

Bulletin & Legislative Platform

THIS YEAR'S TOP ISSUES AT A GLANCE:

ACT 250

- Strengthen Act 250 in several areas such as: granting Supreme Court appeal rights to all parties in Act 250 proceedings; enabling review of cumulative impacts and requiring master plans for large-scale, multi-year, phased development projects like ski area expansion; and making it possible for Act 250 projects to be denied if they do not conform to traffic criterion 5. Reject attempts to weaken citizen participation.

CITIZEN ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

- Vermont should follow the lead of many states and the federal government and allow citizens to take polluters to court to enforce the laws that we already have on the books.

SPRAWL / GROWTH CENTERS / PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

- To counter sprawl, enable the creation of growth centers in which development is encouraged and supported and state funding for infrastructure is targeted. At the same time, implement measures to permanently protect open land and to discourage state infrastructure investment outside growth centers.
- Restore full funding for Municipal and Regional Planning Fund and Housing and Conservation Trust Fund.
- Insure that on-site sewage disposal policy and any use of alternative

sewage treatment technologies consider land use impacts. Close the ten-acre loophole in state subdivision regulations.

TAX SHIFTING

- Consider the concept of land value taxation that would enable cities and towns to increase taxes on land values in their downtown centers while decreasing taxes on downtown building values if they choose.
- Consider increasing the land gains tax for land most threatened by sprawl development.
- Appoint a study committee to investigate revenue-neutral tax shifting options to benefit the environment and the economy.

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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 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!

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WATER RESOURCES

- Support stormwater legislation that addresses urban runoff.
- Require unlicensed hydro-electric power facilities to comply with the Vermont Water Quality Standards.

ACID DEPOSITION OF MERCURY AND ACID RAIN

- Resolve to support appropriate actions on a regional scale to reduce airborne mercury and acid rain pollution.

FORESTS

- Stand firm on the "heavy cutting" law passed in 1997.

ENERGY

- In any legislation on electric utility industry restructuring, it is important to maintain the benefits of the current regulated system, such as environmental protection, demand side management, development of renewable energy resources, consumer protection, and low-income assistance.

TRANSPORTATION

- Target increased funding for public transportation and maintaining what we have rather than on new highway projects like the Circ Highway.

FUNDING FOR AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- Insure that there is sufficient funding for ANR to carry out its statutory responsibilities.

VNRC's TOP PRIORITIES

ACT 250

For 30 years Act 250 has helped Vermonters protect their environment. Its economic effects have also been positive, improving the quality of major developments and producing generally secure financial investments.

Vermont's economic performance has been one of New England's strongest.

Nevertheless, Act 250 should be strengthened in several areas. Citizens who may be affected by decisions of the Vermont Environmental Board currently have no way to appeal to

court the way other parties such as the applicant, town, state, and regional planning commission do. Citizens should be granted the same **rights of appeal** as other parties: to the Vermont Supreme Court.

Legislators should be wary of attempts to weaken citizen



participation in Act 250. Research shows there is no problem with citizen appeals. Rather, citizen involvement has helped to improve project review and permit decisions. Proposals to restrict appeal rights, limit party status, and make the process more legalistic and cumbersome through appeals "**on the record**" will unnecessarily and unreasonably hurt citizen participation.

Act 250 administrators are limited to making fragmented, project-by-project decisions based on piecemeal, often incomplete, information. They need to be able to conduct comprehensive review of the **cumulative impacts** of these large-scale developments, including the review of nearby development projects which are being permitted at nearly the same time.

Similarly, Act 250 does not consistently require that master plans be submitted for large-scale, multi-year, phased developments like ski area expansion. As part of the **master plan review** a determination of whether the development constitutes a **rural growth** area should be made. Once that is done, land within the growth area should follow prescribed "new community" planning principles providing for compact settlement, appropriate rates of growth and population densities. In addition, natural resource lands associated with the growth area should be protected from further development.

Increased traffic is often one of the major impacts of new development, yet Act 250 does not provide for a project to be denied when there are serious traffic concerns. The law should be strengthened to allow **Criterion 5, Traffic**, to become one of the grounds, along with most of the other criteria, for denial of a project.

The slate quarry exemption



should be repealed. Passed in 1995, the bill allows slate quarries that existed before 1970 to continue operating with only limited Act 250 oversight. This has caused problems for neighbors when older quarries seek to expand their operations.

CITIZEN ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

The federal government and many states have laws allowing citizens to take polluters to court. VNRC supports changes in Vermont law to enable citizens to sue for enforcement of environmental protection laws.

