

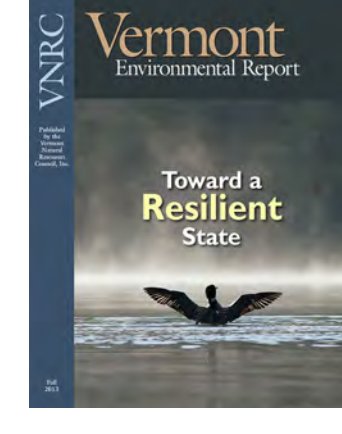


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November 2013 E-News



Brrr! As the days grow shorter and chillier, what better thing to do than hunker down in front of the fire with a hot drink and some good reading? And what better reading is there than the latest issue of the Vermont Environmental Report?

The new VER focuses on the issue of resilience, and features articles by a range of Vermonters on the subject. There are updates from our four program directors, a conversation with vegan-turned-hunter Tovar Cerulli, and more.

Just because you're getting this email, however, doesn't mean you'll get the VER. Why? Because only VNRC members, who are current on their dues, receive VNRC's flagship publication. (While this email goes to paid members, it also goes to a broader list of people who are generally interested in VNRC.)

If you're not a VNRC member, please consider joining! [Just follow this link to our donation page](#) to sign up. In addition to the VER, you'll receive a bumper sticker, discounts at VNRC events, and the knowledge that you're supporting a great organization doing important work.

If you don't know for sure if you are a member, please contact Membership and Outreach Coordinator Mari Zagarin at mzagarins@vnrc.org and she'll let you know.

As always, thanks for everything you do!

VNRC NEWS

"Hub" Vogelmann, Vermont Conservation Leader and VNRC Founder: 1928 - 2013



A UVM professor of botany who was a major leader in Vermont's conservation movement died October 11 at the age of 83. He lived in Jericho.

Hubert "Hub" Vogelmann was a co-founder of the Vermont Chapter of the Nature Conservancy and one of the founders of the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

Hub was an acid rain research pioneer, and he contributed to the creation of Act 250, among other conservation accomplishments. At various times in his life, he served on the boards of TNC, VNRC, The Conservation Fund, Shelburne Farms, and the Governor's Advisory Board under Governor Howard Dean.

"Hub was perhaps best known for his research on Camel's Hump that led to the understanding of the effects of acid rain," said Elizabeth Courtney, a former director of the Vermont Natural Resources Council. "But I believe his greatest contribution was that he inspired in countless students, over his 30 years of teaching at the University of Vermont, a genuine and deep love for the natural world."

[Read the obituary>>](#)

VNRC Publishes New Report Analyzing Taxation of Groundwater Withdrawals



Prompted by recent legislative proposals to assess a fee or tax on the extraction of groundwater for bottled water or bulk water sales, VNRC recently published a new paper examining the idea of a tax, and related groundwater policies. The paper offers context for VNRC's reservations about such a tax in Vermont at this time, but does offer policy options for consideration.

The paper, which is the result of several months of research, includes appendices related to groundwater in Vermont, its known uses, and its regulation.

[Download a copy of the report>>](#)

VNRC Helping Towns, Regions, to Plan for Forests and Wildlife



For the past several weeks, VNRC has been holding evening meetings around the state for local planning commissions, conservation commissions and others who are interested in helping their towns develop coordinated plans for keeping forests and wildlife habitat intact.

VNRC organized these meetings in Craftsbury, Brandon, and Westminster. At each meeting, VNRC staff presented findings from their research on subdivision trends in fourteen Vermont communities. They also presented a suite of local and regional land use strategies to reduce forest fragmentation and sought participants' feedback on what

strategies would be most effective.

These meetings are part of an effort to create a priority implementation plan to reduce forest fragmentation at the local and regional levels. This implementation plan will be part of VNRC's continuing effort to help regional planning commissions and communities keep forests and wildlife habitat intact. These meetings have also served to highlight a new tool for planning and conservation commissions: [Community Strategies for Vermont's Forests and Wildlife: A Guide for Local Action](#).

Contact VNRC's Conservation Planner, Emma Zavez, at ezavez@vnrc.org or (802) 223-2328 ext 116 for more information on this effort.

[Download a free copy of VNRC's latest publication>>](#)

VERMONT NEWS

Vermont's Successful Net Metering Program Threatened, but Fixes are Possible



Net metering, one of Vermont's most successful renewable energy programs, allows Vermonters to generate their own clean, local power. But things have gotten complicated recently.

