

VERMONT

Environmental Report

Published by the Vermont Natural Resources Council

SPRING / SUMMER 1994

THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

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Environmental Report



Published by the Vermont Natural Resources Council

Spring / Summer 1994

THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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The travel and tourism industry brings \$1.3 billion to Vermont's economy every year. Both the natural and "built" environment are important draws. Just as with natural resources, conserving our historic resources also makes good economic sense.

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Roundtable Discussion Finds Business And The Environment Have Much In Common

The notion there's a conflict between the Vermont economy and Vermont environment is false, said business people and environmental advocates at a VNRC roundtable discussion. Rather, they agreed, the two sectors are inextricably linked.

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Paul Hawken's Ecology of Commerce is a blueprint for a green, sustainable economy.

Printing and distribution of this publication was made possible by EPIC, Environmental Programs in Communities, a project of the University of Vermont funded in part by the Kellogg Foundation of Michigan.

The Vermont Natural Resources Council is a nonprofit 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 land use, forestry, agriculture, water, energy, wastes, and growth management.

VNRC is the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY

Jane Difley, Executive Director

This issue of the *Vermont Environmental Report* focuses on the environment and the economy — a subject much discussed, little understood, and more often characterized (at least in these barely post-recession days) as environment *versus* the economy. We hope this VER will add to the discussion by highlighting new concepts, showcasing successful green businesses, and capturing the wisdom of business people and environmentalists alike who

have experience in this new arena.

...Rather than being in conflict, our environment and our economy are intertwined.

Vermont is poised on the forefront of demonstrating that rather than being in conflict, our environment and our economy are intertwined. To VNRC members this isn't news. We know that our state's land-

scape and town centers are what define our sense of place and attract businesses and people to locate here. We value the character of our built, as well as our natural, environment. We enjoy living in the safest state in the nation, and we point to Vermont's wise environmental policies as reasons for the stability of our economy relative to those of other New England states.

However, we cannot take Vermont for granted. Our state has been listed as "endangered" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. And as this VER goes to press the legislature is patch-working together "permit reform," an uncertain (and perhaps misguided) attempt to streamline the environmental permitting process of Act 250, the

land use law for which Vermont is renowned.

Vermont has been on the cutting edge when it comes to environmental protection and the envy of other states that have had less success in maintaining their natural heritage. The Green Mountain state is in the lead again in developing a "green economy" — one that creates and maintains good jobs, restores our environment, contributes to vibrant communities, conserves energy and materials, and protects the opportunities of future generations to enjoy the benefits of a healthy economy and a healthy environment.

VNRC is working with traditional and nontraditional businesses to explore ways to both entice green businesses to locate here and to encourage existing facilities to incorporate environmentally friendly approaches to their practices. Vermont already has many examples of successful businesses that operate with the environment in mind. We need to expand on these successes to "push the envelope" of what we know and what we practice in acknowledging the interdependence of the environment and the economy.

As in other ventures, creativity will be necessary. We will need to rethink engineering and business principles. State and federal policies that discourage innovation must be changed and incentives will be needed to encourage new ways of doing business. We will have to develop new indices of economic health that include not only traditional measures (jobs created, value added), but also environmental indicators to assure that the long-term availability of resources is not sacrificed for short-term economic gains.

There are challenges ahead, but Vermonters agree that the state's environment is an irreplaceable asset. Working together we can create a healthy economy and maintain our priceless environment.

VNRC STAFF

Jane Difley
Executive Director

Nadell Fishman
Membership Director

Marie Frohlich
Operations Manager

Stephen Holmes
Deputy Director for Policy

Chris Kilian
Water/Wetlands Program Director
and Staff Attorney

Jennifer Ramming
Development Director

Jim Shallow
Forests, Wildlife, & Public Lands
Program Director

Kimberly Taylor
Administrative Assistant*

Brendan J. Whittaker
Northern Forest Project Director

*part-time

Interns: Spring Semester
John Russell
Kirstin Fish
Ted Conwell

PUBLICATIONS

Allen Gilbert, Editor, PressKit

Will Lindner, PressKit

Brian P. Graphic Arts, Layout

Vermont Natural Resources Council
9 Bailey Avenue
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-2328

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AN APOLOGY

I need to make an apology to VNRC's membership.

Last year, Lt. Gov. Barbara Snelling asked for VNRC's cooperation in a project to review all Vermont's permitting problems, perceived and otherwise. On short notice I agreed, after consultation with some VNRC Board members, to allow Mrs. Snelling to mail a questionnaire to our members, and we worked closely with her in developing her "Coming Together" project. At our Annual Meeting and other events, Mrs. Snelling commended VNRC for its cooperation.

It has become all too evident that this project was only a charade. I led VNRC into a dark alley, not realizing what Mrs. Snelling was really listening to.

At the time, I believed that the project was honestly intended to create some vision and cooperation in Vermont, and that it gave us a chance to prove that we aren't the extremist obstructionists claimed by so many of our critics. It offered the chance to show that Act 250 has actually protected jobs, not sacrificed them as the fear-mongers are saying. It gave us the opportunity to work with the business community on needed changes to the permitting system without letting down

Vermont's barriers to the wrong kind of development.

Now we know the rest of the story. The Senate's action throwing out capable, committed, and qualified Environmental Board members — with Mrs. Snelling casting the tie-breaking vote — showed that the sharks are out in force, and Mrs. Snelling is swimming with them.

*Ned Farquhar
Former VNRC Executive
Director, Montpelier*

HOLD THE FORT

Certainly environmental issues have been taking a bashing by groups using the economy as a weapon — and that has been particularly so in Windham County, between C&S Grocers in Brattleboro and the Mt. Snow/Haystack pipeline.

Local papers in this area have carried letters and editorials targeting VNRC. We certainly hope that the area between Snow and Haystack does not become another condominium development with the resultant increase in traffic, sprawl, and pollution. There is more than enough strip development between Wilmington and Snow on Rte. 100.

We hope that VNRC can continue to hold the fort and be a factor in

preventing the gutting of Act 250, as is the obvious intent of some interests.

*William and Anita Amberg
Halifax*

PROUD MEMBER

I am proud and happy to finally get it together (financially) enough to be able to contribute to your cause. As a freelance naturalist, I have been struggling along for the last decade, but now, after paying the most necessary bills, there's a few bucks remaining. I've enclosed them.

I have made my voice heard, most commonly through the editorial pages of the local papers, especially on matters concerning water withdrawal for snowmaking, the misleading propaganda by the state Fish and Wildlife Department to promote a moose hunt, and, most recently, over the railroading of the Environmental Board members for their environmental philosophy. Imagine! Having environmentalists on an Environmental Board.

*Gustav W. Verderber
Montgomery Center*

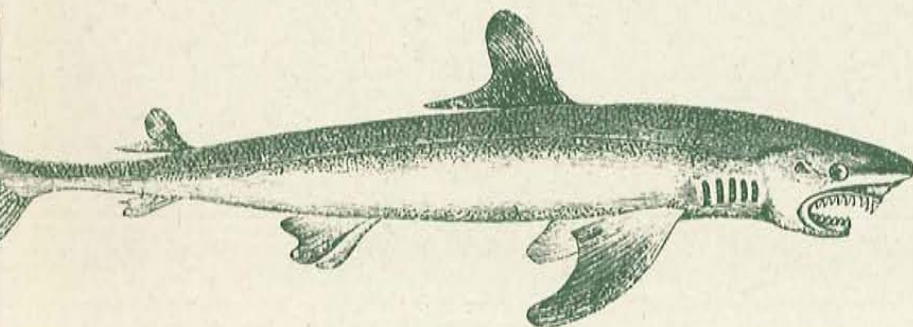
THANKS

Enclosed is a check as a small donation and thank-you for all the terrific endeavors your staff members work on.

I especially want to thank VNRC for running a very informative workshop in Charlotte concerning Act 250 and our town plan.

Thanks again — Vermont would be nothing without you!

*Carolynn Schipa
Charlotte*



IF RIVERS RAN FREE

Nature Speaks Up For The Clyde

It was Sunday, May 1, and VNRC was already up to its waders in the united effort by several groups to restore the Clyde River to its natural streambed. To do so would require the actual removal of Citizens Utility's Newport No. 11 Diversion Dam — a daunting objective — through the regulatory process.

But the reward, besides the satisfaction of seeing a dammed river set free and restored to health, was that it would encourage the return to their historical spawning ground of the Memphremagog strain of Atlantic salmon.

Ironically, on May 1 the spring-swollen river took matters into its own

hands. It broke through, over, and around the power dam, swiftly eroding the river's earthen banks, creating a new channel and pouring into a bed that had been dry since the dam was built in 1957.

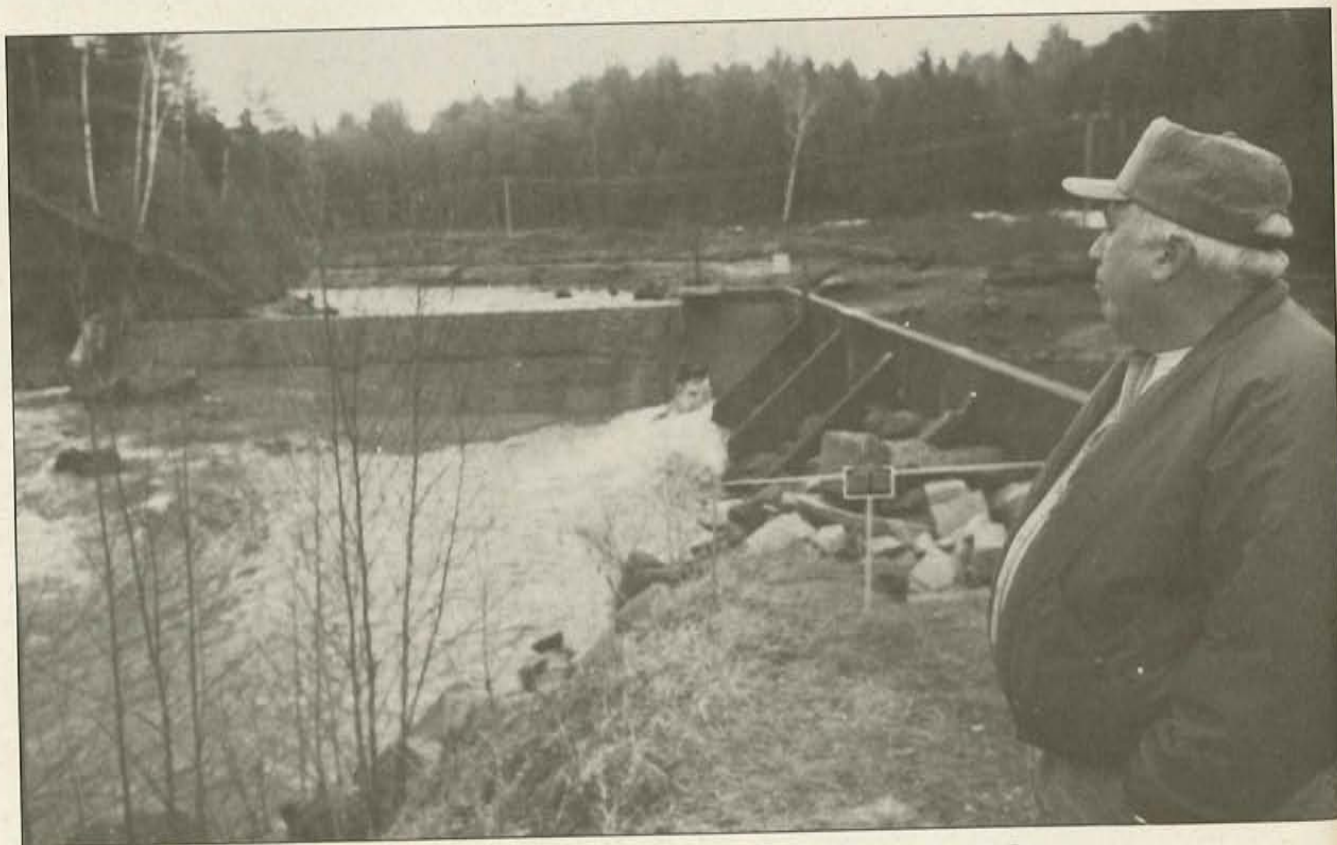
"The river decided its own fate," said Chris Kilian, VNRC's Water Program Director and Staff Attorney. Kilian's focus then became seeing to it that humankind did not reverse nature's action.

