

Vermont Environmental Report

Open Letter on Pyramid Mall -- Bradley Explains Strategy for Act 250 Hearings

To Members and Friends of VNRC:

I wish to respond to people who have asked me what VNRC's strategy would be at the Act 250 hearings on the Pyramid Mall project.

In August, a coalition of environmental organizations under the name of "Citizens for Responsible Growth" requested formal party status in the Act 250 hearings on Pyramid Mall. The coalition included: the Williston Committee for Responsible Growth, the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, the Lake Champlain Committee, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and the VNRC.

The District Commission ruled against granting the coalition party status because State, regional and local governmental bodies were participating in the hearings. The Commission felt that these bodies were capable of representing the interests of all citizens, including the coalition.

The Commission did, however, leave open the possibility of the coalition's participation in the hearing process. Following the completion of formal testimony on each criterion of Act 250, the public will be permitted to address questions to the Commission. If it becomes apparent from the questions that further information is needed, the Commission has indicated that further witnesses could be called.

The strategy of the coalition, then, will be to attend all the hearings and develop questions as needed for the Commission. The coalition will retain several technical experts to evaluate the written documents and verbal testimony to determine whether the parties have presented all of the relevant data. If additional testimony appears to be appropriate, the coalition will offer this testimony either directly to the Commission or through one of the parties.

Thus far, the District Commission has run the hearings competently and fairly. It is now up to the parties, VNRC and the coalition to see that all the relevant information is developed for the Commission.

It is also up to us to strengthen the regional planning process in this State so that in the future Vermont can deal more effectively with developments of the size of Pyramid Mall as part of an overall growth strategy. Regional planning is a subject which must be addressed in the next session of the General Assembly.

More will be said about this subject in future issues of the VER.

Darby Bradley, Director
VNRC Environmental Law Service

A Tribute: Jim MacMartin: He Shared It

Jim MacMartin of Northfield, Vermont, who died at Central Vermont Hospital on September 16th, was a member of the VNRC Board of Directors from 1969 to 1974.

The VER is printing a tribute to Jim MacMartin that was written by VER Editor, Nat Frothingham, and read as part of the "Commentary" series, That's the Way I See It, on radio station WNCS in Montpelier, on Tuesday, October 4.

I am sorry that I never knew James MacMartin who died about three weeks ago and who was Senior Biologist at the Vermont Agency of Environmental Conservation.

I say I never knew Jim MacMartin, and that's true.

Over the past few days I have been trying to put together a small tribute to MacMartin for the pages of the monthly publication of the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

I have been trying to describe this man, his gifts, his personality, his service to Vermont. And though I never knew him, I feel that I do know him now, at least in part. And I want to pass along a few of the things that people who talked to me about him have said about this rare public servant.

The facts of MacMartin's life, the facts of anyone's life, are always easily established.

Jim MacMartin was a biologist. He joined the Fish & Game Department in 1949. Except for a year of graduate study, he worked at Fish & Game continuously for twenty-eight years, up until his death.

The facts tell us very little.

What emerges from conversations with people who knew MacMartin is a man whose understanding of the waters of Vermont -- lakes, rivers and streams, the chemical composition, the fish, the bridges and abutments -- whose understanding of all these things, was simply enormous, encyclopedic, and whose loss will be irreplaceable.

Vermont's Fish & Game Commissioner, Ed Kehoe, talked about MacMartin. "I came in here thirteen years ago," said Kehoe, "and Jim was a Fisheries Biologist. He had completed a study of practically every stream in Vermont. This guy had a tremendous talent..." Kehoe paused, searching almost with awe, for the right words, "a tremendous talent for research."

Writing about Jim MacMartin, "Mac" as his friends called him, has been at once easy and difficult. "Easy" -- because people have wanted to talk about him, have remembered him with affection and respect. "Difficult" -- because the effort of putting something so great, so complex, so wonderful, as a life, in a few words, is always impossible.

People talked about MacMartin's contribution to the work of the International Joint Commission that was studying the future of Lake Champlain. MacMartin simply flabbergasted the Commissioners with the depth of his knowledge and his ability to document his assertions.

He played a large role as Fish & Game's representative to the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Project. He was constantly pushing back the limits of his own knowledge. When the New England Power Company claimed that Atlantic salmon had never been found above the falls at Bellows Falls, MacMartin scoured the local histories of Connecticut River towns and found evidence to prove that salmon had in fact been found above the falls.

