

VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

Published monthly by The Vermont Natural Resources Council, a non-profit citizens' conservation organization supported by membership dues and contributions. 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602 (802) 223-2328 Chairman, Jonathan Brownell, Executive Director, Seward Weber, Editor, Arthur Williams

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

MAY 22 1974

May, 1974, Number 28

COUNCIL EMBARKS ON TRANSPORTATION STUDY

LIBRARY

The Vermont Natural Resources Council has been working with professors Dennis and Dana Meadows, of Dartmouth (the authors of Limits to Growth); VNRC Board member Carl Reidel, who is Chairman of UVM's Environmental Studies Program; and Arthur Ristau of the State Planning Office, formulating a major study of the impact upon Vermont land uses of public and private development decisions.

The VNRC will serve as the public education and communication focal point of the project and will provide to the study a Citizens' Advisory Council to insure that the results of the study will be both known and understood by Vermont citizens and decision makers. The VNRC role, furthermore, will be to assess and critique, on an ongoing basis, the results of the various phases of the study program, in order to assure that decisions on the State level, as well as the District Environmental Commission level, are made with knowledge of the applicable portions of this project. The project will analyze and assess economic and fiscal impacts upon land use, as well as environmental, agricultural and resource impacts of development decisions. The project may be one of the first joint efforts attempted in this field by public and private educational institutions, State Government and a private conservation education group.

Two studies are already in their preliminary stages: a study of the impact upon Vermont land use of major State Highway design and location decisions, and a study of the factors which govern the conservation, or loss, of productive Vermont farmland.

PROJECT VISION TO RESTORE WINDSOR BUSINESS DISTRICT

The VNRC will undertake a demonstration project in the conservation and restoration of the visual quality of Windsor's business district. Vision, Inc., a Cambridge, Massachusetts, foundation dedicated to the elimination of visual blight will perform the study.

The object of the project is to show how the beauty of the buildings and spaces in the central business district of an historic village can be restored through relatively simple and inexpensive design changes and building rehabilitation. After studying the business district and its immediate environs to determine the problems and opportunities for change, Windsor merchants and downtown property owners will be shown how their buildings and the area as a whole can be made more attractive. Methods such as removal of plastic and metal store fronts, replacement of plastic illuminated signs with painted signs, redesign of parking lots and screening with trees and shrubs will be employed.

ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY OPENS REGIONAL OFFICES

Vermont's Agency of Environmental Conservation recently announced the opening of five regional offices throughout the State. The regional offices are intended to better serve the public through two functions: 1) decentralization and consolidation of environmental services, and 2) simplification of permit processing.

Formerly, the various State environmental permits — including Act 250, public health subdivision, public buildings, mobile home parks, and campground permits — were issued through the Agency's various Montpelier offices. Now applications are received and processed through the regional offices.

In addition to permit applications, inquiries regarding environmental problems can be directed to these regional offices. Currently, Act 250 Environmental Coordinators, County Foresters and Environmental Agency Engineers are located at the new regional offices. The Agency plans to expand the number of representatives at these locations to offer a full range of environmental services.

The five regional offices are as follows:

- Region 1 - Southeast: Route 106, Precision Park Area, North Springfield, 05150
(across from Dufresne & Henry Corp.), 886-2215
- Region 2 - Southwest: 9 Merchants Row, Box 129, Rutland, 05701 (State Office Building)
Environmental Coordinator and Engineer: 775-2548 and 775-2549
Forests and Parks: 773-6691 and 775-0663
- Region 3 - Northwest: 58 Pearl Street, P. O. Box 108, Essex Junction, 05452
658-3006 and 658-3007
- Region 4 - Central: Corner of Park Row & Randall Street, Box 586, Waterbury, 05676
244-6971
- Region 5 - Northeast: 46 Eastern Avenue, St. Johnsbury, 05819
Environmental Coordinator and Engineer: 748-2048
Forests and Parks: 748-4890

PUBLIC HEARING ON ANNUAL STATE WATER POLLUTION PLAN

The Department of Water Resources of the Agency of Environmental Conservation will hold a public hearing on the fiscal year 1975 Vermont Water Pollution Control Program Plan on June 4, 1974, at 1:00 p.m. in the Pavilion Office Building auditorium in Montpelier. The purpose of the hearing is to provide for public input in the formulation of Vermont's water pollution control priorities and strategies. Any person may submit oral or written testimony at this hearing.

