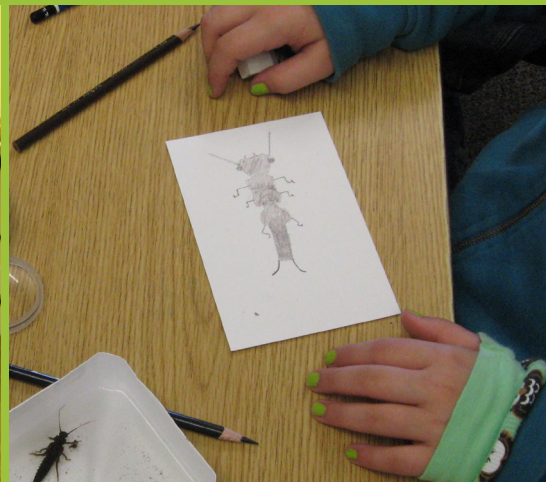
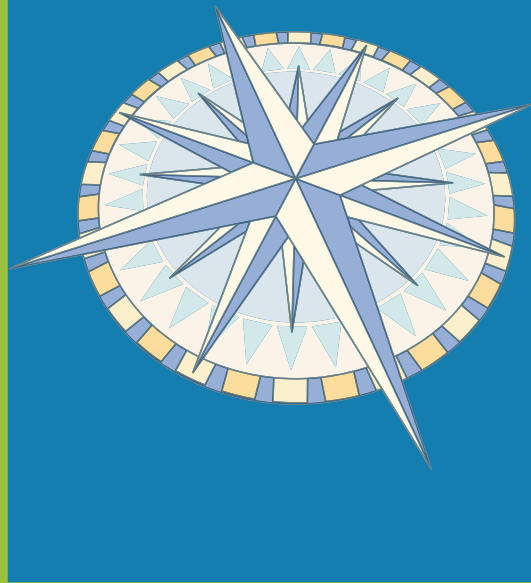
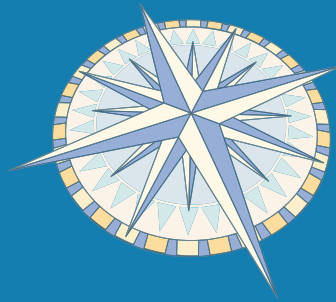




Roadmap to Environmental Literacy for Vermont



Roadmap to Environmental Literacy for Vermont



A Project of:



This project was made possible by generous support from the Canaday Family Charitable Trust.

About SWEEP

Vermont's Statewide Environmental Education Programs alliance (SWEEP) is a coalition of dozens of individuals and more than 60 organizations promoting environmental education in Vermont. SWEEP's purpose is to foster environmental appreciation and understanding in order to enable Vermonters to make responsible decisions affecting the environment.



Since 1973, SWEEP members have been meeting regularly to exchange information and to coordinate efforts among Vermonters involved and interested in environmental education.

SWEEP is one of the six environmental education organizations that make up the New England Environmental Education Alliance (NEEEA).

About Four Winds Nature Institute

Four Winds Nature Institute is a non-profit organization *advancing the understanding, appreciation and protection of the environment through community-based natural science education and research.*

Four Winds staff members are educators and scientists dedicated to helping children and adults gain the background knowledge and science skills needed to understand the world around them and the creative problem-solving and citizenship skills needed to protect it. Their programs encourage folks to learn about and explore nearby nature, connecting people to the natural world where they live, work and play.



Four Winds believes people long for a healthy connection to the environment and to each other. Their community-based education programs bring children and adults together to explore the natural world. Through these programs, the organization is helping people of all ages make meaningful connections to nature. It is these connections that will nurture and fuel communities as people work together to address increasingly complex environmental issues.

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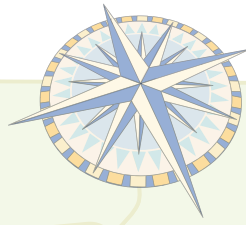
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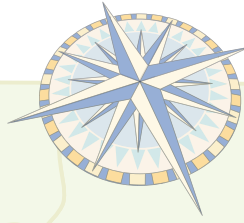
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Introduction

Imagine taking a trip to a community, and as you stroll around town you notice hospital and utility company employees leaving their workplaces at the end of the day with food from local farms that was delivered to their offices. You also see a locally owned fuel company delivering home heating oil in a hybrid fuel truck. And when you decide to take a hike on public lands near the local school, you discover an interpretive trail guide that was produced by the town's middle school students. Fortunately for those of us living in Vermont, we don't have to imagine these things because they're already happening in our communities. Through a series of public dialogues, the Environmental Literacy Vermont project gathered information about many of the environmental initiatives around the state with the goal of creating a roadmap to environmental literacy for all. What we discovered was an abundance of people in all sectors of our statewide community championing a wide variety of environmental projects and programs that are shaping our communities and our future.

What Is Environmental Literacy?

Being literate in the broadest sense means to have both knowledge and competence. When we consider environmental literacy, according to the North American Association of Environmental Education, knowledge and competence includes the following:

- An understanding of the Earth as a physical system and a living environment, including humans and their societies within the landscape
- A familiarity with some basic modes of inquiry, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and an ability to interpret and synthesize information
- An understanding of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in order to participate in resolving issues
- Motivation and empowerment to act, understanding that what people do as individuals and groups can make a difference

In short, understanding, problem-solving, citizenship, and action.

Karen Gaudette



“What is Environmental Literacy? In short, understanding, problem-solving, citizenship and action.”



Fostering environmental literacy may include activities such as school children taking a hike with a naturalist or families attending a local maple sugaring festival. It also may include neighbors cooperatively sharing resources such as lawn mowers, log splitters, roto-tillers, or even just canoes or bicycles. It could be the town road crew working with landowners to install beaver baffles to prevent washouts or a local business providing compost bins for employee lunch waste. Environmental literacy involves community members who are engaged in discussion at town meetings, employees who promote sustainability policies in their workplaces, and students planning community service projects. It might be employees advocating for bike racks or showers in their workplaces or students coordinating recycling programs in their school or energy audits in public buildings. Throughout this project, we discovered a wide variety of environmental programs and activities that already are a part of the fabric in many Vermont communities.

What Are the Goals of this Project?

Environmental literacy is part of the history and tradition of Vermont. Shaped by geologic and glacial forces, the landscape of Vermont provided its first human settlements with a livelihood that was both difficult and sustaining. Native American and European settler alike applied knowledge and skills acquired over many generations to the tasks of making a living here and building a society. Although times have changed a great deal since the earliest days, still the livelihood and social well being of Vermonters is directly linked to the health of our environment. The Environmental Literacy Vermont project was launched with this reality in mind. It began in the spring of 2008 when Vermont's Statewide Environmental Education Programs alliance (SWEET) held a meeting on "Creating an Environmental Literacy Plan for Vermont." At that time, SWEET asked the following questions:

- What topics do you think must be included in a plan for statewide environmental literacy?
- How best can we engage a broad range of folks in this planning process?
- What do you envision as outcomes to this process?

One year later, on Earth Day 2009, the No Child Left Inside Act of 2009 (HR.2054) was introduced into the US Congress. The proposed NCLI Act promotes and rewards the creation of statewide environmental literacy plans and supports professional development for teachers to achieve the plan's goals. Although NCLI only requires that each state's plan address students K-12, SWEET, in partnership with the Four Winds Nature Institute, proposed to develop an environmental literacy plan for Vermont citizens of all ages. By broadening participation, SWEET acknowledged that environmental literacy is, and should be, a lifelong learning process. Environmental literacy begins with parents, early childhood professionals, and young children. It grows into K-12 formal and informal education. It is integrated into higher education, technical education, businesses, government services, and the media; and it involves whole communities.

With this in mind, the goal of Vermont's environmental literacy plan was much broader than the NCLI proposal for school-based K-12 plans. Instead, the goal was to conduct statewide dialogues focusing on model environmental programs in Vermont and to map Vermont's environmental literacy-related assets to help connect people, ideas, and efforts. The participants would include people from all sectors of our communities: manufacturing, retail, tourism, energy, agriculture and forestry, government, higher education, technical education, public and private education, religious organizations, civic groups, early childhood services, the arts, media, non-profits, and the general public.

In the spring of 2009, the Four Winds Nature Institute received grant funding for this project from The Canaday Family Charitable Trust. Four Winds hired a project coordinator and assembled a steering committee from a range of occupations and organizations to coordinate the dialogues. The steering committee met several times during the fall of 2009. The dialogue process was framed around David Cooperrider's work on appreciative inquiry and John Kretzmann and John McKnight's community asset mapping.

Members of the steering committee invited participants who represented different sectors of their communities to come together to discuss environmental literacy. From January through April 2010, public dialogues were held in each of Vermont's 14 counties. Approximately 200 people participated

“The rooms where the dialogues were hosted were filled with spirited conversation, exhilarating ideas, and laughter.”



All photos this page: Jen Brown

in the dialogues and shared their visions for environmentally literate communities. During an interactive process that kept attendees moving around the room and talking to a variety of people, participants highlighted successful environmental projects and initiatives across the state and identified existing needs and opportunities to improve environmental literacy in Vermont. The rooms where the dialogues were hosted were filled with spirited conversation, exhilarating ideas, and laughter. At the end of the evening, participants were asked to share their feedback on small slips of paper, and their responses were inspiring. They ranged from “an affirmation that I really love the town I live in” to “I’m encouraged by the connections that we made as a group tonight and the process of sharing our thoughts and ideas.”

The statewide dialogue process identified hundreds of creative and effective environmental projects and initiatives in every corner of Vermont. Minutes from the dialogues, which are posted at www.environmentalliteracyvt.org and included here in the appendix, list the projects and people that were mentioned by participants. Although there was some overlap in each session, the dialogue process also revealed a slightly different profile for each county — how each defined sustainability and identified priorities, and what specific projects residents in the county were working on and excited about.

Where Will Vermont’s Roadmap to Environmental Literacy Take You?

This Roadmap will take you on a tour of our state. You’ll travel from county to county learning about successful and replicable environmental projects and initiatives along the way. Our hope is that as you read the vignettes you find here, you’ll not only be proud of what your neighbors are accomplishing, but you’ll be inspired to get involved in some of these things yourself or be motivated to start something important and new.

It would be impossible for us to include examples of all of the work that is going on around the state. During the public dialogues, we learned about teachers who are getting their students out in their communities; businesses that are using creative ways to reduce their paper waste and energy demands;

and collaborations between public agencies, nonprofits, and for-profit companies. The Roadmap gives you just a taste of the ways in which our state already is achieving the goals of environmental literacy. The sample of projects and initiatives from each county we’ve included here is just the beginning. We hope this project will continue well into the future, and that we’ll have the opportunity to continue to share innovative and effective projects for years to come. If your organization or business’s work is not mentioned in the Roadmap at this time, we invite you to share your story with us by email.

We’ve chosen to highlight projects that can be replicated in a variety of sectors and that vary in scale in the hope that successful ideas will spread across the state and beyond. Many of the projects we selected are small in scope and can be initiated in a variety of settings — in businesses, schools, nonprofit organizations, churches, town offices, etc. This is not to say there aren’t many highly successful large-scale projects going on in this state. There certainly are. We’ve chosen to focus on ideas, however, that do not require a large capital investment or a big budget, and that could be successful in a variety of sectors.

The Roadmap, besides profiling projects, shows the depth of Vermont’s environmental engagement. Nearly every county hosts farmers’ markets, watershed alliances, school-based environmental education programs, food co-ops, alternative transportation options, and the like. Such statewide projects are important aspects of environmental literacy in our state. We’ve included a section that identifies some of these statewide initiatives.

Finally, at the end of the document we’ve included a section that describes some of the actions suggested by the public to move all of the sectors of our communities closer to environmental literacy. While one goal of this project is that some of the current environmental initiatives highlighted in the Roadmap be replicated in new communities, there are also additional, broader actions that people may choose to take. Like the examples from each county, these recommendations emerged at our statewide dialogues, and they are by no means an exhaustive list. We include them in this document so that businesses, non-profit organizations, and public agencies can

“Folks from all sectors of the community and from all regions of the state braved the weather to share their thoughts about environmental literacy with us.”



All photos this page: Jen Brown

consider them in strategic planning sessions or when setting their yearly goals.

We hope you will use the Roadmap to take a tour through this Green Mountain State. You will travel from south to north through each of Vermont’s 14 counties. In each county, you will find descriptions of two or three specific environmental projects and initiatives. Should you be inspired to learn more — and we hope you will! — each project’s website and other contact information are listed whenever possible. You also can explore the section that lists statewide initiatives, and you can learn about some more general recommendations for action generated by the public. Regardless of what portion of the Roadmap you find most useful, we hope you’ll enjoy taking this tour around Vermont and learning about the work that your neighbors are doing.

Who Was Involved in the Project?

Up to this point, this project has involved the work and participation of over 200 dedicated Vermont residents. Some of those people belong to Vermont’s Statewide Environmental Education Programs alliance (www.vermontsweep.org). SWEEP members have been meeting regularly since 1973 to exchange information and to coordinate efforts among Vermonters involved and interested in environmental education. A number of SWEEP members were on the Environmental Literacy Vermont steering committee, and many also helped to facilitate small-group discussions during public dialogues.