And yet for all this brilliance, Jim MacMartin was a modest, totally human sort of person. "He was," said Ellen Reiss, "alive to the things that other people were doing. He was not myopic about his own work. He had time to help a student who was working on an academic paper. Charles Crowell, who now works at the State Planning Office, remembers MacMartin as the kind of person you could go to with a problem; and when Crowell left the Environmental Agency and shifted over to the State Planning Office, MacMartin was still interested in him, still sent him newspaper clippings. It was a gesture that Crowell appreciated.

MacMartin has a sense of curiosity, a sense of fun. After an Agency Christmas party he could ask for the recipe for a spinach souffle he had enjoyed. On a winter morning he would slump into his office dressed in an open shirt, a pair of khaki pants, wearing an army green ski parka with an eskimo hood. He would look around and growl good-naturedly at the day ahead. At the end of a long office day he could indulge in a rubber band fight, taking cover behind the office partitions.

Ellen Reiss had the office next door to MacMartin. She remembers the memos that circulated through the Agency. A lot of Agency people simply let these memos pass them by without comment. "But MacMartin was always capable of responding," she said. "He was immensely literate and well read. We should have taken an oral history of him a long time ago. He was a repository of information."

"Once in a lifetime," Kehoe said, "you have a fellow like this. You could say to him, 'I just got an inquiry about the Waits River. He could tell you almost stem to stem what that thing had, the type of fish, the growth of fish in there, what should be in there -- he had a tremendous knowledge.'"

Robert Keir, Supervisor of Hatcheries for the State of Vermont, called MacMartin "a unique person, a brilliant fellow." Said Keir, "He had what was termed, 'instant recall' even from years and years past. He could recall things with instant clarity. Standing in the Agency Office in

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Montpelier, MacMartin could point out the exact location of any type of rock, or bridge abutment. He could tell right off where that was."

Kehoe said of him, "I don't think he can be replaced. I don't see anyone in the field today in this State or New England that can replace him. He was brilliant, he had the common sense to go with it. He shared it."

A Fish Story - Climbing Back Up the Connecticut

Jim MacMartin was the Vermont representative to the Technical Committee of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program. The return of the Atlantic Salmon interested him greatly.

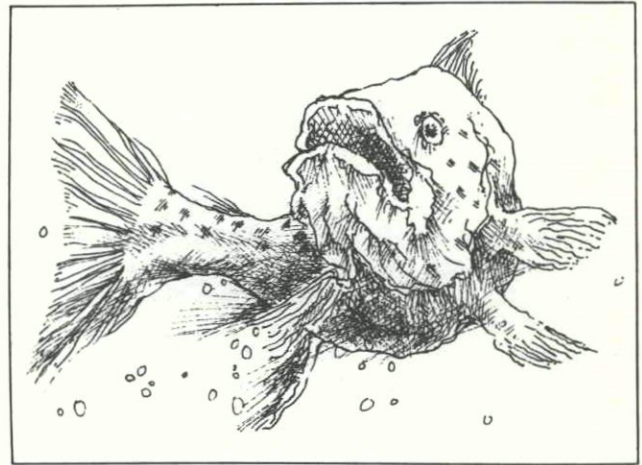
The Connecticut River that has its source in a succession of lakes in Quebec and northern New Hampshire, that flows south for 400 miles forming a natural border between Vermont and New Hampshire, that finally empties into Long Island Sound at Old Saybrook, Connecticut, has now become the scene of a dramatic wildlife experiment that promises to restore the Atlantic salmon to its once-native habitat.

The Atlantic salmon was abundant in the 18th Century, and was found as far north in the Connecticut River as the Canadian border. Then came an era of dam construction for waterpower and canal-building as an aid to water transportation. By 1792, two projects were underway: a dam for waterpower at Turners Falls, ten miles south of the Vermont border, and the first commercial canal built in the United States, at Bellows Falls. Other dams and canals soon followed.

The impact of these dams and canals was so great that by 1814 when a lone Atlantic salmon was pulled out of the Connecticut River at Old Saybrook, the local citizens were astounded. They thought it was an exotic species. Less than twenty-two years had passed since the first dams and canals had begun to appear on the River. Already the Atlantic salmon was gone and forgotten.

