

HELPING FARMERS PROTECT WATER QUALITY IN THE MCKENZIE BROOK WATERSHED



NRCS technical and financial assistance can assist you in meeting state regulations to protect water quality in the McKenzie Brook Watershed. This watershed starts just north of the Champlain Bridge in Addison south down to the mouth of East Creek at Mount Independence State Historic site in Orwell. The watershed does not include any land that drains into Dead Creek, the Lemon Fair or East Creek. All water within the watershed flows westerly directly into Lake Champlain.

2016

Which watersheds are targeted?

Pike River, Rock River, St. Albans Bay in Franklin County and McKenzie Brook in Addison County.

- These watersheds will receive **prioritized technical and financial assistance from NRCS over the next 5 years**. NRCS' approach to watershed management aligns with the State of Vermont's tactical basin plans which focus on projects or actions needed to protect or restore specific waters.

Why is my watershed an area of focus?

- In an effort to assist the state in meeting the phosphorus TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) for Lake Champlain, NRCS initiated a **strategic planning approach** to water quality improvement for those watersheds in the Lake Champlain Basin that were **most impaired and contribute heavy concentrations of agricultural phosphorus runoff to the lake**.
- The objective is to work with farmers to provide **one-on-one assistance** to identify areas of nutrient loading and apply conservation practices.
- The goal is to identify, target, and treat areas on farms with the **most critical resource needs**.
- Accelerated and targeted implementation of conservation in this watershed aims to result in **measurable improvements to water quality**.

What type of assistance is available?

- The NRCS **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** provides technical and financial assistance to eligible producers to address natural resources concerns including water quality and soil health.
- Financial assistance is provided to help farmers install conservation practices including crop rotation, cover crops, grassed waterways, heavy use areas, riparian buffers, waste storage facilities, nutrient management plans, and more.
- EQIP may provide financial assistance of up to 75 percent of the costs of certain practices. However, limited resource producers, new and beginning farmers, and veteran farmers may be eligible for up to 90 percent.
- The Vermont Agency of Ag, Food and Markets is contributing assistance for specific structural practices which would mean that EQIP applicants could receive up to 85% financial assistance to install eligible practices.

*Farmers in the McKenzie Brook Watershed can apply for conservation assistance to protect soil and water quality through NRCS' **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**.*

Contact your local NRCS office today.



HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND IN THE MCKENZIE BROOK WATERSHED**How and why is NRCS targeting assistance to the McKenzie Brook Watershed over the next five years?**

- ◆ The new TMDL for phosphorus reduction will require a **60 percent reduction in phosphorus loading from agriculture in this watershed**. NRCS' strategic plan is designed to help farmers install conservation practices that will aid in this goal.
- ◆ NRCS has allocated **\$4 to 6 million** over 5 years to help improve water quality and **accelerate conservation implementation** in the priority watersheds, including McKenzie Brook.
- ◆ Approximately **\$1 million is available to eligible farmers to implement conservation in 2016**.
- ◆ Although NRCS is focusing on the McKenzie Brook Watershed for five years, farmers are encouraged to **come in early** to apply for assistance to ensure access to the funding.
- ◆ Funding will become more limited over the five year period as it is allocated.

McKenzie Brook Watershed Area	Total Estimated Ag Phosphorus Loading	TMDL Reduction Goal	TMDL AG Phosphorus Reduction Goal (over 20 years)
approx. 21,000 acres	43,000 lbs/year	60%	26,000 lbs/yr

Target phosphorus levels in this segment of Lake Champlain is 25 micrograms/liter. Since 1990, it has only met that once and has in some years almost reached 50 micrograms/liter.

Achieving the required phosphorus reduction load from agriculture in the McKenzie Brook Watershed will require the use of many conservation measures, including, but not limited to:

- ◆ crop-fields planted to winter cover crops
- ◆ reduced tillage and no till for annual crops
- ◆ buffers installed on crop fields adjacent to surface waters
- ◆ 10-foot buffers on all ditches

McKenzie Brook Watershed Facts

- ◆ Area in Annual Crops and Hay=13,752 acres
- ◆ Percent of Watershed in Agriculture=approx. 75%
- ◆ Area in pasture=2,600 acres

For assistance with conservation planning in the McKenzie Brook Watershed, contact:

NRCS: George Tucker at george.tucker@vt.usda.gov, 802-388-6748, ext. 121

or

UVM Extension: Jeff Carter at jeff.carter@uvm.edu, 802-388-4969, ext. 332

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