For more than a year, VNRC has been involved in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission reviews of existing hydro projects, striving for a balance between production of hydroelectricity and the ecology of the rivers spanned

by power dams. Its rare request that the federal agency require Citizens Utilities actually to remove the Newport No. 11 Dam in Orleans County was one of VNRC's most ambitious efforts.

FERC licenses power projects for 30 to 50 years. To be relicensed, projects must receive Water Quality Certificates from the state Agency of Natural Resources. This state/federal process enables VNRC and other conservation groups to argue that companies should redress environmental damage caused by their dams and be prohibited from "dewatering" stretches of rivers or seriously reducing flow by

Continued on next page



David Smith, President of the Northeast Kingdom chapter of Trout Unlimited, at Newport No. 11 Dam.

ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD DEBACLE

Was The Political Hit Off Target?

Lt. Gov. Barbara Snelling brought the gavel down in the Vermont Senate Feb. 22, casting tie-breaking votes that sealed the ouster of Environmental Board Chairwoman Elizabeth Courtney and board member Ferdinand Bongartz.

Courtney, Bongartz, and Terry Ehrich — also rejected by the Senate majority that day — had been nominated by Gov. Howard Dean to continue their service on the nine-member board whose primary function is to hear appeals of Act 250 decisions reached by district environmental commissions.

Snelling's rejection of Courtney, who had been appointed to chair the board by Snelling's late husband when he was governor, and of Bongartz, the dean of the Environmental Board, was seen by VNRC as the climax of a bald political move by the Senate majority to

court favor with interests opposed to land-use regulation.

"This was a desperation move to make a political point about what they perceive to be a problem in this state — despite abundant evidence to the contrary — which is that Act 250 is hurting the economy," said Stephen Holmes, VNRC Deputy Director for Policy. "Having sat through almost all the hearings and interviews with the nominees, I think it is fair to say the process was characterized by misrepresentation, distortion of the issues, and downright dishonesty. In the final analysis there was not a shred of evidence that any of the three were unqualified to continue to serve."

Supporters of the nominees contended that the Senate's action would backfire, stalling development proposals while the decimated board regrouped. Their prediction came true.

"As a result of the confirmation hearings there has been a significant backlog of processing of appeals," Mike Zahner, Administrative Director of the Environmental Board, confirmed in April. The board's docket consisted of 19 appeals, 14 requests for declaratory rulings, four revocation petitions, and

16 cases under way when the board's ranks were chopped.

But though the board was down, it was not out. Zahner said that five alternate members had been pressed into action. Courtney, before she left, appointed acting chairs to serve on some 20 cases. And 85-year-old Arthur Gibb, a board member, former Republican state legislator, and chairman of the historic Gibb Commission whose 1969 study of rampant development in southern Vermont had moved then-Gov. Deane C. Davis to develop Act 250, stepped in as interim board director.

"We're starting to get back in the groove here," Zahner reported.

VNRC, meanwhile, turned its attention to a comprehensive permit-reform bill.

"That's another place the Senate missed the mark," said Holmes. "While they were executing their political hit, the House was working on a bill to improve the permitting process not only in Act 250 but at the municipal level and in the Agency of Natural Resources. The agency, not Act 250 — by former Secretary (Chuck) Clarke's own admission — is where most of the delays in permitting have actually occurred."

RIVERS,

continued from previous page

holding water back for peak power production.

Citizens Utilities owns five dams on the Clyde River. VNRC's goal in asking that Newport No. 11, near Lake Memphremagog, be removed was to restore the run of wild landlocked salmon that once attracted anglers from far and wide and contributed handsomely to Newport's social and economic way of life.

The salmon population declined in the 1940s and '50s when dams along the Clyde began operating in a peak power mode, alternately drying out and flushing the riverbed to the detriment of the fish.

In March, Kilian petitioned FERC

to issue an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before relicensing Citizens' hydropower projects. In subsequent recommendations, VNRC advocated removal of Newport No. 11. Kilian wrote: "In order to properly balance the power generated by the Clyde River project with the significant value of the Clyde River fishery as well as other values, VNRC recommends conversion of the facilities to true, instantaneous run-of-the-river operation."

Derby Rod & Gun Club, Essex/Orleans Rod & Gun Club, and Trout Unlimited have fought along with VNRC to restore the spawning habitat to its natural state, and the Newport City Council voted in April to back those efforts. On May 6, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources issued a decision requiring dam removal, follow-

ing a decommissioning recommendation from its Fish and Wildlife Department.

Citizens Utility resisted calls to decommission Newport No. 11. And following the dam's own form of decommissioning May 1, the concern among anglers and conservationists was that Citizens would try to regain the status quo, rebuilding rather than merely stabilizing the eroded area.

"We're urging the state and federal agencies to recognize that the dam is breached and refocus the consideration of the relicensing process from whether the dam should be taken out to whether it should be rebuilt," Kilian said in May. "Particularly, we're concerned that FERC not allow the utility to rebuild the dam under the guise of an emergency remedial measure."

NORTHERN FORESTS

An End And, Hopefully, A Beginning

The work of the Northern Forest Lands Council reached its crescendo in the first months of 1994 as it raced against a schedule to deliver final recommendations this summer for conservation of the 26 million acres of forest that stretch from Maine to New York State, and of the communities and people in their midst.

On March 3, the NFLC issued its draft (or proposed) recommendations for public consideration. The Council, created by Congress in 1990 with 16 members appointed by the governors of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, had completed a far-reaching study of the social, economic, and ecological health of the vast woods. The Northern Forest constitutes the largest stretch of contiguous woodlands east of the Mississippi River. Two million acres lie in Vermont.

The NFLC identified trends in taxation, resource use, and property ownership that threaten the forest's survival. Its 33 draft recommendations addressed problems ranging from federal inheritance and state property taxes to protecting biodiversity, from supporting local forest-based economies to educating landowners and loggers in harvest and conservation methods.

Early reactions to the proposed recommendations were favorable, said Council member and VNRC Northern Forest Project Director Brendan Whittaker. "I think people realize that we on the Council share the feelings of people across the region in this unique area. Even though there is a great divergence of viewpoints, this process was a real coming-together."

After allowing a month for the study of its proposals, the NFLC held forums, or "listening sessions," in April, in which Council members received public opinion. In Vermont, sessions were scheduled in four communities and statewide on Vermont Interactive TV. The series opened with a session in Island Pond attended by more than 80 people.

VNRC lost no time taking up the NFLC's invitation for comment. It summarized its appraisal of the recom-

gional approach to forest conservation.

"This is the major point that needs to be made," said Jim Shallow, VNRC Forests, Wildlife, and Public Lands Program Director, noting that the success of the NFLC itself had been based on region-wide participation. "It might be done through establishment of an interstate commission or by designating the Northern Forests as a region to target federal programs and assistance. The drafts leave too much to the states to implement, and in Washington a state like Vermont can't compete."

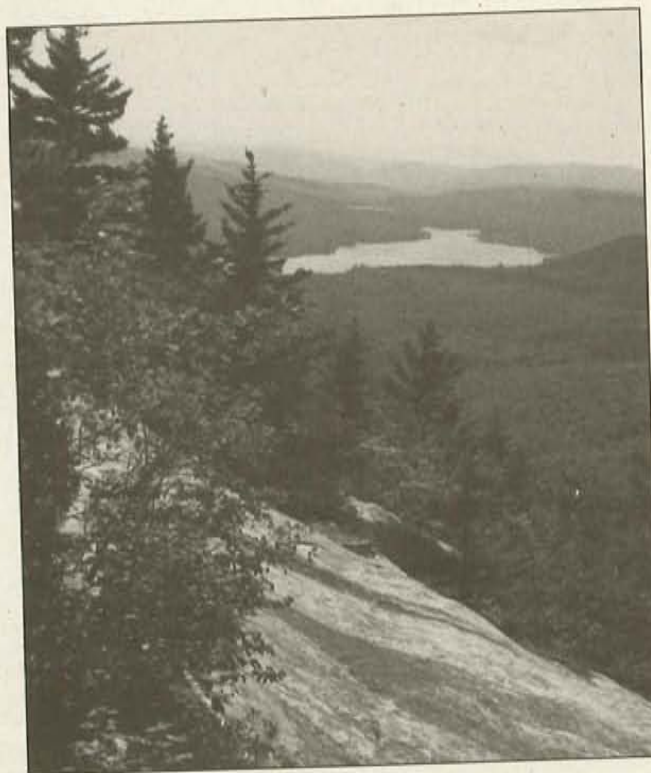
VNRC further urged the Council to strengthen its call for a gradual expansion of protected ecological reserves. Public land purchases in a region in which 85 percent of property is privately owned (in Vermont, the figure is 95 percent) would protect natural biodiversity and provide against the follies of even the best-intentioned land management programs. Purchases would also safeguard the tradition of public access to the forest.

Equally important to the forest's survival is greater economic diversity in its communities.

"The Council talked a lot about the timber economy, but not about the forest economy — activities like hunting, fishing,

recreation, and tourism," said Shallow. "Some of these communities are hurting because they are so dependent on timber. If they can broaden their range of activities associated with the forest, it will diversify their economies."

The Council's final recommendations will head to Congress and the governors of the four states in June. For VNRC and others committed to protection of the Northern Forests, the conclusion of the NFLC's work marks not an end, but a beginning. With an articulated vision and a set of plans on the table, there should be less talk about conservation and more action.



mendations in a mailing and urged supporters to attend the April sessions.

Generally, VNRC praised the Council's assessment of the myriad problems facing the Northern Forest — territory that provides jobs for a quarter of a million people, annual region-wide revenues of \$26 billion, recreation for 10 million visitors a year, and habitat for more than 250 species of wildlife. But in some respects it recommended stronger corrective medicine — a sentiment echoed by the crowd at Island Pond.

In particular, VNRC urged the Council to stand more firmly for a re-

NEW FACES AT AGENCY

Ripley Named Natural Resources Secretary . . .

Barbara Ripley, Vermont's new Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, has taken what she calls "a circuitous route" to her new position.

A former nurse who later earned a Ph.D. in medical anthropology, Ripley then enrolled in law school and worked in private legal practice and in the Public Defender's office. In 1993, Gov. Howard Dean appointed her Commissioner of Labor and Industry.

Her shifts in career course, she said, stemmed partly from family responsibilities, but also came "as my interests have developed along the way."

Dean named Ripley in March to succeed departed ANR Secretary Chuck Clarke.

Although environmental conservation does not figure prominently in her professional background, Ripley believes she brings other talents to the job.

"(The governor) said he needed someone who had good conciliatory skills and good management skills.

