

VNRC

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Are We There Yet?

The Long Road Ahead to Clean Water in Vermont

Summer
2015

A. Blake Gardner

PHOTOGRAPHER



www.ablakegardner.com

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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.

VNRC is the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

VNRC membership includes a subscription to the Vermont Environmental Report magazine. Join VNRC in protecting Vermont with your membership of \$40.

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Cover photo by Kim Greenwood

Safeguarding Our Water

By Brian Shupe



When we think of Vermont, we think of lots of things. One of them might be water. Vermont is, relatively speaking, a humid, water-rich place. The severe thunderstorms that blew through central Vermont in late July, washing out roads in several towns, underscore that.

But shift your eyes across a map of the United States and you'll find a vastly different story. There's California, and other parts of the West, parched and in big trouble.

A recent report prepared for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found through tree ring chronologies that the drought currently afflicting California might be the most severe in 1,200 years. And, according to the report, evidence points to continued droughts in the region for many years to come. If this is not the result of global warming—and there are strong indications that it is—it will certainly be exacerbated by it in the coming years.

This is not just a problem in the arid West. In Puerto Rico, a prolonged drought has local water utilities shutting off water to more than a quarter of the island's households for up to 48 hours at a time.

So what does this have to do with Vermont? Not much, unless you believe that if there was ever a natural resource that demands that we plan ahead, it's water. That's especially important, as Vermont's abundance of water will look increasingly desirable in those drought-stricken locations. And the state's lush Green Mountains will look like an especially enticing new home for people surrounded by a sunburnt landscape and rising seas (rising faster than anyone predicted, according to another recent study).

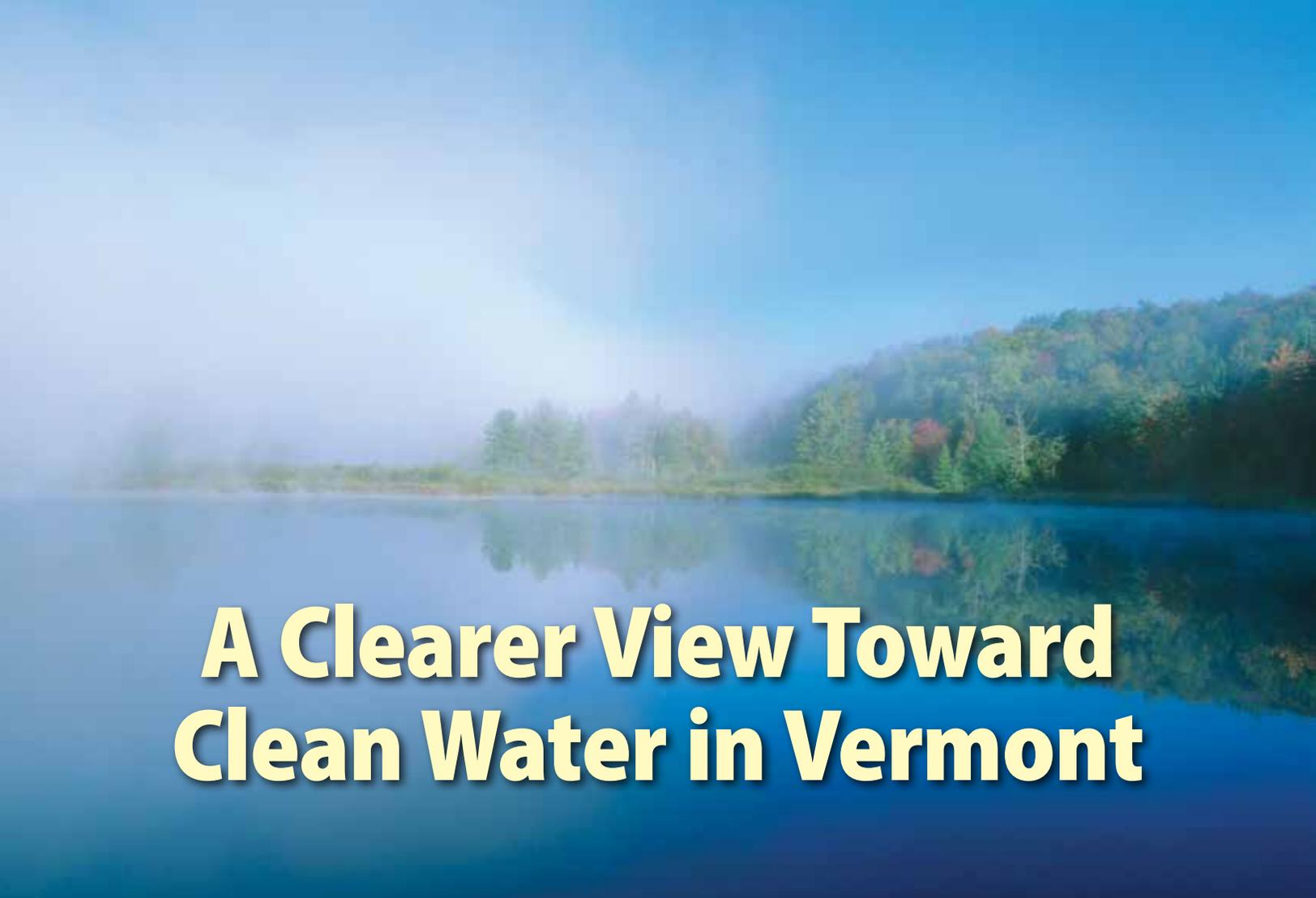
VNRC has been working to protect and enhance both surface water and groundwater in the state since 1963. We have pushed ski areas to use less water for snowmaking, pressured large developments to reduce polluted runoff from parking lots and roofs, and advocated for farmers to clean up their act. We also supported lawmakers in declaring groundwater a public trust resource that is owned by all Vermonters, not some private entity.

