

# Vermont's Flood Safety Act (S.213)

Vermont's historic development pattern has left our homes, schools, businesses, and roads vulnerable to flooding. Our response to this flood vulnerability has been to try to manage our rivers to keep them where we want them, which has only exacerbated our flood problem. Limiting development in these high hazard areas, improving dam safety, and supporting our wetlands – as proposed in S.213 – are essential steps **to improve our collective flood preparedness, climate resilience, and water quality, while significantly decreasing taxpayer-funded flood recovery.**

## 1 River Corridor

**The meandering area of a river.** A river will move within its corridor over time, either through steady, incremental shifts or via rapid, erosive events whereby a river jumps its bank and charts a new course entirely. Development in the river corridor is at risk of catastrophic damage. With increasing flood frequency and severity, limiting development in river corridors is the #1 way to ensure the safety of communities and minimize the taxpayer burden of flood-related disasters.

## 2 Wetlands

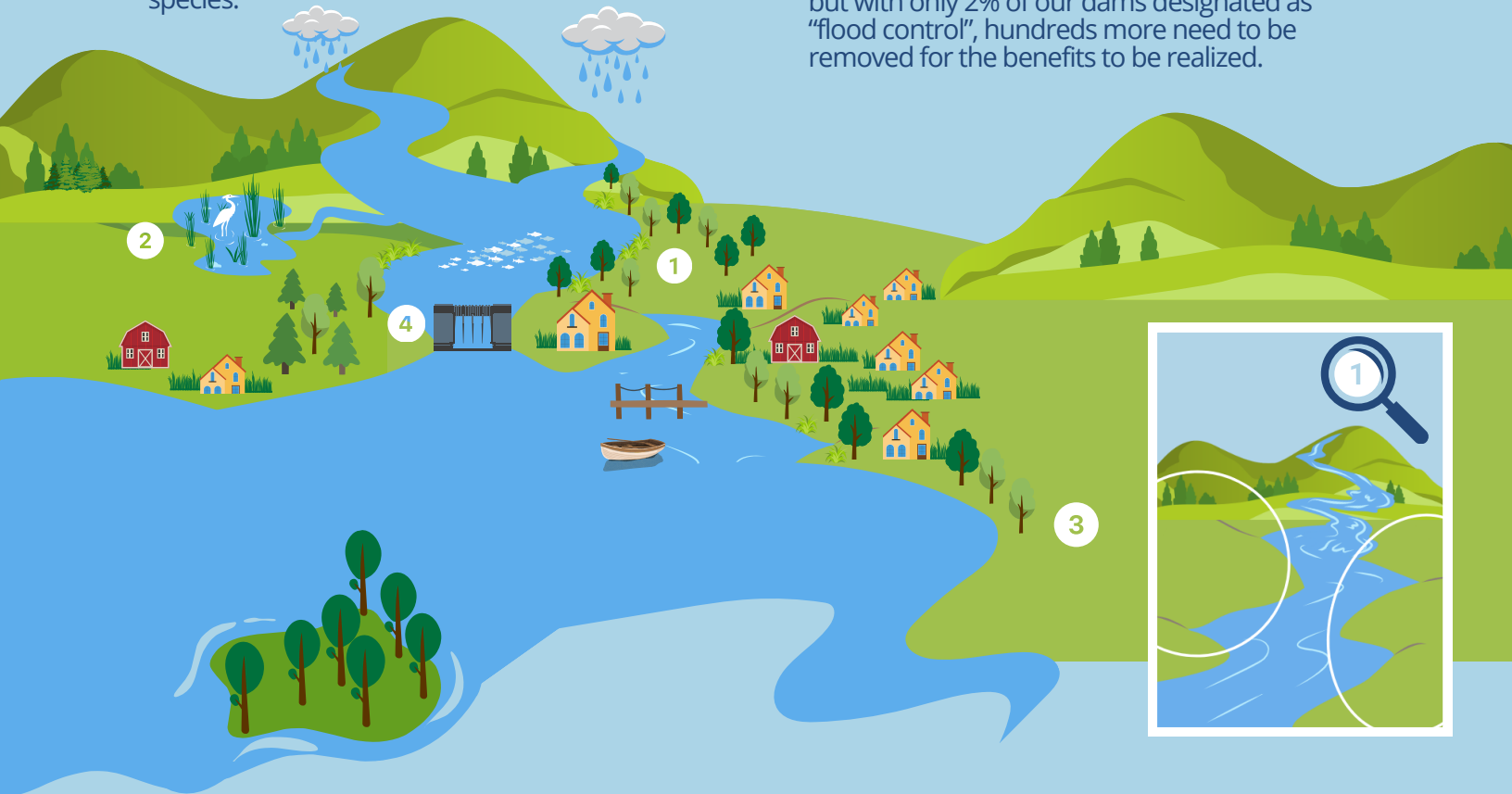
**The area of land saturated with water.** Wetlands serve as a sponge, retaining and slowing floodwaters, filtering and storing sediment, and providing critical habitat for species.

## 3 Floodplains

**The area next to a river that fills with floodwaters.** During high precipitation events, rivers spill over their banks and fill into their floodplains. This is an important natural function that allows floodwaters to spread out and reduce intensity. Riparian vegetation in the floodplain and river corridor also acts as a buffer for floodwaters and should be maintained. Development in the floodplain is at risk of inundation flooding.

## 4 Dam Safety

**Dams unsafely alter river flows.** Removing dams is a highly effective method of restoring rivers, enhancing aquatic habitats, improving water quality, and ensuring public safety. In Vermont, dozens of dams have been removed, but with only 2% of our dams designated as "flood control", hundreds more need to be removed for the benefits to be realized.



# Benefits of Vermont's Flood Safety Act (S.213)



## Public Health and Safety

Flooding is Vermont's number one natural hazard and will worsen with climate change.



## Decreased Cost of Disasters

Flood recovery costs Vermont taxpayers tens of millions of dollars every year.



## Decreased Municipal Burden

Our resource-strained towns are burdened by the patchwork regulatory programs.



## Improved Water Quality

River corridor protections, dam removals, and floodplain and wetland restoration all significantly improve Vermont's water quality.

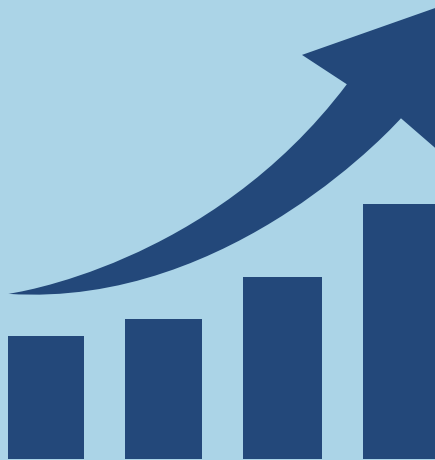


## Biodiversity Protection

Improving aquatic systems' functions will support improved habitat for biodiversity gains.

**67%** 

of Vermonters support limiting development in areas at risk of flooding



61%

of Vermonters think flooding is an extremely or very serious problem

52%

of Vermonters are more worried about flooding now than 5 years ago