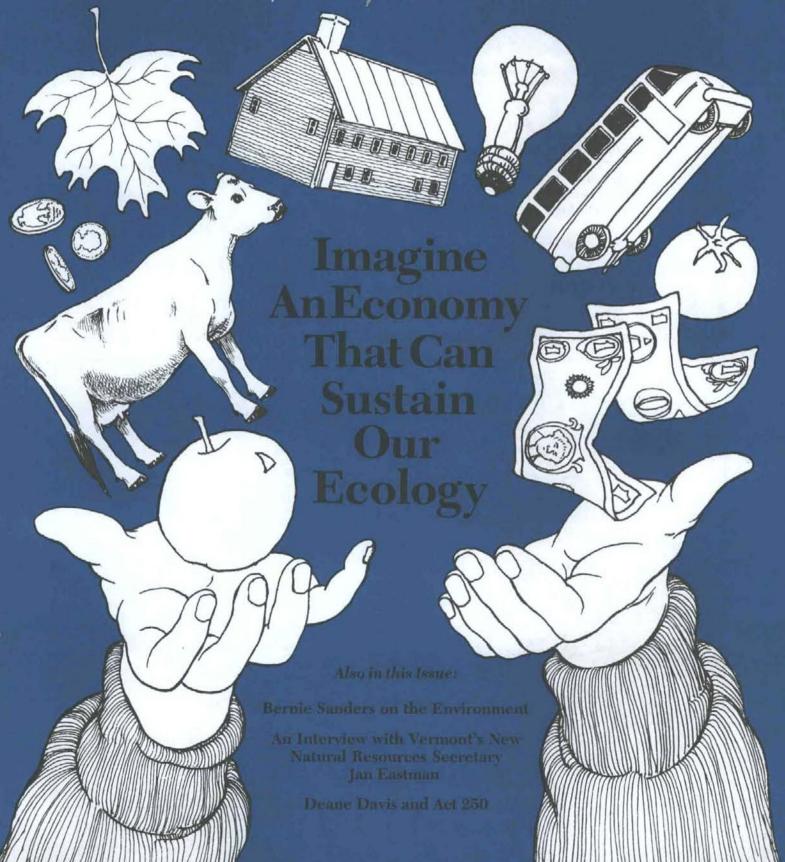


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# VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

#### Published by the Vermont Natural Resources Council

Spring, 1991



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The Vermont Natural Resources Council is a non-profit environmental organization founded in 1963 to promote the wise use of Vermont's natural resources. VNRC does research, legislative lobbying, advocacy, and educational work on issues including forestry, agriculture, water, energy, wastes, and growth management.

VNRC is the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

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# THE INSIDE WORD



# DEANE DAVIS AND ACT 250 Two Vermont Institutions Celebrated

Susan Clark, VNRC Editor

This winter, Vermonters lost a treasure with the death of former governor Deane C. Davis. At 90, this Republican had earned the love of Vermonters through his clarity of vision, humor, and wisdom.

From 1969-1973, Davis governed Vermont at a time of booming growth, and increasing awareness of the accompanying environmental problems. Although a political conservative, Davis called for — and won — bold environmental reform. Among his legacies: Act 250, Vermont's landmark development law, and Act 252, a key water protection law.

Davis's appreciation for Vermont's natural resources was long-standing. He was an unabashed supporter of our natural environment, both as an economic investment and as a source of inspiration and joy to Vermonters. Sometimes his support came as a lone voice of reason — such as, during the heat of the recent planning debate, his open letter to Vermonters in support of Act 200, Vermont's new planning law.

Deane Davis was an open-minded leader with a remarkable talent for bringing opposing sides together. Throughout our organization's history, VNRC has been deeply honored by his support. Vermont's environment is much the richer for his work, and we will miss him greatly.

his winter also marked the 20th anniversary of Act 250, Vermont's land use and development law. Governor Davis shepherded the law through the legislature twenty years ago, and it's *still* ahead of its time — arguably another of Vermont's state treasures.

At its annual meeting in December, the Vermont Environmental Board invited people who had participated in the Act 250 process to stop, at a crossroads in environmental history, so to speak, and discuss the law's history and future.

Former Senator Arthur Gibb, chair of the committee which framed Act 250, brought out planner Walter Blucher's original memo with handwritten notes, in which the ideas for Act 250 were first outlined. Several speakers couldn't resist noting the comparison to our country's Bill of Rights. One even joked that we were going back to Genesis. And indeed, what is remarkable about that piece of writing is that the environmental need was so clearly defined twenty years ago that the criteria of today's Act 250 remain essentially unchanged.

Act 250 was constructed slowly and painstakingly, and somehow crystallized at a point in history when nothing less than a landmark law would have done. In an interview with VNRC (V.E.R. Fall, 1989) Davis recalled it this way: "Somehow God had his hand on our shoulder, I guess, enough so that we knew we couldn't put this thing across

unless we did it right."

Speakers at the meeting revealed some stunning facts about Act 250. In the law's twenty-year history, fewer than 2% of the projects reviewed have been turned down. The key is that many of these plans get modified in the process — moved on the building site to protect a wetland, perhaps, or scaled back to protect water, air quality, agricultural land or other Vermont treasures.

Richard Cowart, Chair of the Vermont Public Service Board, estimated that just through its demand for energyefficient buildings, Act 250 has saved the state's economy an amazing \$500 million over the life of the buildings. Just that savings alone more than pays for the direct cost of the law's administration.

Bank president John Ewing noted that Vermont's percentage of non-performing loans is significantly lower than elsewhere in New England — partly because Act 250 ensures that projects start out better planned and on sounder footing. Interestingly, property rights advocates are now boycotting his bank for saying so. We hope, however, that speaking the truth has other rewards.

Act 250 has *helped* Vermont's economy. What a concept. With all of the noise from developers that Act 250 stops development, in fact, there's evidence to show that you can make a better, more sustainable buck here than anywhere

else in New England.

In these economic hard times, this will be a difficult point to keep our eye on. In fact, in that same VNRC interview, Deane Davis predicted, "The next big test to come on Act 250 is if and when we have a major depression."

Sure enough, in this legislative session there are already plenty of people who are proposing changes to Act 250. Some come as friends, and want to streamline the process, make it more efficient, more fair. Others would like to modify it off the face of the planet.

In order to protect Vermont's state treasures, the trick will be to differentiate between the two.

# **LETTERS**

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#### CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT DAY LAUDED

VNRC's annual "Share the Spirit" gathering of various grassroots environmentalists may in time turn out to be one of your most important actions. The conference brought together a variety of environmental groups ... protecting their local environments and communities from malls, pesticides, and destruction of wildlife habitat.

The conference gave us a chance to share strategies, information, and energy. More importantly, it let us know we are not alone, that there are principled, energetic people all over the state who are working hard to protect the earth. ... While protection of our environment will require changing the destructive practices of powerful multinational corporations, it is grassroots groups that initiate those changes.

Lisa Barrett, Huntington

#### TRULY AN OUTSTANDING RESOURCE

It is indeed good news that the Vermont Water Resources Board has officially designated the Battenkill as an Outstanding Resource Water. (See "Vermont Perspectives," this issue.) This river ... has been the pass through the mountains for Native Americans, settlers, soldiers and passengers on the Underground Railroad. ... The river itself has always offered a mode of transportation, a supply of food, and recreation — and for the first settlers, their only source of power. ...

In 1990 Manchester passed a new Zoning Ordinance giving special protection to streams, ponds, and wetlands. We have new tools to protect our valuable and scenic resource, the Battenkill. It remains to be seen whether we will be good stewards of that trust. This is not an end of a river story, but hopefully a new beginning.

Taffy Scarff, Manchester Center

#### BURN IT BETTER

In her article "Burn It Hot" (Winter 1990 V.E.R.) Ann Watson neglects to mention a centuries-old solution.... If you burn a metal stove good and hot, you will send most of your heat up the chimney, overheat your living room and perhaps damage your stove. My father came from Estonia where his home and thousands of others were heated by a huge mass of clay and brick. ...

These stoves are still built as a matter of course throughout Europe and Scandanavia.... A large mass of masonry, sometimes many tons, is heated directly by flue gases passing through a maze of channels before going up the chimney. The stove is fired with small pieces of wood and plenty of air once or twice a day for a short time. Temperatures within the stove go well above the 1100°F needed to reburn the gases, making masonry stoves as clean as the best metal stove. They create a warm, solid presence in the home, bringing back the meaning of hearth to the living room.

A thorough introduction to these ideas is presented in *The Book of Masonry Stoves: Rediscovering the Old Way of Warming* by David Lyle (Brick House Publishing, Andover, MA).

- Jaan Laaspere, Norwich

#### STARTING YOUNG

A special thanks to Marcia White's Spaulding Graded Middle School 6th grade class. Each student wrote to us after VNRC Executive Director Ned Farquhar spoke to the class about the issues which inspired him to become an environmentalist. The class also participated in VNRC's "Planning Game." Among the letters:

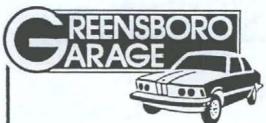
Thank you for coming in and talking to our class about DDT and Rachel Carson. I did a report on Rachel with all the information you gave me.

— Liz Milne, Barre

Thank you for coming to visit us. I found it very interesting. I liked what you said and I'll try to help the environment. I am really glad you came. Your friend,

- Patrick McMahon, Barre





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# CHARD FINLAY

# VERMONT PERSPECTIVE

# THE OUTSTANDING BATTENKILL

First "Outstanding Resource Water" Designated

O riginating in Dorset and flowing 26 miles to the New York border, the Battenkill has been designated Vermont's first Outstanding Resource Water (ORW).

The Vermont Water Resources Board granted the special status in January, finding the Battenkill exceptional for "natural, recreational, cultural and scenic values" — all four of the values required by law.

"The Board's decision was an affirmation of the Kill's exceptional qualities," said Marcy Mahr, VNRC Southern Vermont Program Director. "After working on the project for two and a half years, VNRC and Trout Unlimited are elated by the Board's unanimous decision."

ORW designation was created to protect waterways from streamflow alteration, limit gravel extraction, and recognize community support for the waterways' protection. The Board expects to issue its "findings of fact" in late winter, which may shed light on the new designation's regulatory implications.

At the hearing in November, VNRC expert witnesses focused on the river's fisheries, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic and cultural qualities. VNRC emphasized the distinction between the law's four values and its fourteen "advisory guide posts."

