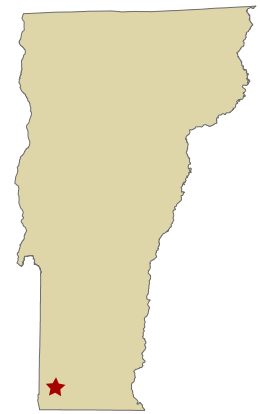


# Restoring Wetlands in Bennington, Vermont

## Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program



### The Problem

Located in rural southwestern Vermont, the Bennington Landfill was initially a site for sand and gravel excavation. In June 1969, the landfill began receiving residential, commercial, and industrial wastes, including highly toxic substances such as paint thinner, inks, glues, solvents, and scrapped capacitors containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Harmful concentrations of PCBs, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and metals in sediments and surface waters in wetlands adjacent to the site prompted the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's 1989 designation of the landfill as a Superfund Site. Further research demonstrated that elevated concentrations of PCBs and metals in wetlands had reduced and contaminated the food supply for migratory birds.

### Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program

When hazardous substances enter the environment, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources can be injured. The Department of the Interior, along with State, Tribal and other Federal partners, acts as "trustee" for these resources. Trustees seek to identify the natural resources injured and determine the extent of the injuries. Trustees work with the responsible parties to carry out restoration activities, or recover funds from responsible parties to carry out the restoration activities. These efforts are possible under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program (NRDAR), the goal of which is to restore natural resources injured by oil spills or the release of hazardous substances.

### Restoring the Resources

After determining that the landfill had contaminated surrounding wetlands used by migratory birds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the State

### Highlights

- Restored 2.8 acres of wetlands; and
- Protected 14 acres of wetlands and uplands in perpetuity.

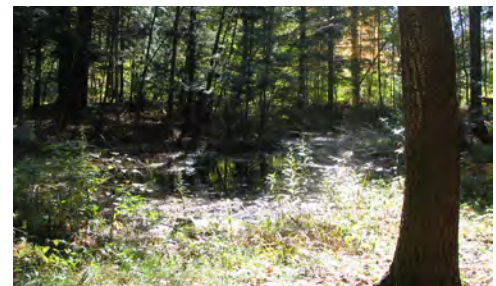
of Vermont negotiated a settlement with the Responsible Party, the Town of Bennington. As part of the settlement, the Town agreed to protect and restore wildlife habitat. At a nearby location, the Town permanently protected 14 acres of forested habitat, including approximately 6 acres of wetlands. In addition, natural hydrologic conditions at the property were restored by removing an antiquated water collection system of concrete cisterns and underground pipes. A committee of interested citizens oversaw the restoration work and created trails and interpretive signs.

### Thanks to Our Partners

This restoration quickly developed into a strong, efficient partnership between the Town of Bennington and the USFWS. With USFWS oversight, Town employees began construction activities less than four months after the restoration agreement was reached. Use of Town employees streamlined costs and increased the Town's commitment to the project. The Town Manager commented that "the project had been transformed from a significant financial burden on the townspeople to something that will benefit the entire community by providing an outdoor sanctuary for everyone's personal enjoyment".



*An antiquated cistern altered natural hydrologic conditions and provided only limited access to wildlife prior to restoration.*



*Several years after the cistern's removal, the natural hydrology of this woodland pool is restored and access to wildlife is improved.*

### For additional information or questions contact:

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Vernal Pool Association



*Spotted salamanders inhabit the restored pools.*