Plymouth Restoration Workshops

Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission will be hosting two wetland restoration workshops in Plymouth, Vermont this summer! Join us at Coolidge State Park on Route 100A on **Tuesday, July 12th** and Pingree Flats on Route 100 on **Thursday, July 14th from 9:30am-2:30 pm** in Plymouth. Attendees will learn how to assess a site for its wetland restoration potential, account for specific site considerations such as native and invasive plants, site limitations, soils and hydrology, plan restoration strategies and manage restoration projects. You will gain valuable in-the-field experience with assessing sites and planning wetland restoration projects!

Our hosts include Julie Follensbee, District Wetlands Ecologist for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Grace Glynn, Field Naturalist/Wetland Scientist at Dubois & King, Inc., Bob Hyams, founder of HRS/Riverscape Ecology, and Marie Caduto, Watershed Planner at DEC. For more information or to register please email Sage Doviak at sdoviak@trorc.org.
**Pingree Flats wetland restoration site in Plymouth, Vermont.**

### Floodplain Regulations

All of our towns regulate floodplain development. Towns without town-wide zoning should be clear on their website and in communications that the town does have zoning, just not everywhere. And since FEMA-mapped flood zones (and river corridors for towns that regulate these) are not obvious on the ground, people getting ready to build should just get a determination that the flood regulations do not apply to them. Only the administrative officer/zoning administrator should be issuing that letter.

For towns with zoning, floodplain regulations also require permits for things like fuel tanks, patios, and internal renovations that usually do not trigger standard zoning permits. Town staff with questions can contact our two Certified Flood Managers, Pete Fellows at pfellows@trorc.org or Kevin Geiger at kgeiger@trorc.org, as well as the regional floodplain coordinator if they have questions on how to handle permits.

### Vermont Flood Ready Atlas map from the Flood Ready Vermont website.

### Adoption of the Strategic Plan

Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee first created a Strategic Plan in 2013, and it has recently been updated in 2022. Strategic planning boils down to three basic processes: assess, analyze and act. It is gathering information and assessing trends, needs, strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities, establishing a vision and mission with goals and objectives, analyzing options, and planning for action and evaluation. The purpose of developing this Strategic Plan was to step back from our day-to-day activities and reflect on what we were doing and if it was helping us to achieve our mission as we strive to provide a high level of service to our communities.

The 2022 update reflects changes in the planning field, the region’s communities, and larger conditions. TRORC’s mission remains to advocate for the needs of member towns, and to articulate a vision for building a thriving regional economy while enhancing the region’s quality of life. TRORC’s staff continues to provide technical services to local, state, and federal levels of government and to the region’s nonprofits and businesses. The Plan can be found [here](#) or on our [website](#).

**TRORC’s Strategic Plan on our website.**
Climate Change and Land Use Resource

It can be difficult for municipalities to find guidance on how to address climate change with land use regulations. To meet this request, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission created [this resource](#). This document is designed to educate municipalities on smart growth to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep Vermont’s rural landscape intact.

Table from the Climate Change and Land Use document created by Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.

Woodstock Public Safety Facility Heating System

The Town of Woodstock has nearly completed a major renovation and addition to its Public Safety Facility. A major component of the renovation was improving the energy efficiency of the building. Working with Woodstock Fire Chief David Green, Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, and Sustainable Woodstock, we were able to improve the performance of the building from its initial design, which simply met energy code, to a net-zero ready standard. This was possible largely through enhanced insulation and air sealing, and an innovative heating system design for the apparatus bays.

Rather than relying on propane to heat the radiant slab in the apparatus bays as initially proposed, we successfully incorporated an air-to-water heat pump system with a thermal storage tank. The first of its kind in Vermont, this system uses a heat pump to store heat in a thermal storage tank during the day when temperatures are warmer and there is an abundance of solar energy on the grid. Then, rather than running the heat pump during cold nighttime hours when the heat pump is least efficient and the grid is dirtier, the system can draw from the stored heat. As a result, this system will lower Woodstock’s energy costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate stress on the electricity grid.

The renovated Woodstock Fire House equipped with an air-to-water heat pump system with a thermal storage tank.

Electric Mower Demo

It’s the start of the mowing season, and that means towns are beginning to mow at town parks and sports fields. Until recently, there have not been viable alternatives to gas-powered mowers. Though they only represent a small fraction of most municipal fleets, lawn equipment like mowers and leaf blowers have a disproportionate impact on emissions; both criteria air pollutants like NOx and particulate matter that are harmful to human health, as well as greenhouse gas emissions that drive
to climate change. Fortunately, battery technology has advanced significantly and electric lawn equipment is now comparable, and in some cases outperforms, their gas counterparts.

To help towns feel more comfortable with these electric options, we held an electric mower demonstration on the Woodstock Green with the Towns of Woodstock and Norwich. Members of each towns’ Public Works Departments came to test electric mowers, as well as electric tools such as a leaf blower, a string trimmer, and a chainsaw. Representatives from Gravely, Greenworks, and Mean Green Mowers brought their equipment for the demonstration and answered questions. The equipment is quiet, powerful, has a substantial run-time, and is zero-emissions! Mean Green is lending Norwich and Woodstock one of their mowers to test out in their operations over the next couple of weeks.

