

# Bulletin

## HISTORIC DAM REMOVAL FREES LEGENDARY WATERS

*VNRC Continues to Push for Restoration*

When the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recommended removal of the Newport No. 11 dam in June, much cheering ensued among advocates for the Clyde River. This marked the first time the agency said a dam should be taken down to restore a river.

Several years of tireless efforts and hard-nosed negotiating paid off when Citizens Utilities began removing the dam in mid-August. Total removal will be completed by October 1, 1996, to reduce threats to spawning salmon.

But destruction of the dam after years of battling with Citizens Utilities, although a significant victory, is only

an important first step in the effort to restore the ecological integrity of the Clyde River. The Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC), Trout Unlimited, and other citizen and government groups know it will take more than just the settling of dirt and dust from the detonations to nurse the river back to its historically healthy self.

"Removal of the dam doesn't mean much if the other parts of the ecological equation aren't in place," cautioned Chris Kilian, VNRC's Water Program Director and Staff Attorney, who has been engaged in the fight to restore the lower reaches

of the river for more than four years.

"The Clyde without the dam is great, but now we need to concentrate on the things that create a living, functioning river," Kilian added.

In fact, the obvious advance achieved with the removal of the dam is of little ecological consequence if important factors such as management of reservoir levels to protect wetlands and maintenance of appropriate flows that provide for fish passage and habitat protection are not achieved. These will be important issues in next

*continued on page 2*

*Dynamite blasts through a section of the Newport No. 11 on the Clyde River, marking the first time in our nation's history that a dam is removed for environmental reasons.*



Sandy Macy





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The Vermont Natural Resources Council, Inc., is a nonprofit environmental organization founded in 1963 to protect Vermont's natural resources and environment for present and future generations through research, education, and advocacy.

VNRC is the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

VNRC membership includes a subscription to the *Bulletin* (published three times a year) and the *Vermont Environmental Report* magazine (published twice annually). For an individual membership, send \$35.00 to VNRC.

The *Bulletin* is printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink. However, please recycle this issue by sharing it with your family and friends!

## CLYDE RIVER

*continued from page 1*

year's discussions with Citizens Utilities, as the utility seeks a water quality certification from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Citizens Utilities claims to have an interest in restoring public confidence in their daily operations in Vermont. VNRC will adopt a wait-and-see attitude, however, because with the Utility's track record, actions will speak louder than words.

"We are going to keep the pressure on," said Kilian.



VNRC's Steve Holmes (left) surveys the Clyde River dam shortly after the first blast.

## COLD BROOK RECLASSIFIED

The Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) worked with activists in the Wilmington/Dover area in southern Vermont to successfully petition the Vermont Water Resources Board to reclassify a portion of Cold Brook (in the Town of Dover) from Class B to Class A water late in August. Because Cold Brook originates between the Mount Snow and Haystack Mountain ski areas, Mount Snow Limited opposed the reclassification and asked the Board to dismiss the petition.

The Board's decision to grant the petition is a strong recognition of the high quality and ecological significance of Cold Brook, a headwater stream that plays a critical role in maintaining and improving the integrity of waters downstream.

Streams like Cold Brook are highly susceptible to degradation resulting from human activity. As such, they merit a higher standard of regulatory protection. With the reclassification of Cold Brook to Class A, any future

development proposals that might potentially affect the stream will have to meet the highest standards of stream protection.

## CURRENT USE SHIFTS TO LOCALITIES

*VNRC Commissions  
White Paper to Clarify*

The legislature shifted financial responsibility for the Current Use Program over to towns with the 1996 appropriations bill. Besides reinstating a penalty for withdrawal from the program, the bill created a "hold harmless" fund of \$4.7 million to reimburse those towns with property tax shifts greater than 1.8 cents. These changes were attempts to continue discouraging the development of working farm and forest land while dealing with the history of state underfunding for the program.

In the weeks following the session, however, confusion reigned and widespread uncertainty about program changes caused divisiveness in

many towns. Because the legislative action came so late, many towns had to recalculate their grand list and tax rate.

