Watershed Forestry Partnership 7th Annual Meeting

February 19, 2026

Silver Maple Room, 4th floor, University of Vermont Davis Center

Agenda

8:30 – 9:00 am **Check-in** Livak Fireplace Lounge, 4th floor, UVM Davis Center

9:00 – 9:25 am **Welcome and Introductions,** Silver Maple Ballroom
Shawn White, Watershed Forestry Partnership Coordinator, UVM

Morning Sessions, Silver Maple Ballroom

9:25 – 9:55 am	
Partner Updates **Ben Rodgers**, Intervale Conservation Nursery	Intervale's new inventory and sales software; ICN inventory
Allaire Diamond, Vermont Land Trust	The Processed-Based Restoration Network
Christian Pelletier/ Lyn Munno, Watersheds United Vermont	WUV Funding for Riparian Buffer Projects
Other partner updates	
9:55 – 10:35 am	
Sourcing seed in an uncertain climate: lessons from common garden studies **Carrie Pike,** US Forest Service	Tree planting efforts have ramped up in recent years to restore degraded landscapes and increase carbon sequestration. In New England, reliance on natural regeneration for decades led to a contraction of the nursery industry as well as a loss of knowledge about seed sourcing, collection, and handling practices. To complicate seed sourcing further, changes in climate may lead to the underperformance of local seed sources which were historically recommended as the sole source for restoration and reforestation. In this presentation we will explore studies of established range-wide common gardens (provenance trials) and population/conservation genetics to learn how seed sources of different species performed in different climates and how this work informs how we source seed today. We will also discuss the availability of existing tools, such as the eastern seed zones and the Seedlot Selection Tool, as guides to help managers identify seed sources that will be adapted to current and projected future climates.
~ ~ ~ 10-minute break ~~~	

Morning Sessions, Silver Maple Ballroom, continued

10:45 – 11:15 am	
Monitoring and Adaptive Management of a Reed Canary Grass Dominated Site **Sam Puddicombe,** Friends of the Winooski River, **and** **Katie Kain,** US Fish & Wildlife	We all know the story--planner meets riparian restoration site, site is dominated by reed canary grass, and heartbreak ensues. This presentation will share what we hope is a happier ending for a restoration site in Jericho, VT. We'll share details on reed canary grass pre-treatment, monitoring data tracking the herbaceous plant community response, restoration implementation, and plans for adaptive management.
11:15 – 11:45 am	
Learning from Revisiting Sites and Stewardship **Lauren Weston**, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District	In 2025, multiple partner organizations came together to support the stewardship of 25 sites over 150 acres in the Lake Champlain Basin in Vermont. The Lake Champlain Basin Program, Vermont ANR-DEC, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and the Franklin County NRCD collaborated to allocate funds for sites to receive enhancement planting, maintenance, and stewardship. Each site and the overall process of performing stewardship has had lessons learned to share. Two events were also held to have practitioners visit past planting sites themselves and discuss strategies, successes, and what approaches might be applicable to other sites in the future.
11:45 am – 12:15 pm	
Bees in the Trees **Spencer Hardy,** Vermont Center for Ecostudies	How can we best leverage riparian restoration efforts to maximize habitat for pollinators, especially bees? I will highlight some keystone woody plants, many of which are already being used and discuss perennials that could be added for additional pollinator support. I will also touch on the wide range of nesting strategies and how our restoration efforts can help (or hinder).
~ ~ ~ 12:15 – 1:15 pm Lunch, Silver Maple Ballroom ~~~	

Afternoon Sessions, Silver Maple Ballroom

1:15 – 1:45 pm	
From Invasion to Restoration: managing Japanese Knotweed in the Mad River Valley **Noelia Barrios-Garcia,** Rubenstein School of the Environment and Natural Resources, UVM	Invasive species are a major threat to biodiversity and to nature's contributions to people. With an estimated global annual cost of **$423 billion**, invasive species have profound ecological, economic, and health impacts. In this talk, I will explore the effects of Japanese knotweed on native ecosystems and discuss the associated socioeconomic consequences that affect human livelihoods. I will then describe how this species is being managed in the Mad River Valley, highlighting effective strategies and the need for interdisciplinary collaboration to achieve long-term restoration.
1:45 – 2:15 pm	
Innovations in ecological restoration of a degraded riparian forested buffer; investigating myco-phytoremediation **Jess Rubin**, MycoEvolve, UVM Dept of Agriculture, Landscape, & Environment	As ecological restoration becomes a more established scientific field, innovative strategies are crucial. Designing for multi-functionality can address not only the ecological but also social damage implicit in the initial degradation. Non-chemical removal of nonnative species may be a valuable tool instead of glyphosate to reduce phosphorus inputs and conserve microbial diversity. Mycorrhizae's symbiotic relationships with plants are not always leveraged for phosphorus mitigation or improving the restoration process. Strategic harvest of biomass is also often overlooked in its ability to fulfill multiple restoration objectives. Learn about 7 years of research investigating commercial and endemic mycorrhizae, effective non-chemical strategies, socio-ecological design and maintenance, and promising phytoremediation strategies.
~ ~ ~ 10-minute break ~~~	
2:25 – 2:55 pm	
Monitoring tree survivorship & growth in riparian buffer plantings **Julia Figueroa, Ben Malisheski,** Rubenstein School of the Environment and Natural Resources, UVM, **and Shawn White** Lake Champlain Sea Grant/UVM-Extension/Rubenstein School	Which tree and shrub species have the best survival, vigor, and growth in riparian buffer plantings? Which are more likely to get browsed by deer? Two UVM students began an effort to answer these questions, collecting and analyzing tree survivorship, species, vigor, and height data on six riparian buffer planting sites using a modification of a monitoring protocol developed by the USFWS. The data is messy, and the results preliminary, but some tentative conclusions can be made, along with recommendations for planting & monitoring.
2:55 – 4:00 pm	
Special Topics Discussions	Open, small-group discussion of restoration-related topics (topics TBD, but may include: barriers to riparian projects, innovative planting methods, invasive plant management, wood addition to streams, project funding, site preparation & maintenance)

Afternoon Sessions, Williams Family and Jost Foundation Rooms

1:15 – 2:45 pm, Williams Family Room	
Nursery Roundtable	The Native Tree Nursery Roundtable was convened in August of 2024 to discuss ways nurseries can work together to supply trees for restoration projects. In this first meeting of 2026, we will hear updates from individual nurseries and partners, talk about seed collection and sharing, discuss the future of the Roundtable, and have time for informal conversations.
~ ~ ~ 15-minute break ~~~	
3:00 – 4:00 pm, Jost Foundation Room	
Dormant Tree ID Hands-on Workshop **Ben Fishbein** and **Christine Cramer,** Intervale Conservation Nursery	Strengthen your bareroot tree ID skills, test your ability to distinguish between silky dogs and RODs, or simply enjoy the opportunity to cuddle some baby trees in February! The Intervale will bring trees & shrubs from their inventory as specimens for this close-up look at the woody plants commonly used in buffer planting projects.