And, just this summer, we are reflecting on our most recent success—and that of many partners—in setting into motion sweeping new requirements to clean up Lake Champlain and other waters across the state. In this issue of the VER you will get an overview of this initiative, and learn how this legislative victory is just the beginning of a long effort to put all of the rules and standards in place to achieve our clean water goals. The success of that effort is far from certain, and will certainly require continued focus and hard work in the coming years.

Compared to California, Vermonters do have reliable access to clean water. As other parts of North America desiccate, fresh water will likely become an attractive and coveted commodity. We must remain vigilant, proactive and above all, uncompromising in the protection of this life force.

We hope you enjoy this exploration of water issues and, as always, be in touch with us at any time.

If there was ever a natural resource that demands that we plan ahead, it's water.



A Clearer View Toward Clean Water in Vermont

Wayne Fawbush

The stars aligned this year in Montpelier for the passage of a big clean water bill. After years of discussion, litigation, finger-pointing and back-and-forth on money, the state now finally has a clean water/Lake Champlain cleanup law signed and on the books. It would seem a good step.

But now that the ink is dry on the documents, the congratulations are done and the parade is over, the real work, the nitty-gritty, far-from-the-limelight work to clean up Vermont's waterways, including Lake Champlain, really begins.

This sweeping law was more than a decade in the making. Over the last several years, the federal Environmental Protection Agency was convinced that Vermont's lake cleanup efforts weren't aggressive enough and because of years of successful litigation led by the Conservation Law Foundation, and increasingly active and vocal local watershed groups, the pressure was only growing.

Then, importantly, there was a subtle but critical shift in the debate over clean water that made a huge difference: the political winds began to blow, albeit gently, for the first time in recent memory, against Vermont's famous agricultural community. Vermonters and legislators began to admit that farming would, indeed, have to clean up its act, too. Even if it cost farmers money.

Then in January Gov. Shumlin advanced this political dynamic when, to the surprise of many, in his inaugural address he tapped clean water as a big priority for the year.

So with the stage set—the grassroots water activists and larger green groups lined up, the administration pushing and EPA hovering, lawmakers got to work. The House Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. David Deen, did extraordinary work on the policy. Then the Senate, through the leadership of the newly appointed chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee, Chris Bray, made targeted improvements to the bill, and the pieces fell into place. On June 16 Gov. Shumlin signed H.35 (now Act 64) into law. And perhaps in recognition of the significance of the move, he signed it not just once, but twice in public waterfront ceremonies, first in Burlington and then in St. Albans.

