Utilities and Conservation

TWO VIEWS

George Sterzinger

Over the past year, a new coalition of utilities, regulators and even some soft energy activists have begun to push for utility company financing of conservation and related "alternative" technologies. Clearly, conservation measures can supply equivalent or even superior energy than building new generating plants. Proposals in this vein offer capital savings, "new" energy as opposed to the incremental power from 'old' or improved technology. However, there is evidence that private utility companies are not the best agents with given responsibility for supplying conservation and other new technologies.

On the simplest level, utilities have no particular incentive to provide lower cost energy to customers. Because their profits are guaranteed by law, they are allowed to pass any additional investment costs on to consumers. Whatever technology they choose to develop is financed by increasing the base rate on utility bills.

Another important aspect of private utility economics that would inflate the cost of conservation and other alternatives is their predilection for "gold-plated" technologies. The greater the dollar value of equipment the utility owns, the greater the profits. Consequently, the more favorable capital-intensive, expensive and complicated alternative energy technologies. Besides increasing costs, a bias also has a substantial effect on our future choice of alternative technologies, since so many of them -- as well as their markets -- are still being developed.

Finally, the most important issue is whether making utilities responsible for conservation actually will redirect them toward energy alternatives, and will this redirection change utilities' plans to expand conventional facilities?

Real development of energy alternatives ought to assume reduced electricity use as conservation and solar resources take over energy needs. If electricity is used only for its optimal purposes, it will be phased out of several markets, such as space and hot water heating, where it currently has a healthy share.

Utility companies' interests in continuing to sell electricity, however, would limit development of alternatives such as solar and conservation. Once a company has invested in a generating plant, it has to sell enough electricity to pay off the investment. A utility can hardly promote conservation when to do so is at odds with its own self-interest in maintaining demand.

Consequently, giving the conservation and solar markets to utilities merely makes it more difficult to control or roll back the use of electricity. Simply put, industry pricing and marketing policies are dedicated to preventing what they see as a "death spiral" of declining consumption in which prices rise because fewer kilowatt-hours of sales pay off the same fixed costs, which in turn increases conservation because of rising prices, and so on.

While we may see some conservation, and perhaps a plant or two cancelled or delayed, it doesn't seem reasonable to expect conservation to compete with electricity use -- or even displace it in some markets -- if its development in under utility control.

A preferable strategy would be to encourage development of conservation and alternative energy production by some form of public ownership. Power companies controlled by the public are providing electricity and gas, and the record shows that they work well -- better in many respects than private utilities. The most recent national figures show

Paul Markowitz

Electrical utilities throughout the country have found conservation and load management to be the most cost-effective strategy for meeting new electrical demand in the years ahead. The work of several large utilities, including Pacific Gas and Electric (of northern California), the Tennessee Valley Authority, General Public Utilities (of Pennsylvania and New Jersey), and Southern California Edison, show conservation and load management can provide electricity at one-half to one-fifteenth the cost of new generation.

"Conservation" here refers to what the Harvard Business School calls "Productive Conservation" or "changes in our capital stock and daily behavior that promote energy savings in a manner that is economically and socially non-disruptive." Load management refers to that subset of activities which allow a utility to shift a major portion of its peak load demand to off-peak periods, thereby optimizing the use of less expensive sources of generation.

Discussions with Vermont utility representatives show a wide variation in the type and extent of conservation and load management activities, with considerable room for expansion. These activities, and the number of participants are summarized in the chart on Page 8. The variation among utilities is quite evident. For instance:

- BED has found that installing low-cost conservation items free-of-charge produces a Kw for one-third the cost of new generating capacity. GMP and CVPS representatives viewed engaging in such activities as an inappropriate role for utilities.

- With a history of promoting alternative energy, Windham has had water heater load management programs for several years. BED is still investigating its options for load management, and GMP is now preparing to purchase a ripple control system designed to achieve 4200 of its 51,000 water heaters.

All but a few utilities participate in the Residential Conservation Corporation by contributing a proportional share to the funding of this program. (The RCC is a non-profit organization that provides specifications for installing conservation measures.)

Many utilities also have seasonal rate programs, mandated by the Public Service Board, which result in higher Kwh charges during the winter months.

Vermont utilities have demonstrated that much can be done to control electricity use through conservation and load management. A look at utilities nationwide will greatly expand these possibilities:

The General Public Utilities Conservation and Load Management program calls for reducing peak demand by 17%. Customers have met projections by 1990, or from a 2.6% to a 7.6% growth factor. The GPU program requires time-of-day rates for all new construction with electric space heat, for new customers in existing households with monthly usage greater than 1100 kWh, and for all industrial users. GPUs provide storage water heaters and storage space heaters to customers who must go on TOU rates.

Pacific Gas and Electric offers cash incentives to energy-efficient home-builders, to customers who replace their old inefficient refrigerators and to appliance salespeople who sell efficient appliances. PG&E plans to increase its expenditures on customer-related activities to $125 million by 1983 (a 300% increase over 1978).

Southern California Edison spent about $39 million on its

(Continued on Page 8)
**Farrmink**

• Milk and More Milk. There is no agreement as yet on the extent of the damage the new $11.5 billion Federal Farm Bill will do to Vermont farming. Dairying presently accounts for nearly 90% of the value of Ver-
mon_t's farm production, and the cuts in Fed-
eral price supports for dairy products are es-
pecially deep. There is general agreement that Vermont stands to lose many of its 50-
50 cow herds, and that new farmers and those with particularly heavy debt loads will be the first to fold.

Contrary to government wishful thinking, individual farmers will not voluntarily cut back their production, thus bringing down the surplus and boosting market prices and farm income. In fact, the price support redu-
tions will have the opposite effect.