"This distinction is critical for assuring that the river is not segmented; we wanted to see the entire stream is designated as an ORW," said Mahr. "We didn't want the Board to make specific findings on specific river segments."

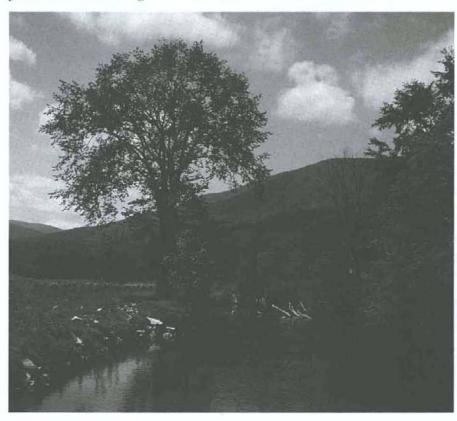
Throughout the proceeding, the uncertainty of the Outstanding Resource Water designation's regulatory effect was a concern echoed by representatives of the towns that are home to the Battenkill. VNRC argued that the regulation must be applied identically for all ORWs. VNRC and Trout Unlimited's legal memorandum to the Board stated, "There is no basis in the law for treating one ORW-designated waterway differently from another. ... An ORW is an ORW. ... Any regulation the Agency develops with regard to Outstanding Resource Waters must apply to any ORW.'

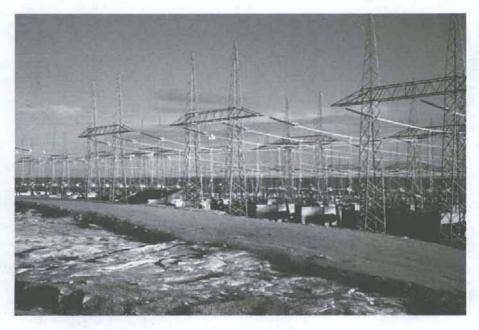
On the same day, the Board also heard testimony on a Jamaica waterfall known as Pike's Falls. VNRC has supported Pike's Falls' designation as Vermont's first waterfall ORW, and in January, the Board also officially made that designation.

"After working on the project for two and a half years, VNRC and Trout Unlimited are elated by the Board's unanimous decision."

Marcy Mahr, VNRC

"Our intention is to have the Battenkill serve as a test case for future petitions. We want to create precedence for how the designation is applied," said Mahr. **DN** 





#### POWER AT A TERRIBLE PRICE VNRC Opposes Hydro-Quebec

The first phase of Hydro-Quebec's James Bay hydroelectric project has already created reservoirs that cover an area half the size of Vermont.

Steven Crowley, VNRC Water Quality Director, visited the main Hydro-Quebec power station and Cree and Inuit villages this summer. According to Crowley, bioaccumulation of mercury generated by the flooding render prime game fish unfit to eat.

"Ancestral hunting lands are flooded and fish are poisoned," explains Crowley. "These effects spell disaster for the 2000-year-old Cree traditions of subsistence and stewardship."

In October the Vermont Public Service Board (PSB) affirmed contracts for the purchase by Vermont utilities of 340 megawatts of electric power from Hydro-Quebec, the purchase has been opposed by VNRC, many other northeastern and national environmental groups, and the Cree nation.

The PSB, while determining that it was limited by law to reviewing only those impacts felt within Vermont, did establish tough energy conservation requirements for Vermont utilities purchasing Hydro-Quebec power.

But according to VNRC Board

member Leigh Seddon, an energy expert who represented VNRC and VPIRG before the PSB, "Vermont could do without Hydro-Quebec, aggressively pursue conservation, and develop renewable sources here."

VNRC and others testified that the massive investments in Hydro-Quebec would tie up funds that could otherwise be spent reducing demand by as much as 35-57%. Utility representatives presented a pessimistic forecast for demand-side management, however, the the PSB tilted the balance in favor of the purchase.

VNRC and other activists continue their efforts. As the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, one of the nation's largest environmental lobbying groups, VNRC is sponsoring a resolution at NWF's March annual meeting; if the resolution is passed, NWF will call for a thorough environmental review of the James Bay Project and strong support for demand-side management. Another focus of attention is Vermont Town Meeting votes in municipalities where utilities seek approval to purchase James Bay power. Meanwhile, Cree activists have filed an appeal of the PSB order. SC/SCC

## A WETLAND SUBSTITUTE? Mall Wins Corps Approval

In early January the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers granted Rutland Regional Mall a nationwide permit. For two years the Finard-Zamias developers have urged the Corps to issue this expedited permit. The decision came two months after the Vermont Environmental Board approved the proposed 442,000- square-foot mall.

Last August, with support from VNRC experts, the Corps determined that the destruction of 8.8 acres of wetlands would have a substantial environmental impact. In order to meet the criteria of the Corps' review, Finard-Zamias had to reconfigure their design significantly. The developers are also required to acquire and preserve a nearby fifteen-acre wetland; run-off control and other environmental safeguards are also permit conditions.

Due to the substantial changes, the developers are now required to return to the District Environmental Commission for an amendment to their permit.

"As soon as the Army Corps asserted jurisdiction, VNRC questioned the value of forcing state regulatory approval without first obtaining federal approval," said Marcy Mahr, VNRC's Southern Vermont Program Director. "For the parties, the Act 250 Commission, and the Environmental Board, this two-and-a-half-year review has been a waste and could have been avoided."

Mall developers requested the removal of conditions requiring air quality monitoring, annual payments of \$150,000 for fifteen years to Rutland City, and the purchase and permanent preservation of the fifteen-acre wetland. VNRC and Citizens for Responsible Growth-Rutland objected, but did agree with removing a provision to construct a pond in a nearby undisturbed wetland. For procedural reasons, the Board denied the motion to reconsider any of the conditions.

VNRC anticipates the amended permit application will be submitted to the District Environmental Commission in early April. **SC/MM** 

#### THE CUTTING EDGE OF ENERGY

Wood Gasification Plant Proposed

A pilot project to create electrical energy from gas produced by burning wood is being considered for Bennington County — and if successful, would be the first in the world. Although the project is still in the preliminary stages of research, the pros and cons are starting to come into the light.

This yet-to-be demonstrated technology has the potential to create local sources of sustainable energy as well as provide a market for low-quality wood.

"So far it looks like the project is in keeping with VNRC's forestry, energy, and economic policies," said VNRC Executive Director Ned Farquhar, "but we'll be monitoring the project with its environmental costs in mind."

The wood-gas turbine would use

low-grade "junk" wood as the fuel. The wood would be chipped and burned to produce a high-quality gas that would be used to run turbines to produce electricity. The facility would require 100,000 cords of wood per year to produce 18-20 megawatts, supplying approximately 4000 homes. Theoretically, this new technology could be as high as 45% energy efficient, as compared to the 33% efficiency of the Burlington Electric wood-burning facility. Wood would be harvested from the four southern Vermont counties and areas in New York and Massachusetts.

"The use of this low-grade wood would have forestland benefits," said Bennington County Forester Jim White. "We can sustain our forest and continue to improve its quality and health, provided yearly harvests do not exceed annual forest growth," he said.

The proposed plant is a joint venture of the Department of Forest and Parks, the Department of Public Service, the Forest Service, several state utilities, and the Bennington County Regional Commission. The plant could cost up to \$50 million to build and will require private and federal funding.

A member of the committee which is reviewing the project, VNRC Southern Vermont Program Director Marcy Mahr notes, "We will be taking a close look at the technology's environmental impacts, energy efficiency, economic feasibility, and, most importantly, effect on forest sustainability." SC/MM

#### LESSER OF TWO EVILS

Killington-Pico Merger Agreement Reached

As most Vermonters know, the regulatory battles that occur between environmentalists and developers can be long and bitter. Polarization can be extremely to costly to both sides in terms of time, resources and legal fees, and, as one conservationist put it, "sometimes more energy is spent on the heat of protracted debate than on the light of actual resource defense."

Environmentalists and developers have been working together on one project to avoid the usual polarization. VNRC was among several signers this January of an agreement related to the proposed merger of the Killington and Pico ski areas, and Act 250 permit applications for construction allowing the merger. Some observers called the agreement "historic" because it removed some controversial issues from the regulatory arena, and included concessions by both the development and environmental interests involved.

Terms of the agreement include new trail, lift, and pipeline development that could allow a 30-40% increase in skier-day capacity over the next twenty years. The agreement also includes: 1) permanent conservation of over 5,000 acres of key wildlife habitat, including Parker's Gore; 2) boundaries and development restrictions limiting the ski areas' future growth; 3) a data-reporting and review process to address long-term growth, water, and other environmental impacts; 4) limited ski development in the existing Appalachian/Long Trails; and 5) acceptance by all parties of the ongoing federal environmental impact statement looking at Trail impacts.

The conservation parties opposed allowing Killington/Pico any new water sources, and none was allowed under the agreement. However, the ski areas may seek water under future permit applications — which conservation groups may oppose.

VNRC Executive Director Ned Farquhar spent months working on the agreement with conservationists, including Nancy Bell of Shrewsbury Land Trust/Save Parker's Gore, Kevin Peterson of the Appalachian Trail Conference, and Jonathan Gibson of Vermont Audubon and Sierra Club.

Farquhar called the agreement "the better of undesirable choices: concession on major points, or an expensive, difficult regulatory battle. It's a partial win, but it's certainly not perfect.

"I don't consider this agreement a model for future agreements," noted Farquhar, adding that it was put together hastily, and without full public review or consultation. "It represents progress, yet it's far from comprehensive. If we did similar agreements all over Vermont, there would be very little of Vermont left," Farquhar said.

VNRC will be a party in the continuing Act 250 review of the proposed merger, arguing for water conservation and growth management controls. VNRC will also be a member of the steering committee for the ongoing growth and water impacts review process. The agreement could be nullified for various reasons anytime through the end of this summer. SC

# TAMARACK HEARINGS CLOSE

Regional Concerns Raised

Three years and thirteen Act 250 hearings later, the 180-unit Tamarack Golf and Country Club had its last hearing in January.

VNRC has opposed the project since it was first proposed as the larger "Salmon Hole" development, on the grounds that it would destroy critical bear habitat, and have severe local and

regional impacts.

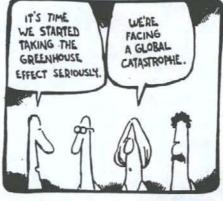
The most recent hearings focused on the project's conformance with the Windham Regional Plan and the Jamaica and Stratton Town Plans. Importantly, the Windham Regional Commission found Tamarack did not conform with the regional plan and would substantially impact the region. Lew Sorensen, Executive Director of the Commission, zeroed in on the project's impacts on regional settlement patterns, rural character and traffic.

