

## 2025 Watershed Forestry Partnership (6<sup>th</sup>) Annual Meeting Agenda

**8:30 – 8:40 Welcome and Introduction** (Shawn White, Watershed Forestry Partnership Coordinator)

**8:40 – 9:00 Announcements by Partners**

- Update: LISFF Funding for Habitat and N Reduction (Kyle Gray, Throwe Environmental)
- Funding update (Christian Pelletier, Watersheds United VT, and Chris Smith, USFWS)

**Morning Session, Silver Maple Ballroom**

<b>9:00 – 10:15 am Assisted Migration and Sourcing Plant Material for Restoration Projects</b>	
<p><b><i>Forestry Assisted Migration in Northeastern Forests</i></b></p> <p><b>Tony D’Amato</b> Director of Forestry Program, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, UVM</p>	<p>Interest in the use of tree planting as a component of adaptation strategies for addressing the impacts of global change on northeastern forests has increased considerably over the past several years. This presentation will provide an overview of the general principles behind assisted migration and the contexts in which it is applied in NE forests. In addition, it will highlight the outcomes of field trials and experiments applying these tactics as part of broader adaptation strategies.</p>
<p><b><i>Growing the Future: Developing Planting Guidelines for Vermont’s Public Lands</i></b></p> <p><b>Danielle Owczarski</b> State Lands Ecologist, Vermont Fish &amp; Wildlife Dept</p>	<p>For the past 2 ½ years, the Agency of Natural Resources has been developing guidance for planting projects on ANR-managed lands. This presentation offers a sneak peek into the collaborative work of botanists, foresters, ecologists, habitat restoration specialists, landscape architects, and other experts to create science-based guidelines that enhance biodiversity and ecosystem function. We will explore the ecological principles, applied research, and real-world strategies driving this effort to restore resilient, native plant communities.</p>
<b>~ ~ ~ 20-minute break ~ ~ ~</b>	
<b>10:35 – 11:05 am Nursery Production Update</b>	
<p><b><i>Nursery Update and the idea of a “Tree Hub”</i></b></p> <p><b>Ben Rodgers</b> Manager, Intervale Conservation Nursery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of this past year’s nursery roundtable discussions and outcomes</li> <li>• How the ICN is experimenting with serving as a resource to the greater local nursery industry</li> <li>• Some challenges and questions we still have</li> </ul>
<b>11:05 – 11:50 am Strategic Woody Addition</b>	
<p><b><i>Using Low-Tech Process-Based Approaches to Restore our Rivers, Floodplains, and Wetlands at a Scale that Matters</i></b></p> <p><b>Shayne Jaquith</b> Watershed Restoration Manager, The Nature Conservancy (VT)</p>	<p>Low-tech process-based riverscape restoration (LTPBR) is grounded in the current scientific understanding of the pre-European settlement condition of the rivers and streams of North America. It has proven both inexpensive, highly effective and highly engaging. This conversation will explore LTPBR and how we can expand its use across Vermont.</p>
<b>~ ~ ~ 12 – 1 pm Lunch, Silver Maple Room ~ ~ ~</b>	

