

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, Nathaniel Frothingham

DECEMBER, 1975 ---- NUMBER 46

WHALES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: Union Elementary School, Montpelier

Children's writing and children's art are communicating the story of the great whales and the importance of saving them.

The plight of the whale. This is the story: 40,000 were killed last year; 40,000 will be killed this year. They have been hunted almost to extinction. They are still being hunted by Japanese and Soviet whaling fleets, using airplanes, helicopters, sonar and high-speed boats. The whaling industry uses its catch to make paints, margarine, soap, handcreams, lipstick and pet food.

Dr. Roger Payne, whose research on whale sounds has brought him national attention, has raised the vital question: "In a world that is interdependent on all living things, does the fate of the whale anticipate the fate of man?"

At the Union Elementary School in Montpelier, James Sardonis, is teaching children about whales and what is happening to them.

At the Union Elementary School in Montpelier, James Sardonis is teaching children about whales and about the expressive power of art. "We talked about whales and what is happening to them. We talked about what we could do to try to help them as artists. We could show people how beautiful whales are. We can show that it is not necessary to kill them."

These are some of the things that kids wrote.

The Whale By Jeremy E.B.

The great big animals that live in the sea,
Are the whales so happy and kind of free,
The animals that are so tame,
They were living peacefully until man came,
Those great huge animals that live in
the sea,
Yes those great huge giants that live
so carefree.

HELP SAVE WHALES

Once there were a lot of whales but now there aren't because people are killing them. Soon there won't be any. I don't think it's right to kill whales because they are an important part of sealife. So I hope that the Governor will make a law so we can't kill whales and if he does people will stop killing whales. People should care about whales, just think of you being a whale and you were getting killed, you would not like it either. And if people keep on killing them there won't be any more and if a teacher starts talking about whales the children would ask what is a whale. So for me and every other person in the world please stop killing WHALES.

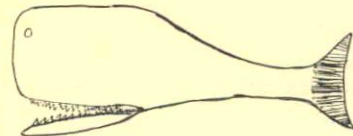
By Stephanie D. Poems

I am a whale by the name of Dan,
Of course I don't eat from a frying pan.
I love to eat fish,
But not from a dish.
My tail goes swish as I eat the fish.

A Riddle

What is blue and lives in the sea
it's a lot bigger than you or me?
It's bigger than a house
and of course a mouse
you can't catch it in a pail
guess what
it's a whale!

LARRY Save Whales



I think that whales should have a right to live. When I grow up I would like to see some. I am doing everything I can to save them. I do not think it is right to do this to them. How would you feel if they all came on shore and killed as you think that is what we are doing to them. I heard the sounds they make and I think it sounds very good. It seems that boats go out and they keep on coming in with whales. You know they might be saying this right now, "Those people are good people," and another might be saying back, "But why do they keep on killing us?" And then they get killed. You think about this.

-- Jon Rouelle

THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION OF WHICH VNRC IS THE VERMONT AFFILIATE IS SUPPORTING A BOYCOTT OF JAPANESE AND RUSSIAN PRODUCTS. THIS BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN WILL BE PURSUED UNTIL THE RUSSIANS AND JAPANESE AGREE TO WHALE CONSERVATION MEASURES. "THE ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE" AT P. O. BOX 3650, WASHINGTON D. C., 20007 IS CO-ORDINATING A "SAVE THE WHALES" CAMPAIGN.

ROBERT KLEIN

INTERVIEW: Robert Klein, Phase 2, Vermont Natural Areas Project

Robert Klein is surging ahead toward the end of his six-month engagement as Director of Phase 2 of the Vermont Natural Areas Project.

Klein came to the Vermont Natural Resources Council on July 1st. He is working under a matching grant between VNRC, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) and the Agency of Environmental Conservation. His project ends on December 31st. Over the past five months he has been working "flat-out" and he has a lot to show for his efforts.

In Phase 1 of the Natural Areas Project, completed in 1973, nearly 1000 natural areas were identified in Vermont.

