

Vermont Environmental Report

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Council Projects

IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER THE VNRC HAS CONCLUDED ITS TWO-YEAR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE HARTLAND PROJECT AND IN LATE AUGUST THE COUNCIL LAUNCHED PHASE III OF THE NATURAL AREAS PROJECT.

BRADLEY AND JACOBS FILE REPORT ON HARTLAND OPEN SPACE PROJECT

The 56-page **Technical Report** of the Hartland Open Space Project, written by Planner, Harvey Jacobs, and VNRC Assistant Director, Darby Bradley, and illustrated by Constance F. D. Ince, has now been published and is available from VNRC.

The Hartland Open Space Project was a major undertaking of the VNRC, beginning in November, 1974. The Open Space Project was conducted in collaboration between the VNRC, the Ottauquechee Planning and Development Commission and the Hartland Board of Selectmen. The basic objective of the Open Space Project was to offer citizens of Hartland an opportunity to stabilize taxes in order to encourage property owners to maintain land in farm or forest uses. The open space proposals were defeated by Hartland voters on May 25, 1976.

"The **Technical Report** will be helpful to those towns that are considering problems of rising land taxes and open space preservation," according to co-author Darby Bradley. It describes the

reasons why the Project was undertaken, it discusses the several open space programs, and it offers a comprehensive analysis as to why the vote eventually failed.

The **Technical Report** is illustrated with maps, graphs, charts and tables. In the Appendix are materials that will be of interest to other towns contemplating tax stabilization programs. There is a "Chronology of Events," a "Warning for the Special Town Meeting," a sample of the "Special Town Meeting" ballot, examples of sample contracts that might have been drawn up had Program 2 or 3 been passed by Hartland voters. The authors have also included those sections of Vermont Law that deal with tax stabilization and open space lands.

(Supplies of the **Technical Report** are limited. VNRC members and others who would like a copy are invited to write the Council. There will be a 50-cent charge per copy to cover handling and postage.)

NATURAL AREAS PROJECT III LAUNCHED

The Vermont Natural Resources Council has announced the beginning of Phase III of the Natural Areas Project. Robert Klein, who completed

work on Phase II of the Natural Areas Project in December, 1974, has been engaged to carry on as Director of Phase III. Klein started work on Phase III in late August. Phase III will take a year to complete and will cost an estimated \$20,000.

In Phase I of the Natural Areas Project, nearly 1,000 natural areas in Vermont were identified. In Phase II, Klein, working with a committee of naturalists, culled the original list of 1,000 natural areas and pinpointed the 64 most important or primary natural areas sites in Vermont.

Now in Phase III, Klein wants to take the effort to its logical conclusion. He has set forth three goals. First, he wants to find ways to protect as many of the 64 primary sites as possible. Second, he wants to build up experience in exploring all the legal means available for protecting natural areas. Some of these legal tools are: easements, covenants, land trusts, and zoning. Klein

feels that by working with individual landowners and governmental bodies a valuable fund of experience in applying land conservation techniques can be accumulated. In this way land conservation techniques can be made more widely understood. A result of this year's work will be the publication of a booklet describing the legal tools that are available to landowners, planners and others who may wish to protect natural areas. This booklet will take the form of a series of "case studies" describing the successful application of the law to protect natural areas.

A third important goal of Phase III of the Project is public education. Klein has already begun assembling materials for an 8-10 minute slide-tape presentation. "We want to keep natural areas before the public during this year," says Klein. He will use this slide presentation to raise consciousness about natural areas with landowners, planners, Boards of Selectmen, and citizens' groups of all kinds.

New England Hydropower: What is the Potential?

A REVIEW

Once in a while out of the endless stream of paper, -- manilla envelopes, newsletters, studies, and documents --, comes something that is provocative and therefore worthy of attention. The **Report on Potential Hydropower Facilities in New England**, prepared by the New England Federal Regional Council for the Federal Energy Administration, fits this description.

It is not a long report, as reports go, some 70 pages. It is not without flaws. (In one section of the paper, the writer substitutes the Mississippi River for Vermont's Missisquoi River.) It does not claim that water power is without complications, environmental or otherwise, or that water power can amount to a total solution to our energy problems. What it does do convincingly is to address the New England and therefore the Vermont energy predicament,

and it discusses ways in which we could look at the power that might be generated from the water that runs in our rivers and streams and tides.

The New England, and therefore the Vermont energy predicament, is easily described. We are dependent on oil; much of that oil (44 percent) is imported; and it is rising in cost. We are becoming dependent on nuclear power, and nuclear power, to say the least, has not turned out to be the panacea that was promised.

In examining the hydropower potential of Vermont and New England it may be useful to cite a few facts.

Item: Vermont's peak demand for power, that is, the greatest call on power on the heaviest day of consumer use last winter, was 756 megawatts. (There are 1000 kilowatts in a megawatt.)
