

# NEWSLETTER

## BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The way land is developed and used, and the way our environment is laid out impacts our individual and community health. Strategies for healthier living include designing communities that support everyday physical activity and access to healthy foods, such as creating safe walking and biking routes, green space for recreational use, farmers' markets and community gardens. The RRPC received a grant from the VT Dept. of Health to build community capacity, assess, and plan for future implementation of environmental and/or policy strategies that support healthy eating and physical activity in our community and the Region.

Land use planning has traditionally dealt with functional issues – land use, transportation, water, infrastructure, natural resources, etc. It has not specifically looked at how these issues could be used to more directly benefit the health of that population. This project will take a different approach and look at communities from the human perspective, taking what has previously been a focus on function and supplementing that focus with one of building a healthy community.

Data shows that Rutland County residents are older, have less income, and are more likely to have a lower level of educational attainment. Consequently they are more vulnerable than Vermonters as a whole to the changes in the economy and with the additional strain arising from the recent recession, may encounter difficulty supporting a healthy lifestyle. (Source: 2008-2009 Community Health Needs Assessment).

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This will be the first time that there will be a coordinated effort at the regional level to work with communities to pull together and supplement the policies and strategies of local land use plans and subsequently implement regulations with a healthy community focus. The targeted

communities will be those with more "urban" centers, recreation departments and schools that have participated or indicated an interest in Safe Routes to Schools, namely Brandon, Castleton, Fair Haven, Wallingford, and Poultney.

The proposed activities focus on collaborating with regional organizations such as Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL) and Rutland Area Physical Activity Coalition (RAPAC) to set region-wide policies and strategies first, crafting changes to the Regional Plan. Secondly, the RRPC will be working with selected town planning commissions, schools, road commissioners and other local groups to incorporate similar strategies in local plans and bylaws to build healthy sustainable communities with environments in which choices related to active living and healthy eating are the easier ones. Issues such as air quality, water quality and sustainable agriculture are addressed in the Regional and town plans and each can support active living, all having synergistic benefits. Specifically, the focus will be on:



- Support Access to Healthy Local Food - Planning for concentrated development in town centers and the preservation of farmland in the rural areas. Farmers' markets located in centers will have ancillary economic benefits for the town;
- Complete Streets: Work with local officials in the Rutland Region to ensure that all users are considered in the planning and development of local transportation projects;
- Safe Routes to School: Promote and support schools in implementing the program to educate and engineer a safe environment for travel to school; (continued on page 2 Healthy)

Find us on the web at [www.rutlandrpc.org](http://www.rutlandrpc.org)

**RRPC - Commissioners**

Benson - Tom Bartholomew  
 Brandon - David Atherton  
 Castleton - Frank Giannini  
 Chittenden - Carolyn Schwalbe  
 Clarendon - Carol Geery  
 Danby - Annette Smith  
 Fair Haven - Bonnie Rosati  
 Hubbardton - Robert Gibbs  
 Ira - Tim Martin  
 Killington - David Rosenblum  
 Mendon - Larry Courcelle  
 Middletown Springs - John Arsenault  
 Mount Holly - Annette Lynch  
 (At-Large)

Mount Tabor -  
 Pawlet - Eric Mach  
 Pittsford - Trish Lewis  
 Poultney - Tracy Carris  
 Proctor - Susan Feenick  
 Rutland City - Charles Romeo  
 Rutland Town - Fred Nicholson  
 (Chair)  
 Shrewsbury - Mark Goodwin  
 (Vice-Chair)

Sudbury -  
 Tinmouth - Robert Lloyd  
 Wallingford - John West  
 Wells - Rebecca Dittmeier  
 West Haven - Christopher Hoyt  
 (Secretary/Treasurer)  
 West Rutland - Denis Lincoln

**Area-Wide Citizen Interest Members:**  
 Natural Resources - Peter Upton  
 Housing/Low Inc -  
 Regional Libraries - Paula Baker