Negotiation is something I enjoy doing as much as anything, and applying common sense to find solutions among people."

If so, her service would continue in the vein of Clarke's, whose hallmark was getting groups and individuals with conflicting interests in Vermont's natural resources to negotiate and compromise (see "Perspectives" article "Streams and Lakes," next page).

Ripley outlined specific priorities for her tenure at the Agency. Among these was a significant increase in land acquisition by the state, which she said was a commitment of Dean's stimulated in part by the recommendations of the Northern Forest Lands Council.

"But we also have to know how to use the land we have," said the Secretary. "If the state can develop good land use and management practices it could serve as a model for landowners . . . who have large lots in private ownership."

Ripley also said it was important to develop guidelines for appropriate uses of state-owned land leased to ski areas, and policies responding to increased

pressure to put communications towers on Vermont's mountain peaks.

"These would be helpful in Act 250 hearings," said Ripley. "It will be a priority of mine to make the permitting and regulatory process as efficient and as fair, and without surprises, as it can be."

Consistent with her legal background, the new Secretary hopes to revise enforcement procedures now hampered by the Agency's "limited resources." Thus she would revise an idea considered before but never instituted: Infractions of permits and violations of environmental laws would be addressed through administrative penalties adjudicated in Vermont's Environmental Court, much as traffic violations are punished with fines.

"For the vast majority of cases that would have a good deterrent effect and we would get more compliance than we get now. Our current enforcement processes are so cumbersome that the small (violators) get away," Ripley said.

The Agency's heavier guns could then be targeted at the most serious abuses.



Barbara Ripley

. . . And Elser Is Fish And Wildlife Commissioner

Recently Norman Maclean's novel, *A River Runs Through It*, and the Hollywood movie made from it have wrought a poetic conception of the sport of fly fishing and the image of majestic, mountainous Montana. Now that image has come east in the person of Vermont's new Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife, Al Elser.

Born in Denver, Colo., Elser went to Montana for his advanced education and remained there for 30 years, becoming a fisheries biologist and working his way through the ranks to Deputy Director of Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

"I've had experience in both ends of

the fish and wildlife world," said Elser, 55. "I've worked at the decision-maker's policy and procedural level, and I understand the issues facing the biologist in the field." Elser speaks with particular fondness of his work in the Yellowstone River with one of the last spawning populations of paddlefish in the U.S.

Arriving in Vermont, Elser says he was pleased to see that the state had



Al Elser

undertaken a comprehensive trout-management plan designed with public input. The plan includes three components: habitat protection, specialized regulation of waterways depending on the needs of their trout populations, and hatcheries to resupply fish culture where it has faded or disappeared. The work has already begun on the Battenkill and White River.

"The key is that Vermont now has guidelines to manage trout streams using obtainable objectives and the public process," Elser said.

He is concerned, however, that the Department is "in dire need of financial help."

Fish and Wildlife's proposed 1995 budget was three-quarters of a million dollars short of balance, partly due to

Continued on next page



BRENDA POTTER REYNOLDS

STREAMS AND LAKES

Withdrawal Rules Adopted, But Use Rules Shelved

Chuck Clarke, briefly the Secretary of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, has returned to Washington state for a job with the federal Environmental Protection Agency. But his last official act before leaving was to adopt, as Agency procedure, the details of an agreement protecting streams and rivers that was negotiated, but never signed, between the Vermont Ski Areas Association, VNRC, and other conservation groups.

The new procedures govern water withdrawals for snowmaking — for years a thorny environmental issue. Last fall, Clarke facilitated discussions on a breakthrough agreement, but it fizzled in January when a few ski resorts backed out.

Chris Kilian, Water Program Director and Staff Attorney for VNRC, said the procedures Clarke imposed are the ones painstakingly reached in those negotiations. Key components are the establishment of February Median Flow as a minimum permissible stream flow that resorts cannot violate with

water withdrawals, and a requirement that resorts first seek other alternatives to meet their snowmaking needs. Existing snowmaking systems that don't meet the new standards are allowed to comply gradually.

"Essentially, the term 'procedure' means it's a framework for the Agency to make decisions (on applications)," said Kilian. "Previous conflicts arose because the Agency had no formal framework."

The procedure went into effect March 4. Parties to last fall's negotiations agreed to a two-month "cooling-off period" before any challenges to the rules would be considered.

While Kilian was pleased with progress on stream-flow issues, he was disappointed in a decision by the Vermont Water Resources Board concerning surface water regulation. In March, after holding hearings and receiving abundant comment on a set of proposed rules for regulating recreational uses of Vermont's ponds and lakes, the Board tabled the whole issue.

The rules would have replaced the current hodge-podge of rulings the Board has handed down on a case-by-case basis when petitioners have requested guidelines for individual lakes and ponds.

VNRC supported the establishment of statewide rules but sought changes in the proposed rules to protect more areas for "quiet uses."

"We were concerned because the proposed rules would have increased the total acres allowed for high-speed boating from about 1,000 acres in the state to about 30,000," Kilian said. By contrast, gasoline engines would have been prohibited on about 7,000 acres, with another 7,000 limiting boats to 5 mph.

Additionally, VNRC objected to the Board's plan to grandfather uses — such as jet skis — that had been established at individual locations prior to 1993, rather than determining whether they were appropriate for those surface waters or not.

But objections to the proposed rules, which Kilian said came from "either side of the fence," were no reason for the Board to drop the dialogue.

"We're disappointed," said Kilian. "There was a lot of controversy associated with these rules, but that's why we have a Water Resources Board. They have a trustee obligation to make decisions pertaining to protection of the natural characteristics of Vermont's waters. They should have done something. They should still do something."

ELSER,

continued from previous page

the resistance of Vermont sportsmen and women to borrowing money for its operations from the waterfowl stamp program.

"We're looking hard to find additional funding for our Department," Elser said. "I'm convinced we're not going to be able to survive on hunting and fishing licensing alone."

A potential revenue source, he said, was "non-consumptive" users — "People who like to look at, watch, or feed wildlife, or just are happy to know by intrinsic value that the wildlife is there." Motivating that group in Vermont, and inventing an avenue for its contributions, is a primary goal for Fish and Wildlife's man from Montana.

REMEMBERING PERRY MERRILL

He Leaves A Bequest That Will Serve Generations

If Vermont is, as many believe, in the vanguard of the nation's conservation movement, much of the credit goes to Perry H. Merrill, who guided the people of his state and nation toward an ethic of active, protective involvement with the natural resources that surround them.

Merrill, virtually an institution in Vermont, was remembered almost with reverence upon his passing on Dec. 23, 1993, five days after his 99th birthday. Known as "the dean of Vermont foresters," his vision and contributions to such crucial elements of life in Vermont as its magnificent state forests and parks, the preservation of special natural areas, and the establishment of a vital and lucrative ski industry were noted with gratitude.

Less well known, however, was Merrill's role in the birth of the Vermont Natural Resources Council. Although he was a central figure in the state's forests and parks system for 47 years, Merrill helped nurture an organization that has functioned in part as a watchdog of government activity in the field of environmental conservation.

In his 1984 autobiography, *The Making of a Forester*, Merrill recounts that VNRC was launched on his own government turf. On May 3, 1963, a group of government officials and private citizens — some representing national conservation organizations while others had no affiliations — met with then-Commissioner Merrill at the Vermont Department of Forests and Parks. The fledgling VNRC elected James Marvin its first chairman and Merrill its first clerk.



The young Perry Merrill

Merrill writes that VNRC was conceived as a volunteer citizen group that was to be actively involved in "natural resource conservation, protection, and advocacy." State government, he knew, couldn't and shouldn't be sole protector of Vermont's forests, rivers, mountains, lakes, and lush valleys.

"Even with his long and very effective years in Vermont government, Perry Merrill in the early 1960s saw the need for an effective citizen conservation/environmental organization," said

Brendan Whittaker, VNRC's Northern Forest Project Director. Whittaker went to work for Merrill in 1959, serving as a county forester, and in 1978 was appointed secretary of Vermont's Agency of Environmental Conservation. "And indeed," he said, "after a relatively short time, VNRC became totally free of any

government connection — a true citizen conservation organization."

Merrill entered forestry in 1919. One of a small band of pioneering conservationists in the early years of this century, he worked directly with such figures as Gifford Pinchot (appointed first head of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905), President Franklin Roosevelt, and Roosevelt's influential Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. During the Depression years, Merrill made Vermont a leader in implementing the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), providing jobs and protecting natural resources at the same time.

Granville Gulf, the Peacham Wildflower Bog, and Camel's Hump State Forest Reserve are some of the tangible natural assets Merrill has left his fellow Vermonters. His dedication to preserving the environment for the public good is a bequest that will serve generations.

"Perry Merrill truly was a visionary person," said Whittaker. "VNRC shares, and is grateful for, Perry's conservation ideals and vision."

GRAZING REFORM

It's Not Just A Western Issue

As world population careens toward 6 billion and the adverse effects of over-abundant humanity upon global resources escalate, issues of environmental abuse cease to be purely local. Vermonters have an interest in the fate of tropical rainforests, chemicals in the Earth's atmosphere, and the nature of pollutants dumped by foreign countries into the world's seas.

It follows, then, that as U.S. taxpayers Vermonters have an even greater stake in the protection of western range lands owned by the federal government, where ranchers are permitted to graze their cattle at a fraction of the cost paid to private landowners. The issue is not so much that these ranchers — which in many cases are giant national and international corporations — are getting a good deal as it is that they are abusing the privilege, despoiling our commonly held range lands.

"This is not a western issue," said Jim Shallow, VNRC's Forests, Wildlife, and Public Lands Program Director. "Vermonters have a stake in these lands. There is a \$50-million federal subsidy going to only 8 percent of the



livestock producers, and it's causing abuse of the land. That needs to be corrected, regardless if we never even set foot out there."

The threat to the range lands comes from overgrazing. Two hundred and seventy million acres in Colorado, Nevada, Montana, and other states are being overrun by cattle. Their uncontrolled consumption of vegetation denudes the prairies and causes

Continued on next page

BACK AGAINST THE WAL

But At Least VNRC Has Party Status

April 15 was the first truly warm and sunny day of spring. The sun shone that day as well on VNRC's campaign to protect Vermont from an onslaught of the kind of giant discount stores that turn thriving downtowns to barren blocks of desolate storefronts and bleed towns' tax bases dry.

On April 15 the Vermont Environmental Board granted VNRC party status in Act 250 hearings on a proposal for a 126,000 square-foot Wal-Mart store just outside downtown St. Albans.

At earlier hearings before the District 6 Environmental Commission, VNRC was denied the opportunity to participate; the commission had ruled that VNRC had no standing to present evidence on economic issues. The hearings ended with a land-use permit for The St. Albans Group, a partnership of Poquette and Bruley Realty of St. Albans, and Arkansas-based Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

However VNRC, along with the Franklin-Grand Isle Citizens for Downtown Preservation, a local group that had opposed the project before the District Commission, appealed the Commission's decision to the Environmental Board and both won party status. The hearings are scheduled to begin June 29.

Seeking standing with the Board is just part of VNRC's effort to prevent Wal-Mart from conducting business as usual in this state. In March, VNRC and the Preservation Trust of Vermont released an 18-minute video, *Back Against The Wal*, that describes the company's practice of building sprawling and oversized stores on the fringes of existing business centers. It illustrates powerfully the impact Wal-Mart can be expected to have on the economic and social structures of Vermont's communities.

