

Pike River Watershed Results

Evaluating the impacts of the strategic watershed approach in Vermont



Goal: Measurable Water Quality Improvement

In an effort to assist the State of Vermont in meeting the phosphorus TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) for Lake Champlain, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) initiated a **strategic planning approach** to water quality improvement for those watersheds in the Lake Champlain Basin that were **most impaired and contribute heavy concentrations of agricultural phosphorus runoff to the lake. This included the Pike River Watershed.**

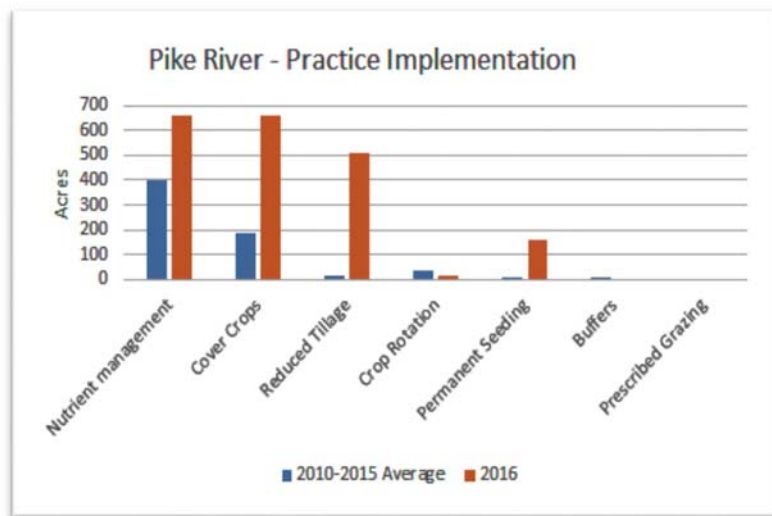
Accelerated and targeted implementation of agricultural conservation practices in this watershed aims to result in **measurable improvements to water quality.**

2016 was the first year of funding and practice implementation through NRCS' strategic watershed effort. These graphs illustrate practice implementation rates and estimated phosphorus reductions.

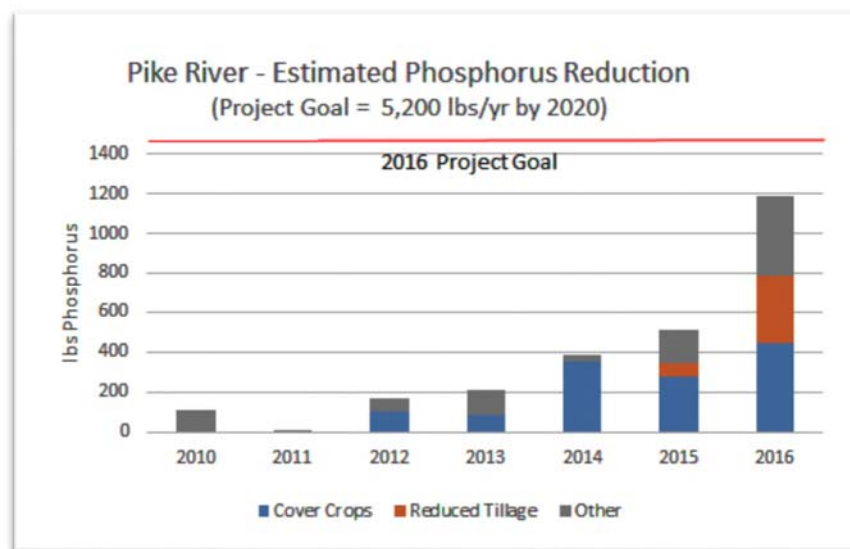
Phosphorus reductions were estimated using modeled cropland loading rates, acres of practices implemented, and practice efficiencies developed by the State of Vermont for TMDL tracking.

TMDL Phosphorus Reduction Goal for Agriculture: 83%
Watershed 5-Year Project Goal for Phosphorus Reduction: 5,200 lbs/year (65% of the TMDL goal)

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The amount of cover crops planted and the amount of reduced tillage used increased significantly in 2016. The amount of nutrient management and permanent seeding also increased in the watershed.



Because of the significant increase in practice implementation, the estimated phosphorus reduction also increased, nearly reaching the 2016 established goal. Active farmer adoption of conservation practices is a primary reason for the success of this project.