



The Picture Behind the Postcard

When you think of Vermont's beautiful landscape, you may imagine rolling farm fields and forested mountains punctuated by covered bridges and historic villages. Behind these postcard images are a unique combination of cultural heritage and economic necessity that is undergoing an intense period of change.

As Vermont communities experience increasing development pressures, the working farms and healthy forests that define our landscape are being threatened. Scattered development is creating a checkerboard of houses and roads, and fragmenting the land on which we depend for food, commerce, wildlife habitat and recreation. The Vermont Forum on Sprawl is working to change this destructive pattern by helping communities encourage

Organic Farming

The only thing better than fresh local food is fresh local organic food. Buying food grown without the use of pesticides or herbicides is healthy and creates an economically viable and ecologically sound food system. Look for the organic label when you shop. Visit www.nofavt.org to find an organic farm near you.

growth in appropriate areas and protect the surrounding land. But preserving our land and way of life also depends on our supporting a strong rural economy. One way to do this is by purchasing goods and services from Vermont businesses that work the land and add value to the state's raw materials.

Vermont Farms Offer Fresh, Local Products

The rolling fields, red barns and black-and-white cows of Vermont's dairy farms are perhaps the most visible and well-known symbols of our working landscape. These and other farms are the backbone of our agricultural economy. Faced with high energy costs, farmers are seeking ways to create products that add value—and increase profits. You can support these farms by purchasing Vermont milk, cheese, produce, beef and other products.

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SPOTLIGHT

VHCB Celebrates 20 Years

Twenty years ago, a coalition of affordable housing, conservation, and historic preservation advocates voiced their concerns about the changing character of Vermont's working landscape. The price of housing was rising, development pressures threatened agricultural and forest lands, and downtowns suffered as suburban development crept over the countryside. In response, the Legislature passed the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund Act, which was enacted in June 1987.

The legislation created a unique entity with a new approach that connected affordable housing and community development with land conservation and historic preservation. Guided by its dual mission, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) has served as a model for investing in community revitalization and land conservation.

Since its inception, the Board has awarded nearly \$200 million to nonprofit housing and conservation organizations, municipalities and state agencies to develop more than 800 projects in 220 towns. This investment has directly leveraged approximately \$636 million from other private and public sources and resulted in the creation of 8,358 units of affordable housing, the conservation of more than 363,248 acres of agricultural, forest and recreational lands and natural areas.

Conserving land is an important approach to strengthening our rural economy, maintaining our traditional development patterns and protecting wildlife habitat. For the last twenty years, VHCB has represented one of the best public investments in maintaining our working landscape. In the coming legislative session, the Forum will work with our partners to secure additional funding for VHCB.

POSTCARD (continued from page 1)

Purchasing locally-grown products is a great way to get fresh food, support your neighbors and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that result from shipping products over great distances. The money you pay for products purchased at farmers' markets, farm stands, orchards, and pick-your-own farms goes directly to the local grower. You'll find a wide variety of products, including apples, raspberries, pumpkins, plums, strawberries, honey, beef, chicken, sheep, turkeys, cheese, and maple syrup. Buying local food directly from the producer helps continue the tradition of independent Vermont farming.

One of Vermont's attractions is the availability of locally-grown food through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). People who participate in a CSA pay a fee to the grower before the growing season and receive the fresh, local food each week. The upfront payment provides the grower with money to buy seeds and supplies. Many CSAs offer the option of picking fruit, vegetables and flowers yourself. It's a great way to feed your family and support farms in your community.

Looking for a local restaurant that serves fresh local food? The Vermont Fresh Network connects local farmers, chefs and consumers to provide fresh local food at restaurants. By building these important partnerships, the network educates consumers about the importance of Vermont's farm economy.



A new "localvore" movement encourages people to eat locally grown and produced foods. Eating food grown closer to home is healthy, supports local businesses and reduces the amount of energy needed to get the food from the field to your plate. In the past year, a number of groups around Vermont have challenged residents to eat only locally grown and produced foods for one week. To learn more about this "Eat Local Challenge," see the websites below.