Copies of the draft Program Plan are available for examination at the Environmental Engineering Division offices—660 Elm Street in Montpelier, the Montpelier Public Library and the VNRC office. For further information, contact Reginald A. LaRosa, Director, Environmental Engineering Division, at 828-2761.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES — SUMMER 1974

The following is a partial listing of environmental education programs to be held in Vermont this summer.

Castleton State College, Castleton, 05735

- June 10 - July 12: Vertebrate Natural History (Bio. 123), Introductory course, 3 credits, undergraduate.
- June 10 - July 12: Rocks and Minerals (Geo. 234), 4 credits.
- July 15 - August 16: Lichenology (Bio. 285), 3 credits, graduate or undergraduate.

Conservation Society of Southern Vermont, Summer Conservation School, Townshend, 05353

- July 14-19, July 28 - August 2, August 11-16: Ages 7-9.
- July 7-12, July 21-26, August 4-9, August 18-23: Ages 10-13.
- Curriculum including camping skills, ecology, conservation, woodsmanship; tents and shelters in the West River Valley Greenway.

Goddard College, Plainfield, 05667 (Contact: Daniel Chodorkoff)

- June 3 - August 23: Social Ecology Studies Program, \$1,750 complete.
(Ecology and Society, Communities and Utopias, American Ethnography, Environmental Economics, Organic Horticulture, Solar Energy, etc.)

Green Mountain Audubon Society, Huntington Nature Center, Huntington, 05462

- Teacher Workshops, Registration \$75 (Mini-workshops available).
- June 17-28: Weekdays only, ten days in all, 9:30 - 3:00.
- August 12-23: Same.

Lake Dunmore School for Trip Leaders, Salisbury, 05769

- June 15-22: Cost \$85, Contact: A. T. Fenn, 40 Cushing Street, Ashburnham, MA, 01430.

Lyndon State College, Lyndonville, with Vermont Department of Forests and Parks and Vermont Department of Education

- June 23 - July 5 and July 7-19 (two sessions): Environmental Education for Elementary and Secondary Teachers, graduate and recertification credits, fee \$125. Contact: Mrs. Marita Johnson, RFD #1, Box 373A, Springfield, 05156.

University of Vermont, Burlington, 05401

- June 24: Field Approach to the Study of the Environment, meeting Monday and Thursday evenings for 7 weeks, times to be arranged, for elementary and secondary teachers, 3 credits, graduate or undergraduate, fee \$120.
Contact: Mr. Sidney Dupont, Deerfield Valley School, Dover, 05341 (464-5177).

Vermont Camping Association, Tamarack Notch, Rutland, 05701

- June 13-19: Vermont Ecology Course for Camp Counselors with Warren M. Little, Director of Education, New England Aquarium, fee \$80.
Contact: Mrs. John Martin, 7 Curtis Avenue, Rutland, 05701 or Jack Hunter 457-2141.

Vermont Institute of Natural Science, Elm Street, Woodstock, 05091

- June 8 & 9: Second Annual Conference on Vermont Birds: Focus on Birds of Prey, lectures and field trips for the general public, fee (meals included): \$12 for one day, \$22 for both days.

AROUND THE STATE

Green Mountain Power Company, the State's second largest utility, has recently received national attention for its plan to use wood as a fuel to produce electricity. The Burlington-based power company is embarking on a pilot project which calls for the conversion of an inactive plant, possibly in Milton, to a wood-burning facility which will utilize nearby forests to generate some 4,000 kilowatts.

According to Company spokesmen, the idea to tap Vermont's abundant forest resource germinated before the current oil shortage and subsequent skyrocketing fuel prices. Present plans call for operating wood-burning facilities on a "sustained yield basis" in order not to deplete forest reserves. Selective cutting rather than massive clear cutting would be the order of the day. The Company is realistic about environmental implications and plans a June 12 meeting in Montpelier with State and local environmental organizations hopefully to clear up any present and potential problems that could occur from large scale utilization of forest land and extensive wood burning to generate power.

Waitsfield architect, Robert Burley testified before the Senate Public Works Committee on legislation to amend the Highway Beautification Act of 1965. Burley, chairman of the American Institute of Architect's Commission on Environment and Design, called for research to improve the design and performance of motorist information systems and recommended development of comprehensive motorist information systems to control and replace billboard advertising on the nation's highways.

