

Testimony to Vermont Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy – March 18, 2015

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1. What do we mean when we say “CONSERVATION?” Farmland Access and Stewardship

2. Lake Champlain Water Quality MOU Signatories:

Federal:

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP)

State:

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM)

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation (VANR-DEC)

Academic:

University of Vermont Cooperative Extension (UVM Extension)

Local:

Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD) and Poultney-Mettowee Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCDs)

3. Cycle of Work with Agricultural Producers

Water Quality Monitoring	VANR-DEC, Watershed Groups
Watershed Basin Planning	VANR-DEC
Education and Outreach about Accepted Agricultural Practices, Best Management Practices, various programs	UVM Extension, VACD, Watershed Groups
Identification of Resource Concerns on the Farm / Environmental Assessment / Permitting/ Inspections/ Complaints	NRCS, VACD, VAAFAM, Watershed Groups, Individuals
Development of Plan to Address Resource Concerns	NRCS, VAAFAM, VACD, UVM Extension
Technical Assistance and Implementation	NRCS - Farm Bill; VAAFAM – BMPs; UVM Extension-Agronomic Practices; VACD, NRCDs, Watershed Groups – smaller practices; DEC – funding (EPA and Ecosystem Restoration Program)
Follow Up and Monitoring	UVM Extension, VACD

4. Issues:

- Regulatory / Non-regulatory
- Financial Assistance (Capital Funds) / Technical Assistance (General Funds)
- Gaps