SWEEP worked in partnership on this project with the Four Winds Nature Institute. Not only did the Institute obtain the funding for the project and hire project coordinator, Jen Brown, but many of its staff and board members also either helped to facilitate or participated in public dialogues.

The steering committee members were indispensable. Their thoughtfulness during the planning process and enthusiasm during the public dialogues were crucial to the success of the project. In short, we couldn’t have done it without them. Steering committee members were as follows:

Rob Apple – Stowe Mountain Resort
Gregor Barnum – Seventh Generation
Debbie Benjamin – SWEEP and Hazen’s Notch Association
Bruce Bentley – Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS)
Jen Brown – SWEEP and Four Winds Nature Institute

Sarah Carson – Sterling College
Jen Cirillo – SWEEP and Shelburne Farms
Catherine Dimitruk – Northwest Regional Planning Commission
Jennifer Dubel – SWEEP
Judy Filkins – Lebanon, NH Schools
Elizabeth Gibson – Rutland Herald/Times Argus
Dan Lambert – Conservation biologist
Sigrid Lumbrá – SWEEP and Vermont Department of Education
Cynthia Moulton – Castleton State College
Lisa Purcell – SWEEP and Four Winds Nature Institute
Ed O’Leary – Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Mark Scott – Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Tim Upton – Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS)
Mimi Wright – Taylor Farm

Of course, our public dialogues would not have occurred without the Vermont public! We would like to thank all the dialogue participants. People from all sectors of the community and from all regions of the state braved the winter weather to share their thoughts about environmental literacy with us. The information we received from those participants is the basis for this document. Throughout this process we have been impressed both by the environmental projects and initiatives that are happening in this state and also by how informed the state’s residents are in regards to those projects. We can’t thank the dialogue participants enough for their valuable information.

We also appreciate the kindness of all of the following organizations and institutions that donated space for us to host the public dialogues:

Ilsey Public Library, *Middlebury*
South Hero Congregational Church, *South Hero*
Manchester Elementary and Middle School, *Manchester*
Rutland Free Library, *Rutland*
Vermont Technical College, *Randolph Center*
Thatcher Brook Primary School, *Waterbury*
Fletcher Free Library, *Burlington*
St. Albans Town Educational Center, *St. Albans*
Hartland Public Library, *Hartland*
Newport State Building, *Newport*
The Fairbanks Museum, *St. Johnsbury*
Brattleboro Senior Center, *Brattleboro*
Green Mountain Technology and Career Center, *Hyde Park*
Brighton Elementary School, *Island Pond*

Visions of Environmental Literacy

At the Environmental Literacy for Vermont Public Dialogues, participants were asked, "What do you see when you picture an environmentally literate community? What's happening? What are individuals, schools, businesses, organizations, etc. doing in your future vision?" And they responded with...

"Membrane between school and community more permeable."

"There is a commitment to healthy employees."

"Incorporation of nature in all aspects of life – town planning, education, recreation, etc."

"We are more connected to one another."

"There's less fretting about children's free exploration in nature."

"Composting is as common as any other form of recycling."

"Religious institutions disseminate 'green' knowledge."

"Clustered development to conserve wildlife habitat."

"Deliberate land use that includes built, sustainably managed and wild spaces."

"Everyone sees themselves as educators."

"New and old neighborhoods collectively plant bird habitats in their yards."

"ENVIRONMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CHOICES ARE LESS EXPENSIVE THAN CONVENTIONAL ONES."

"There is no litter on the ground."

"We do long term planning/ have longer visions."

"Greater connection between business, communities and schools."

"Transportation – bike paths, pedestrian friendly, car pools, car share, etc."

"It's a given that people grow most of their own food, know where their food comes from."

"ALL public buildings must be renewable educational centers."

"Long term costs (health affects, pollution clean-up, etc.) in the initial accounting."

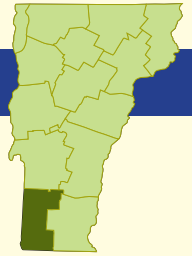
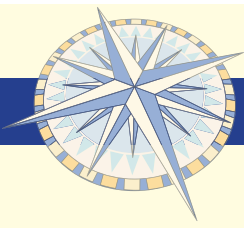
"No-trash society – everything is recycled."

"Town and municipal buildings have to use renewable energy."

"Public transportation would be available and convenient."

"There are networks that share best practices."

"Volunteerism is the norm."



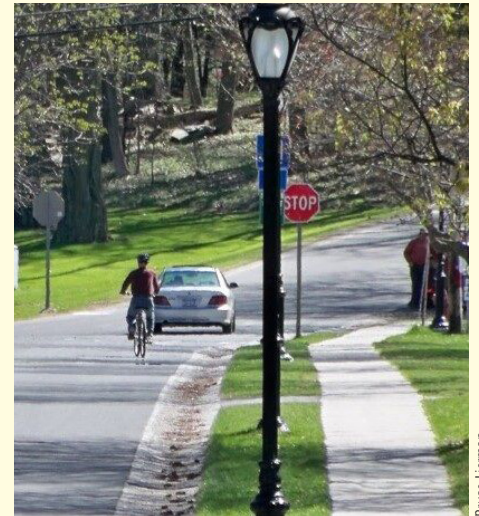
Promoting Bicycling Safety to Get More Bikes on the Road

Bruce Lierman – Bike Safety Instructor, North Bennington

Riding his bicycle for local commuting and errands is one of the things that Bruce Lierman likes best. As a bicycle advocate and safety instructor, Bruce aims to share his knowledge and interest in using bicycles as an alternative transportation mode with others. He recently started The Cycling Academy to teach bicycle safety in southern Vermont.

Certified by the League of American Bicyclists as a League Cycling Instructor, Bruce leads a variety of cycling courses, from hour-long slide presentations to nine-hour courses that include bike safety, maintenance and on-road practice. According to Bruce, these cycling courses “help people to see bicycling as a skill that needs to be developed.” He believes that teaching cyclists how to care for themselves on the road is one of the most important messages that he can get across. He also runs a Motorist Awareness Program primarily with drivers’ education classes. Here the aim is to help drivers know what they can expect from cyclists so that motorists and bicyclists can better share the road.

Bruce focuses on bike safety and the ways in which motorists and cyclists can share the road. He notes, “One of the most significant barriers to biking is simply that people are afraid to do it. Fear of car-bike crashes is often the reason given for not riding bikes, but it’s primarily the people who don’t ride who see bicycling as dangerous.” By providing people with more knowledge about bicycling, Bruce hopes that bikes will become a more common mode of travel on Vermont roadways.



Bruce Lierman

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A Hand in a Greener Community

Hand Motors Auto Dealership – Energy and Recycling Initiatives, Manchester

Our children are often motivating factors in our lives, and that’s certainly the case for Jim Hand from Hand Motors in Manchester. As Jim will tell you, “It all started with my oldest son who got me interested in alternative fuels,” and Jim has since used that interest to make some changes both in his business and in his community.

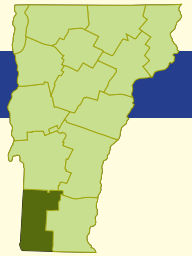
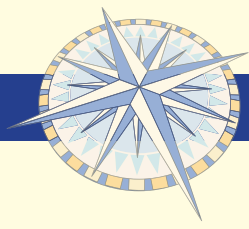
The dealership has changed many of its own practices in an effort to save energy and resources in its buildings. Some of those projects were of the large-scale variety, like re-doing all of the lighting, re-insulating their buildings and installing solar hot water heaters. Many of the new practices, however, are seemingly minor changes that have had a big impact. For instance, Jim researched Manchester’s water, and found it to be as safe to drink as the bottled water that they used to buy. The company then eliminated their water coolers and, by doing so, are saving \$1,400 each year. They’ve also instituted single stream recycling at every workstation, which has reduced their volume of garbage by 40%. Additionally, the dealership has posted



Image provided by Hand Automotive

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Jim Hand, Co-owner,
Hand Motors Auto Dealership
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“No Idling” signs outside of their buildings to cut down on unnecessary gas emissions, and their thermostats are programmed so that at night the buildings are kept at 55 degrees.

The dealership’s environmental practices extend beyond the company’s own walls. Hand Motors also serves as a community recycling point for plastics, batteries, mercury thermostats, metal, aluminum, cardboard, newsprint, office paper, cell phones and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Jim and his son also led a community compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) campaign encouraging community members to trade in their incandescent light bulbs for CFL’s. In the town of Manchester, 43,000 light bulbs were switched out in less than six months. Just goes to show, everyone can make a difference — many Hands make light work!

“It all started with my oldest son who got me interested in alternative fuels.”

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Help in Reducing Home Energy Use

Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services – Food and Fuel Fund, Bennington

Faith organizations regularly provide counseling to those in need. The fact that Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services (GBICS) offers suggestions for ways in which people can reduce their home energy consumption is something that sets them apart.

The Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services established its Food and Fuel Fund in 1973 in the wake of the first international oil embargo. Local clergy banded together to provide support for people who found rising gas and home heating fuel prices difficult to afford. GBICS began to raise money and give it back to people in the local community to help them pay for housing and food costs. Today, the Food and Fuel Fund also counsels people on budgeting, nutrition and ways to reduce home energy costs. While the major focus of the fund is to help people to better afford their lives, sustainability is always in the background. In fact, one of the values in the GBICS mission statement reads, “We must all live sustainably in a way that provides for the needs of today’s people while at the same time assuring that future generations have all that they need to lead fulfilling lives.”

Sue Andrews, Executive Director of GBICS, says, “We see a lot of behaviors that are counter to home budgets and the environment.” This includes things like smoking, having expensive cable television bills and living in homes that are not heated efficiently. When trying to support people in making tough lifestyle changes, Sue says, “The neat thing is that it’s really different working with faith communities in one major way — instead of focusing on the problem, we focus on the strengths. This is a strength-based way of looking at people.” And it seems that by focusing on individual’s strengths, GBICS helps to make whole communities stronger, too.



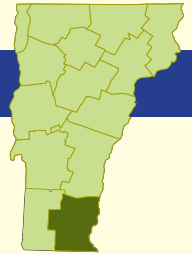
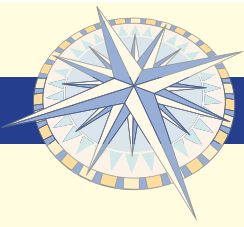
Michael Clough

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Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Services
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802-379-0149

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“The neat thing is that it’s really different working with faith communities in one major way — instead of focusing on the problem, we focus on the strengths.”



School Children Connect Their Community to Local Trails

Guilford Central School – Interpretive Trail Guide, Guilford

Any adult who has spent time in an elementary school knows that there's an energy, idealism and enthusiasm there that can be felt in few other places. The townspeople of Guilford frequently benefit when that energy generated by local school children extends beyond the school walls right into the community.

Guilford Central School's commitment to service learning as an approach to education is responsible for numerous community-focused projects. The eighth grade students produce the *Guilford Gazette*, the town's newsletter that goes out to every resident. Students also work closely with the local historical society to catalog old photographs, and they produced a video to help raise funds to restore the country store in the center of town.

Another project that got the Guilford students outside, literally, in the community was the creation of a high quality interpretive guide to a local trail. Students researched the plants, animals and habitats found on the trail, and they produced drawings and took photographs to go along with the information. Stuart Strothman, a middle school English teacher in Guilford, says that the drawings were an especially exciting part of the project because so many students didn't see themselves as artists. And yet the artwork they created illustrates the guide beautifully. The student-produced trail guides sold like hot cakes, and the school actually made a small profit from the sales. In the process, these youngsters became the experts on trail flora and fauna, growing from the role of student into the role of teacher and community member.



Amber Bessette

► Contact Information:

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 Guilford Central School
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 802-254-2271

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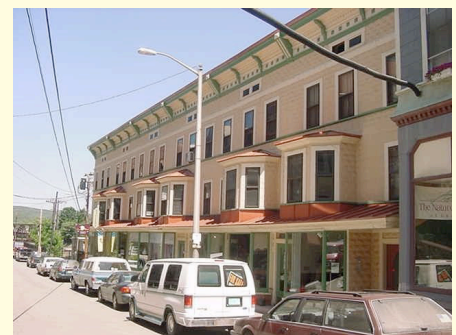


Bellows Falls – Where Arts and the Environment Meet

Rockingham Arts and Museum Project – Project Space #9, Bellows Falls

Bellows Falls has undergone some major changes over the years, and the story of its transformation is an inspiring one full of interesting characters deeply connected through work and community. This story has found its storyteller in Robert McBride and a home in Project Space #9.

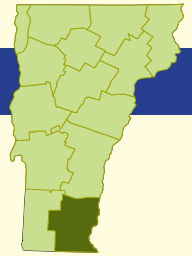
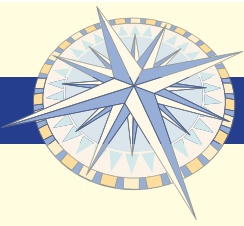
The Rockingham Arts and Museum Project (RAMP) has been instrumental in helping to revitalize the downtown community of Bellows Falls. Robert McBride, the founding Director of RAMP, moved to Bellows Falls in 1995, and, he says, “so began the story of a person being passionate about a community.” Not only does McBride care deeply for the place he lives, he also firmly believes that art can make a difference. With that idea in mind, RAMP worked with Housing Vermont and the Rockingham Area Land Trust to restore the historic Exner Block in Bellows Falls. The building now includes affordable housing and studio space for artists, retail storefronts and a non-profit gallery space – Project Space #9.