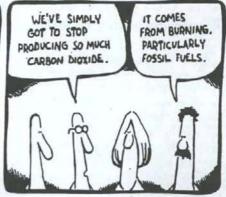
Jim Northup, VNRC's expert witness on land use planning, corroborated Sorensen's findings. "Ignoring the Plan and approving Tamarack would open the floodgates for second-home developments throughout a large, remote area," said Northup. "Even if Tamarack did not ruin this area's rural character and bear habitat, the cumulative impacts of future development certainly would."

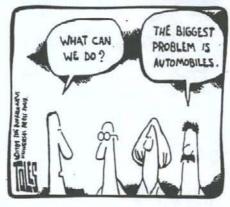
A last-minute plan for increasing bear spring food sources was submitted by the developers. The plan calls for manipulation of the vegetation on wetlands within the project area to increase bears' wetlands use.

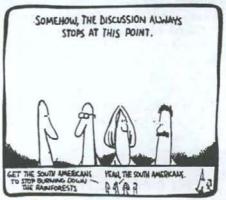
"Given what we know about bears' use of wetlands and desire to avoid each other, increasing the availability of food will not affect the number of bears using the wetlands," notes VNRC Southern Vermont Program Director Marcy Mahr. "In fact, because most of the wetlands are in close proximity to the development, it is more likely the bears will discontinue their usage."

The Commission's decision will be issued in March. MM









## **NEW DIRECTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION**

"Planning How To Plan"

Perhaps the most significant statutory change in Vermont in recent years is the requirement that state agencies plan for their activities affecting land use in a way that is consistent with Vermont's Planning Goals and compatible with regional and approved municipal plans."

Thus begins the Council of Regional Commissions' recommendations on state agency interim plans released in December. The requirement referred to was passed as part of Act 200, Vermont's new planning law.

The Council found that most state agencies were in a stage of "planning how to plan." It provided its recommendations as guidance for state agency plans, which will be adopted in 1993-95.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) has been a leader in the state agency planning, as befits its level of influence on land use in Vermont. AOT states that it will address the goals during 1991-92, and report progress in its 1993-94 Act 200 plan. There is a struggle within the Agency, however, as it becomes clear that the goals in AOT's interim plan call for major new directions in transportation policy.

The Council's recommendations for AOT reflect those areas of inner struggle: the Agency is moving from a mission of accommodating the automobile and using up federal funds, to a mission of maximizing options for mobility in a more energy- and cost-efficient manner.

The Council recommends: 1) increasing emphasis on imaginative means of public transit in urban, suburban and rural areas; 2) increasing emphasis on pedestrian pathways and bikeways, for commuting as well as recreation; 3) increasing emphasis on en-

ergy conservation; 4) improving understanding of the relationship between transportation infrastructure and municipal and regional growth; and 5) recognizing the inherent conflict between the public's lack of support for additional roads, and the Agency's mandate to provide for the state's transportation system. Criteria should be set forth for determining when new roads, improvement of existing facilities or other solutions are appropriate.

The Transportation Board held three public hearings this fall on state transportation policy, planning, and implementation. Public response to the hearings was strong. However, other areas where citizen input is needed — such as the Agency's long-range planning — have not been opened to public comment.

"The public is clearly more aware than ever of the impact of our current auto-dependent culture on our environment, economy, and national security," says VNRC's Land Use Director Peg Elmer. "AOT's inner struggle to acknowledge and meet these public demands is just beginning. We, as concerned citizens, need to stay involved."

For ideas on getting involved, call VNRC's Peg Elmer at 223-2328, or the transportation activism group Grass Routes at 658-4267. SC/PE

### NORTHERN FOREST LANDS PROTECTION

New Council and Alliance Formed

NRC and other conservation groups have lobbied hard for protection of threatened northern forest lands, and efforts are paying off. The 101st Congress appropriated \$1.275 million to continue the work of the Northern Forest Lands Study. (See "Vermont Perspectives," V.E.R. Winter 1990.) A portion of the federal money was designated to fund a Northern Forest Lands Council.

Legislation authorizing the creation of the Council is still pending; in the meantime, the Governor's Task Force on Northern Forests has begun the Council's work.

The group is now designing its firstyear work plan which includes establishing an inventory and mapping process for the area, and conducting a search for an executive director.

Meanwhile, VNRC and sixteen other conservation groups agreed to form a Northern Forest Land Alliance to ensure that the conservation community is working together. The groups decided to establish a Washington lobbying

presence within a year and set up Forest Legacy projects in each of the four states. Forest Legacy is a new federal program to buy conservation easements on threatened forest land.

"In order to protect New England and New York's northern forests, we can't just talk about preservation; we need to work on a multi-faceted strategy which includes economic sustainability, forest health, and ecosystem protection," notes VNRC Resource Conservation Director Jim Shallow. "The new Alliance will help environmentalists work together on this broadbased approach." SC/JS



#### GOOD GROWING

VNRC Lobbies for Stronger Farm Bill

ast summer VNRC and other environmentalists took a close look at the reauthorization of the 1990 Farm Bill. VNRC staff met with national environmental groups and with staff from Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy's office. As a result of strong advocacy from national and state environmental groups, and firm leadership by Leahy — who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee — the Farm Bill was transformed.

The Conservation Reserve Program has been greatly expanded to include conservation easements for wetlands, forests, and other sensitive areas, and to upgrade erosion control practices. A new Forest Legacy Program provides forest protection (see above article).

The Swampbuster provision in the 1985 Farm Bill denied federal subsidies to farms that drained wetlands. In the 1990 Farm Bill this was clarified, allowing certain minimal-impact conversions, but strengthening prohibitions on drainage of sensitive wetland areas.

The bill also ensures that alternative farming methods will have a place in outreach and extension activities. Past programs that have provided assistance on basic conservation practices (like crop rotation) will now also make farmers more aware of techniques that minimize the use of chemicals and fertilizers — a critical step in avoiding surface and ground water pollution.

The biggest disappointment of the 1990 amendments was the removal, in the closing days of debate, of a provision that would close the "Circle of Poison," making it illegal to export pesticides that are banned in the United States. American farmers will, however, now be required to keep records of pesticide use, which will be valuable in tracking the long-term effects of various pesticides. SCC

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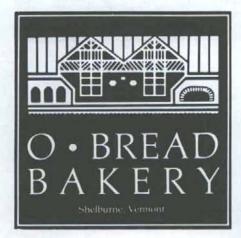
# Consulting Foresters Association of Vermont





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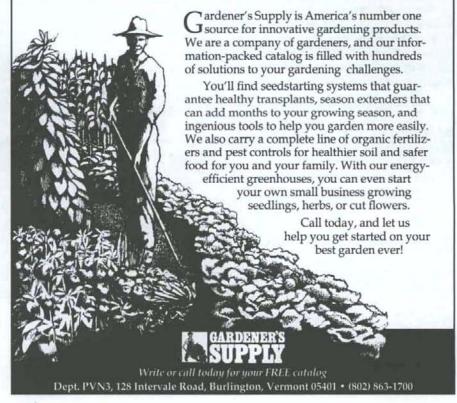
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### GROWTH IN GROWTH CENTERS

New Legislation Could Define the Limits

"To encourage growth in growth centers" was one of the eight recommendations made by the Governor's Commission on Vermont's Future in 1988.

This led, through Act 200, to the first goal of Vermont's revised planning enabling law in Chapter 117: "To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside."

The concept of growth centers is popular with all sides: with developers, who know that in these areas growth will be given a bright green light; and with conservationists, because other locations would then be targeted in the planning process to remain open.

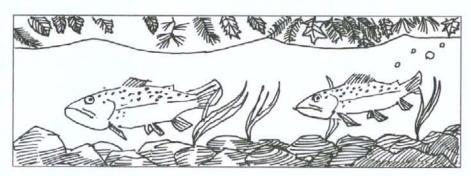
VNRC has organized a group including Representative Chuck Ross (D-Hinesburg) and Senator George Little (D-Chittenden), the Vermont Planners Association, and other interested proponents, to draft a bill to create incentives for development within growth centers.

Some groups have advocated Act 250 changes to permit trade-offs of natural resources for public economic interests. However, VNRC argues that the language evaluating natural resources in relation to social, economic and cultural values is already included in Act 250.

VNRC emphasizes that towns must plan to mitigate any loss of a natural resource — such as prime agricultural land — that occurs through the creation of a growth center. Some towns, such as Williston, now include such provisions in their plans.

In the bill as drafted, a municipality would proceed through a growth center planning process and then apply for an "umbrella" Act 250 permit for the growth center; individual development applications that follow would then have a simplified review.

In the bill, towns which effectively plan growth centers would benefit by receiving priority for state funding for example, for sewer or water projects. State policy would also be shifted to emphasize that state agency staff (such as wildlife biologists) should focus on the local level — the town planning process — first, rather than the later Act 250 process. SC/PE



#### HOW MUCH WATER DOES A FISH NEED?

"Minimum Streamflows Procedure" Debated

The water of Vermont's rivers and streams is in great demand these days. Public water supply, industrial uses, snowmaking, and hydropower all divert water from its natural course.

At the same time, people boat and swim in the water; many of our municipal and industrial treatment plants discharge into our rivers; and fish and wildlife depend on water flow for cover, habitat maintenance, and simply for living space.

As a result, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) is often called upon to recommend minimum flow regimes as requirements for withdrawals. The ANR has now proposed the official adoption of a "Minimum Streamflow Procedure" to establish consistent review of permit requests.

A committee drawn together by the ANR has been offering its advice. Composed of representatives from VNRC and other environmental groups, hydropower utilities, ski areas, and municipalities, the committee has carried out a frank dialogue.

The Agency and the commercial users would both like to see firmly established minimum flow formulas, although the Agency argues for higher flows. Resource advocates point out that any time you gear a regulatory system to protect the "average stream," there are going to be lots of streams that are underprotected.

The Minimum Streamflow Procedure — the subject of a public rule-making process through the winter months — uses a combination of average flow figures generated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Instream Flow Incremental Methodology (IFIM). The IFIM was developed in Colorado as a people-based negotiation and decision-making process. As used in New England by some stream withdrawal engineering firms, however, IFIM is a quick computer program that spews out numbers on one or two fish species' habitat needs.

According to Ken Kimball, Research Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club, "A 'black box' formula like IFIM is only as good as the assumptions you start out with. IFIM was never intended to be used as it is commonly used in the Northeast."