In tough times, as the margin of price over production gets smaller, farmers have to pro-
duce more just to stay even. No matter how low milk prices fall, farmers must still pay their mortgages, taxes, principal and interest on their tractors, silos and equipment. They cannot stay afloat without fuel, feed and replacement parts. Rather than cutting production, simple survival requires that farmers make up for smaller margins by milking more cows, eating more milk per cow and generally shaving production costs in every possible way.

Both the dairy industry and the USDA now predict that farmers will produce approxi-
mately 2% more milk in 1982. The bigger get bigger, the smaller follow suit or fold, and the cycle continues.

"Part-time Farmers." Bob Ramler, President of the Vermont Association of America (based in Brattleboro) predicts that in 1990, "only 38% of America's present 256,000 dairy farms will be in business." He also adds that anyone milking fewer than 30 cows should be called a "part-timer." Hmmm, quite a few 15-hour-a-day part-
timers here in Vermont, I reckon.

A Chance to Do Something. Try to get to one of the Regional Conferences the Ext-
tension Service is sponsoring in February and March. The Extension Service has put together a helpful package outlining farmland preservation strategies for discussion at these meetings. See Calendar, Page 2, for dates and places.

**Agricultural Diversification Study.** The long awaited study of the potential for di-
versified agriculture in the Connecticut River Valley is at the printer's. The Federally-
funded, State-conducted study is optimistic about the future for a limited number of new fruit and vegetable producers in the val-
ley. But once the best roadside stand loca-
tions are spoken for, growers will have to compete with wholesalers for the restaurant and grocery store trade. If you'd like a copy of the 70-page study, write Bob Reiss at the Vermont Department of Agriculture, State Office Building, Montpelier, VT 05602.

• Puddling vs. Rolling. Meanwhile, some produce wholesalers are having a tough time making a go of it. Natural food giant Ere-
whon has just filed for bankruptcy. Green Mountain Produce, looking for a cap-
ital infusion of $50,000 to build its in-
vventory, fills its orders and stays afloat. If you know of a potential investor looking for an effective way to give a direct boost to Vermont agriculture, please call me, Don Hooper, collect at 223-2328.

As a tattered veteran of direct marketing farm commodities, fresh vegetables, goats milk, feta cheese, eggs, I feel I have a bias. I doubt that most small diversified farmers really want to spend as much time peddling as producing. It might be more cost-effective for us to supply the wholesalers who have the econ-
omy of scale necessary to get Vermont pro-
duce onto urban shelves throughout New England.

("Farrmink" is a regular VER feature by Don Hooper, goat farmer and VNRC's Assis-
tant Director.")

**Legislative Update**

"Act 250. H.133 would correct some defici-
cies in Act 250 by eliminating the ten-acre exemp-
tion for residences, making the law more effective.

The House Natural Resources Committee approved the bill after deleting the section concerning the "ten-
acre loophole." But on the House floor, the bill was voted down as amended and referred to the House Agriculture Committee. VNRC strongly reco-
mends that this bill be approved in its original form, and that it be complemented by a bill removing the ten-acre exemption in State Subdivision regulations. Under current law, "subdivision" is defined as a division of land into parcels of ten acres or less. If there are ten or more parcels, the developer must secure Act 250 approval; if less than ten parcels are involved, the State Subdivision Regulations apply. Developers can circumvent State review by creating subdivi-
sions where each parcel is just slightly larger than ten acres. This means that Vermont farm and forestland is up for sale at a much lower rate — ten acres at a time — than market condi-
tions alone would warrant.

"Minimum Streamflow. H.460, the Dam Saf-
ty Bill, was passed by the full House on January 29th. The House Energy Committee took a maximum streamflow amendment which would not allow the State to require a certificate of public good, that dam operators maintain a "minimum water discharge flow rate" through a dam. However, this provision applies only to new construction and to dams with im-
poundments larger than 500,000 cubic feet. It

as at best a half-hearted attempt to balance the need for hydroelectric power with the need to maintain water quality. We hope that the House Natural Resources Committee will recon-
stitute H.360, the Minimum Streamflow Bill, or a similar bill which deals with minimum flow in a more comprehensive way.

"Endangered Species. We commend the House Natural Resources Committee for approving S.63, the Endangered Species Bill. S.63, as amended, restores the Environmental Secretary as head of the Endangered Species Committee and leaves appointment of the committee members to the Governor. The compromise on committee mem-

**Monday, February 25th, 12:15 - 1:30**

**VNRC Brown Bag Luncheon.** Bob Wagner, Agricultural Land Resource Consultant for the Vermont Department of Agriculture, will talk about the State's new farmland mapping program.

**Calendar**

Friday, February 19th, 12:15 - 1:30

**VNRC Brown Bag Luncheon.** Bob Wagner, Agricultural Land Resource Consultant for the Vermont Department of Agriculture, will talk about the State's new farmland mapping program.

Monday, February 22nd

Regional conference on farmland protec-
tion in the Bellows Falls area, sponsored by the Extension Service. For more information, call Bob Townshend, 457-2684.

Friday, February 26th, 12:15 - 1:30

**VNRC Brown Bag Luncheon.** Jan Eastman, Executive Officer of the Vermont Environ-
mental Board, will talk about the strengths and weaknesses of Act 250.

Friday, March 5th, 12:15 - 1:30

**VNRC Brown Bag Luncheon.** Special screening of, We're Building an Ark, an ex-
cellent new slide-tape show produced by Bob Klein, Field Director of the Vermont Nature Conservancy. The 20-minute show discusses the importance of private land trusts in pro-
moting natural diversity and resource protec-
tion and features some spectacularly beauti-

nature photographs.

**Monday, March 8th**

Regional conference on farmland protec-
tion at VTC in Randolph, sponsored by the Extension Service. Call Barry Stryker, 223-2389, for information.

