

Derway Cove, A New Riverfront Access Area



The ribbon cutting: L/R: Ben Rose, Recovery and Mitigation Section Chief, Vermont Emergency Management, Jeff O'Donnell, Communications and Community Engagement Manager, Lake Champlain Land Trust, Karen Cady, Chair, Lake Champlain Land Trust Board of Trustees, Zoe Richards, Chair, Burlington Conservation Commission, Sonja Schuyler, Chair, WVPD Board of Trustees, Karen Freeman, Director of Conservation, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and Nick Warner, Executive Director, Winooski Valley Park District.

The Winooski Valley Park District and the Lake Champlain Land Trust will celebrate the permanent conservation of Derway Cove—a critical property at the mouth of the Winooski River that has been transformed into a new riverfront access area—at an outdoor ribbon cutting ceremony. Tuesday, September 27, 2022.

The 2.4-acre property was previously home to the River's End Marina and its owner and operator, who worked with the Partners to conserve the property and open it to the public. Located entirely within the floodplain of the Winooski River, large sections of the property flood every spring. This project removed all buildings from the site and restored the land to a natural state, vastly increasing its ability to absorb and retain floodwaters. The

naturalization of the site is an ongoing process, with several rounds of plantings occurring over the past two years.

“We are extremely grateful to the to the Bowler family for their patience and helpfulness during the acquisition. The Lake Champlain Land Trust, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and Burlington Conservation Legacy Fund all contributed resources and time to the purchase, with FEMA funds supporting the removal of buildings and infrastructure, and the Vermont Community Foundation Lake Champlain and Tributaries Restoration Fund underwriting park development and naturalization. It was truly a collaborative effort, which could not have gone forward without the hard work of our partners.” said Nick Warner, Exec-

Continued on page 25...

Derway Cove Project *Continued from page One...*



Above, Nick Warner of the WVPD informs onlookers about the project at the new Derway Cove in the New North End of Burlington. *Photo by Cliff Cooper*

utive Director of the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD).

The new public access site is located just off the Burlington Bike Path in the City's New North End neighborhood. Easily accessible from Downtown Burlington and Colchester, the access area is a premier bird-watching and fishing location, and features a gently-sloping boat launching area.

"The Derway Cove project represents community conservation at its finest. We are reclaiming and restoring critical riverbank and wetland buffers, protecting sensitive wildlife habitat, and providing a natural classroom for local school children," said Lake Champlain Land Trust Executive Director, Chris Boget. "We hope that this public access area offers a model solution for restored lands that can absorb floodwaters and improve the quality of water flowing into Lake Champlain."

The project site and the waters off its shore support several rare species, including five rare plant species that grow along the property's river shoreline and wetland. The mouth of the Winooski River supports 13 rare animal species, including Lake Sturgeon, Pink Heelsplitter (freshwater mussel) and Mudpuppy (salamander). In the spring, the Winooski River surges with several game fish species travelling up-river from Lake Champlain to spawn, including the prized Landlocked Atlan-

tic Salmon and Walleye.

The Derway Cove project also buffers and expands an intact block of conserved lands at the heart of this ecologically and recreationally significant landscape. The property is positioned between Derway Island Natural Area (WVPD) and Mayes Landing (LCLT and WVPD) and is directly across the river from Delta Park (WVPD).

The Winooski Valley Park District owns the property and manages day-to-day operations. The Lake Champlain Land Trust (LCLT) and the Vermont Housing Conservation Board hold a conservation easement on the property and assisted with the design and implementation of an ecologically sensitive public access and riverbank restoration plan. The Partners have already planted over 150 water quality-improving trees at the site.

Acquisition of the property was supported by funding from the WVPD's Capital Budget, the City of Burlington's Conservation Legacy Fund, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and private donors. Demolition of the structures was funded by a FEMA grant, and site planning and development was supported by the Lake Champlain and Tributaries Restoration Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation. <https://www.lclt.org/conserving-derway-cove/> or

<https://wvpd.org/>



BEFORE



AFTER