Since the IFIM, and the minimum flow policy, are expected to play a central role in withdrawal and hydroelectric relicensing proposals over the next several years, VNRC will be paying very close attention. SCC

# ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA CARTER

# **SUSTAINABILITY**

# The New Economics of Conservation

Eric Palola

Sustainable development is variously seen as the new economics, as the climax (or last gasp) of capitalism, as a great hoax.... By some accounts the railroads arrived in Vermont, laden with Appalachian coal, not a minute too soon. By the 1870s Vermont was running out of wood — the potash kilns and lumber mills giving way to a new legacy of sheep, cows, and open

fields. By 1910, however, these yielded in turn to an urban migration to the mills and sweatshops of new industry. Each stage saw changes in the environment and the composition of Vermont towns. By today's judgement we might say this transformation was too big, too fast, too risky — in short, "unsustainable."

But what would we do differently? Today, similar economic shifts are afoot — caused this time by a looming hangover from a half-century of unprecedented energy and resource use. Human activities are now seen as a key variable in the maintenance of basic ecology. This realization is

driving a call for policies that are sustainable.

"Sustainable development"? Sounds good, but where do we start? In broad terms, we're searching for an economic model that includes ecological and ethical principles, in order to avoid the environmental and social costs of many modern development strategies. The modern lexicon of sustainability began most recently with the *Our Common Future* report of the of the U.N. World Commission on the Environment and Development in 1987.

The report's central criterion for sustainable development is providing "inter-generational equity": that is, we should leave future generations at least as well off, and with at least as many development choices, as current consumers. By harvesting resource productivity (the "interest") rather than resource stocks (the "principle"), we satisfy long-run economic needs and provide for the sustainable use of air, land and water. So far, so good.

But, when does the future begin? Which group sacrifices what things today in order to make fair provision for tomorrow? And how will we know when we get it right? Designing actions to fit a theory of sustainability has generated fertile political and scholarly debate. Sustainability is often more easily defined in terms of *unsustainable* actions — things like pollution, clear-cutting the rainforest, or energy waste. Across the international spectrum,

sustainable development is variously seen as the new economics, as the climax (or last gasp) of capitalism, as a great hoax, or as a new buzzword for the waiting mandates of ecology. Some have hailed it as a political bridge in the time-worn "environment versus economy" contest, while others agree with Donald Mann, President of Negative Population Growth, who calls sustainable development "a thundering oxymoron." Perhaps most dangerously, it is seen by some as a sign that with only a few changes, we can "have it all" and continue along the same economic track.

Several issues arise persistently in shaping sustainable develop-

ment policy. One is whether capitalist economies, with their acquisitive bias toward the "here and now," will begin to incorporate social and environmental costs without more expansive and costly government regulation. Another issue concerns the acute concentration of wealth and disproportionately high consumption of world resources (80%) that developed countries with only one-fifth of the world population enjoy. Reconciling theory with sustainable consumption paths may challenge "the American Way" — a debate fraught with ideological land mines. As Ken Piddington, former environmental head at the World Bank has emphasized, a "prime determinant of sustainability will be the *nature* of consumption," not just the quantities consumed.

Other difficult questions lurk. How do we best assign values to the future, given present social inequities? How fast are we running out of key resources? And, as scientist William Clark has asked, "What kind of planet can we get?" given uncertain human-induced biospheric changes now in motion.

Policies of the U.N., international lending groups, and many resource economists promote a new tool-

box of government interventions and market incentives to achieve sustainability. Debt-for-natureswaps, energy efficiency tax credits, emissions trading, "green" taxes, careful allocation of property rights, pricing of environmental "externalities," and

technology transfers are all potential tools.

Given the historical problems of short-run markets, some argue that sustainability lies in entirely different approaches. Post-Marxist critiques on western economies have emerged over the last two decades under new headings like "evolutionary economics" (Boulding), "steady-state economics" (Daly), "community economics" (Etzione), "home economics" (Berry), or the "economics of futurity." They argue for enforceable population controls, new standards for national income accounting that in-

clude resource depletion, the integration of community values in market decisions, and consumption quotas on key resources.

This group asserts a more basic ideological challenge — one that would pull economics back to its humanitarian and ecological roots, reminding us that ecology is just long-run economics, that incrementalism is too late. Today's markets, they argue, hopelessly undervalue and conceal the system-wide social and biological effects of current consumption.

Historically, economic growth has tended to favor certain income and ethnic groups over others. Redistribution by government, combined with an

expanded ethic of sharing and austerity, has been an attempt to even out the worst disparities of unbridled growth. In the U.S., however, the roaring '80s saw an unprecedented concentration of wealth, along with historic, unsustainable levels of homelessness, decline in wages, export of capital, increase in crime, and environmental problems - all challeng-

ing the "growth-is-good" paradigm.

A wild card affecting growth and sustainability is the role of substitution and technological innovation. This was recently highlighted in a famous wager between ecologist Paul Ehrlich and economist Julian Simon over the ten-year price path of several key minerals. Historically, as the bet-winning Simon would argue, technology has continually offered more cost-efficient, less resource consumptive materials and energy. Besides the falling prices of minerals, Simon could point to the smaller size and cost of computers, or the increasing competitiveness of solar photovoltaics as examples.

But Ehrlich and others argue that the ability to substitute human-made capital - money and services — for natural resource capital is dwindling.

The rate at which technology can alleviate resource constraints, like world-wide depletion of topsoil, is slowing, while, disturbing patterns like global warming and loss of species diversity are accelerating.

So who's right? Well, it appears to depend on what we want and what we think our obligations are - to each other, to other living things, and to the folks that come after us. Most of us worry more about next week's grocery money than whether we can fish in mountain streams fifty years hence. But most of us also care about the future, if only because we suspect that the rising bill on our environmental credit card will soon come due.

Planetary management is anathema would we trust? - but to "think globally and act locally" suggests an ethic of community self-reliance, a

"How do we ... make a

local culture that will

preserve our part of the

"We are talking here

not just about a kind of

knowledge that involves

that is unavailable to

the unaffectionate .... "

affection but ... knowledge

Wendell Berry.

conservationist and poet

world while we use it?

global sense of interconnectedness and compassion. A sustainable future will mean discovering, using Aldo Leopold's words, "what the right tendencies are" in a local, decentralized way, but with an eye to long-term global patterns. It will require better accounting systems on nonrenewable resources, and attention to more qualitative measurements like energy use per capita, instead of blanket support of conventions like the Gross National Product.

Is Vermont on a sustainable path? The good signs include a relatively diverse economic base, environmental laws that encourage sustainable consumption,

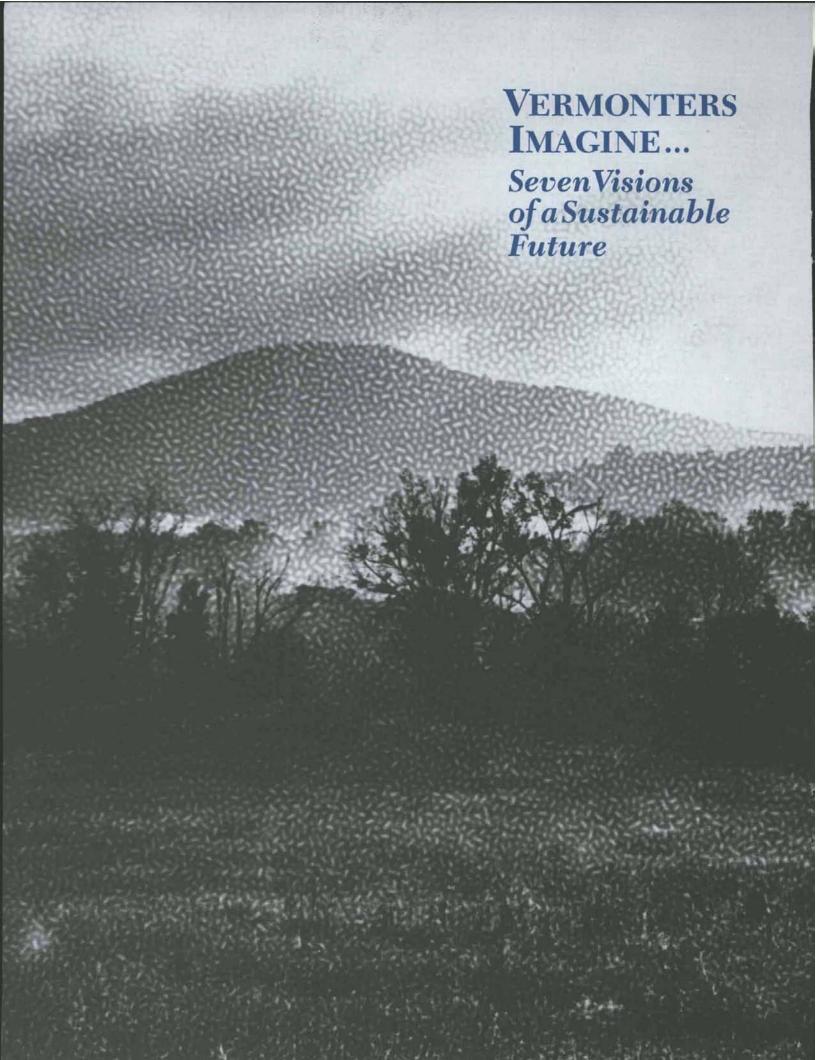
and attention to programs that have multiple longterm benefits like the Current Use tax program or the Housing and Conservation Trust Fund. And we're actively discussing what sustainability means, from the 1989 Governor's Commission on Economic Future report Pathways to Prosperity, to conferences like one held last year between New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers.

The bad signs are familiar: the likelihood of another round of dairy farm losses, continuing landconsumptive suburban sprawl, and a high degree of dependence on imported energy and food.

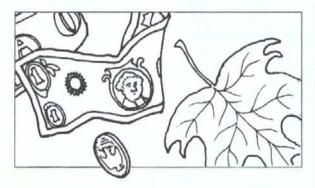
The work of many Vermonters, as indicated in the following articles, shows that sustainable solutions are within reach and indeed, waiting to be tapped. Despite the seemingly impregnable economic forces surrounding Vermont, common sense and ecological truths show that sustainable policies must eventually prevail. •

Eric Palola is a policy analyst with C.T. Donovan Associates in Burlington. He was VNRC Associate Director and lobbyist from 1984-1988.