Vermont Forests Provide Resources for Sustainable Wood Products

Over 100 years ago, approximately 75 percent of Vermont's landscape was clear-cut for pasture, timber, and fuel. Since that time, the land has healed, the forest returned, and private landowners, non-profit organizations and government agencies have worked together to protect and manage these lands. They now provide a variety of resources, including wild-life habitat, wilderness, clean water, recreation opportunities, and timber and forest products.

Forest Certified Wood

When you purchase products from businesses with forest certification, you support responsible harvesting of this important natural resource. Vermont WoodNet, a coalition of over 150 wood-workers, holds a group Chain-of-Custody (COC) Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate, issued by Smartwood, the world's leading FSC forest certifier. To learn more, visit www.vtwoodnet.org.



Forest product companies employ almost 12,000 Vermonters, according to the Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association. Offering products such as lumber, Christmas trees, furniture and cabinetry, these companies account for over \$1 billion in sales annually. This important part of Vermont's natural resource-based economy can be supported by purchasing wood products made by Vermont craftspeople.

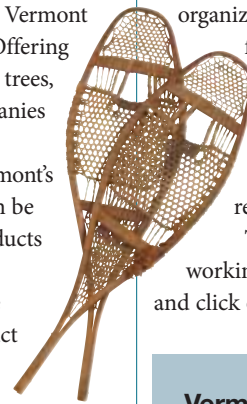
As one of Vermont's most visible exports, maple syrup is also a product linked to stewardship of our forests.

In the late winter/early spring, Vermont sugar makers around the state tap their trees, and collect and boil sap for maple syrup. Vermont is the largest producer of maple syrup in the United States, producing about 37 percent of the total U.S. crop in 2000. That year, producers made 460,000 gallons of maple syrup, with a value of approximately \$13 million. When you buy maple syrup and maple products, look for the Vermont label to help preserve a rich tradition and conserve Vermont's forests.

If you like to hike, ski, bike or fish, Vermont offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation. While many of these activities are free, there are local businesses that offer lessons, coordinate tours and sell equipment to enhance your recreational experience. Many private land-

owners have established businesses or non-profit organizations, and opened trails on their land for mountain biking, show shoeing and cross country skiing. Taking care of the land you use, and supporting these businesses is key to maintaining opportunities for all kinds of outdoor recreation.

To learn more about supporting our working landscape, visit www.vtsprawl.org and click on Communities and the Land. ■



Vermont's Working Landscape: The Smart Growth Connection

Smart growth principles encourage a settlement pattern defined by the contrast between compact, mixed-use villages and "growth centers," and the surrounding rural landscape. In fact, Vermont's smart growth principles, enacted in state law in 2006, call for growth that "serves to strengthen agricultural and forest industries and minimize conflicts of development with these industries." By encouraging this type of growth, and supporting Vermont businesses who work and respect the land, the Vermont Forum on Sprawl believes we can preserve the landscape on which we all depend.

Resources

- Vermont Forum on Sprawl..... www.vtsprawl.org
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture..... www.vermontagriculture.com
- Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation www.vtfrpr.org
- Vermont Farms and Farm Events..... www.vtfarms.org
- Vermont Fresh Network Farmers and Restaurants www.vermontfresh.net
- Responsibly Harvested Wood Products and Furniture..... www.vtwoodnet.org
- Vermont Recreation..... www.vermontvacation.com

Vermont Localvores

- Brattleboro Localvores www.postoilsolutions.org/localvore
- Champlain Valley Localvores www.eatlocalvt.org
- Addison County Relocalization Network..... www.acornvt.org
- Mad River Valley Localvores www.VermontLocalvore.org
- Upper Valley Localvores..... www.uvlocalvore.com

VIEW FROM THE BOARD: JOHN ROBERTS

Over the past 50 years, Vermont's predominantly simple, agricultural-based economy has evolved to one with a more complex mix of agriculture, forestry, tourism, manufacturing and value-added farm production. As a result, our communities now face increasing challenges to make it all 'fit' in a harmonious way. Since we all have different preferences, some classical, some rock, some rap, even some country, harmony can be difficult to achieve.

