

VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

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are simply people out for a good time who enjoy riding bicycles for pleasure.

Bicycle advocates have formed a Vermont Bikeways Coalition. They are pushing for bicycle legislation. They want two things: first, recognition; recognition of bicycles as an important recreational pursuit, recognition of bicycles as a serious alternative form of transportation; and second, money; the commitment of local, state and federal funds to provide bicycle routes and to ensure bicycle safety.

Up until now no Highway Department money has been spent in building bicycle routes, in providing bicycle lanes, or in designating shared roadways. According to David Kelly, Division Engineer for the Federal Highway Administration in Montpelier, Vermont has been legally empowered to spend money for bikeways since 1968. "We have the funds," said Kelly, "but the state has to take the initiative." So far the state, meaning the Highway Department, has taken no initiative. Said Kelly, "The response in Vermont has been 'zero;' we haven't expended any funds for bikeways."



The only bicycle route construction that has taken place has been the result of local action. Towns such as Burlington, Colchester and Woodstock have initiated specific projects. In Burlington, \$20,000 of revenue-sharing funds have been appropriated for the

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BICYCLES - BICYCLES - BICYCLES

In the past two years the Vermont General Assembly has taken important steps to encourage the use of bicycles both as a recreational pursuit and as a viable transportation alternative. In April, 1974, the Assembly enacted a law that permits the State Highway Department to spend state and federal highway money for the construction of bicycle routes. In the same year, the Assembly authorized a comprehensive study of bicycling in Vermont.

That study entitled, Bicycling in Vermont, was completed last January. It was written by Debby Barlow for the Agency of Environmental Conservation. Bicycling in Vermont is a wide-ranging document; it draws upon the thinking of state officials, regional planners and bicycle advocates. It discusses the results of an extensive survey that was conducted with cyclists and non-cyclists alike. It is a fat and informative volume that runs to 44 pages of text, 35 pages of appended materials and is replete with graphs, tables, statistics, proposals and recommendations.

The bicycle study tells us that there are over 154,000 bicycles in Vermont. It says that most people ride bicycles for pleasure although many people use bicycles as a serious alternative form of transportation. Forty percent of all automobile trips are four miles or less, a distance that would take the slowest cyclist less than half an hour to complete, a fact that suggests that the bicycle is, or could be, competitive with the automobile in urban areas or towns.

Bicycle advocates are a mixed lot: some are parents concerned about the provision of safe, restricted bicycle paths for children; some are sportspeople engaged in touring and racing; some are working men and women who use a bicycle for transportation; and others

INTERVIEW: RICHARD VALENTINETTI DISCUSSES
SOLID WASTE PROGRAMS IN VERMONT

Richard Valentinetti has a second-floor office at the Agency of Environmental Conservation headquarters in Montpelier. He is Chief of the State's Air and Solid Waste Programs. It's a big job. He looks out across his desk to a large map of Vermont. Red pins are scattered across the face of the map and every pin represents one of the fifty towns that is still in violation of the state laws on solid waste.

These towns in violation are smaller communities: towns with open dumps or landfill operations that fail to meet state standards; towns like Townshend in Windham County with 686 people, or Tunbridge in Orange with 791 people, or Victory in Essex with 42 people.

Back before 1967 the solid waste situation statewide was chaotic. Every town had its own arrangements and there was indiscriminate open burning and open dumping. This, in turn, led to air pollution and degradation of the state's water resources. Since 1967 most of these open dumps have been closed; burning has stopped; and many towns have banded together to support "approved" regional refuse disposal operations.

Valentinetti looks ahead to problems of a more fundamental and long-range nature: problems like source reduction, reducing the total volume of solid waste, and the initiation of recycling efforts. He is sympathetic but not too optimistic. "I agree with you about over packaging," Valentinetti remarks, but he sees it as an enormous problem that can be attacked most effectively at a federal level. As to recycling, Valentinetti points out the obvious difficulties. Vermont is a small state with a scattered, rural population. It generates about 360 tons of solid waste per day, a comparatively modest volume. "I don't know if recycling is worth the capital cost. States like Connecticut are spending 20 or 30 million dollars on capital equipment and we can't afford that kind of thing in Vermont."

Two or three years ago the recycling idea looked pretty good. There was a market for glass, cans, old newsprint and corrugated boxes. In April, 1972, the General Assembly

authorized a study of solid waste and recycling needs in Vermont. The report that emerged, the Solid Waste Management and Resource Recovery Plan, became the basis for subsequent legislative efforts in the 1973 Session. Valentinetti praises the report, "The report is a very good description of the situation as it exists in Vermont. Your program has to be developed on good figures and this report provides the baseline data."

Former State Senator Frank Smallwood took up the challenge of translating the report into legislation and S-99 was the result. Under S-99 the state would have played a substantial role in recycling efforts. What happened to the Smallwood proposals in now history. S-99 passed the 1973 Vermont Senate but got tied up in the House by opponents of the bottle ban legislation.

Since 1973, much has changed. First, open dumps have closed in favor of regional landfill operations. Second, and more important, the bottom has dropped out of the market for recycled materials. Corrugated paper that once brought \$70-80/ton now brings \$1.00/ton; newsprint that once brought \$25/ton now brings practically nothing, \$3.00/ton; no one wants it and you can't get rid of it. The current recession has cut the demand for building materials, and recycled paper products like sheet rock, tar paper, asphalt shingles and insulation.