So who's right? It appears to depend on what we think our obligations are to each other, to other living things, and to the folks that come after us.



hat is your vision of a
Vermont economy that can
sustain our ecology?" We asked
Vermonters in many different fields to
answer this question — and received a
variety of intriguing answers.



# A NEW VERMONT ECONOMY Will Raap

In the ideal world, we would be aggressively seeking an economic model that could sustain our ecology at least. But, we'd want it to do more, too. The economy should also renew and honor our ecology. We'd want an economy that was a reflection of an increasingly healthy ecology.

Okay, I know we don't live in an ideal world, but many of us are in Vermont because it's as close as we can come. Why not push for even more? Why not invent a new economic system that conforms to *our* values, rather than those of turn-of-the-century English economist Lord Keynes — whose theories guide our economy — who said, "In the long term we're all dead"?

A recent University of Vermont poll reported 72% of Vermonters would pay more taxes to preserve our environment; 62% would do the same to save our farms. Vermonters understand what's valuable about Vermont. Why not redefine our economic guideposts to value what we already value?

In the area of economic growth, let's officially recognize that Lord Keynes was short-sighted and that there is a future our grandchildren will inherit. Let's establish that a preserved and improved environment and a well-educated working force are highest priority investments in that future.

Let's define the type of economic activity most suitable for our state and its people, and develop long-term policies to attract it. Let's assess a "future generations investment tax" to pay the start-up costs of this policy — these investments should create a positive revenue stream quickly (in quality of life and in financial terms). And, let's honestly look at the cost of development in natural capital. If farm

land is lost or water polluted or air fouled, let's quantify the cost and assess the project.

In the area of agriculture, we really are messed up. Should Vermonters accept the loss of one-third of our remaining dairies because there's excess milk nationally and prices need to fall \$2.00/100 weight? Should we at the same time accept the loss of up to one-half of Vermont's organic vegetable growers because federal transportation, energy and irrigation policies give California growers an insurmountable competitive advantage? Let's fight this insanity!

Farming works best serving local or regional markets. Let's protect our tradition of family farms just as Europe and Japan do. Let's initiate a New England agricultural economic alliance to support the best stewards of our land — family farmers. Let's tax food that's grown with ecologically damaging practices. Let's vitalize our Department of Agriculture to create Vermont farms, New England markets and the next generation of farmers to provide more of our food using sustainable practices. Vermonters want this and are willing to help pay for it.

How do we create a Vermont economy that can sustain our ecology? We start by creating a new "Eco"-nomics!

Will Raap is President of Gardener's Supply Co. of Burlington and several smaller companies.

"I know we don't live in an ideal world, but many of us are in Vermont because it's as close as we can come. Why not push for more?"

Will Raap, President, Gardener's Supply Company

#### BANKING ON OUR STRENGTHS Marcy Harding

hen I was a young girl in the 1950s I recall my parents referring to the hard times many Chittenden County families were having as the woolen mills in Winooski closed down. In those years, it was common for young people to leave Vermont to seek employment. Since that time Vermont has experienced three decades of virtually uninterrupted economic growth. Youngsters have no longer been forced to leave the state to find jobs and many have chosen to move to our state because of our strong economy and our quality of life.

In 1990, however, it became apparent to most Vermonters that the boom years of the '70s and '80s had come to a halt. Although this creates hardships for many, perhaps it will give us time to analyze the type of growth we want in Vermont.

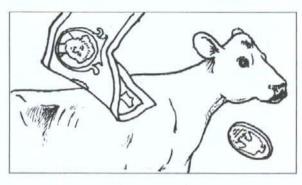
Those of us in the banking industry, especially commercial lenders, are acutely aware of how difficult a downturn in the economy can be. We have some basic rules in lending to businesses which can be applied to economic development efforts as well. We encourage our customers to concentrate on what they do best, reach a broad base of customers with their product or service, and avoid becoming too dependent on one or two suppliers.

In recent years, the manufacturing and agricultu-

ral segments of our economy have declined while the construction and service industries have grown. This trend needs to be reversed. Construction and service industries should support, but not fuel, our economy. In recent years, our economy has been driven by the construction industry and at the same time we have lost much of what we value to condominium developments and shopping outlets. The increasing number of citizen groups opposing devel-

"We must shift the balance back to manufacturing and agriculture and away from real estate development."

Marcy Harding, Bank Vice President



opments supports the notion that Vermonters are unwilling to give up what makes this state so special so that people from outside our communities can play, shop and vacation in our backyards.

Clearly Vermont's strengths include her environment and natural beauty. These qualities should be used to attract businesses that enhance our quality of life. We must shift the balance back to manufacturing and agriculture and away from real estate development, especially that which is unaffordable to most Vermonters and creates low-paying jobs.

The first step is for Vermonters to understand that a shift in the balance of industrial segments is needed. After that, economic incentives, and perhaps disincentives, offered at the state and local level could facilitate such a shift. There are many useful recommendations in A Strategic Outlook By the Governor's Commission On The Economic Future of Vermont — Pathways to Prosperity, published in November, 1989. In addition, Act 200, as it is implemented, will quite likely help citizens at the local level focus on their economic future. Whatever it takes, I hope we can take action before it is too late.

Marcy Harding is a Senior Vice President and Commercial Loan Officer for the Howard Bank. Her views are from a personal perspective and may not reflect the views of Howard Bank management.

#### SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION Tony Redington

Policymakers in 1991 fashioning a national transportation program use 2020 as the horizon year for investments. For Vermont, 2020 signifies

the date of a possible 15th Agency of Transportation Act 200 Plan. Let's pretend it is 2020 and peek at the possible highlights of a report on Vermont sustainable transportation future:

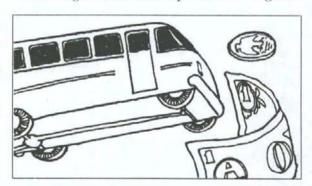
"Vermont exceeded goals for the 2010 decade for vehicle miles of travel and gasoline consumption. Vermont reached a new low of 2.6 billion vehicle miles compared to the record 5.7 billion set in 1989. With the motor vehicle fleet averaging 50 mpg, motor fuel use reached less than a quarter of the record 1989 use. Travel by Vermonters reached a new high, however, spurred by more passenger miles by rail, trolley, bus, and bicycle.

"Vermont continued its leadership in the President's Global Warming Awards for lowest per capita global warming emissions.

"Vermont and New Hampshire celebrated the 10th anniversary of extension of the Franconia Notch Parkway (I-93) from Littleton to St. Johnsbury, accomplished by closing down one north-and south-bound lane on the low-volume interstate. The parkway continues a remarkable safety record, and saves the states \$400,000/year in maintenance.

"Montpelier and Rutland completed major downtown renewal programs bringing residential, shopping, and office space into car-free complexes designed to accommodate the needs of the escalating elderly population. Shelburne Road received a national award for multi-town 'strip development renewal.' The trolley line down the center of the former six-lane highway keyed the renewal design.

"The three-decade population trend back to city and towns centers continues, due in part to the firstclass rail, bus, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities developed at the turn of the century. Killington, now the nation's largest ski resort complex, acknowledges its



number one status can be credited to the daily rail services via Rutland to both New York and Montreal. Burlington region leaders hailed the completion of the Chittenden Crescent Transportation System from Colchester to Charlotte, combining nonmotorized and snowmobile/motorcycle trails with the long-time trolley service.

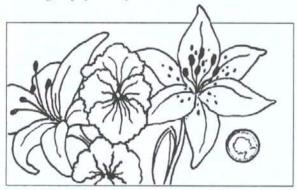
"The rail service connection from Newport to Burlington is set for a mid-2020 start, representing the fourth east-west corridor to obtain daily service in addition to Bellows Falls-Rutland, White River Junction-Burlington, and St. Johnsbury-Swanton."

From our 1991 view, what moves Vermont to the 2020 sustainable transportation system? Two 1991 reports — the first Agency of Transportation Act 200 Interim Plan 1991-1992 and the Vermont Department of Public Service Comprehensive Energy Plan 1990-2000 — chart choices suggested by citizens that easily lead to the sustainable system described here. Some recommendations go before the

1991 Vermont Legislature.

Economic and political developments have contributed to the current condition of transportation. Transportation-sector use of petroleum ballooned 25% during the 1972-1990 period, for example, while use by other sectors (residential, industrial and utility) declined by about 25%. Mostly because of transportation policy, the U.S. uses petroleum at twice the per capita rate of Western Europe. But international affairs, as well as problems such as global warming, may dictate changes. The decisions on how to achieve the policy goals remain properly in the political arena. However, the overall direction of transportation policy - towards energy conservation and sustainability - appears irresistible.

Tony Redington is a Policy Analyst for the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

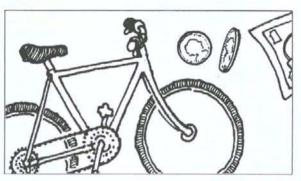


#### DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES Seth Bongartz

ntil relatively recently, the truism about Vermont's economy was that it was a three-legged stool: agriculture, manufacturing and tourism.

By 1990 however, (and probably much earlier), this model was a thing of the past. Our farms are disappearing, and manufacturing is on the decline. Tourism continues strong. But perhaps the most dramatic shift in Vermont's economy has been our increasing dependence on the construction trades industry. In fact, construction may have become the fourth — and dominant — leg of our economy.

From 1984 to 1988, a period of strong economic growth in Vermont, the dollar value of Act 250 permit applications rose from \$233 million to \$ 340 million. The first three months of 1989 vs. the first three months of 1988 saw the number of Act 250 applications rise by 50%, and their dollar value double. The first eleven months of 1989 saw the contracting of \$611 million of construction in Vermont. Clearly, the 1980s saw more and more Vermonters



become dependent on the construction trades industry as their means of livelihood.

By its nature, construction requires the constant devouring of Vermont's natural resources. Each mountainside condominium requires a building lot; each shopping mall increases the pressure for widening existing roads or building a bypass. That means converting forests or agricultural meadows.

It is less than clear, even from a purely economic point of view, that this is the right course to take. At best, such a heavy dependence on construction makes us subject to the fluctuations in the national and regional economy. And ironically, this dependence on the construction trades industry most often represents the antithesis of opportunity. For instance, between 1985 and 1988 (in the midst of a construction boom) the housing "affordability gap" the difference between the price of the average home and the price that the average person can afford to pay - rose in Vermont from an alreadydeadly \$23,000 to \$31,000.