## Afternoon Sessions, Silver Maple Room

1:00 – 2:30 pm	
<p><b><i>Prioritizing riparian restoration along headwater streams</i></b></p> <p><b>Ben Gabos</b> CREP Coordinator, Vermont Agency of Agriculture</p>	<p>Small stream systems represent 79% of the overall river network and drain 70% of the land in the US. The water quality of these streams determines the overall ecosystem health of larger order streams and rivers. Riparian buffers are more effective along small low-order streams than along larger high-order streams and rivers. When possible, conservation partners should prioritize projects restoring riparian forests along headwater streams.</p>
<p><b><i>Community-Engaged, Scientifically-Informed: A Watershed Approach to Invasive Species</i></b></p> <p><b>Curt Lindberg</b> Chair, Waitsfield Conservation Commission</p>	<p>The 3 Conservation Commissions in the Mad River Valley are developing a comprehensive approach to invasive species management and riparian restoration that is starting to show real results. The effort features genuine community engagement, monitoring, partnership, experimentation, GIS mapping, &amp; long-term commitment. This session will cover the strategies underpinning the initiative, management methods employed, results achieved, future plans, and lessons learned.</p>
<p><b><i>GIS mapping of invasive species management and restoration projects</i></b></p> <p><b>Hans Estrin</b> Local Food Network Coordinator, UVM-Extension</p>	<p>The Ecological Planning Laboratory at UVM has partnered on the Mad River Valley Knotweed project to provide research support. Using a custom ArcGIS Online platform, volunteer and staff-reported data has been collected and made available to inform mapping, management, and decision-making for the project. This partnership strategy could be more broadly applied to track and assist restoration efforts in other watersheds.</p>
<p>~ ~ ~ <b>15-minute break</b> ~ ~ ~</p>	
2:45 – 3:45 pm	
<p><b><i>Lessons Learned from Monitoring Past Floodplain Restoration Projects in the Connecticut River Watershed</i></b></p> <p><b>Fritz Gerhardt</b> Conservation Scientist, Connecticut River Conservancy</p>	<p>The Connecticut River Conservancy has planted more than 97,000 stems at &gt;100 sites in the Connecticut River watershed. In 2024, we collected and analyzed survival and growth data for 2,870 stems at 19 sites planted 2017-2024. Stem density of surviving stems differed dramatically among sites but was unrelated to time since planting or initial planting density. Mean vigor also differed dramatically and improved markedly from the newest to the oldest plantings. We were able to identify possible causes of mortality or poor growth, including drought, flooding, beaver, voles, deer, and bindweed. To ensure project success, it is imperative that follow-up monitoring and maintenance be part of all restoration projects.</p>
<p><b><i>Lessons learned from the American elm and LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest restoration projects in Vermont</i></b></p> <p><b>Gus Goodwin</b> Senior Conservation Planner The Nature Conservancy (VT) &amp; <b>Morgan Southgate</b> Postdoctoral Researcher, Appalachian Mountain Club</p>	<p>The Nature Conservancy has undertaken several large riparian planting projects, including efforts to establish research plantations of disease resistant American elms and to restore riparian forests at the LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest (LHTF). The results of these efforts will be discussed, highlighting the role of site selection and stewardship for success with the elm plantations and an analysis of the factors driving tree vitality at the LHTF site based on detailed post-planting monitoring.</p>

## Afternoon Sessions, Chittenden Bank Room

<b>1:00 – 2:30 pm</b>	
<b>Nursery Roundtable Meeting</b>  <b>Brooke Fleischman</b> Seed Coordinator, Intervale Conservation Nursery & <b>Ben Rodgers</b> Manager, Intervale Conservation Nursery <i>(facilitators)</i>	The quarterly meeting of the native tree nursery roundtable - an ongoing discussion about the challenges of growing native woody plants for conservation purposes and opportunities for collaboration among established and emerging local nurseries. Open to all who are interested!
<i>~ ~ ~ 15-minute break ~ ~ ~</i>	
<b>2:45 – 3:45 pm</b>	
<b>Agroforestry Opportunities and Barriers</b>  <b>Meghan Giroux</b> Interlace Commons	Interlace Commons is an agroforestry research and education group that collaborates with farms across the Northeast to plan and implement agroforestry practices, including conservation practices and production riparian buffers. Learn about the tools and technology designed to enhance efficiency, reduce mortality, and manage costs. Meghan will address the barriers facing the agroforestry and conservation sectors.

## Late Afternoon Session, Silver Maple Room

<b>3:55 – 4:30 pm</b>	
<b>The Watershed Forestry Partnership – Future Efforts (Continuing Discussion)</b>	This will be an open, informal discussion and brainstorming session about the Watershed Forestry Partnership and how it can promote and support the work of partner organizations.
<b>4:30 – 4:45</b>	
<b>Wrap up, quiz, evaluation</b>	

**Get some energy for the drive home!**

*Please stay for healthy snacks and conversation in the Livak Fireplace Lounge, 4:45 – 5:30 pm*