooding during a large storm. It probably would have re-routed the stream and may have impacted infrastructure as well.
    - Reduced risk to water supply infrastructure - an uncontrolled failure likely could have exposed or damaged the water line that crosses the stream just downstream of where the dam was and jeopardized the drinking water supply for the Village.
- Monitoring at the site - this site will be monitored to show the ecosystem benefits of dam removal over time by comparing pre-removal to post-removal data which will likely help improve design and removal processes for future dams across the state.
- Challenges that go into managing a project like this - coordination of funders, permits, and the work itself. Lots of moving pieces that FCNRCD was able to manage with limited involvement of the Village except at critical junctions such as agreeing to move forward with construction, signing permits as the landowner, and weekly meetings at the construction site. Helpful for the grant funds to be secured and channeled through FCNRCD instead of the Village for administrative, reporting, and bookkeeping reasons
- FCNRCD began scoping this project in 2022 and connected with the Village at various progress points to create designs, hire contractors, receive permits, oversee construction, etc.
- This relationship is continuing via FCNRCD working to secure funds to improve the culverts that cross the access road to the wells to improve water quality and aquatic organism passage; FCNRCD is easy to connect and work with to move things like this forward and build on successes.
- A few figures that might be helpful:
    - FCNRCD secured $120,000 for Final Design of the Dam Removal

    - FCNRCD initially secured $800,000 for construction, but with the changes to the project schedule and needing to return to the project in the spring of 2026, FCNRCD was also able to raise an additional ~$220,000 to complete the project as needed.
    - FCNRCD also wrote a grant for about $115,000 for monitoring work at the site that is underway
- FCNRCD has also collaborated with the Enosburgh Conservation Commission on three years of the annual Missisquoi River Fishing Festival which has been hosted on the parcel of land adjacent to the water treatment facility along the Missisquoi River, which has brought hundreds of students and families out to celebrate the river each year.

Montgomery Flood Study + Project Development

- Throughout 2024, the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District, in close partnership with the Montgomery Conservation Commission, Selectboard, and other groups such as the Vermont River Conservancy, Upper Missisquoi and Trout River Wild and Scenic Committee, and VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation Rivers Program, worked with an engineering firm, SLR International, to better understand the flooding patterns and impacts of the Trout River, Black Falls Brook, and West Hill Brook in Montgomery, VT. Using this information, the team identified possible flood risk reduction alternatives and locations where floodplain restoration, buyouts, infrastructure upgrades, etc. may be beneficial for hazard mitigation and watershed health. We are continuing to develop these projects, including floodplain lowering on a town-owned parcel at the confluence of Trout River and Black Falls Brook, just upstream of the confluence with West Hill Brook. We are also connecting with private landowners to advance projects on their properties.
- This project has involved countless hours applying for FEMA grants and trying to secure funds to advance these projects, including trying to troubleshoot the regular accumulation and management of sediment under a bridge across 118 over West Hill Brook that regularly fills up and floods out the adjacent properties. We've worked with VTrans staff, town staff and selectboard members, and the neighbors to try to advance solutions.
- We also work closely with Montgomery on other projects such as trails and events in their Town Forest as well as site visits with landowners to help assess and improve wildlife habitat and identify animal tracks and birds on their property.
- Images from the Halloween 2019 Storm in Montgomery that helped to motivate this project:

Black Falls Road

Black Falls Road

Route 118 over West Hill Brook

Route 118 over West Hill Brook

Green Mountain Road

Green Mountain Road

This project was funded by the FY 2023 Flood Resilient Communities Fund.

Overview of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding for the State of Vermont: Vermont was awarded $1.05 billion in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding) as part of the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The Governor's Recovery Plan is focused on transparent investments in key infrastructure needs including housing, broadband, wastewater and sewer systems, climate change prevention and mitigation, and economic development. The explicit objective of this Plan is to provide long term economic recovery opportunities to communities statewide, with a focus on those regions or counties struggling the most with job losses and declines in demographics and income levels.