"Some people believe it was unfair to ask towns to pay for a program with statewide benefits," explains Jim Shallow, Forest and Outreach Programs Director. Consequently, four towns—Barnard, Bridgewater, Reading, and Halifax—voted



## DREAM STREAM

An Opening Reception at  
the Stephen Huneck  
Gallery  
To Benefit VNRC  
Saturday, October 5th,  
3:00 til 7:00 pm

The Huneck Gallery will  
donate 20% of all sales on  
October 5th to VNRC.

Stephen Huneck Gallery  
49 Central Street  
Woodstock, VT 05091  
(802) 457-3206



to ignore the program altogether, taxing landowners enrolled in the program for the full market value of their land instead of the use value.

Since the provision sunsets at the end of the fiscal year, the next legislative session will probably visit the program again.

"Ideally," says Shallow, "future changes in the program will help equalize tax burdens among communities and individuals within communities so the full population picks up some of the cost of this program—which obviously has both statewide and local benefits."

VNRC would like to see the program wrapped in broader property tax reform. According to Steve Holmes, Acting Executive Director, "Even with the changes, current use is still a band aid.

It's critical for Vermont to reform the property tax if we are serious about sustaining healthy communities, maintaining a working landscape, and reducing sprawl. The objectives of current use policy—taxing open land at use value and long-term land stewardship—must be integrated in comprehensive property tax reform."

In anticipation of the next session, VNRC has commissioned a white paper that will examine the history of the program and analyze the effects of changes brought about by the 1996 legislature. The paper, which will be available in October, will inform the general public, steer VNRC's policy development, and guide new legislators in their efforts to make the Current Use Program work for Vermont.

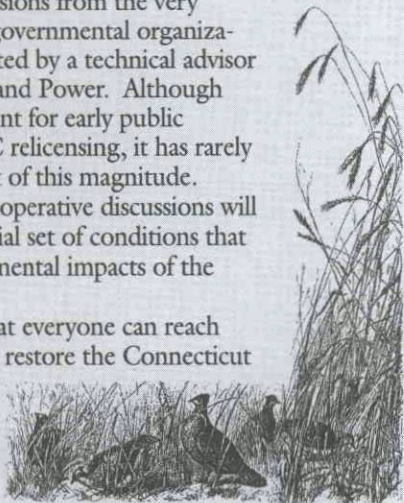
## EARLY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ON 15 MILE FALLS RELICENSING

Five years before the current license for the 15 Mile Falls Hydroelectric Project will expire, New England Power Company has entered into a unique agreement that will allow cooperative public participation early in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process for the project. The 15 Mile Falls is a complex of three dams on the upper Connecticut River, and is the largest hydroelectric project in New England.

Along with other interested parties, the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) will participate in license renewal discussions from the very beginning. All non-governmental organizations will be represented by a technical advisor funded by New England Power. Although there is some precedent for early public involvement in FERC relicensing, it has rarely occurred for a project of this magnitude.

The goal of the cooperative discussions will be a mutually beneficial set of conditions that will mitigate environmental impacts of the project.

"We're hopeful that everyone can reach agreement which will restore the Connecticut River," said Chris Kilian, Water Program Director and Staff Attorney.



## A GIANT THANKS TO VNRC'S SUMMER INTERN TEAM!

VNRC extends a warm thanks to all of our interns and volunteers, both past and present:

**Jennifer Gilson**, a recent graduate of Hampshire College did an amazing job coordinating VNRC's 1996 Annual Meeting. Thanks to Jennifer's hard work, our Annual Meeting was a great success for everyone involved.

**Stacie Haines**, currently a senior at the University of Vermont, was a huge help as VNRC's Trailhead Coordinator. Stacie worked hard to educate outdoor enthusiasts about the Northern Forest and the Northern Forest Stewardship Act—over the summer months Stacie talked with hundreds of Vermonters.

**Eileen Hentcy**, who was visiting from New York this summer, provided her excellent organizational skills to VNRC volunteering as an administrative assistant on financial matters and helping with member communications.