Robert McBride

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The word gallery evokes images of paintings and photographs hung carefully on the wall or sculptures placed strategically on pedestals. One certainly can find such things within Project Space #9 from time to time, but often this space showcases the work of organizations in the local community. Past exhibitions have included the work of Connecticut River Transit, a local transportation program; the Rockingham Area Community Land Trust, which supports quality affordable housing; and Southeastern Vermont Community Action, an organization that helps people to create sustainable self-sufficiency. With the help of RAMP, these organizations and numerous others have had the opportunity to organize their messages and share them with their community. In this way, RAMP uses art as the medium through which it integrates local non-profit organizations into the everyday life of the Bellows Falls community.

RAMP uses art as the medium through which it integrates local non-profit organizations into the everyday life of the Bellows Falls community.

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Farming Present Not All That Different From Farming Past

Taylor Farm and Hildene – Summer Camp Collaboration, Londonderry and Manchester

Vermont is a state rich with history, and Taylor Farm in Londonderry has been contributing to that history for some time. Taylor Farm has been a working dairy farm for the last 180 years. Today the Wright family runs the farm, where they care for 50 Holstein and Jersey cows, make delicious cheeses and offer sleigh rides through the beautiful winter landscape.

Fifteen miles away, Hildene was built in 1905 as a summer home by Robert Todd Lincoln, the only child of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln to survive to adulthood. Located in a quiet section of Manchester, the estate now houses a non-profit museum and education organization. Diane Newton, the Education Director at Hildene, says that the historical site offers summer camps that aim to, “connect campers with where they are.” To this end, the staff at Hildene smartly teams up with people who know the local area intimately. That’s why each year Newton turns to Mimi Wright of Taylor Farm to run a Farm Camp “to show children that despite all of the changes that have occurred over the past 100 years, many things have stayed the same.”

Wright says about Farm Camp, “My hope is that the children learn something about the lives of farmers and farm animals. I suppose the word I most want them to come away with is respect – respect for farmers, the land, animals and each other.” Due to the Lincoln family connection and the farm connection, it seems inevitable that campers also come away with a respect for history. To foster that respect, the campers visit other nearby sites including Taylor Farm, Wildwood Farm for berry picking, Anjali Farms to learn about vegetable farming and a local antique tractor collection. Food production also is a big part of camp. It’s not unusual to find the campers making breads, pies, jam, butter, simple cheese and yogurt just as the folks living at Hildene did at the turn of the 20th century. Not surprisingly, many of the activities in which children at Farm Camp engage foster a respect for the past and the hard work of being a farmer and making a living off the land, which is just fine by Mimi Wright.

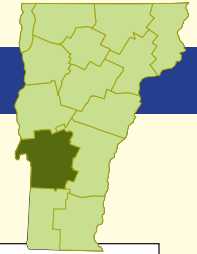
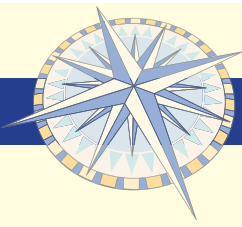


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News Written for the People by the People

The Rutland Herald – Environment Page, Rutland

Local newspapers are responding to changes in media, technology and public interest in a variety of ways. Since 2008, Vermont's Rutland Herald and Barre Times Argus have published an Environment Page each Sunday morning with feature articles on topics like commuting by bike, celebrating a green Christmas, weatherizing older homes, learning outdoors, and hundreds of others. Today the printed versions of these sister papers enjoy a statewide readership of 20,000 people on Sundays.

Most of the articles on the Environment Page are written not by journalists but by local experts and community leaders. The six regular contributors to the Weekly Planet portion of the page include a climate scientist, a local farmer, a green builder, an energy efficiency specialist, and the executive directors of the Vermont Natural Resources Council and Renewable Energy Vermont. Meanwhile, feature article authors range from local business owners to college professors and students, and from non-profit administrators to research scientists. Elizabeth Gibson edits the Environment Page, and she explains that while the paper assigns journalists to write some of these articles, many of them fall under the category of "community-based journalism," which is a growing trend. She admits that she often "prefers to work with people who are writing about things firsthand" as they really are the experts in their fields.

Not only does the Rutland Herald believe that it is valuable to have community members contribute to the content of the paper, it also wants to be used as an information resource long after it is read over Sunday breakfast. To this end, the paper is beginning to archive past Environment Pages to make them available on a searchable website for teachers and students alike. In doing so, the paper will insure that the contributions of community members will be more than just today's news.

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An Electric Utility's Energy Saving Initiatives

Central Vermont Public Service – Employee Farm Share Program, Rutland

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is becoming a popular way to purchase local food. In a CSA, the consumer buys a share in a farm and pays money up front to help cover the season's start-up costs. In exchange, the consumer receives fresh produce and farm products each week during the course of the season. At Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS), Vermont's largest electric utility company, employees participating in the Farm Share Program get their weekly farm share delivered right to the office. Worksite delivery saves employees both fuel and time as they no longer need to shop for fresh produce each week.

The project, a partnership with area farmers and the Rutland Area Farm and Food Link, began in 2010 with a pilot program of 40 CVPS employees. Karen Massaro from CVPS says that most of the participants enjoy the CSA very much, and in particular, "People have enjoyed being introduced to items that they normally would bypass at the grocery store, like kale or Swiss chard." She also said

Environment
Local • State • National
The Rutland Herald

The Rearing of red foxes
February is an ideal time to notice fox dens

By JOHN WILLIAMS
For the first week or so, and for the first time in a long time, the foxes are out in the open. They are not yet old enough to be out on their own, but they are old enough to be out on their own. They are not yet old enough to be out on their own, but they are old enough to be out on their own. They are not yet old enough to be out on their own, but they are old enough to be out on their own.

Even though red foxes are breeding now, and not giving birth until March or April, February is an ideal time to notice fox dens.

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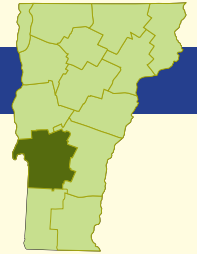
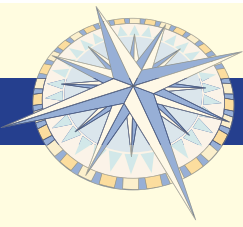
Image provided by Rutland Herald

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Image provided by CVPS

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that the farmers share recipes with the participants so they can experiment with different items. Casual conversations in the office now are often about garlic scapes and collard greens rather than sports scores.

And the Farm Share Program is just one of many CVPS initiatives that illustrate its commitment to the community and the environment. The company also has a Sustainability Committee that is responsible for countless energy, fuel and waste saving projects including the installation of software that allows computers to be turned off at night and powered on just for software or security updates, the presentation of eco-driving workshops, the gift of stainless steel travel mugs to any employee who signs a pledge not to use disposable cups at work, and the education of hundreds of elementary, high school and college students at their renewable energy education site. So when you receive your electric bill with its energy saving tips, know that the company is doing its part to save energy as well.

“People have enjoyed being introduced to items that they normally would bypass at the grocery store, like kale or Swiss chard.”

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Local Farm Organization Cultivates Community

Rutland Area Farm and Food Link – Grow the Longest Extra Row and New Farmer Initiative, East Poultney

Farmers cultivate crops, and in many places, including Rutland County, farmers also cultivate community. The Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL) benefits the local community both through its Grow the Longest Extra Row program and through its New Farmer Initiative.

The Grow the Longest Extra Row program relies on an AmeriCorps Vista position that Green Mountain College generously shares with RAFFL. This AmeriCorps member works directly with local farmers’ markets, collecting food left unsold at the end of the day. In addition, the AmeriCorps member encourages local gardeners to donate extra crops and matches volunteers with local farms to glean unharvested crops that normally would be plowed under. According to Tara Kelly, executive director of RAFFL, the Grow the Longest Extra Row project collected 10,000 and 15,000 pounds of produce in its first and second years respectively. These “extras” are then given to area food shelves and parent-child centers to help feed community members in need. The parent-child center goes a step further by using the food to teach children about food storage, good nutrition and a healthy diet.

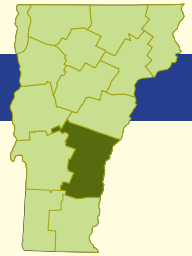
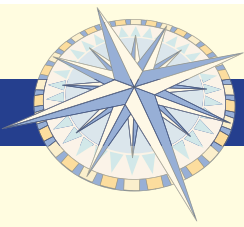
RAFFL also aims to cultivate young farmers through its New Farmer Initiative. This project helps young farmers by offering on-farm workshops, connecting young farmers with mentors, and matching landowners who have usable farmland with farmers who need land for growing. RAFFL board president Greg Cox has been offering his land and expertise to young farmers since the late 1990’s. He says of apprentices on his farm, “Sometimes you see someone who you know, if given the opportunity, will be successful at farming.” He is aware of and thankful for the breaks that he has received, and he has more land than he can use, so he’s more than happy to share it. Plus he says, “If this local food thing is going to work, we need more farmers.”



Image provided by RAFFL

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Being Green and Being Thrifty Can Go Hand in Hand

COVER Home Repair, White River Junction

COVER Home Repair’s Executive Director, Rob Schultz, describes the organization as one that is, “profoundly oriented toward saving people money.” The side effects of such a simple mission are many, including keeping families in their homes, bringing community members together and promoting sustainability.

COVER accomplishes its goal of helping people save money by offering low-cost education programs that teach basic skills like carpentry and car repair; by selling used appliances, furniture, and other household items in its ReCover Store; and through its home repair and weatherization program, which brings community members together to make homes safe, warm and dry. What COVER does by focusing on home repair and weatherization, Schultz says “is to squeeze as much life out of homes as possible to save homeowners from the human and financial costs of moving. The old homes and trailer homes will work for a little bit longer.” The home repair program depends on volunteers who help the homeowners to make repairs. In the process, people from all walks of life work together and communities are strengthened. As Schultz describes it, “It’s about taking care of each other.”

A side effect of taking care of each other is that the local environment is taken care of as well. All three of COVER’s programs — the educational classes, the ReCover Store, and the home repair and weatherization — help to divert items from landfills by fixing and using things longer. So while COVER is in the process of building knowledge, community and structures, it’s also in the process of reducing costs and human impacts.



Image provided by COVER Home Repair

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Library Serves as a Sustainable Living Hub of the Community

Hartland Public Library, Hartland

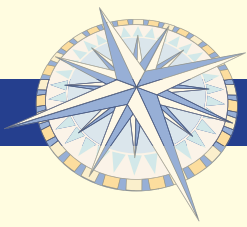
The basic concept of a library — a place that promotes the sharing of books and information rather than the purchase of them —illustrates that good environmental practices have been part of our communities for a long time. The Hartland Public Library takes its job as a hub for sharing resources very seriously, and it sees promoting sustainable living as one of its primary goals.

When you visit the Hartland Public Library, you’ll find that they actually have a sustainable living bookshelf devoted to information on weatherization, organic gardening, saving energy, and other related topics. This shelf also includes a Kill A Watt meter that library patrons can borrow to measure the energy use of different appliances in their homes. Basically, if you’re looking to find ways to reduce the environmental impact of your home, the sustainable living bookshelf at the library can help.

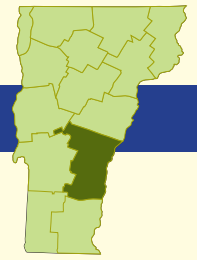
Additionally, the library offers programs that deal with sustainable living. Examples of past programs include composting, canning, seed starting, seed saving, and raising chickens as well as discussion groups on food and healthy kids. According



Mary Danko



WINDSOR COUNTY



to Mary Danko, the library’s director, all of these initiatives are just a start. She says, “I am very, very interested in continuing in this direction for the library. Our community loves it!” Mary has ideas for even more sharing. She’d like to offer things like post hole diggers and food dehydrators for people to borrow, and the library has the infrastructure to do so. The Hartland Public Library clearly has recognized that libraries in and of themselves promote environmental literacy, and they’ve chosen to take that several steps further.

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From Tree to Table

Shackleton Thomas Furniture and Pottery – The Naked Table Project, Bridgewater

While it’s not uncommon these days to know the names and faces of the farmers who sell vegetables at the local farmers market, it is unusual to know the landowner and the forester responsible for growing the tree that becomes the table on which you eat those vegetables. The Naked Table Project celebrates the table owner and all those involved with growing, harvesting, milling, and crafting the table.