Because of the rising interest in net metering, some utilities are reaching a statutory cap on net-metered projects. That means that many Vermonters, depending on where they live, can't go solar if they want.

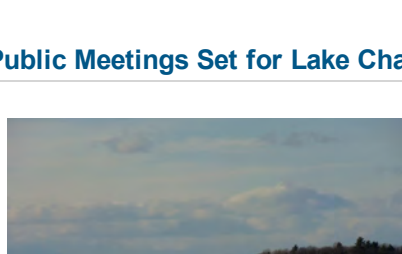
This stumbling block is keeping many Vermont families, schools, municipalities and businesses from installing solar, it's slowing down

larger-scale investments in solar, and it's creating uncertainty in an already-stressed investor market. The good news is that when lawmakers convene in January, they may consider statutory changes to address current roadblocks and maintain the successful program. Among the ideas are exempting residential systems under 15kW from counting towards any cap and raising the cap for projects over 15kW to 20 percent.

Please stay tuned to VNRC for additional information on possible fixes to this important program.

[Read more about net metering>>](#)

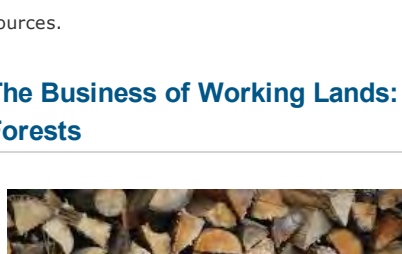
Public Meetings Set for Lake Champlain "Total Maximum Daily Load" Pollution Budget



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, is holding a series of six public meetings in December, 2013, to discuss the new phosphorus plan that is under development by the EPA for the Lake Champlain Basin, referred to as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). [The meetings](#) will be moderated by the Lake Champlain Basin Program staff and held around the Lake Champlain Basin. No pre-registration is required.

The TMDL will place a cap on the amount of phosphorus that can be allowed to enter Lake Champlain and still meet Vermont's water quality standards. It will allocate that amount to each river basin draining to Lake Champlain and among the various phosphorus sources.

The Business of Working Lands: Entrepreneurship that Supports Vermont's Farms and Forests



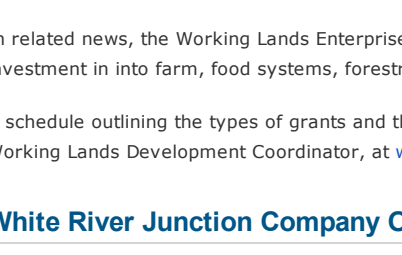
One of the keys to healthy forests is a healthy forest economy, notes Paul Costello in a [recent op-ed](#) that appeared in various news outlets. Costello is the director of the Vermont Council on Rural Development and has been a leader in creating a new program, the Working Lands Enterprise Board, to promote entrepreneurship that supports Vermont's working lands.

In the op-ed, Costello focuses on the forests of Vermont, saying the state must continue to support the people engaged in the enterprises that count on the forest, like the landowners, loggers, and truckers as well as value-added industries from furniture to toys to artwork.

In related news, the Working Lands Enterprise Board recently announced another round of over \$1 million in grant funds for investment in into farm, food systems, forestry, and forest products enterprises.

A schedule outlining the types of grants and the deadlines and other information is available. Contact Neolle Sevoian, Working Lands Development Coordinator, at working.lands@state.vt.us or (802) 585-9072.

White River Junction Company Offers a New Type of Modular Home Ready for the Future



Energy efficient and strong, a new breed of mobile home is now being built by a company in White River Junction.

Built to withstand climate extremes and severe storms, the new type of modular home is energy-efficient. The homes, built by Vermod, are designed to be more firmly anchored to a foundation than a traditional mobile home.

About 15 percent of the homes damaged or destroyed in Tropical Storm Irene were modular.

The homes are more expensive than traditional mobile homes. A single-wide 66-70 foot long home costs about \$90,000 but subsidies are

available.

[Vermont Public Radio covered the unveiling of the new homes>>](#)

Check Out the New Blog Run by DEC's Watershed Management Division



The Watershed Management Division just launched a blog at www.vtwatershedblog.com.

The blog will highlight big announcements about events, opportunities including available grants and trainings, success stories, and science.

Readers can sign up to receive email notifications when there are new posts. The content is limited at the moment but more is on the way.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Energy. Climate Action. Partnerships. Join Us at Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, December 7



This year's Vermont Community Energy and Climate Action Conference is all about getting serious about climate action in Vermont by strengthening partnerships and advancing total energy solutions. It will be held at the Lake Morey Inn in Fairlee from 9 am to 4:30 pm on Saturday, December 7.

