

TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE REGIONAL COMMISSION



News

October 2013



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news@trorc.org

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Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

TRORC is working with the East Central Vermont partnership to develop a vision and plan for a

We want to hear from you!

Share your vision of the future by visiting the website:

www.ecvermont.org



TRORC Attends Invitation Only Forum in Washington, DC

Loralee Morrow was recently invited to attend the Regional Innovation in Rural America hosted by the White House Rural Council with USDA. It was her excellent work on community and economic development through the HUD grant that garnered the invitation.



The meeting discussed issues of importance to rural regions and small towns. The participants, which included many NADO members, discussed entrepreneurial development, broadband infrastructure, public-private partnerships, affordable housing, food systems, asset-based economic development, and other timely topics. NADO member Cheryal Lee Hills, Executive Director of Region Five Development Commission, spoke as part of the opening panel and presented her organization's work on the Resilient Region plan, funded in part through a HUD Sustainable Communities grant. As part of its capacity building efforts for HUD Sustainable Communities grantees, NADO hosted a training session during the forum, led by Director of Economic Development Brian Kelsey, which addressed regional economic development and preparing for upcoming changes to the CEDS process.



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Vice Chairperson

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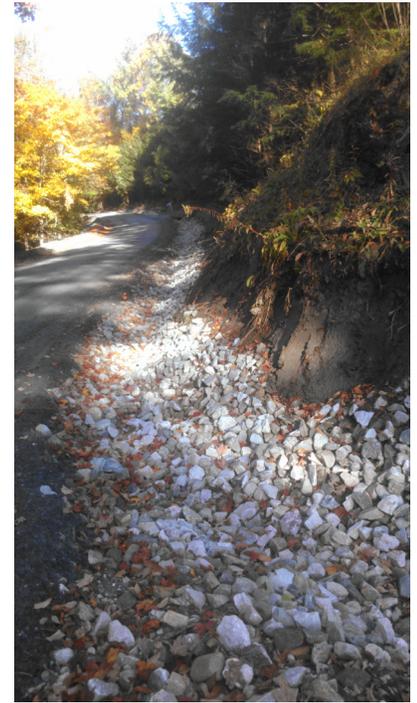
Frank Roderick

Nancy Jones

Resiliency Projects in the TRORC Region

Tropical Storm Irene had devastated the State of Vermont two years ago and highlighted the vulnerability of our transportation infrastructure. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) has been assisting on educating towns and citizens on the vulnerability of transportation infrastructure and the relation to rivers and streams. Working within the thirty town region alongside towns and state staff, TRORC has provided assistance in identifying priority locations for improving infrastructure resiliency and has been able to find funding to assist towns for implementation.

To learn more and see the full list of 2013 Better Back Roads awards, please visit, <http://trorc.org/pubsnl.html#press>



A finished stone lined ditch, sitting on unwoven fabric in Barnard

TRORC Completes Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)

Two years and 41 Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP Plans) later, TRORC has improved the resilience of businesses in area using funding provided by Economic Development Administration (EDA) In the final two months, we were able to meet our goal (and exceed it!) of drafting COOP Plans for 8 businesses in the region to meet our 40 completed-COOP plan requirement-- a tall order! This is a short list of the types of businesses we worked with: restaurants, general stores, fitness centers, specialty shops, a dentist office, professional offices, and a bowling alley.



The COOP program is centered on business resiliency and seeks to improve a business's ability to bounce back after a disaster like a flood or fire impacts the business. Due to the region's vulnerability to flooding, TRORC focused its efforts on businesses located within or near a floodplain, or places that could be economically impacted by flooding. In order to draft a COOP Plan, TRORC staff met with the business owner, discussed the emergency preparedness procedures, and surveyed the business for areas of improvement. After learning about the business, a plan was written which included recommendations for ways they could become more resilient to disaster.

Thanks to the COOP program, 41 businesses throughout the Two Rivers region have some of the tools necessary to rebound more quickly after a disaster!

Home Energy Challenge in the TRORC Region

In January 2013, Efficiency Vermont, in partnership with Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN) and other organizations, launched a one year effort to increase the number of homes completing comprehensive energy efficiency improvements in Vermont.



During the Challenge, town energy committees are competing with other communities in their region. These committees have a target of weatherizing 3% of the homes within their community in 2013. Community prizes will be awarded for the top towns in each region, as well as a statewide award for the top region and town. The Challenge will help Vermont reach its statewide goal of 25% energy savings in 80,000 homes by the year 2020. Bradford, Braintree, Fairlee, Hartland, Norwich, Randolph, Sharon, Strafford, Thetford, Topsham, Tunbridge and Woodstock are the participating towns in the Two Rivers' region. Of those, Strafford is in the lead with 25% of projects completed, while Thetford is leading with the number of pledges received, at 137% of it's goal.

