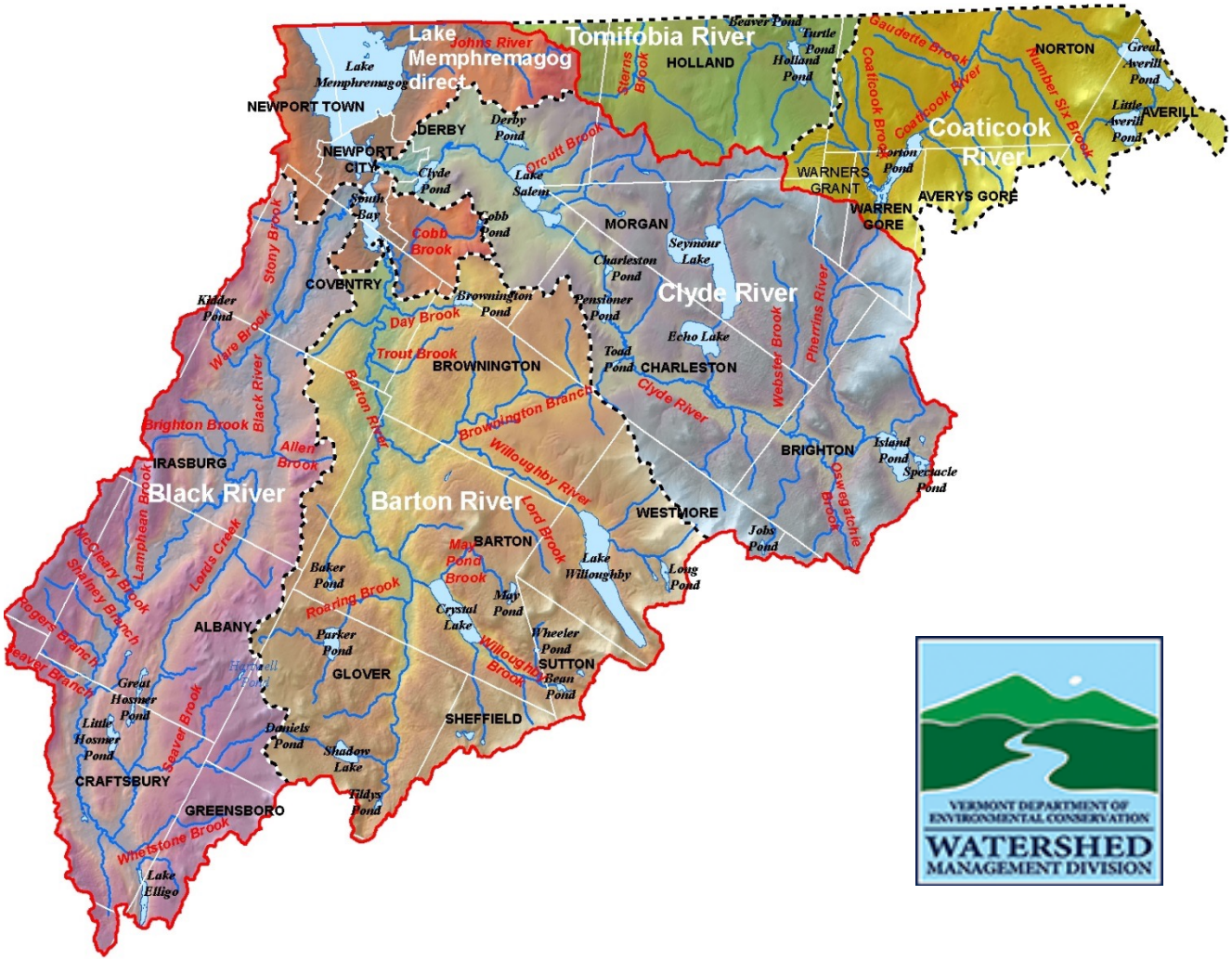
Tactical Basin Planning in a Nutshell

- There are 15 major watersheds in VT
- There are 5 watershed planners
- Each planner covers 3 watersheds

Basin Planner's Responsibilities

Planners evaluate lake and stream problems and threats; identify special uses, values, and characteristics; catalyze and support watershed organizations and projects; provide funding and technical assistance to nonpoint source planning and implementation projects; and provide information and assistance to municipalities for local surface water protection.

Tactical basin plans focus on the projects or actions needed to protect or restore specific waters and identify appropriate funding sources to complete the work, based on monitoring and assessment data. Since these tactical plans will guide all watershed work supported by the VT Watershed Management Division, the issues identified in these plans are the ones that will be prioritized for management attention, including funding. Tactical Basin Plans integrate priority items from complementary plans, including River Corridor Plans, Stormwater Master Plans, Backroads Inventories, and Agricultural Environmental Assessments.



Steps for Tactical Basin Planning

1. **Gather information about water quality in the watershed**
    a. This information comes from:
        i. state scientists who study the fisheries, bugs, streams, lakes, stormwater, hazardous waste sites, agriculture, and wetlands
        ii. studies or inventories conducted by consultants hired by towns, planning commissions, and others
        iii. water quality sampling from local groups
        iv. feedback from the general public directly or through municipalities, regional planning commissions or other sources
    b. This information needs to be based on scientific evidence, but some problems can be identified if they are obvious (ex. dirty water discharging to a stream) which would be a priority for further assessment
2. **Compile and analyze gathered information and use to identify:**
    a. the very high quality waters
    b. areas that show declining water quality
    c. and areas that have documented water quality problems or are a source of pollution to downstream waters
3. **Make a list of actions and projects that address water quality concerns to:**
    a. Protect the highest quality waters (ex. Class I recommendation – funding for research)
    b. Enhance areas that need help (ex. Plant trees along a lakeshore to make better habitat for animals and keep the water cool for fish, or relocate a salt/sand pile so it doesn't discharge into surface waters)
    c. Maintain areas that are in good shape (ex. Recommend protection in town plans for areas vulnerable to development and encourage healthy land use activities)
    d. Restore areas that are not doing well and/or as necessary to meet Total Maximum Daily Load reductions for downstream waters (ex. Install stormwater practices, land easements in floodplains)
4. **Prioritize projects that will provide the highest benefit to water quality** and o**rganize and identify key partners and funding sources to carry these out.**
5. **Release of draft plan for public comment, make revisions based on public input and get final approval of tactical basin plan.**
6. **Continue working with partners on the projects included in the basin plan which will be a priority for state funding until the next basin planning cycle begins with gathering information in 3 years to maintain the 5-year basin planning cycle.**

Note from Basin Planner: A Tactical Basin Plan is revisited every 5 years for each basin. Basin 17 is currently being updated. Once the plan is complete, I work with groups to apply for funding and help them move forward with their projects. I write the plan, but the partners and stakeholders carry out the actions. I'm there to inform and help along the way, but the majority of the credit goes to the partners and stakeholders. Anyone who cares about water quality can take part in making their waters the best where they live.