Written and narrated by Ron Powers, a former CBS journalist and Pulitzer prize winner, the video visits Sterling, Ill., and other towns in the Midwest and Texas where Wal-Mart has moved in. Residents and community leaders describe how acres of fields and meadows are paved for parking lots, how local merchants see sales erode as consumers opt for the bargain

buys outside town, and how towns suffer when the mercantile class — typically a wellspring of community service — disappears. They speak of Wal-Mart's minimum-wage jobs that offer few if any employee benefits, and describe how the same consumers eager to buy discount goods suffer in the end when hometown stores close, leaving residents to make up the lost taxes.

And, poignantly, the camera shows the dead hulk of a Wal-Mart, shut down and abandoned because the town had withered so much that even the discount store couldn't draw enough customers, its empty shell and ghostly parking lot adding further to the economic carnage it had wrought.

Only a decision by the Environmental Board denying or modifying Wal-Mart's application can help avoid a similarly depressing, yet entirely possible, scenario.

Said Stephen Holmes, VNRC's Deputy Director for Policy, "We're pleased that the Board is going to let us present our case, which we think is compelling and will show that this project will have negative effects on St. Albans City, St. Albans Town, and the surrounding communities."

GRAZING,

continued from previous page

erosion; in hot weather they escape to streams and rivers, eroding the banks and contaminating the waters.

"There are a whole host of impacts on wildlife and precious water resources, and it limits public use of the land," Shallow said, adding that Vermonters and other Easterners travel to the range lands for recreation and hunting.

Rampant overgrazing will continue as long as the government charges just \$1.86 per cow per month, when the going rate for grazing fees on private land is closer to \$10. An attempt by Congress to raise the fee to \$3.46 and reform land management laws failed

last year when Republicans in the U.S. Senate staged a filibuster.

Vermonters in Congress can help restore protection of public land. Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., is chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and a friend of grazing reform. Republican Sen. James M. Jeffords, however, sided in 1993 with the GOP filibuster.

"Jeffords," said Shallow, "is in a unique position, as a moderate Republican with a strong environmental record, to help move this debate forward when the Interior Department's appropriations are considered again next fall."

Jeffords could provide leadership that would reduce a federal subsidy that is out of line with modern economics and help to protect lands that are

valuable not just because they are owned by the public but because they are a part of the nation's, and the world's, finite environment.

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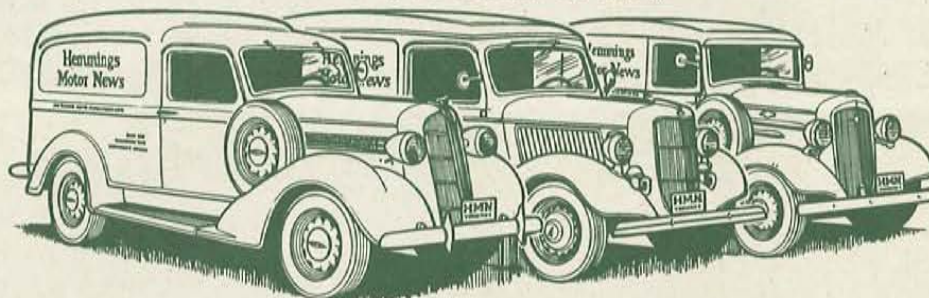
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Business and the Environment

*A Partnership
That Makes Sense*

BY WILL LINDNER

Waitsfield architect Bill Maclay had an announcement to make. He had been headed in this direction for 20 years, exploring recycled and alternative building materials to conserve the earth's resources and reduce construction waste, tackling the sometimes conflicting objectives of retaining heat and minimizing rot, and designing homes to employ nature's gifts of light and air to conserve energy and enhance the domestic environment.

Now his ideas and experience had coalesced and Maclay was ready to introduce the "Vermont Healthy Home." His announcement came in the Winter 1994 edition of "Frameworks," a quarterly newsletter published by his firm, William Maclay Architects and Planners.

"When we build in the '90s we need to build homes which will last, which are healthy and pleasant to live in and which do not unnecessarily use up precious natural resources," Maclay wrote.

Continued on next page

The design plans for "Vermont Healthy Homes" can be purchased from his firm, and Maclay and his wife will build the first one for themselves this summer.

Better Loans Through Efficiency

While Maclay is making conservation central to homebuilding, the Vermont Energy Investment Corp. of Burlington is moving conservation from a peripheral concern when banks and applicants negotiate mortgage agreements, to a fundamental goal with incentives for

borrower and lender alike.

In its Energy Rated Homes program, VEIC inspects the energy systems of buildings that are to be sold; if the house is found to be energy-efficient,

the bank agrees to increase the borrower's debt-to-income ratio, recognizing that the family will save money on energy bills and thus qualify for a mortgage that might otherwise be beyond their reach. If the house is rated poorly, the bank incorporates money for energy improvements into the loan and extends the mortgage period; the homeowner pays only as long as he or



Beth Sachs

Vermont Healthy Home No. 2 by Architect William McClay captures the sun as it overlooks the view.

she owns the house.

"You're basically changing the traditional mortgage structure," says Beth Sachs, VEIC Executive Director. "It's a big change in the system but it's a great idea, so we're plugging away at it."

Business and the Environment Joined

But the real change Maclay and Sachs are involved in is even broader. They are part of a growing nexus of businesses that seek nothing less than to reinvent commerce and industry, with conservation occupying a central role.

It's not a matter of being nice to Mother Nature, they point out, but of finding a path toward an economy and way of life that can be sustained on this planet with its finite resources.

They would not attempt to turn Americans into ascetics — surely a hopeless cause. Instead, they try to meet the established demands of commerce with new products, new technologies, and new economic agreements.

Maclay builds spacious and comfortable homes (he also works with non-profit agencies on affordable housing), but eschews materials harvested in endangered rainforests. Countertop components include soybeans and recycled

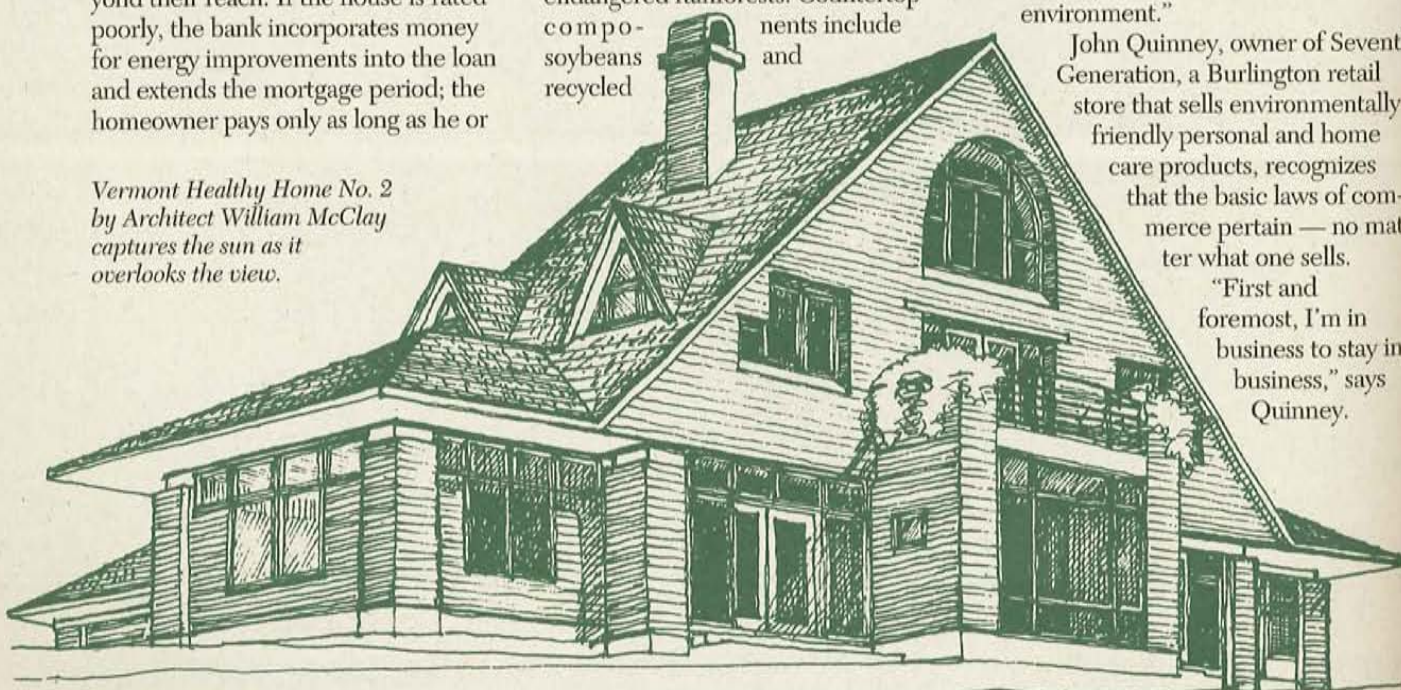
newspaper. For laying carpet and linoleum he uses adhesives without toxic compounds. Air systems conserve energy, reduce dust, and recover heat.

As with Maclay's firm, other businesses that make things, sell things, and invent new financial relationships that defer to the environment are finding Vermont hospitable. The state's roster of "green companies" has grown and diversified. It includes small hydro, solar, and wind power producers, manufacturers of natural skin care products, retailers of everything from vegetable-based household cleansers to composting equipment, designers of chemical-free wastewater treatment processes, and financial services that enable investors to put their money where their ethics are.

Their bridge to the mainstream is that they make sense. Beth Sachs, whose work with VEIC extends beyond reconstructing mortgage contracts to a realm of innovative financial and investment activities that encourage energy efficiency and use of renewables, says, "The work we do improves everybody's bottom line," whether in homes, offices, factories, or municipalities, and provides "hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars to Vermont's economy. It's appalling to me that people set up a dichotomy between business and the environment."

John Quinney, owner of Seventh Generation, a Burlington retail store that sells environmentally friendly personal and home care products, recognizes that the basic laws of commerce pertain — no matter what one sells.

"First and foremost, I'm in business to stay in business," says Quinney.



"What will make the movement successful is not just the environmental quality of the products we sell but their performance. When it comes right down to it, anything that's to be bought has to work."

"I think more people buy environmentally if it's convenient," he says, "and my purpose is to have environmental products be things people use in their everyday lives. Also, there's a certain credible size we need to be in order to offer customers adequate choices."

But while he looks to his own ledger to make daily decisions, Quinney believes that in a larger sense staying in business means husbanding the resources bestowed by the earth. "The basis of a healthy economy is a healthy environment," he says. "I find any other position indefensible."

Building Wealth While Retaining Ethics

Vermonters who agree with Quinney and Sachs — even if they labor in far different fields — can let their money work in the cause through alternative banking and investment funds. Two companies capitalizing on the "green" money theme are the A.G. Edwards and Sons brokerage firm in Burlington, and Vermont National Bank, which offers a Socially Responsible Banking Fund.

With A.G. Edwards' "socially responsible investing" program, people define for themselves what is a "green" or socially responsible enterprise, and invest in its growth with such traditional instruments as tax-free bonds and mutual funds.

Investment manager Bob Guthrie is fond of saying, "You can make money on Wall Street without compromising your beliefs." To help his clients do so, Guthrie provides extensive information about companies and their products, and about bonds that support community programs locally or far away.

Guided by his client's wishes, he employs "screening" techniques — a screen for avoidance ("As an investor you might say I want to avoid compa-

nies that are clear-cutting the rainforest or that buy power from Hydro Quebec"), and a positive screen ("Yes, I want to be a shareholder in companies that do positive things for the environment, or companies with women or minorities on the board of directors").