During a Naked Table Project weekend, participants build their own tables out of locally grown lumber, and while doing so, they learn about each step from tree to table. They learn about the forester who manages the woods where the tree once grew, the logger who cut the tree six months earlier, and the local craftsman who dried and machined the wood into table parts. Participants then spend a day working with furniture makers from Charles Shackleton Furniture and finishers from Vermont Natural Coatings to construct and finish their tables. As the weekend comes to a close, the group enjoys eating a meal of locally grown food on their very own tables. Finally, they take those tables home, where, as Charles Shackleton notes, they “will age, gathering history and conversations; breakfasts, lunches and dinners; games and projects — the sustenance of daily life.”

Charles Shackleton believes, “The least of what the weekends are about is furniture. Rather, it is about connections.” Some of those connections are between people. Some participants construct their tables in memory of someone. Fathers and sons or husbands and wives work together on tables. Whole families may work on them, and the children especially seem to be quite proud of what they do. Additionally, the project is about a connection with the place where the trees for the tables grew, a connection to the land, the sunlight, the water and the dirt that are a part of each table. And one might imagine all the additional connections made by participants for years to come as the tables become a part of their homes and their daily lives.



Jon Gilbert Fox

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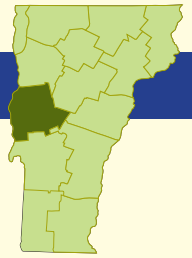
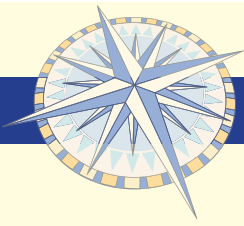
Charles Shackleton
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“The least of what the weekends are about is furniture.
Rather, it is about connections”

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At Middlebury College, Blending Athletics and Sustainability

Middlebury College – Coordinator for Athletic Sustainability, Middlebury

Middlebury College is well known nationally for many of its environmental initiatives. After all, it does have the oldest undergraduate environmental studies program in the country. It also aims for sustainability to be an integral part of the entire campus community. The dining halls divert 75% of their food waste from landfills through a composting program. A student-run, college-owned bike shop allows students to get help fixing their bikes or rent bikes for just \$25 per semester. The list of environmental projects and initiatives at Middlebury is a long one, and now it also includes sustainable athletics.

Andrew Gardner became the college’s Coordinator for Athletic Sustainability a few years ago when a discussion about installing sustainable turf on the football field made it clear that all of the college’s athletics teams could be doing more to lessen their environmental impacts. Since that time, Andrew and student liaisons from the different athletic teams have instituted changes such as converting a pick-up truck used to haul ski equipment to run on waste vegetable oil, improving travel schedules so that some of the men’s and women’s teams share buses to away games, and converting to low flow shower heads in the locker rooms.

In the future, the plan is for Gardner and the team liaisons to choose one project each year on which to focus, like increasing the number and quality of bicycle parking areas near the athletic center in an effort to increase the use of bicycles by athletes on campus.

Already the team liaisons have been a driving force in improving sustainability in athletics at the college. Gardner says that many of the grant proposals to make improvements, such as changing out light switches in the locker rooms and some equipment purchasing decisions, have come from the students. In his words, “the kids run the show.”



Image provided by Middlebury College

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A Trail That’s Close to Homes and Hearts

Trail Around Middlebury; New Haven, Weybridge, Cornwall and Middlebury

If you enjoy getting out on the trail for a hike, Vermont is a great place to live. Hiking trails crisscross the state’s mountains, forests, and meadows. Some of these paths are maintained by government agencies and nonprofit organizations, and some, like the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM), are maintained through unique collaborations.

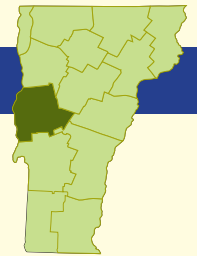
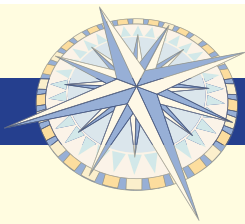
The construction on TAM began in the early 1990s, and today it is a 16-mile loop that runs through the towns of New Haven, Weybridge, Cornwall, and Middlebury. The Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT), the participating towns, Middlebury College, and private landowners own the land through which it runs, and volunteers maintain the trail. Suzanne Young, MALT’s Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, says, “It’s really a collaboration of a lot of volunteers who make it



Image provided by Middlebury Area Land Trust

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happen.” John Derick is a volunteer who keeps MALT up to date in terms of what needs to be done to maintain the trail. He also organizes volunteer crews to do the work. Some of those crews are comprised of individuals who live in the nearby communities, and others are organizations like the youth group from a local Congregational Church.

Additionally, each year approximately 100 to 130 individuals volunteer to participate in the TAM Trek, an event that raises between \$8,000 and \$10,000 annually to cover the trail’s maintenance. Participants choose how much of the trail they want to travel during the TAM Trek and find sponsors who will donate to the cause. Some folks go three miles, and others complete all 16 miles in one day. Some people choose to walk and some choose to run. And that’s the thing about the TAM. As Suzanne Young puts it, “it means so many different things to so many people,” and perhaps that’s truly what has sustained it all these years.

“Its really a collaboration of a lot of volunteers who make it happen.”

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Reading the Tree, Harvesting the Knowledge

Vermont Family Forests, Robinson Elementary School, Starksboro Public Library Collaboration, Starksboro

How does the health of our town forests impact the vitality of our communities? Third and fourth grade students at Robinson Elementary School in Starksboro found that forest resources play a supporting role in one of their favorite town institutions, the local public library.

In 2001, Robinson students spent time in the Starksboro Town Forest with David Brynn of Vermont Family Forests. With Brynn’s help, students learned about the types of trees growing in their woods, they measured the size of the trees, and they looked at the health of the forest. Working in small groups, the students then proposed harvesting certain trees from the forest to both improve the forest’s health and to gain lumber for shelves in the public library. Brynn was surprised at the students’ enthusiasm for the project. “I thought none of them would be interested in harvesting trees, but they all were,” he said. The students’ input was used to select the tree to be used to construct the shelves.

Next, students met with the logger who would be cutting down the tree. He explained what he was going to do and how, describing the equipment he would use and the steps in the process. After the tree was harvested, it was taken to a local sawmill, then dried in a local kiln and finally delivered to a local woodworker who built and installed the shelves. Today in the Starksboro Public Library, a display explains how the shelves came to be there. Brynn says that the project was “a great educational experience” for all involved, and one might imagine that the students learned as much about citizenship and their community as they did about forest ecology throughout the course of their work.



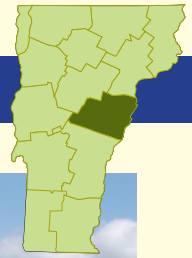
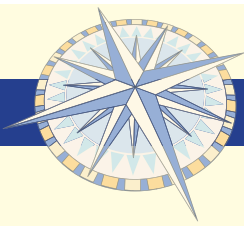
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“I thought none of them would be interested in harvesting trees, but they all were.”

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Neighbory Farms Lives Up to Its Name

Neighbory Farms, Randolph

Traveling around the country roads near the Vermont Technical College in Orange County, you'll encounter a number of dairy farms and one of them is Neighbory, both in name and in practice. Rob and Linda Dimmick started Neighbory Farms, an organic dairy farm that's home to about fifty Holsteins, over twenty years ago, and Linda admits that, "after farming twenty years you think you have it all figured out, and then you realize that you don't know anything." It seems that at this point, one of the things that the Dimmicks have figured out is how to work with their neighboring farms.

Neighbory Farms clearly isn't the only farm in their area. Just down the road are other small farms, including Turkey Hill Farm and Fat Toad Farm, both of which have decided that they can benefit from working together. While it's not uncommon for farmers to help each other out during emergencies or when there are big chores to be done, these neighbors work together on a regular basis. A few years back, the farms got together and decided that they would all use the retail space at Neighbory Farms to sell their products. Rather than offering just their own cheese at their store, the Dimmicks also began offering goat milk, honey, soap and even caramel from other nearby farms. Today, the other farms have their own small stores as well, where they also sell the Dimmicks' cheese, and Linda says that when visitors stop at her farm, she sends them down the road to the other nearby farms.

This entire story is also part of the Turkey Hill Farm website on a page devoted to "Building Community," so it is clear that the tradition of farmers supporting one another is alive and well in Orange County.



David Goldsworthy

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Student Work Benefits More Than Just GPAs

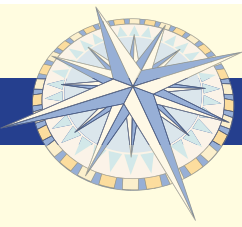
Vermont Technical College's Center for Sustainable Practices – Anemometer Loan Program and Farmers' Market and Hospital Collaboration, Randolph Center

The Vermont Technical College (VTC) recognizes that, as one of the largest business entities in the town of Randolph, it has a responsibility to contribute to its community. It does so by asking VTC students to put learning into practice to address real world issues.

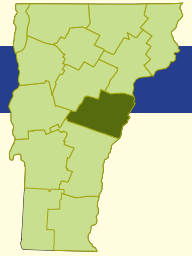
The Vermont Anemometer Loan Program is one way in which the students at VTC gain experience while also benefitting the college's neighbors. Through this program, Vermont businesses, farmers and homeowners can request to borrow equipment from the college to determine whether wind power is a viable option for their property. In addition, they receive technical assistance from students to set up the instruments and to determine if the site is suitable for small-scale wind power. By the winter of 2010, the program had monitored twenty-five sites around the state. Donna Barlow Casey, the director of VTC's Center for Sustainable Practices (CSP), says that the school plans to expand the program. She says, "We often undertake



Jen Brown



ORANGE COUNTY



projects on a small scale first and then determine what worked and didn't and how we could do it better." To this end, the school is striving to make the program a bit more user friendly while finding ways for the program to expand its scope.

Additionally, the CSP's Sustainable Agriculture division works both to provide local farmers with opportunities to sell their products and to provide the school's cafeteria and the local hospital with as much locally grown food as possible. Casey says, "We recognize that farms that sell a wider variety of products to a wider variety of people are more sustainable," so the school hosts a weekly farmers' market, giving area farms the opportunity to do just that. Gifford Hospital of Randolph also approached VTC for help in finding ways to use more local foods in their food services. The hope is that VTC's student-run farm actually will be able to provide some food both to the hospital and to the school's cafeteria. As the students learn to grow the food, they also learn some creative and helpful ways to distribute it that benefits their local community.

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Children are the Future for Fish and Game Club

Randolph Fish and Game Club – Conservation Camp Sponsorship, Randolph

The Randolph Fish and Game Club is the oldest continuously active club of its kind in Vermont, and, due to the support that the club offers to children, it's clear that it will continue to thrive for years to come. Each year the club sponsors a kids' fishing derby, it allows the children of adult members to be members of the club free of charge, it offers free hunter safety courses and it helps families to afford to send their kids to Green Mountain Conservation Camp.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department hosts the Green Mountain Conservation Camps each summer for children ages 12 to 16. These camps connect young people to the outdoors through activities including canoeing, fly fishing and spin casting, firearm safety, building bluebird boxes, hiking and more. Campers spend a week either on Buck Lake in Woodbury or at Kehoe Camp in Castleton. Members of the Randolph Fish and Game Club believe strongly in giving kids quality outdoor experiences, and each year they raise money to send kids to the conservation camps. They do so in some creative ways. Dale White, treasurer for Randolph Fish and Game, described a duck race raffle that the club organizes during Randolph's July 4th parade. Raffle participants purchase a numbered toy duck, and the duck that crosses the finish line in the river first, wins. Another camp scholarship fundraising event that was very successful was one where the prize was a beautiful cedar strip canoe donated by a craftsman from Greensboro.

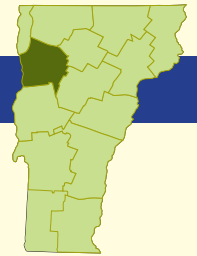
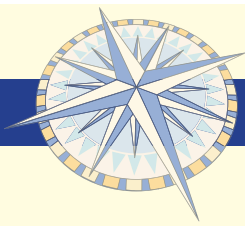
White says, "As a club, we feel that every kid that wants to go to camp should have the opportunity to do so," and to his knowledge the club has never turned down any potential campers. He hopes that trend continues well into the future with creative fund raising and the kind generosity of the local community.



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Weaving Internet Connections into Community

Front Porch Forum, Burlington

During the public dialogue process that informed the creation of this Roadmap, we heard time and time again that people want an online resource to connect neighbors in a community. For many towns in the state, that resource already exists in the form of the Front Porch Forum.

Michael and Valerie Wood-Lewis launched a community online forum in their Burlington neighborhood in 2000. Due to the success of their original neighborhood forum, they expanded and created Front Porch Forum in 2006 to help other communities be better connected. Today all 19 towns in Chittenden County have Front Porch Forums. The program has expanded to other areas of the state as well, with the goal to be statewide by the end of 2011. An average neighborhood forum covers 500 households, and typically one-third of those households subscribe. In some areas, participation is closer to one-half of households subscribing, and in a few communities, like Huntington, almost 90% do.

So what do all of these subscribers actually do on Front Porch Forum? Michael Wood-Lewis says, "The nature of the thing is a little deceiving – people think of it as a place to post announcements. But what's much more subtle, or profound, is that on a daily basis people see a collection of messages about things neighbors might talk about — a lost cat, an opinion about a school play, a bear sighting, sharing a ladder, etc." He continues, "People get great direct results, but if that's all they did, it would be a failure. The fact that these people live so close means the strands of the web of community get interwoven more and more every day." Although the forum may be virtual, it connects real people who may someday meet in person at school functions, at local events, or just walking down the sidewalk past neighbors sitting out on their front porches.



