**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release - March 11, 2025

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Vermont DEC Recognizes Flood Safety Awareness Week:

Understanding Floodplains and Your Flood Risk

*Montpelier, Vt.* – From March 10 to March 16, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) recognizes Flood Safety Awareness Week. With recent major flood events and spring flood season underway, DEC wants to remind Vermonters about the benefits of floodplain protection and how to protect yourself if your property is at risk of flooding.

“Flood Safety Awareness Week is our yearly reminder to put safety first and remember the functions and values of Vermont’s floodplains.” said DEC Commissioner Jason Batchelder. “These vital areas protect our friends, families, and properties by slowing down water, serving as the brakes on our rivers.”

Most streams fill with spring rains and snowmelt every year or two. As they spill over onto floodplains, small frequent floods offer many benefits from clean water to wildlife habitat. The sounds of wood frogs, spring peepers, and red-winged blackbirds fill the air while geese graze on nearby fields. Silt and nutrients help build nearby soils instead of polluting downstream lakes.

“Floodplains not only help Vermonters by reducing the impact and costs of powerfully erosive high water,” said Batchelder, “but they are also critical for clean water, capturing sediment and phosphorus and keeping our rivers and lakes swimmable.”

For Vermonters that live in the path of possible floods or near a floodplain, we recommend taking proactive steps to protect yourself and your property.

* Find out if your property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area by viewing the [Vermont Flood Ready Atlas](https://floodready.vermont.gov/assessment/vt_floodready_atlas) or visiting the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) [Flood Map Service Center](https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home).
* Work with a homeowner’s insurance agent to get flood insurance. Adequate flood insurance is essential to recover after flood damage.
* Check with your town about their participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Flood insurance is available for any building in a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (about 90% of Vermont communities). The cost varies with location and insurance is required for any mortgage or loan to a building in a high-risk flood hazard area.

To learn more about floodplain protection, flood insurance, and flood recovery, visit [FloodReady.Vermont.Gov](https://floodready.vermont.gov/) or [ANR.Vermont.Gov/Flood](https://anr.vermont.gov/flood). Communities and towns can also explore [state and federal funding opportunities](https://bit.ly/VT-FRFO) to become more flood resilient.

For other flood safety and preparedness tips, visit [Vermont Emergency Management](https://vem.vermont.gov/preparedness/floods).

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