I was brought up in England and moved to Vermont when I was 23. Although I did not pay a great deal of attention to urban and rural planning in England at that time, I absorbed lessons by osmosis nonetheless. I spent much of my youth in Bampton Grange, a village in the Lake District of Northwest England, and I have come to appreciate the benefits of the compact village development, and preservation of the working landscape around that central human habitation location, along with the pub!

I became an American citizen as soon as I was eligible because I wanted to participate in the political process. One advantage of Vermont's democracy over England's is that one can have a real say in how one's community faces up to the challenges ahead.

When John Ewing asked me to join the Forum's Board, I was humbled because the organization's approach to land use planning is based on a fair and open process where everyone has a voice in planning for their community's future. Through our Community Planning Partnership, the organization is "getting our hands dirty" and helping communities make the hard decisions about how their land will be developed or protected. I look forward to working with the Forum's staff and Board to achieve harmony between Vermont's people, communities and landscape.

Intern and Volunteer Update

The Forum is pleased to welcome three interns. **Abby Farnham** (right) will be conducting research for our Community Planning Toolbox. Abby will enter her senior year majoring in Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont. **Bill Holt** will be compiling information about land use legal issues for the Toolbox. Bill currently attends the Vermont Law School. **Ian Perrault** joins us from Keene State College, and is researching transportation issues.

Denise Quick, who teaches at the Community College of Vermont, is now conducting research on the link between sprawl and climate change. **David Newland** is assisting us with land use research. He also co-authored *The Picture Behind the Postcard* in this issue. If you are interested in an internship or volunteer opportunity with the Vermont Forum on Sprawl, call us at (802) 864-6310.



Forum Welcomes New Board Members

John Roberts is a dairy farmer from Cornwall Vermont, who emigrated from the United Kingdom. He has lived with his wife and family in Vermont for the last 30 years. Over the years, Roberts has been involved with various boards and committees, namely the Vermont Water Resources Board and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. He is presently a member of the Cornwall Planning Commission.



David Rocchio is managing director of The Arno Group, a consulting firm that helps companies to achieve results on their most critical projects and intractable issues. Rocchio is former Legal Counsel to Governor Howard Dean, where, in addition to providing general counsel advice, he was responsible for designing, and executing, approaches to achieve the Governor's goals. Rocchio received his JD at Boston College Law School and his BA in Political Science from the University of Vermont.



Lawrence E. Gubb II is founder, principal and designer for BILD NorAm, Inc., specializing in concepts, programming, planning and design. Gubb served on the Londonderry Planning Commission, the Londonderry Revitalization Committee and the Windham Regional Commission Planning Coordination Committee. A 31 year resident of Vermont, Gubb attended New England College, majoring in Environmental Sciences and Engineering and the School of Art, Architecture and Planning, Cornell University, majoring in Architecture.



Training Sessions Enable Communities to Address Development Pressures

Officials from the Town of Waterbury recently participated in a Vermont Forum on Sprawl workshop on managing residential subdivisions and controlling highway "strip" development. "Waterbury is fortunate to have an active planning program and engaged citizens," said Brian Shupe, Program Director for the Forum. "They have done a great job with supporting the economic vitality

of Waterbury Village, which was designated a downtown development district in November 2006. The Town also recently adopted zoning standards to mitigate the impacts of high elevation development in the Worcester Range."

"However, local planners are still struggling with commercial development along the Route 100 corridor, and the fragmentation of farm and forest land," Shupe explained, "and this workshop

was an opportunity for local leaders to discuss options for addressing those challenges."

The workshop, funded by a Vermont Municipal Education Grant (MEG), was one of seven similar workshops and training sessions that the Forum conducted for municipal officials in recent weeks. Staff addressed similar topics concerning how to manage scattered rural development for the Towns of Reading, Windsor and Richmond, and discussed growth centers planning and smart growth planning in Bradford, Wells and Troy. To schedule a workshop, call Brian Shupe at (802) 864-6310.

Healthy Neighborhoods Project Wins EPA Award This innovative project has won its third honor, a 2007 Environmental Merit Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The awards recognize teachers, citizen activists, business leaders, scientists, public officials and others who have made outstanding contributions to New England's public health and natural environment. The project, coordinated by Shelburne Farms Sustainable School Project, evolved from a partnership with the Vermont Forum on Sprawl.

