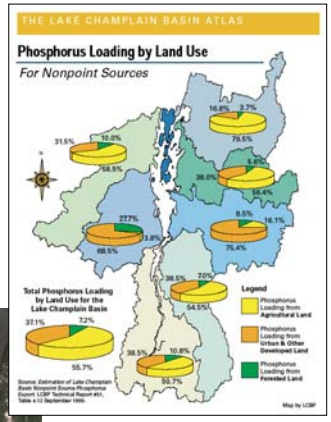
Sustainable Grounds Care: Expanding the role of the business community in reducing NPS pollution

Jurij Homziak[1], Bethany Hanna[2], Jim Flint[3]

[1]Lake Champlain Sea Grant, University of Vermont, [2]University of Vermont Extension, [3]Friends of Burlington Gardens

Problem

Excess phosphorus inputs to Lake Champlain have increased the rate of eutrophication. Noxious and toxic algae blooms **negatively impact aquatic resources and the local economy that depends upon them**.



Credit: Leslie Morrissey and Sarah Wheeler

Historically, the business community has not been targeted in NPS reduction efforts.

Business properties often have a high % of lawn area.

Methods

- Develop a **database** of non-residential properties.

Property Types

Credit: Jurij Homziak

Commercial

Credit: Bethany Hanna

Institutional

Credit: Jurij Homziak

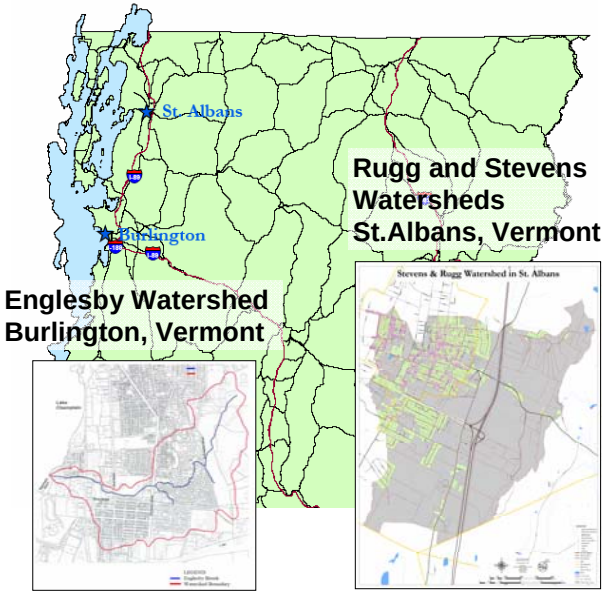
Commons

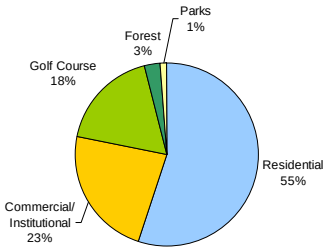
- **Prioritize** by landscaped area.
- **Survey** property managers of higher priority parcels.
- Provide **outreach** on low input grounds care.

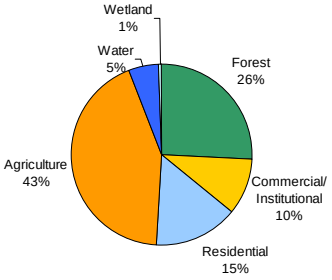
Objective

Reduce the amount of phosphorus being applied to non-residential properties.

Project Sites







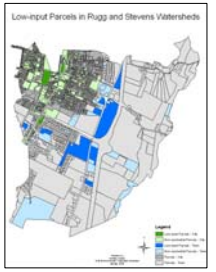
Results

Englesby Watershed

Credit: Jurij Homziak

- 18 out of 35 property managers (43%) completed survey.
- 47 out of 80 acres (59%) of commercial lawn in low input/no P grounds care.
- 10 property managers committed to practicing sustainable grounds care.
- All managers continued practices after 2 years.
- Estimated reduction in P inputs of 0.45 - 0.93 MT annually.

Rugg and Stevens Watersheds



- 25 out of 27 property managers (93%) completed survey.
- 195 out of 351 acres (56%) of non-residential property in low input/no P grounds care.
- 18 property managers committed to practicing sustainable grounds care.
- Post-survey to be completed summer 2008.

Conclusion

- Easily replicated/adapted to other areas.
- Effective in reducing inputs.
- Provides example of sustainable grounds care to community.
- Projects planned for South Portland, Maine and New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The University of Vermont Extension

Lake Champlain Sea Grant

New England Regional Water Program