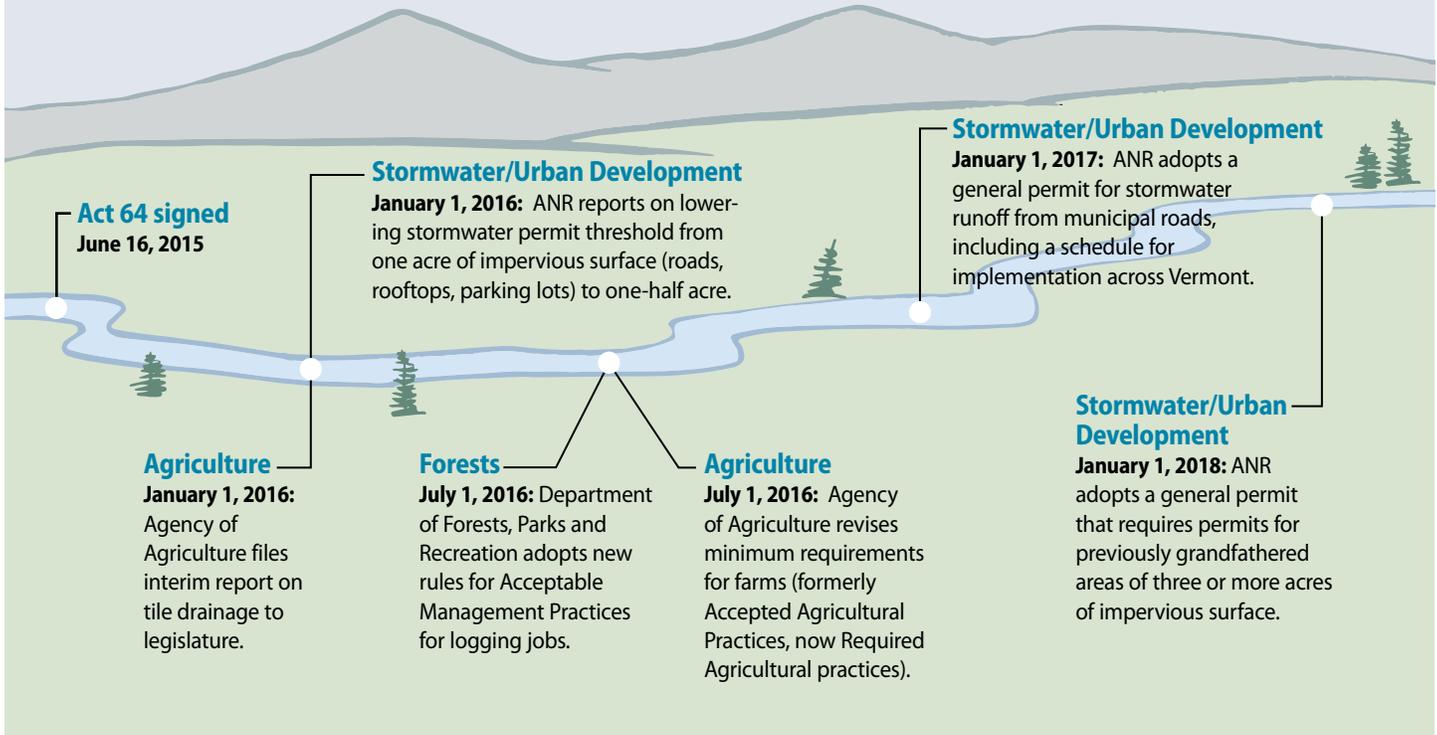
Since then, there has been fanfare and a buzz of optimism that finally Vermont has done something about the long-festered pollution problems in Lake Champlain and other lakes and streams across the Green Mountain State. There is certainly reason to be upbeat. But there is a big need to dig in, and dig in deeply as this law is just a framework for action.

“We’ve poured the foundation,” said Kim Greenwood, VNRC’s water program director. “There is plenty more work ahead to finish the house.”

She noted there are rules to develop, reports to write and new permits to create. She stresses that people who care about clean

People who care about clean water must assiduously stay on task.

Act 64 Milestones



water must assiduously stay on task.

“One thing we know for certain is that if the follow-through is weak, we won’t be seeing cleaner water in Vermont. That responsibility is now on all of us: state government, advocates, and citizens,” she said.

What the law is, in large part, is the legislature’s “filling in the blanks” of parts of the state’s Lake Champlain TMDL Implementation Plan that needed new, or emphasized, legislative authority. It’s a bill that was meant to demonstrate to EPA that Vermont is committed to cleaning up Lake Champlain.

“What’s good for Lake Champlain is good for other waterways,” Greenwood said, “This bill will have a statewide impact. This is a good thing.”

So, what does Act 64 actually do?

The law, for all intents and purposes, is about stormwater—that water that falls from the sky in the form of rain, ice, or snow, and lands on the ground and catches pollution, and then hauls all that junk into rivers and lakes. In many ways a land use law as much as a water pollution law, Act 64 calls for additional regulations to reduce water pollution coming off of three broad categories of our landscape: developed land, farms and forests.

