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By NAT WORMAN  
Messenger Correspondent

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At stake is the water quality of the lake that, according to latest figures, is subjected to phosphorus runoff in excess of sustainable levels.

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Also available was the blueprint that guides the FWC's work. The document explains the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the lake, which is identified by the Agency of Natural

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Resources as "a daily amount or load of phosphorous that can enter the lake without causing water quality problems."

"Lake Carmi exceeds such a daily load currently (April 8, 2009) and the TMDL will provide guidelines as to how much the load needs to be reduced. If followed, the TMDL should result in the correction of water quality problems," states the most recent report.

Under FWC President Jim Cameron's administration and the work of coordinator Heidi Britch-Valenta, FWC has reached its highest level of community engagement in its 16-year existence.

"One thing we need to think about is future generations, how they need to become more involved," said village resident Eric Beauregard. "The watershed committee is a very good thing and could be a role model for other towns. What they've accomplished in a relatively short amount of time is quite impressive.

Since science and measurement, as well as the opinions of those who live near the lake, are equally important, three public organizations helped guide the TMDL report,

FWC, the Lake Carmi Campers Association, and the Missisquoi River Basin Association.

The report says, "The water quality targets (22 parts phosphorous per billion parts water) . . . are defined so as to eliminate severe algae blooms in Lake Carmi and are consistent with a lake condition that will meet water quality standards."

FWC's 2008-2009 report detailed its work designed to reach that goal. Citizens contributed some 1,000 volunteer hours.

The FWC launched an information and outreach program to campers to make available information to them about septic systems. The FWC created flyers and binders, and publicized where they could be picked up.

Fifty-seven of 306 Lake Carmi camp owners replied to a septic system survey, now entered in a data base, to be used for further action to reduce campers' contribution to pollution of the lake. In 2009, 30 lakeshore property owners (compared to 18 in 2008) had septic systems pumped out as part of FWC's \$50-rebate program.

Another survey and action was taken to pinpoint farm pollution problems and their solutions. Cost-share programs were begun with four farms. The goal is to have 10 taking part this spring, according to FWC's report.

Britch-Valenta was host at a booth at the annual Franklin Fireman's Barbecue, which some 1,000 people attend. The display included a model of the Lake Carmi watershed, a demonstration model for treating septic systems, and free samples of a dish detergent shown to be friendly to septic systems.

Also, FWC sought and got funds from the Agency of Transportation to pay Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) to cure pollution sore points. Over two weeks, VYCC completed three erosion-stopping projects, ditching and turnouts on steep camp roads, seeding and stabilization of the Dewing Shore Road embankment, and a stone facing on banks at Rhodes Cove Inlet. The crew also cleaned up weeds and debris at the north end of the lake.

Dairy owners Wayne and Nancy Fiske, who own a 360-acre, 180 Holstein herd above a small pond at Browns Corner were present. Like most farmers, he gets about \$15 a hundredweight for milk, which costs \$18 to produce.

These meetings give us the opportunities to "educate people on the practices we are using on our farms," Wayne Fiske told the *Messenger*. "How we're trying to slow down the phosphorous that's going into the Rock River. We've put in buffers, we've put in strip cropping - corn and haylage - each one 150 feet apart so it's slowing down erosion on the slopes."

The pond is the source of Rock River.

He added that they had also put in a pit to stop runoff from the corn from draining into the pond.

Cecil King who sells vegetables and eggs from his flowering plot in the middle of the village said, "One of the most important things we can do for young people is to give them the opportunity to enjoy the natural environment."

For example, he went on "fishing along a road . . . and catching something that's worth while they can take home and prepare a

meal for their family and participate in the clean up of the same area. These things would . . . create a much more positive attitude among the young people."

He added, "Water is the most important thing we can talk about. Our bodies are made mostly of water and if we can't keep the water clean then we're not doing the job."

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