

2004 OTTER CREEK  
WATERSHED PLANNING  
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY



Addison Country Regional Planning  
Commission

Created by Middlebury College Environmental Studies Senior Seminar Students:  
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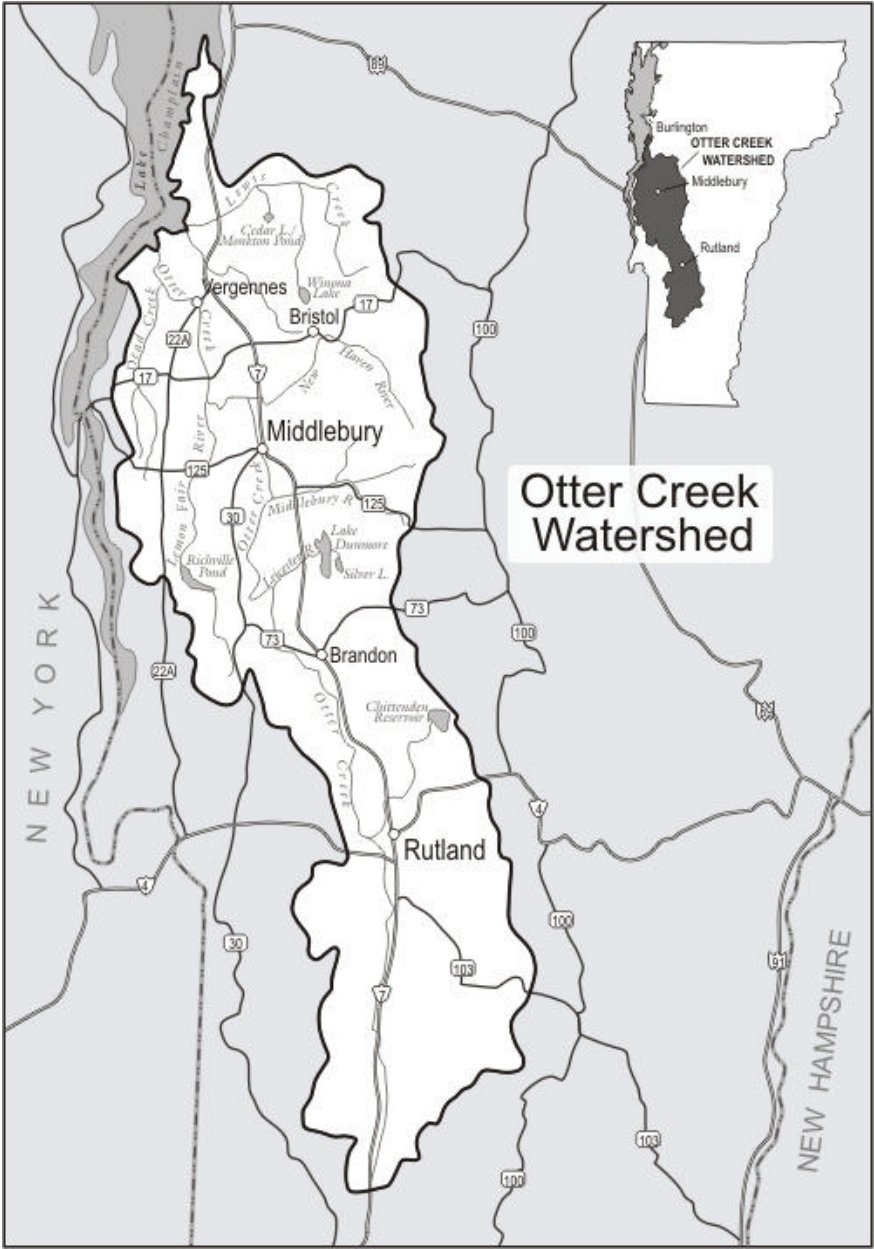
Questionnaire #

35. Is there anything else about the Otter Creek Watershed and/or Watershed Planning that you would like to share with us ?

Four horizontal lines for providing an answer to question 35.