Designed to inspire, support, and grow the statewide network of town energy committees and other energy-ambitious Vermonters, the one-day conference emphasizes clean energy and climate action strategies that can be implemented locally. Workshops and roundtables will address energy efficiency, transportation, renewable energy, legislative, coalition-building and other essential solutions needed to meet Vermont's energy and climate goals.

[Register online>>](#)

Summit on the Future of Vermont's Working Landscape Set for December 17 in Randolph



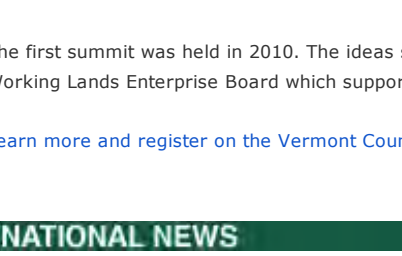
This year's Summit on the Future of Vermont's Working Landscape will be held December 17 from 9 am-4:30 pm at the Vermont Technical College in Randolph. The Summit will bring farmers, forest products leaders, value-adding entrepreneurs, investors, policy leaders, community residents, and all who care about the future of Vermont's Working Lands together to consider progress that has been made, assess the work ahead, and advance the next steps needed for public policy and investment.

The first summit was held in 2010. The ideas spawned at that summit eventually led to the Legislature's creation of the Working Lands Enterprise Board which supports the businesses that depend on Vermont's working farms and forests.

[Learn more and register on the Vermont Council on Rural Development website>>](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

Green Investment Organizations Give Oil, Gas Companies "F" on Fracking Disclosure



A recent shareholder analysis of 24 companies that engage in hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas finds energy producers failing to adequately report efforts to reduce environmental and community impacts. BP, Exxon Mobil and Occidental had among the lowest scores.

In 2011, with the support of VNRC, the Vermont legislature banned fracking in the state.

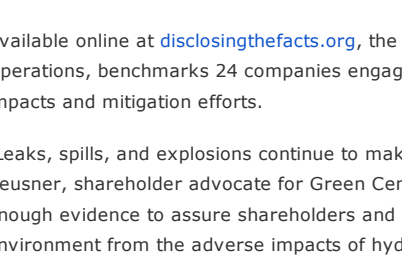
Broadly, the oil and gas production industry is consistently failing to report measurable reductions of its impacts on communities and the environment from hydraulic fracturing operations, according to a

scorecard report released jointly recently by As You Sow, Boston Common Asset Management, Green Century Capital Management (Green Century), and the Investor Environmental Health Network (IEHN).

Available online at disclosingthefacts.org, the report, Disclosing the Facts: Transparency and Risk in Hydraulic Fracturing Operations, benchmarks 24 companies engaged in hydraulic fracturing against investor needs for disclosure of operational impacts and mitigation efforts.

"Leaks, spills, and explosions continue to make headlines and demonstrate the risks of hydraulic fracturing," noted Lucia von Reusner, shareholder advocate for Green Century Capital Management. "Unfortunately companies are failing to provide enough evidence to assure shareholders and the public regarding steps being taken to protect communities and the environment from the adverse impacts of hydraulic fracturing."

It's All in the Numbers: How Insurance Companies View Climate-Related Risk



A recent post on Smithsonian Magazine's blog notes yet again that the insurance industry is keenly aware of climate shifts because it's about their bottom line.

The chief scientist at a firm that creates software models to allow insurance companies to calculate risk, Risk Management Solutions (RMS), notes in the blog post, that insurance is about the numbers.

"Our business depends on us being neutral. We simply try to make the best possible assessment of risk today, with no vested interest," says Robert Muir-Wood. "In the past, when making these assessments, we looked to history. But in fact, we've now realized that that's no longer a

safe assumption—we can see, with certain phenomena in certain parts of the world, that the activity today is not simply the average of history."

[Read more on Smithsonian Magazine's blog>>](#)

Note: Correction on Information Contained in the Fall Vermont Environmental Report

In the most recent issue of the Vermont Environmental Report we reported the death of a former Vermont board member Paul Heald. As part of that story we published a list of founding board members. Due to a research error on the VER editor, that list was incomplete. The following people were also VNRC founding board members: Robert Fish, James W. Marvin, John Morphy, and Fritz Wiessner.

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VNRC's Mission

Through research, education, collaboration and advocacy, VNRC protects and enhances Vermont's natural environments, vibrant communities, productive working landscapes, rural character and unique sense of place, and prepares the state for future challenges and opportunities.