**Darcy Hoyt**, a Woodstock native and sophomore at Wellesley College, was an instrumental part of VNRC's office during the month of July. Darcy did a fabulous job as temporary office receptionist and assisted with the daily operation of the VNRC office.

**Mira Isaak**, a Montpelier resident, regularly assisted VNRC with her eager willingness to take on many different administrative assistant tasks. Mira's bright, reliable presence is greatly appreciated by all of us.

**Steve Velyvis**, VNRC's summer legal intern, is already well into his second year at Vermont Law School. Steve spent many hours researching and writing about numerous VNRC policy issues, including but not limited to the Clyde River, the Deerfield river, and the White Rocks National Recreation area.



## THE WHO'S WHO OF VERMONT'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY

*VNRC's 1996 Vermont Environmental Directory is here!*

The newly updated Vermont *Environmental Directory* gives you access to Vermont's most dedicated and knowledgeable people who are the core of our environmental movement.

To obtain your copy, call or write to Stacie McNary at VNRC. Directories cost \$11.00 each, including postage.



## FAMILIES AND FRIENDS CELEBRATE CONSERVATION

Lake Champlain provided a sparkling backdrop for members and friends attending the recent annual meeting at Shelburne Farms on September 14th. Hollis Burbank-Hammarlund, Board Chair, covered the business of the day, including a review of the strategic planning process and the new strategic plan, a summary of VNRC's healthy finances, and a vote to accept the nominations to the Board of Directors: William Amberg, Halifax; Leonard Wilson, East Montpelier; Stephen C. Harper, Lincoln; and returning Mark Schroeder, Belvidere.

Vermonters who have given of themselves to protect the environment received special acknowledgment during the awards presentation (see page 5). In addition, Mollie Beattie's special gifts to conservation at home and around our country were honored in a presentation by



Joan Barton leans against the Coach Barn door as she waits for her field trip to begin.



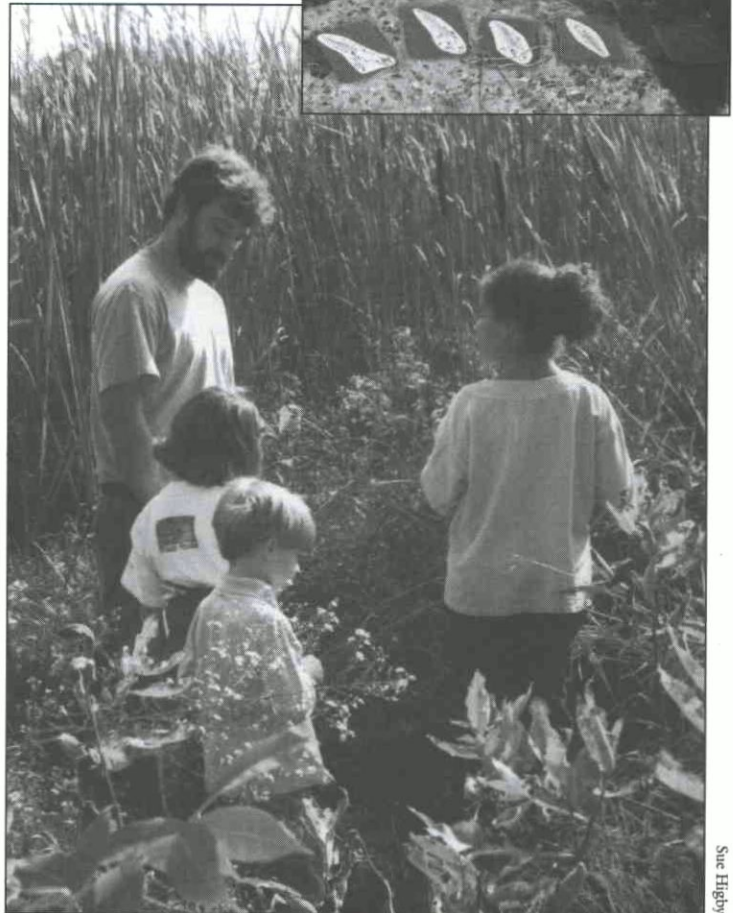
Steve Holmes, Acting Executive Director.