SPRAWL / GROWTH CENTERS

To counter sprawl, the legislature should enable the creation of growth centers in which development is encouraged and supported and state funding for infrastructure is targeted. At the same time, measures should be implemented to permanently protect open land and to curtail state infrastructure investment outside growth centers. The urban service area (USA) and urban growth boundary (UGB) concepts both hold promise. The USA is simply an area beyond which a jurisdiction will not provide basic urban services, like sewer and water and investment in

significant road improvements. Minnesota's Twin Cities have a USA, and Maryland's "**Smart Growth**" program discourages state investment in infrastructure such as road improvements, public buildings, water and sewer systems outside properly designated growth centers. The UGB is essentially a line that contains growth within the urbanized area of a jurisdiction and prohibits high density and suburban development outside the line. The UGB concept has been used in Portland, Oregon and several parts of California. Both concepts aim to strengthen downtowns, protect open spaces, preserve a rural edge around downtowns and villages, and prevent urban sprawl.

Vermont's traditional downtown urban areas and its historic resources and village settlements are cornerstones of both a successful growth center policy and a long-term development strategy for the state.

Growth centers should first be designated in existing downtowns. Growth centers, in downtown locations or adjacent to existing downtowns, would enable communities to concentrate appropriately scaled and sited, mixed development—shops, offices, homes—in one area, following Vermont's traditional, compact village settlement patterns. Only when downtown growth centers are at capacity should locations outside the downtown be developed. VNRC will continue to support the growth center concept as an excellent alternative to strip development and haphazard parcelling up the Vermont countryside—as long as it is linked to permanent protection of land outside the growth center.

FUNDING FOR MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

In FY 2000, communities and regional planning commissions will receive just over \$2.9 million for various planning activities. While this is an increase over FY 99, it is still below the over \$3 million towns and regions received ten years ago. In particular, municipal funding at just over \$600,000 is still significantly lower than the \$1.5 million communities received in 1989.

Erosion of these funds weakens effective planning, adds to the local property tax burden, and undermines protection of Vermont's environmental, economic, and social well-being.

Restoration of full funding and continued dedication of a portion of the property transfer tax to the Municipal and Regional Planning Fund and the Housing and Conservation Trust Fund are critical if the goals of comprehensive planning and preservation of affordable housing and open land are to be fully achieved.

VNRC will continue to support the planning goals and open public access established in Act 200 and will oppose any legislation that repeals or undermines the goals and objectives of this valuable law.

HOUSING AND CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

The HCTF provides important resources for the protection of agricultural and forest land throughout Vermont and finances the creation and preservation of affordable housing for



Vermonters.

VNRC supports a funding level for the HCTF which is sufficient to meet its objectives for fiscal year 2000.

TAX SHIFTING TO BENEFIT THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY

Have you ever wondered what our society would be like if taxes were actually lowered on things we wanted—like our paychecks—and raised on things that we didn't want—like waste and pollution? How would you feel about a tax credit to businesses coupled with a tax rebate to all Vermont households in exchange for a tax on carbon-based fuels that cause air pollution?

These are among the questions that VNRC, along with other members of the Vermont Fair Tax Coalition (Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, Friends of the Earth, and Vermont Public Interest Research

Group and about 30 new members who have joined in recent months), is asking the Legislature to consider in the 2000 legislative session. The Coalition believes that tax shifts can be designed to strengthen the economy, clean up the environment, and make our tax system fairer for low-income Vermonters.

Here are some alternatives the legislature could explore:

- To reduce air pollution by encouraging more efficient vehicles and car-pooling, and investigating increasing the gas tax while decreasing the sales or property tax. Or instead of reducing another tax, the increased gas tax revenue could be used to support public transportation such as rail, increased car and van-pooling, increased funding for affordable housing and for protection of farms and forests.
- To enhance any downtown initiatives and help curb sprawl, consider the con-

cept of land value taxation that would enable communities to increase taxes on land values in their downtown centers while decreasing taxes on downtown building values if they choose.

