

NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION SUCCESS STORY

The Power of Conservation District Wraparound Services

A FARM SHAPED BY THE MISSISQUOI RIVER

Located in Lowell along the Upper Missisquoi River, the Raboin Farm has been cared for by three generations and has long been shaped by the benefits and challenges of farming within an active river floodplain.

A frequently flooded barn yard and hayfield along the river became increasingly difficult to manage, producing poor-quality forage while contributing to erosion and requiring additional labor each growing season.

These conditions resulted in:

- Frequent flooding and reduced hay quality
- Streambank erosion
- Nutrient and sediment movement
- Seasonal fencing challenges
- Reduced productivity on flood-prone acres

FARM AT A GLANCE

- **Owners:** Rita Raboin, Dennis Raboin, and Mike Raboin
- **Location:** Lowell, Vermont
- **Watershed:** Upper Missisquoi River Watershed
- **Land base:** 324 acres
- **Operation:** Hay production (formerly 50 cow dairy)
- **Conservation Focus:** Floodplain restoration, riparian habitat, water quality, and flood resilience

“The dairy barn burnt down and the hay field adjacent to the barn was always flooding. We couldn't sell waterlogged hay for feed. So we decided to cut our losses.” - Dennis Raboin

BUILDING A FARM TEAM FOR A RESILIENT FLOODPLAIN

The Raboins partnered with the Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District (OCNRCD) in 2017 through the Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program (AgCWIP) with the initial goal of meeting Vermont's Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs). During that process, the floodplain management challenges were highlighted and OCNRCD staff continued a working relationship with the farm to find a conservation solution that would better serve both the farm and the river.

Once the farm was ready to move forward with a conservation project, OCNRCD brought together state, federal, and nonprofit partners to develop a long-term conservation solution for one of the farm's most flood-prone fields. For nearly five years, through site visits, guided project planning meetings, and program coordination and navigation OCNRCD supported the Raboins every step of the way as a trusted local partner from concept to implementation.



Nutrient Management Planning

Completed the six-day UVM course, ensuring compliance with Vermont's Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) to protect water quality while improving yields.



Floodplain Restoration

21.5 acres restored to riparian forest and wetland through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).



River Corridor Protection

A 32-acre Vermont River Conservancy permanent River Corridor Easement valued at \$79,940 will allow the Missisquoi River to naturally adjust over time and improve flood resilience.



*Mike Raboin &
OCNRCD Staff
soil sampling.*



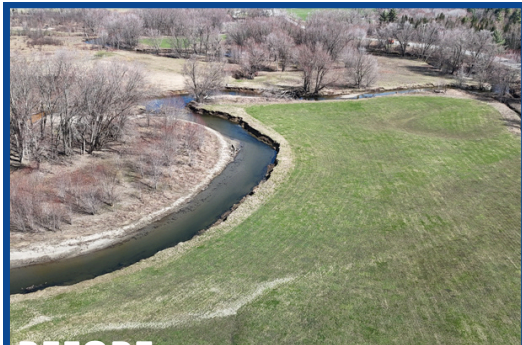
A HEALTHIER RIVER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- 21.54 acres restored to riparian forest
- 32 acres permanent River Corridor Easement
- Improved wildlife habitat
- Increased flood resilience
- Reduced downstream sediment loading
- Long-term water quality protection
- Estimated Phosphorus reduction of 38.4 kg/yr

Working with local conservation partners can help transform recurring challenges into lasting benefits for farms, communities, and future generations.

Stewardship often means making decisions that benefit the land long into the future. By choosing to restore a field that had become increasingly difficult to farm, the Raboin family invested in the long-term health of their property while helping protect one of Vermont's designated Wild and Scenic rivers.



Drone image showcasing a riparian area void of plants, operating as a hay field.

BEFORE

On-the-ground image of land with hundreds of small seedlings planted along the riparian area



AFTER

Photo depicting ponded water in former river meander depressions following heavy rainfall event.



Map depicting land committed to CREP

OCNRCD'S ROLE

- Coordinated 8+ project partners
- Guided five years of project planning
- Connected the family with program funding and translated program terminology and processes.
- Assisted with USDA paperwork
- Provided long-term local support



"The Orleans County NRCD provided invaluable long-term continuity, vision, and landowner connection over the many years it took to shepherd this complex project to completion. Having a local contact to successfully navigate the multi-year timeline, translate conservation lingo and guide the necessary USDA FSA paperwork with the family was essential to our success."

- Ben Gabos, VAAFM CREP Coordinator

A LEGACY ALONG THE MISSISQUOI

The Raboin family hopes their project encourages other landowners to explore conservation opportunities that strengthen both working lands and Vermont's rivers.



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