



# PASSUMPSIC VALLEY LAND TRUST

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## St. Johnsbury's Drinking Water Quality Deemed Safe

The town of St. Johnsbury recently released their annual report on the quality of their drinking water.

The public water supply in St. Johnsbury is provided by Stiles Pond in nearby Waterford, Vermont. Stiles pond collects the water that is traveling both along the surface as well as underground. Water picks up substances along the way and these are considered contaminants. All drinking water has contaminants, but not all contaminants are considered harmful.

The contaminants come from two sources, one is naturally occurring minerals that dissolve into the water and the other is human or animal activity. Naturally occurring minerals such as iron and

sulfur tend not to be harmful to drinking water. Substances that originate from human or animal activity can be harmful if their levels are too high. If any harmful contaminants are discovered it is the responsibility of public water systems to eliminate them. St. Johnsbury's drinking water does not contain any contaminants that exceed the acceptable levels for human consumption.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Vermont provide regulations limiting the amount of potentially harmful contaminants. The substances are broken down into five categories, microbial organisms (viruses and bacteria), inorganic chemicals (salts and metals), synthetic

organic chemicals (pesticides and herbicides), volatile organic chemicals (gasoline and solvents) and naturally occurring radioactivity. Except for naturally occurring radioactivity the sources for these types of contaminants is human activity. These activities include: sewage treatment plants, septic systems, urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic waste water discharges, farming, and careless handling or disposal of gasoline or household chemicals.

Water quality data lists all of the contaminants detected in the year 2003. It also lists data from test sites that do not have annual tests. (Continued on Page 3)

# PVLT Seeks Funding for Riverfront Conservation Project

PVLT is seeking funding for the first year of a three-year program to protect targeted parcels for conservation along the Passumpsic River. PVLT is submitting a grant application to the Upper Connecticut Mitigation and Enhancement Fund that will request money to purchase easements or land for conservation.

About fifteen land owners have shown interest in working with the PVLT.

Hiring a professional conservation consultant will be necessary to receive the grant and funding for that position is allocated in the details of the

application. The consultant will work closely with the PVLT board of directors to accomplish the acquisition of land. These people own riverfront land that has been deemed high priority for protection through a previous PVLT grant.

The criteria for a high priority parcel includes a long frontage with narrow depth and small parcel size (5-25 acres) as well as close proximity to already existing PVLT land, and frontage on agricultural land. Parcels with high ecological value or high sensitivity, parcels identified by the Caledonia County

Conservation District as high priority and parcels with owners who showed interest in working with the PVLT were also taken into account.

The Upper Connecticut Mitigation and Enhancement Fund is set up to allocate funds required by the Fifteen Mile Falls Hydro project that is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The funding is provided by the owner of the dam, US Generating, New England. The grant application will be voted on in January by the fund's board of directors.

## East Burke Dam Removal Project Receives Further Funding

PVLT has received a grant from the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund to study the dam PVLT owns on the Passumpsic River's East Branch, located in East Burke

village.

Contracts were awarded in late 2003 to Gomez and Sullivan Engineers (G&S) of Weare, NH and the Archaeology Research Center of the University of Maine at

Farmington (UME-ARC).

The main thrust of the two-part study is to help PVLT evaluate the feasibility of removing the deteriorating dam, which is responsible for host of environmental, recreational, safety and aesthetic problems.

G&S's role was to investigate the dam structure, the impoundment dimensions, impounded sediments, the historic river channel, and impoundment-dependent wetlands. G&S was also charged with developing preliminary plans for the dam removal and estimating the cost of both removing dam and rebuilding it. (Continued on Page 4)



# Introducing PVLТ’s Newest Board Member, Chris Walker

Christine Walker is the PVLТ’s newest board member and she brings extensive experience in obtaining funding for non-profit organizations. She is currently the Economic Development Planning Coordinator for the Economic Development Administration, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce. In this position she is responsible for facilitating funding for projects and maintaining a regional economic strategy. She also works as a project manager for EDA and CDBG funded

projects as well as other federal and state funded programs.

Christine has utilized her Bachelor’s Degree in Natural Resource Management from UVM to work on projects with Vermont’s Act 250, Fish and Game, as well as with Parks and Recreation. She has also authored the 2003-2008 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Northern New Hampshire, which details economic conditions and analysis as well as work plans for the region. She is also a recent graduate of

New Hampshire’s Professional Certification Program in Economic Development.

“I believe there is always a learning curve when joining a new board,” commented Christine. “I am planning on learning how the mission was developed and how it has been carried forward to this point.” “Having a background in Natural Resource Planning I believe I can benefit the Land Trust in GIS applications, land ownership research and land use patterns.”

## St. Johnsbury’s Drinking Water Deemed Safe from p. 1

The data lists the amount of a contaminant that was found in the drinking water and compares that to the level at which a contaminant is considered safe. The data also measures the amounts of disinfectants and other additives such as fluoride. Fluoride is added to promote strong teeth. Disinfectants have been added to ensure quality and fight off possible microbial contaminants. The data compares the levels of an

additive to the maximum allowable levels of each additive. The data also measures the turbidity which is a measure of the cloudiness of water. These levels can indicate the quality of water and the effectiveness of disinfectants. None of the water that was tested contained levels of harmful contaminants or disinfectant additives that exceeded the maximum amount allowed by the EPA or the State of Vermont.

The presence of contaminants does not always mean drinking water poses a health risk. Some individuals may be more vulnerable to certain contaminants than others. People with illness, the elderly, and infants may be at risk from infection and need to obtain advice from health care providers concerning drinking water. The EPA maintains the Safe Drinking Water Hotline and can be reached at (1-800-426-4791).

### Help contribute to the future of the Passumpsic Valley

The Passumpsic Valley can be protected best by those who know it best. The land trust is your chance to protect the Passumpsic River watershed. Your membership fees go directly to preservation and recreation projects. Make a commitment to the future of the Passumpsic Valley

<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>\$250</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>Associate</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>Supporting</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>\$100</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail your tax-deductible check to: Passumpsic Valley Land Trust, Box 624, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819**

# East Burke Dam Removal Project Update from p. 2

UME-ARC had the job of studying the cultural resources attributable to the dam and associated milling operations, as well as an archeological assessment of the dam site. This includes assessing the impoundment and the downstream river channel, researching the history of the town of Burke and determining the dam's eligibility for the National Historic Register.

PVLT vice president Lenny Gerardi is reviewing the studies and assisting the contractors in finishing their research. Final reports are expected soon and will be discussed in future newsletters as well as in one or more public meetings.

To date no surprises have come to light that would automatically preclude the dam removal. Proactively removing the dam will be an expensive undertaking, but not as costly as restoration. PVLT is looking into potential funding sources.

This edition was written and produced by Chris Austin

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