

**THE ASSOCIATION OF
VERMONT CONSERVATION
COMMISSIONS (AVCC)
2022 ANNUAL SUMMIT
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15
8:30AM-3:30PM**

**PLANNING
FOR A
CLIMATE-
CHANGED
FUTURE**



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OCT 15 | 8:30AM-3:30PM | LAKE MOREY RESORT | FAIRLEE, VT

WELCOME

A Message from the AVCC Board of Directors:

Welcome to the 2022 annual Conservation Summit. After two long years, we are back in person. What a treat it is to meet together sharing smiles, ideas, and stories about protecting Vermont's natural resources. We appreciate those of you who joined us virtually for the last two years and are happy that we can be together today.

Our theme this year is "Planning For A Climate-Changed Future". We have certainly learned about change over the last two years and the importance of being able to adapt to change. But what about "planning for change"? Over its long history, Vermont has seen its share of challenges. From deforestation, droughts, and flooding, our landscape has shown its strength and ability to recover. But Vermont has also been resilient in the way we come together to address our problems. Now more than ever, Vermont communities are planning for our climate future, by putting infrastructure for resilience in place, and devising new systems that adapt to our rapidly changing reality.

Much of the recent action on climate has been at the state level, but Vermont's Climate Action plan identifies strategies and actions that municipalities can engage in to prepare and respond to a changing climate. We hope that over the course of today, you will learn from our expert presenters and from each other about ways to plan for the coming climate changes in your community.

Signed,
Mark Nelson (Chair)
Nancy Jones (Secretary)
Bill Dell'Isola (Treasurer)
Jens Hilke
Suma Lashof
Rebecca Roman
Makenna Goodman
Caitlin Drasher

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Nature-Based Solutions: Strategies to Create Climate-Smart Communities

TAJ SCHOTTLAND (Associate Director of the National Climate Program, Trust for Public Land) and **ZOE RICHARDS** (Director of the Burlington Wildways Partnership, Burlington Conservation Board) will present on the growing movement of towns and cities across the country that are turning to nature-based climate solutions rooted in three climate-action objectives: improve community resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, and address long-standing structural inequities that have resulted in low-income and historically disenfranchised populations being disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. This work is being led by a coalition of NGOs, researchers, and municipalities working together over the last three years to pilot new approaches, document benefits, and build the capacity of others to use nature to deliver climate action. The keynote will explore the latest science behind nature-based climate solutions, share resources and lessons learned from a network of cities advancing nature-based climate strategies, and highlight how Burlington, Vermont's largest city, is doubling down on nature-based climate action to reduce emissions, improve public health, and create a more equitable and resilient city.

SCHEDULE

8:30-9:00 | REGISTRATION (FRONT LOBBY)

9:00-9:30 | WELCOME: Board Elections, Opening Remarks (BIG ROOM)

9:30-10:30 | KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Taj Schottland & Zoe Richards (BIG ROOM)

10:45-11:45 | CONCURRENT SESSIONS

- Intact Freshwater Systems Build Climate Resilience, *Jon Groveman & Karina Dailey* (Theater)
- Town Action Towards Resilient Community, *Chris Company* (Waterlot)
- Using BioFinder to Learn About Climate Resilience, *Jens Hilke* (Lakeside)

11:45-12:45 | LUNCH & EXHIBITOR SPACE (BIG ROOM)

12:45-1:45 | CONCURRENT SESSIONS

- Vermont Climate Forecasts & Adaption, *Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux* (Theater)
- Peeling "Resiliency" Like an Onion, *Ben Rose* (Waterlot)

2:00-3:00 | CONCURRENT SESSIONS

- Developing a Municipal Climate Toolkit, *Marian Wolz* (Lakeside)
- Where Has All the Water Gone?, *Stephen Leslie & Jennifer Byrne* (Waterlot)

3:00-3:30 | CLOSING

OCT 15 | 8:30AM-3:30PM | LAKE MOREY RESORT | FAIRLEE, VT

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Intact Freshwater Systems Build Climate Resilience (JON GROVEMAN & KARINA DAILEY)—

This panel presentation by Jon Groveman and Karina Dailey of Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) will focus on the importance of freshwater ecosystems—including our rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, riparian areas, and floodplains—as critical resources and will discuss the importance of improving protections for them. Karina will provide the science behind thinking about these systems as intact, functioning networks and their contribution to climate resilience. Jon will explain the existing regulatory framework and offer state and local strategies for strengthening protection. **10:45-11:45am (Theater)**