**Ex-Officio Members:**  
 REDC - Jamie Stewart  
 RRCC—Tom Donahue  
 RRTC—Minga Dana  
 WIB - Larry Sudlow

**RRPC STAFF**

Executive Director - Mark Blucher  
 Assistant Director - Susan Schreiber  
 Finance Administrator - Judy Holcomb  
 Senior GIS Technician - Mary Trombley  
 GIS Manager - Steve Schild  
 Regional Planner - Edward Bove  
 Planner - Philip Picotte

**Suggestions? Comments?**

Contact the RRPC  
 Newsletter Editor at  
[mtrombley@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:mtrombley@rutlandrpc.org)

**BROWNFIELDS**

**CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN FOR FLORY'S PLAZA IN CENTER RUTLAND**



Former Motel at Flory's Plaza in Center Rutland

A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) has been prepared for Flory's Plaza in Center Rutland. The CAP summarizes environmental issues at the site and provides remediation options and costs. The goal of the document is to provide clarity on all site issues, which then facilitates redevelopment.

This is the final phase of assessment work that will be conducted by the Rutland Region Brownfields Program. In total, over \$100,000 in assessment funding, provided through the EPA, has been spent on the property. The Brownfields Program will continue to work with REDC and the property owner on site redevelopment

**Phase II ESA at OMYA in Proctor**

Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) work has been completed at the OMYA property in Proctor. The site used to house operations of the former Vermont Marble Company. ESA work is being conducted in conjunction with ESA work at an adjacent property, which was also part of the VT Marble complex and housed the processing facilities.

After completion of assessment work on both properties, the Brownfields Program will work with the Town of Proctor to conduct area-wide planning efforts on these and other properties in the village center. The goal is to create mixed-use development opportunities in this area of town to restore vibrancy which has dissipated since the relocation of VT Marble/OMYA operations.

**Phase II at Parker's in Middletown Springs**

In the heart of Middletown Springs, a quintessential Vermont town, lies the blighted, vacant property known as Parker's Service Station. This .5 acre site has the potential for significant redevelopment due to its location in the village center, across from the village green and town offices. The Brownfields Program enrolled the site in 2009 and is now conducting a Phase II ESA work, which will be completed before winter.

The goal is to create a CAP in conjunction with town plans to possibly purchase the property and redevelop it into a community building. Leggette, Brashears and Graham is the consultant conducting the assessment work.

**Healthy** (continued from page 1)

- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program funding to help towns support less polluting non-motorized transportation modes - walking and bicycling;
- Recreational Trails/Open Space Network;
- Enhancing Healthy Municipal Plans and Policies to promote sustainable development and incorporate smart growth principles including street design standards and other strategies that promote bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities; such as:
  - mixed use developments in village centers;
  - ensuring connections between adjacent developments for all modes;
  - using Village and Downtown designations to help maintain the viability of existing areas.

**TROPICAL STORM IRENE**

Transportation planning work changed after August 28 when Tropical Storm Irene hit. VTrans asked RPCs to assist towns with the reconstruction efforts on local roads. From emergency to recovery, the RRPC is helping procure needed services for reconstruction/repair. We helped map the damage, update information frequently, and worked with VTrans and FE.MA

Assistance was also received from:

**VTrans Employees:** Approximately 700 had been assigned to IRENE recovery tasks

**Hundreds of National Guard Troops:**

- **Vermont** – 200 people, numerous equipment
- **Maine** – 220 people, numerous equipment, Command & Control function for out-of-state troops
- **Illinois** - 145 troops, 8 aircraft, 23 vehicles
- **Ohio** – 93 people, 29 pieces of equipment
- **New Hampshire** – 8 people, 2 aircraft
- **South Carolina** – 51 people, 23 pieces of equipment
- **West Virginia** – 30 people, 10 pieces of equipment
- **Virginia** – 16 people, 6 pieces of equipment

**DOT Partners**

- **Maine** – 150 people, 145 pieces of equipment
- **New Hampshire** – 75 people, 60 pieces of equipment

**Over 200 Private Contractors and Consultants**

- Approximately 1800 people from the private sector, primarily from Vermont

**Medical Assistance from LA, ME, AR, MO, NH, ID and FL EOC, RPCs, Red Cross Church groups, Fraternal Organizations, and many individuals.**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

NOVEMBER

- 17th **Climate Action Planning: Part 1. Webinar** To register: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/677432690>
- 18th **Building Healthy Communities.** Holiday Inn, Rutland, VT. For details, contact [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org).
- 30th **Building Healthy Communities.** Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier, VT. For details, contact [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org).