"With socially responsible investing, you're dealing with values," says Guthrie, "and that always gets into gray areas. I respond to the investor's own definition."

By contrast, the Socially Responsible Banking Fund, directed by David Berge of Vermont National Bank's Brattleboro office, does not offer investment portfolios. The fund is a pool of money that pays depositors the same interest as they'd get with other Vermont National accounts and is similarly protected by the FDIC.

With the advice of a citizen board whose members in many cases are active themselves in alternative enterprises, the bank extends flexible loans in five areas: affordable housing, education, agriculture, environmental conser-

vation, and certain kinds of small business.

"A lot of time, people see socially responsible investments as grandiose," says Berge. "We're trying to find practical ways to build on one thing at a time. It goes beyond the negative — 'I don't want to support this or that' — to 'I would like to support the environment, local daycare centers, organic farming.'"

Berge says the fund strives to be a vehicle for "conversational" banking. Officers work with borrowers to determine how a loan can be structured to be most effective, and depositors sometimes come in to discuss their own ideas for targeting the special fund.

"There's an amazing amount of good will by people who keep their money



David Berge

A Seventh Generation products display



with us," says Berge. "For them, it's an opportunity to think a little differently about their relationship to their own money."

The fund was instituted in 1989, and by March 1994 had grown to include 6,775 depositors with assets of \$64.2 million; there were more than 1,100 active loans, totaling \$52.6 million.

Green Makes Economic Sense

One man with no shortage of ideas about where "green money" should go is Will Raap. The owner of Gardener's Supply in Burlington suggests "what's good for the environment is good for the economy" is a truism verging on cliché.

"That's like saying apple pie and motherhood are good," says Raap. "The real issue now is not so much green investors and green consumers, but the industrial fabric of our economy. The charge is to make green industry the foundation of all industry . . . really getting into the industrial bowels of the

*So why not turn
industry green?
There are those in
state government
who claim that is
what the Dean
administration
would like to do. . .
within reason.*

economy in manufacturing, design, engineering, waste treatment, transportation.

"One thing, and one thing alone, will do that: Having it make economic sense."

Raap has gotten knee-deep in the effort as a founder of Living Technolo-

gies, a wastewater treatment company that shuns chlorine-based processes for a system that uses nature's inherent ability to purify wastes. The firm has landed a contract to design a facility for a Mars candy company plant in Australia.

Wastewater treatment, Raap points out, is a \$100 billion-a-year industry. Living Technologies now has a foot in the door, which can accomplish two things: It can provide good-paying jobs for environmentally benevolent work, and it can soften conventional industry to the claims of conservationists. Raap says Mars spends half a million dollars a year for wastewater treatment at its Australian plant. The

company thinks the natural solution offered by Living Technologies can save money.

Raap concurs in the opinion that Vermont is positioned to prosper with green, sustainable industry. He advocates a drive to make Vermont energy independent, which would focus a major economic-industrial thrust on emerging green technology and would provide the growth in jobs that environmental advocates have long been promising.

"There is the opportunity for Vermont to be the most environmentally conscious and quality-maintained environment in the country, and then leverage how we did that — and that image — as part of a marketing process to attract more people and business to these industries."

Besides the environmental benefits, the payoff would be wages in manufacturing and technology double the average wage of the service sector.

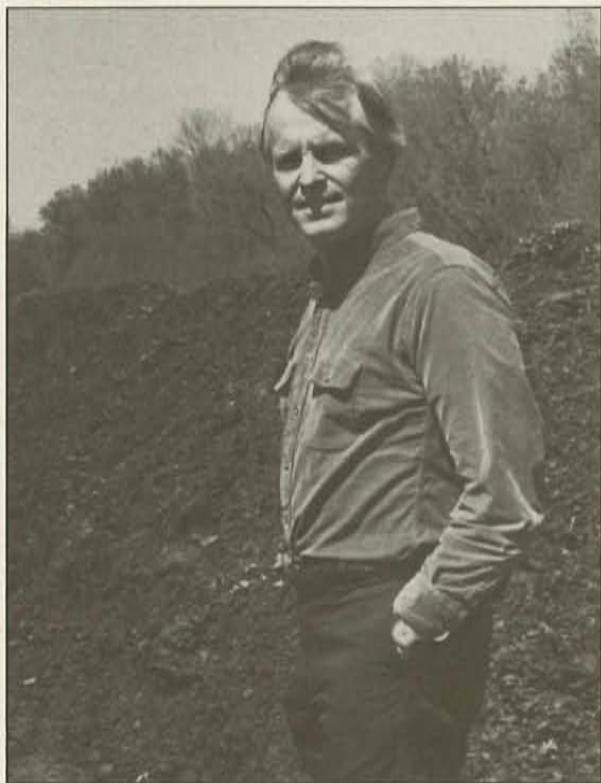
Is Vermont A Believer?

So why not turn industry green? There are those in state government who claim that is what the Dean administration would like to do. . . within reason.

A tangible expression of that interest, says David Bradbury, Deputy Commissioner for Economic Development, is the Vermont Technology Council, created to develop a science and technology plan for the state in which, Bradbury believes, environmental services will figure strongly.

As he awaits the plan, Bradbury is marshalling the tools to promote such services and strengthen their role in the economy. Already, he says, the Department is guiding Vermont companies with expertise in pollution control, recycling, and other technologies to contracts with federal agencies and out-of-state companies.

Also under consideration is an Environmental Business Council that would bring the representatives of green industries to the table when the state charts its economic and industrial course.



Will Raap

Bradbury says, "The critical components are here. We're looking for opportunities for partnering public/private enterprises with these qualities in mind."

But conservationists give the state mixed reviews. They are encouraged to find Bradbury working on these important issues, and the governor's Economic Progress Act of 1993 authorized the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) to extend financial incentives to manufacturers to use recyclable materials and make energy efficiency improvements in their plants.

But two of the administration's major economic policy documents relegate environmental concerns to fringe considerations. The follow-up to the Economic Progress Act, informally known as EPA 2, is almost silent on green and alternative industries. It merely recommends that the Department of Economic Development employ a specialist to develop markets for natural resource-based industries.

The other document is a proposed 10-year economic development blueprint, authored by the Dean-appointed Vermont Partnership for Economic Progress, titled "A Plan for a Decade of Progress." The Plan is somewhat stronger on issues of conservation but is hardly a clarion call for revolutionizing Vermont's economy with an ambitious green focus.

The report hails the working landscape as a livelihood for a (diminishing) number of workers, and applauds the contributions of agriculture and forest industries to Vermont's image. In an otherwise bleak assessment of farm and forest economies it finds promise in specialty foods and value-added innovations for forest products.

Of chief concern to conservationists, however, is the plan's failure to embrace fully the goals of energy efficiency and renewable energy technology. Though marking "the importance of a continuing commitment to conservation," the authors tepidly call for further study of the relationship of conservation to economic development.

Their lack of enthusiasm has triggered an angry response.

"The positive impact of energy

*The good thing,
Hawken says, is
that the technology
exists to replace
current wasteful
practices, and will
supply meaningful
employment.*

efficiency is so clear that I don't understand anything less than wholehearted endorsement," says Beth Sachs of VEIC. And the Conservation Law Foundation's Lewis Milford, in a letter to Deputy Commissioner Bradbury, accused the plan of "damn(ing) energy efficiency with faint praise" and betraying established and vital energy policies long endorsed by state government.

The Key: Showing Possibilities

Like others in the conservation community, VNRC Executive Director Jane Difley has been thinking a lot lately about the economic dynamics of society and its use of natural resources. In March, Difley attended the annual meeting of the National Wildlife Federation in Austin, Texas, which featured an address by businessman Paul Hawken.

Hawken's recent book, *The Ecology of Commerce* (reviewed in this VER), has sparked new enthusiasm among advocates of the "green, sustainable economy." His thesis is that western economies have rewarded activities that inevitably deplete the very resources they need to survive, and that our laws, tax codes, and economic structure must be reversed to reward conservation.

The good thing, Hawken says, is that the technology exists to replace current

wasteful practices, and will supply meaningful employment.

So Difley has been thinking about VNRC's relationship to business.

"Hawken's point is that because business is the largest entity in the world, business is going to have to save the world — and by that I mean save our environment," she says.

That conviction is at the heart of her determination to elevate VNRC's relationship to the business community.

"Creating green businesses is a great idea," says Difley, "but even our traditional industries are going to have to rethink the way they do business.

"We also have to remember that it is not going to happen overnight. We need to get started because this is going to take a lot of time."

Ideas now afoot are interesting, and radical. Germany, for example, is moving toward a concept wherein the manufacturers of goods such as automobiles,

washing machines, and televisions will retain ownership of the materials in their products, so that when the consumer has finished with them the company must take them back.

The intent is to motivate the industrial sector to create products that can be recycled.

"Very few people are familiar with these concepts, so we have a lot of educating to do," Difley says, "a lot of social agreements that have to be reached. Often the hardest challenges are to change the way we think about things."

It is encouraging, however, to know the pioneers have already set out. Green enterprises in Vermont are redesigning the homes we live in, the clothes we wear, our sources of power, and the jobs we perform. The task now is to help them move from the fringes to the center of commerce, and to encourage traditional businesses to follow along. ■



Paul Hawken

REDEFINING THE DEBATE:

What Preserves and Protects, Enriches

by Amber Older



Lake Champlain and the Champlain Valley from Mount Independence.

Living and working in a state heralded for its environmental splendor, Vermonters have a two-fold concern: They must preserve the integrity of a world-renowned landscape, and they must advance as a competitive, economically sound New England state. The question of how to maintain Vermont's economic and environmental viability concerns conservationists, business people, residents, and tourists alike. Heated as the discussion often seems, thoughtful observers say the solution lies in recognizing that the relationship of the economy to the environment is not tense, but close and harmonious. As Eric Gilbertson, of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation states, "People come here because it's a special place. They also come here because it's a real place. Vermont isn't Disney World — it's a real, working place."

Not surprisingly, the points at which the economy and the environment intersect are difficult to mark. For many, the term "eco-tourism" is as vague as it is trendy; it does, however,

provide a common ground from which the relationship can be explored.

Travel and tourism, which brings \$1.3 billion annually to the state, is the backbone of Vermont's increasingly diverse economy. Raymond Lemire, director of marketing at Vermont Bicycle Tours, points out that the term "eco-tourism" originated with travelers trying to find new destinations that weren't packed with other tourists. Although he uses the term "special experiences" to describe a typical VBT cycling adventure, Lemire acknowledges the importance of the "ecology" in every part of their two- to five-day tours.

"Our mode of transportation is non-impactful, non-polluting, and we try to educate people about the flora and fauna — but we have never thought of ourselves as part of eco-tourism. Having said that, we know people come here because of the way Vermont is presented — as a state with traditional values, open farms, clean air, and safe surroundings. It all comes down to aesthetics. If the environment wasn't beautiful, we wouldn't exist."

Endangered State: Vermont

The question of existence plays a vital role in the discussion of green industry, in terms of both environmental protection and development. In June 1993, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Vermont one of 11 endangered sites in the country. The first time that an entire state had been thus categorized, public reaction — statewide, nationally, and beyond — ranged from concern to curiosity. More than anything else, the classification awakened people to the reality that the state needs care — and funds to nurture it. The strategy worked.

"People wanted to find out about Vermont," Gilbertson remembers. "I had calls as far away as London and France from travelers who wanted to visit the state. Inquiries about historic sites have gone way up since the list was published — more and more, people are focusing on preservation issues and what they can do to help."