A major portion of Vermont's economic structure is fundamentally at odds with our goals as Vermonters. No amount of "planning" and no amount of regulation can, in the long run, compensate for the negative environmental and human consequences that accompany this structure. The only answer is for Vermont to develop a new economy: an economy that is in harmony with the environment and our values as Vermonters

Vermont is poised for an agricultural renaissance. Organically grown foods with the Vermont label are a natural for a health-oriented public; furthermore, there is actually a milk production shortage in the Northeast. We should consider a retirement fund for farmers; a state-built processing and/or canning facility for Vermonters' vegetable and meat specialty products; and an effort far beyond the \$350,000 the state presently allocates to agricultural promotion. The position of Commissioner of Agriculture should

Vision for 2020: "Shelburne Road receives a national award for 'strip development renewal.' The trolley line down the former six-lane highway keyed the renewal design...."

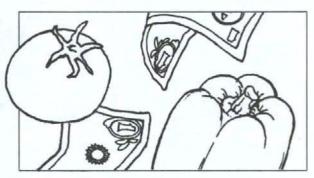
Tony Redington, Transportation Policy Analyst

be elevated to Secretary, and become one of the Governor's closest advisors.

Hundreds of small, community-based businesses already contribute to Vermont's economy without threatening our environment. Earth's Best organic baby food, Hemmings Motor News national antique car magazine, Catamount Brewery, and J.K. Adams woodworking are just a few examples of Vermont businesses that now employ hundreds; Ben and Jer-

"A working rural landscape... needs to draw on the strengths of both the farm and non-farm communities."

Will Stevens, Farmer



ry's, Cabot Creamery and After the Fall all have national distribution and real ties to the community.

A third component may come through our increasing telecommunications network. The need to drive to the metropolitan center to work, and then back to the country to live, may be greatly reduced as people can communicate via computer nationwide in an instant.

Vermont need not destroy that which we cherish most to create opportunity for our citizens. Decisions about where we want to go and creative thinking about how to get there can provide Vermonters with a unique opportunity to develop a very strong economic base that enhances all those qualities that make Vermont, Vermont.

Seth Bongartz is an attorney in Manchester. He was VNRC Southern Vermont Director from 1988-90 and is a former state senator.

# FARMING THAT WORKS Will Stevens

In order to maintain the working rural landscape, we will need a program which draws on the strengths of both the farm and non-farm communities. Such a program would include:

Promotion: Commodity groups should use a media campaign to show that with every purchase of a Vermont-raised product, consumers are allying themselves with the working landscape. Such an effort would encourage "average" Vermonters to demand Vermont foods in local restaurants, stores or farmstands. The effect would be to stem the flow of food into, and dollars out of, the state.

Education: Elementary schools should seek the participation of local representatives of agricultural and other businesses in an interdisciplinary curriculum. Such an approach would heighten a child's sense of community awareness, and use agriculture as a model to develop concepts such as cause-and-effect and problem solving.

Financial return: To keep farmers farming, we must make it profitable for them. Programs such as conservation easements, purchase of development rights, tax abatements, etc., are short-term responses to poor policies. A more appropriate tax policy, for example, would reflect the true costs of services by shifting the artificially inflated value of potential farmland development on to residences and industry. Government and lending institutions should provide funding/financing for in-state processing facilities which handle "raw" Vermont commodities. This would reduce transportation costs, provide employment and tax base for the community, and result in a greater net income for the primary producer.

Access to land and facilities: "To keep farm families in farming" is a pervasive yet inappropriate, caste-oriented attitude which overlooks the current reality. Many farm parents are presently encouraging their children to do anything but farm, due to a bleak economic picture. While efforts are being made to pair up new farmers with those ready to retire, methods should also be explored to shift the major burden of risk from the retiring property owner to the broader community. Society, as the ultimate beneficiary, would assume more of the financial risk, and simultaneously reduce the likelihood of default by making it mutually profitable for both parties to enter into a working relationship.

As non-farmers come to appreciate what their farming neighbors are up to (or against), and realize that a life of quality and opportunity are shared goals, both sectors will work together toward a sustainable, socially resilient Vermont.

Will Stevens is president of Vermont Organic Farmers which certifies Vermont organic farms. He and his wife own and operate Golden Russet Farm in Shoreham.

# ENERGY: WAVES OF THE FUTURE Steve Webster

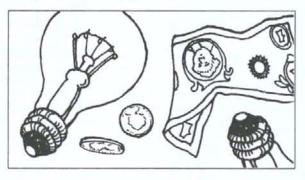
To achieve a sustainable energy system we must match our consumption of energy to the energy income from the sun (including wind, hydro, biomass), and cease consumption of energy capital (oil, coal, natural gas, uranium). Vermont is in a fairly good position to attain this goal. Here's a glimpse of what things could be like in 10-30 years:

New buildings are super-insulated, with tightly

sealed 12" walls and automated systems that provide optimal ventilation at all times. Windows with R-values equivalent to an insulated 2x4 wall employ such innovations as a thin film that changes from transparent to opaque when a small electric current is applied. Buildings are oriented to maximize passive solar heating. Space heating demands are minimal — a typical home would use less than fifty gallons of oil a year — and are provided by exceedingly efficient, clean-burning wood chip or wood pellet systems, with thermostatically controlled, automatic feeding mechanisms.

Solar and wood-fired systems heat water. All electricity is provided by renewable energy: hydropower; wind; wood; and solar electric (photovoltaic) panels on all south-facing roofs. Super-efficient lights, industrial motors, refrigerators, and other appliances, coupled with widespread use of natural day-lighting and ventilation/shading have reduced total electricity demand well below 1990 levels.

Mass transit, highly efficient vehicles, changes in development patterns to minimize commuting, "telecommuting" (where people work at home, using computers linked by phone lines to their offices),

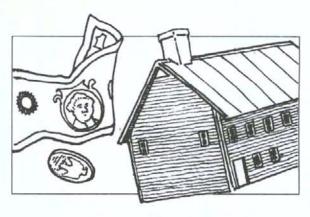


etc. have drastically reduced transportation energy use. Most vehicles run on compressed natural gas, which is being used as a transition fuel while engineers develop electric cars that use fuel cells powered by hydrogen produced by the electrolysis of water using photovoltaic-produced electricity.

Consumers have mastered the reduce/reuse/ recycle and energy conservation ethics, making minor changes in their behavior that yield significant energy savings. Many are growing much of their own food, using low-energy, organic methods. Others are buying locally produced products.

The advantages of such a scenario are many: reduced emissions that contribute to global warming and acid rain, fewer oil spills, no production of radioactive wastes, retention of energy dollars in Vermont, greater stability of energy supply and costs, and more. This a scenario that could be sustained almost indefinitely; and the technologies needed are either close to commercialization or here today.

Steve Webster is an energy specialist and General Manager of SolarWorks of Montpelier.



#### A LIVING WAGE Cheryl Rivers

Politicians are fond of saying that protection of our environment and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. Yet currently there is no comprehensive plan in the state's economic development policy to produce a vibrant economy which would provide all Vermonters with quality jobs which pay living wages.

As I have travelled around our state, I have met too many Vermonters who work very hard at jobs that don't pay them enough to provide them with decent housing or allow them access to health insurance. Many of them are limited to part-time work so that their employers can avoid paying benefits. Statistics reveal that the fastest growing sector of Vermont's economy is the service sector, which has not historically paid wages that are as high as the manufacturing sector. There are those who argue that we should measure progress in terms of numbers of new jobs created. But if thousands more Vermonters become employed in businesses that do not pay a living wage, are we really making "progress"?

The State of Vermont should put the construction industry back to work weatherizing existing public buildings and homes and building affordable housing. The State could also do much more to encourage diversified agriculture. We should expand on the Market Vermont concept. Vermonters could and would produce more products and meat, if the state provided them with assistance in marketing.

Finally, there are many talented Vermonters who, with some technical assistance and a small amount of financing, could become successful business people. Vermont could become a center for processing recyclables and developing recycling technologies. The Job Start Program, which provides very small loans to very low-income Vermonters, has proven this to be true. This is now a small program, but the concept needs to be replicated as a mainstream economic policy for Vermont's future.

Cheryl Rivers is a senator from Windsor County and a former advocate on low-income issues. •

"If thousands more Vermonters become employed in businesses that do not pay a living wage, are we really making 'progress'?"

Cheryl Rivers, State Senator

# WORCESTER MOUNTAINS PROJECT A Model In Sustainability

Jim Shallow

"We need to change the current perception that environmental protection, stewardship and sustainability are bad for business."

Ned Farquhar, VNRC Executive Director We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

— Aldo Leopold

The Worcester Range is the backbone of an area of relatively unfragmented open space in central Vermont. Within a twenty minute drive from Montpelier, these mountains are a favorite place for area residents. For many years forestry and farming stewarded the land, but the last twenty-five years have seen increased development pressure in the area.

"This area is the last 'undeveloped frontier' within reach of Stowe," says John Buck, Vermont State Wildlife Biologist. "Although very little in the way of necessary wildlife habitat exists in the tract, it is valuable wildlife habitat from the perspective of its contribution to the large undeveloped forested landscape," notes Buck.

In an effort to conserve the area's working rural landscape in a sustainable fashion, VNRC has organized a steering committee of local citizens. The committee is made up of volunteers from many area interests, including a forester who works for a local mill, an owner of cider pressing operation, several interested landowners, and a representative of the Central Vermont Audubon Society.

"We have a good group here," observes Rick Paradis, a Middlesex resident and committee member. "Even though we all have different interests, everyone recognizes that this is a special area that is under a lot of pressure from development and that something needs to be done to protect it."

Meeting since November to develop sustainable protection strategies, the group lists its goals as threefold: to protect forest resources including the timber values, wildlife habitat, scenic values and recreational opportunities; to enhance the local timber economy and forest projects through incentives, development loans and other projects; and to strengthen communities by promoting sustainable natural resource-based economies including recreation, working land, and economic opportunity.

This is a tall order, even for a relatively manage-

able 113,000 acres in the Worcester range area. The committee decided, as its first project, to contact the many private landowners in the area to determine how they manage their land and what their long-term intentions are.

The committee also applied for a grant, through the Stewardship Program, to establish a Worcester Mountain Stewardship District. The federally funded Stewardship Program encourages landowners to manage their lands for recreational, scenic, timber, and wildlife values. The project will identify landowners in critical areas and offer them the services of the county forester to help them establish their objectives for the land. The Stewardship District will be also promoted to build the sense of community based on the natural resources in the area.

