*[This is content from an article that Guilford’s Floodplain Administrator published in the Guilford Gazette to let the community know about the bylaw process and an opportunity to learn more at a meeting* before *the Selectboard had a hearing on the bylaw and made a decision. Consider adapting this language for your own use.]*

Public Meeting Scheduled to Discuss Proposed River Corridor Protection Bylaw

A public meeting to discuss a proposed River Corridor Protection Bylaw will be held at the **Guilford Central School on Wednesday, November 29th, at 6:00pm**

Simultaneously with the nation witnessing one of the most destructive hurricane seasons on record, the Guilford Selectboard has been considering the adoption of a flood and erosion bylaw that would help protect areas prone to flood and river erosion damage.

The purpose of the Bylaw is to:

* Minimize the loss of life and property
* Reduce taxpayer costs and demands on public services
* Ensure that development in flood prone areas minimizes or eliminates flooding and erosion loss
* Capture the maximum State Emergency Relief Assistance Fund match
* Implement the recommendations outlined in the Town Plan

Since 1986, as part of the National Flood Insurance Program, Guilford has regulated development in FEMA defined Special Flood Hazard Areas. The proposed Bylaw includes the broader River Corridor as defined and mapped by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). A River Corridor is the area that a river may move over time. The ANR maps show corridors for rivers and streams that drain a watershed area of over two square miles (e.g., Green River and Broad Brook). Small perennial streams draining a watershed of a half mile up to two square miles are not shown on the ANR maps, but are included under the bylaw regulations and include a buffer of 50 feet measured from the top of the stream’s bank.

Towns that protect River Corridors are eligible for enhanced financial incentives including the highest rate available through Vermont’s [Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund](http://floodready.vermont.gov/find_funding/emergency_relief_assistance%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). Under the proposed Bylaw, Guilford would be eligible for an additional 5% of ERAF funding (e.g. $50,000 based on a million-dollar disaster)

Protecting a River Corridor also means restricting development that occurs in that corridor. No new primary residences or major additions are allowed within the mapped corridor without meeting and complying with very specific criteria. Structures such as garages and outbuildings that are not living areas and have under 500 square feet of floor area are permissible with minimal requirements. **The bylaw regulations are not retroactive**; they do not affect development done prior to the bylaw being adopted.

Reducing the vicious risk/cost cycle caused by flooding can only be achieved when rivers flow freely in corridors that are open. While the proposed Bylaw can’t guarantee total protection, it does add substantial flood resistance and is the best way for Guilford to prepare for storms that we know are coming.

For more information: Visit the Town website at **www.guilfordvt.net**. There you will find several related documents including the complete Bylaw. These documents will also be posted around Town. You can also view the FEMA Floodplain and ANR River Corridor mapping at the [Flood Ready Atlas](http://bit.ly/floodatlas).