**Thank you for you valuable input! Please return your completed questionnaire in the postage-paid business reply envelope as soon as possible. Thank You.**

*Please direct all inquires to:*  
**Nell Fraser**  
**Watershed Planner**  
**Addison County Regional Planning Commission**  
**79 Court Street**  
**Middlebury, VT**  
**Phone: (802) 388- 3141**  
**Email: nfraser@sover.net**



**33. What is your occupation?** *(circle all that apply)*

- a) Unemployed
- b) Student
- c) Homemaker
- d) Retired
- e) Agriculture-related
- f) Natural resources related
- g) Education
- h) Other managerial
- i) Other professional
- j) Other technical
- k) Other clerical
- l) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**34. What is your future vision of the watershed and what should the priority areas of future watershed planning and conservation efforts be?**

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You have been randomly selected as a resident in the Otter Creek Watershed to provide important information about water related issues near your home. Your responses are an important contribution to the Otter Creek Watershed Plan and will help to insure the quality of local water sources.

The purpose of the Otter Creek Watershed Planning Process is to develop a plan for protecting pristine surface waters and improving surface water quality in the Otter Creek Watershed. There are four key components of the process: public participation, water quality assessment and monitoring, watershed restoration and protection projects, and education and outreach. The watershed planning process takes a grass roots approach to planning, relying on public participation and involvement at each stage of the planning process. Your responses to the following questions will help guide the planning process and influence recommendations for protection, restoration, and management of the lakes and streams near your home. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions. The information you provide will remain strictly confidential and you will never be identified with your answers.

Thank You!

**I. Water Values**

**1. Below is a list of watershed issues that could be addressed by and/or influence the Otter Creek Watershed Plan. Please circle the number that best indicates how important each issue is to you.**

*1=Not at all important; 2=Slightly important; 3=Neutral; 4=Very important; 5=Extremely important*

- a) Water clean enough for swimming ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- b) Water clean enough for fishing ..... 1 2 3 4 5

- c) Allowing motorized water craft.....1 2 3 4 5
- d) Banning motorized water craft where necessary.....1 2 3 4 5
- e) Economically productive agricultural lands..... 1 2 3 4 5
- h) Economically productive forestry practices..... 1 2 3 4 5
- i) Sustainable forestry practices..... 1 2 3 4 5
- j) Limiting the development of new housing.....1 2 3 4 5
- k) Encouraging the development of new housing..... 1 2 3 4 5
- l) Limiting new commercial development..... 1 2 3 4 5
- m) Encouraging new commercial development..... 1 2 3 4 5
- n) Limiting new industrial development..... 1 2 3 4 5
- o) Encouraging new industrial development..... 1 2 3 4 5
- p) Preservation of existing open space..... 1 2 3 4 5
- q) Establishment of more open space..... 1 2 3 4 5
- r) Expansion of riparian habitat..... 1 2 3 4 5
- s) Expansion of public access opportunities to surface waters.. 1 2 3 4 5
- t) Control of aquatic exotic and invasive species..... 1 2 3 4 5  
(i.e. Eurasian milfoil, water chestnuts, zebra mussels, etc)
- u) Protecting surface water with very good quality.....1 2 3 4 5
- v) Control non-point source pollution entering surface waters...1 2 3 4 5

**29. Have you been involved in the Otter Creek Watershed Planning process?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**30. Do you make land management decisions for property that borders a stream or river?**

- a) Yes
- b) No
- a) Not sure

**31. What town do you currently live in? \_\_\_\_\_**

**32. How long have you lived in the Otter Creek Watershed?**

- a) 0-2 years
- b) 3-6 years
- c) 6-10 years
- d) 10-20 years
- e) >20 years
- f) don't live in watershed, but own land in watershed

**25. Have you attended town meetings (i.e. planning commission, select board, conservation commission) in the past?**

- a) NO
- b) YES

**26. If YES, how often do you attend? (circle one)** [if NO skip to question 27]

- a) monthly
- b) several times a year
- c) once a year
- d) once every few years

**27. Do you own or work on a working farm?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**28. If YES, please circle the choice that best describes your situation:**

*[if NO skip to question 29]*

- a) non-farm landowner
- b) landowner/ farm operator
- c) Absentee landowner
- d) Tenant farm operator
- e) other

**2. How important to you is the overall health of each of the following rivers and lakes in Otter Creek Watershed?** 1=Not at all important; 2=Slightly important; 3=Neutral; 4=Very important; 5=Extremely important