"The steering committee hopes that the Stewardship District will develop into a landowner association," explains committee member Jonathan Wood, a forester for a lumber mill in the area. "Owners of smaller forest parcels could join together into a coop, offering them the benefits that larger landowners enjoy," says Wood.

Information gained from the landowner contacts may also help in designing programs to foster sustainable natural resource-based businesses. The steering committee is researching the amount of economic activity now generated by local sawmills and secondary manufacturers such as furniture makers. This study will lead to identifying existing and potential programs which could stabilize and enhance the natural resource-based sector of the economy.

"We need to change the current perception that environmental protection, stewardship and sustainability are bad for business," notes VNRC Executive Director Ned Farquhar. VNRC's Worcester Mountain project, aimed at protecting valuable open space through the combined use of landowner incentives and promotion of natural resource-based businesses, can be a model for other regions interested in sustainable economies which don't degrade our resources.

Jim Shallow is the Director of VNRC's Resource Conservation Program. "We can condemn the material suppression of literature - the persecution of writers, acts of censorship, the burning of books, but we are powerless when it comes to the worst violation, that of not reading books."

> - Joseph Brodsky recipient1987 Nobel Prize for literature



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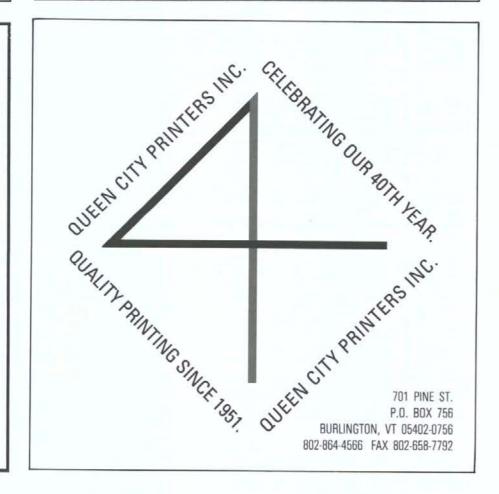
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# SANDERS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

# An Interview

"If ... you're
not prepared
to challenge
corporate
control over
America, then
you're not an
environmentalist."

Bernard Sanders, Vermont Representative The 1990 race for Vermont's lone congressional seat was fascinating but unusually divisive for Vermont's conservation community. Some environmentalists pointed to incumbent Republican Peter Smith's 100% voting grade from the national League of Conservation Voters; others agreed with Independent socialist Bernard Sanders that Congress needed "shaking up," its environmental agenda included. (Democrat Dolores Sandoval came in a distant third in the election.) With the smoke of the election cleared, VNRC Editor Susan Clark interviewed Sanders at his Burlington office in late December.

VNRC: A textbook socialist might argue that we need redistribution of wealth, and that natural resources are just another "piece of the pie" that needs to go to the underprivileged rather than the rich. How would you reconcile this with the environmentalists' argument of "Earth for Earth's sake" — that the right to foul our air and water doesn't get doled out to anyone?

Sanders: I would turn that question around and say that the criticism that some would make of the environmental movement, or at least some aspects of the movement, is that the needs of poor people, even within the context of the environment, have not been adequately addressed. Look at those people who suffer the most as a result of environmental degradation; it is not wealthy people who are forced to look at a trailer park, but it is people who are living in slums where ... the air is more polluted, the noise is louder, the water is worse.

VNRC: Would you say that you espouse a kind of green socialism?

**Sanders:** Well, the goal that I am searching for is ... how you create a society which provides for all its people — decent income, decent jobs, decent housing, decent health care — and at the same time does not destroy the environment.

I don't think anyone has a magical solution. We know for example, that in the Communist countries in East Europe and the Soviet Union, if anything their treatment of the environment was worse than what went on in the U.S. On the other hand, we know that in some Social Democratic countries like Sweden, there is a deep understanding that everybody suffers when you destroy the environment. There are no simple solutions, but clearly, unless we

look at corporate control over this country, at greed which motivates the system, and at who's profiting off of environmental degradation, you're not going to deal with the environmental crisis.

VNRC: In this issue of the magazine, we're discussing the issue of sustainability — in particular, of Vermont's environment and traditional way of life. Is this a priority for you?

**Sanders:** Of course it is a tremendous priority, because what you're really talking about, to a significant degree, is agriculture in the state of Vermont.

One of the positive developments that has been taking place in recent years is that many people within the progressive community in our state — who are concerned about the environment, about agriculture, about the needs of low income and working people — are beginning to catch on that they're involved in the same struggle. Out of that is coming groups like the Unity [Coalition] which is taking place in Montpelier — that is a major step.

If we see the family farm go, we're going to see the degradation of our environment and we're going to see condominiums, shopping malls, parking lots, replace the family farm and that will be absolute disaster. So I think I will play as strong a role as I can in fighting to protect Vermont's family farms.

VNRC: Do you have a specific agenda for agriculture in mind?

Sanders: First of all, milk price support is at \$10.10 [per 100 pounds of milk] right now ... You can't maintain a functioning family farm at [these] milk prices. You need \$15.00, you need \$16.00 per hundred weight. So, one effort has got to be in Washington, to fight for high milk price supports and I intend to do that. Arrayed against that is agribusiness ... and the Bush administration essentially wants to do away with all price supports.

The more immediate effort is to bring together the farmers — almost like a union organizing effort— to say we're not going to sell our product at \$10.10. Put pressure on the co-ops and on the cheese companies that buy the milk.

VNRC: Can you give us your vision for a Vermont economy that sustains our ecology?

Sanders: Okay. First of all, the preservation of agriculture in the Vermont is an absolute necessity. Number two, in terms of development — and as

Mayor of Burlington I fought against the Pyramid Mall — there has to be an understanding that ... development cannot take place any place or every place. We have got to have regions which are industrial regions, which are commercial regions, and areas of the state which remain open and beautiful.

Thirdly, [it will take] a lot of resources. It takes money to clean up Lake Champlain. We're spending \$52 million on that city-state project. It will take money to build some of the waste facilities, landfills, new sewer systems, to put forward the recycling measures. That ties in with progressive taxation — that cannot be dumped on the property tax, because working people just can't afford it.

VNRC: In a letter to environmentalists at the beginning of your campaign, you wrote, "We must re-direct our priorities away from military spending and to those cities and towns in Vermont that are trying to upgrade their sewage treatment systems, build appropriate landfills, develop recycling programs, support public transit, and clean up Lake Champlain." Do you have specific programs in mind toward those ends for Vermont?

Sanders: I will support, as I said during my campaign, a 50% reduction in military spending ... over a five-year period. Now, where do you use that money? ... You put a significant amount of money back into the communities to deal with [these environmental programs]. Do I have a specific program? Not at this moment I don't, but I will.

VNRC: Barry Commoner told your supporters when he was here this fall that no useful environmental bills had come out of Congress recently, and called for a bill mandating that the federal government buy only fuel-efficient cars. Do you have plans for that kind of bill?

Sanders: I've worked with Barry for many years and I consider him to be one of the more perceptive, important people in the environmental movement. Barry's main point is that the government itself is a huge purchaser of products. And by saying that we as a government, when we purchase our automobiles or our products, demand certain standards, it would force manufacturers to start supplying those products. Once you supply it for the government, you're going to do it for other institutions as well.

VNRC: Do you plan to introduce a bill?

Sanders: Well, I want to talk with Barry and other people in the environmental movement whom I respect and develop an agenda, but that's certainly an idea that I am sympathetic to.

VNRC: Do you have plans to do coalition work with environmental groups? If so, which ones, and on which priorities?

Sanders: Well, we've got the endorsement of Environmental Action. We'll work with Greenpeace. ...I intend to work with all the groups of course ... but those that I will probably instinctively come closer to are those groups who see the connection between the economy and the environment.

VNRC: In light of current national and global events, how would you summarize your message to Vermont environmentalists?

Sanders: Clearly energy is related directly to what is going on in the Persian Gulf right now. Everybody understands that, and groups like VNRC are going to have to demand that automobiles in this country start off getting 60-70 mpg, not 20 mpg, that we put huge sums of money into solar energy, etc.

But the message that I want to make to VNRC members is this. The problems facing this nation are enormous. ... We are declining as an industrial nation, our educational system, health care system and infrastructure are collapsing, people don't vote anymore, and so forth.

If you think you're an environmentalist and you're not prepared to challenge corporate control over America — if you think you're an environmentalist and you're not prepared to fight for campaign finance reform — then you're not an environmentalist. There will be no serious restructuring of our

approach to the environment unless you have many, many new people coming into the U. S. Congress.

One of the lessons that I learned during the last campaign — and of course its not just the environmental groups although they are as bad as anybody in this — is that if somebody is not horrendous, people say, "let's support him — after all, we could get somebody worse." We call it the Incumbency Protection Act. The environmental movement, in my view, VNRC and all of the other serious groups, have got to start developing a progressive

agenda.

But I guess the main message is that if you're not prepared to raise basic questions as to... the relationship of the degradation of the environment with greed and quick profits, I think one is not being terribly serious. Now I know this offends certain people and that has been perhaps some of the strain that has existed between some people in the environmental movement and myself. But that's the way it goes; that is what I believe.

"There will be no serious restructuring of our approach to the environment unless you have many, many new people coming into the U.S. Congress..."

Bernard Sanders



VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT



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## ADVOCATES FOR VERMONT

VNRC announces a new major donor program: Advocates for Vermont. Advocates is a committed group of VNRC members who support the work of the Council by making yearly contributions of \$1,000 or more.

Special benefits include a Sabra Field limited print (created exclusively for Advocates for Vermont), three free VNRC gift memberships, special outings and mailings, and other benefits. Most important, the Advocates category allows the VNRC to continue its leading role as a state-wide environmental defender of Vermont's natural resources.

If you'd like more information about the Advocates program, please call Deb Crespin at the Montpelier office of VNRC, (802) 223-2328 or write to us at 9 Bailey Avenue, Montpelier, Vermont 05602.

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# **EASTMAN ON BALANCE**

# An Interview with Vermont's New Natural Resources Secretary

an Eastman, Vermont's new Natural Resources Secretary appointed by Governor Snelling, is a Peacham lawyer who grew up in Vermont. She has previously served as the Executive Officer and Vice-Chair of the Vermont Environmental Board. VNRC Executive Director Ned Farquhar interviewed her soon after the new administration took office.

VNRC: It sounds like the budget is already a big issue.... Certainly your greatest accomplishment, when history looks back on your administration, won't be that you maintained or provided new funding for existing programs.

