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## E-News - January 2017



With a new administration and legislature in session, state leaders are grappling with a number of important issues, such as funding efforts to clean up Lake Champlain and waters across the state, maintaining forest health and safeguarding our drinking water from exposure to toxic chemicals. VNRC is fully engaged in these discussions, working with legislators to ensure the state takes meaningful action in the months

ahead.

While it's essential the state address our most pressing environmental issues and not hold our breath for leadership from the federal government, we also recognize Vermont is not an island, which is why we'll be taking our shared values to Washington this weekend, joining fellow Vermonters and 100,000's of others projected to attend the Women's March on Washington. Read more on our trip, recent work, and other updates below.

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### VNRC NEWS

#### [VNRC Working With Legislators to Address Gaps in Toxic Chemical Safeguards](#)



The PFOA contamination in Bennington revealed that Vermonters are not adequately protected from the release of toxic substances in our communities. Recently, the Working Group tasked with identifying gaps in laws aimed at protecting Vermonters from contamination by toxic substances like PFOA released its report of recommendations to the Legislature. Jon Groveman, VNRC policy and water program director said of the report, "VNRC is pleased that a majority of Working Group members voted to recommend that the Legislature pursue legislation to close these gaps. If adopted, these recommendations will dramatically improve

protections for Vermonters and our environment." More on the story coming soon.

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#### [VNRC Fills Bus to Women's March on Washington](#)

Since the election, it's become clear that many Vermonters are not willing to sit idly by and accept malignant comments about women, minorities, and other groups, as well as promises to roll back environmental



protections and action on climate change. We heard you, which is why we organized a bus and invited our members, activists and friends, to join us. Within hours we had filled the bus. Yet, if you missed out on riding with VNRC, there are still other ways to join fellow Vermonters in D.C. or **closer to home in Montpelier**. Read more on the story and find info

local events and other transportation options to the march [here](#).

## Promising Menu of Funding Options to Clean Up Lake Champlain, State Waters

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"We appreciate the Treasurer's engagement and commitment to water quality progress in Vermont. The report provides a number of options for funding that VNRC will be reviewing and the Legislature should consider. However, if we are going to restore our waters, safeguard the Vermont brand of a clean and green state, and meet our legal obligations, the Legislature must adopt a long-term, stable funding mechanism that appropriately invests in our water cleanup this year," said VNRC's Policy and Water Program Director Jon Groveman. Read the report [here](#).

## McCarthy to Talk Implications of New Vistas Development

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A Utah-based developer has been buying up land in four Windsor and Orange County communities as part of a long-term plan to develop a 20,000-person community. Next week Sustainable Communities Program Director Kate McCarthy will present with members of the Alliance for Vermont Communities, which is hosting an event on January 24th in Montpelier to discuss the statewide implications for a project like this, how local and regional planning can be used to shape development, and

information on Act 250. [Read more here](#).

## McCarthy Weighs in on Small-Box Development After Jericho Zoning Vote

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The doubling of Dollar General stores in Vermont over the last five years has once again led a number of communities across the state to assess what a balanced approach to economic growth, including business growth, should look like. Recently, residents in Jericho took to the voting booths to grapple with how growth and change should happen - questions all communities contemplate as they work to strengthen their communities, boost their economies and maintain a healthy and clean environment. VNRC's Kate McCarthy spoke with WCAX recently on the growing awareness of issues related to small-box development in the state. [Click](#)

[here](#) for more on the story.

## VNRC, Sierra Club Talk Environmental Priorities Under Gov. Scott

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VNRC's Jon Groveman and Sierra Club Vermont Chapter's Rob Kidd discuss the outlook for Vermont's environment under new state leadership, priority environmental issues, and more on Our Nature on WDEV. [Click here to listen](#).

## Governor Scott Affirms Commitment to a Clean Energy Transition

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Days after VNRC and partners urged Governor Scott to not back down from the state's renewable energy goals, he held his first press conference confirming his support of state goals and highlighting the job creation opportunities renewable energy and energy efficiency offer the state. [Read more here](#).



## VERMONT NEWS

### Vermont Conservation Voters to Release 2017 Environmental Common Agenda



Vermont Conservation Voters will be releasing its 2017 *Vermont Environmental Common Agenda* of legislative priorities at the end of the month. Better known as the *Common Agenda*, the report highlights the environmental priorities and proposed solutions for the 2017 legislative session. The *Common Agenda* represents the priorities of a range of environmental organizations across Vermont working on matters affecting our shared natural resources, the character of our communities, and the health of Vermonters. Stay tuned to [vermontconservationvoters.org](http://vermontconservationvoters.org) for its late-January release.

### Grants Available for Watershed Resilience Work



The [High Meadows Fund](#) has issued a [Request for Proposals](#) (RFP) that represents a commitment of \$180,000 towards promoting planning and action to build resilience within Vermont's watersheds. The funds are intended to support multi-town watershed planning and early action. **Letters of intent are due February 10th, 2017. For more information on the Watershed Resilience Initiative and grants, [click here](#).**

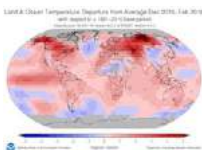
### Celebrate Vermont's Public Places: 2017 Public Places Awards



The public places awards program recognizes special public spaces, the corridors that connect them, or networks of public spaces which have been defined or enriched by planning or design, as well as regulations that promote positive public uses and benefits.

The awards program is a collaboration between the Vermont Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Vermont Planning Association, and the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program. For information and to apply, [click here](#).

### What Greenland's Past and Present Tell Us About the Earth's Future



A team of UVM researchers recently joined *Vermont Edition* to discuss their work and latest findings on the effects that global warming is having on the Greenland Ice Sheet and the implications for dramatic sea level rise in the years ahead. [Read more and listen here](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Seward Weber Lecture: The Importance of Old-Growth Forests



You're invited to join VNRC, Audubon Vermont, and the Vermont Land Trust at the upcoming Seward Weber lecture on **January 26th in Montpelier** featuring **Tom Wessels**, faculty emeritus at Antioch University New England and author of a number of books, including *Reading the Forested Landscape*. Wessels will discuss the importance of old-growth forests as a functional part of our regional landscape. [Click here](#) for more details.

## Vermont Housing and Conservation Coalition Advocacy Day

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Save the date for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Coalition Advocacy Day, which will be held on **February 2nd** at the State House. **Register by January 26th** and join fellow supporters, along with the many housing and conservation organizations who've benefitted from the program, to tell your legislators to keep funding the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. For more info on the day and to register, [click here](#)

## Clean Water Day March 29th

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Join VNRC for an exciting, information-packed day to learn about pending water legislation - from clean water funding to safeguards against toxic chemicals in our groundwater – and to show your support for healthy waters at Clean Water Day on **March 29th** at the Vermont State House. Stay tuned for more info in the coming weeks.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### New Report Shows Energy Efficiency Supporting Millions of U.S. Jobs



Energy efficiency continues to garner recognition as the largest industry in the clean energy economy, one that, according to a recent report, outpaces the auto and oil and gas extraction industries combined. The report also offers state-by-state details on energy efficiency jobs, including nearly 8,600 Vermont jobs. [Read more here.](#)

### Trump Voters Care About Climate, Clean Air and Water



Despite the President-elect's rhetoric about rolling back safeguards for our natural resources and climate action, new survey results show that a majority of Trump voters support action on climate, clean air and water. Read more [here.](#)

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