Brendan Whittaker, former Secretary of Vermont's Agency of Environmental Conservation and retired VNRC staff and Board member, delivered a rousing talk that reflected on Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson's statement during an international meeting of environmental journalists last year: "We are five years away from entering the century of, the millennium of, the environment—*whether we like it or not!*"

Bren credited the many people and organizations that have confronted the "Wise Use" and "Property Rights" movements and other anti-environmental groups, and declared that we must continue to work hard to maintain the free and open democracy that "hammers out fair solutions" to environmental issues.

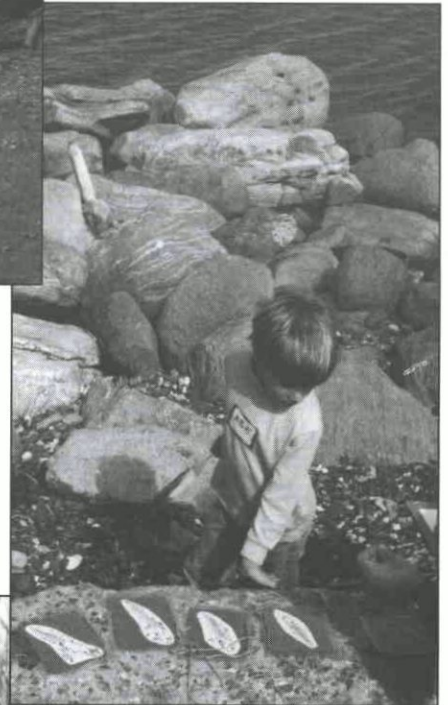
He said, "We've done a lot in Vermont, in a small state, without huge amounts of money around. I believe we are poised to enter that century and millennium of the environment of E.O. Wilson well-prepared. Just think if 30 or 40 years ago we had stripped it all, liquidated it, polluted it, and paved it, all in the name of progress. Where would we be today—not in a very good position at all, I guarantee!"

Bren's speech will be printed in full in the next issue of the *Vermont Environmental Report*. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the VNRC strategic plan, please contact Stacie McNary at VNRC.



Gordon Auchincloss of Shelburne Farms takes Mary Kulkowick, Abe Freidin, and Carmen Denison into a wetland setting to learn about resident plants, animals, and insects.

VNRC's Chris Kilian describes the effects of non-point source water pollution in Vermont from the banks of Lake Champlain (left). Abe Freidin demonstrates his knowledge of the lifecycle of a frog, using puzzle pieces on a rock (below).





## MAJOR "TOWERS" CONFERENCE SOON

Mark Your Calendar for  
November 15-16

The Environmental Law Center at Vermont Law School is convening a layperson and consumer-oriented, regional conference entitled, "Unplugged: Health and Policy Implications of the Wireless Revolution" on November 15-16, 1996 at Killington Ski Resort.

The conference will cover possible human and environmental health effects of exposure to wireless telecommunication radiation (i.e., radio frequency/microwave-cellular) and then address legal, planning, policy, and practical responses to the possible effects. Featured speakers include noted experts Dr. Stanislaw Szmigielski, Professor A.R. Liboff, Dr. Keith Florig, Dr. Robert Cleveland (of the FCC) and attorneys Anthony Roisman, Aaron Simon, Gerald Tarrant, and Robert Penington, plus a number of technical/mitigation experts and citizen group activists from around the United States.

Interest has been overwhelming and early registration is strongly suggested. The cost is \$115 (\$95 if preregister by 10/20/96) and includes luncheon meals both days; Killington amenities and accommodations are significantly discounted for conference attendees. For conference registration or accommodations, call: 1 (800) 752-2005, 9:30-5:00 EST (see enclosed information). For more detailed information contact: C.C. Kelsey, J.D., M.S.L., (802) 222-5213 (E-mail cckelsey@sover.net).