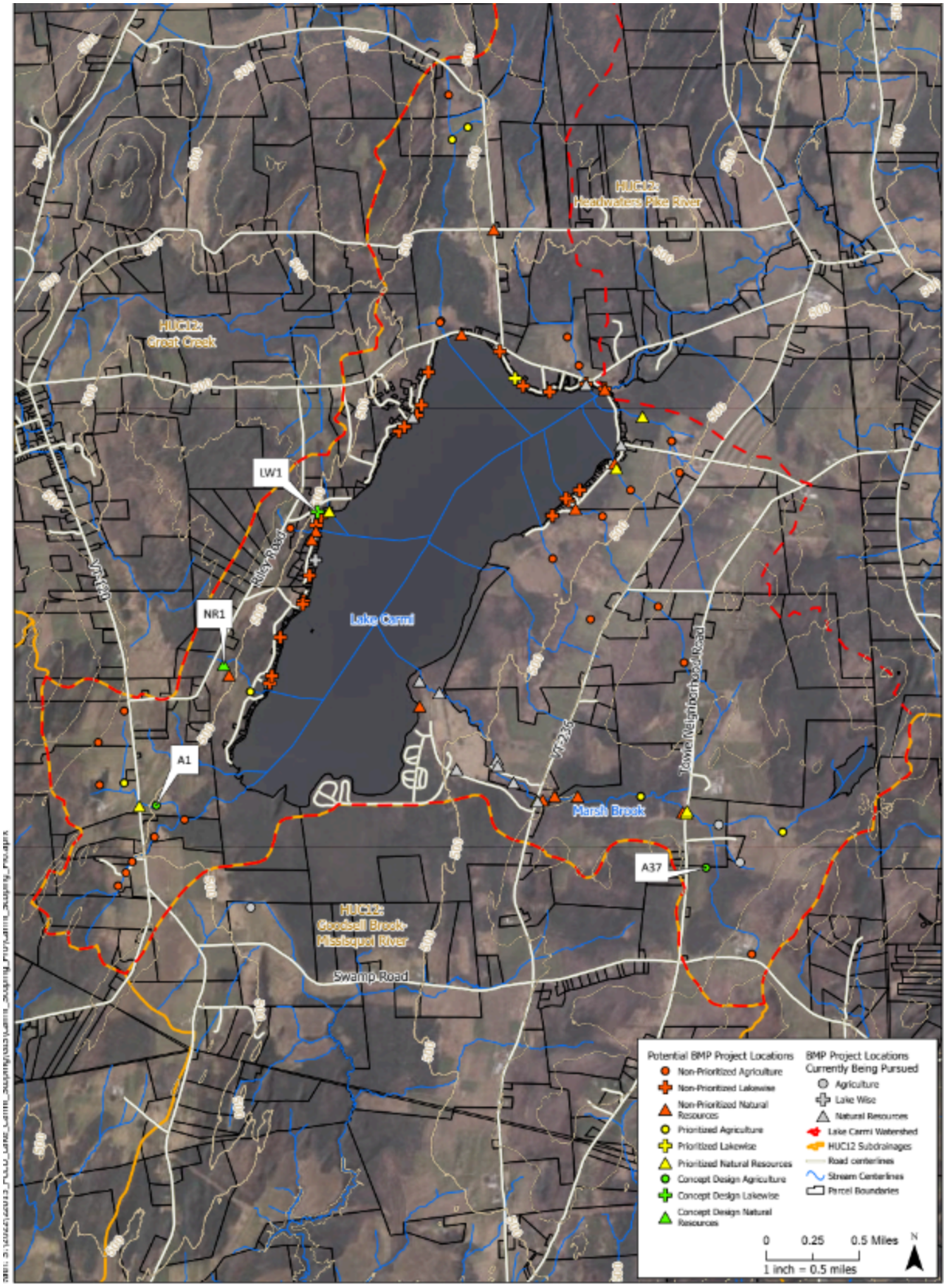
The explicit objective of the ARPA funding through the Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF) is to improve landscape and community resilience and reduce the future public safety and water quality impacts of climate-related flood hazards in Vermont, focusing on buyouts of flood-vulnerable properties and floodplain restoration.

Lake Carmi Water Quality Work

- In 2024, the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD), Franklin Watershed Committee (FWC), and Fitzgerald Environmental Associates (FEA) partnered with various stakeholders in the Lake Carmi community to work toward water quality solutions. Lake Carmi is the fourth largest lake in Vermont and serves as a beautiful natural resource for Franklin County residents. However, Lake Carmi has faced many water quality challenges due to historic phosphorus pollution and toxic algal blooms. As a result, it is Vermont's only designated Lake in Crisis.
- In 2024, the project team completed a comprehensive assessment of completed, in progress, and potential best management practices (BMPs) in the Lake Carmi watershed. This project gave us the opportunity to take stock of work that has already been completed to contribute to phosphorus reduction goals, and water quality work that can potentially be pursued in the future as we continue to develop relationships with landowners in the area. As a result, we identified 58 BMPs that are in progress or have already been completed and 120 potential BMPs that could be implemented in the future. We are thankful to our many regional partners that helped to complete this assessment, including the Lake Carmi Campers Association, Black Woods Association, Town of

Franklin, and the many generous landowners in Franklin that have made this progress possible.

- To conclude this project, we created preliminary designs for four priority projects in the Lake Carmi watershed. These water quality projects look different based on the context of each parcel and the landowner's goals, but each will help to reduce phosphorus inputs and improve overall lake health. Project types include floodplain restorations, wetland restoration, two-tier channels, and shoreline bioengineering.
- We have advanced 10 projects on both public and private lands into design or implementation phases so far and will continue to get more work done on the ground!



Map of potential BMP projects around Lake Carmi

Lake Carmi Boat Launch at the Town Beach showing thick cyanobacteria bloom across lake

Cyanobacteria bloom present during Boat Tour around Lake Carmi in from of lakeshore camps