The Atlantic salmon is an "anadromous" fish, meaning that it migrates from salt waters of the ocean to spawn and breed in fresh, shallow water. After birth, the young salmon, or parr, as they are called, spend an average of one to two years in the freshwater stream. At the end of this period they are 5 to 6 inches long and are ready for seaward migration. They are now called "smolts."

At sea, the salmon smolt is a voracious feeder. After one year in salt water, a smolt may grow to 16 inches in length and weigh up to six pounds. Salmon are extensive travelers. Their migration sometimes takes them as far as the coasts of Labrador and Greenland. Fish biologists have been fascinated by the migration of Atlantic salmon and have employed fish tags like cattle brands to trace their movements. At the end of the first year at sea, some salmon migrate



back to their native rivers. These salmon are called "grisle." Those that remain in the ocean for a second year and then return to fresh water are called "bright" or "maiden" salmon.

How does a salmon find its way home? Biologists say that the Atlantic salmon possesses a highly sophisticated olfactory organ system. No two rivers have the same "odor" or contain the same chemical and organic matter. The Atlantic salmon can "smell out" the difference between one river and another and find his river of origin.

In 1966, fishery agency directors from the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, regional directors of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and members of the National Marine Fisheries Service met in Boston, Massachusetts. They decided to inaugurate a plan to restore Atlantic salmon to the Connecticut River. There were now a total of sixty-six dams, canals and flood protection projects along the River, and any plan to restore the salmon would have to contend with these obstacles.

There are six dams located on or along the main stem of the Connecticut River where the restoration of the Atlantic salmon is planned. These include: Rainbow Dam in Farmington, Connecticut, Holyoke Dam and Turners Falls Dam in western Massachusetts, Vernon Dam in southern Vermont, Bellows Falls Dam at Bellows Falls, and Wilder Dam north of White River Junction. Although there are dam sites above Wilder, fish passage problems associated with "high head" dams, preclude the restoration of Atlantic salmon north of this point. (A "high head" dam is a

fish cont...

water power site on a river location with high drops in water level.)

At the Holyoke Dam, fish passage facilities have been completed and include lift facilities to carry fish over the dam. Also installed is a plexiglass viewing window where numbers and species of fish can be assessed.

A fish passageway has also been constructed at Rainbow Dam, located on a primary tributary of the Connecticut River, the Farmington River. This passageway permits anadromous fish access to the Farmington River for the first time in 100 years.

Up river at Turners Falls, construction on fish passageways will begin in 1979. These facilities will be completed by 1981.

As to the question of future construction of fish passageways at the remaining three dams (Vernon, Bellows Falls and Wilder), the July, 1977 Biennial Report of the Connecticut River Anadromous Fish Restoration Program says: "Significant progress was made (in 1975 - 1976) relative to the issue of providing fish passage facilities for anadromous fish at these three dams."

Alongside efforts to remove man-made obstructions from the returning path of the Atlantic salmon up the

Connecticut River has been the simultaneous work of releasing Atlantic salmon juveniles in riverside pools at various upstream points. In the 1975-1976 Biennium, four federal and four state hatcheries produced some 154,676 pre-smolts and 42,550 fry for the Connecticut River program. A new federal hatchery in Bethel, Vermont will be completed in 1981, and the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation has proposed a hatchery at Vernon.

The goal of all these efforts has been to restore Atlantic salmon to the Connecticut River, and these efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

Between 1975 and 1976, five adult salmon were observed in the Connecticut River. At least three of these had traveled as far north as the fish lift at Holyoke Dam, 75 miles from the mouth of the River. Two of these fish were used for breeding and then released.

Looking ahead to the long-range success or failure of the restoration project, Fish and Game official Robert Keir, Supervisor of Hatcheries for the State of Vermont, expresses extreme caution. Says Keir: "There is no guarantee that the Atlantic salmon will return. I hope that they will, and I guess it's just a matter of time."

(Jeannette Stebbins)

Two Day Conference: Are There Alternatives to Sewers?

The Vermont 208 Water Quality Planning Program and three other sponsors have announced plans for a two-day conference to explore the dimensions of this question: "Are There Alternatives to Sewers for Vermont Towns?"

The three other sponsors are the Vermont Agency of Environmental Conservation, the UVM Water Resources Center, and the UVM Extension Service.