Town Action Towards Resilient Community: You Are the Hero You Seek (CHRIS CAMPANY)

—In Vermont, municipalities are given the power to choose. They can choose to plan. They can choose to follow state planning goals. They can choose to implement their plans. They can choose to adopt zoning bylaws. They can choose to participate in state land use and energy project review proceedings (Act 250 and Section 248, respectively). They can choose to raise revenue and appropriate funds. They can choose to act, or not. We'll look at three pillars of planning policy that are key to resilient communities—compact settlement, climate change hazard mitigation and adaptation, and habitat connectivity—and integrating these pillars to engage with and bring the community along to inform and empower action. **10:45-11:45am (Waterlot)**

Using BioFinder to Learn about Climate Resilience (JENS HILKE)—Vermont Conservation Design was first released in 2016 and has been used by towns across the state to identify landscape patterns of connected forests and waters as well as community and species hotspots. Vermont Conservation Design certainly does show these areas of current biological diversity but also speaks to climate resilience into the future. Join us to learn how these concepts come together and how you can use Vermont Conservation Design on the BioFinder website to better plan for your town's climate future. **10:45-11:45am (Lakeside)**

Vermont Climate Forecasts and Adaptation (LESLEY-ANN DUPIGNY-GIROUX)—In this informative session, participants will hear more about the state of climate change in Vermont and what adaptation looks like. Climate forecasts are nuanced and variable, affecting parts of the state in different ways. Furthermore, impacts of climate change disproportionately affect some groups of Vermonters more than others. Join us to learn more. **12:45-1:45 (Theater)**

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS, continued

Peeling “Resiliency” Like an Onion (BEN ROSE)—Hoping to engage in a robust conversation with whoever shows up about the definition and characteristics of “resiliency.” Hypothesis: resiliency begins with individuals, gets practiced in neighborhoods, can be fostered and supported by towns, and gets talked about by state bureaucrats. Also: there is currently SO MUCH funding available for hazard mitigation projects, and there has been and may never be a better time for towns to address known flood vulnerabilities. **12:45-1:45 (Waterlot)**

Developing a Municipal Climate Toolkit: Expanding Your Town’s Capacity to Tackle Climate Change (MARIAN WOLZ)—Are there issues related to climate change in your community that you would like to tackle, but so far, have not had the resources or tools to do so? Join this session to learn about the development of a Municipal Climate Toolkit, an online hub of existing State programs, datasets, planning guides, tools, and technical assistance providers that will connect the day-to-day work of municipal staff and volunteers to climate change. Through a partnership with the Vermont Climate Council, the Agency of Natural Resources is designing and developing a Municipal Climate Toolkit that will connect municipalities with climate action resources across the areas of transportation, energy, natural and water resources, farms & food, and more. Share your thoughts and ideas about what would be helpful to see in a toolkit as you take steps to tackle climate change in your community. **2:00-3:00 (Lakeside)**

Where Has All the Water Gone? (STEPHEN LESLIE & JENNIFER BYRNE)—A recent climate impact study from UVM details the challenges our farmers are already facing with a combination of “flash droughts” and “precipitation events”. In this powerpoint presentation, Stephen will discuss these impacts and describe some of the innovative practices Vermont farmers are undertaking to mitigate loss & damage through restoring the carbon and water cycles on their farms. These practices are grounded in the view that healthy soil is the critical (and often overlooked) foundation to securing an abundant supply of clean water. The talk will close with a quick review of policy initiatives to incentivize land managers to adopt healthy soil practices. The second half of the presentation will be Jennifer Byrne presenting on the role of the Conservation Districts (and how they might interface more with the commissions). **2:00-3:00 (Waterlot)**

SPEAKER BIOS (in alphabetical order)

JENNIFER BYRNE—Jennifer Byrne is the District Manager of White River NRC. From 2011-2016, Jennifer worked and volunteered for the USDA-NRCS in over 15 states, comparing targeted conservation efforts and local and regional water quality improvement programs while assisting with conservation planning, rural and urban soil surveys, wetland delineation and restoration, tree plantings and monitoring, and engineering surveys. Jennifer holds a Master of Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School, a B.S. in Agriculture Science from Oregon State University, and an A.A.S. in Alternative Energy Technology from Lansing College in Michigan. She now happily resides in Lyme with her young daughter. Her mission at the District is to help make conservation effective, consistent, and accessible to all farmers and land stewards.

