



2003
Vermont Natural Resources Council
ANNUAL REPORT



Dear VNRC Member,

At the heart of VNRC's work are values that promote clean water, healthy forests, safe renewable energy, strong sustainable communities and a balanced economy through education, research and advocacy. By collaborating with citizens, organizations, businesses and government agencies across the state, VNRC is an effective voice for the environment.

2003 marked a milestone year for VNRC. We celebrated our 40th anniversary, and took time to reflect upon the many ways that our efforts have helped to shape Vermont's environment. To celebrate our 40 years as Vermont's environmental guardian, we held three big events. Keynote speakers included Amory Lovins, Bill McKibben, Senator Patrick Leahy, Frances Moore Lappé, Senator Jim Jeffords, and Representative Bernie Sanders. We also included state poets such as Grace Paley and Galway Kinnell, and musicians Jon Gailmor and the Woodstock Speak Chorus. Hundreds of people attended our anniversary events along with the many workshops and fieldtrips we held this year.

VNRC's events are important because they bring together our members and activists. Involved citizens are the integral component of our success. We work hard to keep Vermonters informed about current issues and the benefits of their participation, and we back our positions with sound legal and scientific research.

Our outreach and education efforts were greatly increased in 2003, and we produced a new brochure and an updated, action-oriented website to help get information out to Vermonters. As we are the only conservation group in the State House with a full-time presence, we have been working hard to

“VNRC is an integral tool in keeping citizens informed of what the government is doing and not doing environmentally... Organizations like you are very, very important because it helps us spread the voice... As a Vermonter, I'm so thankful you are here.”

US Senator Patrick Leahy, VNRC 40th Annual Meeting

help citizens share their concerns with their representatives and advocate for important environmental issues in Vermont such as permit reform and stormwater.


In the past 40 years VNRC has grown from a small, volunteer group without a budget to an 11 staff and 14 board member organization, with hundreds of dedicated volunteer activists and a 3/4 of a million dollar budget. As we've grown, the need to protect Vermont's environment has grown as well. VNRC will continue to preserve Vermont's local economy, beautiful vistas, wildlife habitat and rural character.

Yours in conservation,




Elizabeth Courtney,
VNRC Executive Director


VNRC's Top Priorities: Clean Water, Sustainable Communities, Clean Energy and Healthy Forests




Vermonters deserve clean water, free flowing rivers and healthy fisheries. VNRC continues to protect wetlands and conserve our pristine groundwater aquifers.



Sprawling, low-density communities threaten our forest and farmland and dissolve Vermont's strong sense of community. VNRC continues to fight for policies that encourage a sustainable economy and strengthen Act 250.



The effects of fossil fuel dependence, especially global climate change, threaten Vermont traditions and our economy by potentially limiting our ski season, colors of fall foliage, maple sugaring, and habitat for deer, moose and trout. VNRC continues to promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.



Forest fragmentation of public land threatens biodiversity and wildlife habitat. VNRC continues to promote viable forestry practices that are compatible with protecting habitat and recovering threatened and endangered species.

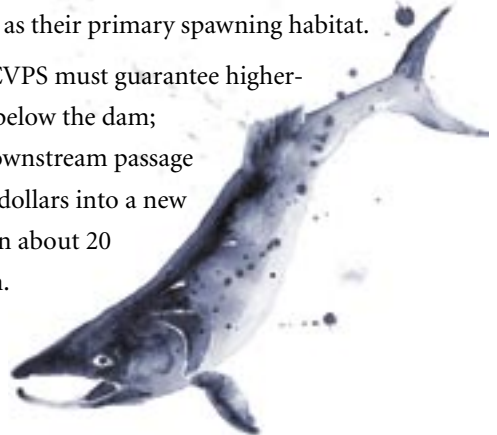
Clean Water

Vermonters deserve clean water, free flowing rivers and healthy fisheries. VNRC is committed to ensuring that Vermont's lakes and streams provide the healthy aquatic habitat that meets these goals. The Water Program at VNRC is protecting wetlands, improving the operation of hydroelectric facilities that harm our fisheries and natural aquatic systems, petitioning for reclassification of Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) and high quality wetlands, and seeking to conserve our pristine groundwater aquifers. The following are two of our current water-related projects:

ORW petition on the Green Mountain National Forest: For the past two years, VNRC has been organizing community support and compiling scientific research on the merits of designating one of Vermont's last pristine areas as an Outstanding Resource Water. This designation, a provision under the Clean Water Act, would give over 100,000 acres of watersheds and their related headwater streams and river segments the highest protection status under state and federal law.

Peterson Dam Removal: Efforts to remove the Peterson dam finally came to a close in 2003. After 10 years and thousands of hours of effort by VNRC staff, Trout Unlimited, state and local officials, and representatives of Central Vermont Public Service, the struggle over the Peterson Dam on the lower Lamoille River achieved a settlement. The dam, which was completed in 1948, had an enormously detrimental effect on many aquatic species such as salmon and sturgeon which had used the river as their primary spawning habitat.

The settlement agreement states that CVPS must guarantee higher-volume "conservation flows" of water below the dam; provide young stocked salmon with downstream passage to Lake Champlain; put half a million dollars into a new Lamoille River restoration fund; and, in about 20 years, finally remove the Peterson Dam.





Healthy Forests

Vermont's forests provide wood products that fuel our rural economy and provide abundant habitat for Vermont wildlife. VNRC continues to be instrumental in promoting viable forestry practices that are compatible with protecting habitat for a variety of game and non-game species on

both public and private land. Recovery of threatened and endangered species, wilderness, ecological reserves, and sustainable forestry are key conservation components in VNRC's forest program. Below are some additional details about two of our forestry-related issues:

Threatened and Endangered Species Protection: VNRC continues to advocate for increased funding for conservation planning and support for Vermont's Non-game and Natural Heritage Program. VNRC is also pursuing a listing of all species that should be protected under Vermont's Threatened and Endangered Species Act. Finally, through our wetland reclassification work, VNRC continues to accomplish habitat preservation for a host of threatened and endangered wetland-dependent species in Vermont.