VERMONTERS ACTIVE IN ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Ten Vermont representatives participated in a three-day New England Environmental Leadership Workshop at Pinkham Notch, New Hampshire, last month sponsored by the Wilderness Society. In light of the national need for more effective environmental leaders and better coordination of environmental efforts, the Wilderness Society has initiated a series of regional and state workshops throughout the country.

Representing VNRC at the workshop were Executive Director Seward Weber and Michele Frome. Additional participants included Cathy Bothwell and Stephen Sease of the Agency of Environmental Conservation and Justin Brande and Cheryl King from UVM. Sierra Club representatives Peter Smith, Stanton Allaben, Mitch Spencer and Allen Smith also attended.

Recognizing the need for a broader base of involved citizens and better communication between existing environmental groups in Vermont, the Vermont representatives plan to follow up with State training workshops. Those interested in becoming involved are invited to contact the above workshop participants for further information.

VPIRG INVESTIGATES HIGHWAY PLANNING

VPIRG, "Vermont Public Interest Research Group," has recently undertaken an investigation of the highway planning process in Vermont. The study focuses on the Highway Action Plan—the new planning process required by the Federal Highway Administration for all future highways, the 1990 Needs Plan—long range plans for road improvement and new highways in the state, and certain specific road projects included in the present seven-year highway construction plan.

The major thrust of the VPIRG program is directed at providing Vermonters with information on highway planning in their towns. Seminars on the planning process have been held in a number of towns to better acquaint citizens with proposed plans so they will be aware of the issues when the Highway Department calls a public hearing or when an environmental impact statement is published.

The Public Interest Research Group feels the average person does not exercise his prerogative to testify at hearings because he feels uninformed and is often confused by the technicalities of the proceedings. Many citizens also feel their testimony will have little impact on the outcome of the issue. VPIRG hopes to change this attitude and involve Vermonters in the highway planning process.

VPIRG contends citizens have not had an adequate opportunity to participate in the highway planning process. Consequently, there is little public input into highway projects, even though the Highway Action Plan requires the Vermont Highway Department to ensure public participation in the planning of all road projects.

Volunteers from VPIRG are researching a number of major road construction projects. Research will cover their environmental, economic and social impacts as well as their needs, costs and possible alternatives. Roads currently under study are: Chester Bypass, Route 2 from Danville to St. Johnsbury, Route 2 from Colchester to Milton, Interstate 93 and the Williamstown Mill Hill Road. Studies of these projects will be coupled with attitude surveys of the towns affected to determine public opinion concerning the proposed plans.

UPCOMING HEARING ON FUTURE OF RAIL LINES

The Interstate Commerce Commission will hold an important three-day public hearing in White River Junction in early July to consider the U. S. Department of Transportation's proposal to reduce freight rail service in Vermont and neighboring states. The hearing will offer Vermonters the opportunity to testify on the environmental impacts of rail reduction and express their support for increased railroad use.

PESTICIDE USE CHALLENGED

Vermont Tomorrow intends to petition the State Department of Agriculture to cancel all uses of the pesticide 2,4,5-T in Vermont. The Green Mountain Power Company plans to spray its power line rights-of-way with 2,4,5-T this summer.

WATER QUALITY WORKSHOP ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SET FOR JUNE 1 AT KILLINGTON

The Statewide Water Quality Workshop on public participation in enforcement of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (PL 92-500) will be held on Saturday, June 1, in the Snowshed at Killington Ski Area. The workshop is open to the public, with special invitation extended to members of VNRC and other Vermont conservation, civic, business and professional groups. Prior reservations must be made with VNRC, indicating whether cafeteria lunches (approximate cost \$2.50) will be purchased.

Since this conference will be a working forum to deal with possible arrangements for ongoing citizen input in Vermont's water pollution control program, interested organizations are requested to designate one or more members as official delegates to the workshop. If provided with names and addresses of these delegates by May 23, VNRC will mail to them preparatory materials prior to the workshop.

The tentative workshop agenda is as follows:

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| 9:00 - 9:15 A.M. | REGISTRATION |
| 9:15 - 9:25 | WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
—William Cowles, Lake Champlain Committee |
| 9:25 - 9:55 | OVERVIEW: PL 92-500 and its Significance for Clean Water in Vermont
—Gordon Pyper, Commissioner, Department of Water Resources
—Arthur Ristau, Director, State Planning Office |
| 9:55 - 10:25 | WATER QUALITY STANDARDS: Their Establishment and Role Under PL 92-500
—David Clough, Director, Water Quality Division
—Denning Miller, former Water Resources Board Member |
| 10:25 - 10:40 | COFFEE AND INFORMAL DISCUSSION |
| 10:40 - 11:20 | VERMONT'S PERMIT PROGRAM AND ITS ENFORCEMENT
—Gordon Pyper, Commissioner, Department of Water Resources
—John Ponsetto, Environmental Protection Division |
| 11:20 - 12:00 P.M. | MUNICIPAL TREATMENT PLANT CONSTRUCTION: The Federal Grants Program, Its Status in Vermont, State Program Planning
—Reginald LaRosa, Chief, Environmental Engineering Division |
| 12:00 - 1:30 | LUNCH: Snowshed Cafeteria |
| 1:30 - 2:10 | SECTION 303 PLANNING: River Basin Plans, Non-Point Sources
—David Clough/Richard Czaplinski, Water Quality Division |
| 2:10 - 3:15 | CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN VERMONT'S WATER POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAM: A working session to answer questions and develop practical suggestions for ongoing citizen participation. |
| 3:15 - 3:30 | WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE: Summary of Working Session |

HELP BUILD A SHELTER

The Conservation Society of Southern Vermont is sponsoring a program to build shelters on the 3,000 acre West River Valley Greenway for use by the CSSV's Summer Conservation School, local schools and other groups. Three existing tent pads have already been converted to Adirondack type shelters. For information on how individuals, clubs or special fund raising groups can build a shelter on the Greenway or in order to make a tax deductible gift to this effort, contact the CSSV, Townshend, Vermont, 05353.

ENVIRONMONTH

Steve Patterson, State Coordinator for Environmonth, reports a number of interesting projects taking place throughout Vermont. May 4, Green Up Day, brought out many individuals and organizations to clean up roadsides. Fortunately, they were in much better shape this spring than in the past, thanks to the ban on nonreturnable containers. A group in the Rutland area undertook extensive stream bank cleanup on Moon Brook and Pinney Brook. Woodstock Country Day School students are working on a bicycle trail which will run from the Taftsville Covered Bridge to Quechee Gorge.

The Vermont Highway Board has initiated a program for Environmonth to enhance the environmental characteristics of Vermont's Interstate, primary and secondary highways. According to members of the Board, the new program will be the first undertaken entirely with State funds for highway beautification. The program will involve not only the planting of 1,100 evergreen trees during the month but also the maintenance of shrubbery which has been set out since the first combined Federal-State landscaping project was completed in 1967.

May 26 has been designated as State Picnic Day; all State Parks with picnic facilities will be open to the public with no admission charge. Some parks will have State Foresters on hand to conduct environmental tours and answer questions on forest management. A list of parks to be opened will be published in local newspapers.

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 1974?

This Form May Be Used For Renewing Your Membership

Student Membership	\$ 5.00	Non-Profit Organization	\$15.00
Individual Membership	7.50	Associate Membership	25.00
Family Membership	10.00	Sustaining Membership	50.00

Enclosed is my contribution in the amount of \$ _____ to the VNRC.

Name: _____

Address: _____

All dues and contributions are tax deductible

Vermont Natural Resources Council
26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602

EDITORIAL — STREAM BANK STABILIZATION!

The changes made to the banks of the Mad River between Waitsfield and Moretown should not be allowed to take place on any river or stream in Vermont or any other state. For the farmers and landowners who applied for soil conservation funds under emergency conservation provisions, the job might look fine. No longer will there be the worry of flooded fields or banks washed out from ice jams. For others who have enjoyed the beauty of the river as seen from Route 100, or fished its banks or canoed its waters, the Mad River will never be the same.

Astounding as it may seem, this was done at the landowner's request, with permission from adjacent landowners, with permits from the Department of Water Resources and under the supervision of the Soil Conservation Service to their specifications. Unfortunately, specifications for stream bank stabilization are the same for every state calling for the removal of all trees and related cover from the banks and the substitution of gravel covered by naked rock.

The State Water Resources Department is disturbed by what has happened on the Mad River and other scenic rivers in the State and is now working with the State Soil Conservation Office to modify specifications so that other rivers will not share the same fate.

Although it is too late to save stretches of the Mad River, it may not be too late to save your river. If you own land on a river and are contemplating applying for emergency conservation funds you would be advised to see examples of the finished product. If you are not directly involved as a landowner but cherish the beauty of your river, it would be wise to talk to state and local officials including your town or regional planning commission to see what can be done to prevent this type of excessive bank stabilization.

VERMONT NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL
26 STATE STREET
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