Here are some highlights for each category:

Developed Lands

The law reaches back in time to require any parcel that has more than three acres (a little over three three football fields in area) of impervious surface, like roads, parking lots or rooftops, to be re-engineered to better control stormwater flow by building things like stormwater ponds, ditches or rain gardens.

The state will create new permits and standards for municipal

Water Caucus Keeps the Info Flowing

VNRC’s Water Caucus has brought together watershed groups and other organizations several times since it was launched in early 2014.

The objective of the caucus is to better involve the environmental community and help relatively small environmental organizations to stay up to speed with, and, if they want, help efficiently and constructively advance protective policies for Vermont’s waters like those to follow from Act 64.

Recent Water Caucus meeting topics have included detailed reviews of pending water-related legislation and rules; how solar and hydropower energy interact with water resources; and flood hazard and river corridor rules.

Ann Smith, the director of the Friends of the Winooski River, a regional watershed group in central Vermont, has attended several caucus meetings.

“As a watershed group, we are focused on the implementation of watershed improvement projects and education and we don’t have much time to understand the regulatory and legislative dynamics that impact water resources,” she said. “Thanks to the Water Caucus, we are in a much better position to inform our members and constituents as well as participate, where we can, in the policy-making process.”

You can find out more about the Water Caucus at <http://vnrc.org/programs/water/water-caucus/>

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gravel roads (although those requirements won't kick in until next decade).

The law could lead to tightening water pollution permitting requirements for new development—triggered by development of one half an acre rather than the current, looser one acre—in the coming years, depending on the results of a report coming from ANR.

The state will develop a new handbook for homeowners who don't need permits but might like some guidance on how to manage their stormwater runoff better.

Farms

Farms will likely have to comply with a range of new requirements, including fencing livestock out of rivers, cultivating soils in ways that keep it from washing into waterways and building new manure pits in a way that keeps waste from washing into waters, among other things.

Farms might have to change how and if they use “tile

drains”—piping systems that collect runoff from farm fields and send it into streams—depending on the results of a report looking at the issue.

In addition, the state will take steps to make more uniform the water quality protections on all farms, including creating certifications and training programs.

Finally, farms that are enrolled in the Use-Value Appraisal program, also known as Current Use, could lose their property tax relief if they don't protect water quality.

Forests, Planning

Erosion prevention measures, like the distance that harvesting is set back from streams, and sediment control techniques, like water bars, will be updated, and the state will study whether they should be made mandatory.

In addition, regional planning efforts will be better aligned with water quality protection goals, getting more miles out of these plans than ever before by requiring regional plans to consider and further the goal of water protection.

The Money: How It's Raised, How It's Spent

The bill creates a new Clean Water Fund to manage funds specifically for water quality projects. The fund will initially be filled with revenues from an increase in the tax that people pay when they buy and sell real estate in Vermont, as well as the proceeds from a new non-agricultural fertilizer tax. The fund will also take private donations and other payments, including possibly payments from a company that wants to lay an electric cable along the length of Lake Champlain.

The money in the fund will be used for state compliance with

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Water Pressure: How You Can Help Keep It Up

To fully capitalize on the promise of Act 64, significant input from Vermont citizens like you will be critical. Here are specific ways to help:

Comment on rules. The legislature passes laws, like Act 64, and then the administration develops rules to implement those laws. Rules are where the general requirements of a law are fleshed out in detail. Strong input from the public during the rule-making process can mean the difference between strong and clear rules that protect natural resources, and weak, ineffectual rules. You don't need to be a policy expert or a scientist to weigh in on a rule-making process. The process also includes public hearings where citizens can speak, and urge administrators to develop a strong rule. You can also attend a meeting of the VNRC Water Caucus to find out how you can get involved.

Over the next few years, important rules mandated by Act 64 will be promulgated by the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and the Agency of Agriculture.

Write letters to the editor. A letter to the editor in your local paper expressing your views on clean water can elevate the issue and put government officials on notice that people are watching how they implement Act 64. Try to keep letters short, in most cases less than 250 words. Some papers have online forms you can paste your letter into; for others you need to send an email. If your letter does not appear after a couple of days, call the news outlet and ask the editor if they plan to run it and if so, when. If they don't plan to run it, ask them if you can edit it to make it something they would run.

Join the VNRC Water Caucus. By joining the caucus, you will be kept abreast of the latest opportunities to weigh in on these important policy issues. Meetings are held four times a year. (See story on the VNRC Water Caucus this issue.)