Friday, March 12th, 12:15 - 1:30

**VNRC Brown Bag Luncheon.** Cheryl King of the Vermont Department of Water Re-

sources and Environmental Engineering will bring us up to date on the State's proposed ground water protection strategy.

Friday, March 19th, 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Meeting of "SLEEP" (Statewide Environ-
mental Education People) at the Green Mount-
in Audubon Center in Huntington. An open meeting for teachers, conservationists and anyone else interested in comparing notes, sharing ideas and generally finding out what's happening in the field of environmental edu-
cation. For further information, call Sally Laughlin at VINS, 457-2779.

Friday, March 26th, 12:15 - 1:30

**VNRC Brown Bag Luncheon.** Film and dis-
cussion of the future of farmland protection with Don Hooper, VNRC Assistant Director. Don will show "Farming the Land," an ex-

cellent 25-minute film produced by Michael Hall of Ipswich, New Hampshire. The film includes poignant interviews with six New Hampshire farmers forced off the land by development pressures and rising real estate values.
Co-ops May Be Key to Better Forest Management

Sarah Thorne

Vermont woodland owners face a tremendous challenge and opportunity. Within the next 50 years, the national timber demand will double. However, if woodland owners cannot manage their forests now to increase the growth of marketable species for the future, the surge in timber harvesting will outstrip Vermont’s net annual growth in 15-30 years.

Several obstacles prevent forest owners from managing and harvesting timber in a way that allows them to profitably meet demand in the short run and to sustain the yield and health of their forests in the long run. The obstacles are (1) the low quality of timber, (2) the fragmented pattern of forest ownership, and (3) the difficulty of marketing low-quality, low-volume timber.

One way Vermont forest land owners can overcome these barriers is to create local woodland owners’ management and marketing associations.

LOW-QUALITY TIMBER

For many years, Vermont landowners have had neither the knowledge nor the incentive to do anything but “high-grade” their forests. By high-grading (cutting the best and leaving the rest), landowners leave themselves with overcrowded stands of less valuable trees. Because they derive smaller profits from low-quality timber, they have little incentive to re-invest in the forest. The inevitable result: more high-grading.

This is why, on two-thirds of Vermont’s forest land, the average net annual growth of merchantable timber is only about one-quarter of the potential yield. High-quality white pine is already being harvested faster than it can be replaced. Sawmills, which usually buy only higher quality timber, must accept smaller trees and lower-quality species. This means higher consumer prices for prime quality lumber.

FRAGMENTED OWNERSHIP

A major reason why it is difficult for landowners to escape this vicious circle is that the average parcel of forest land in Vermont is only about 50 acres. Thus, the harvest is not only low-quality, but low-volume. As a rule, the smaller the parcel, the longer the period between harvests and the more difficult the access for loggers. In addition, more than half of all private forest land changes hands every 25 years. Therefore, it is difficult for landowners to adopt a long-term, high-quality management perspective.

INACCESSIBLE MARKETS

Right now, there are few economic incentives to take the long-range view. Prospective timber producers often cannot find markets which will pay enough to cover management, logging and transportation costs for low-quality, low-volume harvests. They are also at a competitive disadvantage because of the trend toward mechanized whole-tree harvesting for large-volume buyers (wood-fired industries and utilities, pellet plants, and chipboard manufacturers). Only landowners with larger tracts, better logging access and higher-quality timber can take advantage of these expanding markets.

FOREST LANDOWNERS’ ASSOCIATIONS

Vermont forest owners can surmount these obstacles to profitable management by building successful landowners’ associations. A forest landowners’ association is typically a membership organization confined to a small geographical region, such as a county or watershed. Members may number in the hundreds, and range from owners of a few acres to a few hundred acres. They share the cost of hiring a forester, who develops long-term management plans, selects and marks timber, recommends loggers, and secures contracts or provides marketing assistance. The association either maintains a timber concentration yard or coordinates harvesting and transportation so that marketable volumes of particular species can be assembled.

Landowners — and occasionally non-forest-owning residents — may buy shares in the association. Members cover the association’s operating costs and dividends by paying commissions on sales and services received. Members may have direct and extensive control over the association, as in a cooperative, or they may have limited involvement, as in a joint-venture. Landowners’ associations offer their members the competitive advantages of large commercial forest operations, but members retain ownership and control of their land.

Members receive more income through association than they would as individuals because:

- Economies of scale mean that foresters can provide services at lower rates.
- Members can coordinate harvesting on adjacent parcels to improve logging access and reduce costs.
- Members may secure loans from the association for logging and management costs (the association can apply for public and private loans which are seldom available to individuals).
- By pooling harvests from several parcels, landowners can transport their timber further and sell it for higher-value uses (e.g., sawlogs rather than firewood). Therefore they have an incentive to manage for high-value trees.

The best-known landowners’ associations are the federated cooperatives in Scandinavia and Japan, but at one time, there were 65 forest cooperatives in the United States. Most of these were Depression-era cooperatives which failed after several years because of poor markets, inadequate transportation and poor management.

Recently, changing conditions have renewed interest in landowner associations in the U.S. A new association, of interest to Vermont woodland owners, is the Forest Products Marketing and Management Cooperative of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. Begun as an educational organization, it has operated as a cooperative for two years. 75 members employ two foresters to manage 15,000 acres and a collective holding yard. Initially funded by a U.S. Forest Service grant, the cooperative is now financially self-sufficient.

Another association, being sponsored by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Monadnock Forest Land Trust, have conducted a forest inventory for 20 landowners of 5000 acres in southwestern New Hampshire. They will analyze this data to determine the acreage and timber quality necessary to support a landowners’ association in their area.