DECEMBER

- 7th **Climate Action Planning: Part 2. Webinar** To register: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/961077066>
- 7th **Municipal Technology Workshop.** Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier, VT. For details, contact [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org).

JANUARY

- 15th **Municipal Mapping Conference.** Summit Center, Waterbury, VT. For details, contact [www.vcqi.org](http://www.vcqi.org)

FEBRUARY

- 22nd **Town Meeting Tune-Up.** Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier, VT. For details, contact [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org).

MARCH

- 29th **Vermont Organics Recycling Summit (VORS)** Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT. For details, contact [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org).

**RUTLAND CREEK PATH**

Construction on Rutland Creek Path is yet to begin as it is still in the final construction bid document revision phase. Once VTrans gives its final approval the City will advertise for construction. With contractors busy doing post-Irene work and winter upon us, the bids should be lower in early spring. Stafford Technical School’s forestry students have been clearing and grubbing the area behind Northwest Primary School south to State Street on Segment 1. Another Transportation Enhancement grant application was submitted in August for Segment 2 - from State Street to West Street. Soon we hope to find the pot of gold to build this wonderful asset for our Region. Any clues and help are welcome.



**BULK PURCHASE OF REGULATORY SIGNS**



RRPC helped towns save hundreds of \$ by compiling the Region’s order of regulatory signs that meet the MUTCD size and retro-reflectivity standards for the 2015 deadline.

## POULTNEY WOODSHED PROJECT

Green Mountain College (GMC) and the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation (HBRF) are collaborating on the Poultney Woodshed Project. The project's goal is to fuel the College's new biomass facility from local sources of sustainably harvested woodchips. The \$73,658 project is funded in part (\$35,000) by the RRPC with funds from the U.S. Department of Energy's, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. Other funders include the High Meadows Fund, Riverledge Foundation and the Luce Foundation.

The Hubbard Brook Research Foundation is working with GMC to secure woodchips harvested from privately owned forestlands located relatively close to Poultney. If successful, this project will produce carbon savings resulting from reduced travel distances for woodchips and support the local economy by engaging traditional stewards of the forest: landowners, foresters, loggers, chippers and truckers.

A community event was held at Green Mountain College on October 27, 2011 with 50 attendees. The college has set up a dedicated phone number and e-mail address to field inquiries. Those with general questions are directed to the school's website where they will find information about the biomass plant, the Poultney Woodshed Project and answers to Frequently

Asked Questions. Those who plan to do a cutting within the next six months are given details on the type of wood the school is looking to buy and encouraged to have their forester contact Ken Gagnon. Gagnon Lumber is acting as a concentration yard for the school, and will weigh, segregate, store, chip and eventually deliver to GMC.

"The biomass project substantially reduces the use of number six fuel oil, which was the College's main fuel source until this year," said GMC President Paul Fonteyn. "As much as possible, we want to use woodchips from sustainably harvested local sources, which are environmentally friendly and helpful to the local economy."

The two organizations will recruit private and public partners working cooperatively to determine if: 1 - biomass harvesting protocols set forth by the Forest Guild are acceptable to local landowners, foresters and loggers; 2 - if sustainable harvesting practices can be done cost effectively, and 3 - the amount of biomass that GMC can hope to purchase from local landowners over time. The overriding question the Poultney Woodshed Project will answer is this: "Is there a viable market for sustainably harvested, locally sourced woodchips?"

## BUTTON UP WORKSHOPS HELD IN FOUR COMMUNITIES

Button Up Vermont, the popular workshop about weatherizing homes, was presented this fall in Wallingford, Rutland City, Pawlet, and Brandon. The workshops were organized by Efficiency Vermont and Central Vermont Community Action Council, and hosted by local energy committees. In addition, Heritage Family Credit Union hosted the Rutland City workshop, and the RRPC hosted the event in Brandon.