If you want more information about how you can get involved, please contact Kim Greenwood at kgreenwood@vnrc.org.

VNRC to Help Owners Take Out Unwanted Dams

VNRC is launching a new dam removal initiative. The initiative involves highlighting the impacts of dams, identifying old dams that could be removed, contacting the owners and, if they are willing, working with them to help them both coordinate the removal and find money to pay for the work.

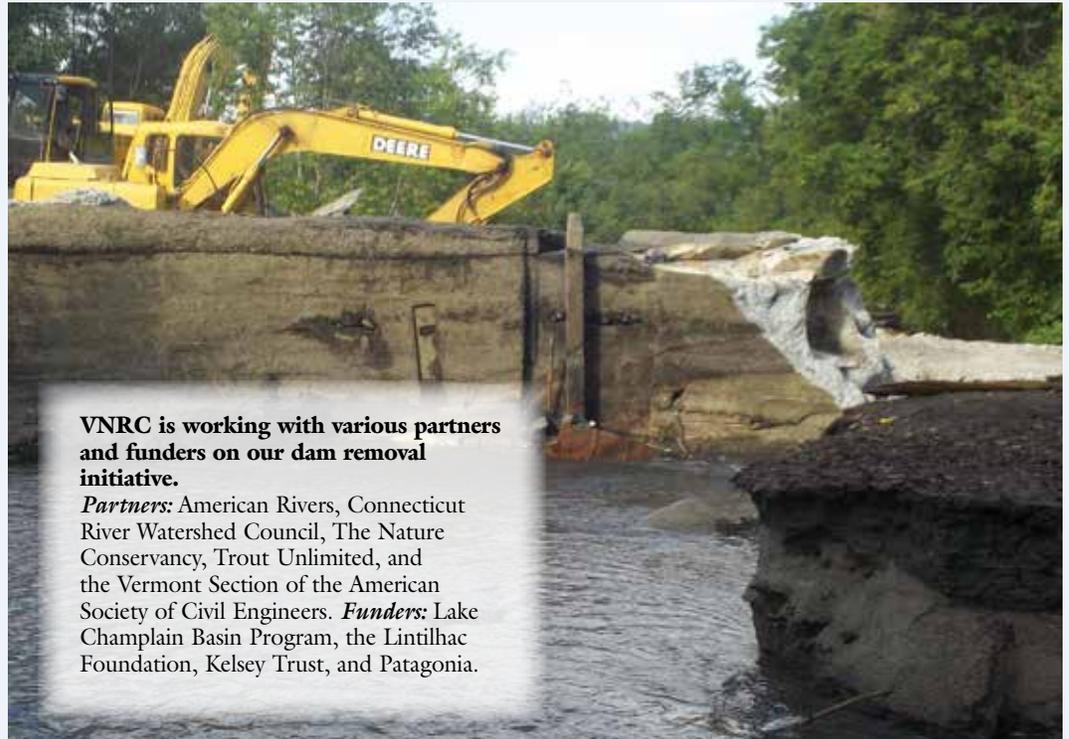
There are an estimated 1,200 dams across Vermont, many of which are in various stages of disrepair. Many are partly broken and have the potential to break up more depending on water flow, ice and other factors. Most sit idle, producing neither power nor providing benefits to Vermonters.

“Removing unwanted dams not only improves public safety and reduces liability but boosts overall water quality by helping rivers return toward their natural, free-flowing state,” said Kim Greenwood, VNRC’s water program director.

A bill pending in the legislature, if it passed, could help boost dam safety. Under the current version of the bill, owners

of dams would have to register the dam with the Department of Environmental Conservation. The state would then charge an annual fee to the owner of the dam, based on the dam’s hazard potential, to offset dam safety costs.

For more information about this initiative, or if you are a dam owner who would like to learn more about removing your dam, please contact Kim Greenwood at kgreenwood@vnrc.org.



VNRC is working with various partners and funders on our dam removal initiative.

Partners: American Rivers, Connecticut River Watershed Council, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and the Vermont Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. **Funders:** Lake Champlain Basin Program, the Lintilhac Foundation, Kelsey Trust, and Patagonia.

Marshfield dam removal, 2014

Photo courtesy Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

For Clean Energy, Why Not Hydro?

Because hydroelectric power is a renewable energy source, it’s been attracting increased attention in recent years in Vermont as we attempt to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

For a long time it’s been evident to VNRC, and it’s become clear to policy makers in recent years as well, that there are significant constraints, many of them effectively immovable, to the development of new hydropower dams in Vermont.