## ENVIRONMENTALISTS HONORED AT ANNUAL MEETING

*Thank You and Congrats!*

Once each year, VNRC can pay tribute to some of the outstanding citizens who devote considerable time to protecting Vermont's precious rivers and streams, mountains, and lands. These are extraordinary individuals in Vermont's finest tradition of strength and individualism. The following citizens received well-deserved recognition at the VNRC annual meeting on September 14, 1996, for their outstanding conservation actions:

### GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP AWARD

Dr. George Humphreys—for his inspirational leadership and persistence in standing up for the Deerfield Valley's natural resources throughout several waves of ski area growth.

*Award recipients  
Dr. George Humphreys  
and Sherry Belknap  
pause from the  
day's activities.*



Sue Higby

### ONCE IN A LIFETIME AWARD

Brendan Whittaker—for his distinguished career devoted to the conservation of Vermont's natural resources and his exceptional service to the people of Vermont.

### LOWELL KRASNER CITIZEN ACTIVIST AWARDS

Sherry Belknap and Lloyd Gierke—for their strong voices against herbicide spraying when

Boise Cascade attempted to aerial spray herbicides in the Northeast Kingdom. Lloyd and Sherry led the way in opposing this new type of forest management in Vermont.

### OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD

Mark Naud—for his outstanding efforts in researching, as well as preparing testimony and legal documents for the Lamoille Water Resources Board Appeal and the St. Albans Wal-Mart Act 250 and Supreme Court cases.

## GREEN GUIDE PROMOTES CONSERVATION

VNRC assisted the Environmental Programs in Communities (EPIC) program at University of Vermont in producing the *Green Guide*. This a directory of resources—both technical assistance and financial support—available to land owners interested in conservation. Find out how to obtain support, whether you are eligible, and how programs work.

To find out about the

## MAINTAIN WARM CONVICTIONS FOR CONSERVATION

Your favorite warm beverage can withstand the northwinds better with VNRC's new travel mug, made from recycled materials. The mug is granite colored, and is accented by a dark green lid, handle, and illustration (see below).

Brace yourself for brisk, winter days and cheer conservationists with your bold VNRC message—call Stacie McNary and order your mug for \$5.00, including postage.

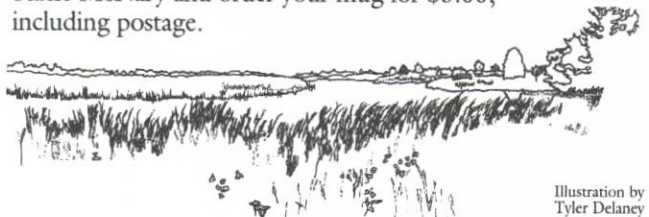


Illustration by  
Tyler Delaney





programs available to help you evaluate and pursue conservation land management, contact Stacie McNary at VNRC. The *Green Guide* is free; please provide VNRC \$1.50 for postage and handling.

## VNRC NEW MEMBER MAILING

There is a chance—a very small chance—that you will receive a brochure asking you to join VNRC. If you do and

you are already a VNRC member, we are very sorry! (And we hope you will pass this brochure along to a friend.)

We carefully reviewed our mailing list; however, even with advanced computer technologies, mistakes can happen and members may inadvertently receive a brochure. Please let us know if this happens.

Give us a call if you would like us to add someone to our mailing list to receive publications and an invitation to join VNRC.

## It's THE BEST JOB IN VERMONT!

VNRC is searching for a new Executive Director. Do you know of any excellent candidates? The following advertisement was published in Vermont and New England papers:

Leading statewide nonprofit environmental advocacy, research, and education organization with 5,000 members based in Montpelier seeks Executive Director. Individual reports to Board of Directors and is responsible for managing a staff of eight and a \$500,000 budget. Leadership, management, fund raising, communication skills, and commitment to conservation required. Salary range: \$45-55,000 plus benefits.

Send resume and cover letter by October 7, 1996, to Paul Bruhn, Chair, Search Committee, c/o VNRC, 9 Bailey Avenue, Montpelier, VT 05602.



Bert Dodson



Vermont Natural Resources Council, Inc.  
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Montpelier, Vermont 05602

(802) 223-2328  
(802) 223-0287 facsimile  
E-mail: VNRC@together.org

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