For more information about forest landowners’ associations, write for a copy of the forthcoming publication, Forest Management and Marketing Associations in Vermont, to: Natural Resources Extension, University of Vermont, 601 Main Street, Burlington, VT 05405 or call Sarah Thorne, (603) 646-3551.

Sarah Thorne is a graduate student at Dartmouth’s Resource Policy Center. Her interest in woodland owners’ associations grew out of an independent study project for UVM’s School of Natural Resources.
New England Prospects
Carl Reidel, Editor
(University Press of New England, $7.95 paper)

New England Prospects, edited by VNRC
Board Chairman Carl Reidel, is the first vol-
ume in a series entitled, Futures of New Eng-
land. The authors of the essays in this collection
describe the relationships between land use patterns,
ergy, natural resources and public policy
in the six-state region. But more importantly,
they expose an excellent sense of how New England works by
explaining the accidents of history, geography, geography
and politics which shaped the character of
New England, and speculating on how these
limitations and opportunities will determine our
future.

In “An Historical Perspective,” Benjamin
Labaree describes, in a most engaging fashion,
the evolution of land use patterns and the
importance of land in early New England politi-
cal, social and cultural life. The settlement
of Massachusetts Bay Colony took great
care to parcel out land in such a way that the
integrity of the community and its values would be
preserved. No fees of urban planning, they
prescribed the pattern and width of streets
as well as the location and size of buildings.
Their attention to detail no doubt accounts
in part for the timeless charm of New Eng-
land villages.

But the colonists were also responsible for
lingering, destructive attitudes toward the
land’s resources. Although per-acre yields
were low by English standards, the colonists
made few attempts to improve the produc-
tivity of their soils. “The Colonial way to
greater production was to cultivate more land,”
says Labaree.

Likewise, forest management was virtually
unheard of in early New England: “From
the earliest settlements of the seventeenth
century, Americans had considered forests
to be one of the greatest obstacles to progress in
the new world, and they bent every effort to
clearing the land... No one anticipated a
time when timber would be of sufficient value
to justify measures of conservation, let alone
management of any sort.”

Poor management combined with the ad-
verse natural conditions effectively put an end to
the “agricultural phase” of land use in New
England. The railroads created ready access
to the Middle West, “where soil conditions
and climate made it possible for farmers to
undersell easterners in their own backyard.”
The number of farms and the
amount of land devoted to agriculture
declined steadily after 1880.

Mark Lapping’s “Toward a Working New
England Landscape” picks up where Labaree
leaves off. After quantifying farmland loss
since 1880, Lapping criticizes the various
farmland protection schemes employed by
the six New England states. He concludes
that use value assessment, purchase of de-
velopment rights and Vermont’s capital gains
tax all evade the real question, which is
“how to make farming profitable?”

Lapping recommends stimulating the pur-
chase of farm commodities, reducing
energy costs through greater reliance on
rail transport, substituting local forage for
imported feed grains, diversifying agricultural products, maintaining high
interest rates for farming entry, and creating a “far-
mland rationalization” program (preservation of
contiguous tracts of farmland through land
trusts and government-subsidized purchases).

The author’s criticisms of current farmland
preservation techniques are persuasive, but
his alternatives do not seem to get to the root
of the complicated problem of revitalizing
New England agriculture. Surely he overesti-
mates the efficacy of the “Vermont Seal of
Quality” program or last year’s institutional
marketing law (which says only that, all other
things being equal, State institutions should
buy Vermont produce). He also underesti-
mates the difficulty of introducing a “far-
mland rationalization” program in a relatively
densely-populated region like New England,
and the economic costs of re-introducing
rail transport and local forage.

Lapping nevertheless has contributed great-
ly, in this article and elsewhere, to the defini-
tion and understanding of the chronic
critical problem of farmland loss in New Eng-
land.

F.H. Bormann’s “Air Pollution Stress and
Energy Policy” should be read in conjunction
with Henry Lee’s “Energy: The Challenge.”
I found it hard to follow Bormann’s technical
argument that “cheap energy” — bought at
the cost of increased pollution — is not cheap
at all because we must expend energy and
capital to create substitutes for, or to restore,
natural systems destroyed by pollution. But
I can appreciate his conclusion that, “the
available evidence indicates that New England
receives a large burden of transported pollu-
tants that originate in an area stretching from
southern Canada to the southeastern United
States,” and his recommendation that we con-
tinue to reduce emissions while cutting back
on our use of fossil fuels through increased
energy efficiency and reliance on solar, water,
wind and tidal power.

Then, in the subsequent article — possibly
the liveliest and most controversial in this
collection — we run headlong into Henry Lee’s
contention that the transition to a non-petro-
leum-based economy is going to take a lot
longer than most of us anticipated. Lee
reasons that the transitions from wood to
coal, and from coal to oil, each took about
50 years, and that the amount of “embedded
capital stock” is much greater now than it
was at the time of these earlier transitions.
Lee also maintains that, in retrospect, the
effects of the energy crises of the last decade
were less profound than they appeared. For

one thing, New England industries have been
moving away from energy-intensive manufac-
turing for 100 years. New England manufac-
turers use less than one third the energy per
unit value added than their national counterparts,
due in part to the predominance of hi-tech
industries such as the manufacture of elec-
tronics and communications equipment. “En-
ergy is more expensive in New England and
has always been so,” says Lee, because of
“distance from energy production centers”
and the inability to acquire cheap, price-controlled
natural gas.”

However, Lee points out that continued es-
calation of energy prices could cause a drain
on the state’s economy despite the fact
that New England’s energy dollars go to producers
in other parts of the country. To remedy this
situation, Lee recommends substituting energy-
efficient plant equipment for older, less-efficient
capital stock, and maximizing the use of
labor-intensive renewable energy resources.
As for residential and commercial energy
use, which is 47% of England’s energy load,
Lee believes that technological breakthroughs in the areas of energy utilization
will be more important than new methods of energy production. But he stresses that un-
less subsidized financing is more reasonable,
many investments in energy-efficiency improve-
ments will not be made.

