

# DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LEGISLATIVE REPORT

## Vermont Wetland Permitted Losses and Gains, 2025

**Year: 2025**

**Date reported: April 30, 2026**

**Authorizing statute: 10 V.S.A. § 919(a)**

**Committees: House Committee on Environment; Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy**

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### Executive Summary

The Vermont Wetlands Program (Program) is responsible for identifying and protecting wetlands and the functions and values they provide by the implementation of the [Vermont Wetland Rules](#) with a goal of achieving a net gain of wetlands statewide. Activities to achieve this goal include education, project review, and enforcement. A significant portion of staff time involves providing technical assistance to landowners and project managers. This report provides a snapshot of Program and the Enforcement Division's wetland work in calendar year 2025.

The Program issued 195 permit decisions in 2025 for activities affecting wetlands or their buffer zones. Authorized permits were granted when staff could determine that the activities would cause no undue adverse impact on wetland functions and values. In 2025, the Program received 42 permittee reports certifying project completion. Among these reported projects, 1.8 acres of wetlands were filled and permittees restored and enhanced wetlands for a result in a net gain of about 1.5 acres of wetland. Rutland County exhibited the greatest gain in wetland enhancement in these reports. Project completion certificates received are substantially lower than the number of permits the Program issues and the Program is working to improve reporting compliance. For context, impacts allowed in 2025 permit decisions included 12.5 acres of wetland fill, with an offsetting 11 acres of wetland restoration and 32 acres of wetland enhancement.

Enforcement activities in 2025 include the receipt of 248 wetland violation complaints, with investigations leading to 140 completed investigations and 6 cases referred for penalties.

### Key Takeaways

- The Program handled 1,930 technical assistance requests and conducted 715 site visits in 2025 across a team of 8 full-time regulatory staff and two temporary technicians.
- Projects reported to the Program as completed in 2025 indicate a net gain in wetland statewide of 1.5 acres. Reporting compliance is low.
- Projects permitted in 2025 (and not necessarily constructed) include 12.5 acres of wetland fill, 11 acres of wetland restoration and 32 acres of wetland enhancement.

- Database improvements are needed to report on restoration success.

## Discussion

The goal of the regulation and management of wetlands in the State is the net gain of wetlands. This goal is achieved through the Wetlands Program (Program) through the Vermont Wetland Rules and voluntary restoration. Much of the Program’s work towards the net gain goal happens in the form of technical assistance. Technical assistance may be in the form of a desktop review or site visit of a parcel or potential project. Technical assistance duties include identifying the general location and classification of wetlands, determining whether the project needs a wetland permit or an allowed use approval, provide advice on how to avoid or minimize wetland impacts, and provide directives to clean up violations. The Program tallies the number of technical assistance calls received for uniquely identified properties each year. For any one property, there may be a back-and-forth of emails, calls and site visits which are all tallied as one technical assistance call for tracking purposes. In 2025, there were 1,930 technical assistance calls and 715 site visits.

Each year the Program issues around 200 permits for activities to occur within wetlands or 50-foot buffer zones. There are 195 permit decisions from calendar year 2025. Permittees must report on when construction for the permitted project is complete and certify that it was completed following all conditions, including restoration. Most permittees do not submit completion certificates when work is completed (roughly 1/3 submit) and the Program is working to increase compliance for this requirement. The losses and gains data in this report includes the 42 projects reported as complete in calendar year 2025. Wetland filling activities are considered wetland loss. Wetland enhancement and restoration are considered gain. In 2025 no completed permitted projects included wetland creation or conservation for compensation. Nearly two acres of wetland was filled (1.8 acres). Of the reported projects, 38% included no wetland fill. Permit requirements for enhancement, restoration, or In Lieu Fee<sup>1</sup> payment of wetland generated more than the amount of permitted wetland loss (3.3 acres enhancement and restoration).

Table 1 displays the reporting data by county. There was no work completion reporting in 2025 for Essex or Lamoille counties. Six counties had more wetland gain than loss (Addison, Chittenden, Grand Isle, Orange, Rutland, and Windsor) with Rutland having the greatest gain due to wetland enhancement. Six counties have a net loss of wetland in the 2025 time-period (Bennington, Caledonia, Franklin, Orleans, Washington, and Windham).

<b>Table 1. Wetland Loss and Gain</b>				
	<b>Square Feet</b>		<b>Acres</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Gain</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Gain</b>
Addison	5403	18373	0.124	0.422
Bennington	265	0	0.006	0.000
Caledonia	793	0	0.018	0.000
Chittenden	13699	21908	0.314	0.503

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Mitigation/In-Lieu-Fee-Programs/VT/>

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	<b>Square Feet</b>		<b>Acres</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Gain</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Gain</b>
Franklin	13798	1500	0.317	0.034
Grand Isle	2224	15877	0.051	0.364
Orange	3240	9265	0.074	0.213
Orleans	1560	0	0.036	0.000
Rutland	25905	74902	0.595	1.720
Washington	8035	0	0.184	0.000
Windham	1572	0	0.036	0.000
Windsor	2340	4800	0.05	0.110
<b>Total</b>	<b>78066</b>	<b>146625</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>3.37</b>

These data do not account for other non-fill wetland alterations, the loss of wetland due to lack of state jurisdiction, wetland fill violations that did not obtain after-the-fact permits, non-reporting permits, or projects that did not report completion. These numbers also do not account for restoration efforts that are not associated with a wetlands permit, such as the investment of conservation funds for wetlands acquisition, restoration, and conservation. For comparison, the amount of impacts permitted by the Wetlands Program in 2025 include 12.5

acres of wetland fill, 11 acres of wetland restoration, and 32 acres of wetland enhancement. The Clean Water Performance Report for 2025 identifies 16 additional acres conserved or restored in 2025, and 1,346 acres conserved or restored since 2017.

The Wetlands Program will separately track wetlands restored on-site, off-site, In Lieu Fees paid or conservation implemented associated with permits in future reporting years once an update is made to the database.

The Wetlands Program and the Environmental Compliance Division conducts wetland investigations and enforcement actions. In 2025, six incidents were referred as cases for penalties. No cases or citation enforcement actions were completed. Many additional investigations were conducted to determine if there was a violation. If a violation was found, the Program would provide directives, and encourage voluntary compliance. Here's the breakdown:

Complaints Received	Pending	No Violation	NOAV	Citation	Voluntarily Corrected	Case	Other Closure	Total Closed
248	108	90	3	0	14	6	3	140

The Program reports on additional wetland trends every five years (next report for years 2021-2025).