Contact your participating town's Energy Committee for more information and to complete an Energy Savings Kit request card to receive FREE energy saving supplies for your home. You can also visit the Home Energy Challenge website at: www.encyvermont.com

TRORC Assists Communities with Hazard Mitigation

This year TRORC began working with towns in our region to begin the process of updating and drafting new town-specific Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP). These towns include: Braintree, Rochester, Randolph, Sharon, Royalton, Pittsfield, Plymouth, Fairlee and Hancock. The Hazard Mitigation Plans for the Towns of Braintree, Rochester and Randolph are already nearing the final stages of the plan development process! These towns have taken the proactive approach because at the end of September 2013, all Hazard Mitigation Plans in the TRORC region were set to expire.



FEMA

Hazard mitigation planning is a process that is strongly supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is a process through which communities assess risks and identify actions to reduce vulnerability to natural and man-made hazards. Without a FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, a town is ineligible for specific FEMA grant funding opportunities. The most well-known example of the use of one of these grants is the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which is currently being used to buy-out properties in our region and across the state that were damaged during Tropical Storm Irene.

If you would like to know more about Hazard Mitigation Plans, or begin the process for your town, please contact Samantha (Sam) Holcomb at sholcomb@trorc.org

TRORC Travel Trends

TRORC recently completed a commuting behavior analysis for the 30-town region. The analysis looked at travel patterns using data from the Longitudinal Employment Household Dynamics (LEHD) data and the American Community Survey (ACS). To view the entire press release please visit <http://trorc.org/pubsnl.html#press>



Announcements

East Central Vermont Consortium to Hold Economic Development “Voice of the Community” Meetings

All residents of the East Central Vermont 40-town region are invited to help shape the future of your community by setting priorities for economic development.

As a part of the East Central Vermont: What We Want project, we are organizing in an intensive, locally-driven strategic planning process. You can offer ideas about specific initiatives and projects you feel could benefit your community and the region.



The Consortium hopes to build off its momentum from the July meeting

The upcoming meetings are as follows:

Monday, October 7 - 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM | Springfield Town Office
96 Main Street- Springfield, Vt

Tuesday, October 8 - 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM | Bradford Town Offices
172 North Main Street- Bradford, VT

Wednesday, October 9 - 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM | Hartland Town Office
Damon Hall - 1 Quechee Road- Hartland, VT

Thursday, October 10 - 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM | Bethel Town Hall
134 South Main Street- Bethel, VT

Tuesday, October 15 - 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM | Hotel Coolidge
39 South Main Street - White River Junction, VT

If you would like to learn more or participate in the ECV: What We Want in any way, please contact Lorelee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org. or visit ecvermont.org

Designations Under the Downtown Program Must Now be Addressed in Town Plans



New Statutory Requirements

New Applications: filed after July 1, 2014, the intention to apply for designation shall be included in the town plan and the town plan shall explain how the designation would further the plan and statewide goals.

Renewal Applications: filed after July 1, 2014, any community applying for renewal shall explain how the designation has furthered the goals of the town plan and shall submit an approved town plan map that depicts the boundary of the designated area.

Any questions regarding these changes can be forwarded to Peter Gregory at pgregory@trorc.org

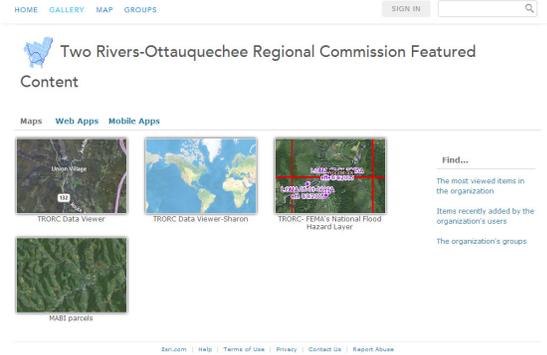
TRORC's ArcGIS Online Mapping Tool is Now Available

Recently GIS Manager, Pete Fellows unveiled the TRORC ArcGIS online portal for public viewing. It is one of several steps being undertaken to make town specific and supplementary data more accessible for municipal officials.

Examples highlighted on the site showcase, FEMA's National Flood Hazard layer (where available digitally) in the TRORC region, parcel mapping for the area immediately surrounding the Marsh Billings property and several data viewers.

These interactive web maps have proven to be effective and can bring a whole new functionality to the planning process. Please take a look at <http://trorc.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html> and check out some of the map packages already in place.

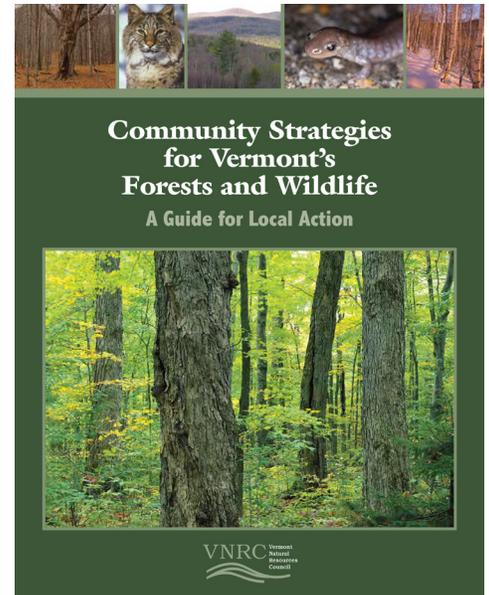
*For more information, please contact Pete Fellows
(pfellows@trorc.org)*



VNRC's Newest Publication, Community Strategies for Vermont's Forests and Wildlife, is Now Available!