The author also points out that rising oil
prices, while not catastrophic for New Eng-
land as a whole, will place the region’s poor in
an “untenable situation.” Even with mod-
erate increases (to $50 per barrel), the total
energy bill by the year 2000 for an average
New England home will be about $2500.
At $100 per barrel, people with incomes of
around $7500 would need $5000 for their
basic energy needs.

If they don’t read anything else this year,
eyery legislator in New England should read
that paragraph. It makes it clear that fuel
assistance cannot no longer be viewed as an ad
hoc government function; it must become
a standard line item in State budgets until we
have successfully completed the transition
to new sources of energy.

Kenneth Geiser’s “Reformulation of the
Cities” is the weakest link in this chain. Al-
though the topic is important, Geiser con-
tributes little new information. Who doesn’t
know by now that New England cities are ex-
periencing slower growth and higher energy
consumption compared to the nation as a whole.
The number of divorced, separated and single
adults, single-parent families and childless
 couples is re-structuring urban housing stock?

Geiser does, however, offer an interesting
analysis of three different approaches to ur-
ban planning: the “competitive market
approach,” the “corporate planning approach,”
and the “immunity self-sufficiency ap-
proach.” He leaves little doubt about where
his sympathies lie, describing the goal of the
third approach as “cities of decentralized but
cooperative social units affirmatively addres-
sing their own needs wherever possible from
their own resources.”

This modern utopian vision of a network of
small energy- and food-self-sufficient New
England communities is implicit in most of
the essays in this book, but it reaches its ful-
ter expression in Tom Jorling’s “Alternatives
in A Time of Change.” In earlier days, people
generally knew how to produce or obtain and
maintain the various requirements necessary
to support life. To the extent that they did
not have either of these two forms of know-
ledge, they knew, in a personal sense, the in-

(Continued on Page 5)
CURRENT USE OFFERS NO PERMANENT PROTECTION FOR FARMLAND

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on the Current Use article that appeared in the September/October issue of the Environmental Report. Until recently, my wife and I lived in New Hampshire and supported the passage of the Current Use Law, N.H. RSA 79-A. Although this law has been in effect ¾ years, there is no clear evidence that land is indeed protected, particularly farmland, as Debbie Brightman's article tended to suggest is the case in Vermont. Current Use does offer tax equity and may serve to delay development, but this is not my definition of protection.

While tax equity is an important issue, research conducted by the University of Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station has indicated that taxes are not necessarily the prime or even major cause for land being sold for development (see Attitudes Toward Preserving Agricultural Land in Vermont, August, 1977, Pub. No. 93). The major problem with the Current Use Law as it presently exists in both New Hampshire and Vermont is the inadequate penalty. Commercial and industrial developers are able to offer exorbitant prices for open space. The 10% penalty, which may have a payback period of, say, three years, is not enough of a disincentive. A farmer can place his land under Current Use, plan to sell out in five years, and actually make money. This is especially true in areas of high growth, with a corresponding increase in land values, where the greatest threat to farmland exists. The larger the penalty, the less the likelihood that the land will be removed, I think. With a 100% penalty, probably no one would leave the program (if indeed anyone chose to sign up). On the other hand, with a zero penalty, everyone who qualified would probably join, and could leave as easily. Originally, New Hampshire requested a 20% penalty, but this was later reduced to the present 10%.

Unfortunately, too many folks have come to rely upon Current Use as a primary protection method. The only effective protection strategy in New Hampshire today is high interest rates. Once these rates drop, and let's hope they do for other reasons, the growth boom will be on again and more farmland will turn into subdivisions. In conclusion, I trust you will continue to support Current Use evaluation as one type of assistance to farmers and other landowners. In particular, I encourage you to keep careful records of where and why land leaves Current Use if the State is not already doing this. However, your support of the law should not be at the expense of seeking and demanding programs that truly do "permanently" protect our farmland and open space.

Sincerely,
Peter S. Wellenberger
Executive Director
Nashua River Watershed Association

DARBY BRADLEY'S "SUSTAINED COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT"

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my deep thanks to Darby Bradley, who is leaving the Vermont Natural Resources Council after several years of wonderful and effective service. I felt lucky to work with Darby during my three years at the Council. He is a gifted, generous, modest person.

Darby was already at the Council when I arrived, and he remained there a number of years after I left. I mention this because he had many achievements and I am citing only a few of them:

- Darby won tremendous respect as VNRC's attorney for his knowledge, his thoroughness, his skill and understanding of the law.
- He pioneered the idea of "environmental mediation."
- He pioneered the idea of the "land trust" in Vermont, helping to create the Lake Champlain Islands Trust and the Ottauquechee Regional Land Trust.
- Darby has a deep understanding of Vermont's forest resource. He led an experimental project in whole-tree chip harvesting and served on the Forest Resource Advisory Council. He gave himself with grace and skill and intelligence to issues that affect the future of this terribly important and much-neglected resource.
- He spent countless hours preparing and pursuing a successful legal battle to prevent the construction of Pyramid Mall in Williston.

I never heard Darby complain. Many, many times in my years at the Council, Darby dropped his own work to help me with mine, even though he was carrying a heavy burden himself. In a world of small deceits, Darby is a man who deserves absolute trust. He always helped with a standard of decency and integrity. I find it difficult to express the profound thanks I feel toward Darby as a friend, and my admiration for all that he achieved in his service to Vermont and Vermonters. I can think of few people who have had a greater and more sustained personal commitment to the cause of the environment. Darby's personal gifts and public service were and are indispensable.