Representatives from Gravely, Greenworks, and Mean Green Mowers demonstrating equipment use in Woodstock.

VCRD Community Leadership Summit

The Vermont Council on Rural Development has announced their 2022 Vermont Community Leadership Summit! The event will take place on Wednesday, August 10, 2022 at Vermont Technical College in Randolph, Vermont. The Summit agenda will include skills workshops, networking opportunities, community project panels, and forum discussions.

This event will be an all-inclusive summit aiming to bring new and established voices together from across Vermont. Anyone who is serving on local commissions, taking the lead or taking a stand in their community, or who is engaged in advancing a positive future for their town, city, or state is encouraged to join the conversation. Speakers and participants will represent the full diversity of Vermont community members and leaders including youth, municipal leaders, community organizers and volunteers, people with lived experience with critical challenges facing our communities, experts and technical assistance providers, regional leaders, and more.

Learn more at https://www.vtrural.org/Summit22

Grant Writing Workshop for Creatives and Artists in the 3CVT Sector

TRORC will be hosting a virtual grant writing workshop on June 28th from 10am-11:30 am for creatives and artists in the 3CVT sector. The instructor, Carey Crozier, is both a creative business owner and professional grant writer. In the last five years, she has helped small businesses in Vermont generate hundred of thousands of dollars in funding through local, state and federal grant programs. You can learn more about Carey by clicking on this link.
In this workshop, attendees will learn how to find grant opportunities and determine your eligibility, best practices for writing a compelling grant narrative, how to set up a simple budget for a grant application, and what to do once you receive a grant. To register, please email Sage Doviak at sdoviak@trorc.org.

The grant writing training is one of four development trainings TRORC will be hosting. The trainings are just one component of a larger effort to support the region’s creative economy. Learn more and stay up to date by visiting the 3CVT website, 3CVT Facebook page, or subscribing to the 3CVT Email Discussion List. Contact Meghan Asbury at masbury@trorc.org for more information. This project is funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and TRORC.

For more information about the grant writing workshop or to register, please email Sage Doviak at sdoviak@trorc.org.

LEMP Reminder

Updated Local Emergency Management Plans (LEMPs) were due May 1st. Thank you to the towns who have submitted them! If you have not already, please submit them as soon as possible and do not hesitate to reach out to Kevin Gieger at kgeiger@trorc.org with questions.

Necessary LEMP templates can be found on the Vermont Emergency Management website.

Davenport Electric Fest

The Davenport Electric Fest is a one-of-a-kind Electric festival in Brandon, Vermont on July 9th from 11am to 6pm! Expect an array of electric vehicles to check out, other electric equipment and accessories, kids activities, music and guest speakers.

Contact Emily Eckert at 802-874-9786 or email Bill Moore at bmoore@townofbrandon.com for more information.
Staffing Changes

This month, we said goodbye to Kimberly Gilbert. Kim has been a valued member of the TRORC team for five years working closely with creatives and artists and other members of the community on EDA 3CVT grant work, health projects and community planning. We wish you the best of luck!

We welcomed a new planner, Kyle Katz to the team! Kyle will provide planning support for regional and town planning projects including town plan updates and hazard mitigation plans. As a Vermont native, Kyle is happy to be back in his home state, where he enjoys hiking and biking, attending farmer's markets, and exploring the many cultural activities Vermont has to offer.

REGIONAL GRANT AWARDS

The Newton School in Strafford Tree Planting Project

The Newton School in Strafford was awarded a $4,560 Resilient Communities Fund grant to facilitate native tree planting along the West Branch of the Ompompanoosuc River. The grants are designed to fund projects like buyouts of flood-vulnerable homes, floodplain restoration, and other natural resource projects that will help protect life and property from future floods in Vermont. The Flood Resilient Community Fund program was created in 2021 to enhance community resilience to flooding and improve water quality in Vermont. The $4.8 million program is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars.
**FY2023 VTrans Better Roads Awards**

Congratulations to our 11 towns (Barnard, Bethel, Bradford, Corinth, Fairlee, Norwich, Pomfret, Stockbridge, Strafford, Topsham and Tunbridge) on being awarded ditching and bank stabilization grants through the VTrans Better Roads program. TRORC staff were actively assisting our towns with these grant applications and are pleased our region is receiving nearly $230,000 to support municipal road projects that improve water quality and result in maintenance cost savings.


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**Fairlee, Vermont is one of the towns awarded the VTrans Better Roads Awards. Photo by: John Knox**

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**GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

**VTrans Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program Invitation**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) invites municipalities to participate in the Municipal Roads, Grants-in-Aid Program, which provides funding for municipalities to implement best management practices (BMPs) in accordance with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). Grants-in-Aid awards will be made available through AOT and will total approximately $5.8 million dollars in this grant cycle. Municipalities will submit reimbursement requests directly to AOT for work completed, and AOT will reimburse up to 80% of the municipality’s documented construction expenses, including in-kind support, for BMPs on hydrologically connected roads.

Municipalities must return a signed letter **by June 24, 2022** to be eligible.

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Check out the website: [https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/Municipal-Grant-in-aid-Program](https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/Municipal-Grant-in-aid-Program). Contact Ross Gouin [ross.gouin@vermont.gov](mailto:ross.gouin@vermont.gov) for more information.