VNRC is pleased to unveil Community Strategies for Vermont's Forests and Wildlife: A Guide for Local Action. Over the years, VNRC has supported Vermont communities by offering proactive solutions to reduce forest fragmentation and parcelization in Vermont to maintain the rural character of our state. There are many different ways that communities can help sustain forests and wildlife at the local and regional levels, and the Guide provides town officials and interested citizens with the tools - both regulatory and non-regulatory - to do just that. We hope that it will become a go-to resource for you!

Please download a copy and share it with friends:
www.vnrc.org/programs/forests-wildlife/guide/.



The East Central Vermont "What We Want Survey"

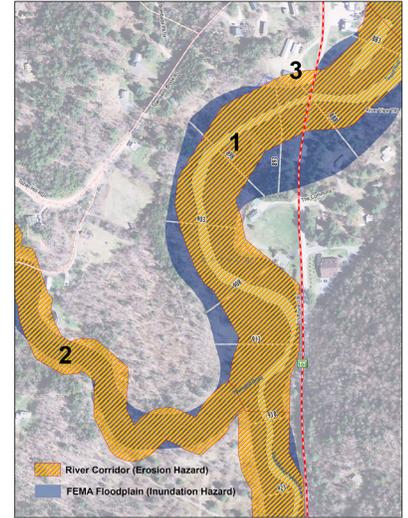
If you haven't done so yet, please take a few moments and fill out the ECVermont "What We Want Survey". The information derived from this survey will be incorporated in the future planning of the region! Visit <http://ecvermont.org/> for a link to the survey.



Flood Bylaw Administration Outreach

Flood regulations are administered locally by the town Zoning Administrator or Administrative Officer. In towns with no zoning this person gets very little experience in the handling and processing of permits, as does the local review board. Even in towns with zoning, there is a general need for training of local review boards and Zoning Administrators/Administrative Officials, and a great need for detailed training on National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Past trainings and grants have been targeted to the public, local officials, bankers and realtors and have not been as in-depth, hands on or prolonged enough to professionalize the administration of flood regulations.

This program will include three intensive training sessions to local officials that administer flood regulations in 2013 and in 2014, followed up by on-call technical assistance and then individual visits to each of our 30 communities. The training sessions may be day long or a series of nights, but are meant to be much more in-depth than a simple two hour workshop. Sustained follow-up is critical to retaining the subject matter, and the on-site visit will serve to further answer individual questions. This program will be carried out by two staff Certified Flood Plain Managers, and will be coordinated with VTDEC for any assistance they would like to provide. Additional information will be added to the TRORC web site including a Frequently Asked Questions section on NFIP.



For any immediate questions on the upcoming opportunity, please contact Pete Fellows at pfellows@trorc.org or call 802-457-3188 x21



A beautiful late summers day in Randolph

Upcoming Events

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134 South Main Street- Bethel, VT

Tuesday, October 15 - 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM | Hotel Coolidge
39 South Main Street - White River Junction, VT

October 16 - Vermont Transportation Board Hearing

6:00 PM

Springfield Town Hall, 96 Main St. Springfield

For more information, please visit <http://trorc.org/events.html#meetingsnouncement.pdf>

October 17 - LEPC #12 Meeting

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Upper Valley Ambulance, Fairlee

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 802-457-3188 x13

October 23 - TRORC Board Meeting

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

The King Farm (128 King Farm Rd., Woodstock)

November 11 - Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Location TBD, Check back with trorc.org for the latest meeting updates.

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 802-457-3188 x13

Winter Session - Orange/Windsor County Road Foreman Meeting

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Location TBD, Check back with trorc.org for the latest meeting updates.

For more information, contact Rita Seto at 802-457-3188 x13



Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
128 King Farm Rd
Woodstock, VT 05091

Grants / Funding Opportunities

TRORC's mission is to advocate for the needs of our member towns, and to articulate a vision for building a thriving regional economy while enhancing the region's quality of life.

The Commission's staff provides technical services to local, state and federal levels of government and to the Region's non-profits and businesses.

To learn more, visit our website: www.trorc.org.

2014 Barn Grant Applications Now Available

Since 1991, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has offered matching grants to help owners repair their historic agricultural buildings. Matching grants up to \$15,000 are available to fund work on these endangered buildings and ensure their continued use. Eligible work includes restoration and repair of roofs, frames, windows, foundations, and other important components of historic agricultural buildings.

The deadline for the next round of grant applications is November 4, 2013.

*The 2014 Barn Grant Application and Manual are available at:
http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/grants/barn*