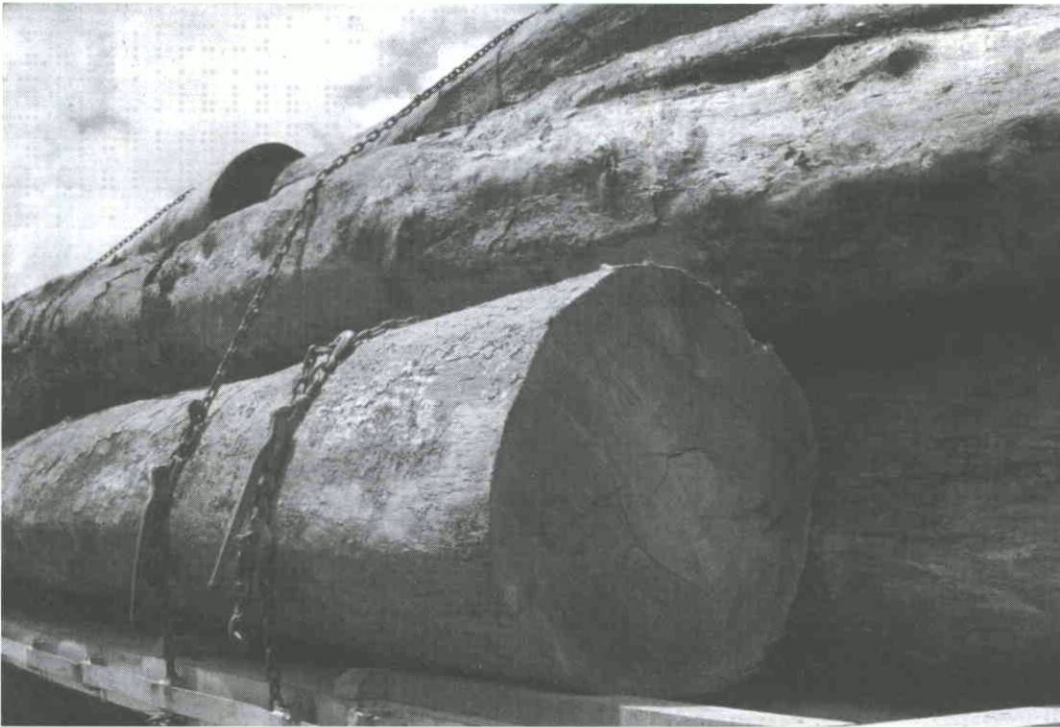
- Consider increasing the land gains tax for land most threatened by sprawl.
- Remove the 5% sales tax exemption on non-farm use of agricultural pesticides
- Appoint a study committee to investigate use of revenue-neutral tax shifting options to benefit the environment and the economy.

A good place to start is "Fueling Vermont's Future", the 1998 report published by the Vermont Department of Public Service, which recommends a serious investigation of energy tax proposals that incorporate the concept of tax shifting. For example, the Department's research on tax shifting reveals that a \$100 per ton carbon tax with all of the revenues going toward reducing other taxes, such as personal or corporate taxes, would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, expand the state economy and increase competitiveness through efficiency gains, and leave more disposable income for low and moderate-income households.

Additionally, the Vermont Fair Tax Coalition has offered a variety of tax shifting options for Vermont in its 1999 report, "Tax Reform that Agrees with Vermont". The Coalition is conducting additional research in 2000.

WATER RESOURCES

The waters of the state are public resources owned by all



Vermonters. Both the Vermont Constitution and the public trust doctrine require that the General Assembly protect the public's interest in our lakes, rivers, and streams.

There is widespread public support for clean water. Vermont's water quality laws should be strengthened to build upon the successes of the past in restoring water quality.

Addressing problems of polluted stormwater runoff, insufficient stream flow, habitat deterioration and loss of biodiversity should be priorities for Vermont.

Although Vermont has done a good job of cleaning up direct municipal and industrial discharges often called "point sources" of pollution, our lakes and streams are damaged by dispersed "non-point source pollution" (wet weather runoff) from urban parking lots and streets, agriculture and other sources. **Non-point source pollution** is now the leading source of water pollution in Vermont.

Studies have shown that on

a per acre basis, urban runoff delivers a pollutant load that is many times greater than agricultural runoff, although agriculture is still the prime problem in terms of total pollutant load. For example, in the Lake Champlain basin, urban land comprises only three percent of the basin yet contributes 18% of the nutrient load—excess nutrients make it possible for the blue-green algae, which caused dog deaths this summer, to grow in the lake.

Pollutants in urban runoff include heavy metals, petroleum products, pesticides, fertilizers, sediment and salt. For fish, one of the worst problems is sediment which smothers the aquatic insects that form the base of the food chain.

The legislature is urged to support **stormwater legislation** that addresses urban runoff in the following areas:

- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site runoff control

- Post-construction runoff control
- Pollution prevention / good housekeeping
- Public education and outreach
- Public participation / involvement

The legislature should also provide more **financial assistance to farmers** in support of efforts to **reduce agricultural runoff**. This should include structural solutions like manure pits to store waste, assistance with innovative practices like on-farm composting and pasture management, and education and inspections related to Accepted Agricultural Practices and Best Management Practices.