In an effort to promote awareness of Vermont's built, as opposed to natu-

ral, resources, Paul Bruhn, Executive Director of the Preservation Trust of Vermont, has helped launch a new kind of tourism campaign: heritage tourism. In 1982, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation published a guide book, *Three Hundred Other Things to See and Do in Vermont*. Listing historic sites, art galleries, museums, and scenic wonders throughout the state, the book, says Bruhn, was "gobbled up" each time it was reprinted.

Such enthusiasm suggests that visitors want to explore Vermont's history as well as its ski slopes. That interest was confirmed last year through an informal study conducted by the Vermont Department of Travel and Tourism. The survey analyzed the 105,000 tourist inquiries received throughout the year. The results showed that the majority of out-of-state visitors wanted to see historic sites and cultural events as much as — if not more than — bike trails and chair lifts.

"People come here to see the early village scenario in the midst of the mountains, 'the Real America concept,'" says Bobbe Maynes, Commissioner of the Department of Travel and Tourism. "That doesn't mean that we don't clearly recognize skiing and sporting recreation as an important part of Vermont's industry — but people are very interested in our rich history and culture."

Gilbertson concurs with Bruhn and Maynes, positing that Vermont is an ideal place to promote both natural and historical wonders — and in so doing, to enhance the state's economy.

"Right now, heritage tourism is Vermont's best-kept secret. History is seamless here — you drive through nice little villages to get from one cultural site to another. We are so rich in terms of our built resources — it's time to consider 'walking in an historic district' an outdoor recreation. Our economy depends on the natural and built environment. If we destroy historical buildings, they won't grow back."

Image Meets Reality

Of course, the image of Vermont as a collection of simple, rural, tra-

ditional communities conflicts with a much more complex reality: how to survive financially in one of New England's poorest states. Proponents of retail development promote new jobs, more consumer choices, and an improved tax base as essential to improving Vermont's economy.

*"People come here
because it's a special
place. They also come
here because it's a real
place. Vermont isn't
Disney World — it's a
real, working place."*

Pointing out that not all environmentalists are anti-development, Bruhn maintains, "We don't oppose Wal-Mart, for example. We just want them to do business differently in Vermont." But he believes the only way to promote economic viability is through an equally viable environment.

"We're right in the middle of the conflict," Bruhn admits. "Not everyone in Vermont believes that our natural and historic resources are integral to our economy. The case is there. We just need to make it clearly."

Efforts to make this case can be seen across the state. The Agency of Transportation, for example, is in the midst of completing an economic study exploring a Scenic By-Ways planning project. The 16-month study, which focuses on the designation, preservation, and development of scenic roads, explores both economic and environmental components. According to Tony Reddington, a planner for the Agency, the issues are inherently linked.

"Recognizing the importance of economics, we have conducted a survey of visitors to Vermont to measure what the financial value of a scenic landscape is," explains Reddington. "We've also surveyed bus and bike tour operators

and tourists to determine what visitors look for and find in Vermont. That's a crucial part of scenic protection and planning."

The importance of scenic planning has also been recognized at the federal level. In December 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was passed, boosting funds for alternative transportation methods such as biking, walking, and car pooling. Through those funds, the Agency of Transportation, in conjunction with the Department of Travel and Tourism, hopes to develop another alternative planning project. "Tours and Detours" will establish a variety of "tourist plazas" at highway rest areas, providing computerized information about natural and historical sites in the immediate area.

Eventually, plans for alternative transportation may leave the highways and take to the tracks. Last year, a study by the Vermont Rail Council explored the viability of the "Great Circle Route," a tourist train ride that would journey from Brattleboro to Montpelier on to Burlington, and then loop back to White River and Brattleboro. The possibility of a commuter train running from Charlotte to Burlington is also currently under study.

"In order for scenic preservation and protection to work, we need to understand the economic role of tourism," says Reddington, noting additional plans to develop bike paths and scenic corridors within and beyond Vermont. "Towns need to know what the economic value of aesthetics is. We need to interpret it for them in dollars and cents. This kind of research will help us pursue a new form of scenic preservation and protection that exploits the economic benefits."

"If We Don't Have a Green Industry, We Don't Have An Industry"

Figures indicate a blossoming interest in Vermont's cultural heritage — but no one can forget Vermont's international stature as a four-season, recreation state. For hikers, hunters, anglers, and skiers alike, Vermont's

great outdoors ensure a quality experience throughout the year. Skiing (and its younger sibling, snow boarding) remains the most popular activity. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, a healthy environment means the difference between economic prosperity and financial despair.

Call it eco-tourism or just common sense, says Sugarbush's Jim Tabor, the fact remains that "if we don't have a truly green industry, we don't have an industry."

Tabor is the director of communications at the Sugarbush Resort in Waitsfield. With an expected 380,000 skier visits this season, he knows full well that guests of the mountain come with high awareness — and expectations — of environmental preservation and protection. At Sugarbush, says Tabor, their expectations are met.

"We recognize that our guests are hypersensitive about the earth. We have a strong recycling program in action, we use water-saving composting toilets, and we use appropriate signage to educate people about the area's ecological system. We also take preventive measures against erosion, and we do a lot of work to protect the Clay Brook's fish and wildlife habitat. In fact, we're

finalists for a national award for ski industries."

While Tabor is proud of such internal efforts at Sugarbush, he believes that last year's widely publicized controversy over water withdrawal epitomizes the necessity of environmental and economic co-existence.

"When the landmark agreement was finalized in July, it became a communication paradigm for skiers and conservationists," says Tabor. "The 'Sugarbush Solution,' as we call it, allowed for snowmaking and conservation controls. It proved that if everyone is willing to give a bit, solutions can be found. It was a joyous thing to be part of."

Needed: Long-Term Strategy

Megan Epler Wood is the Executive Director of the Eco-Tourism Society, an international nonprofit organization located in Bennington. While she applauds such individual reconciliation efforts, she believes that Vermont needs a managed tourism plan for the state as a whole.

"Vermont doesn't have a long-term strategy for sustainable tourism," she contends. "We need to look at the existing assets and who is benefitting from them now. Where are we going in the future? We need facts and figures."

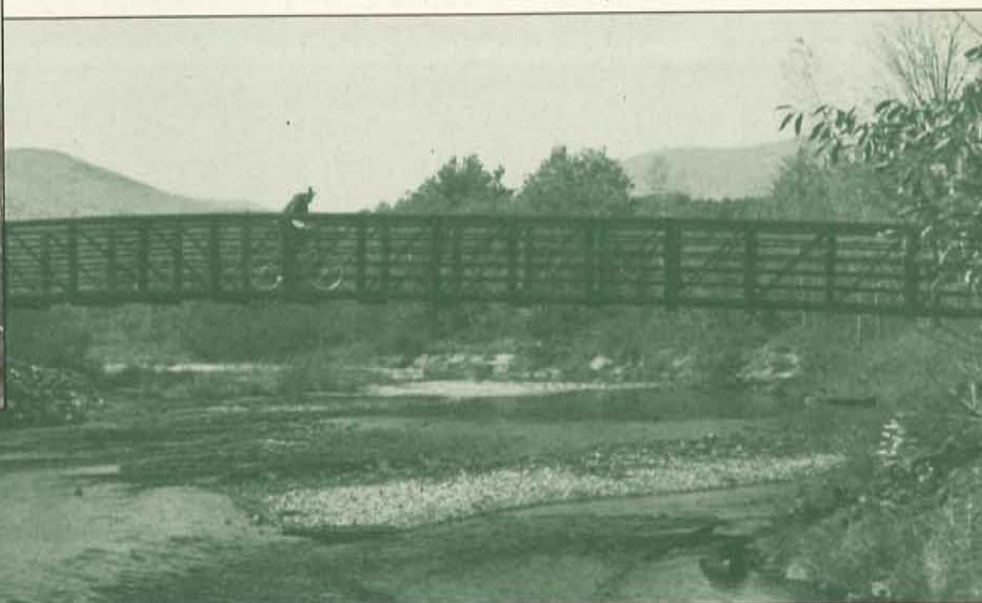
Wood describes the concept of "sustainable tourism" as the superset of which eco-tourism and heritage tourism are subsets. Simply put, sustainable tourism brings in tourist dollars without undermining the environment, whether it be in Manhattan or Monkton. Citing Manchester, Vermont, as an example, Wood explains the importance of development that stays within the environmental character of the state.

"If we allowed sprawl development in Vermont, it might bring in money, but it would degenerate the quality of life for locals. We would grow in a way that looks more like Manchester. That's why we need planning perspective and strategy — so Vermont's natural marketability isn't undermined."

And there's the rub. In a time when a handful of jobs often speaks louder than a forest full of wildlife, the fine line between marketability and sustainability is easily crossed. The solution, as *Vermont Life* editor Tom Slayton maintains, lies in a combination of realism and foresight.

"We must use our economic forces in a positive way if we are to preserve what is best about this state," says Slayton. "We can't preserve every acre, but we can help build an economy that uses Vermont's natural strengths as a foundation — in a careful, productive way." ■

The Middlebury green, and a bike path in Stowe.



"We Seem to Be at A Crossroads in This State"

Roundtable Discussion Finds Business and The Environment Have Much In Common



Editor's Note: During the past few months, much rhetoric has swirled around the discussion of environmental and economic issues in the Legislature and in the state's newspapers. VNRC sought to add some substance to the debate. In April, it

invited a panel of statewide leaders representing business and environmental interests to discuss the issues that seemed to be driving Vermonters into two opposing camps. What the group found was not division but common ground. The lively discussion lasted for nearly two hours. What appears below is a transcript of the most cogent parts of the discussion. VNRC thanks the participants for their generous donation of time in helping to elucidate the complex and interrelated issues the state faces.

Participants:

John Ewing of Burlington: *President, Bank of Vermont*
Patricia Moulton-Powden of South Londonderry: *Town of St. Johnsbury Area Economic Development Office, partner in Moulton Consultants*
Leigh Seddon of Montpelier: *VNRC Board member, principal of Solar Works, a renewable energy company*
Pat Heffernan of Shelburne: *Marketing Partners, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility Board member*
William Shouldice IV of Montpelier: *Secretary of Development, State of Vermont*
Allison Hooper of East Brookfield: *President, Vermont Butter and Cheese Co.*
Steven Terry of Middlebury: *Vice President for External Affairs, Green Mountain Power Corp.*
Jane Difley of Bennington: *VNRC Executive Director*

Jane Difley: We appreciate your coming. It's part of an effort by VNRC to help advance the discussion of the environment and the economy in our state. VNRC doesn't see that the environment and the economy need to be at odds with one another, but we know not everyone thinks that way. We feel that Vermont has the potential to be on the cutting edge of this question, and our hope is that this afternoon's discussion will further that discussion. Collectively, we'll come up with some new ideas and some new thoughts that need to be looked into. Are there ways we can bring the environment and the economy together?

John Ewing: I've been in both camps during my life, and continue to be, and I think there's a great deal of common ground. But I think people don't realize that, because seldom do the two groups discuss with each other except in the arena of a permit appeal or a water resource issue — in an adversarial process where the groups sit down and talk, and that's the worst possible process. I think where there's an opportunity to have a discussion like this, common ground very quickly makes itself known. It's only because there's so little conversation that polarization exists. I don't think polarization is at all mandated, but I do think it exists right now.

Steve Terry: I would totally agree with that. What has happened in the last few years is that there doesn't seem to be

any discussion in a regular way between business interests and environmental interests. There is really a lot of common ground once you get beyond the initial postures.