First, and perhaps most important, in Vermont the vast majority of good hydropower sites are already developed and generating power.

“There is a perception out there that Vermont has huge amounts of untapped, available hydro energy. This is just not true,” said Kim Greenwood, VNRC’s water program director.



Second, the economics of projects most often don’t make sense.

Additionally, because these dams involve a public trust resource—namely water—environmental permitting requirements are appropriately rigorous, and both federal and state laws apply.

“The regulations are properly tough because water is held in the public trust, meaning it belongs to all Vermonters,” said Greenwood. “So if a business or utility wants to take it and dam it up, change the way it holds oxygen and how it handles sediment and impacts fish habitat, the protective regulations are absolutely necessary.”

Greenwood says a better way to get more hydro-power is to squeeze more energy out of existing, operating dams through efficiency or technology upgrades.

News & Notes

VNRC Opposes Massive Exit 4 Development

VNRC and our partners the Conservation Law Foundation, the Preservation Trust of Vermont and an active local citizens group, are engaged in a very important battle in Randolph. A Connecticut developer has proposed a massive commercial, industrial, retail and residential complex on land surrounding I-89's Exit 4. Much of this land contains some of Vermont's best agricultural soils. Act 250, the state's principal development law, is supposed to safeguard those soils, and this case will determine a key issue in how impacts of land are "mitigated" under a recent change in the law that could significantly undermine future farmland protection efforts.



According to Brian Shupe, VNRC's executive director, the Randolph case is in part about food and in part about maintaining the economic vitality of the state's downtowns, including downtown Randolph.

In his introductory piece in this issue of the VER, he points out that California is suffering through the worst drought in over a thousand years.

"That's bad news not only for Californians, but for anyone else who likes to eat," Shupe said, noting that California produces more than half of the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables.

"With extended drought in the forecast, we'll likely have to grow more of our food close to home in the coming decades," Shupe said. "To do that, and to protect water quality, we'll need to carefully manage and conserve our farmland right here in Vermont."

Shupe noted that agricultural soils are a finite resource, and once they are gone, they're gone.

"Vermont has had strong success bolstering the local food system in recent years. Dropping another Taft Corners on good agricultural land in rural central Vermont just doesn't make sense," he said.

VNRC and CLF presented a portion of their case at a District Commission hearing in July. That hearing will be continued in late September. Stay tuned for further updates.

Forest Bills Pass

The passage of the clean water bill and energy bill this year got plenty of press this spring, but lawmakers also passed two other important conservation measures that were high priorities for VNRC.

Legislation strengthening Vermont's Current Use property

tax equity program – against a backdrop of proposed cuts to the program in a tough budget year – was a major victory after many years of hard work by VNRC, our partners and key legislative leaders.

The Current Use legislation, which is part of Act 57, puts in place a stronger development penalty, which should deter land speculators from abusing the program by "parking" land in Current Use for a few years, reaping the tax benefit, paying the currently modest penalty, and then developing the parcel.

The other forest-related bill, part of Act 61, requires the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to develop recommendations for the 2016 Legislature to promote forest integrity and address forest fragmentation.

VCV to Release Lawmaker Scorecard

Vermont Conservation Voters this summer will release an interim legislative scorecard, which presents lawmakers' voting records on key environmental and clean energy bills for the 2015 Vermont legislative biennium.

You can find the environmental scorecard at vermontconservationvoters.org

VCV assessed legislators' actions on bills related to clean water, energy, toxic materials in consumer products, forest integrity and Current Use. You can see how your lawmakers voted on these conservation priorities on the scorecard.

Two years ago VCV and VNRC entered into a strategic partnership that has been a benefit to both organizations. VCV is housed at VNRC, and while the organizations share some resources, they remain separate, stand-alone entities with complementary missions.

Summer Help for VNRC

VNRC has been lucky to have great volunteer help this summer. Pictured from left to right are: Ali Shaw, who is about to graduate from Wheaton College



in Massachusetts with a major in philosophy and a minor in education; Sara Barnowski, currently pursuing her JD at Vermont Law School with emphasis on energy and natural resources law and business law; and Greg Berry, VNRC's Mollie Beattie intern, who is also working on his JD at VLS.

"These talented, committed young people are bringing big value to VNRC this year, and we are grateful for their help," said Brian Shupe, VNRC's executive director.

Program Updates

Below is a brief rundown of VNRC's programs, a few recent highlights of their work, and program director contact information.