Uses that reduce stream flows and have damaged our rivers include snowmaking, hydro-electric power generation, municipal use without conservation measures and industrial use.

Every day over 8.7 million gallons of water are sucked from Vermont's public waters

for commercial and domestic uses. Over 3.1 billion gallons are used every year—predominantly for hydro-electric power.

Yet most of the commercial users, including hydro-electric and snowmaking operations, pay nothing for the privilege of sucking water out of our rivers and streams. The legislature should enable assessment of reasonable **fees for water uses**, with the funds dedicated to state programs that protect water quality, fish, and wildlife, and require **unlicensed hydro power facilities to comply with the Vermont Water Quality Standards**.

The legislature should also make sure that the Agency of Natural Resources revives the **river basin planning** program using a comprehensive watershed ecosystem approach.

AIR DEPOSITION OF MERCURY AND ACID RAIN

Mercury and the pollutants that cause acid rain are carried to Vermont by the prevailing winds from the midwest and from urban areas, and industries and trash incinerators in the northeast. As a result, we must limit our consumption of fish because of high mercury concentrations, and declines in forest health from the effects of acid rain have been documented.

The legislature can resolve to support appropriate actions on a regional scale to reduce airborne mercury and acid rain pollution through collaboratives like the New England Governors and Canadian Premiers Action Plan.

The legislature could also require and fund the Agency of Natural Resources to complete clean-up plans known as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of pollution quicker

than the scheduled 2008 target date. TMDLs are enforceable requirements under the federal Clean Water Act that would allow us to clean up sources of mercury and other pollutants in our watersheds.

FOREST RESOURCES

The 2000 legislature is urged to stand behind the "heavy cutting" law passed in 1997. Responding to growing concerns about large-scale liquidation of our forests and unsound logging practices, the legislature passed a law enabling the state to regulate heavy cuts on 40 or more acres of land. The law provides, for the first time, a tool the state can use to control the kind of practices that have left great patches of Vermont's forest scarred, naked, and depleted.

The proposal eventually adopted by the Legislature was the result of a unique collaboration of VNRC and other environmental groups, forest industry representatives, foresters and landowners, and the Forest Resources Advisory Council (FRAC). The parties realized a common agenda to conserve forest resources and developed a proposal advanced by FRAC that ultimately passed into law.

The law requires the Commissioner of Forests, Parks, and Recreation to adopt rules that will provide for protection of soil productivity, water quality, wetlands, riparian zones, wildlife habitat, unique or fragile natural areas, forest regeneration, scenic quality and unusual environmental events, such as storms or pest outbreaks. At this time, VNRC does not believe the Commissioner's proposed permanent rule, dealing with these important natural resource issues, measures up to the legislative mandate of

ACT 15. The legislature should ensure that the rules clearly follow legislative intent and protect Vermont's forest resources.

ENERGY

As the nation moves toward market competition through **electric utility industry restructuring**, it is important that we not lose some of the important benefits of the current regulated system, such as environmental protection, demand side management, development of renewable energy resources, consumer protection, and low-income assistance.

In any legislation addressing this issue, Vermont should set environmental portfolio standards for any retail or generating companies offering power for sale in Vermont. Generation resources should

meet protective environmental standards. In particular, existing in-state unlicensed hydropower facilities should meet the Vermont Water Quality Standards. VNRC supported the provisions of the 1997 Senate-passed restructuring bill which addressed water quality, environmental protection, and energy conservation. At a minimum, any restructuring bill considered by the Legislature should incorporate these provisions.

TRANSPORTATION

Rather than proceeding with expensive and potentially sprawl-inducing new highway projects like the Chittenden County **Circumferential Highway** and the Bennington Bypass, the state should be evaluating alternatives that emphasize the use of public

transportation, utilizing the existing road network more efficiently (such as "roundabouts"), and creating innovative land use strategies for directing development to transit-oriented growth centers and downtowns. The state also needs to implement an effective **highway exit access policy** that protects Vermont's scenic quality and discourages strip development and sprawl.

VNRC will monitor the Agency of Transportation's Capital Program (list of construction and planning projects) and Long Range Transportation Plan to seek strong implementation of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA—pronounced "ice tea"), and its 1998 reauthorization, TEA 21, promoting more environmentally-sound transportation, such as passenger and freight rail, buses, car-pooling and bicycles, with less emphasis on new highway construction, and more citizen involvement in transportation planning.

VNRC will advocate for project designs that encourage alternative forms of transportation (such as bike path construction on reconstructed roads or bridge replacements), and that respect environmental, historic, and scenic resources (such as the "foot-print replacement" bridge program).

