

TOWN OF WARREN, VERMONT
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR FLOODPLAIN AREAS OWNED BY THE TOWN

24 MAY 2016

The lands along the riparian corridor of the Mad River are important assets of the town. To protect and enhance the inherent value of these lands, the Town has adopted a Management Plan, which applies to all Town owned lands and informs other landowners of recommended practice guidelines. The approach adopted by the Town is to let the Mad River return to its natural state, where practical and possible. The capture and storage of water, sediment, and debris in natural floodplain features will reduce flood hazards and promote the ecological health of our rivers. At the same time, the Town will incorporate low impact recreational opportunities, enhance the natural riparian forests and provide wildlife habitats and corridors. Each individual parcel of Town land will have a specific Management Plan with provides attention to the site-specific needs and opportunities.

These lands are subject to Federal and State regulations regarding floodplain and floodways as well as FEMA conditions for some parcels. These conditions have been addressed in the Management Plans.

GOALS:

Protect water quality and river health

Ensure the waters in the Mad River watershed will be cold, clean, and clear; safe to swim in; and will support a healthy diversity of native aquatic species.

Protect and restore floodplain forests and forested riparian buffers

Plant and protect native trees and other plants so they will dominate the floodplain forests and the riparian areas along the Mad River. The River's banks should be shaded and stabilized by a forested riparian area. Facilitate the regeneration of forests by tending trees and removing or limiting invasive plant species. Follow the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Riparian Buffer Guidance (2005) and attempt to restore or maintain an undisturbed 50 foot vegetated buffer as measured from the top of the bank. The best practice is for riparian buffers to be managed as "undisturbed" areas, meaning the complete avoidance of earth-moving activities; the storage of materials; the removal of trees, shrubs, or groundcover; and mowing (VT DEC Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Protection Procedures, Draft 10/6/2014).

Allow the river channel to return to a balanced state

The Mad River will be allowed to flood its banks and erode and deposit sediments along its channel over time, which may lead to a change in the location and appearance of the channel. Consideration can be given to current human structures with a goal of mitigating their impact. Reforestation of the riparian corridor will slow erosion impacts and impede channel realignment.

Promote public river access, low-impact recreational uses and community education

The public will be encouraged to use the Mad River as a place to play, swim, fish, picnic, walk, exercise, seek solitude, and socialize. Specific sites can be developed for low impact use in order to provide a simple, quiet place for human enjoyment. Educational signage will be provided. Maintenance of river access and recreational areas will be defined for Town owned parcels.

Protect and enhance wildlife habitats for a diversity of species

The Mad River corridor will contribute habitat for healthy populations of many wildlife species that live directly in and alongside the River, as well as for those who travel along the River corridor. Planting of trees and shrubs will enhance, and low-impact recreation will not heavily impact, wildlife use.