Yours sincerely,
Nat Frothingham
Montpelier, Vermont

( Editor's Note: Darby Bradley is leaving VNRC to go to work for the Ottauquechee Regional Land Trust, but he will continue part-time at the Council through 1982. Our thanks to Nat Frothingham for expressing what all of us feel about Darby. Nat is a former Editor of the Vermont Environmental Report.)
Reagan Steps Up Attack on Environmental Protection Agency

Seward Weber

Frontal assaults on the Clean Air Act and other important environmental laws may be stymied by Congress, so the Reagan Administration is stepping up its attack on other fronts: destroying resource conservation programs through personnel and budget reductions. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA must ensure the safe use of more than one billion pounds of pesticides each year, oversee the safe disposal of 40 million tons of hazardous wastes annually, clean up several thousand old waste sites all over the country, set safe levels for radioactivity, monitor some 70,000 chemicals now in use and investigate several thousand new ones introduced every year. All of this is in addition to managing the wastewater treatment program, the Clean Air Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act, to mention but a few of EPA's responsibilities.

When Congress has doubled the Agency's workforce by mandating that it control environmental toxics as well as traditional pollutants, Mr. Reagan recommends that Congress cut the EPA's real purchasing power by 44%.

The Agency has already abolished its Office of Enforcement and its Office of Public Awareness. It has sharply reduced the number of pollution enforcement referrals to the Justice Department for enforcement action. It has allowed a major relaxation of the emission standards that had been toughening up to meet the 1977 Amendments to the Clean Air Act, the upcoming fight to save the Endangered Species Act, and the current effort to dismantle the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. There were also sessions on fundraising, lobbying, and how NWF, as a national organization, can better serve its affiliates.

It would be impossible for me to even begin to summarize the information presented to us. However, after some reflection, I think the single most important thing I learned was how to become an environmental activist again.

Since the first Earth Day more than 10 years ago, I have slowly acquiesced to government agencies and left the fighting up to non-profit organizations. Now I find that government is no longer sympathetic to environmental protection and that many of the organizations I belong to are no less vigilant as they should be. The NWF meeting revived the spirit of environmental activism, and fortunately offered some practical suggestions as well. Two of the most instructive sessions in this regard were the discussions on lobbying by Pat Goggins, NWF's chief lobbyist in Washington, and the presentation on the successful campaign to defeat the Dickey-Lincoln project in Maine by Bob Gardiner, the Executive Director of the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

Pat Goggins pointed out that we will have to struggle at the national level just to keep the laws we have intact. And since it is the voice of the people back home that the lawmakers in Washington really listen to, it will be essential for state-based organizations to keep the pressure on their congressional delegations to support strong environmental laws. State organizations, he said, should organize letter-writing campaigns and get as much information as possible into the media.

Under the New Federalism, the burden for environmental protection, Goggins said, will fall heavily on the states, and because of this effective state lobbying is going to become even more crucial. The task looks formidable: state environmental agencies will probably need more money, not less, in order to take up the slack when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's funds are cut, and we may need to push for new state environmental laws if Federal laws become weak and ineffective. The tactics that Goggins outlined for lobbying on the national level are just as applicable to lobbying in the Vermont Statehouse. VNRC, an individual members must represent an articulate and aggressive environmental constituency in the legislature. As individuals, we must make sure we let our representatives know that we want strong environmental laws. As an organization, VNRC must make sure that its members receive the information they need and that they know where the organization stands on issues. Through letters, the media, testimony before committees, and personal contact with legislators, VNRC, with the support of its members, must become a more effective voice for the environment in the legislature.

At the NWF meeting, Rob Gardiner reported that the long battle against the Dickey-Lincoln Hydroelectric project on the Allagash River in northern Maine has ended in a compromise. The environmentalists, he said, have for the time being retreated from the site scraping that Dickey Dam and leaving open the possibility that the Lincoln School Dam may still be built. It is not a bad compromise, since the Lincoln School Dam, if built, will be much smaller and considerably less destructive. In assessing why they were successful, Gardiner identified certain elements that were constant throughout their effort. Here are some of those elements:

-`Communication. The NRCC developed their own "fact sheets." They pulled together reliable second sources of information, analyzed the project, and sought experts whenever possible.
-`Media. They worked every possible angle to keep Dickey-Lincoln in the news, and whenever possible, they made positive statements (they are for wildlife, for wise energy planning, etc.)
-`Coalitions. They built broad-based coalitions to protect themselves from charges of elitism and to present the strongest possible constituency.
-`Politics. They worked to get support for their position from their congressional delegation and governor.

For me, the NWF workshop uncovered many of the tools that were used in the early days of the environmental movement, and that have not been used very well since. They were effective then and could be again, if we can only find the will to pick them up once more.

(Rebecca Davison is a member of VNRC's Board of Directors and a former Editor of the Vermont Environmental Report.)
NWF Celebrates "Year of the Eagle"

"We Care About Eagles" has been chosen as the theme of National Wildlife Week for 1982, to be observed from March 14 through 20. The 45th annual observance of the "week" will help commemorate 1982 as the "Year of the Eagle" — the bicentennial of the selection of the bald eagle as America's national symbol — and will call attention to the fact that many wildlife species — including the bald eagle — are now endangered species in the U.S.

National Wildlife Week is sponsored each year by the National Wildlife Federation and its affiliates. In Vermont, VNRC and the Departments of Fish and Game and Education will distribute over 2000 educational kits to elementary and junior high school science teachers to help children learn about the plight of the bald eagle and other endangered animals.

BUDGET IS MAIN TOPIC AT VNRC'S WINTER BOARD MEETING

Five new Directors attended the Board's first meeting of 1982 on January 20th in Montpelier. They included: Lawrence P. Summer, Saratoga, Sarnelle Hitchcock of Craftsbury, Robert Jervis of Middlesex, Charles Ross of Hinesburg and Bryce Thomas of Barnet.

