

# HELPING FARMERS PROTECT WATER QUALITY IN THE ST. ALBANS BAY WATERSHED



*NRCS technical and financial assistance can assist you in meeting state regulations to protect water quality in the St. Albans Bay Watershed and help you be a good steward of the land.*

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.**

## Why is my watershed an area of focus?

- In an effort to assist farmers 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, and watersheds with significant public interest.**
- The objective is to work with farmers to provide **one-on-one assistance** to identify areas of farm run-off and apply conservation practices.
- The goal is to focus assistance to areas with the **most critical resource needs.**
- Focused 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 resource concerns including water quality and soil health.
- Available practices include: crop rotation, cover crops, grassed waterways, heavy use areas, riparian buffers, waste storage facilities, nutrient management plans, no till and more.
- EQIP may provide financial assistance of up to 75 percent of the costs of certain practices. Up to 90 percent cost share may be available for limited resource producers, new and beginning farmers, and veteran farmers.
- The Vermont Agency of Ag, Food and Markets is contributing up to 10 percent financial assistance for specific structural practices which would mean that eligible EQIP applicants could receive up to 85 percent financial assistance to install practices.

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

*Contact the St. Albans NRCS office today.*



## HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND IN THE ST. ALBANS BAY WATERSHED

### How and why is NRCS targeting assistance to the St. Albans Bay Watershed over the next five years?

- ◆ The new TMDL for phosphorus reduction will require an **83 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 **\$4-6 million** over 5 years to help improve water quality and **accelerate conservation implementation** in the priority watersheds, including St. Albans Bay.
- ◆ Approximately **\$1 million is available to eligible farmers to implement conservation in both 2016 and 2017**, and then funding will begin to **decrease over the five year period**.
- ◆ Although NRCS is focusing on the St. Albans Bay 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.

St. Albans Bay Watershed Area	Total Estimated Ag Phosphorus Loading	TMDL Reduction Goal	TMDL AG Phosphorus Reduction Goal (over 20 years)	NRCS Ag Phosphorus Reduction Goal (over 5 years)
25,088 acres	9,599 lb/year	83%	7,967 lbs/yr	5,200 lbs/year or 65% of TMDL goal

### Reducing phosphorus reduction load from agriculture in the St. Albans Bay Watershed will require the use of many conservation measures, including, but not limited to:

- ◆ crop-fields planted to 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
- ◆ waste management system upgrades

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#### St. Albans Bay Watershed Facts

- ◆ Area in Annual Crops and Hay = 6,075 acres
- ◆ Percent of Watershed in Ag = 36%
- ◆ Active Farmsteads (2014)=70
- ◆ Large Farming Operations=5
- ◆ Medium Farming Operations=4
- ◆ Small Farmsteads=66