

The Lamoille Valley Farm & Forest Initiative: Supporting the Working Landscape

Many of us as individuals already know the countless benefits of buying locally, be it economics, community building or environmental...but what bigger efforts are being made to support the movement? Increased development means greater disturbance to soils, greater impact on natural resources and greater stress on the capacity of existing farmland to both produce more on less land and to maintain the pastoral nature of the landscape. How can we as consumers and producers keep fields and forests under sustainable cultivation? How does the working landscape impact water quality? The correlation is actually quite direct. More active farm and forest lands means more land that is allowed to filter, absorb, and hold water thus recharging aquifers and streams in a way that minimizes soil erosion and water quality degradation. Keeping the small farm and woodlot as mainstays on the landscape means less land that is lost to impervious surfaces such as parking lots and pavement.

Encouraged by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's draft Lamoille Basin Plan, the Lamoille County Natural Resources Conservation District & Nature Center (LCNRCD) is working to look at the entire Lamoille Watershed as a project area when appropriate, and to create collaborative projects between conservation-minded organizations and agencies. Participants in the Lamoille basin planning process outlined the loss of the working landscape as one of the top issues facing Lamoille Valley as land is fragmented and developed at a rapid pace. Based on this recommendation, the Lamoille Valley Farm & Forest Initiative's main goal is to support the working landscape and advocate for a farm and forest lands-based economy of the Lamoille River Watershed. The initiative is comprised of a series of projects that support the working landscape, be it farming or forestry or their secondary markets.

LCNRCD is a not for profit organization serving predominantly Lamoille County since 1945 whose mission includes conservation implementation, environmental education and outreach and advocates for project partnerships that benefit our local communities.

Lamoille Valley Farm & Forest Directory

Over a year of research has culminated in a guide to over 200 primary and secondary agricultural and forest product producers within the watershed. The directory is an invaluable resource for people who are looking to buy local products and directly support their working neighbors. A limited number of hard copies are available; we encourage people to download the directory from our website www.lcnrcd.com. For those who are interested in being added to the mailing list for future LVFFI events, contact the District.

**For more information on the LVFFI or other District projects contact
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