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PMNRCD Awarded Grant for New No-till Drill

An update from Agronomy Specialist, Jennifer Alexander

We are pleased to announce that PMNRCD has received a Capitol Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP) grant to purchase a new 10-ft Haybuster 107C No-Till Drill! This addition to our equipment fleet will improve scheduling flexibility throughout the year, particularly during high-demand periods such as early spring and late summer seeding and fall cover crop establishment.

Alongside the new drill, we are introducing an updated process for equipment use. As in the past, farms with an active no-till or reduced-till seeding contracts will receive priority — and that policy remains unchanged. While the drill continues to be available at no charge, we are putting a simple rental agreement in place to formalize the process.

New for 2026: The District is requiring two additional steps for all drill users: field documentation and a signed District release. Acceptable field documentation includes FSA maps or a screenshot from a mapping application such as Apple Maps or Google Maps. Together, these requirements will help the District better track drill usage and meet reporting obligations for the grants that support this work. Once the rental agreement is finalized, copies will be mailed to farms that have previously used the District drill.

As always, PMNRCD is a non-regulatory organization dedicated to helping farmers and others improve water quality and soil health. Any information collected through the release will not be shared with partner staff for regulatory purposes.

Spring 2026 Newsletter

Poultney Mettower Natural Resources Conservation District

PO Box 209
Poultney, VT 05764
802-287-6880
www.pmnrcd.org

POULTNEY METTOWEE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Spring Plant Sale

Our annual fundraiser is right around the corner!

In addition to native trees, shrubs, and perennial flowers, we're offering fruit trees (apple, pear, peach, cherry), berries (strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries), asparagus, horseradish crowns, lilacs, a native wildflower and grass seed blend, and tree protection materials. We also have District hats and shirts available, as well as a 2026 calendar featuring local farms. New plants this year include mini shitake mushroom logs, persimmons, currants, American mountain ash, lavender, and garden cover crop seed mixes.

Ordering is open until **April 15th**. Pickup will be **Saturday, May 2nd (9am - 1pm)** at the Champlain Valley Native Plant Restoration Nursery.

Find our **catalog** and **order form** on the PMNRCD website's nursery tab or contact us to request a mailed catalog. Please check plant availability before placing an order with a physical form after March 31st. New in 2026! We are now offering an **online purchase option**. Payment and ordering will be processed automatically. Please fill out all of the information when purchasing so that we will be able to keep you up to date on sale and pick-up information.

If you'd like to make some beneficial additions to your landscape, this is your opportunity! Create wildlife habitat, offer birds and pollinators a treat, increase flood resilience, improve soil and water quality, and enjoy nature's beauty through the seasons.

The Champlain Valley Native Plant Restoration Nursery is a partnership with PMNRCD and the Nature Conservancy with support from the Village of Poultney. We grow native plants from local seed for statewide conservation and restoration projects. PMNRCD and CVNPRN provide education to schools and the wider community: sale proceeds will fund educational and technical programming.

Champlain Valley Native Plant Restoration Nursery: 685 York Street
Poultney, VT 05764

www.pmnrcd.org/champlain-valley-native-plant-restoration-nursery

Questions? Contact nursery manager Sadie Brown: sadie@pmnrcd.org or (802) 287-6606

Tree Sale Store

POULTNEY METTOWEE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Clean Water Riparian Planting with Local Farm

An update from Agricultural Outreach Specialist, Whitney Hier

The Poultney Mettowee NRCD, with the Champlain Valley Native Plant Restoration Nursery continue to support clean water projects in our region. This fall, we were fortunate to collaborate with The Allen Family Farm, a local dairy farm in Castleton, VT and install a planting on their property. This project was supported with funds from CWSP (Clean Water Service Provider) and Pur Project.

The Allen Family had observed increased erosion in this area of their property in recent years and worked with district staff to find suitable solutions to stabilize the area and be compliant with the State of Vermont's Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs). District staff collaborated with the farm to design a suitable planting plan that was supportive of the grazing lands adjacent to the project. This assures that the area remains stabilized, and the farm is still able to graze adjacent pastures.

Through this collaborative work, this project helped to stabilize 2.63 acres along the North Breton Brook that runs through the property. District staff planted approximately 900 native plants and a few edible fruit tree species in this area. One of the farm owners worked to install exclusion fencing to keep the cows out of the planted area and this section of North Breton Brook. We are excited to have had the cooperation of the farm for this project and appreciate their willingness to work to reduce phosphorus entering surface waters and increase biodiversity on their farm with this approach.

