

*Friends of the Mad River (FMR) is a community-supported, non-profit organization committed to protecting and enhancing the valued ecological, recreational, and community resources of the Mad River and its watershed. More info is available at: [www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org](http://www.FriendsoftheMadRiver.org).*

Resilience is the capacity of a system to change and adapt, to recover health after a stressor. Resilience is about being smarter, not necessarily stronger. Efforts to build resilient Mad River ecosystems and communities are a focus at FMR in response to predictions of a changing climate and our own local experiences with increasing flooding and flood intensity. FMR uses several key strategies to help build ecological and community resilience that safeguard our quality of life in the MRV into the future. Highlights from FMR's 2014 work are below.

“Slow, spread, and sink” stormwater runoff from buildings, roads and farms since fast moving stormwater exacerbates flooding and the pollutants it carries diminish water quality:

- Researched Mad River Glen's parking area and designed renovations that stabilize its drainage path and prevent sedimentation to Mill Brook. We are currently working with MRG to secure construction funds.
- Acquired funding for “stormwater master planning” at Harwood Union Middle/High School. An engineer will design a suite of stormwater retrofits to dramatically reduce pollution and sedimentation from the school buildings and parking lots into Dowsville Brook. A school and community committee will guide progress.

Restore riparian buffers to slow and filter stormwater runoff, moderate flooding and provide wildlife habitat:

- Collaborated with UVM LANDS Program to inventory five years of FMR riparian buffer planting sites and outline recommendations for long-term stewardship at these sites.
- Provided technical assistance to the Town of Warren as the Selectboard and Conservation Commission consider management of three town-owned properties along the Mad River. Management aims to maximize floodplain function for downstream landowners and recreational value

for all. With US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) assistance and our own Riparian Buffer Restoration Fund, we'll plant trees and shrubs that strengthen the riparian buffer at Riverside Park in 2015.

Improve transportation infrastructure (roads, culverts, bridges) to reduce long-term maintenance costs and environmental impacts:

- Partnered with the Town of Fayston, FWS, and Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department to replace a high priority culvert on Lockwood Brook. The new, larger culvert provides brook trout access to upstream cold water habitat and allows flood waters to pass without damage to public and private property.

Monitor water quality and ecosystem health and share information with the community:

- Collected 432 water samples from 36 sites across the watershed throughout the summer with the help of ten dedicated volunteers. We analyzed samples from all sites for *E. coli* presence and samples from 18 sites for phosphorus and turbidity levels. We published results in the Valley Reporter, on FMR's website and Facebook page, on signs at nine swimming holes, and have submitted results to the State for further analysis.
- Published the *State of the Watershed Report* that serves as a "checkup" for the watershed, recording its vitals and celebrating the steps we've taken with our members, volunteers, and the larger community towards its good health. The Report is available in PDF form on our website or in publication form in our office.
- Worked with five local school classes to investigate the river ecosystem, connect students with the place they live, and enhance hands-on inquiry in the curriculum.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrie Miller  
Executive Director

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