WATER PROGRAM

Aims to protect and enhance the quality of Vermont's streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, wetlands, and groundwater.

Recent Program Highlights:

- Advocating on many fronts for strong state implementation of the clean water bill that was passed this year to assure that rules and permits under development truly protect water quality.
- Ramping up our dam removal campaign to facilitate the removal of obsolete and hazardous river dams that do not serve a useful purpose.
- Participated in an ANR/PSB docket examining drinking water contamination from utility poles.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:
Kim Greenwood
kgreenwood@vnrc.org



FOREST AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

Works to maintain and enhance the ecological and economic vitality of Vermont's forests with the overarching goal of keeping forests as forests to maintain their overall integrity.

Recent Program Highlights:

- Supporting policies to address forest fragmentation, including legislation to promote forest integrity by keeping forests healthy and intact.
- Assisting municipal officials, planners, real estate agents, engineers, and landowners to plan development in a way that maintains the functions of forests and wildlife habitat.
- Continuing to convene the productive policy discussions at the popular Forest Roundtable.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:
Jamey Fidel
jfidel@vnrc.org



ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION

Works from the grassroots to the state level to advocate needed conservation, efficiency, renewable energy and transportation solutions to the energy and climate challenges we face.

Recent Program Highlights:

- Helping to usher in Act 56, an innovative Renewable Energy Standard that requires utilities to help customers reduce fossil fuel use.
- Continuing to coordinate the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network, supporting town energy committees and working with the Public Service Department to solicit public input as the state updates its Comprehensive Energy Plan.
- Continuing to work with Energy Independent Vermont coalition partners and a growing core of committed local leaders to put a price on carbon pollution in Vermont.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:
Johanna Miller
jmiller@vnrc.org



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Focuses on protecting and promoting Vermont's traditional settlement patterns of compact settlements — with options for transportation, housing and employment — surrounded by farms, forests and unique natural areas.

Recent Program Highlights:

- Intervening in a large proposed development at the Exit 4 interchange in Randolph, arguing that the proposal will have unacceptable impacts on agricultural soils and does not conform with the regional plan.
- Successfully defending Act 250 changes, enacted in 2014 and designed to curb strip development, from attacks.
- Developing a training course for the Agency of Natural Resources that helps local officials take action to protect forests, wildlife, and water resources.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR:
Kate McCarthy
kmcCarthy@vnrc.org



Member Profile

VNRC Member Marty Illick: Working in Watersheds

Marty Illick of Charlotte is a retired research and development consultant in the organic agriculture and food industry. She is well known in Vermont conservation circles as the executive director of the Lewis Creek Association, a 25-year-old watershed group based in Chittenden and Addison Counties.

Marty is also a board member of the Charlotte Land Trust, Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative, LaPlatte Watershed Partnership, South Chittenden Riverwatch; a commissioner of the Charlotte Planning Commission; and an alternate commissioner of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. She also serves on the Vermont Natural Resources Board, the state body that administers Act 250. She has been a VNRC member since the 80s.



Among many things, you are known for your work at the watershed level—working on the ground with your Lewis Creek Association board members and other volunteers to improve the conditions of river corridors, wildlife habitat and water quality. Why is this work important to you?

Water quality is an indicator of the health of river corridors and wildlife habitat. Helping landowners and towns to understand what natural systems are at play in their backyards and towns is increasingly important as we work to address the issues of the Lake Champlain basin. I love this work for selfish and altruistic reasons. LCA's work is about maintaining the health of local backyards, which are a part of larger natural systems of our region and New England. Groups like LCA can help landowners and government to be more informed and therefore more proactive, so they prevent damage to natural resources before it happens rather than after the fact. This is better and cheaper in the long run. I prefer that Vermont spend more money on schools and libraries and Vermont's special places versus fixing avoidable mistakes.

It's a big world. The Lewis Creek, and Vermont for that matter, is a very small part of the whole. What keeps you motivated in your work, knowing how significant the environmental and natural resources challenges are that face the globe as a whole?

I've circled the planet numerous times with my family over the years, and we've seen a lot, from sad to glorious. Trying to fix things in faraway places is good if you have depth of knowledge. But I believe that depth of knowledge is more possible to gain in places close to home, and I'm still learning about how things work here in Vermont. So when we have our house in order, we can then help our neighbors, one watershed at a time.

What is your view of Act 64, the clean water bill? What should be done to increase the chances it lives up to its promise?