VNRC also supports the implementation of the transportation enhancements portion of ISTEA which provides grants to communities for projects which enhance the travel experience such as: pedestrian and bicycle facilities; historic preservation, building rehabilitation and landscaping at transit stations and other transportation facilities; and other scenic beautification.



FUNDING FOR AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

In recent years, declining General Fund appropriations for the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), coupled with only modest increases in its overall budget, has resulted in staffing reductions of almost 40 people between 1995 and 1999. These factors severely limit the effectiveness of the State of Vermont's environmental protection efforts.

Between 1993 and 1998 the amount of state general funds invested in environmental protection dropped from \$35 per year/per Vermonter to \$15.50. For the fifteen years between 1979 and 1994, the annual ANR budget averaged over 2% of the General Fund. Throughout the 1990s the ANR share of the General Fund has averaged less than 1.5%, and in 1998, ANR received only 1.1% of the total General Fund.

In the last fifteen years, the legislature has been successful in passing new laws to address environmental problems. However, the funding to implement and enforce the laws has not kept pace. For example, the legislature in 1991 asked ANR to complete all 17 river basin plans by the year 2000. To date, none have been completed. And ANR is still playing catch up with laws like the one addressing leaking underground fuel storage tanks. ANR has identified over 1000 sites where releases have occurred, but further investigation is needed, and cleanup efforts have been lagging.

ISSUES TO KEEP AN EYE ON

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VNRC supports legislation promoting economic development that is economically and environmentally sustainable, protects opportunity for all Vermonters, enhances the rural economy, and provides for long-term prosperity.

The World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 defined sustainable development as that which is intended "...to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Vermont's economic policies should protect environmental quality by leading toward:

- The sustainable use of land and resources for contemporary and future Vermonters, with special emphasis on Vermont's

small, locally owned and operated businesses, including home businesses;

- Programs that strengthen agriculture and forestry, including: development and marketing of agricultural and forest products and other land-based products which depend on the "Made In Vermont" label and a high level of environmental quality; development of value-added farm and forest products; and support for current use and eventually linking the program to sustainable techniques like rotational grazing and uneven-aged, long-rotation timber harvesting;
- Implementation of the Sustainable Jobs Fund and programs and funding to attract environmental industry sectors like recycling technologies and environmental products and non-polluting industries;
- Programs and funding which preserve our historic resources and foster down-

town revitalization, and creation of growth centers where economic development—from manufacturing, recreation, and small businesses, to education and financial services—is targeted;

- Energy conservation in domestic, commercial, and transportation uses and increased production from renewable and local energy sources.

STATE PLANNING OFFICE

The state should reestablish a state planning office and give it proper funding. This office was formerly attached to the Governor's office and conducted valuable research, education, and analysis on policy issues affecting the state and provided considerable outreach and liaison with the public, state agencies and the legislature. Without it many functions have fallen by the wayside, such as oversight of state agency plan preparation under Act 200. There is virtually no coordinated planning of state programs and guidance on state agency plans that have land use impacts.

In addition, there is no funding or staff support for the Council of Regional Commissions created in 1988 to review state agency plans for consistency with Act 200 goals. Although 19 state agencies updated plans in 1997, by law they should have been reviewed and readopted in 1999. To date little has been done to carry out this mandate.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STUDY

The state of Vermont has not come to grips with a vision of how it wants to grow, what types of growth are desired and at what levels, and how to achieve sustainable development. For example, ski areas are submitting plans for new "cities" and "villages" in some of the most sensitive areas of the state, yet we have not developed cohesive state policy or benchmarks for determining if this kind of development, at this scale, is what is best for Vermont.

What will Vermont be like if all these projects are built as planned? Have we determined that hundreds of thousands of square feet of new retail space and several thousand more condos and other lodging is needed, appropriate and desirable? Will development of this nature preclude other commerce and manufacturing with higher paying jobs and arguably less environmental impact, because the former has used all the water, sewage, and road capacity?

In order to begin to get a handle on these and other questions, a revitalized state planning office should be charged with developing a research, education and public outreach project to ascertain the overall cumulative impacts of various development scenarios, including public attitudes, in order for state policy makers to have a more informed, comprehensive basis for their decisions.

ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL

VNRC supports efforts to improve the management of Vermont's on-site sewage disposal program. There is a

growing problem with failed septic systems caused by improper siting, installation and maintenance, resulting in sewage surfacing and water supply and surface water contamination.

As the legislature crafts on-site sewage disposal policy, including potential use of alternative sewage treatment technologies, it must consider the long-term land use impacts associated with more flexible septic system design standards.