State Lands Planning: VNRC is actively engaged in commenting on new management plans being developed for state forests and wildlife management areas. We are busy tracking planning efforts on both the Willoughby and Coolidge State Forests. Our consistent message is that we support the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation taking a balanced approach to land management planning. We advocate for the careful consideration of active management, including timber harvesting, and passive management, including ecological protection of biological resources. We are working hard to inform VNRC activists and concerned citizens about the issues and have been encouraging them to speak out at public hearings and comment periods.

Sustainable Communities

Sprawling, low-density communities threaten our forest and farmland, pollute our rivers and streams, and dissolve Vermont's strong sense of community. We will continue to fight for policies that encourage a sustainable economy, protect the environment, and strengthen Act 250. The following are two current projects we are working on to combat sprawl:

Land Use: During the 2003 legislative session, VNRC was the leading voice for Act 250 and local, state and regional planning. We led advocacy and outreach efforts, which resulted in positive recommendations for Act 250, environmental permitting, and local planning. VNRC will continue to take the lead in coordinating the environmental community, other stakeholder groups, and citizen activists in developing the message, communications, outreach, and policy advocacy for implementing a strategy to improve Vermont's planning and development review process.

Vermont Smart Growth Collaborative: VNRC and nine other diverse Vermont organizations have joined together to launch a collaborative effort to advance policy, education, and community strategies to reduce sprawl and achieve Smart Growth in Vermont. The Collaborative is working to foster a culture that supports advancing a vision of compact settlements separated by rural countryside and working landscapes with equitable access for all Vermonters. In 2003, we hosted a very successful national conference bringing together communities from across the country here in Vermont to highlight proven Smart Growth strategies and programs.



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Financials

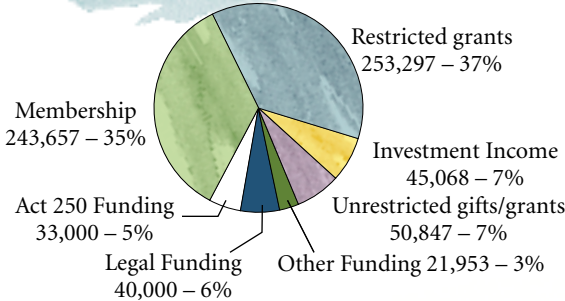
Assets

Current Assets	
Cash	\$ 113,540
Investments	1,492,288
Other	2,500
Total Current Assets	1,608,328
Total Non-Current Assets	384,267
TOTAL ASSETS	1,992,595

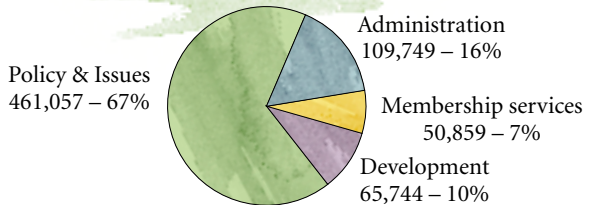
Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities	40,873
Non-Current Liabilities	0
Total Liabilities	40,873
Net Assets, Unrestricted	1,791,652
Net Assets, Temporarily Restricted	160,070
Total Net Assets	1,951,722
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	1,992,595

FY '03 Operating Revenue
& Cash Flow: \$687,822



FY '03 Expenses: \$687,409



Excerpted from the audited financial report for the period ending June 30, 2003 which was prepared by Sullivan, Powers & Co. The full audited financial report for the Vermont Natural Resources Council is available upon request.

List of Donors

Fiscal Year 2003—Gifts received July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003

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As this list reflects only a fraction of our members and supporters, VNRC would like to thank everyone who has helped make our work possible.



Staff

Elizabeth Courtney, *Executive Director*

Patrick Berry, *Communications Director*

Matteo Burani, *Outreach Coordinator*

Jamey Fidel, *Forest & Biodiversity Program Director*

Jimmy Fordham, *Office Manager & Administrative Assistant*

Stephen Holmes, *Sustainable Communities Program Director*

Kim Kendall, *Staff Scientist*

Kelly Lowry, *Water Program Director & General Counsel*

Lucy Morini, *Finance Coordinator*

Stephanie Mueller, *Development Director*

Erin Lee Tittel, *Membership Coordinator*

Asher Burns-Burg, *Mollie Beattie Intern*

Best wishes to 2003 departing staff:

Deborah Daniels, *Finance & Membership Coordinator*

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Images courtesy of Rod MacIver/Heron Dance.
www.herondance.org



VNRC's office is located at 9 Bailey Avenue in Montpelier one block from the State House.



Members and staff paddle at Dennis Pond during a VNRC Across Vermont trip to the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area.



Members and staff snowshoe during a tracking expedition in Jericho Vermont—and saw bobcat tracks!



VNRC staff Jimmy and Erin visit with a wolf during VNRC's 40th Anniversary Celebration at Shelburne Farms.



VNRC Executive Director Elizabeth Courtney & Sen. Jim Jeffords after Jeffords was awarded VNRC's Peter Ziliacus Environmental Citizenship Award.



VERMONT
NATURAL
RESOURCES
COUNCIL

VERMONT'S ENVIRONMENTAL
GUARDIAN SINCE 1963

9 Bailey Avenue • Montpelier, Vermont 05602
WEB www.vnrc.org • EMAIL info@vnrc.org