

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

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A Call-To-Arms Against Milfoil

In 1991, Eurasian Watermilfoil was discovered in Fairlee's Lake Morey. For 13 years, the spread of the plants was kept under control but over the past several years it has intensified to the point where milfoil is in virtually every part of the lake's perimeter.

Milfoil is described on the Vermont DEC's website as a non-native aquatic plant species which "forms dense beds that can seriously impair the recreational use of a lake, reduce the availability of fish spawning grounds, outcompete beneficial native plants, and otherwise alter a lake's environment."

Milfoil infestations can also have a significant financial impact on a community. Since 1992, Fairlee has spent over \$1 million on control activities of which about \$500,000 was reimbursed by the state through various grants. The balance came from the town and volunteer in-kind contributions.

Furthermore, if not addressed promptly and effectively, the infestation will have an adverse effect on property values and ultimately Fairlee's financial viability. At the present time, one-half of the town's property tax is paid by people with lake frontage, access, or views. Two of the biggest taxpayers, the Aloha Camps and the Lake Morey Resort, are lake dependent and provide employment, hire local trades people, purchase goods and services from area businesses, and attract tourist dollars.

Unfortunately, Lake Morey's plight is not unique. There are now 60 lakes and 20 rivers in Vermont that are infested with milfoil. The one hundred or so towns associated with these water bodies are now or can soon expect to be experiencing similar problems. And there are even broader implications. Under Act 60, the state is dependent on a state-wide property tax base for educational funding.

Fairlee has employed every state-sanctioned methodology with the exception of herbicides to control the infestation – the use of bottom barriers, suction harvesting, and hand pulling. With the recent exponential growth, however, they are no longer effective.

The time has come for the Vermont Legislature to take action, now, and for the DEC to expand the availability of safe and effective alternatives to combat this threat to Vermont's waters and economy.

Don Weaver
Lake Morey



TRORC Regional Plan Update

The Regional Plan is undergoing significant change with the addition of three towns (Hartford, Hartland and Norwich); integration of the Transportation Plan into the Regional Plan; data updates throughout; introduction of new or expanded sections (Child Care, Nursing Care, Recreation, Technology); statutory updates; review of Goals, Policies and Recommendations with amendments proposed; reorganization of Introduction and Plan Implementation chapters; and all new maps.

The Regional Plan Committee will be meeting this Fall with public hearings in the late winter and an anticipated adoption by the full Board in the Spring, 2007. Please contact Peter Gregory with questions.

New! DHCA Grant Programs

Municipal Education Grants

On behalf of the Vermont Land Use Education and Training Collaborative, TRORC is pleased to announce the new Municipal Education Grant (MEG) Program. Applications are now being accepted for grants of up to \$800/municipality to bring training directly to local land use boards and commissions.

An electronic version of the application form for easy word processing and the required grant agreement form can be downloaded from <http://www.dhca.state.vt.us/Planning/MEG.htm> with links available from www.vpic.info. Hard copies of the application package will be sent to municipalities in late September.

Applications for the MEG will be accepted any time before May 15, 2007 and will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis. The program is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) Planning Division.

Please contact Faith Ingulsrud at the Planning Division (faith.ingulsrud@state.vt.us or 802-828-5228) if you have any questions about the MEG program.

Ancient Roads Grants

Grant funds will be available to research and map “unidentified corridors.” Unidentified corridors are town highways that “are not clearly observable by physical evidence.” Failure to map such roads by July 1, 2009 could lead to land-owner compensation for continued use. By July 1, 2015, public access to unmapped ancient roads will be discontinued.

Ancient Roads Grant Applications are available on DHCA’s website (www.dhca.state.vt.us) and are due to DHCA (postmarked) November 10th, 2006. For more information on Ancient Roads please contact Sue Minter, DHCA Grant coordinator: sue.minter@state.vt.us or 802-828-3119.

September is National Preparedness Month

For handy links to regional, state and federal online sources of news and information on all types of hazards, and how to prepare for these, visit our website: www.TRORC.org/em.html



A Guide to Putting Your Town on the Web, Part III

In the past two newsletters, we have looked at the basics of building your town's web site. In the final installment of our guide to putting your town on the web, we will touch on web hosting, naming your site and resources to simplify the process.

Naming Your Site

Every web site has what is known as a "domain name". This is the name that follows the "www" of every web site address. At Two Rivers, for example, our domain is www.trorc.org. In order to have your domain name point to where your site is hosted, you must register it.