Act 64 was the result of many well-informed people giving thousands of hours to make Vermont a better place for our kids and grandkids. This bill was a long time coming, but the work has just begun. Now, the devil is in the rules, permits, town plan updates and retooling USDA to provide for far more strategic conservation practices and investments. We must now update our rules so they apply evenly across the board, with no sacred cows. Justice across all land-use sectors is critically important.

Gone should be the days when only bigger developments pay to protect river corridors, while farmland and small development are permitted to encroach into river corridors, causing all manner of erosion and sediment to load into Lake Champlain.

Vermont's River Management Program has some of the best science-based river corridor management protocols and procedures in the United States. We need to put this science on the ground. With more frequent erosive rain events expected, the law will need to be even tighter if we are to see erosion and pollution trends reversed.

How utterly foolish we all have been to cast a blind eye all these years, and to then raise our annual tax bills repeatedly in the name of crisis management versus pollution prevention.

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The Lewis Creek Association

The mission of Lewis Creek Association is to protect, maintain and restore ecological health while promoting social values that support sustainable community development in the Lewis Creek watershed region and Vermont. Through education and action, LCA works to:

- Restore water quality, stream stability, and native wildlife habitat
- Protect and restore important and diverse natural areas
- Conserve productive and scenic lands that contribute to rural character and economy
- Support growth compatible with important natural systems and working landscapes
- Strengthen and support local conservation initiatives and opportunities
- Model active participation and respect for differences



Stone Environmental would like to recognize the good work of so many Vermonters who have pulled together with common purpose over the last few years to chart a course for cleaner water in Vermont. Statewide environmental organizations, watershed groups, individual Vermonters, lawmakers and the administration worked for the common good, for a brighter, cleaner future for Vermont's waters.



STONE ENVIRONMENTAL INC

Are We There Yet?

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water quality requirements and implementation of water quality projects or programs. That will likely involve hiring more staff at ANR, VTrans and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and sending some of the money to nonprofit organizations and regional organizations for water quality improvement projects. Secretaries of five state agencies will administer the fund.

Several additional reports are required, one of which will be an audit examining how the fund money is spent and whether it's resulting in water quality benefits. Another report is due from the state treasurer to recommend long-term financing options for improving water quality in Vermont.

In all, the bill calls for more than 20 different permits, reports, rules and documents in the next decade.

"This whole exercise comes down to one thing," Greenwood said. "Implementation. It'll be so easy to make it weak, but it's so critical to make it strong, and that's why we all have our work cut out for us."

Member Profile

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In your experience, what are the most effective things you and other watershed groups can do to generally improve water quality?

Education, education, education. Accumulate solid science-based trend information at a subwatershed scale. Then call for full accountability through regulation. Period.

As a VNRC member, what, in your mind, makes VNRC an organization worth supporting?

VNRC brings top-notch expertise to the State House on environmental issues. Interestingly, there is no business related lobby that puts nature first, and nature in all its glory is what makes Vermont so special. VNRC has also convened the Water Caucus that helps more Vermonters interested in water quality to stay up on what's happening. Working on the ground, in our local watershed communities, we can get a whole lot done.

For more information, visit Lewiscreek.org.

VNRC is a membership organization and we count on members for support!

Please join us!

You can donate online at vnrc.org and click join/renew



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Save the Dates

VNRC Annual Meeting

Join us **September 24 at Lareau Farm in Waitsfield** for our Annual Meeting from 5:30 to 7:30. VNRC will be offering a brief update on our activities and then recognize Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund Executive Director Ellen Kahler with the Art Gibb Award for Individual Leadership. Come and socialize with people like you who care about Vermont's future. Free flatbread. Cash bar. Suggested donation: \$10.



Ellen Kahler

Community Conservation Summit: Celebrating 100 Years of Town Forests/AVCC Annual Meeting Saturday, November 7, Vermont Technical College.

This event, a partnership between the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions and the Town Forest Partnership, will feature workshops across several themes, an award ceremony, and a keynote address by Peter Forbes, co-founder of the Center for Whole Communities.

8th Annual Community Energy & Climate Action Conference

Saturday, December 5, Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee

This one-day conference, targeted largely to town energy committees but open to all, emphasizes program, projects and policy approaches Vermonters can support to help realize the state's clean energy and climate change goals. It's a "can't miss" event with a fantastic, internationally renowned keynote speaker — Richard Heinberg.

For more information about any of these events, go to vnrc.org/events

**Remember:
VNRC is a membership organization and we count on members for support!
Please join us!**

vnrc.org

