



**White River
Natural
Resources
Conservation
District**

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White River NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting

When: June 18, 2026, 1:00 - 2:30 PM

[Horizons Day Camp](#) (Cafeteria)

[19 Middlebrook Road, Fairlee, VT 05045](#)

or Virtual

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Lj8ObVbfSHyNKhby_TTBOA

APPROVED Minutes

Attendees: Jennifer Byrne, Jaiel Pulskamp, Kate Willard, Sabra Ewing, Olivia Carlson, Alvina Harvey, Didi Pershouse

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 PM

Approve [April Meeting Minutes](#) and [May Meeting Minutes](#)

April and May meeting minutes were approved.

- Motion: Kate Willard - Second: Didi Pershouse - Vote: Approved

NRCS Updates

Privacy & Data Sharing (1619 Agreement)

- Discussion on whether a board member training on the 1619 data-sharing agreement would be helpful.
- NRCS contract details cannot be shared externally, but certain information can be used to report district activity to select boards.

Reporting to Select Boards

- It was mentioned that a town-by-town report showing funded conservation practices, amounts, and the agencies and programs involved (including non-federal sources such as Trees for Streams) could be helpful. Jaiel and Jen can work with other staff to put it together.
- Vermont's EQIP allocations have grown to \$5.6 million, largely due to district outreach efforts.

NRCS Leadership Meeting

- Alvina and Jen met with Travis (NRCS) and two staff members. Travis expressed enthusiasm for the new NRCS leadership and indicated he anticipates increased conservation funding.
- Travis supports the Agriculture Guidance Document.

District Updates

-  **VT NRCD Agriculture Staff Guidance Document Draft (JB 6.2.26)**

The board reviewed the VT NRCD Agriculture Staff Guidance Document (draft dated June 2, 2026). Key points:

- Purpose: To standardize agricultural staff work across districts, demonstrate to NRCS and the Agency of Agriculture how district funds are used, and provide a framework for holistic farm planning and team coordination.
- The document is primarily Vermont-specific and reflects state programs, including voluntary conservation programs that fund district staff.
- Developed collaboratively with Windham County, Heather Blunk, Kate Wintergreen, Sara (Orleans County), and Emily Newmer, with AGCWIP grant funding (two-year grants currently concluding).
- Vermont runs some of the most robust state-level voluntary conservation programs in the country; this document helps ensure those resources are not underutilized.

Approval of public comments for the ANR Lands Management Planning Rule

The board discussed the proposed ANR rule change for long-range management planning on state lands. Key discussion points:

- The rule aims to improve coordination among state agencies (ANR, Agency of Agriculture, and others) in public land planning.
- Board concerns: the rule's public engagement process does not adequately reflect Vermont's environmental justice requirements; proactive solicitation of comment on biodiversity, chemical use, wild-harvested products, and NRCC representation is needed.
- The board supports requiring an environmental impact assessment before significant land management actions and making chemical avoidance the first option considered in planning processes.
- Vote: The board approved submitting public comments with the district's name. Names to be added: Didi Pershouse, Alvina Harvey, Sabra Ewing, Kate Willard. Motion: Kate Willard. Second: Sabra Ewing. Vote: Approved

Lake Fairlee Shoreline Project

Horizons Bioengineering Project Review:

- Stuart from Horizons presented the completed Lake Fairlee shoreline bioengineering project, which removed an aging sea wall and restored a naturalized, ecologically sound shoreline.

- Project funded by DEC and the Aloha Foundation. Goals include improved lake health, increased biodiversity, and use as an educational demonstration site.
- A fall site visit for interested board members is being planned (when camp is not in session).

- **Upcoming Events:**

- Outreach underway to Vermont Law School and Vermont State University for student group participation.
 - Note: Sabra Ewing requested that the board be involved in approving future events.
- - [Cedar Circle Farm Fellows/Farm Force Work Dates](#)
 - June 25, July 14, August 4, August 18
 - The district is seeking additional farm sites and conservation training opportunities for the fellows.
 - Outreach underway to Vermont Law School and Vermont State University for student group participation.
 - June 26: [Land Care Agriculture](#) Event
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 - July 1: [Multi-species Grazing Workshop w/ UVM Fern River Farm, Chelsea](#)
 - July 20: [Cover Cropping Trials and Lessons Learned at Moon and Stars](#)
 - August 3-7: [Public Banking Congress](#)
 - August 8: Ninny Goat in Fairlee. Farm tour locations TBD.

Note: Discussion about the board's involvement in approving future events.

- **Future Trainings:** Soil Health / CEMA 215 Training at VTSU Randolph (Sept 10-12 or 17-19)
 - September 10–12 or 17–19: Soil Health / CEMA 215 Training at VTSU Randolph — Three-day training on soil health assessments required by NRCS for farms in the regenerative pilot program—participants from Extension, NRCS, NRCDs, and the Agency of Agriculture lab in Randolph. VTSU provides food and housing at a reasonable cost.
- Lake Work:
 - Lake Fairlee Aquatic Nuisance Control Grant:
 - [06140-SG-4465 White River NRCD.docx](#)
 - Halls Lake TA Request

NRCC/VACD Updates

- [Act 181 S.325 Public Engagement Plan](#) (see Section 9)
 - [VT Environmental Justice Advisory Council Letter](#)

- Article on the topic:
<https://alexsys.substack.com/p/act-181-is-repealed-working-for-whom>

- Northern Border Regional Commission grants: deadline August 10; maximum award \$250,000. Board to review the opportunity and decide whether to pursue a proposal. Staff to send contact information and links to relevant funding categories to the board.

Items for Future Agendas

- Easements: a legal memo from Vermont Law School is expected before the next meeting; a dedicated meeting session is being planned.
- Staff evaluations and recent staff changes: to be discussed in a future meeting or executive session.
- VSU training updates and related district work.
- Communications process improvements: ways to improve board-staff communications, including the impacts of staff changes on projects.

The following agenda items were noted for addition to a future meeting agenda:

- Discussion of personal/staff issues (may require executive session)
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Action Items

- Update the board at the next meeting on VSU training status and related district work.
- Develop a longer-term reporting framework that summarizes NRCS-funded conservation practices by town and farm, including a map and an ecosystem chart of agencies and funding flows.
- Prepare a board training session on the NRCS 1619 privacy/data-sharing agreement.
- Provide the board with the NRCS town-by-town conservation practice report once complete.
- Schedule a future board meeting or executive session to discuss recent staff changes and their impact on district structure.
- Arrange a fall site visit for interested board members for the Lake Fairlee site work.
- Submit district comments on the ANR land management planning rule, incorporating board priorities and adding the district's name.
- Attend the June 26 Land Care Agriculture event (sign up via the agenda link).
- Meet with the Harvard Law School contact regarding support for the Public Banking Congress.
- Coordinate and deliver the September soil health training at VTSU, including food and housing arrangements.
- Review the Northern Border Regional Commission grant opportunity; send board contact information and funding category links.
- Follow up about the Northern Border Regional grant.
- Obtain the easement legal memo from Vermont Law School and share it with the board before the next meeting.
- Plan a future board meeting focused on easements and staff evaluations.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Sabra Ewing. Meeting adjourned.2:40 PM