Valentinetti has not given up on recycling. He says, "I'm not saying that recycling or source reduction are lost and I still feel philosophically strongly the need to move in that direction." He wants state money appropriated for demonstration pilot projects. He wants the federal government to take a more favorable attitude to requests from small states for small projects. He points to a successful project in two southern Vermont communities. In Bennington and Stamford, citizens have established disposal sites for the separate collection of glass, cans and newsprint. A jobber picks up these materials for recycling. The reason recycling has worked in these towns, Valentinetti explains, is because they are close to markets and they got started before the market situation changed.

(Valentinetti Interview Continued)

There is a project in Ames, Iowa that Valentinetti is watching closely. The City of Ames is about the same size as Burlington, and in Ames they are burning solid waste to produce electricity. Burlington produces 200 tons of solid waste per day. Says Valentinetti, "If the Ames project is feasible we can start talking about a power plant in Burlington that can burn everything."

For the present, Valentinetti's aims are modest. It is not a dazzling program. It may perhaps fail to satisfy those who want recycling or source reduction. Vermont is small; people are spread out; landfill sites are available in most places; and Vermonters pay out \$4.00 per year per capita to dispose of solid waste. In states like Massachusetts the cost is \$14.00 per year per person.

In the circumstances Valentinetti will be happy if we can reach three objectives: first, at existing "approved" landfill sites, to require that state standards are met; second, at presently unacceptable landfill operations, to see that these are improved; and third, at open dumps, to see that these are closed as soon as possible.

ROBERT KLEIN TO DIRECT "VERMONT NATURAL AREAS PROJECT -- PHASE II"

Robert Klein, of Chelsea, has been named Director of Phase II of the Vermont Natural

Areas Project, a cooperative undertaking between VNRC and the Agency of Environmental Conservation. Klein worked for the (Martha's) Vineyard Conservation Society last summer and has a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from Duke University.

Phase II of the Natural Areas Project has two principal goals: (1) to devise an evaluation system to identify the most important of the nearly 1000 known natural areas in the state; and (2) once the most significant areas have been identified, to design a comprehensive program for their protection.

STOVEMAKERS NEEDED IN MARLBORO

Larry Gay, who has spoken and written extensively on wood as an alternative source of energy, is starting a company in Marlboro, Vermont, to construct stoves with a soapstone firebox. The stovemaking operation is to begin in September and Gay is looking for two or three good workers, particularly for an experienced welder.

VNRC THANKS MEMBERS

We asked members to help us with our 1975 membership drive by sending us the names of people who might be interested in the Council's work. The response was excellent and many members sent in contributions. We need and appreciate your support.

VNRC MEMBERSHIP FORM

Enclosed are my dues of \$_____ for 1975 VNRC membership. () New () Renewal

Student	\$ 5.00	Non-profit Org.	\$15.00
Individual	7.50	Associate	25.00
Family	10.00	Business	50.00

Name: _____
Address: _____
ZIP: _____

Please accept my additional contribution of \$_____ for VNRC projects.

The following persons would be interested in learning of the Council's activities. (Please print)

1. Name: _____
Address: _____
ZIP: _____
2. Name: _____
Address: _____
ZIP: _____

You may use my name: () Yes () No

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first year of what is scheduled to be a five-year, \$100,000 project. The Burlington project will include bikelanes on city streets, a separate bike route to run along an abandoned railroad right-of-way, and the creation of designated, shared roadways. In Colchester certain streets have been designated as bike routes with the financial assistance of the local Jaycees. In Woodstock, a "signed" or marked bicycle route has been established with financial help on a 50-50 basis from the League of Women Voters and town highway money.



What distresses bicycle enthusiasts is that more has not been done. Vermont is entitled to spend up to a limit of two million dollars of its annual federal highway money on bicycle routes and pedestrian

facilities. Bicycle money is available along state highways on a 70-30 federal-state matching grant basis, and along interstates on a 90-10 matching basis.

Ellen Reiss, a Resources Planner with the Agency of Environmental Conservation and a person who was involved with last year's bicycle study, says that Vermont is just one of a handful of states that has not availed itself of federal money for bicycle route construction. She goes on to note that there is Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR)

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Address Correction
Requested

money available for recreational bicycle routes.

Resistance to the use of federal money to support bicycle route development is coming from some quarters of the State Highway Department. The Highway Department has had its own problems. In recent years federal money for highway projects has been impounded and the state highway construction timetable has been set back.

Commissioner John Gray provided a clue to their thinking when he answered the question of why the state has refused to spend its available highway money on bicycle path construction: "What we are obligated to carry out by the Legislature in the way of highway projects already exceeds our funding. You can't spend the same money twice." And he added, "I think bicycles are a traffic hazard and should be confined to separate roads built for that purpose."

If the Commissioner's view prevails, bicycles would be banned from roads carrying automotive traffic. Bicycles would be confined to specially-constructed paths or trails, and these paths cost as much as \$40,000 per mile to build.

Times are changing. There is increasing public awareness of the need to develop transportation alternatives. The creation of a new Agency of Transportation is a sign of this. If strong public support for bicycles continues the prospects for financial assistance to bicycle travel are good.

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