William Shouldice: Unless we all are bent on having 66,000 people unemployed by the year 2004, then let's continue this polarity between the two groups and let's continue to draw lines in the sand about what is and isn't right for the economy. As the person who Gov. Dean has asked to put forth the economic development initiative for the state, I bet we can all disagree here today on 20 things from whether the Red Sox are going to be any good to water withdrawal decisions that have been made; but there are probably 30 things we could work up with a flip chart right now that we agree on, and I just don't see that with resources being as limited as they are that we have any choice but to roll up our sleeves, to work on issues of common ground, and to roll out an economic development effort the likes of which this state has never seen before, with the goal of putting Vermonters to work at higher and better paying jobs. The time is right, it's up to us, and we can use those resources however we want. It's up to us whether we want to use that time efficiently or inefficiently.

Pat Heffernan: When you see the polarity — and I think we've all seen that — many people seem to lack a philosophic framework, an economic philosophy, that allows them to simultaneously hold those same values and deal with them. You seem to think that whenever the groups get together you have to wear one hat at such a meeting, that you either come as an environmentalist or you come as a business person, or in some instances you come as a sort of social advocate. But the idea that there is a framework, or that we can comfortably have a business working in those three arenas, that they're not mutually exclusive, that it's not either/or, that they are part of a whole — this idea is not commonly held by the public. We simply lack that sort of concept; and in many instances, we lack the information and education around which to deal with these issues. So, too quickly those sort of knee-jerk alignments are made — and if they are made in adversarial relationships you don't understand the other view.

Pat Moulton: I think part of the polarity is fueled by just economic realities, and there is a pendulum that exists whether we like it or not. To the extent as Bill has said we can slow that pendulum or stop it where our economic and our environmental policies are sustain-

able, then I think we have less opportunity for that polarity to be fueled. When unemployment rates are high, people are out of work, I've heard business people or employees say that all the permit and regulatory bodies should just roll over and play dead for a couple of years so we can recover. That's not going to happen, and we don't want it to happen. But the common Joe on the street doesn't really care too much about water quality when he can't pay his bills The polarity is fueled by the economic realities and the perception, too. People perceive you can't get a permit in this state, you can't get anything done. And I fault the media in this state for that The perception is, you can't do it here.

Steve Terry: There were some stories this week that helped. Since 1990 there have been 2,400 permits applied for, and less than 50 were denied. But yet that is not the view of most businesses. I know that I spend a lot of time with our customers in my job at Green Mountain, and I have yet to visit one of our major customers or one of our medium-size customers that wants to move out of Vermont. They are thinking and want to do business here, would like to find ways to expand their business. And it is mostly issues of markets.



Leigh Seddon: I think that the whole issue of the polarity and some of the false dichotomies between, Can we have a good environment and a good economy? have certainly been claimed by the recession. But there's another thing working here. I think all of us in this room, if we sat down and thought about it, would say that the natural environment and human resources are where all of our economic benefits spring from. You know, our people, our water, our air. And that's what creates economic value in Vermont, and we have to preserve them, and that's the rational thing to do. But when that interferes with short-term gain or somebody's personal gain, then there's a conflict. And I think there's always some polarity, but it's been blown up so much because feeding that polarity can be a self-serving function, either for an environmentalist or for the business sector. If you have black and white, it's easier to take on the bad guy than a complicated issue of making the permit system work, and protecting the environment, but still growing. So I think that one of the key things we have to do is recognize where there's polarity or where there's legitimate grievances about permit reform versus rhetoric that is just making it easier for a certain industry or a certain environmental group to fight any specific battle. It's not in the long-term interests of the

state, but people have their specific short-term goals. So I see it as a real problem of figuring out the short-term/long-term and bringing that polarity down to real issues.

Allison Hooper: The other thing is that in my business, I really don't do business in Vermont, and I compete with imported products from Europe, so I view the business community in much more global terms. We have to look at the things that make us unique, and if we just try to find the lowest common denominator and try to be just like South Carolina and just like Oklahoma or something, all the jobs are going to go south. I mean there's going to be nothing left, and then those jobs are going to go even further south. So I don't think these are all problems that are unique to Vermont, and we may just be looking at them earlier. Imagine, that 20 years from now, people in New Hampshire are going to go, God, how come Vermont was right next door to us and we never paid any attention to them and the things that they were doing? I think you're going to see that Vermont will become a more desirable place to do business. In fact yesterday I had someone call me from Colorado whom I had never met, and he said he had a garment business — he makes sort of specialty ski-wear and so forth

— he wants to move his business to Vermont because he considers it to be green and it will help his marketing. So there is not only the perception that Vermont isn't so business-friendly but that it's also a good place to be, and we should be focusing on that.

Pat Heffernan: Most of our clients are marketing out-of-state. So for every one that is saying it would be cheaper or easier to hop across the Connecticut River, my usual response to that — particularly if they're in a consumer market — is to say, And what premium does that cost you in the market? If you've got a value-added agricultural product as Allison does and you've got a New Hampshire address, you've paid a price that is quite in excess of what you will pay for some permitting . . . There's also a misperception in terms of what are the environmental processes in other states, New Hampshire being a sort of notable nearby exception. But clients who are operating in multiple states — Massachusetts is much worse, New Jersey is trying to undo decades of next-to-nothing. They are much worse.

John Ewing: I've heard the same thing . . . I think New Hampshire is the problem, because they have it easy.



Steve Terry: We seem to be at a crossroads in this state. And we do have a chance for some common ground — whether it's green businesses or established businesses, especially the specialty food businesses — to join in a way and be willing to talk in a positive way about Vermont as a place to do business. Vermont business right now is probably very pessimistic. It's overly pessimistic. It doesn't do business any good to talk about how bad it is. But I am really somewhat disappointed by the view that if we are about balance and common ground that's really a code word for not wanting to protect the environment.

John Ewing: I think if business designed an agenda for Vermont and you looked at it, many of the features promoted would be exactly what's on the environmental agenda. It's really the same set of goals, I think, that basically are identified as what makes Vermont a good place to do business and what makes for a good environment. And I think what happens is that then people begin to get polarized because they choose the wrong issues to debate. They keep drifting away from that common ground and tend to get on things that disrupt the agreement, and I think that's where we tend to go wrong. Somehow if we could more carefully pick the issues, whether you are a

business person or an environmental person.

Leigh Seddon: One of the things that a sustainable economy has to do for Vermonters is create more human and natural resources with every generation so the next generation doesn't *not* have water, doesn't *not* have air, but it has air and water, hopefully as good — but there are other values that have been created, human values, so that we're actually gaining wealth and not using it up. What I'm concerned about in Vermont right now is the indiscriminate use of resources; it's really wasting the resources that future generations want to have. We really need to learn how to use that water and air to maximum advantage so we create value.

Pat Heffernan: We need to help people translate why we need to do that, and not only because of the value to the environment but also because of the value to business. In other words, that it makes economic sense to do those things just as much as it makes environmental sense. Because I think that's the part of the loop, the description, that people don't understand yet. They're still understanding, Steve, your (GMP's) energy efficiency programs — that conservation and having a more effective motor in your plant not only

saves energy, but to a low-income Vermonter it's not, but that it saves money for that business. It helps them run better and be more competitive. And to me those stories — it's those numbers — those environmental goods translated into business goods is what a lot of people still don't yet recognize.

Pat Moulton: I think there's an educational component here, clearly. Because I just don't think there's enough information flowing around on how to do this and enough incentive for businesses to make the conversion. And I think we all need to be educated about this. Are we in fact leaving a negative legacy for our kids? Are we consuming too much water and too much air?

Pat Heffernan: In terms of what VNRC and other groups can do would be to help the state, both with regulations and in statutes, to put in the carrots; basically to put the money where the mouth is, to walk the talk. If the state as a whole, and the whole community, says, for example, nontoxic paints are a good thing, or any sort of green industries are a good thing, or energy-efficient businesses are a good thing, then everything the state does should reflect that. And that is not the case now. You can have some whiz-bang new fantastic gadget that's



great for the environment and a good business thing, and there's absolutely no favoritism, no carrots, when you go to the state for funding on this. Nothing from VIDA (Vermont Industrial Development Authority) gives you bonus points on this if you pay better-than-average wages; nothing in VIDA gives you any bonus points if you have a good environmental product. When you go to Act 250 even, there should be some trade-offs, so things could be looked at in terms of impacts between the different areas. There are many opportunities for giving, sort of, brownie points. If you're doing what we said we want, you should have some carrots.

Jane Difley: What do we do with existing businesses in terms of a sustainable economy, or making sure that the environment is protected?

Leigh Seddon: That's a real good question. I was thinking when Pat was saying small businesses are where a lot of new job creation comes from — in the future it will be. But I think of ski areas, IBM, all our existing businesses; and as I've been looking at the ski industry for the last several years, I've learned to realize that there are directions it can go to grow that are definitely detrimental to the environment,

and there are directions it can go to grow that are good for the environment. And one thing that came to mind was Stowe's upgrading of its gondola. It's got a state-of-the-art, world-class gondola up there, fastest in the world, not just in America, and that's a way to get more skiers up on the mountain, get more revenue in, without making new trails. They could have said, We're going to cut out some new trail areas and build new ski lifts; instead, they put in a state-of-the-art gondola. I think if more of our existing businesses can look to, How can we improve our quality and efficiency to enhance profits rather than just do raw growth — sort of just power-through to the next level — let's look at quality and innovation in our business. It can actually be much more profitable, and it's better for the environment. I think that's where state government must say, We're going to give you special incentives for becoming state-of-the-art, for becoming innovative, instead of just using more resources.

Steve Terry: The (water withdrawal) agreement that was finally worked out between VNRC, Conservation Law Foundation, and Sugarbush was really aimed at how to do this, which helped Sugarbush understand they had to go out and find a very efficient snow-making system that used less water and also used less energy. And

that's probably the only way that that will work for their goals.

Jane Difley: I'm wondering if any of you have any lessons from your own work that illustrate the creativity of an organization in bringing together the economy and the environment.

Steve Terry: Patience. You have to be willing to negotiate in this state. You have to be willing to honestly negotiate and be willing to give something. If you're not that way, you can't expect to operate in this state. With principles, of course, though.

Pat Moulton: You need to educate about the need to compromise . . . It's patience, education, and trying to work within the system.

Jane Difley: This has been wonderful for me. It's really stimulated my thinking, and we at VNRC are grateful for your participation. I personally am delighted to meet each of you and to hear your thoughts. I hope it's been as interesting for you as it has been for me. Thank you for your constructive participation.

John Ewing: We should have more of this kind of thing. ■



WRITERS DONATE PROCEEDS

Two writers have recently donated proceeds from publication of their works to VNRC. These gifts give twice: the subjects foster interest in the environment, and the money helps VNRC do its work.

William Graves of Barnet writes poetry. The North Star monthly of Danville has published his poems *Besting It* and *Winterkills*. Prof. Stephanie Kaza of the University of Vermont's Environmental Studies Department has recently published *The Attentive Heart: Conversations with Trees*.

Fishing season upon us, we thought readers might enjoy Graves' *Besting It*.



"Just like another world," the fisherman told himself, standing still as he was, jeweled and joe pye nearby, chest high to him. He had come alone a long way to these highest beginnings where beaver ponds tainted the stream red from soaking dead fir and washing cedar roots. "Nature's bleeding," he said, casting out his fishing line. All that was in the woods around knew he was there, but what chance he had was with the trout back feeding then under spots the beaver slapped just before he came up walking. He'd take advantage (as anyone would) of these linked ponds where the trout jumped as if they wanted out, where no one could see him, and he would see no other soul fishing.