The two-day event will take place on Wednesday, November 2, and Thursday, November 3, at the Lake Morey Inn in Fairlee, Vermont. (Fairlee is about 20 miles north of White River Junction on Route 91).

As the program announcement explains, the question of alternatives to centralized sewage systems is a timely concern.

Increasingly the smaller communities in the state are saying they cannot afford sewage treatment plants. More than one town has voted down the necessary bond to support a centralized sewage treatment plant. Citizens in another (town) have voted to reject federal money and to force individual polluters to install their own septic systems.

In addition, the proposed Senate amendments to the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act contain a

provision that would require "rural states" to spend five to ten percent of their annual allotment for sewage treatment plant construction on "alternatives" for communities of 2,500 or less.

Cathy Garnett, of the Water Quality Office, in preparing for this conference has been careful to stress the purpose of the State 208 Program and to set the aim of the conference in its proper perspective.

The purpose of the 208 Program, Garnett explained, is to look at **unaddressed** water quality problems in Vermont. "Alternatives" is one of these unaddressed problems. Garnett goes on to say that it would be wrong to conclude that in drawing attention to alternatives the 208 Program was in any way repudiating centralized systems. Garnett believes that centralized systems have an important function, particularly in more densely settled communities. The problem is in places like Marshfield, Albany, Arlington, lightly populated communities, that are faced with the prospect of "sewerage up" at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars of capital costs, high annual users' fees, and all this to abate pollution from as few as 25, or 40, or 50 points of discharge. It is for such towns that the idea of alternatives has special appeal.

conference ...

The conference on November 2 and 3 will explore a host of issues surrounding the question of alternatives, including: septic tanks, the disposal of wastes from septic tanks, alternative systems for single family houses, alternatives for subdivisions and clusters of houses, the environmental and economic impact of alternatives, and case study reports from communities in other northern states, like Wisconsin and Maine, where such alternatives have been field-tested.

Cathy Garnett hopes that selectmen, health officers, consulting engineers, state officials, members of regional planning commissions, legislators and members of the public will attend the conference. Said Garnett: "The conference will be successful if the idea of alternatives gains a fair

hearing in professional circles. We are looking for acceptance of the validity of alternatives; at the same time we want people to understand their limitations.

The Water Quality Office in Montpelier is asking people to pre-register for the conference before October 28. Pre-registration for lunch and coffee will cost \$5.25 per person per day, and \$10.50 for both days. Conference participants who choose NOT to have meals at the Lake Morey Inn will be asked to pay a registration fee of \$2.00 per day at the door. For further information, contact Cathy Garnett, 5 Court Street, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602, telephone (802) 828-2741.

Hydropower Sites & Energy Conservation Month

ERDA ASKS FOR HYDROPOWER PROPOSALS

The Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) will soon be asking for proposals as part of a \$10 million nationwide program to study the feasibility of generating electric power by restoring existing "low-head hydropower sites." A low-head hydropower site is a river location with small drops in water level.

The ERDA program, although nationwide in scope, will have a special emphasis in New England. About 40 to 60 sites will be designated as part of the overall feasibility study. Of particular interest to ERDA are sites owned by a community, a public utility or an industrial concern.

In September, 1976, Gordon Stensrud, Chief Engineer at the Public Service Board in Montpelier, reported that at least 26 dams in Vermont that were once producing electric power had been abandoned. The ERDA study will be devoted to "site specific studies of the economic and engineering requirements for restoring existing sites."

Vermonters interested in finding out more about the new \$10 million federal program to study the feasibility of restoring existing low-head hydro sites should write: Benny G. Dibona, Chief, Resource Engineering Branch, Division of Geothermal Energy, Energy Research and Development Administration, Washington, D.C., 20545.

ENERGY CONSERVATION MONTH

The Vermont State Energy Office in Montpelier has designated November as "Energy Conservation Month."

During November, the State Energy Office will form committees to develop innovative energy conservation programs for each segment of Vermont's economy.

