

Restoring Wetlands in Northern Vermont

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program



The Problem

The Pine Street Canal Superfund Site is an 80-acre site located in the City of Burlington, Vermont. The site includes a former coal gasification plant, an abandoned canal and turning basin used to transport lumber during the 1800s, and surrounding wetland and upland habitats. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designated the area a Superfund Site in 1981 after studies conducted by the State of Vermont revealed high levels of coal tar, volatile organic compounds, and cyanide in the canal and surrounding wetlands. Contaminants in wetland sediments reduced aquatic invertebrate populations; this impairment adversely affected other wetland-dependant species such as amphibians and 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

In a 1998 settlement with the Responsible Parties (RPs), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the State of Vermont agreed to an RP-led restoration of an 11-acre pond, also located in Burlington. The pond,

Highlights

- Restored six acres of wetlands; and
- Protected 26 acres of wetland and upland in perpetuity.

originally constructed as a wetland mitigation project, had failed to provide quality wildlife habitat due to construction mistakes that left steep slopes and straight shorelines. Six acres of shoreline were re-graded to increase emergent wetland habitat, and wetland plants, shrubs and trees were planted. The RPs also purchased a conservation easement on 8 acres adjacent to the pond.



S. Schuyler

Steep rocky pondshore lacked vegetation and provided little wetland transition prior to restoration at Howe Farm Pond.



Kozlowski

Forage for dabbling ducks, such as Wood Duck, Mallard (pictured), and American Black Duck, has improved following restoration.

Thanks to Our Partners

With State and USFWS oversight, the RPs enhanced six acres of wetland habitat. Twenty-six acres, including the wetland and surrounding habitat, were protected in perpetuity through a combined effort of the RPs and the State.



S. Schuyler

After the shoreline was re-graded, re-shaped, and planted, the habitat quality surrounding the pond improved and additional wetland habitat was created.

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