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A Small School with a Big Reach

The Sustainability Academy, Burlington

An octopus is an unusual way to describe a school, but in the case of The Sustainability Academy at Lawrence Barnes, the description fits quite well. Jen Cirillo, Director of Professional Development at Shelburne Farms, says, "The Sustainability Academy is like an octopus with tentacles that reach out all over the world," and it's that reach into its local community and beyond that makes the school a model for others to follow.

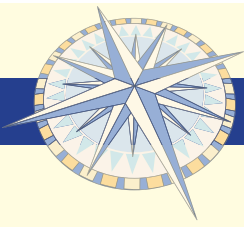
The Sustainability Academy at Lawrence Barnes is a k-5 magnet school that is a part of the Sustainable Schools Project. In September of 2009, it became the nation's first magnet school with a sustainability theme, and its partnership with Shelburne Farms has enabled its teachers to follow through with that theme. Sustainability Coach, Anne Tewksbury-Frye says, "Through this partnership we began the process of developing a curriculum that incorporated understanding of our connections to our community and to our place, and provided ways for students to make a difference." As teachers identify the curriculum that they will teach, the educators at Shelburne



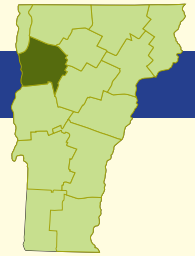
Provided by Sustainable Schools Project

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CHITTENDEN COUNTY



Farms help find community partners and places to support the learning. The Intervale, home to Burlington’s community gardens, has become one of those places. Students visit its farms to learn science concepts such as plant life cycles or to see where their food comes from, and then that learning is reinforced in the school’s cafeteria where food from the Intervale is served.

The students who attend the academy are not the only members of the community who learn something there. The school also hosts events that are open to the public, like programs by Burlington’s City Market focusing on healthy cooking on a budget or a political forum where students ask questions of elected officials. Additionally, students from many of the local colleges and universities spend semesters at the Sustainability Academy learning how to teach, and international visitors come to the school as well. The list of partners that the school now has is a long one, and Cirillo attributes that list to the school’s outward view. She says, “instead of a school that looks inward, this school has really been looking outward – what are our opportunities right outside our door and beyond?” It’s a question that certainly has served this school well.

Students visit its farms to learn science concepts such as plant life cycles or to see where their food comes from.



A Community Comes Together, One Bicycle at a Time

Bike Recycle Vermont, Burlington

The basic idea behind Bike Recycle Vermont (BRV) is simple. The organization accepts donations of used bicycles, volunteers refurbish those bikes and then low income Vermonters can purchase the bikes for \$25. Additionally, kids ages 8 to 18 can donate their time and, in turn, earn a bike. The whole system is incredibly simple, yet it has a big impact both from a sustainability standpoint and in terms of bringing diverse people together.

Clearly, choosing to ride a bicycle to get to school, work, the grocery store or a friend’s house is an environmentally literate choice. Keeping old bicycles out of the waste stream by refurbishing them takes that choice one step further. For Christine Hill, an AmeriCorps member who works at BRV, it’s the impact that the organization has on the local community that really inspires her. Since its inception, the organization has provided bicycles to homeless people, refugees, and to people receiving food stamps, Social Security disability and section 8 housing. As Hill puts it, “I have yet to come across a place where there is such a diverse group of people and personalities who mesh so well. You can have a 12-year old, 23-year old and 89-year old in the shop at the same time. When I started to work here, I felt like I was really seeing Burlington in the round for the first time.”

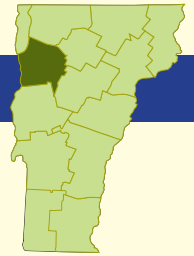
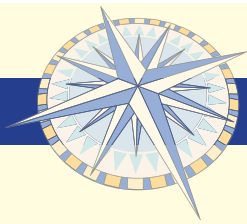
BRV aims to continue to increase its diversity as well. Hill says that she’d like to see more women in the shop. One way that she hopes to attract them is through an “upcycling initiative,” in which she offers workshops for making things like jewelry and wind chimes out of defunct bike parts. Thus it seems that BRV is the intersection of diversity, creativity and sustainability.



Image provided by Bike Recycle Vermont

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Higher Education in Vermont Earns High Marks in Environmental Literacy

University of Vermont's Eco-Reps, Champlain College's Guide to Greening Your Event and St. Michael's College's Teaching Gardens, Burlington and Colchester

Despite its small size, Vermont has a number of higher education institutions, and Chittenden County is home to several, including the University of Vermont, Champlain College and St. Michael's College. These three institutions promote environmental literacy in some creative ways.

As expected, students living in the dorms at the **University of Vermont (UVM)** are familiar with their Residence Assistants, or RA's. In addition to their RA's, UVM dorm dwellers also can seek the advice of their Eco-Reps. Eco-Reps are undergraduates at UVM who educate the students who live in the dorms about environmental issues. Eco-Reps can be found teaching students how to separate their recycling from their trash, doing energy audits on dorm rooms, exchanging incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescent bulbs, weighing food waste in the dining hall, and going door to door in the dorms to engage students in conversations.

Eco-Reps Program Advisor, Erica Spiegel, says that one of the strengths of the program is its broad reach. She says, "The Eco-Reps crosscut many cultural and academic boundaries. They're not all environmental students. They have varied interests from art and music to engineering and technology." Additionally, the program is a partnership of varied university departments. The residence halls, Office of Sustainability, and energy engineers all work together on the project. Eco-Reps also partner with other school clubs from time to time, and their collaborative nature doesn't end with UVM. They maintain an extensive website in part so that they can share their ideas, manuals and work with other colleges and universities interested in accomplishing similar goals.

Another Chittenden County institution that shares its work with others is **Champlain College**, specifically in the arena of hosting green meetings. Christina Erickson, the college's Sustainability Director, says, "We're hearing that people are wanting a place to hold green meetings. Also, our conference and event center does a lot of business in the summer, so it's a great opportunity to reach lots of people." In response to this demand, the college has created a document entitled *Greening Your Event at Champlain College*, which can be found on the Conference and Event Center portion of the college's website. The guide encourages readers to consider site selection, transportation, food and waste when planning an event, and it is chock full of handy checklists.

Erickson admits that this project still is in its early stages. She believes that there's a lot to be done to further develop the project, but the college is making the commitment to do so. Sustainability has been mentioned as one of the college's core values, and now is very much a part of its planning, mission and vision. For that reason, we can expect to see further development of *Greening Your Event* along with many of the college's other sustainability efforts.



Image provided by University of Vermont

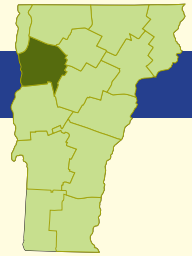
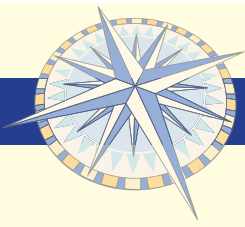
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St. Michael's College in Colchester also has environmental initiatives it hopes to grow in the years to come. There, the Department of Education and Department of Botany have teamed up to create Teaching Gardens, designed to support learning community-wide.

Currently, there are four Teaching Gardens. The Books in Bloom garden features plants that play a major role in children's literature. The Native Plants garden contains native and naturalized plants of our region. The International Garden consists of four quadrants, shaped like a globe, and plants are geographically planted in their correct locations. There's also the Word Garden consisting of stones with words carved into them that can be moved around to create phrases, sentences and poems.

St. Michael's botany and education students designed all of these gardens. Professors Valerie Bang-Jensen and Mark Lubkowitz explain that on any given day, a passerby might observe a St. Michael's poetry class creating a class poem in the Word Garden, a group of young children listening to their student teacher read aloud from a book that's tied to the Books in Bloom garden or a local hospice director engaging a group of students in a conversation about the role that gardens play for a person with a terminal illness.

Each year, the botany and education students build on what's been done in the gardens in previous years and add their own new ideas as well. It's clear that these gardens and the ideas that they generate will continue to grow for years to come.



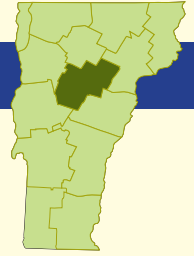
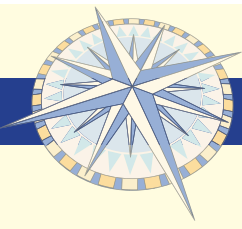
Valerie Bang-Jensen

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It's clear that these gardens and the ideas that they generate will continue to grow for years to come.



“Alternative” Transportation the Way to Go

National Life Group – Alternative Transportation Incentives, Montpelier

National Life Insurance is a large Vermont-based company with a number of environmental projects and initiatives. One of the largest solar electric systems in Vermont provides the company with electricity and hot water, more than 90% of their heat is provided by a biomass boiler, and their shredded paper waste is used as bedding for cows at a local dairy farm. National Life is committed to making responsible decisions regarding the company’s use of resources, and they can ask their employees to make responsible decisions as well.

National Life’s Alternative Transportation Incentive program gives employees benefits for choosing to walk, bike, carpool or ride the bus to work. Each month, employees fill out a card where they keep track of how they get to and from work. If an employee averages one round trip each week that involves walking, biking, carpooling or riding the bus, he/she earns an incentive. Bicyclists can earn a free bike tune up; walkers and runners earn gift certificates to Onion River Sports; car poolers earn gas cards; and employees who take public transportation earn pass cards good for five round trips on local public transit. Additionally, participants in each category can enter their names in drawings to win sustainable promotional items.

Tim Shea, an executive at National Life, says that approximately 20 to 25 percent of employees participate in the program. Shea notes that in addition to the incentive program, National Life also encourages its employees to cut down on their fuel use by offering preferred parking to people who carpool. Also there are 40 parking spaces available for employees who drive fuel-efficient vehicles that average 35 miles per gallon or more. Parking spaces for efficient cars and incentives for efficient travel show that at National Life, “alternative” transportation is beginning to be the way to go.



Bill Brown

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School Lunch is Healthy for Kids and Their World

Warren School Cafeteria, Warren

What images does “school lunch” conjure up in your mind? Perhaps processed cheese and plastic utensils? If you’re a student at Warren Elementary School, you probably think more about vegetables from the school garden and home cooking. That’s because Claire Simpson, the cook at the Warren School, makes using local, fresh ingredients a priority.

Simpson, who has been the cook at Warren since 1992, grew up in New Zealand with parents who raised all of their own food. Now she and her husband do the same here in Vermont. They grow their vegetables and raise cows, chickens, pigs and sheep. While Simpson admits that she’s not, “totally nutty about never eating anything that is processed,” she says, “I do try to create as clean a diet as I can and feed it to my family and the school kids.”

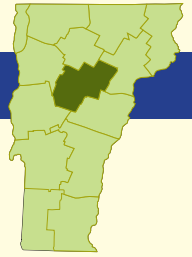
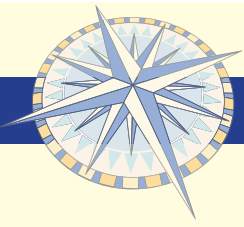
Everyday during Warren School lunches, Simpson’s philosophy about food is evident as students fill their plates with fresh salad greens and other vegetables. In the



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fall, Simpson uses the vegetables that are grown in the school's garden. She also buys vegetables and eggs from farmers in the Mad River Valley whenever possible, and brings in food from her own garden from time to time. Additionally, she purchases beef in bulk from local farmers, often a half-cow at a time from Elwin Neill in Waitsfield. She buys very inexpensive day-old bread from the Red Hen Bakery in Middlesex and the Warren Store. She heats it with a little water, "and it's just like fresh!" She also makes her own dough for stromboli, pizza and hamburger buns. Not only does Simpson think about where her food comes from, but also where the waste ends up. At the end of lunch, students throw their food waste into the "pig bucket," which Simpson then takes home with her. She feeds the food scraps to her personal pigs, which later feed her family.

Not only does Claire think about where her food comes from, but also where the waste ends up.



Job Training for a Green Future

Vermont Green Energy Training Partnership – Youth Program, Barre

One of the barriers to using alternative energy is the need to train people how to install, maintain and use new technologies. Vermont Green Energy Training Partnership has devised a way to do just that.

Through its Youth Program, Vermont Green helps young adults ages 16 to 22 living in difficult circumstances to gain access to trainings and certifications that lead to successful employment in green jobs. Case managers work with these young adults throughout the entire process, to help them identify their strengths and interests, create a plan, find trainings and, hopefully, to find a job. The case managers offer follow-up support as well. The jobs that program participants obtain include energy efficient construction and retrofit, renewable electric power production and recycling and waste reduction.

