

The Winooski Watershed



At the uppermost part of the watershed, in Vermont's North-east Kingdom, the Winooski River is a small stream.

As it flows through Montpelier, Vermont's capitol, the Winooski River is restricted in an urban environment.

As it nears Lake Champlain in the Intervale, the Winooski is a wide, low-gradient river that flows through some of the most productive agricultural land in Chittenden County.

What is a *watershed*? It is all of the land that drains to a common body of water. The Winooski Watershed is one of seven major watersheds in Vermont that drain to Lake Champlain. Other watersheds include the Missisquoi and Lamoille Rivers to the north, and the Otter Creek and Poultney-Mettowee River to the south.

The Winooski River Watershed includes parts of nearly 50 towns in six different counties as it flows to Lake Champlain.

The watershed's landscape varies from hilly, rugged, and forested in the upper reaches, to a combination of forested, agricultural, and urban between Montpelier and Burlington.

Challenges affecting the water quality in the Winooski watershed come from numerous land uses, including development, agriculture, forestry, and recreation. Healthy forested riparian (streamside) buffers have been shown to reduce the water quality impacts from all of these activities.

(Photographs courtesy of the Intervale Foundation.)