BASIN WATER QUALITY COUNCIL
JANUARY 29, 2026, 3:00 PM

MEETING DETAILS

Virtual: Microsoft Teams, ID: 28945081456069, Pass: pK7gE2cG
In-Person: RRPC, 16 Evelyn Street, Second Floor, Rutland, VT 05701

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members: Erin Rodgers, Mike Winslow, Paul Donaldson, Katie Crumley, Shayne Jaquith, Sarah Pelkey, Adam Piper, and Rob Terry.
Other: Devon Neary (RRPC), Mike Jones (Castleton), Vicki Pattison-Willits, Hilary Solomon (PMNRCD), Brian Bertsch (F&O), Zapata Courage, Chris Rottler, and Angie Allen (DEC).

MEETING MINUTES

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rodgers at 3:04 PM. Neary thanked Barbara Pulling, recently retired from the RRPC, for all her incredible work with the CWSP. The BWQC members all congratulated and thanked Pulling for her service.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 29, 2026, AGENDA

Motion to approve the January 29, 2026 agenda by Winslow. Seconded by Piper. Approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2025, MINUTES

Motion to table the approval of September 18, 2025 minutes until next meeting by Winslow. Seconded by Crumley. Approved by voice vote.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

None present.

REVIEW OF NEW PROJECTS

Solomon introduced the project alongside Bertsch from Fuss & O'Neill, who has worked closely with the Town. The project originated from a scoping study completed by PMNRCD and the Town to address chronic drainage and water quality issues in the village, particularly recurring flooding near the library where untreated stormwater freezes in winter and discharges directly to the river. The former Village School property, now a town-owned recreation center, was identified as the highest-ranking site for phosphorus reduction and stormwater treatment due to its highly infiltrative soils and municipal ownership. Concept design was funded through the LCBP, with final design funded by the South Lake CWSP and nearing completion.

Bertsch presented aerial imagery and engineering drawings for a proposed subsurface infiltration system beneath the basketball court. The project would treat runoff from approximately 17 acres, including residential areas, roadways, and portions of the college campus, with 8–9 acres of impervious surface. Stormwater currently flows rapidly through catch basins to the Castleton River. The system is designed to capture the water quality volume, roughly the first inch of rainfall carrying the highest pollutant load, with larger storms bypassing to existing infrastructure. Test pits showed strong infiltration rates averaging 5.5 inches per hour. Operations and maintenance would be shared by the Town and the CWSP through routine inspections and periodic cleanout.

Solomon reviewed staff scoring, noting an estimated phosphorus reduction of approximately 10.15 kg per year, a projected project life of over 20 years using a 10-year default for calculations, and generally strong basin priority and longevity scores. Cost efficiency varied depending on final funding assumptions, and total staff scores ranged from 57 to 77. Discussion followed on co-benefits such as flood reduction, environmental justice, cultural value tied to the library and village center, and community visibility. While some concern was raised about potential overlap among criteria, members agreed the project remained strong regardless of minor scoring adjustments.

The Council also discussed how the 3-acre stormwater permit rule could affect phosphorus accounting, particularly for runoff from the Castleton University campus. If portions of the campus are subject to the rule, those acres may not be eligible for CWSP credit, potentially reducing the impervious area counted and lowering phosphorus reduction totals. Members agreed this is largely a regulatory interpretation issue requiring further coordination with DEC. Easement requirements were noted and are expected to be manageable. The Council requested the CWSP staff work with project partners to determine eligibility and adjust phosphorus credits and cost ratios as needed.

Motion to approve the proposed project at a cost of up to $55,000 per kilogram based on eligibility after potential changes to phosphorus credits and costs by Winslow. Seconded by Jaquith. Approved by voice vote.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Neary requested the Council establish a routine meeting time on a quarterly schedule. The Council granted the request and determined that BWQC meetings would be held on the last Thursday of the Quarter at 3PM. Neary to provide a recurring meeting invite and link.

CWSP STAFF UPDATES

Neary stated that the RRPC was interviewing candidates to take over the RRPC staff role for the CWSP.

Solomon reported that forest headwaters outreach is gaining momentum, with letters recently sent to priority landowners in the Castleton watershed and initial responses already received, including one follow-up meeting scheduled. Mailing lists are also being developed for additional headwater areas, and CWSP staff emphasized the importance of continuing to build this project pipeline.

ADJOURN
Meeting adjourned at 4:34 PM.