Then came Phase 2, the job of sifting through the 1973 data, estimating the value of individual sites and coming up finally with a list of the 50 or so natural areas that are most deserving of preservation. Of all Klein's tasks, technically this has been the most daunting challenge, coping with the original 1973 list, a thick stack of computer print-out sheets. Klein is modest about what he has achieved, about the fact that he has all but finished this part of the work. "All that we are doing," he says, "is sorting through the data in an intelligent way."

Klein feels that the original data was basically sound. But there were some tricky problems. "It's a document created by a number of people," says Klein, "and any document created by a number of people will represent different perspectives."

Here is an example of what Klein is talking about. No two naturalists, however competent, will always agree on what they are seeing. When two naturalists make an independent assessment of the same site, one naturalist may see an ecosystem that is chiefly valuable as a vegetative community and another naturalist may see an ecosystem that is chiefly valuable as an animal habitat. Klein's job has been to sort out these irregularities and pare down the list from 1000 natural areas to 50.

Another tough assignment is the problem of reaching the citizen-in-the-street and convincing him of the importance of preserving natural areas. Klein is conscious of the current public mood: the skepticism of government, the hostility to governmental intervention, and the passions that can be excited when landowners feel their rights are being violated.

The Bristol Cliffs controversy is a case in point. Here a small group of landowners in Addison County mounted a campaign against the "Eastern Wilderness Act." Residents and property owners of the Bristol Cliffs area saw in this federal legislation a threat to their property rights and one more governmental move to lock up 2,700 acres of individually-held land.

Klein is quick to draw a distinction between a "wilderness area" and a "natural area." "Natural areas do not represent another land grab," says Klein. In general, they can be as small as 5 acres or as large as 200 acres. Wilderness areas are much larger. The purpose of natural areas is to preserve rare natural systems that are unique. The purpose of a wilderness area is to set aside a large tract of land for wildlife protection and carefully-controlled public use.

When Klein gets talking about natural areas he is terribly persuasive.

Take a bog, for example. One might ask, "What makes a bog worth protecting?"

"Bogs are rare," explains Klein. "That's one answer. From an 'ecosystem point of view' a bog in Vermont will not be the same as a bog in Georgia. The differences are important."

Klein goes on. He explains how bogs were formed by the retreat of the last glacier 12,500 years ago. The environment of a bog is inhospitable: its waters are cold, stagnant, highly acidic and poor in nutrients. BUT, put a "coring device" into the rich build-up of a bog bottom and draw up your 20-foot-long sample. What you have, in layers, is like the pages of a history book, a natural account of the last 12,500 years. In studying such a sample a student of natural history can discern the long swings of climate, the changes in vegetation, and can gain a sense of all that has happened in the natural world since the last glacier.

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No living man will see again the long-grass prairie, where a sea of prairie flowers lapped at the stirrups of the pioneer. We shall do well to find a forty here and there on which the prairie plants can be kept alive as species. There were a hundred such plants, many of exceptional beauty. Most of them are a

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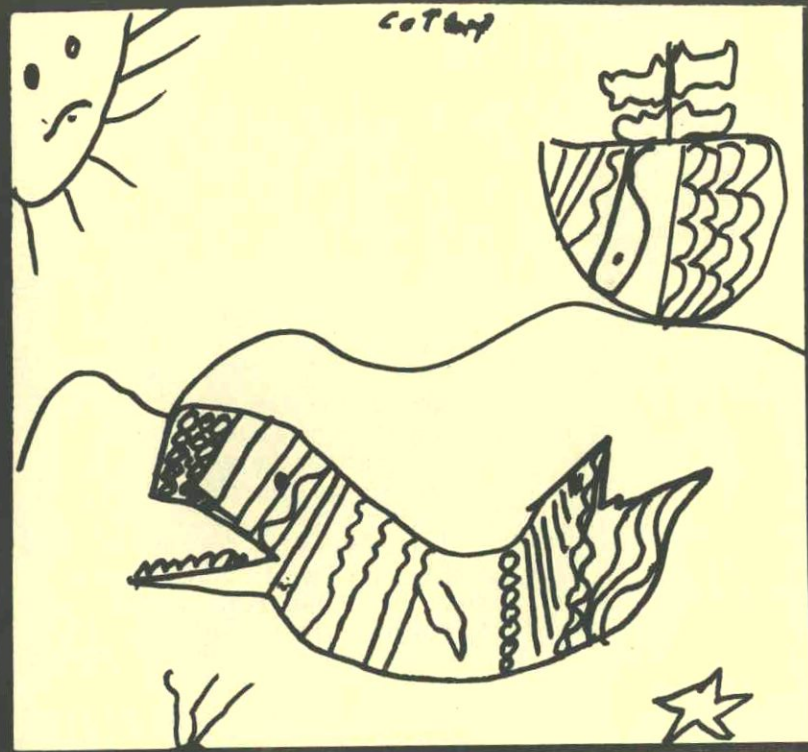
UPDATE