The Board spent most of the meeting considering VNRC's 1982 spending and revenue plan. The plan calls for expenditures of about $170,000 and predicts revenues of around $150,000.

Expenses should be lower in 1982 than they were in 1981, due in part to Darby Bradley's reduced involvement with VNRC. There will also be fewer special projects this year because Federal budget cuts mean that less money is available for research and action grants.

Postage expenses will be up sharply because the Reagan Administration has eliminated the preferential rate for bulk mailings by non-profit organizations.

The Board also considered a draft forest policy bill prepared by the Forest Policy Committee. While it was not adopted, the committee was commended on its work and instructed to submit its final proposal to the Executive Committee.

-Seward Weber

166 New Members in November/December

We're pleased to welcome the following members who joined us in November and December:

Peter and Coni Liljengren; Sally D. Mole; Francis Voigt; Mrs. Rachel H. Samson; Dr. and Mrs. Milton Tinnis; Clinton A. Renfrew; Francis Branon; Robert A. Metz; Arthur Goodrich; Mrs. C. Herbert Ridgley; Christine Barnes; Susan Prattel; James LaMontagne; A.H. Simmons; Seymour K. Browne; Dr. and Mrs. Peter A. Dietrich; Alan C. Turner; Mrs. and Mr. Hugh Campbell; Richard W. Stickleby; Robert Mackler; Ralph Rosenberg; Rosaline Rush; Diane Morgan; Lyn Dunouilain; Scott Wilson; Leon Connors; Dr. Robert G. Page; Lynn Ocone; Elaine A. Callinan; Mark Gibson; Rose Paul; Larry Zomorra; Maria Beinksher; Mr. Nancy Egan Sternbach; Craig E. Long; Fred M. Hunt; Mrs. Wayne Fajans; William J. Ryan; Hyatt Waggoner; Mrs. J.G. Davidson; Mrs. Virginia Bressette; June Bradley; Geoffrey R. Smith; George LeShane; Marcia Convoy; Rick Schneider; Mrs. Victor Coty; Ron and Radetta Nemecoky, Mrs. C.B. Schley; Maryanne May/Chris Ritherman; Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Ruthman; Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Elliott; Douglas Reaves; Leon Winter; Mrs. Stephen B. Lande; Kathy Pesce; Peter H. Ebb; Alan Robets; Eric Zeney; Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan T. Fairbank; Richard Norman; Randolph Rowland; Marjorie Houghton; Roy Kaufman; Craig Knebel; Robert Y. Justis; Jono Bollinger; Robert Kennison; Richard and Arvis Addison; Olcott Hooper; Rebecca A. Merrilee; Middlebury College EQ; Floyd and Kathleen Campbell; Kurt and Carol Haupt; Mrs. Edward J. Wipprecht; Richard H. Penney; Halsey L. Beemer; Maurice C. Ball; Miss Adelaide Mayo; Mrs. Elaine McClellan; Doris Freeman; Art Cermoin; Carmen M. Valdes; John J. Eason; Alex Colodny; Linda Daniels; Les Motechman; Marietta Clement/Doug Klaucke; Joe Bartoszek; John Rindlaub; Mrs. D.H. Dommermuth; Elaine Fay; Cynthia Phillips; Stephen Burr; Allen W. Wood; Wendy Laramée; Sherman W. White; Jonathan and Dolores Leff; M.C. Leff; Randall Edwards; Priscilla Haugen; John Douglas; Edna Lee; Gloria Russ Stevenson; Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Saville; Debra and Harvey Klein; Margaret A. Bingham; Michael Powers; Dale E. Percy; Chapinville Union High School; Mr. and Mrs. John Hanselman; Dr. Robert B. Northrop; Barbara Racen; Kathryn Gips; Laura Swigert; Katherine K. Browne; Dr. Philip Ehret; Marjorie Kent; Harvey Liss; James Layok; Ottawaqupee Regional Land Trust; Burlington Savings Bank; Lois and George Lackey; Richard and Katherine Rose; Alfred G. Parker; Associates in Rural Development; Dennis Bailey; Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Flower, Jr.; Elizabeth Kellogg; Richard Noyes; Samuel Lloyd; Robert J. Pulaski; Mr. and Mrs. G.C. Schweizerho; Ernest H. Bancroft; Judy Gendron; Gordon Thomas; Margot Childs; Jack Noble; Mr. and Mrs. Edward Rowe, Jr.; Mr. and Mrs. John H.T. Wilson; Evelyn M. Sprague; Gesualdo and Loreta Schneider.

HAPPY MARMOT DAY!

Since this paper went to bed during the wee hours of the morning on February 2nd, it seemed only fitting to pause for a moment of groundhog . . . er . . . that is, woodchuck appreciation. As you can see, this small mammal has rather tender feelings. In fact, a little burrowing (pardon the expression) revealed that the groundhog, or woodchuck, is actually the largest and thickest marmot of the northeastern U.S. and Canada.

Marmot or not, VNRC and this creature have shared interests. One of the Council's top priorities is farmland preservation. We believe that preserving our economic independence and our way of life depend on reverting agricultural. And if that isn't woodchuck lib, what is?

Name ____________________________________________
Town or City ___________________________ State ______ Zip ______

( ) Please bill me.

( ) Enclosed is $_________ for a membership in the following category: ( ) Individual - $15.00 ( ) Family - $20.00 ( ) Student - $5.00 ( ) Fixed or Limited Income - $6.00 ( ) Business - $75.00 ( ) Sustaining - $50.00 ( ) Supporting - $100.00

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES:

Senator Patrick Leahy
Room 427
Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Robert Stafford
Room 8219
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman James Jeffords
Room 1524
Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

National Wildlife Federation
1412 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

SAVE EPA
Suite 700
1000 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20005
Two Views: Sterzinger

(Continued from Page 1) public utilities can provide significantly less expensive electricity. Many public utilities are also more concerned about consumer needs because those consumers have control over funding resolutions and, through election of public officials, ultimately control the climate in which utilities operate.