- a) Otter Creek ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- b) Middlebury River..... 1 2 3 4 5
- c) New Haven River.....1 2 3 4 5
- d) Dead Creek.....1 2 3 4 5
- e) Lemon Fair River..... 1 2 3 4 5
- f) Little Otter Creek..... 1 2 3 4 5
- g) Lewis Creek..... 1 2 3 4 5
- h) Leicester/Neshobe Rivers..... 1 2 3 4 5
- i) Lake Dunmore ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- j) Chittenden Reservoir ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- k) Winona Lake ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- l) Danyow Pond .....1 2 3 4 5
- m) Cedar Lake/ Monkton Pond ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- n) Richville Pond ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- o) Silver Lake in Leicester..... 1 2 3 4 5
- p) Other\_\_\_\_\_..... 1 2 3 4 5

**3. How important is it to you to have public access to each of the following rivers and lakes in the Otter Creek Watershed? 1=Not at all important; 2=Slightly important; 3=Neutral; 4=Very important; 5=Extremely important**

- a) Otter Creek..... 1 2 3 4 5
- b) Middlebury River..... 1 2 3 4 5
- c) New Haven River..... 1 2 3 4 5
- d) Dead Creek..... 1 2 3 4 5
- e) Lemon Fair River..... 1 2 3 4 5
- f) Little Otter Creek..... 1 2 3 4 5
- g) Lewis Creek..... 1 2 3 4 5
- h) Leicester/Neshobe Rivers..... 1 2 3 4 5
- i) Lake Dunmore ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- j) Chittenden Reservoir ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- k) Winona Lake ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- l) Danyow Pond ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- m) Cedar Lake/ Monkton Pond ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- n) Richville Pond ..... 1 2 3 4 5
- o) Silver Lake in Leicester..... 1 2 3 4 5
- p) Other\_\_\_\_\_..... 1 2 3 4 5

**23. Which of the following sources of information do you use to access water quality related information about surface waters in the Otter Creek Watershed and how often do you use them for this purpose?**

	<i>Never (or N/A)</i>	<i>Sometimes (&lt; once a month)</i>	<i>Often (monthly or more)</i>
a) Daily and weekly newspapers, magazine or newsletters	1	2	3
b) Television or radio	1	2	3
c) The internet	1	2	3
d) Conversations with staff from local, state or federal conservation, environmental or Watershed planning agencies	1	2	3
e) Written materials provide by any of these agencies	1	2	3
f) Workshops, meetings, or forums held by any of these agencies	1	2	3
g) Family or friends	1	2	3
h) Nongovernmental or community organizations	1	2	3

**24. Of the sources above, which one do you believe to be the most helpful in providing accurate and accessible information regarding water quality and pollution levels in the watershed? \_\_\_\_\_**

**V. Demographics**

*All responses provided in this survey are strictly confidential.*

**22. Are you a member of any of the following local citizen-based watershed or conservation organizations? (circle ALL that apply)**

- a) Addison County River Watch Collaborative
- b) Home Owners Association
- c) Lewis Creek Association
- d) Middlebury River Watershed Partnership
- e) Middlebury Area Land Trust
- f) New Haven River Anglers Association
- g) Otter Creek Audubon
- h) Town Conservation Commission
- i) Town Select Board
- j) Town Planning Commission
- k) Vermont Association of Foresters
- l) Vermont Farms Association
- m) Vermont Farm Bureau
- n) Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG)
- o) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Water Use**

**4. How often do you use the following surface waters in the Otter Creek Watershed?**

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely ( &lt; once a year )</i>	<i>Occasional ly ( 1-6 times a yr )</i>	<i>Frequently ( monthly or more )</i>
a) Otter Creek	1	2	3	4
b) Middlebury River	1	2	3	4
c) New Haven River	1	2	3	4
d) Dead Creek	1	2	3	4
e) Lemon Fair River	1	2	3	4
f) Little Otter Creek	1	2	3	4
g) Lewis Creek	1	2	3	4
h) Otter Creek	1	2	3	4
i) Lake Dunmore	1	2	3	4
j) Chittenden Reservoir	1	2	3	4
k) Winona Lake	1	2	3	4
l) Danyow Pond	1	2	3	4
m) Cedar Lake/ Monkton Pond	1	2	3	4
n) Richville Pond	1	2	3	4
o) Silver Lake in Leicester	1	2	3	4