Julie Aitcheson, Vermont Green's Youth Program Statewide Coordinator, believes, "the best way to serve youth is through education." To that end, Vermont Green uses the Roots of Success curriculum to provide a foundation in environmental literacy to young adults seeking green jobs. One of the goals of Roots of Success is to "Create a more knowledgeable workforce and help green job seekers and community leaders grasp and make sense of deep concepts related to the connection between human activity and the environment." Not only does Vermont Green provide access to trainings in relation to green jobs specifically, but also they insure that participants in their program gain soft skills and job readiness skills to be valuable employees in any job. Just as the study of ecological concepts focuses on whole systems, Vermont Green's Youth Training Program considers the whole person when helping a young adult to prepare for the next generation of jobs.

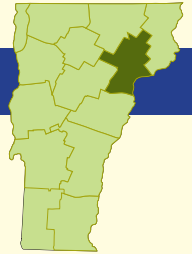
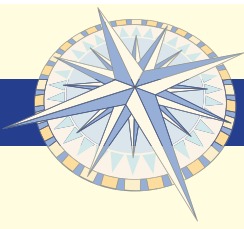


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Engaging the Next Generation of Volunteers

The Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium Student Volunteers, St. Johnsbury

At all times, and particularly during an economic downturn, volunteers help associations in a variety of ways. It goes without saying that the relationship between a volunteer and an organization can be beneficial all the way around, and at the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium in St. Johnsbury, volunteerism is alive and well in a unique way.

While many organizations are open to student volunteers, the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium has created a volunteer program specifically for students. The museum’s Student Curator program is decades old, and was designed for kids ages 12 to 15, who are interested in providing educational experiences for the museum’s visitors. Each summer approximately 10 students work independently and in groups to research different themes such as weather, birds, butterflies, amphibians and wildflowers. They develop short presentations and supporting hands-on activities so that museum visitors can experience engaging programs every day. Education Coordinator and Museum Educator, Tara Holt, says that the Student Curators, “make the museum alive in a totally different way in the summer. The program allows the curators to feel like a part of the museum family and that is reflected in their work.”

Beginning in 2011, the Student Curators joined forces with the museum’s Community of Observers, a citizen science program in which participants record and report trends in the habits of a select group of birds, butterflies and wildflowers that may be sensitive to long-term shifts in weather patterns or changes in their habitats. Each week there is a field day, during which Student Curators go into the field to do data collection as called for by the Community of Observers program. The curators then present information related to that research in some of their programs for the public. Clearly, the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium Student Curators enhance the museum’s visitor experience, increase the knowledge base of the scientific community, and promote community involvement for the next generation.



Tara Holt

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Investment in Local Restaurant Buys Food and More

Claire’s Community Supported Restaurant, Hardwick

CSA is an acronym that is becoming familiar to more and more people. It stands for Community Supported Agriculture, a model in which the consumer pays money up front to cover the start-up costs of a year’s production on a farm. In return, the shareholder receives fresh vegetables throughout the course of the farm season.

In Hardwick, a community that is passionate about local food, the same model has been put to use at a restaurant. CSR, standing for Community Supported Restaurant, is now a part of the vernacular.

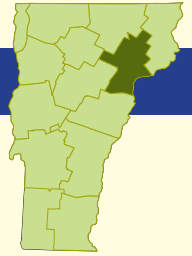
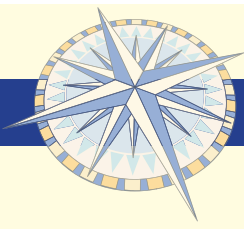
Claire’s Restaurant, located on Main Street in Hardwick, opened in May of 2008 thanks to 50 community members who committed \$1,000 each. Those subscribers receive their money back in the form of dinners. They each receive \$25 off a meal,



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10 months out of the year, for four years. In addition, much of the food that they eat at Claire’s is locally grown. 70% of their food dollars go directly to Vermont farmers and artisans. The farmers themselves often eat at Claire’s, and many of the restaurant’s servers also work on the local farms. Veronica, Claire’s General Manager, says that it’s wonderful to be able to say, “I’m your server, and I picked the kale that you’ll be eating today.” The commitment to local products doesn’t end with the food, but also includes the drinks. The bar serves all Vermont beer and vodka, and is trying to use as many small batch and artisan liquors as it can.

The commitment that those 50 community members made back in 2008 seems to have been a good one. Not only do they receive delicious, locally grown meals in return for their money, but also they helped to create a gathering place and a job training site in their community. Chef and owner, Steven Obranovich, provides training for high school and college students. It turns out that \$1,000 goes a long way in creating good food and a healthy community.

“I’m your server, and I picked the kale that you’ll be eating today.”

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A Good Idea that has Spread Like Compost

St. Johnsbury Academy – Composting Program, St. Johnsbury

“The academy is doing a lot right now,” says James Bentley, a St. Johnsbury Academy English teacher, when asked about the environmental initiatives at the school. Solar panels and a geothermal heating system are being installed in a new dormitory, and there is a new ropes course on campus. There also is a project that is less visible than these, but that still has big results.

The composting program at St. Johnsbury Academy began in earnest during the 2009-2010 school year through a senior capstone project. Seniors at the academy write proposals for projects that are intended to improve the school. Bentley supervised the composting program, which he says began with no funding and some 5-gallon buckets. Bentley, other faculty volunteers and students from the school’s National Honor Society chapter initially hauled the food scraps from their cafeteria to a farm in Lyndonville. After collecting 13 tons of food scraps in one winter, they quickly realized that they needed a more efficient means of dealing with the waste, so they turned to Wise Worms. Wise Worms is a business run by the LaPointe family, which provides compost bins to the school. The LaPointes pick up the bins, so Bentley and his students no longer need to haul them, and the containers are much nicer than the buckets that they used originally.

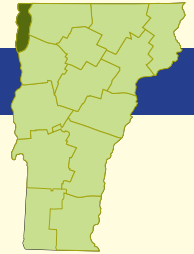
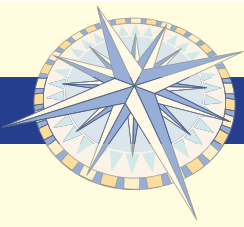
After switching to Wise Worms, St. Johnsbury Academy gave their 5-gallon buckets to Good Shepherd School, who also was interested in starting a compost program. Good Shepherd also had success with their project, and they’ve since moved to the Wise Worm model as well. Just as compost helps a garden grow, this project is spreading too.



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Creativity and Collaboration Abundant at Farmers' Market

Champlain Islands Farmers' Market – Community Collaborations, South Hero

Vermont is a state full of bustling and fun farmers' markets, and the Champlain Islands Farmers' Market (CIFM) in South Hero is no exception. Not only do shoppers frequent this market in Grand Isle County for its abundance of local produce, but also for its variety of creative programming and collaborations as well.

Regardless of the time of year, the Champlain Islands Farmers' Market has something to offer. From November through April, shoppers head to the once-a-month winter market. Market goers can expect to find fall vegetables, eggs, grass-fed beef, homemade breads, pickles and jams along with a variety of wooden bowls, yarns, handmade soaps and crafts. Happily, the South Hero Congregational Church has both the space and the willingness to host the market during the cold winter months. During the warmer months, the market moves outside behind St. Rose of Lima Church in South Hero and behind St. Joseph's Church in Grand Isle where shoppers can find the above products plus an abundance of summer produce and a variety of programs. Emily Alger, one of the market's executive committee members, says that the market, "pulls in partners from all over the community by offering workshops on fiber, dairy, honey, canning and flower arranging." Additionally, a couple of times each summer the market sponsors Youth Farmers' Market Day, where it allows kids to sell produce that they've grown, food that they've made, or crafts that they've created. Open Farm and Studio Tours are another unique offering of CIFM. These tours are the brainchild of a group of farmer/artists who both raise sheep and spin wool.

Many of the different programs are made possible by a collaboration with the South Hero Land Trust (SHLT), who Alger says, "we are thrilled to partner with." SHLT co-sponsored moving the market to South Hero and making it a sustainable organization, and many of the residents of Grand Isle County are happy that they did so.



Emily Alger, provided by South Hero Land Trust

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Islanders Teach One Another How to Save Energy

Islanders Caring for the Environment and Town Offices Collaboration, South Hero

Islanders Caring for the Environment (ICE) is a grassroots organization whose members aim to make improvements in their own backyard, and they've teamed up with their local town offices to do just that.

ICE is an effort seeking to reduce the carbon footprint of both individuals and the community. Using grant money, ICE performed energy audits on South Hero's town office building, town garage and town museum to learn what energy improvements they can make. Already on the town office building they have replaced outside doors, exchanged the light bulbs for energy efficient compact fluorescent bulbs and replaced the forty-year-old furnace. ICE member, Bob Buermann, says, "The intention is to use these buildings as examples of what home owners can do, along with saving the town money and reducing our carbon use." Clearly, at least one of those goals, that of saving the town money, already is being accomplished. In one year, the change in the lighting alone saved the town \$269, which is more than they spent on the new bulbs

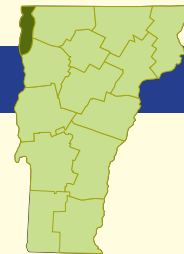
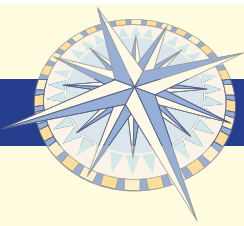


Molly Buermann

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thanks to the financial assistance they received from the grant and from Efficiency Vermont. And the town will realize these energy savings for years to come.

Not only does ICE plan to use town-owned buildings as examples, they also are developing a list of the many locations in South Hero and Grand Isle County that use alternative forms of energy. Initially, they plan to create a photo demonstration so people can see what different forms of energy work in the area, and later they hope to lead tours of some of the sites so homeowners can learn how to replicate projects in their own homes. In South Hero it seems that when islanders care for the environment, they care for their neighbors too.

In one year, the change in the lighting alone saved the town \$269.

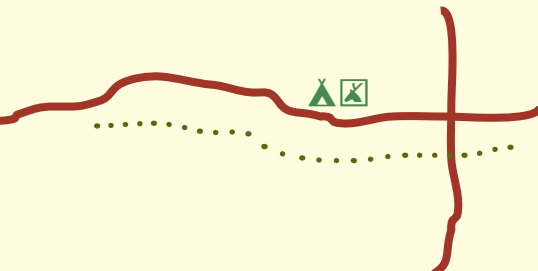
Taking Children from Awareness to Action

South Hero Land Trust – The Land, the Farms and Me, South Hero

In 2002, Reina Warren, a Folsom School parent, had the idea to create a program for the school that would connect students to their food and the land. Her hope was that some day the program would cease to be an extra in the curriculum, and that it eventually would become just a part of the school culture. With the help and support of the South Hero Land Trust, *The Land, the Farms and Me*, became just what Reina wanted, an integral part of every child's education.

Part of what makes *The Land, the Farms and Me* so successful is that Warren had some valuable goals right from the beginning. One of those goals was, "to assist the Folsom School teachers in meeting the Grand Isle County curriculum and State of Vermont Grade Expectations." Aligning the program with Vermont's state standards meant that the program was viewed as more than just extra work for the teachers. Rather, the program has become a way for teachers to cover topics required by the state in engaging ways that address different learning styles. This focus on the ways in which children learn also has been central to the program. As Warren describes it, "awareness to action is the spectrum." In other words, the program meets the developmental needs of different ages. In kindergarten and first grade, the focus simply is on visiting local farms and learning about the plants, animals and people that live there. Meanwhile, seventh and eighth graders do community service projects that benefit the land.

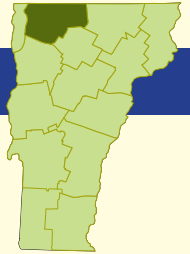
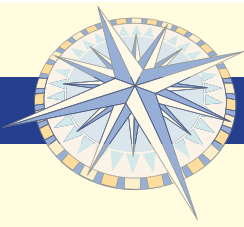
Weaving together the community and the children's education also has been important from the start. Warren says, "There's no problem getting chaperones and not only are you educating the kids but also the parents. The program has made a lot of nice community connections." In fact, cultivating the partnerships between the teachers and the farmers and other community members has been integral to keeping the program viable. Those connections are now firmly established, so much so that Warren no longer has to lead many of the educational experiences, but rather she is able to act as a resource. The connections that have been fostered with the community have allowed Warren to step back and let the teachers run the show, which is just what she and the South Hero Land Trust always wanted.



Rob Swanson

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Lake Champlain, Where People Connect

Lake Champlain International – Fishing for Friends Mentoring Program, Colchester

Participating in outdoor recreational activities can foster healthy relationships and the desire to protect our natural resources. For these two reasons, Lake Champlain International (LCI) created their Fishing for Friends Mentoring Program.

While LCI's office is located in Colchester, it reaches out to people and communities throughout Lake Champlain's watershed. Just as its geographic reach is far, the organization also aims to reach out to a diverse group of people, and the Fishing for Friends program is one way they do just that. About a decade ago, James Ehlers, Executive Director of LCI, realized that there were no adults available after school and on weekends to many of the children who attended the organization's large fishing events. The kids clearly were interested in fishing, but didn't have the means or anyone to teach them to fish. Initially, LCI began to supply bait and fishing rods to these children, but the kids needed more than just equipment. It didn't take long for staff at LCI to realize that they needed help, too, to meet the need. So LCI teamed up with HowardCenter, an organization dedicated to the well being of children, adults, families and communities. Through this partnership, LCI advertises the need for adult mentors to take kids fishing, and HowardCenter trains the mentors and pairs them up with children who want to spend more time outside with a caring adult.