Castleton Village School Stormwater Mitigation Project Design

An update from District Manager, Hilary Solomon

The Castleton Village School Stormwater Mitigation Project is a final design effort to reduce phosphorus loading and improve stormwater management in downtown Castleton. Funded by a South Lake CWSP Formula Grant, the plan includes installing a subsurface infiltration system beneath the former school's basketball courts, supported by new catch basins, upgraded piping, and an overflow diversion structure, to treat runoff from surrounding streets in downtown Castleton and from the Vermont State University campus.

Designed to treat runoff from about 8 acres of impervious surface within a 17-acre drainage area, the system is expected to remove between 8 kg and 10 kg of phosphorus annually, enhance water quality in the Castleton River, and comply with Vermont DEC standards. The project provides a sustainable, cost-effective solution that strengthens the town's long-term stormwater management strategy.

Flooding and Stone Inlet at 75 Elm Street

Save the Date

May 23rd— Workshop on native plants in the landscape and their uses.

Join the Poultney Mettowee and Rutland Conservation Districts for an information and hands-on workshop.
Water quality credits available.
Location: PMNRCD offices and Champlain Valley Native Plant Nursery in Poultney VT.
Reach out for more info! sadie@pmnrcd.org

Improving Waterfront Access in our Region

Update provided by Vicki Pattison-Willits, Project Manager & Community Outreach Officer

With support from the Vermont Community Foundation, PMNRCD and partners including The Nature Conservancy, Vermont Land Trust, and the Lake Champlain Basin Program are kicking off the South Lake Champlain Public Access Initiative. This project explores opportunities to expand responsible access to the southern shores of Lake Champlain, as well as other lakes, rivers, and streams across our watershed. Access to shorelines has long been recognized as an important priority for our region, and this project is an exciting step toward identifying where new opportunities may exist in the future.

Community input will play a big role in shaping what comes next—and this is where you come in! We'd love to hear from people who know and care about our local landscapes and waterways. In this early phase, we're exploring a few key ideas:

1. **Creating small-scale access points –** simple, low-impact sites for paddling, fishing, or swimming, with a short shoreline trail, a few parking spaces, and basic features like steps or a small launch area.
2. **Mapping existing access** – building a clearer picture of the places people already use and enjoy. Many fishing spots, informal launch areas, and picnic sites are well known locally but not always documented, and we're working to create a more complete inventory. If you have a favorite spot, we'd love to hear about it.
3. **Looking ahead** – exploring opportunities for larger recreation areas and community programs, from equipment lending to guided walks and outdoor learning events

At its heart, this project is about enhancing access to the shores of southern Lake Champlain and other local waterbodies, so more people can recreate, explore, and connect with the landscapes and habitats that define our region. We'd love to hear from you—whether you know of places where water access could be improved, have noticed areas under pressure, remember sites where access once existed, or have experienced challenges getting to the water. We're also interested in your ideas for programs, resources, or activities you'd like to see offered locally.

Feel free to share your thoughts by email or reach out to set up a time to chat with Vicki Willits, Project Manager & Community Outreach Specialist 603-299-9096 | vicki.pmnrcd@gmail.com Feedback is welcomed through the end of May.

Creating Opportunities in Forested Headwaters

Update provided by Jaden Groff, Project & Community Outreach Specialist

Through a grant provided by the VT Department of Environmental Conservation, the District continues to provide broader services to landowners and the public in support of the Vermont Clean Water Act. PMNRCD focuses primarily on the South Lake Basin, identifying sources of sediment and nutrient pollution, documenting water quality, and conducting outreach to help develop effective projects and garner greater local support and awareness of the Basin Plan's goals. This year, PMNRCD is allocating a portion of this funding to focus on landowners in forested headwaters of the Poultney and Mettowee River watersheds.

Headwaters are found high in our landscape where our rivers begin, and their condition plays an important role in determining a river's flow throughout the seasons, water quality, and ecological health downstream. With thoughtful management, we can support working forests, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Our goal is to work collaboratively with forest landowners to share information, provide technical assistance, and identify opportunities to strengthen forest headwater systems. PMNRCD staff are available to visit headwater properties to provide assessments and technical advice related to streams, forest roads and trails, and erosion concerns.

Looking ahead, we hope to host workshops, forest headwater walks, informal networking opportunities to highlight common issues, practical management approaches, and successful local projects.

If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to PMNRCD Outreach Coordinator, Vicki Pattison- Willits at: vicki@pmnrcd.org