



Communities work together to improve water quality.

For more than ten years, several Chittenden County communities, have worked together to create and operate the Regional Stormwater Education Program (RSEP). This organization is a collaborative effort of nine municipalities, the University of Vermont, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and the Burlington International Airport. The central mission of RSEP is to educate the public on how stormwater affects our streams and Lake Champlain and the simple things we all can do to improve overall water quality. Together, we have been able to do much more than we would if efforts were town-by-town

Our efforts have included extensive community outreach and education to residents on key behaviors that anyone could do: picking up pet waste, reducing the use of fertilizers and pesticides, testing soils to determine if fertilizers are even needed and greener practices for car washing.

We are happy to report that progress is being made and the overall results are promising. In 2013 we surveyed more than 400 residents of the nine RSEP member towns. More than 80% of those surveyed now pick up pet waste compared to only 62% in 2003. Pet waste can be a significant source of bacterial contamination to our streams and Lake Champlain. Similarly, only 29% of the citizens surveyed use fertilizers on their lawn, down from 50%. We also saw an increase in soil testing to determine whether fertilizers are even needed. Testing soil for fertilizer need saves money, but also prevents unnecessary pollutants from entering our local waters.

Your efforts have resulted in significant progress. We applaud your ongoing commitment to improving our water resources, and remain committed to working with you to advance these common goals

To that end, in 2014 and beyond we will be providing you more information on how you can further protect waterways by using rain gardens, rain barrels and reducing impermeable surfaces on your property. As spring and summer rainstorms become more intense, these actions can “Slow the Flow” of stormwater so our local waterways don’t become excessively eroded and/or clogged with silt and other trash.

We would like to thank the people of **Your Town** for your stewardship of our streams and Lake Champlain. We encourage anyone who wants to learn more about what you can do to keep our Town's streams and Lake Champlain clean to please visit www.smartwaterways.org.

Name and Title

Regional Stormwater Education Program Steering Committee member