In the most recent issue of *Vermont Energy News* from the

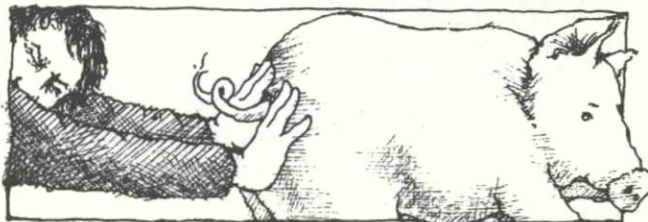
State Energy Office, it was pointed out that New England is now about 79% dependent on foreign oil. This figure compares to 75% in 1973. The Energy Office is calling on Vermonters to use energy more efficiently, to use it less, and to employ sensible alternatives.

For information on energy conservation, contact the State Energy Office, State Office Building, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602, (802) 828-2768.

CONFERENCE ON SOLAR-HEATED GREENHOUSES

On Saturday, November 19, Marlboro College in Marlboro, Vermont will play host to a Conference on Solar-Heated Greenhouses. The all-day conference will focus on the design, construction and operation of solar-heated greenhouses and the economics of wintertime vegetable production in non-conventional greenhouses.

Those who wish to attend the Conference should pre-register for admission, and will be asked to pay a fee of \$22.00. For further information, contact John Hayes, Marlboro College, Marlboro, Vermont, 05344, (802) 254-2393.



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"R.A.R.E. 2"

55,780 Acres to be Evaluated

John P. McArdle, U.S. Forest Supervisor of the Green Mountain National Forest, has announced the results of Phase I of the "Roadless and Undeveloped Area Inventory" in Vermont.

In a letter dated September 20, McArdle says that the Inventory "has resulted in the identification of six areas covering a total of 55,780 acres in the Green Mountain National Forest. These six areas have met the Forest Service criteria established for roadless and undeveloped areas in the Eastern United States."

A first inventory of roadless and undeveloped areas (RARE I) was completed in 1973. But the new Carter Administration and many supporters of wilderness preservation viewed that first inventory as seriously flawed. One major omission was the failure to consider lands in eastern National Forests, such as Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest.

A bulletin prepared by national environmental groups states what the RARE II inventory will do and what it will not do.

The objective of Phase I is simply to get every last acre of roadless and undeveloped land onto the completed inventory, so that all potential wilderness can be considered in later phases of (the Roadless Area Review).

Phase I is not an opinion gathering exercise, nor a popularity contest, and does not involve choosing priorities between areas. It is basically a technical matter: if a particular acre of land meets the criteria, liberally interpreted, it should be included.

The RARE II inventory does not designate areas to be set aside as wilderness areas. Only Congress and the President can do this. So when John McArdle announced the results of Phase I he was not designating additions to Vermont's existing wilderness areas. He was simply saying that 55,780 acres of land in the Green Mountain National Forest qualify for inclusion in the Inventory, and that maps and descriptions of this land have been forwarded to the U.S. Forest Service District Office in Milwaukee and then to Washington, D.C. At some future date, these 55,780 acres will be evaluated, and the public will have an opportunity to comment on what lands, if any, should be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The two existing wilderness areas in Vermont are Bristol Cliffs (3,740 acres) and Lye Brook (12,898 acres). These

two areas amount to less than 7 percent of the 250,000 acres in the entire Green Mountain National Forest.

The six additional areas that have now been recommended for further evaluation in Washington, D.C. are these:

- (1) Breadloaf -- 19,910 acres in the Towns of Lincoln, Ripton, Granville, Hancock and Warren;
- (2) Walder Mountain -- 8,590 acres in the towns of Wallingford and Mt. Tabor;
- (3) Devil's Den -- 8,830 acres in the Towns of Mount Holly, Weston and Mt. Tabor;
- (4) Griffith Lake -- 9,670 acres in the Towns of Mt. Tabor, Dorset and Peru;
- (5) Lye Brook addition -- 2,660 acres in the Town of Sunderland;
- (6) Woodford -- 6,120 acres in the Towns of Woodford, Searsburg and Readsboro.

Feelings are running high in Vermont both for and against the eventual designation of new wilderness areas.

The new Administration in Washington, D.C. is committed to an expansion of the present wilderness system. In his environmental message to Congress on May 23, President Carter said that the National Wilderness Preservation System "must be expanded promptly, before the most deserving areas of federal lands are opened to other uses and lost to wilderness forever."