5. For what *purpose* do you use the following water sources in the Otter Creek Watershed? (circle all that apply)

	<i>Swimming</i>	<i>Fishing</i>	<i>Boating</i>	<i>Irrigation</i>	<i>Nature viewing: Bird watching</i>	<i>No use</i>
a) Otter Creek	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Middlebury River	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) New Haven River	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) Dead Creek	1	2	3	4	5	6
e) Lemon Fair River	1	2	3	4	5	6
f) Little Otter Creek	1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Lewis Creek	1	2	3	4	5	6
h) Otter Creek	1	2	3	4	5	6
i) Lake Dunmore	1	2	3	4	5	6
j) Chittenden Reservoir	1	2	3	4	5	6
k) Winona Lake	1	2	3	4	5	6
l) Danyow Pond	1	2	3	4	5	6
m) Cedar Lake/ Monkton Pond	1	2	3	4	5	6
n) Richville Pond	1	2	3	4	5	6
o) Silver Lake	1	2	3	4	5	6

20. Public input is very important to the Watershed Planning process. Please indicate the effectiveness of the following methods of *distributing* information and *gathering more comments* for the plan.

	<i>Not effective</i>	<i>Slightly effective</i>	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Very Effective</i>	<i>Extremely Effective</i>
a) Public hearings with opportunities for questions and comments	1	2	3	4	5
b) Informational mailings with opportunity to comment	1	2	3	4	5
c) Posting of information on regional website for review and comment	1	2	3	4	5
d) Including basin planning in the agenda at Town Select Board and Conservation Commission meetings	1	2	3	4	5

21. Please list any surface waters in the Otter Creek Watershed that you consider to be:

- a) Most *Impaired* and in need of restoration: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Most *pristine* and in need of protection: \_\_\_\_\_

i) Reduce water pollution from soil erosion	1	2	3	4
j) Reduce chemical and animal waste runoff from agricultural lands	1	2	3	4
k) Finance farm improvements to limit agricultural pollution	1	2	3	4
l) Educate the public about watershed issues	1	2	3	4
m) Protect pristine surface water bodies from degradation	1	2	3	4

19. Public access to waterways is an important aspect of watershed planning. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements as they pertain to the Otter Creek Watershed.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
a) There are adequate sites for public access	1	2	3	4	5
b) Local and/or state governments should establish more public access sites	1	2	3	4	5
c) Local and/or state governments should improve existing public access sites	1	2	3	4	5
d) Local and/or state governments should monitor and maintain access sites more frequently	1	2	3	4	5

6. How often does poor water quality *discourage* you from the following forms of recreation in the Otter Creek Watershed?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely (&lt; once a yr)</i>	<i>Occasionally (1-6 times a yr)</i>	<i>Frequently (monthly or more)</i>	<i>Daily</i>
a) Swimming	1	2	3	4	5
b) Fishing	1	2	3	4	5
c) Boating	1	2	3	4	5
d) Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

### III. Watershed Quality

7. How would you rate the overall water quality of the following lakes and ponds in the Otter Creek Watershed?

	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a) Lake Dunmore	1	2	3	4	5
b) Chittenden Reservoir	1	2	3	4	5
c) Winona Lake	1	2	3	4	5
d) Danyow Pond	1	2	3	4	5
e) Cedar Lake/ Monkton Pond	1	2	3	4	5
f) Richville Pond	1	2	3	4	5
g) Silver Lake in Leicester	1	2	3	4	5
h) Lake Champlain	1	2	3	4	5

8. How would you rate the overall water quality of the following rivers in the Otter Creek Watershed?

	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excel- lent</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a) Otter Creek	1	2	3	4	5
b) Middlebury River	1	2	3	4	5
c) New Haven River	1	2	3	4	5
d) Dead Creek	1	2	3	4	5
e) Lemon Fair River	1	2	3	4	5
f) Little Otter Creek	1	2	3	4	5
g) Lewis Creek	1	2	3	4	5

9. Please list specific surface waters within the Otter Creek Watershed that you feel are *the most* polluted or impaired:

- a) Rivers/creeks: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Lakes/ponds: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Marshes/wetlands: \_\_\_\_\_
- d) other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Please list your top *issues* and *concerns* regarding water quality and water use in the Otter Creek Watershed:

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#### IV. Watershed Planning

18. Below is a list of potential goals for the Otter Creek Watershed Plan. Please indicate whether you consider each be a high priority, medium priority or low priority *where you live* in the Otter Creek Watershed.