● **THE CENTER FOR NORTHERN STUDIES** is offering a two-week field study experience in Winter Ecology between January 3rd and January 17th at the Center's Field Station in Wolcott, Vermont. A bulletin from the Center for Northern Studies describes the field course as "a multi-disciplinary study of life and the winter environment in the north." These are a few of the topics that will be pursued by course participants: low temperature and short day responses in plants and animals; energy exchange over snow-covered ground; the geography of plants and animals in relation to winter survival and the ecological importance of snow cover. For registration materials and full information write, giving your name, address and phone number, to the Center for Northern Studies, Wolcott, Vermont, 05680, Tel. (802) 888-4331.

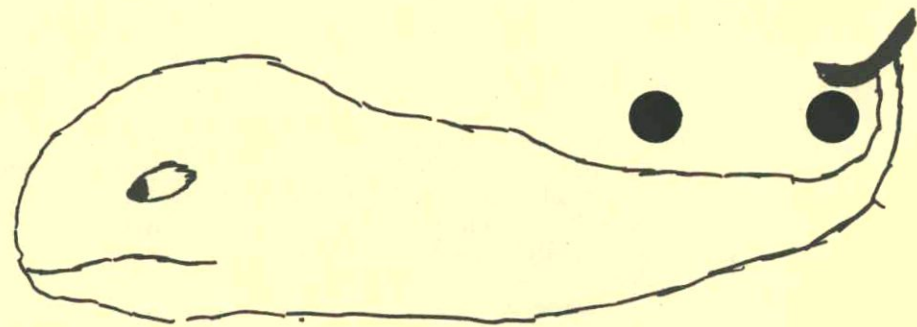
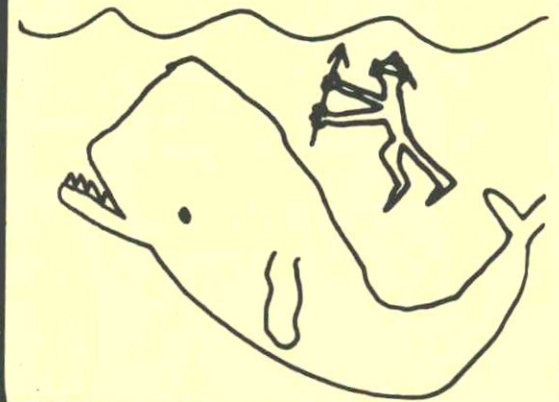
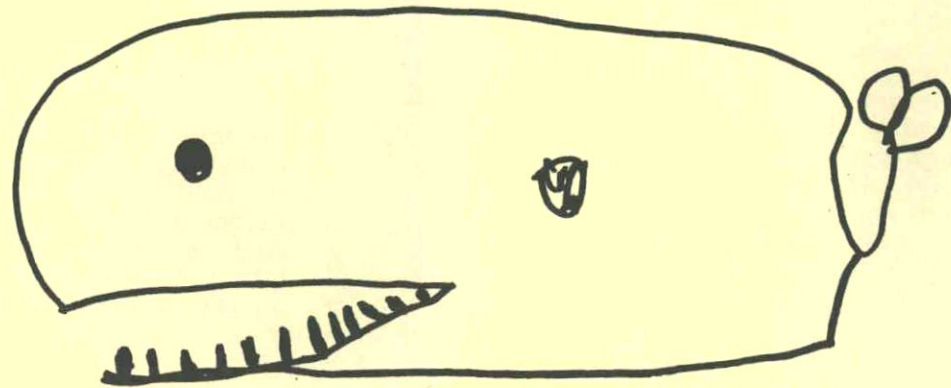
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● **"HOW TO CHALLENGE YOUR GAS AND ELECTRIC BILL"** is the title of a new Vermont Public Interest Group (VPIRG) publication. It was written by staff member Lynn Heglund and it will be available to the public for twenty-five cents on December 15th. For copies, write to VPIRG, 26 State Street, Montpelier, VT., 05602.

