Irene left a huge mark on the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee region. After the dust settled, 28 of our 30 towns applied for FEMA Public Assistance (PA). Of the 28, 14 of those towns, particularly along and surrounding the Route 100 corridor, were severely hit. Some towns faced as high as 95% of road and bridge infrastructure alone being decimated. Town road crews have been working nonstop, racing against the oncoming winter to repair roads to at least being plowable. TRORC staff have been working with our towns collecting local damage assessment reports that were sent to VTrans, assisting with contractor bid information and equipment resources, and keeping our towns informed about FEMA Public Assistance procedures for disaster reimbursement.

Recovering After Irene

There are two types of FEMA hazard mitigation efforts. Section 406 provides discretionary authority to fund mitigation measures in conjunction with the repair of the disaster-damaged facilities. Damaged locations eligible for 406 will be identified under the FEMA PA process. The mitigation measures must be related to eligible disaster-related damages and must directly reduce the potential of future, similar disaster damages to the eligible facility. A typical example of 406 mitigation is upsizing a damaged culvert to current Codes and Standards. Mitigation measures may amount to up to 15% of the total cost of the eligible repair work on a particular project.

Mitigation Efforts with Towns

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP also known as 404 mitigation) grants are meant to address an issue at a site so that it does not get damaged in the next disaster. HMGP grant funds will be available in January and March for the spring 2011 flooding and Hurricane Irene. These funds are only available in towns that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) (by regulating development in flood zones) and that have a FEMA-approved mitigation plan. Thanks to our towns and efforts of Commission staff, we are happy to report that all towns in this region meet both criteria.
Irene (cont’d)

TRORC will be assisting towns in the completion of a survey and documenting vulnerable locations on maps to aid in tracking and prioritization. This information will also aid the RPCs and ANR in providing technical assistance to towns engaged in recovery efforts. TRORC staff member, Pete Fellows, will be contacting towns.

River Management Efforts

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources’ River Management Program has asked the RPCs to assist municipalities with identifying and documenting needs related to debris jams, bridges, culverts, and road embankments. Information will be collected and mapped to aid municipalities and State agencies as they prioritize the critical cleanup; some projects must be accomplished before winter, while others can wait until spring. Information will also be used to help support towns that are seeking funds for recovery.

TRORC will be assisting towns in the completion of a survey and documenting vulnerable locations on maps to aid in tracking and prioritization. This information will also aid the RPCs and ANR in providing technical assistance to towns engaged in recovery efforts. TRORC staff member, Pete Fellows, will be contacting towns.

TRORC Receives HUD Sustainable Communities Grant

Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission was recently awarded $540,000 in an economic development regional planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The grant is among only a few dozen regional planning projects approved by HUD nationwide. TRORC will address issues related to housing, transportation, public utilities, natural resources and energy use in the 40 Vermont towns served by the commission and by the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission. The aim of the projects funded by the grant will be to reduce energy use and foster economic opportunities in the region.

Peter Gregory declared: “The resiliency of this region continually gets tested as natural disasters hit, energy prices climb, safe and affordable housing becomes more challenging to find, and the economy transitions. This funding will enable many stakeholders to have the opportunity to develop a framework that allows for a strengthening of our physical and social wellbeing for the long term. We are very pleased to have been recognized nationally as an important area in which to invest.” TRORC as the lead, will partner with over 40 local, regional and state organizations that will make up the Consortium for a Sustainable East Central Vermont Region (CSECVR).

In an earlier letter of support for TRORC’s application, Senator Patrick Leahy (D), Senator Bernie Sanders (I) and Congressman Peter Welch (D) said the grant “will help guide local, regional, and state policymaking to support smart growth as well as invest in a sustainable future for the people of Vermont.”
Peter Gregory, Executive Director of the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission in Woodstock, Vermont was elected Second Vice President of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) on October 11, 2011 at the association’s Annual Business Meeting. The meeting was held in conjunction with NADO’s 44th Annual Training Conference in Miami, Florida.