	<i>Low priority</i>	<i>Medium priority</i>	<i>High Priority</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a) Protect public health	1	2	3	4
b) Prevent flooding	1	2	3	4
c) Prevent bank erosion	1	2	3	4
d) Remove trash and debris	1	2	3	4
e) Improve and increase public access sites	1	2	3	4
f) Provide for boating, fishing, and other recreational uses	1	2	3	4
g) Monitor and report water quality	1	2	3	4
h) Protect and restore wetlands and other wildlife habitat	1	2	3	4

**15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about riparian buffers in the Otter Creek Watershed.**

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a) There are enough riparian buffers to protect and maintain high water quality	1	2	3	4	5
b) Current riparian buffers should be restored and better maintained	1	2	3	4	5
c) Agricultural operators that take land out of production to plant riparian buffers need to be fairly compensated	1	2	3	4	5
d) Adequate number of riparian buffers	1	2	3	4	5

**16. If you own or live on land near a surface water in the Otter Creek Watershed, please answer the following questions: (otherwise skip to question #17)**

- a) Do you have riparian buffers in place? Yes / No
- b) Would you require monetary compensation to take some of your land out of production for future riparian buffers? Yes / No

**10. Do you currently own or live on property adjacent to, or containing, any wetlands, ponds, lakes and/or creeks part of the Otter Creek Watershed?**

- a) NO
- b) YES

**11. If YES, how polluted do you think the water body near where you live is? (If NO, go to question 12)**

- a) Not at all polluted
- b) Somewhat polluted
- c) Very polluted
- d) Don't know

**12. To what degree is the current water quality within the Otter Creek Watershed an impact to each of the following categories?**

	<i>No impact</i>	<i>Slight impact</i>	<i>Minor impact</i>	<i>Serious impact</i>
a) Your health	1	2	3	4
b) Your daily activities	1	2	3	4
c) Your lifestyle	1	2	3	4
d) Your vacations	1	2	3	4
e) Your workplace	1	2	3	4

**13. There are numerous potential threats to the quality of the surface waters in the Otter Creek Watershed. Please indicate how serious a problem you think the following factors are.**

	<i>Not a problem</i>	<i>Somewhat at a problem</i>	<i>Serious problem</i>	<i>Very Serious Problem</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a) Residential development	1	2	3	4	5
b) Commercial development	1	2	3	4	5
c) Draining or filling of wetlands	1	2	3	4	5
d) Storm-water runoff from roads, parking lots, roofs or driveways	1	2	3	4	5
e) Runoff from farming	1	2	3	4	5
f) Runoff from logging operations	1	2	3	4	5
g) Sedimentation	1	2	3	4	5
h) Nutrifcation	1	2	3	4	5
i) Pathogens from animal waste run-off, failing septic systems adjacent to surface waters, and other sources	1	2	3	4	5
j) Livestock wading in streams	1	2	3	4	5
k) Agricultural pesticides and herbicides	1	2	3	4	5
l) Agricultural fertilizers	1	2	3	4	5
m) Residential lawn and garden fertilizers or pesticides	1	2	3	4	5

n) Stream bank erosion	1	2	3	4	5
o) Emissions from boats	1	2	3	4	5
p) Sludge application	1	2	3	4	5
q) Invasive species	1	2	3	4	5
r) Algal blooms	1	2	3	4	5
s) Loss of vegetation along stream banks	1	2	3	4	5
t) Debris in stream channel (i.e. logs)	1	2	3	4	5
u) Excessive vegetation that impedes boating and swimming	1	2	3	4	5

**14. Of those mentioned as being very serious, which problem do you see as being the most serious and why?**

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*Properly installed and well-maintained riparian buffers (i.e. trees and shrubs along river banks) are a common sense approach to conservation in the working landscape. Riparian buffers slow water runoff and trap sediments, fertilizers, pesticides, pathogens and other pollutants, minimizing the chance of these pollutants entering surface water or ground water. Furthermore they protect livestock from harsh weather, provide a natural habitat for wildlife and improve fish habitat.*