



Corinth, VT

Source: Jericho Hills Photography

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Grants-in-Aid Year One a Success in TRO Region**
- **Forestry Requirements in New Town Plans**
- **Enhanced Energy Planning**
- **Several Better Roads Grants Applied For**
- **Public Hearings on TRORC Bylaw Update**
- **Municipal Planning Grants Awarded**
- **CDBG-DR Construction Projects Come to a Close**
- **Passing Commissioners**
- **Save the Date! 2018 Vermont Walk/Bike Summit**

GRANTS-IN-AID YEAR ONE A SUCCESS IN TRO REGION

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) partnered with Vermont's 11 regional planning commissions and offered towns a new grant called the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid in June 2017. This was part of DEC's Clean Water Initiative Program of \$2.1 million to assist towns implementing Best Management Practices on municipal roads towards compliance with the Municipal Roads General Permit. Twenty-seven of thirty towns in the TRO Region took part of this pilot program leveraging \$400,000 in state grant funds, in addition to another \$100,000 of local match.

Practices eligible under this funding program include drainage ditch installations and upgrades, turnouts, berm removal, stabilization of drainage culverts and catch basins.

DEC anticipates another year of program funding and will seek Legislative approval this Spring. For more information about this program contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org.

FORESTRY REQUIREMENTS IN NEW TOWN PLANS

For Town and Regional Plans adopted after January 1, 2018, municipalities and regions that are updating their plans must identify areas that are known as 'forest blocks' and 'habitat connectors,' and plan for development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation. New requirements include a map of high priority forested areas in the municipality and appropriate language and goals pertaining to these areas. TRORC has held multiple trainings on these new requirements, there is still a chance to attend one on January 10, 2018 at the Bethel Town Hall.

For more information on Act 171, please contact Pete Fellows at pfellows@trorc.org or go to our calendar at trorc.org/calendar.

ENHANCED ENERGY PLANNING

Over the next few months TRORC will be working with communities for the second year to help support the development of enhanced energy plans compliant with the standards of Act 174. If a town meets the standards, the legislation gives municipal plans substantial deference in Section 248 proceedings of the Public Utility Commission on the siting of energy generation projects. Through this process, towns are charting a course for meeting the 90% by 2050 renewable goal. This year we will be working with the Towns of Bradford, Norwich, Sharon, Thetford and potentially Strafford to prepare draft enhanced energy plans.

TRORC is looking for interest in a third year of enhanced energy planning, please contact Chris Damiani at cdamiani@trorc.org or Dee Gish at dgish@trorc.org.

FY18 BETTER ROADS GRANTS APPLICATIONS

TRORC assisted in the preparation of thirty-six applications totaling \$811,379 for this round of the Vermont Better Roads Grants. The goal is to promote the use of erosion control and maintenance techniques that save money while protecting and enhancing the water quality of Vermont's lakes and streams. Funds, subject to availability, are distributed as grants to municipalities to address town erosion problems. The projects ranged from planning to construction grants, where the planning grants will help provide information for the new Municipal Roads General Permit set to take effect in 2018. TRORC staff are conducting road erosion and culvert inventories in 11 towns during the 2018/2019 field season. These grants are expected to be awarded in January 2018.

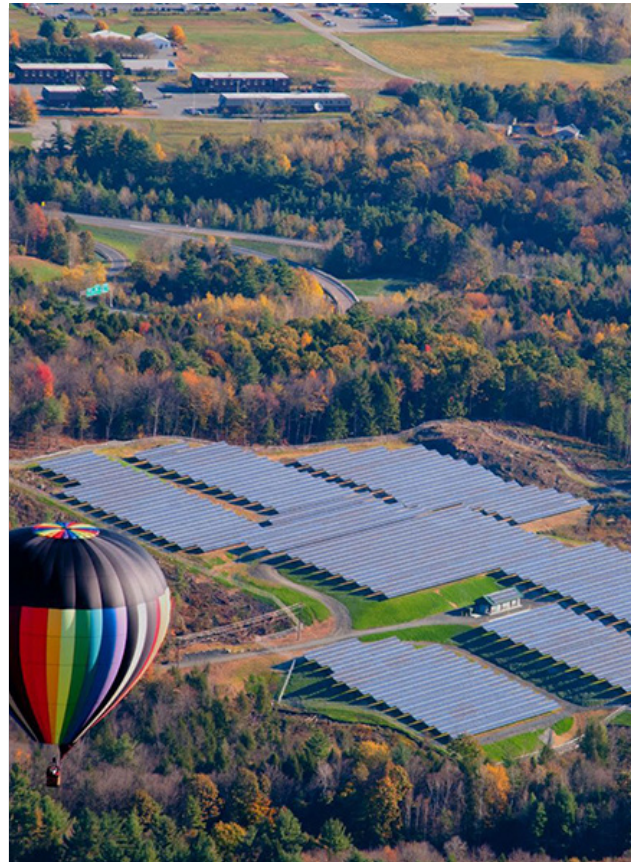
For more information about this grant program, please contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON TRORC BYLAW UPDATE