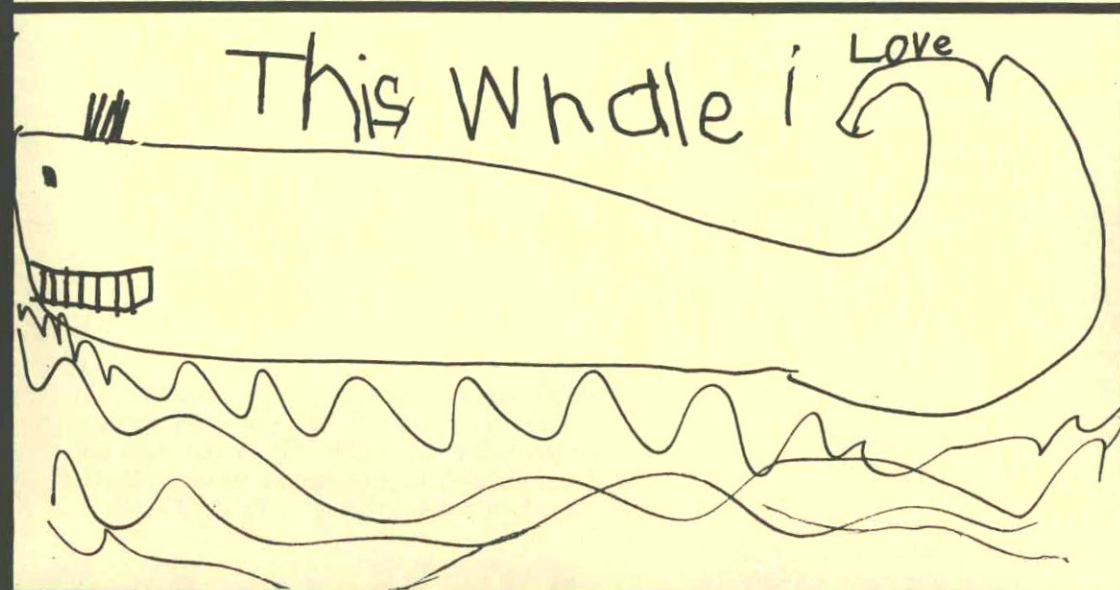
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please stop killing whales!

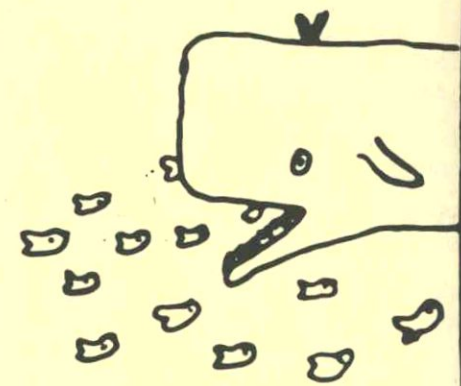
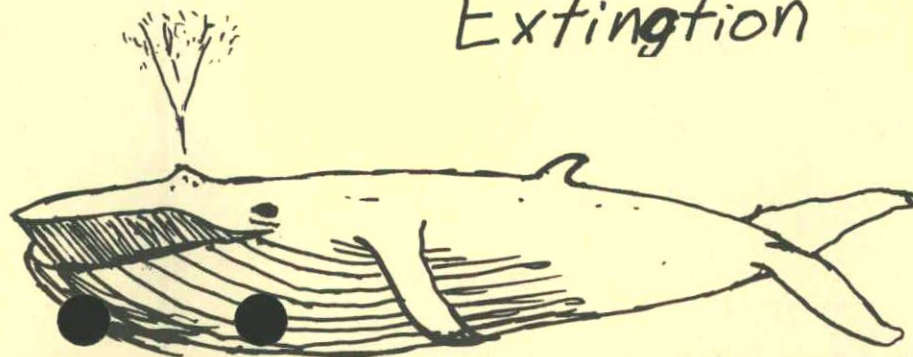


don't!