Unfortunately, there are also many examples of organizational self-interest replacing public service as the driving force behind public utilities. The first generation of public utilities has shown some of the same weaknesses that private companies have -- extreme reluctance to delay or cancel additional generation plants, and a willingness to charge customers premiums above the actual cost of providing services in order to finance those plans. These practices are most common in the utilities that are isolated from public control or independent regulatory review (such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, and several of the large state projects).

Public power companies began as a response to the early excesses of the private utility industry, such as price-fixing and failure to serve small markets. Now power companies' malfeasance is promoting excessive energy use. To assure that a second generation of public power will be low-cost, fair, and will develop and market alternative resources in direct competition with conventional ones, the new group of public power companies would have to be democratically-controlled, have the ability to plan for conservation and solar alternatives, and command the financial resources to purchase these alternatives. While private power companies today have the financing ability, they do not seem likely to satisfy our need for democratic control of alternative energy.


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<th>Number of Customers</th>
<th>Seasonal Rates</th>
<th>Time of Day Rates</th>
<th>Peak kW</th>
<th>Base kW</th>
<th>Storage</th>
<th>Heating</th>
<th>Service to Residence</th>
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Two Views: Markowitz

(Continued from Page 1) conservation and load management activities in 1981, with a corresponding savings of around 2 billion kwh and a reduction in peak demand of about 300 Mw. Admittedly, there are tremendous variations among utilities with regard to size, ownership patterns and energy source mixes. But a kilowatt-hour saved is a kilowatt-hour produced, and even a small utility can profitably invest in conservation and load management as it would in new generation.

Utilities offer the ideal institutional framework for helping customers overcome such obstacles to conservation as inadequate funding or lack of information about appropriate conservation activities in the home. As the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission has stated, "They [utilities] are the only institutions in our society that go into our homes once a month with some kind of billing or a meter reader. They have a sense of what is out there; what energy consumption is. For that reason, it is important to take advantage of this contact with the consumer, so we can target where we are going and systematically cover the marketplace. Many of the concerns that have been expressed about consumer protection and design of the program can be handled adequately by an intelligent public commission or other state agency."

Vermont utilities have yet to explore and utilize the full potential of cheaper, shorter-term and more environmentally-benign conservation and load management investments. They can greatly expand their C & LM programs by putting into practice activities undertaken by utilities within the state and throughout the nation. The expedient implementation of these programs in Vermont will need the encouragement of the Legislature and the Public Service Board.

Excerpted from testimony to the Joint Energy Committee of the Vermont Legislature by Paul Markowitz. For a copy of the complete text, write or call the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, 43 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602 (802) 223-5221.

Vermont Environmental Report

Vermont Natural Resources Council
7 Main Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Address Correction Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed

January/February 1982

(Psst! Did you renew for 1982?)
URGENT! PLEASE CALL IMMEDIATELY!!

Act 250 "Ten-Acre Exclusion" Bill in Trouble
February 16, 1982

H.513, a bill which would eliminate the ten-acre exemption from Act 250, is in trouble. This is one of the most important environmental bills before the Vermont General Assembly, and your help is needed to make sure that it gets a fair hearing this session.

The Purpose of the Bill

Act 250, Vermont's land use and development control law, is actually accelerating the conversion of farmland and forest land to other uses because of the way it defines "development." A "lot" is defined as a parcel of land ten acres or smaller. Developers who create ten or more lots within a five-mile radius within a ten-year period must obtain an Act 250 permit; if less than ten lots are involved, State subdivision regulations apply but Act 250 does not.

Developers can escape State subdivision and Act 250 review by creating subdivisions where the parcels are larger than ten acres. This means that in many cases, productive farm and forest land is being carved up at a faster rate than market conditions alone would warrant. For instance:

- The Windham Regional Planning and Development Commission says that "development of subdivisions with lots greater than ten acres has become a common pattern of land development in southeastern Vermont." In a memo in support of H.513, the Commission's Public Policy and Legislation Committee reported that since 1971 there have been thirty large-lot subdivisions in the six-town region, and that these subdivisions have involved more than 3700 acres of land.

- A study by Michael Munson for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission found that since Act 250 went into effect, building lots ten acres or larger have jumped from one percent to thirteen percent of all the lots formed in Chittenden County. And while these lots constituted 10.8% of all the building lots formed between 1968 and 1981, they accounted for over 40% of the land used by those lots.

H.513 would close the "ten-acre loophole" by changing the definition of "lot" in Act 250. This bill would require developers to obtain an Act 250 permit for any subdivision of land into ten or more parcels, regardless of their size. It would also improve the administration of Act 250 by authorizing the courts to assess a civil penalty for violations.

We Must Act Quickly

H.513 was voted out of the House Natural Resources Committee in late January, but without the provision closing the ten-acre loophole. The Committee felt that the important civil penalty provision would not be approved by the full House unless the ten-acre exemption was deleted. But on January 26th, the Committee's amendments were defeated and the bill was referred to the House Agriculture Committee. This Committee is considering the bill this week and will return it to the floor Wednesday, Thursday or Friday (February 17 - 19).

What You Can Do

Call your representative and urge him or her to vote for H.513 with the provision eliminating the ten-acre exemption from Act 250. Ask your friends to do the same. Representatives' home phone numbers are on the back of this sheet. If you cannot reach your legislator at home, call the Sergeant-at-Arms, 828-2228 and request a return call by way of your representative's NATS line.