One of the most common sites for domain registration is www.networksolutions.com. If you go to their site, you can see an area labeled "find a domain". Because every web site must have a unique domain, you will need to use this tool to find out if the name you want is available. You should be prepared for the possibility that the name you want might already be taken, by having a list of variations on your preferred name. For example, you might want to try some variation of the following options:

www.anytown.gov
www.anytown.org
www.anytownVT.com
www.anytown.net

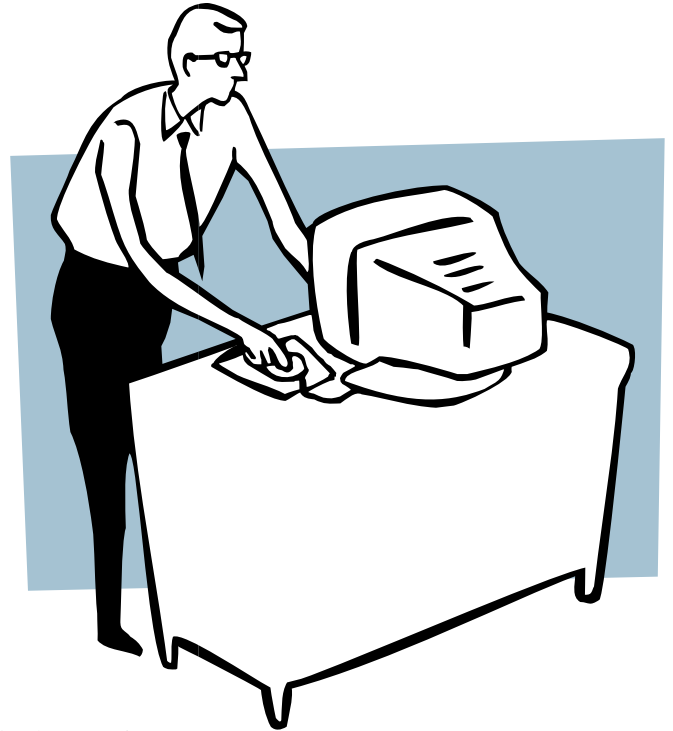
Keep trying until you find one that is available. Registration generally lasts for three years and will cost approximately \$75. When you choose a name for your site, remember that short and simple is key. A shorter name is easier to remember, and more likely to be typed correctly.

Web Hosting

Now that you've chosen your web site's domain name, where will the web site live? In order for the rest of the world to see your site, it needs to be connected to the internet, and it needs to be available all of the time. While some organizations are capable of hosting their own site, most have someone else host their web site.

There are many web hosts available to you. In our case, we choose to use a local host for our site. GovOffice, who we've mentioned in previous articles, can host your site as well. You can easily search the web for "web hosting" and you will find all the information you need. It is important to decide what your needs are and then to find out what services different hosts can provide. Consider what types of information you'll want to have

on your web site. If your town is planning a simple site, with mainly textual information, your storage needs will be small. If you plan to have a lot of large files such as images, documents and map files on your site you should plan for several hundred megabytes of storage. The amount of storage needed will have a direct bearing on the cost of maintaining your web site.



Getting Help

Designing, programming and hosting your web site can seem complicated. Don't hesitate to utilize the expertise of your local web hosts for information. Many of them will be able to answer basic questions without charging you for their time. Local hosts are convenient and offer the added benefit of supporting a local business.

The GovOffice web design and hosting program is one option for a town looking to create a web site on a budget. GovOffice charges a setup fee (which includes training) and then a monthly fee that is based on the population of your municipality. Members of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns can receive a discount on GovOffice packages. Their "template based" web design makes it easy to build and update your website. If you're interested in seeing some GovOffice powered web sites, take a look at www.hartland.govoffice.com or www.WestFairleeVT.com.

If you need more information, Chris Sargent at TRORC may be able to help point you in the right direction. He can be reached at csargent@trorc.org.



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Fall 2006 Training and Workshops

Tuesday, October 17

Municipal Officers Management Seminar (MOMS)

Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, VT

MOMS is a day long series of speakers and educational sessions of interest to land use officials. Topics range from new legislation on ancient roads to the planning and zoning roundtable. For more information, contact Katherine Forrer at UVM Extension: (802) 223-2389 Email: Katherine.Forrer@uvm.edu

Tuesday, November 14

Planning for Ancient Highways

Vermont Interactive TV (Locally: Hartford CCV and Randolph VTC)

Legislation passed in 2006 requires towns to research, identify and map previously unknown Class 4 highways by July of 2009 or face the prospect of having those roads discontinued in 2015. This workshop will focus on the financial and technical resources available to assist towns in this planning process.



Visit TRORC's News and Events page: www.trorc.org/events.html