CHRIS CAMPANY—Chris is Executive Director of the Windham Regional Commission based in Brattleboro, Vermont, which serves 27 towns in Southeastern Vermont. He was previously Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Graduate Program Coordinator at Mississippi State University; Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning for Calvert County, Maryland; Deputy Commissioner of Planning for Orange County, New York; Federal Policy Coordinator for the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture; founder and Executive Director of the Baton Rouge Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance; and a Presidential Management Intern/Fellow with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, DC. Chris holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Master of Public Policy and Administration from Mississippi State University, and a Master of Landscape Architecture from Louisiana State University. He resides in Townshend with his family.

KARINA DAILEY—As Vermont Natural Resource Council (VNRC)'s Restoration Ecologist, Karina is responsible for running VNRC's dam removal program and contributing her scientific knowledge and expertise to policy issues around the conservation and restoration of Vermont's waters. Most recently, Dailey was Senior Ecologist at Trudell Consulting Engineers (TCE) in Williston, overseeing natural resource-related projects and providing testimony for Act 250 and Act 248 land use permitting projects. Formerly, Dailey was a Project Manager for the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District and a Restoration Ecologist for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Intervale Nursery. Before moving to Vermont, she taught environmental science and worked in conservation in the Greater Yellowstone area in Wyoming.

LESLEY-ANN DUPIGNY-GIROUX—Dr. Dupigny-Giroux is a Professor of Climatology in the Department of Geography at the University of Vermont. She uses a variety of mixed methods from remotely sensed data to statistics and historical content analysis, to explore the influence of atmospheric processes on fluvial processes and vegetated landscapes. Her work spans a number of climate hazards and severe weather, with a special focus on flooding and droughts. As the State Climatologist for Vermont, she engages directly with community groups, K-12 schools, State legislators, Federal and State agencies...

..LESLEY-ANN DUPIGNY-GIROUX continued...

and national climate organizations. She is the President of the American Association of State Climatologists and was inducted as a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society in January 2020. She is the lead editor of 'Historical climate variability and impacts in North America', the first monograph to deal with the use of documentary and other ancillary records for analyzing climate variability and change. Nationally, she is the lead author for the Northeast Chapter of the Fourth National Climate Assessment of the US Global Change Research Program. She has served on the NOAA Science Advisory Board Climate Working Group helping to guide climate research across the US. Statewide, she is the Co-Chair of the State's Drought Task Force and worked closely with the Vermont Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security on the climatology related sections of the FEMA-mandated Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Plan. In 2014, she was a Scholar-in-Residence for the Sustainability Graduate Institute at Goddard College, and their Commencement Speaker in Spring 2015. Also, in 2015, Dr. Dupigny-Giroux was elected a Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering in recognition of her academic and outreach contributions to the state.

JON GROVEMAN—Jon is the Policy and Water Program Director at the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC). He previously held the position of General Counsel at VNRC before being asked in 2011 to serve as General Counsel for the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources under the Shumlin Administration. Governor Shumlin appointed him to Chair the Natural Resources Board (NRB), which administers the Act 250 program, Vermont's statewide land use program. In addition to his past work at VNRC and in the Shumlin Administration, Jon served as Director of the Vermont Water Resources Board, Director of the Law Center for the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and Act 250 Land Use Attorney for the State of Vermont.

JENS HILKE—Jens Hilke works for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department as a Conservation Planning Biologist. He helps towns, regional planning commissions and non-governmental organizations with their conservation planning efforts. This includes help with GIS natural resource mapping, advice on prioritizing significant natural features, and help with implementing town conservation goals. Jens did his undergraduate work at Connecticut College in Environmental Sociology and then got a Masters in Botany from the University of Vermont as a Field Naturalist.

STEPHEN LESLIE—Stephen Leslie is a co-owner of Cedar Mountain Farm & Cobb Hill Cheese, both located at Cobb Hill Co-housing in Hartland, VT. Stephen & his wife, Kerry Gawalt, maintain a herd of 20 milk cows on 60 acres of hay and grazing land and raise vegetables in a one acre no-till market garden. Stephen has written two books about farming with draft animals published by Chelsea Green and has written numerous articles for farm journals. He is a regular presenter at draft animal field days and organic agriculture conferences. Stephen is a self-described farmer-activist & soil-advocate.