At the same time, the **10-acre loophole in state subdivision regulations should be closed.**

USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF STATE LANDS

The state should require master plans for its leased lands. The process should be open for public review and comment. Standards should be set for state land leases which reflect an appropriate market value based on the actual use of the land.

VNRC generally supports land swaps where state and private lands of equal value can be exchanged and where state lands are irrevocably dedicated to preservation of

natural resources or outdoor recreational uses.

FACTORY FARMS

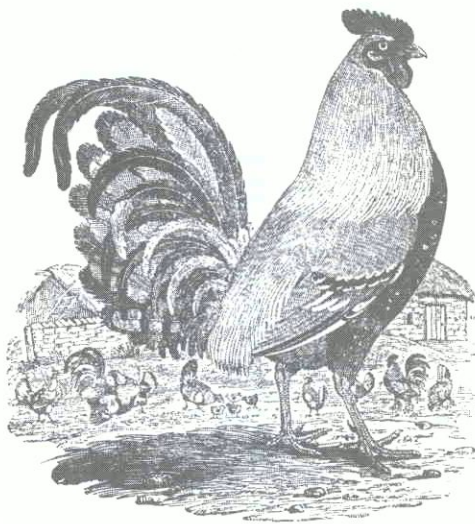
Large-scale factory farms can cause water and air pollution problems and other public health and safety concerns if not properly sited and designed.

Although the legislature has given permitting authority to the Department of Agriculture, there is no right of appeal granted to citizens who might be adversely affected by the decision of the Commissioner of Agriculture.

This year, the legislature should **reauthorize and amend the large farm operations law.** Ideally, the state Environmental Board should have jurisdiction over such operations. However, if the legislature decides to keep the program under the Department of Agriculture, there should be appeal rights to an independent panel and then to the Supreme Court. The Commissioner and panel should be required to review and condition permits on a broad range of criteria including odor, traffic, noise, pests, and insects, as well as air and water quality, water supply, waste disposal, economic impacts, and impacts on municipal services. The

Agency of Natural Resources should retain permitting authority over discharges.

Municipalities should be given authority to zone for development that meets the large farm operations threshold.



FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND HABITAT PROTECTION

From its forests and alpine areas to its wetlands and rivers, Vermont has many varied ecosystems that support a full range of biodiversity. Our public health depends on the health of our ecosystems in many ways, from the forests and soils protecting our surface water supplies to the long-term medicinal value of some forest species. VNRC supports habitat protection and fish and wildlife management policies that are based on sound biology and will maintain the health of these diverse species and ecosystems.

VNRC opposes weakening the state endangered species law and any staff reductions in Vermont's valuable Non-game Wildlife and Natural Heritage programs.

VNRC supports continuation of **conservation license plates** to help support these and other conservation programs. The program is scheduled to *sunset* in December 2000. The legislature can insure the future of this valuable program by removing the sunset provision.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

VNRC supports the goals of Act 78 that set a high priority on waste reduction, reuse and recycling. The Legislature should continue to strengthen the law keeping these goals in mind, and it should pass the **expanded Bottle Bill** that would add juice, iced tea, water, and wine bottles to the list of containers already redeemable for a five cent deposit.

UPCOMING EVENTS

VNRC OPEN HOUSE

Join us for our annual open house on **Friday, January 28, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.** The open house is an informal opportunity to meet with VNRC's staff, tour our newly renovated building, and discuss the issues in our 2000 Legislative Platform. A light breakfast and coffee will be served. For more information, please call VNRC at 223-2328.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS!

Join us for an Animal Tracks® professional development workshop on wolves and endangered species of Vermont

Friday, February 11, 2000
9:00 am - 3:30 pm

This workshop offers you:

- A six-hour professional development experience for learning about the ecology of wolves and endangered species in Vermont.
- Lively presentations by outstanding professionals working for endangered species protection.
- Demonstrations of hands-on, inquiry-based activities aligned to Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities.
- Materials and resources for teaching about endangered species in the classroom and for developing student-driven research and community action projects.
- Workshop equivalent to 0.4 relicensure credits. Certificate of completion provided.
- An opportunity to network with other professionals.

Sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation and Vermont Institute of Natural Science

For more information, contact Lisa Windhausen at National Wildlife Federation: (802) 229-0650.

ANNUAL TRACKING WORKSHOP

Sign Up Today!

Come and look for signs of bear, bobcat, moose and other forest creatures with nationally recognized wildlife habitat and tracking expert Sue Morse of Keeping Track. This year, we will offer both a full day and half day session. Workshops fill up fast so please pre-register with Joyce Cusimano at 223-2328.