Eastman: No, I hope the achievement is that we will have looked at all the very good programs that we have, that we take advantage of the hard times, and think, "How can we do things better? How can we still get to the bottom line with as little extra effort as is necessary?"... You have to admit that there are many divisions in the Department of Environmental Conservation and many projects require more than one permit. I'm not suggesting that you can just lump all those permits together, but maybe we can do a little to make things easier for people....

VNRC: Can you tell whether your look into the permitting issue will also include more public access into the "black box" of the Agen-

cy's permitting process?

Eastman: I want to be sure that there is public access. It's the qualifiers that I'm not sure about.... I do believe that to the extent that people are affected by a decision they deserve a chance to know what's going on. I want to make it a good opportunity to participate. I think everybody deserves a good shot. Now, duplicative shots? I'll try and avoid them. I really will, because ... we need to get on with things. An honest shot? A chance to get at the substance of issues? Yes. That's where we're all trying to get.

VNRC: What are the policy changes you want to get done, besides working on funding and permitting? For instance, the northern forests issue is important to our members.

Eastman: I'm interested in the Northern Forests Study. I live in the Northeast Kingdom and I do understand that our forests are changing and maturing and there are going to be new issues there five, ten, or fifteen years from now. I think it should be something that we're spending some time on. We should be spending a lot of time on educating the people who live in those areas as to what good forest management means. I'm a little concerned that good management may not look [good] to someone who doesn't understand it — it's a dynamic thing, and there are going to be changes. Am I going to suggest that we regulate forest practices? Not yet...

VNRC: You've been both a big player in and defender of Act 250 and Act 200. You've developed by now an overall vision of the issues in environmental protection in Vermont.

Eastman: I'm not a scientist. What I look for — and I'll need a lot of help from a lot of people — is what are the numbers? What are the bottom lines for protection? I'm not anti-development. I believe we can have what we need in the State of Vermont — some kind of growth to provide jobs for our children, for us — and I think you can still [protect the environment]. When we can't, we just can't. I don't come into this with a mind set one way or another.... I am an advocate of planning.... I hope we have a vision of where we're going. I hope we sit down every now and then and say, "Now what do we want? Where do we want to end up?"

VNRC: When you look back on your experience at the Environmental Board, what stands out for you as a philosophy of managing natural resources and protecting the environment?

Eastman: I don't think that things all have to be resolved through confrontation. I think that my forte is that I'll sit down and listen to different groups, and then I'll try to figure out what really are the concerns. What do people really want? That doesn't mean that it's all a balancing test and you always end up in the middle. The point is that as a public servant, I've always felt that we're here for everybody, absolutely everybody... We listen, and we try to make thoughtful decisions. We try to put some judgment back into decision-making, and some support for those decisions when you exercise judgment... [On my own land] I want to protect it and all the creatures, for future generations. But I'm also a historian of Vermont and I know that we've used our resources frequently, historically. •

"I think that my forte is that I'll sit down and listen to different groups...
That doesn't mean it's all a balancing test and you always end up in the middle."

Jan Eastman, Vermont Secretary of Natural Resources

# VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

# VNRC NEWS & NOTES

#### SETTING THE AGENDA

VNRC Legislative Breakfast Well Attended

A ccording to Rep. Curt McCormack (D-Rutland City), by mid-January, the House Committee on Natural Resources had already been assigned over 100 bills — with more on the way.

McCormack, who chairs the committee, was among over 75 leaders and conservationists attending this January's annual Environmental Breakfast organized by VNRC.

McCormack told the group that he did not expect to see significant action on anti-Act 200 bills, noting, "We passed good legislation and answered the most important problems last year. Now we need to let it operate."

Other leaders addressing the group included Attorney General Jeffrey Amestoy, and Senator George Little (R-Chittenden), Chair of the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

The breakfast was also an opportunity for environmental advocates to present their views. Over a dozen environmental groups, from the Audubon Society to the Sporting Alliance for Vermont's Environment, as well as several governmental entities, outlined priorities.

"It is critical that leaders and advocates get on the same wavelength, and we're glad to be able to organize these opportunities to talk early in the session," said VNRC Executive Director Ned Farquhar.

"As importantly, we're glad to be making sure that our fellow environmental groups begin networking early. Cooperation will be the key to success in this biennium," Farquhar said. SC

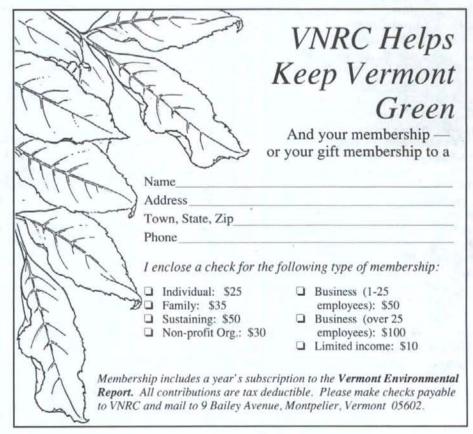
### VNRC OFFERS A THOUSAND THANKS

Outgoing Board Members Will Be Missed

There is no way we can adequately thank them for all they have done for us, but we can at least wish a fond farewell to the outstanding VNRC Board members whose terms ended in December, 1990. Each has made a significant difference to VNRC's health and welfare.

**John Hemenway**, who represented the Vermont Timberlands Association, has been extremely helpful in forestry matters. Patricia Highberg was active in committee work, and served as VNRC Board Chair as well as a short stint as Acting Co-Director. Patsy's dedication and patience over the years has made an enormous difference to the organization. Ecologist Dave Jillson served on numerous board committees, and helped steer VNRC policy and programs.

Richard Mixer served as Board Chair, and has been critical in VNRC's times of transition, serving as Acting Director three times over the years. Dick also played a key role in VNRC's financial and internal computer programs. Mark Schroeder has been ac-



tive as VNRC Treasurer for many years. Mark also made sure that agriculture was well represented in VNRC's agenda. William Uptegrove, representative from the Green Mountain Club, helped boost our citizen activist work in southern Vermont; Bill and his wife Betsy earned the 1990 VNRC Leadership Award.

VNRC by-laws only allow each board member two consecutive threeyear terms, and so we know all good things must end. However, out hats are off to these fine Board members!

DC



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# NWF OPENS NEW RESOURCE CENTER

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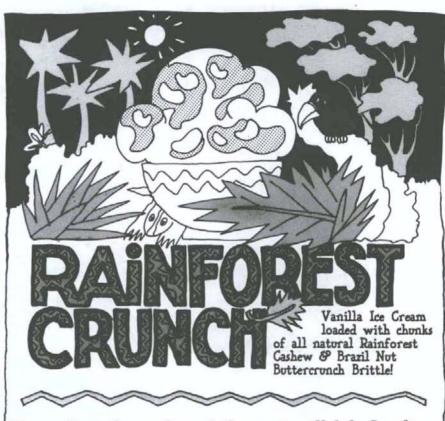
There's a new kid on the environmental block! Montpelier's Bailey Avenue, already the home of the VNRC main office and the new office of the Vermont Land Trust, welcomes the National Wildlife Federation Northeast Natural Resource Center.

"New England is well represented by very able conservation and education organizations covering a wide range of topics and issues," wrote Center Director R. Montgomery Fischer in his description of the Center. "However, there are at least two main areas ... in need of greater attention. They are the concept of economic sustainability ... and the human health aspect of environmental degradation."

According to Fischer, a well-known Vermont conservationist and former VNRC Executive Director, the Center will work to determine the economic impacts of selected public and private development proposals, and the public health issues resulting from existing or proposed environmental degradation.

The National Wildlife Federation, one of the nation's largest conservation groups, has seven other Regional Resource Centers across the U.S., each with its own regional issues focus.

NWF also chooses one environmental organization to act as its affiliate in each state; VNRC is the Vermont NWF affiliate. SC



Money from the purchase of these nuts will help Brazilian forest peoples start a nut-shelling cooperative that they'll own & operate. Rainforest Crunch helps to show that the forests are more profitable when their nuts, fruits & medicinal plants are cultivated for traditional harvest than when their trees are cut & burned for short term gain.



# BULLETIN BOARD

April 6

The Larger Context offers workshops and dialogue with over 40 socially responsible organizations at their Alternative Careers Forum. 12 - 5 p.m., Memorial Auditorium, Burlington; free admission. For information call Joe Heyer, (802) 655-9602.

April 12-13

"Closing the Loop" is the theme of the Montpelier Association of Vermont Recyclers' Annual Conference, focusing on promoting waste reduction and recycling through buying recycled products. Workshops, exhibits, national speakers and more. Call (802) 229-1833 for more information.

May 18

Join experts and enthusiasts for a VNRC Old Growth Forest Field Trip. Led by forest expert Charles Cogbill, this field trip will explore the 30-40 acre tract of old growth forest on



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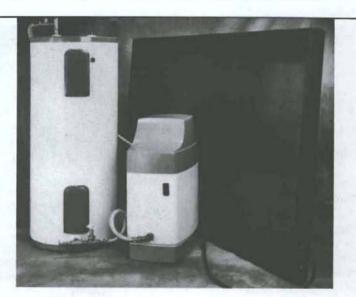
Environmental Law Center Vermont Law School South Royalton, VT 05068 (802) 763-8303 Lord's Hill in Marshfield. For details, call Jim Shallow at VNRC, 223-2328.

June 8-9

"Problems in the Tropics" will be the topic of keynote speaker Dr. William E. Davis at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science's 19th annual Vermont Bird Conference, to be held at Trinity College in Burlington. Contact VINS after April 1 at P.O. Box 86, Woodstock VT 05091, (802) 457-2779.

June 23-29

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V.E.R. Hot Spots

A trolley line down Shelburne , Road wins a "Ştrip Development Renewal" award? Read about this — and many other visions of a sustainable future. See page 12.

A group of local landowners is working with VNRC to promote a sustainable forest economy in the Worcester Range. See page 20.

Jan Eastman is the new Natural Resources Secretary appointed by Governor Snelling. What are her plans for the post? See page 25.

Over two years of research and advocacy by VNRC and Trout Unlimited pay off: the Battenkill is Vermont's first Outstanding Resource Water! See page 5. A new Council and Alliance are working to protect Vermont's northern forests through conservation easements and more. See page 9.

Import Canadian power for Vermont use? VNRC testifies in **Hydro-Quebec** hearings that the costs to the environment and native peoples are too high. See page 6.

Ski trails, hiking trails, wildlife, and more: Developers and conservationists including VNRC agree for now on the Killington-Pico ski area merger. See page 7.



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