**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Lake Raponda and Lake Morey Achieve Gold Lake Wise Award Status**

*Montpelier, Vt.* – The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is pleased to announce that a fourth and fifth lake have achieved the Gold Lake Wise Award. Lake Raponda in Wilmington and Lake Morey in Fairlee join Echo Lake, Seymour Lake, and Lake Iroquois in reaching this accomplishment. The [Gold Lake Wise Award](https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise) is granted to lake associations when 15% of the properties surrounding a lake have received an individual Lake Wise Award.

“The Gold Lake Wise Award is an impressive achievement,” said DEC Commissioner Jason Batchelder. “It is clear that the Lake Raponda and Lake Morey communities are committed to preserving lake health and promoting best shoreland management practices.”

A Lake Wise Award is given to individual lakeshore property owners who participate in the voluntary [Lake Wise Program](https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise) to improve stormwater management and prevent erosion. Their properties must meet a series of criteria that indicate it is well managed, uses [Shoreland Best Management Practices](https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise/bmp), and is maintained to care for the lake.

“The Lake Morey community has been alarmed by a variety of threats to lake quality, including invasive species and algae blooms. Our association has promoted good stewardship of the watershed – leading to a growing number of lakeshore owners taking part in the Lake Wise Program,” said Bill Minard, Lake Morey Protective Association Treasurer. “Owners were excited to achieve the award and make changes to protect the lake from runoff. We look forward to continued improvements to our watershed.”

At Lake Morey, the Gold Lake Wise Award would not have been possible without committed landowners or Lisa Niccolai from the White River Natural Resource Conservation District. Over the course of two years, Lisa helped complete 30 Lake Wise assessments as part of the [Lake Watershed Action Plan](https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise/LWAP).

“The Lake Raponda Association is pleased to hear that Lake Raponda is one of five lakes to ever receive the Gold Lake Wise Award,” said Carol de Groot Bois, a Lake Wise Champion at Lake Raponda. “Our Association and lake community have been working over the years with DEC to educate and help lake property owners improve and protect our lake's quality and habitat. We hope to continue this excellent work.”

Learn how to [become a Gold Lake awardee](https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise). View the map to [find other Lake Wise properties and lakes](https://geodata.vermont.gov/datasets/42c6ae85e8a44deaa1c7e6bbd4ecbf95_0/explore?location=44.108938%2C-72.406882%2C8.18). If Alison Marchione is not available at 802-490-6128 or [Alison.Marchione@Vermont.gov](mailto:Alison.Marchione@Vermont.gov), contact Laura Dlugolecki at 802-490-6133 or [Laura.Dlugolecki@Vermont.gov](mailto:Laura.Dlugolecki@Vermont.gov).

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*A vegetated lakeshore buffer at Lake Raponda in Wilmington, Vermont.*Two women holding a sign

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*Sisters Susan Merrick and Kathy Childs Jones from Lake Raponda proudly display their property’s Lake Wise Award*.

Hammock between trees in a backyard

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*A vegetated lakefront at Lake Morey in Fairlee, Vermont.*

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