Here in Vermont, a public workshop was held in Rutland on August 3. This workshop was attended by as many as 150 people. The purpose of the workshop was to hear suggestions for areas to be included in the new inventory, and to review possible criteria for evaluating potential wilderness areas. The majority of people in attendance at the workshop took the opportunity to voice their opposition to further federally-designated wilderness areas in Vermont. This was in spite of the fact that the Rutland workshop had NOT been called to hear citizen sentiment for or against wilderness, as such. Even so, the message was clear -- there is citizen opposition to the designation of further wilderness areas in Vermont.

On the other side are supporters of wilderness. They have

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R.A.R.E. continued

been working to see that all the land that qualifies for review is included in the Roadless and Undeveloped Area Inventory.

The importance of the RARE II review to wilderness advo-

LAND TRUST TO HOLD INAUGURAL MEETING

The Ottauquechee Regional Land Trust will hold a meeting to introduce itself to citizens and organizations in the Woodstock area on Thursday evening, November 17, at 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Woodstock Historical Society.

The inaugural public meeting of the Trust will open with introductory remarks by Richard Carbin, Executive Director of the Ottauquechee Regional Planning & Development Commission. Carbin will be followed by Edmund Kellogg, Associate Dean of the Vermont Law School. Kellogg will say briefly what the Trust is and what it hopes to achieve. There will be two

Backpacking, Canoeing, Nature Study, X-C... Backpacker Books has just released its new Catalog Number 4, listing over 750 trail guides, climbing guides, and titles related to wilderness travel and nature study. Price is \$1.00, refundable with the first purchase. Or stop in, 9 - 4, Monday through Friday. Backpacker Books, Dept CL42, Main Street, Orwell, Vt. 05760.

We Welcome Your Classified Ad

The Resources Section of the Vermont Environmental Report is accepting classifieds for upcoming issues. Ads are sold on the basis of twenty cents per word, a minimum of \$5.00 per ad. For more information contact: Jeannette T. Stebbins, VNRC, 26 State St., Montpelier, Vt. 05602. or call 223-2328.

cates is expressed in a letter from Grace Pierce of the Wilderness Society and addressed to friends of wilderness. Pierce says: "The WILDERNESS importance of RARE II (the inventory) is obvious. All future Forest Service wilderness selections will come from this inventory." For the supporters of wilderness, the identification of 55,780 acres in Vermont was a large step in the direction of that objective.

principal speakers on the evening's program: William M. Preston from the Lincoln Land Trust in Lincoln, Massachusetts, and Rep. Norris Hoyt, an attorney from Norwich, Vermont. Preston will explain the program of the Lincoln Land Trust and Hoyt will discuss land trusts in Vermont and legislation that affects easements.

There will also be a showing of Robert Klein's slide-tape presentation, entitled, "Natural Areas: Saving a Precious Resource."

For further information on the National Wildlife Federation Fellowship program for academic year 1978-1979 with awards of up to \$4,000, write, Executive Vice President, National Wildlife Federation, 1412 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

Dickey-Lincoln & Other ANNOUNCEMENTS....

CORPS ANNOUNCES ST. JOHNSBURY MEETING

Colonel John P. Chandler, Head of the Corps of Army Engineers' New England Office, has announced a public meeting in Vermont to provide a "convenient opportunity" for private citizens, public officials and organized groups to express their views on the \$690 million proposed Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric project on the Upper St. John River in northern Maine. The Vermont meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 14, at the Junior High School Auditorium, in St. Johnsbury. Those wishing to submit written statements should direct their remarks to: Colonel John P. Chandler, New England Division Office, Army Corps of Engineers, 424 Trapelo Road, Waltham, Massachusetts, 02154.

VNRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

VNRC members are invited to attend the next meeting of the Vermont Natural Resources Council Board of Directors. It will be held on Wednesday, November 16, in the Gallery of the Woodstock Historical Society at 26 Elm Street in Woodstock. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m., and will conclude no later than 4:30 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Seward Weber, Executive Director of the Vermont Natural Resources Council, has indicated that minutes of the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Council are available, and will be sent to any VNRC member upon request.

CORRECTION:

The page one story in last month's VER entitled, "Relief in Sight for the Unsewered Town," stated that the Town of Barton directed its polluters to install septic systems in order to abate local water pollution.

This particular action was taken by the Town of Albany, NOT Barton, and Albany took this action on its own, before a vote on whether or not to construct a municipal sewage system was offered to Albany citizens.

The VER regrets this mistake.

VNRC

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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