Today LCI also partners with Spectrum Youth and Family Services to do the same thing. Ehlers says the partnerships work so well, because HowardCenter and Spectrum, "help LCI to get environmental stewardship out to another audience and LCI helps them to raise awareness for the need of adult mentors in the lives of children." And he says, "It is a logical path, because when people have a stake in a resource they tend to be concerned about its welfare and help to take care of it."



Photo provided by Lake Champlain International

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Community Supports Summer Camp For All

Hazen's Notch Association – Campership Fund, Montgomery Center

For some, a summer without camp is unimaginable. While for others, the thought of attending camp is only a dream. Fortunately for kids in northern Vermont, the Hazen's Notch Association (HNA) Campership Fund makes attending summer camp a reality for many who normally couldn't even consider it.

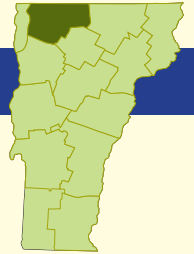
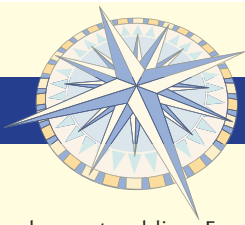
Rolf Anderson, President of HNA, explains that the idea of the Campership Fund really took off when a family who lives near HNA contacted the camp saying that they wanted to sponsor a child to attend. This family didn't have children who attended the camp. They simply lived nearby and wanted to support the program. Anderson says, "I then asked myself how could I take this family's generosity and multiply it?" He started by telling HNA members about the family's kindness in the organization's annual membership letter. There, he also invited members to contribute any amount to add to the fund. Small donations began to trickle in and add up. He then went to schools and asked if they'd be interested in helping to find students who'd want to come to camp but couldn't afford it. The schools were



Rolf Anderson

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happy to oblige. From there, HNA went to Town Meeting to request money for the fund, and the townspeople agreed to contribute since they had heard good things about the camp.

Today the collaboration of non-profit organization, town and school continues. HNA members and town budgets contribute four to five thousand dollars each year to the fund, which enables many children to attend the camp. After the money is collected, HNA joins forces with guidance counselors from the local schools to find students who would like to attend the camp and could use financial support to do so. Anderson says, "People like to support a program where they can see the direct benefit to people."

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An Encouraging Use of Lawn Signs

St. Albans Area Watershed Association – Lawn Signs, St. Albans

At election time it's not uncommon to find signs on lawns indicating the candidates your neighbors support for public office, and in the St. Albans area, it's possible that those campaign signs will be standing next to signs supporting phosphorous free lawns.

Thanks to a grant from the Vermont Watershed Management Fund, the St. Albans Area Watershed Association (SAAWA) now provides signs to homeowners that promote using phosphorous-free fertilizer. When phosphorous runs into waterways, it encourages the growth of potentially toxic algal blooms and aquatic weeds. Much of the phosphorous that winds up in our waterways comes from fertilizers containing phosphorous, and, as Lori Coseo, administrative coordinator of SAAWA states, "The choice to use phosphorous-free fertilizer is an easy one because soils in the area don't even need phosphorous." In order to spread the word that phosphorous isn't needed for a healthy lawn, and that it actually can create unhealthy water, SAAWA distributes signs that state, "Green Lawns, Blue Water! If you fertilize, use phosphorous free." Coseo believes that the signs are effective, because she says, "The best way to encourage people to protect the lake is by seeing that their neighbors are involved."

In addition to encouraging community support of lake-friendly lawn practices, SAAWA also provides financial incentives for maintaining lawns that promote healthy water. With funding from the Agency of Natural Resources, SAAWA has been able to provide \$5 rebate coupons to those who purchase phosphorous free fertilizer. SAAWA realizes that a number of tactics often are needed to make a difference, and through both financial incentives and community support, they hope to find fewer algal blooms and aquatic weeds in Lake Champlain and its surrounding waters.



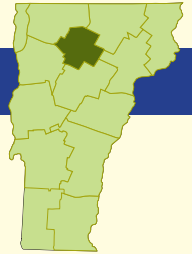
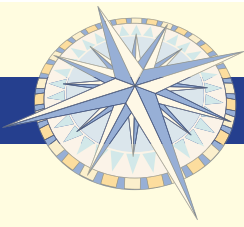
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BACK



Walking the Talk of Resource Conservation

Bourne's Energy Inc. – Conserving Resources at the Office, Morrisville

When a Bourne's Energy fuel delivery truck powered by biodiesel drives by, it's clear to see that the company is dedicated to walking the talk of saving energy. Additionally, when moving into their new office on Main Street in Morrisville, the company was careful to make many energy efficient upgrades including a solar hot water heater, low flush toilets and energy saving lighting. Not only is the company known for making these obvious and large scale investments in conservation, but also its employees do many seemingly small actions at the office that have a big impact.

Lori Barkyoumb, Bourne's Marketing Director, says that the energy company, "is asking employees to practice what they preach" as they go about their work at the office, and a number of initiatives enable them to do so. For instance, at 2:00 each afternoon, the heat in the office is turned down, and prior to going home, employees turn off power strips that supply energy to office equipment. The company also conserves energy by using lights that have sensors so that they turn off when no one is in a room. In the kitchen, employees compost their food waste and recycle any parts of their lunch packaging that they can. Instead of a water cooler and all of its small paper cups or a vending machine selling bottled water, Bourne's has a water fountain that spouts filtered water. Conserving resources also occurs in the copy room. Comical signs stating, "PC files, not paper piles" remind employees to think before they print, and workers also use one-sided paper that winds up in the recycling bin as scrap paper.

Bourne's is an energy company that understands that small changes in one's home can have big effects on the resources needed to heat and cool that home. Clearly the company and its employees also realize that small changes in office procedures can go a long way in conserving resources.

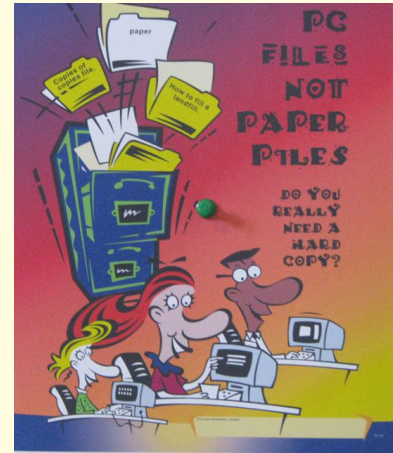


Image provided by Lori Barkyoumb

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Sharing is More Than the Kind Thing to Do

Lamoille County Natural Resources Conservation District – Portable Skidder Bridge Rental Program and Regional Hydroseeder Project, Morrisville

As children we are taught that it is kind to share. The simple act of sharing is more than just kind however it also is a practice that both reduces consumption and promotes community. The Lamoille County Natural Resources Conservation District (LCNRCD) illustrates that it understands the benefits of sharing through two programs that promote the simple act.

The LCNRCD participates in the Portable Skidder Bridge Rental Program, an initiative that is overseen by the Vermont Division of Forestry. Portable Skidder Bridges can be used to cross streams when logging, in order to reduce non-point source pollution that normally results from stream bank and bed disturbances. Loggers can contact the LCNRCD to rent a Portable Skidder Bridge in Lamoille County for just \$100 per month. Not only do the bridges help to reduce pollution, but as LCNRCD Director Kim Komer explains, the bridges also, "give loggers easier access to where

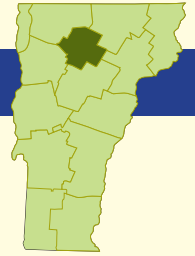
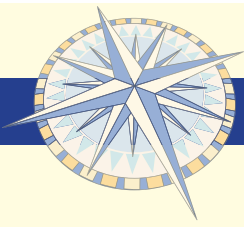


Image provided by LCNRCD

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they're going and prevent loggers from having to worry about fines, muddying up equipment, etc." The Portable Skidder Bridge rental program is a win-win situation for both the loggers and our state's water quality.

The Regional Hydroseeder Project is a second LCNRCD initiative that promotes sharing while helping to protect our waterways by reducing non-point source pollution. In the early 90's, the LCNRCD obtained grant funding to purchase and maintain a hydroseeder to be shared among several municipalities. The hydroseeder is used to apply grass seed along roads. This vegetative stabilization helps to prevent erosion, undermining, and washouts, which pollute waterways and cost local governments tens of thousands of dollars each year to correct. Though here it is tools and equipment rather than toys, that lesson we learned as children about sharing nicely, has economic and environmental benefits as well.

The Portable Skidder Bridge rental program is a win-win situation for both the loggers and our state's water quality.

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Piles of Compost as Exciting as Piles of Snow for Ski Resort

Stowe Mountain Resort – Composting Initiative, Stowe

Stowe Mountain Resort (SMR) has received a great deal of recognition for its environmental commitment. It was the first mountain resort in the United States to receive a "Green Community Award" from Audubon International. Spruce Peak at Stowe received the honor for implementing a wide array of environmental projects and initiatives. The resort protected over 2,000 acres of wildlife habitat through a pair of conservation easements. Efficiency Vermont helped the resort to build energy efficient cabins. Plus, SMR financially supports public transportation and encourages its employees to ride-share.

In addition to all of these achievements, SMR also has implemented an impressive composting program. Rob Apple, Planning Manager at Spruce Peak at Stowe, explains that the program began "when the resort formed a composting committee, that quickly found a farm willing to take our food scraps." The resort started to compost food waste from the back of the kitchen in Stowe Mountain Lodge, and after a year wanted to expand its efforts, so staff began working with the Central Vermont Solid Waste District (CVSWD). SMR became one of 110 businesses that participate in the composting program run by CVSWD, which transports SMR's compost to Grow Compost in Moretown.

This project, which began in just one kitchen, has had a sizeable impact. In the first nine months of 2010, SMR diverted 75 tons of waste from landfills by getting it transported to Grow Compost. And while Rob Apple says that it can be a challenge to implement composting in some of the resort's older kitchens with limited space, he and the resort are committed to expanding the program. Furthermore, using a calculator based upon compost offsetting fossil fuel derived fertilizers as well as decreased greenhouse gas emissions compared to those in a landfill, CVSWD estimates that SMR saved approximately 6,700 gallons of gas by composting rather than throwing away its food scraps. The resort then buys soil back from Grow Compost for use in its own landscaping. Just as each chair on the ski lift circles back to its start, so does the food waste at Stowe Mountain Resort!



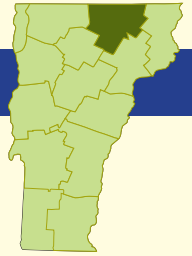
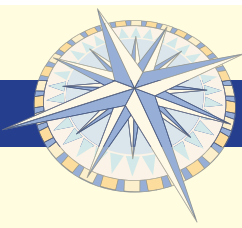
Image provided by Stowe Mountain Resort

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A Program that Grows with its Participants

Northwoods Stewardship Center – Conservation Corps, East Charleston

Middle School is notorious for being a difficult time of one’s life. Research shows that caring adult mentors, service opportunities, and active group work can all help young teens feel valued as members of the community. For middle school aged kids in the Northeast Kingdom, the Northwoods Stewardship Center’s Conservation Corps helps fill this need.

The Northwoods Conservations Corps began in 1995, and right from the start it aimed to provide middle schoolers in the Northeast Kingdom with job opportunities and support through this time of transition from child to young adult. In the beginning, the corps consisted of just one group of eight kids who did trail maintenance, and since then the program has grown by leaps and bounds. Today the program has expanded to include older students and to include work done in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife in Vermont and surrounding states. In the summer of 2011 there were 12 crews totaling approximately 70 young people.

Despite the geographic expansion of the program, the Conservation Corps remains committed to serving local middle school students, and the program is designed to grow with them. Students aged 14 to 16 from Northeast Kingdom middle and high schools perform trail maintenance, invasive plant projects and wildlife habitat improvements as a part of day crews. Then, as those corps members get older, they can work on crews that spend week-long outings in the backcountry maintaining trails. After working in the backcountry, crew leader positions await corps members as well. Ross Stevens, Conservation Service Corps Director, says that Northwoods created the backcountry crews because they “had lots of great crew members, who hit the age limit and couldn’t work for the corps anymore. We wanted to provide them with opportunities to continue to be a part of the team.”



Ross Stevens

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A College Where Book Learning is Only Half the Story

Sterling College – Student Service Requirement, Craftsbury Common

With only 125 students, Sterling College is a small institution of higher education, but don’t let the size of the student body fool you. This is a school with a big impact.