Friday, February 25, 2000
9:00 to 4:00

Richmond: Be prepared to be outside all day hiking over some steep trails, and please dress accordingly: warm clothes, good boots, and extra clothes. PLEASE BRING LUNCH, water, and snowshoes if there is snow. Fee: \$15.00

Monday, March 6, 2000
12:00 to 4:00

Richmond: This workshop will only last for half the day, and will be on mostly flat trails. Be prepared for cold weather with warm clothes, good boots and a drink. Please bring snowshoes if there is snow. Fee: \$10.00

Workshops are sponsored by the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Vermont Woodland Association.

SECOND ANNUAL JUSTIN BRANDE SYMPOSIUM

"Simple Ways to Live Simply"

On **March 17-18**, Project Laundry List will host its second annual symposium at Vermont Law School. The focus and title of the two-day event is "Simple Ways to Live Simply." Invited keynote speakers include Peter Forbes, a fellow with the Trust for Public Land; Monique Miller of the Center for a New American Dream, and Michael Brower, author of *Effective Environmental Choices*.

Friday evening will feature a slide show by Peter Forbes, an AVR performance of "Stuffed," and a screening of the popular anti-consumerism film, "Affluenza."

Saturday will be filled with motivating speeches and interesting workshops. Among the ten workshops will be a how-to session on bread baking and a planning session on organizing a National Hanging Out Day event in your campus or community. There will also be a panel discussion on bringing green energy into your household and a discussion of simplicity and spirituality.

Co-sponsors of the event include Vermont Natural Resources Council, Vermont Public Interest Research Group, Vermont Population Alliance, American Friends Service Committee, the Peace & Justice Center, the New Hampshire Chapters of the Sierra Club, Vermont Law School's Environmental Law Center and Environmental Law

Society, and the Association of Vermont Recyclers.

Register soon by calling (802) 763-8303 x 2332!



PLEASE WELCOME NEW VNRC BOARD MEMBERS!

Will Raap started Gardener's Supply Company in 1983—a company which has grown to be “America's # 1 Resource for Successful Gardening” and a \$39 million business that includes: the leading catalog of innovative gardening products, a destination retail store with display gardens, a two-step direct marketing division, a greenhouse and garden products manufacturing company, a growing website and wholesale division. Will serves as Chairman of the Board for the Intervale Foundation, and as a board member for the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Vermont Partnerships of Environmental Technology and Science, Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Advisory Council, and Living Technologies, Inc. Will lives in Shelburne with his wife and three children.

Matthew Huntington works as a Deputy State's Attorney in Windsor county, Vermont, where he handles criminal prosecution of all descriptions. Before coming to Vermont in 1994, where he obtained his J.D. and studied environmental law at Vermont Law School, Matthew worked in Washington D.C. There he worked as Director of Hydropower Programs for American Rivers, a national non-profit conservation organization. At American Rivers he was instrumental in organizing a national coalition to advocate for environmental improvements at hydropower dam relicensings around the country, including Vermont's Deerfield River. He also obtained funding that aided in

protecting the Ompompanoosuc River from an ill-advised dam project. His affection for the outdoors has taken him, among other places, climbing to the top of Mt. McKinley in Alaska, and sailing from the Caribbean to Rio De Janeiro aboard an expedition researching the environmental history of South America's northeast coast. After law school, he clerked for Chief Justice Jeffrey Amestoy of the Vermont Supreme Court. Matthew lives in Norwich, Vt.

Ellen H. Taggart has twelve years of experience in environmental advocacy, organizing and public education.

Currently, Ellen is the Executive Director of Rural Vermont, a family farm and rural citizen advocacy group with 3,000 members in Vermont. With her leadership in the past four years, Rural Vermont has successfully advocated for controls on factory farm development, for the right of farmers to market rBGH-free milk and dairy products and for consumers to know their food is safe, and for an unprecedented appropriation of state resources to support small-scale, diversified agriculture. Also with her leadership, Rural Vermont has empowered local activists in Franklin County, Washington County, Caledonia County,

and Orleans County to support family farmers and protect the environment through local action. Previous to her Rural Vermont tenure, Ellen worked in policy and advocacy, development, and management positions for a number of environmental organizations including Environmental Action, the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste, the Health and Development Policy Project, and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. Ellen is also working to complete her Masters Degree in Environmental Policy from the Urban and Environmental Policy Program at Tufts University.

