

Press Release
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Building Flood Resilience in the Flower Brook Watershed

Over the past year, Poultney Mettowee NRCD (PMNRCD) partnered with Fitzgerald Environmental Associates (FEA) to study how streams in the Flower Brook Watershed interact with the surrounding landscape. This work is part of a multi-year Floodplain and Flood Resilience Assessment, funded by the Lake Champlain Basin Program, to improve stream health and protect communities from flooding.

What We Learned

In 2024, the team completed GIS analysis and field assessments on Flower Brook, Beaver Brook, and Purchase Brook in Pawlet and Danby, all tributaries to the Mettowee River and South Lake Champlain. Findings show that while the watershed remains largely forested, past land use and development have changed how streams flow and function. Issues include:

- Loss of streamside vegetation
- Channel straightening and berming
- Undersized culverts
- Increased erosion and sediment buildup

These changes reduce floodplain connectivity and make streams more vulnerable during storms.

Potential Solutions

The team identified 68 project opportunities to restore stream stability and flood resilience, such as:

- Adding woody material to streams to stabilize banks, retain sediment in the headwaters, and reduce erosion
- Tree planting to restore buffers and improve habitat
- Upgrading culverts to better handle storm flows and reconnect floodplains

What's Next?

Of the 68 sites, 13 were ranked as high priority, and the top three were provided conceptual designs. The designs outline treatment options, permitting needs, and cost estimates. PMNRCD

and FEA will work closely with landowners—projects will only move forward with landowner permission and municipal coordination.

Once designs are complete, these projects will be ready for state and federal funding, supporting broader efforts to improve water quality, restore floodplains, and reduce flood risk for communities like Pawlet Village.

When asked if they were interested in implementing the identified projects located on town lands, the Danby Planning Commission members responded positively and supported the idea of protecting downstream residents to the greatest extent possible (personal communication, January 2026).

Learn More

Funding for this project was provided by the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Work was conducted with support from Vermont DEC, South Mountain Research & Consulting, and landowners in the watershed.

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