Getting near.....

Extinction



Update...

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mont and accounted for an infusion of at least \$50,000 into Vermont's economy. Freiden ran down a list of needs: more and better publicity; better hook-ups between trains and ferry boats; better East-West bicycle routes; better accomodation for people and bicycles coming into the state. On buses, bikes have to be boxed. Train timetables are difficult and the service Freiden described as "abominable."

● **EMERITUS PROFESSOR THOMAS YAHKUB** of Goddard College is organizing an open public meeting in the middle of January to be addressed by Dr. Verhese Kurien, the man who organized a vast network of peasant milk co-operatives in India. Kurien runs a giant web of village co-ops, not far from Bombay, that involve 215,000 farming families and that produce 170,000 gallons of milk per day. Details of the time and place of Dr. Kurien's presentation will be announced in the press.

ENVIRONMENTAL BILLS

The following are new pieces of legislation that relate to environmental issues. These new pieces of legislation have been introduced since the completion of the 1975 Session and since the last VER legislative log in May.

No. and Sponsor	Purpose
H. 430 Carse	To provide planning guidelines for development of municipal plans.
H. 434 Archambault	To prohibit state and local officials from using salt and chloride compounds on any road in this State under his control.
H. 436 Lloyd	To provide for equal treatment of all housing types, particularly mobile homes and modular homes.
H. 439 Maher	To provide, at local option, for a 50% reduction in property taxes for certain historic properties.
H. 440 Ketcham	To control diesel exhaust emissions.
H. 441 Stevenson	To provide for the establishment of capital budget programs by villages and municipalities.
H. 442 Maher	To provide for boat pump-out stations at newly-constructed marinas.
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H. 473 Baker and others	To prohibit sale of certain chlorofluorocarbon compounds used in aerosol sprays.
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"Winter Night, Vermont"
Woodcut by Sabra Johnson, East Barnard, Vt.

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● **STATE OFFICIALS** in charge of planning and designing new sewage construction projects have consistently denied any existing mandate to consider the impact of such projects on land use and growth. They have stoutly maintained that their primary, if not exclusive responsibility, was to abate pollution, not to plan. Now a newly-revised set of guidelines has been handed down from the Regional Office of the Environmental Protection Agency in Boston. Under these newly-revised guidelines, those who prepare and review environmental assessments for specific projects have the clear responsibility of raising important questions about land use and growth. Before a sewage construction project is approved, these kinds of questions must be asked: "How will the proposed project encourage or discourage residential, commercial and industrial growth within the service area? "Will (the proposed project) induce growth in undeveloped areas or concentrate population in developed areas?"

● **THE QUESTION OF "FARM LAND OWNERSHIP"** is almost certain to be addressed by the Vermont Food Commission in its report to Governor Salmon in December. Benjamin Huffman, who wrote a 1973 study entitled, **THE VERMONT FARM AND A LAND REFORM PROGRAM**, spoke on this subject at a Food Commission hearing in Brattleboro on September 17th. These were Huffman's principal points: first, that Vermont's farms are an irreplaceable natural and capital asset; second, that with rising property values, the sale of a farm from one farmer to another is likely to become "an increasingly rare event;" and third, that conventional regulation and zoning mechanisms don't fully address the ownership problem because they deny farmers a fair return on their investment. What Huffman has proposed is this, a state-financed program to purchase "development rights" from farmers, the difference between agricultural productive value and the market value of farm property. Such a program would be expensive, but no more expensive than the average cost of Vermont's highway program, between 10 and 11 million dollars a year.

