

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Friends of Northern Lake Champlain, a non-profit organization actively working on water quality issues in the Lake Champlain Basin for over 12 years, reaffirmed their strongly held opinion today that the 2011 Missisquoi Bay Basin Critical Source Area of Phosphorus Pollution study conducted by Stone Environmental with funding from the Lake Champlain Basin Program is the most comprehensive study we have regarding the sources of sediment and nutrient pollution in the Missisquoi Bay watershed. This report was developed as a tool for landowners, municipal personnel, foresters, farm managers and technical service providers to improve the targeting of resources on the landscape to areas contributing the majority of the phosphorous.

“This report has been extremely effective and useful to us as we work directly with landowners on their fields. It has enabled us to open the conversation and immediately explore with the landowner, at a sub-field level, how to best reduce erosion and minimize the nutrients leaving their fields.” explained Denise Smith, Executive Director of the Friends of Northern Lake Champlain. “The critical source area maps were developed using a model and the best available data, but are not perfect. We still need to go out in the field with landowners, validate the information provided, and determine the best conservation measure to address the resource concern.

“As an organization working directly with landowners and municipalities to address erosion and nutrient run off problems, we see first-hand what some of the barriers are to addressing the critical source areas. Many of the sites we look at in developed areas need to be retrofitted and those best management practices cost more money than if stormwater issues were addressed during the development phase” explained Kent Henderson, Chair of the Friends of Northern Lake Champlain. “When discussing nutrient loss and erosion on farms, we know that the best strategies are often agronomic practices like crop rotation and strip cropping that have been used by farmers for thousands of years. We actively work with farms and our partners (NRCS, the State of Vermont, UVM extension, NRCS, FWA, MRBA, and FWC) on promoting and implementing projects such as grassed waterways, cover cropping, reduced tillage, cover crop inter-seeding, strip cropping, and in some areas, perennial seeding and the establishment of trees.”

The Critical Source Area Report for the Missisquoi Bay Basin should continue to be used as a tool for farm managers, landowners and technical service providers. We support developing Critical Source Area maps that identify those portions of the landscape that may disproportionately contribute phosphorous pollution for the rest of the Lake Champlain Basin and we encourage people to understand what the maps are and how we have been using them to support better land management decisions in the Missisquoi Bay Basin over the last three years.

FNLC is a non-profit organization that acts to clean the waters of northern Lake Champlain and its watershed by working collaboratively with citizens, businesses, farmers and government in order to reduce land-use pollution. Our focus is on catalyzing the actions and accountability needed to reduce land-use pollution and securing the essential local, state, and federal funding necessary for successful implementation. If you are interested in receiving more information about the organization or would like to volunteer, please contact Denise Smith at 802-355-0694 or denisefnlc@gmail.com.