TRORC is updating their bylaws to enable assisting towns with setting up shared services agreements. Two public hearings will be held on the bylaw changes at the following dates and locations:

- January 16, 2018: Randolph Town Offices - 6:00 p.m.
- January 24, 2018: Thompson Senior Center, Woodstock - 6:30 p.m.

To view the draft bylaws, please go to trorc.org/calendar.



A hot air balloon floats over a large solar field in White River Junction.
Source | Advanced Energy



A grant was applied for to install a larger culvert to handle high rain events and prevent erosion on the road. This culvert is located on Blackhawk Road in Chelsea.
Source | TRORC Staff



*Before (above) and after (below) of the Churchville Culvert replacement in Hancock.
Source | TRORC Staff*



*After picture of the Barnard bank stabilization.
Source | TRORC Staff*

MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANTS AWARDED

The TRO Region has received \$40,825 in Municipal Planning Grants (MPG) for FY 2018. The Towns of Rochester, Randolph and Corinth received an MPG for town plan updates, while Fairlee and Bradford received a MPG for a Capital Budget and Program and Zoning updates respectively. TRORC assisted with nine applications this round and will be assisting towns awarded with their respective projects. Much needed elements like Flood Resiliency, Forestry, and Village Designation language will be added to these older town plans to be compliant with state statute.

To see the complete list of awardees across the state, go to: <http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/CD/CPR/MPG/CPR-MPG-FundedProjects-2018.pdf>

CDBG-DR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS COME TO A CLOSE

Several Community Development Block Grants - Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) construction projects have been completed this past fall. These are the final Tropical Storm Irene road projects being managed by TRORC. The Churchville Culvert in Hancock was successfully replaced with a concrete deck bridge over the summer, allowing 100-year storm flows to safely pass through. The Taggart Hill Road Relocation project in Stockbridge consisted of moving the road over 50 feet and widening the stream to lessen road erosion during heavy rain events. The long awaited Mt. Hunger Road Bank Stabilization project in Barnard was just completed that will prevent the road from falling into the stream and protecting the town garage and recycling center. Thank you to these towns for all of their hard work!

For more information on these projects, please contact Pete Fellows at pfellows@trorc.org.

PASSING COMMISSIONERS

On a sad note, two former Commissioners of TRORC passed away over the last couple of months. Tom Gray of Norwich was an alternate to the TRORC Board and Arnold Castagner of Tunbridge was their appointed representative for many years in addition to serving on the TRORC Executive Committee. Both men are missed by many within and outside the TRORC family. We thank all our volunteers, as serving the public in this manner is essential to a functioning community. Bill Emmons, on behalf of the Board, and Peter Gregory, on behalf of the staff, salute these two exceptional individuals.



Two Rivers-Ottauquechee
REGIONAL COMMISSION
128 King Farm Road ~ Woodstock, VT 05091

December 2017 News & Notes

SAVE THE DATE! 2018 VERMONT WALK/BIKE SUMMIT

In partnership with Vermont Agency of Transportation, and a number of other participating organizations and sponsors, TRORC and Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission will host the 2018 statewide Vermont Walk/Bike Summit on May 4 in White River Junction! This is an excellent opportunity to connect with community members, employers, planners and researchers from throughout the state for in-depth sharing on current efforts, new ideas, and networking to advance more livable communities.

This year's Summit will include interactive mobile workshops, peer exchanges, a highly-acclaimed keynote, and a variety of dynamic presentations and topics including advocacy and education, public safety, economic development, and the built environment.

The Summit is currently accepting proposals for conference topics and sponsors.

For more information about the event, please visit <https://vtwalkbikesummit.com> or contact Rita Seto at rseto@trorc.org.



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