● **FOOD CO-OP PARTICIPANTS** throughout Vermont will soon be munching on home-grown grains and beans. This is the result of the "Beans and Grains Project" initiated this past spring by the New England People's Co-op (NEPCOOP), the Natural Organic Farmers' Association (NOFA), with a grant from the Hanover Co-op and advice from the Vermont State Extension Service. The purpose of the Beans and Grains Project is clear: to restore a small measure of self-sufficiency to the production of staple foods. That small measure is the approximately 20,000 pounds of yellow eye, soldier, kidney and pinto beans, all grown

locally in Vermont and New Hampshire, that will soon go out to Co-op members. In addition, three Champlain Valley farmers have produced 15,000 pounds of whole wheat flour. The Plainfield Co-op regularly mills 8,000 pounds of flour a month for all the co-ops in Vermont.

● **THE VERMONT OPEN SPACE TAX COALITION IS PUSHING HARD** for passage in the 1976 General Assembly of H-134, a bill introduced by Representative Norris Hoyt of Norwich. The intention of H-134 is to provide a measure of tax relief to owners of farm and forest land, if these owners are actively farming or managing their lands. In addition, H-134 would provide tax relief to conservation land held by tax-exempt organizations and "homestead open land," being undeveloped land up to 500 acres contiguous to an owner's principal residence. The real legislative issue revolves around the question of who will ultimately pay for this shift in the tax burden. Last summer a Dartmouth College study indicated that if undeveloped, open land was appraised at 40% of fair market value, and if the existing Property Tax Relief Fund was tapped for 1.5 million dollars annually, no Vermont town would experience a tax rate increase of greater than 6.7%. In most cases, the increase would be considerably less. The crunch would come in two or three years when the 3.4 to 4.4 million dollars in the existing Property Tax Relief Fund has been spent. Who would be willing in two or three years to pick up the tab after the Fund runs out?

Letters:

The VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT welcomes letters from its readers. Individual points of view are important. The VNRC is seeking to encourage a broad exchange of ideas on environmental issues.

To the Editor:

The rumblings that are now a roar from the Bristol Cliffs Wilderness Area on South Mountain are due to the shock felt by us landowners when we learned our private lands were included in the Wilderness Area. We were not considered or even notified of this until March 14, 1975, by registered letter, after the law became a fact on January 5, 1975.

And neither were we considered for accurate information of our beliefs for the article in your October, 1975, newsletter entitled "Bristol Cliffs: Private Ownership Versus Wilderness." In August we sent a copy of our "Statement of Principles" to Seward Weber, your Director. At the Senate Hear-

LETTERS

ings in Bristol on September 28 and 29, he attended and testified. From either of these he should have known that we, the Bristol Cliffs Landowners, are happy to have the Wilderness Area on our mountain. Not a one of us would live or own land on South Mountain if we did not love nature. We are willing to share it as we always have. When the Forest Service offered free appraisals of private lands within the Wilderness Area, 21 owners asked for them with the right to accept or reject to determine the intent only. The claim that these are offers for sale is completely erroneous. There have been no Transfers of Title on record.

Here is the main point we want to make in this letter. The chief reason for our pursuit of the democratic process through the Congress to have these boundaries moved back to the lines of the Green Mountain National Forest is that we are a strong little band of people who believe that our precious rights constituted by our forebears must constantly be guarded and fought for.

There is nothing to be gained by us or you believing there are differences between us. If you have been on South Mountain you know that we who live there and own land there have got to be as strong environmentalists as if we belonged to your organization. And you who do not own land there are citizens of this great country and for you it is fully as important to object to the unconstitutional methods employed by the federal government by including our private lands without even a hearing for us to express our approval or reservation regarding the boundaries.

Thank you very much for the opportunity for greater understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Leah Ruth Denton

EDITOR'S NOTE: Readers of the VER may be interested in obtaining more information from the Bristol Cliffs Landowners Association. Copies of the Association's "Statement of Principles" and other informational materials may be secured by writing to Leah Ruth Denton, Clerk for the Bristol Cliffs Landowners Association, 11 Liberty Street, Bristol, Vt., 05443.

VNRC

this issue

- WHALES, Environmental Education
- Interview: Robert Klein, Director
Phase Two, Vermont Natural Areas Project
- Legislative Log of New Bills

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