BULLETIN BOARD

A Commendation and An Appointment for Whittaker

Northern Forest Project Director Brendan Whittaker was named Vermont recipient of the Environmental Citizenship Program and New England Environmental Network's 1994 Environmental Service Award at the 16th Annual New England Environmental Conference March 27 in Medford, Mass.

The Environmental Service Awards are given to New England's most effective environmental advocates, represented by a group or an individual in each of the New England states. Whittaker's 35 years of service to the protection and responsible use of Vermont's natural resources, as well as his impact on environmental efforts regionwide, were praised.

"Receiving the award is a special honor and a real tribute to all I've had the pleasure to work with in trying to keep Vermont a 'Green' State," Whittaker said. "Together we'll continue to reinvent the framework and impact of forestry and agriculture as positive forces on this region's environment."

In May, Whittaker was appointed to Vermont Public Radio's new VPR Community Advisory Board, a group of 14 selected from 75 nominees statewide to provide public input to the station's staff and directors.

Whittaker's appointment could be the result of his efforts through VNRC to bring the weekly environmental affairs program, "Living on Earth," to VPR. Whittaker noted that the show was being aired on more than 70 public radio stations nationwide, including New Hampshire and Maine, but not here in Vermont.

Under its new director, Mark Vogelzang, VPR responded favorably. "Living on Earth" now airs weekly — on Mondays from 6:30 to 7 p.m.

Working With Your Woodland Updated

There's a new edition out of *Working with your Woodland: A Landowner's Guide*, co-authored by former VNRC Board Chair and now U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Mollie Beattie along with Charles Thompson and Lynn Levine.

"One of the best books on the subject of forest management," said the *Vermont Forest Quarterly* when the original edition was published in 1983. The updated version reflects the technological, legal, environmental, and philosophical changes of the last decade, as well as taking a more holistic view of forest ownership. A new postscript on stewardship emphasizes the place of New England forests in the larger ecology.

Working with your Woodland: A Landowner's Guide is published by the University Press of New England.

Environmental Youth Awards

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency annually sponsors the President's Environmental Youth Awards program for students in Grades K-12. The program provides an opportunity for students to pursue environmental interests and get involved in their communities — whether it's cleaning up a city park or raising public awareness about endangered species.

The deadline for the national competition is July 1. For a brochure

and further information, contact Evelyn Sullivan at the EPA, JFK Federal Building, Boston, MA 02203 (tel: 617/565-3187).

Wetlands Conservation Strategy Unveiled

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' draft version of the Vermont Wetlands Conservation Strategy has been released.

The document provides current information on wetland inventories, threats to wetlands, and existing wetland conservation programs. More importantly, it presents a series of options to improve wetland protection, enhance coordination between existing programs, and increase understanding and support for wetland protection.

Contact the Agency of Natural Resources (tel: 241-3770) or regional planning commissions for a copy of the document.

Staff Intern

Geordie Vining has been working as VNRC Land Use Program Assistant. Among other tasks, Geordie helped to organize the Roundtable Discussion reported in this issue of the VER.



Geordie Vining

Recreation Plan Available

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation has released its draft 1993 Vermont Recreation Plan. The sixth in a series of comprehensive plans, the new draft culminates three years of study and research. Its goal is to serve as an information source on outdoor recreation opportunities, needs, and issues in Vermont.

Part of the plan is the Vermont Recreation Survey and Environmental Quality Index. Results of the survey show Vermonters place a high value on the state's scenic and environmental resources and are concerned that future generations will not have a better quality environment than today. They are most concerned about solid and toxic waste disposal, loss of agricultural land, acid rain, and increasing development. Most feel the state's environmental laws are not too strict and that environmental protection and economic growth can go hand in hand.

Copies of the report are available from the Department or at regional offices of the Agency of Natural Resources.

CALENDAR

Romp on the Pomp

Here's a June event that has nothing to do with proms but everything to do with rivers: the 8th annual "Romp on the Pomp" from 2 to 6 p.m. June 19 in Thetford Center.

The festival, sponsored by the Friends of the Ompompanoosuc, is free and offers music, story-telling, children's games, swimming, Morris dancers, a hot air balloon lift-off, historical exhibit, and a nature trail walk. Come and enjoy!

VINS Programs

Looking for an interesting way to learn more about the natural world that surrounds us all? The Vermont Institute of Natural Science of Woodstock offers a variety of programs throughout the year on a wide range of topics.

In early June you can explore bogs and swamps of the Northeast Kingdom, or take part in a "herbal walk" and wildflower identification. On Father's Day you can join a backroads bike jaunt.

For a complete program of events, call VINS at 457-2779.



NOFA Conference

The 20th Annual Northeast Organic Farming Association Summer Conference and Celebration of Rural Life will be held Aug. 5-7 at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass.

The event is billed as "a unique opportunity to join with others to learn about and promote the variety of issues that surround the rapidly growing organic movement — from planting to environmental protection, agriculture to education, and research to political action." There's even a children's conference for kids 2 through 12, and a teenagers' work/study program.

For more information, contact Julie Rawson, 411 Sheldon Road, Barre, MA 01005 (tel: 508/355-2853).

GIVING THE INVISIBLE HAND A GREEN THUMB

The Ecology of Commerce

by Paul Hawken.

New York: Harper Collins, 1993.

Reviewed by Justin Brande

Following a Roman adage that to read without a pencil is to sleep, my copy of Paul Hawken's *The Ecology of Commerce* is almost half underlined, with additional notes, check-marks, and glosses. Every page I found pregnant with provocative ideas and suggestions, often needing and deserving re-reading. Clearly this is an important book that should be read by environmental activists, the business community, and otherwise thoughtful people. We can only hope that its message will be received and applied in the world of commerce and indeed in our daily lives.

At the considerable risk of oversimplifying Hawken's message, here it is: First, we have become aware with the help of modern science and technology that our planet is facing a dire future of depleted resources, increasing pollution of every major ecosystem, and an unchecked, runaway population expansion; second, it is mainly unbridled commerce that has brought us to this gloomy prospect.

Commerce, on a world scale, has ignored and indeed violated the laws of nature, so that in taking, making, and wasting the world's resources we humans have endangered all life on earth, Hawken says. But, we can't live without commerce; ergo, we must radically change (and soon) the way we run our commerce and run our lives. It must and can be done. Business can become the beneficent cooperator in providing the well-being we

all seek, but we all must follow nature's demanding patterns — in the forest, fields, fisheries, AND the marketplace. We cannot naively expect the Invisible Hand to restrain our cupidity and to clean up the mess we leave behind.

Hawken has specific criteria we should apply in developing the new "restorative" economy, and he has several strategies for bringing this new economy into being within a sustainable society.

The principal problem he finds is that the market as we know it is good

*We have become aware
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population expansion.*

for setting prices, but it fails badly in providing us with the true cost. This general market failure leads us to over-produce and over-consume and waste our resources, best illustrated perhaps by the anomaly of cheap food in the market and expensive garbage at the landfill. Almost all of our fundamental values and relationships are badly skewed because, as Oscar Wilde put it, we know the price of everything but the value of nothing. We have not learned that no human system, political or economic, can be truly sound unless it is first biologically sound.

Hawken says we must forthwith begin to calculate these values — the

true costs to people and our environment — and then find out how these costs can be made to show in the marketplace or be legitimately avoided, not just passed on to future generations and others who can't defend themselves. He appeals to an earlier British economist, Arthur Pigou, for his most fundamental corrective measure, what Hawken calls the "Green Tax," which should be levied not just as clean-up revenue, but rather to make up the difference between the deficient market price and the true costs to society and the environment. This would, he argues, make for a truly free market in which the consumer would be able to exercise valid choices, choices that would automatically enforce frugality and conservation on us.

Hawken has many other ideas and suggestions, some of which are already being used here and in other parts of the world, such as taxes that are added to products that pay for their ultimate, environmentally friendly disposal.

At first blush, on reading this heady summary of such a pervasive, fundamental reversal of conventional thinking and systems, one might suspect that Hawken is anti-capitalist or is just bashing big business. Far from it; he is really hopeful and fully supports the life of business and commerce. But he insists that we must learn how to give the Invisible Hand a green thumb while we make society a congenial matrix in which a benign world of business can function.

Probably the biggest hurdle in making Hawken's vision real is his proposals for a restorative, sustainable economy. It's all too easy to say we must change our ways of thinking about business, pass a green tax, or alter the code of corporate ethics. But we need only to reflect on our growing tribulations over Act 250, the Clean Water Act, endangered species, or any of the myriad environmental issues that face us every

day to sense the magnitude of the task before us.

Hawken does assure us, however, that if we persevere, as we must, and design it right, the resulting political economy should, like nature's model, be truly a self-governing, sustainable system.

Daunting though the task may be, Hawken is right in warning us of the dire prospects for all life if we fail to act, and he has done a good job in pointing out the road we must travel. And he has set this all down in well-thought-out, lucid prose.

—Justin Brande
of Cornwall was one of
VNRC's early directors

a downtown? Who is paying the price tag? As the number of local merchants dwindles, who takes over community services that traditionally relied on their involvement?"

perspectives on the future of Vermont's Northern Forests. Included also is a summary of the Northern Forest Lands Council recommendations and how people can get involved.

**Vermont's Northern Forests:
A Resource for the Future**
Free tabloid

This is a summary of VNRC's three-year-old Northern Forests Project. It includes a discussion of the Northern Forests and the issues, including changes that resources face and the results of over two dozen meetings held in people's homes to discuss local

VNRC's Citizen Action Guide
\$6.00 / members; \$11.00 / nonmembers

This indispensable activist guide includes tips on what to do when unwanted development comes to town, how to enlist others on your conservation issues, possible protective action initiatives, guides to Vermont's state and local planning and regulatory processes, and many more resources!

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM VNRC

The following materials are all available by contacting: VNRC, 9 Bailey Avenue, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 223-2328.

Back Against The Wal
18 Minute Video
Ann Cousins & Townsend
Anderson, 1994.
\$10.00 postpaid.

VNRC and the Preservation Trust of Vermont present a new videotape that documents the effects of Wal-Mart-type development on small rural communities in the Midwest and Texas. According to Cousins, the video poses the following questions: "What happens to the local tax base when businesses loose out to giant national discount chains? What does it cost to bring back

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ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

VNRC's 1993 Annual Report, which details activities VNRC undertook last year in helping to conserve Vermont's natural resources, has been published. If you would like a copy, please write or call our Montpelier office: VNRC, 9 Bailey Avenue, Montpelier, VT 05602; tel., 802-223-2328

THE IMPACT OF ACT 250

Made in Vermont:

The Dividends of Act 250 (VNRC, 1993)

VNRC presents a 20 minute videotape showing Act 250's impact, in the words of Vermonters who have experiences with the law. A diverse range of businesspeople, including Jerry Greenfield of Ben & Jerry's, former Vermont Development Secretary Elbert Moulton, and banker Zoe Erdman, present their views on Act 250's importance to Vermont's economy. In addition, citizens who have protected their homes and businesses through Act 250 speak about the importance of public participation. Available on a 2-week loan basis with \$2.90 for postage.

Act 250: A Positive Economic Force for Vermont (VNRC, 1992)

This paper sets out the relevant evidence to support that Act 250 is a valuable economic asset. It explores the fallacy of the "negative impact theory" and the nature and extent of the positive relationship between Act 250 and Vermont's economy. \$3.00 plus \$1.00 postage.



Vermont Natural Resources Council
9 Bailey Avenue
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