EARTH DAY 2000

Sustainable Energy — Sustainable Vermont

Friday, April 21. Noon to 5:00pm (in Montpelier)
Saturday, April 22. 11:00am to 6:00pm. (in Burlington)

Join us for clean energy demonstrations, workshops, guided nature walks, a Bread and Puppet parade, train rides, solar and electric car rides, displays of children's Earthday artwork, live music, local food, and much more.

This is Earth Day's 30th anniversary. It promises to be a very special celebration. Any ideas are welcome, and volunteers are needed for event planning and organization. Please call 802-223-2328 in Montpelier or 802-864-9600 in Burlington, or log on at www.vnrc.org for more information.

We are happy to announce that Jeff Fellingner, past Mollie Beattie Intern, has agreed to work as special coordinator for the Earth Day Event. We are lucky to again have Jeff's help!



COME MEET NEW VNRC STAFF ATTORNEY KELLY LOWRY!

VNRC is pleased to introduce, Kelly D. H. Lowry our new Staff Attorney. Kelly is a great asset to VNRC. He brings energy, dedication, and experience to help strengthen our protection efforts in Vermont.

Kelly comes to us from South Carolina, where he has practiced law since graduating from Vermont Law School. After dabbling briefly in private practice, Kelly took a position with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), where he enforced environmental laws on behalf of the State. Although he worked primarily with the Bureau of Water litigating cases involving the Federal Clean Water Act and associated state laws and regulations, he also handled various other matters, including solid and hazardous waste management and disposal, air pollution, radiological and environmental health, and hard rock, mineral, and sand mining. In addition to his legal duties at DHEC, Kelly also served (and continues to serve) on the S.C. Bar Association's Administrative and Regulatory Law Committee, and is co-author



Kelly Lowry

of a treatise on South Carolina administrative and regulatory law set for publication in 2001.

Kelly has also used his skills to promote the natural world in the educational arena, lecturing on environmental ethics as an adjunct professor in the Philosophy Department at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Kelly earned a Juris Doctor and a Master of Studies in Environmental Law from Vermont Law School. While attending VLS, he served as a student clerk for the Honorable Chief Justice Frederic W. Allen (retired) of the Vermont Supreme Court.

Please stop by our office to help us welcome Kelly to the VNRC team.

WELCOME BACK ROB SHATNEY!

A native Vermonter from East Montpelier, Rob is in his second session as VNRC's legislative intern. He graduated from UVM with a bachelor's degree in community development and applied economics and will be applying to law school following this legislative session. Rob will be tracking stormwater runoff, Act 250, tax shifting, sprawl and other issues.

VNRC is pleased to welcome Rob back.



Rob Shatney

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD JOIN VNRC'S CONSERVATION NETWORK

VNRC's Conservation Network is a team of informed individuals who make a difference for environmental protection here in Vermont. VNRC activists receive the latest information on legislation, public hearings, and community events and are given the opportunity to instantly respond to legislators, public officials, and the press when challenges arise. "We need to let public officials know where Vermonters stand on current issues. Input from citizens is critical. VNRC works to provide support and act as an outlet for citizens' voices," says VNRC's Executive Director Elizabeth Courtney.

For more information or to join the Conservation Network, contact Pat Berry at 802-223-2328 or via email: pberry@together.net.

Help make a difference in Vermont!



Artwork courtesy of Stephen Huneck

Give the gift of Vermont Natural Resources Council

Yes, I want to protect Vermont! Sign me up today!

☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$ Other

**VNRC also offers a student membership rate of \$20

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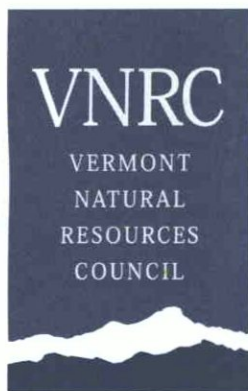
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Please send check or information request to:

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REACH OUT AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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(for contact with Vermont legislators)
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Vermont Legislature

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1-(800) 339-9834
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U.S. Sen. James Jeffords

1-(800) 835-5500
E-mail: Vermont@jeffords.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy

1-(800) 642-3193
E-mail: Senator_leahy@leahy.senate.gov

VNRC's LEGISLATIVE TEAM—BACK IN ACTION!

VNRC publishes the Legislative Platform in order to inform Vermont citizens and legislators about the issues affecting our state. We are available to answer questions, clarify issues, and provide help to anyone interested in making a difference during this legislative session and the coming year. Please do not hesitate to write, call, or e-mail us here at VNRC!

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*From left to right:
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Job Heintz,
Elizabeth
Courtney,
Rob Shatney,
Kim Kendall,
and Steve Holmes*