The college’s mission statement explains, “The Sterling College community combines structured academic study with experiential challenges and plain hard work to build responsible problem solvers who become stewards of the environment as they pursue productive lives.” Tim Patterson, Publications Editor and Director of Media Relations at Sterling, boils it down by saying that the college, “tries to teach sustainability not only through theory, but also through practice.” Patterson cites the school’s dining hall as one area of the school where sustainability is put into practice. Approximately 25% of the food consumed in the dining hall is grown by students on the Sterling Farm and Organic Gardens. Other

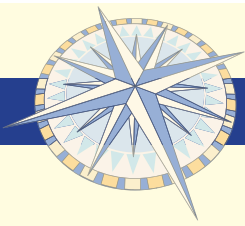
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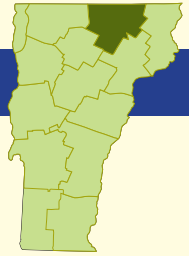


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ORLEANS COUNTY



students harvest timber from the school's woodlot for construction and firewood. And some students volunteer to present environmental and gardening lessons each month in local schools, bringing both content knowledge and extra hands into classrooms.

Sterling is New England's only Work-Learning-Service college. The Work-Learning-Service designation means that students work at least 80 hours each semester both to earn money toward their tuition and to contribute to the campus and local communities. Students work as Mount Mansfield Watershed Monitors, as Craftsbury High School Mentors and as members of the school's Maple Sugaring Team, just to name a few of the jobs. According to Sterling's website, the purpose of this program is not just to build student resumes, but to, "simply demonstrate on a daily basis what it takes and what it means to be a productive member of an active community." At Sterling, it clearly isn't about quantity, but quality. While a small number of students graduate each spring, both the coursework and Work-Learning-Service component insure that those students become active and productive members of their future communities.



Photo provided by Sterling College

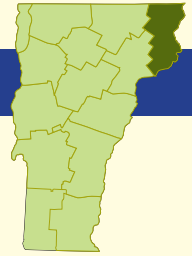
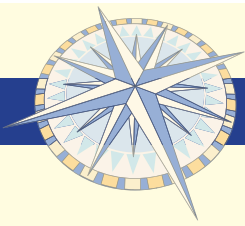
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The purpose of this program is not just to build student resumes, but to "simply demonstrate on a daily basis what it takes and what it means to be a productive member of an active community."

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Citizen Science Brings Vermont Loons Back from the Brink

Vermont Center for Ecostudies – Vermont Loon Recovery Project

“Uniting People and Science for Conservation” is the motto of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE). One way in which the organization accomplishes this goal is through citizen science, which partners VCE biologists with volunteer observers to answer research questions. The Vermont Loon Recovery Program (VLRP) is one VCE project that relies on its volunteers to protect a species that almost disappeared from the lakes and ponds in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom and elsewhere around the state.

VLRP began in 1977 when fewer than 20 nesting Common Loons could be found in Vermont. In 1983, the situation became even more dire when only 7 pairs attempted to nest. While the world population of loons has remained healthy over the years, the Vermont population became so low that in 1987 the bird was put on Vermont’s Endangered Species List, and a seasonal biologist was hired to revive the population. Since 1998, that biologist has been Eric Hanson, and thanks to his efforts and those of the volunteers he coordinates, today there are over 200 loons in Vermont compared to 29 individuals in 1983.

By monitoring the loons, educating the public through outreach activities, and management techniques like placing nesting rafts on lakes, VLRP volunteers have helped loons in Vermont to rebound. Hanson says, “I’ve really been into getting the volunteers to feel empowered. There are some lakes that I don’t even visit anymore, because the volunteers there have such a good handle on things.” Today, the project has around 250 volunteers. Thankfully, their work will continue to keep an iconic northern species on Vermont lakes for generations to come.



Mike Konkuk

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Partnerships are Key to Land Conservation

Nulhegan Basin – Land Conservation

For those who enjoy outdoor recreation like hunting, fishing, hiking, cross country skiing and wildlife photography, few areas of Vermont have as much to offer as the Northeast Kingdom. Particularly, the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge is a place to enjoy an abundance of wildlife, and thanks to a collaboration with the Conservation Fund, the refuge now includes the 26,000 acre Nulhegan Basin Unit.

In 1998, the Conservation Fund worked with private, public and non-profit partners to protect 300,000 acres of land in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire. It was the largest multi-state conservation project in U.S. history. Nearly half of the land, 130,000 acres in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, was purchased from the paper company, Champion International. Nancy Bell, the Conservation Fund’s Vermont Representative, explains that “some of that land now is managed for wildlife, some is unmanaged and a large amount of it is used as a working forest.” 26,000 of those acres were used to create the Nulhegan Basin Unit of the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge. This significant wetland contains miles of river frontage, important deer wintering areas, a healthy population of moose and countless recreation opportunities that contribute to the economic base of the local communities.

Bell is quick to point out that while the acquisition of the Champion lands was an important piece of land conservation, countless land trusts throughout the state are doing similar work on a smaller scale, partnering to conserve land.

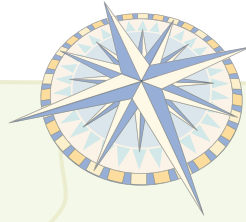
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Roadmap to Environmental Literacy for Vermont

Statewide Environmental Projects & Initiatives



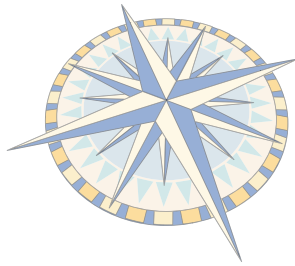
Along with profiling projects, this Roadmap also intends to show the depth of Vermont's environmental engagement. Nearly every county hosts farmers' markets, watershed alliances, school-based environmental education programs, food co-ops, alternative transportation options, and the like. Such statewide projects are vitally important components of environmental literacy in our state.

Here you will find links to the statewide environmental projects and initiatives that participants mentioned during the public dialogue process. Click on the name of a specific project or initiative in the list below if you would like to learn more about it, and we hope you will!

[Association of Vermont Recyclers](#)
[Carshare Vermont](#)
[Cohousing](#)
[Community Action Agencies](#)
[Community Supported Agriculture](#)
[Composting Association of Vermont](#)
[Conservation Commissions](#)
[Farmers' Markets](#)
[Farm to Plate](#)
[Farm to School](#)
[Food Co-ops](#)
[Forest for Every Classroom](#)
[Four Winds Nature Institute](#)
[Freecycle Vermont](#)
[Front Porch Forum](#)
[Green Up Vermont](#)
[Land Trusts – Housing and Conservation Coalition](#)
[Natural Resource Conservation Districts](#)
[Nature Centers](#)
[Park-and-Rides](#)
[Planning Commissions](#)
[Safe Routes to School](#)
[Statewide Environmental Education Programs Alliance](#)
[Solid Waste Districts](#)
[Technical Education](#)
[Transition Towns](#)
[Vermont Business Environmental Partnership](#)
[Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility](#)
[Vermont Community Garden Network](#)
[Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network](#)
[Vermont Environmental Consortium](#)
[Vermont Recreation Trails](#)
[Watershed Associations](#)

Roadmap to Environmental Literacy for Vermont

The Road to Action

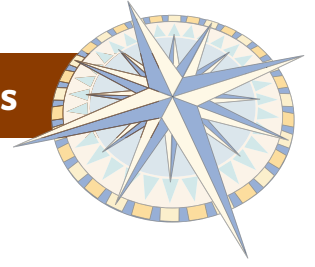


The last portion of each of our public dialogues consisted of participants imagining the ways in which we can move from the environmental projects and initiatives currently happening in their communities to the visions of environmental literacy that they discussed at the beginning of the dialogues. The complete lists of participant visions can be found in the minutes to each public dialogue (<http://www.environmentalliteracyvt.org/index.php?id=32>). Again, we were impressed with the thoughtful discussion and ideas generated by the dialogue participants.

The following pages describe ideas that are based on suggestions shared by the public during the wrap-up of each meeting. Here we've chosen to highlight actions that are clear, doable, creative and specific. Some suggestions were repeated at several dialogues, and we've highlighted several of these popular ideas as well. The complete lists of participant suggestions can be found in the minutes to each dialogue session (<http://www.environmentalliteracyvt.org/index.php?id=32>).

The suggestions that we gathered during the public dialogues will inform Vermont's k-12 environmental literacy plan. However, recognizing that environmental literacy is a lifelong goal, we also want to acknowledge the topics and ideas that young and old alike can learn more about as together we progress toward sustainability. Dialogue participants' suggestions included action steps that can be done on a large scale by many people, actions that can be performed by individuals, and everything in between, and that's how we've organized them here. First we present some of the big ideas for large groups like state government officials and policy makers to consider. Next we focus on our communities, with suggestions for schools, businesses, community agencies, neighbors and the like. Vermont's State-Wide Environmental Education Programs alliance (SWEET), co-host of the dialogue process, hopes to put some of the suggestions listed in this section into action. Finally, we highlight some ideas for ways in which you and your family can move toward sustainability at home and in your own lives. After all, it's an individual's willingness to take action that ultimately makes a difference. It's clear from the many creative ideas dialogue participants shared that Vermont will continue down the road toward environmental literacy.

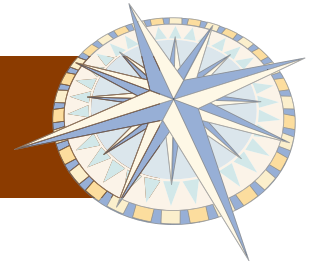
ACTION STEPS FOR: Policy Makers & Government Agencies



- Administer carbon credits for individuals with municipal initiatives. For example, ride your bike to work for 5 years, and you earn a solar panel.
- Create a town fund to offer loans to homes or businesses for renewable energy or efficiency projects, perhaps paid back with a surcharge to property tax.
- Design public buildings as models for LEED architecture.
- Insure that the steps of critical thinking are embedded in education curriculum.
- Link multi-town school budgets to afford more environmental education, community projects, etc.
- Adopt environmental literacy standards in schools, K-12.
- Consider both cost effectiveness and the environment in the bidding process for government contracts.
- Shift funding so that local and sustainable products are the more affordable choice.
- Label both food and packaging with where it came from.
- Pass “living streets” legislation – roads for all means of transport.
- Fund statewide sustainability initiatives through a stamp or sticker for non-consumptive use of wildlife and habitat like bird watching or canoeing.
- Incentivize sustainable environmental behavior through economic, education and tax credits.
- Award tax credits for in-fill development to make downtowns both sustainable and vibrant.



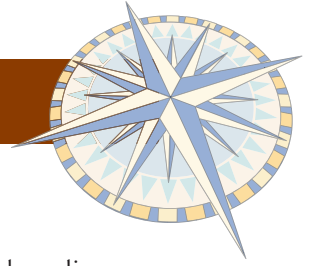
ACTION STEPS FOR: COMMUNITIES, BUSINESSES, NON-PROFITS & SCHOOLS



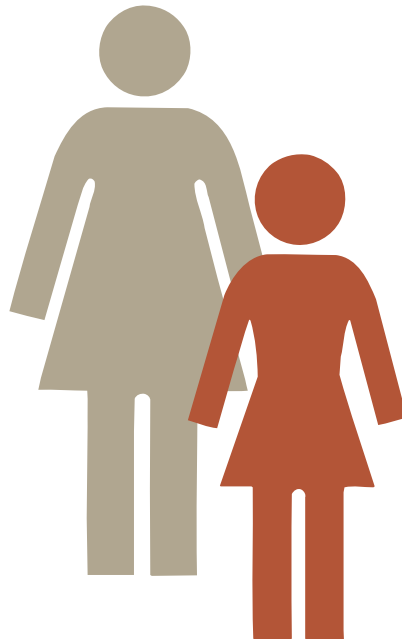
- Develop regional community asset maps for local organizations and businesses to collaborate and form partnerships.
- Link businesses and associations to share resources, buy in bulk, buy locally.
- Provide a space (actual or virtual) to exchange ideas, information and resources. Create a booklet/website to let folks know what's available. Create a shared calendar.
- Integrate life-long learning and education opportunities throughout the community.
- Expand the model of connecting content specialists with schools/teachers to address the needs of the community.
- Install more bike racks.
- Purchase and share a biodiesel bus between non-profit organizations to use for school field trips.
- Integrate school transportation with public transportation.
- Design products to reduce waste and recapture resources.
- Write job descriptions and contracts to include sustainability and environmental responsibilities.
- Promote healthier populations by constructing bike and pedestrian paths.
- Engage more people in the town planning process through door-to-door public education efforts.
- Create a town-wide guide that identifies skills and occupations of neighbors to encourage local employment and community service opportunities.
- Support institutional food services in using local food and composting.
- Establish more community gardens.
- Create one document with many local organizations' annual reports to celebrate all the good work in communities.
- Offer gardening and outdoor education as part of the school day, so kids learn and play in natural settings.



ACTION STEPS FOR: INDIVIDUALS



- Encourage peer-to-peer sharing to help people learn how to use technology, social media and social marketing.
- Share through Public Service Announcements on radio and TV sustainability tips that individuals can do.
- Shower together to save water.
- Expand opportunities for green tourism – sustainable logging, farm visits, other natural resources, etc.
- Coordinate interdisciplinary service learning projects.
- Identify good environmental literacy stories, contacts and personalities for the media to cover – to help humanize the understanding of “green.” The “green” image or lifestyle could be presented with positive stories.
- Organize community-wide workshops on canning and drying food, healthy cooking and composting/gardening.
- Think beyond our children’s children’s children’s children...



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