Peter has been on the staff of the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission since 1989 and has served as Executive Director since 1997. Peter currently serves as Chair of the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA), the statewide association of Vermont’s 11 regional planning agencies, and is Chair of the Vermont State Infrastructure Bank. Peter is also a member of the Vermont Downtown Board, the entity that makes decisions on downtown and growth center designations under Vermont law.

“We are honored to have Peter Gregory serve as Second Vice President of NADO. He brings a wealth of expertise, knowledge and leadership on regional community and economic development issues to the national level,” stated Matthew Chase, NADO Executive Director. “Most importantly, he is focused on helping our nation’s local communities pursue comprehensive regional strategies for remaining economically competitive in today’s rapidly changing global environment.”

For more information about NADO, check out www.nado.org.

### TRORC Staff Updates

**Peter Gregory, Elected Second Vice President of NADO**

**Dee Gish**

TRORC welcomes Dee as our new Finance Manager. Dee is originally from PA, and has moved around the country many times due to her husband’s Navy career. Dee and her family have “retired” to Sharon, VT. Dee has a BS in International Business from Temple University, an MBA from Western Washington University and completed a Masters in Environmental Law and Policy at VLS this past August. Dee also serves as Chair of the Sharon Energy Committee. Dee manages budgets, contracts, accounts receivables and payables, and human resources.

**Brian Hamlin**

Brian began his tenure as a TRORC temporary employee the day after Irene. Brian is a recent landscape architecture graduate from SUNY’s College of Environmental Science and Forestry. He previously interned with the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council. Brian has been a great resource by assisting TRORC with Irene recovery efforts through the transportation program and ANR work.

**Loralee Morrow**

TRORC also welcomes Loralee as our new Regional Planner. Loralee recently moved from Tampa, FL where she was an urban designer for the city. She brings a wealth of experience in form-based zoning, Smart Growth principles, affordable housing and alternative energy review and sustainability planning. Recently, she worked on the city’s Housing and Urban Development Sustainability Grant for Sustainable Communities. Loralee is LEED AP certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional). She will be assisting TRORC with the recently awarded Sustainable Communities grant, the Regional Plan and on local zoning work.

**Goodbye to Sally Hull**

The Regional Commission’s staffing suffered a blow when Sally Hull moved on to work for a local environmental firm. Sally’s new work will involve Brownfields assessment, a program she led at TRORC. Sally was instrumental in moving our bi-regional CEDs program forward, as well as several town plans and our EDA-funded business continuity/recovery program. Thanks Sally for your great work over the years!
News & Upcoming Events

Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN) Conference:
Saturday, Dec. 3rd at Lake Morey Inn (Fairlee, VT) from 9 AM to 4 PM

VECAN’s annual conference is a great place to translate your interest in renewable energy and efficiency into action. This year, VECAN will offer 14 different workshops and a handful of roundtable discussions to help you learn how to promote efficiency and support renewable energy at the local level. The conference is geared toward interested individuals, town officials, as well as existing energy committee members—all are welcome! It constitutes a great networking opportunity—you’ll be able to meet other people who are already active on energy issues in your town, or who haven’t gotten involved yet, but would like to do so. Additionally, you’ll have the opportunity to hear Kathryn Blume speak about her experience as a climate activist, as well as Elizabeth Miller (Commissioner of the VT Dept. of Public Service) on the new State Energy Plan, and Deb Markowitz (Secretary of the VT Agency of Natural Resources) discuss the State’s Climate Cabinet.

Register at www.vecan.net. TRORC’s energy planning staff will be in attendance. Look for Chris Sargent and Emma Zavez to say hello!

Digital Newsletter Option
Email dgish@trorc.org if you would prefer a digital copy.

12/3 - Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN) Conference
12/8 - Next Road Foreman meeting, W. Windsor Garage, 9:30am to 11am
12/14 - Next TRORC Board Meeting
12/15 - Next TAC Meeting, Thetford Town Hall, 9:30am to 11am
12/15 - Next LEPC12 Meeting, Royalton Barracks, 6pm to 8pm.
12/30 - VEM Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Letter of Intent due
1/20 - VEM Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application due

For more information, please visit our website: www.trorc.org/events.html.