ZOE RICHARDS—Zoe Richards is the Director and co-founder of the Burlington Wildways Partnership. She is a Wildlife Biologist and currently chairs Burlington’s Conservation Board. Zoe has been working in conservation for over 20 years. Her interests lie in how to make climate resilience and biodiversity core tenets in city planning. Zoe is also the recipient of the Arthur Gibb Award for Individual Leadership.

BEN ROSE—Ben Rose is Recovery and Mitigation Section Chief for Vermont Emergency Management. He followed Neale Lunderville, Sue Minter, and Dave Rapoport as the final “Irene Recovery Officer”, and currently fulfills the role of “COVID-19 Recovery Unit Leader”. His previous roles include Executive Director of the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District 1988-2004, State Representative and Clerk of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee 1995-1998, and Executive Director of the Green Mountain Club 1988-2011. He holds a BA from Yale University and an MS in Natural Resource Planning from UVM. A former Chair of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, he co-founded the Catamount Trail Association in 1984 and is a founding and current board member of the Cross Vermont Trail Association. He is a Justice of the Peace in Williston and has run 44 marathons.

TAJ SCHOTTLAND—Taj Schottland is the Associate Director of the Trust for Public Land’s national climate program. He has over twelve years of professional experience working in the natural resources field and has spent the last eight years working specifically on natural climate solutions. In his current role, he works with Trust for Public Land field staff and diverse cross-sector partnerships across the country to drive systems level change in how communities invest in green infrastructure, parks, and open space with the goal of improving climate, health, and equity outcomes.

MARIAN WOLZ—Marian Wolz is the Resilience & Adaptation Program Coordinator within the Climate Action Office at the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). Previously, she worked as the Global Warming Solutions Act Coordinator, supporting the Vermont Climate Council in drafting Vermont’s Initial Climate Action Plan. She currently works across the Council’s five subcommittees and with State agencies to implement climate adaptation and resilience actions. Prior to joining ANR, Marian worked for four years with Vermont Emergency Management as a Planner focused on state level response to and recovery from major disasters. Most recently, she worked on the State’s COVID Response Team, establishing systems for the delivery of food, and vaccines across the state. Marian holds a Bachelor of Arts in Public and Urban Affairs from Virginia Tech and began her career working with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission on regional initiatives for transportation and housing affordability, renewable energy planning, and green infrastructure.

Congratulations to the 2022 Tiny Grant Recipients!

**The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) awarded 2022 Tiny Grants to six conservation commissions in the following towns:
Bethel, Mt. Holly, Georgia, Monkton, Burlington, and Marshfield.**

Tiny Grants is an AVCC initiative that provides seed money or matching funds to conservation commissions for land conservation, education and outreach, stewardship and management, and planning activities. Conservation commissions are non-regulatory bodies designed to advise planning commissions and select boards on natural resources issues. Grantees received between \$300 and \$600 to improve trails on conserved lands; increase wildlife activity through birdhouse installation; eradicate unwanted, invasive plants; encourage plant and wildlife biodiversity in schools; and educate communities. **Thirteen applications were received and six (listed below) were approved for funding.**

- **Bethel Conservation Commission:** for installation of bluebird houses and the purchase of books, binoculars, and journals for the second season of Bird Camp;
- **Mt. Holly Conservation Commission:** to hold a public outreach/education event regarding nuisance vegetation at the town swimming and boat launch area of Star Lake;
- **Georgia Conservation Commission:** to aid in the expansion of a foot and bike access to Russell Greene Natural Area;
- **Monkton Conservation Commission:** to purchase two uprooter tools to assist with the removal of invasive buckthorn;
- **Burlington Conservation Commission:** to create a native plant garden at the Edmunds Elementary School; and
- **Marshfield Conservation Commission:** to purchase a pair of brush grubbers to pull the stumps of invasive shrubs.

AVCC Tiny Grant Information

**Grant range: \$250 – \$600 | Applications due in the spring
For more information, visit www.vtconservation.com**

GRANT GOALS:

- >>To assist local committees/groups to become conservation commissions
- >>To increase the functioning capacity of existing conservation commissions
- >>To provide seed money and/or matching funds for specific projects in the broad categories of land conservation, education and outreach, stewardship and management, and planning.

NOTES

Stay in Touch with AVCC!

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