Button Up Vermont is a 90-minute workshop designed to help Vermonters understand why and how they should "button up" their homes to save energy and improve comfort. These workshops help homeowners understand what they can do in a typical Vermont home, and where to start the process of making energy improvements.

If you want to host one in your community, act now! Workshops are being scheduled throughout the fall and winter. For details, visit [ButtonUpVermont.org](http://ButtonUpVermont.org) or call (802) 477-5083.

## COMMISSION PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN DISASTER RESPONSE

Hurricane Irene was the largest disaster to strike Vermont since the Floods of 1927. Some streams in the Rutland Region exceeded their 1927 crests as unrelenting tropical moisture fell for 20 hours on saturated ground. The Otter Creek at Center Rutland set a new mark, four feet higher than any flood since records began in the 1930s.

The RRPC played a major role before, during, and after the disaster. Before the storm, weather and hydrology forecasts were distributed electronically to local officials through the Local Emergency Planning Committee. Beginning that Sunday, RRPC staff collected damage details, road conditions, and emergency needs

from all 27 communities for use in the State Emergency Operations Center.

Over the next two weeks, RRPC served as the primary link between towns and Vermont Emergency Management, VTrans, and FEMA. Staff members were tasked with disseminating hundreds of announcements and managing dozens of specific information requests about public infrastructure. The RRPC directed FEMA damage assessment surveyors (traveling by truck and helicopter) to the hardest hit areas and met with outreach teams looking to speed financial assistance to storm victims. (More than 1,000 residents registered for FEMA assistance in Rutland County.)

## \$20 MILLION AVAILABLE THROUGH HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM; MITIGATION PLAN UPDATES ONGOING

After a declared disaster, FEMA funds do more than repair damaged infrastructure: they make some of it stronger. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) covers up to 75% of costs for eligible mitigation projects that lessen the impact of future disasters. In Vermont, mitigation projects typically include upgrading roads, culverts, and bridges; home acquisition (buy-outs); structural elevations or relocations; and stream bank stabilization. Because the amount of mitigation funds is based on the scope of the disaster, this round will offer approximately \$20 million statewide for mitigation projects. HMGP is administered by Vermont Emergency Management and does not impact FEMA Public Assistance funding that reimburses towns for repairing damaged infrastructure.

In fact, mitigation projects do not even need to be related to Tropical Storm Irene. Complete applications must include maps, a list of alternative proposals, engineering plans, hydrology studies (if needed), and a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA). The RRPC can assist with the BCA, which compares past dam-

ages to the project cost. Recurring problems, such as culverts that washout every spring, are good candidates.

Following the severe impact of Tropical Storm Irene, FEMA is requiring an update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and Annexes distributed and adopted by towns in August. This update the ideal time to identify new mitigation projects in your community. The RRPC is currently working with FEMA mitigation specialists to update each town Annex and will request Selectboard re-adoption when FEMA approval is granted later this year.

This is an excellent opportunity to fund mitigation projects, but it requires time to complete an application. Begin compiling cost estimates, hydrology reports, and engineering studies as soon as possible. A Letter of Intent is due to Vermont Emergency Management by December 30; the complete application is due by January 20. Full details are online at [vem.vermont.gov](http://vem.vermont.gov). For more information, contact Philip Picotte at 775-0871 x. 205.

### Disaster (Continued from page 4)

Once life-safety issues were resolved, transportation became the highest priority. VTrans called in dozens of employees from northern Vermont to staff an ad-hoc Incident Command Center established in Rutland. Steve Schild, the RRPC's GIS Manager, worked 14-hour days for more than a week, organizing the vast amount of data that poured in from every damaged road, bridge, and culvert on state and local highways. The RRPC, took the lead in assisting towns rebuild their roads. Highway foremen were connected with the gravel, engineers, and traffic cones needed to restore service. State officials were kept up to date where resources were needed most. Every damaged road, impacted bridge, and overtopped culvert was mapped by meeting directly with town road crews. FEMA Public Assistance specialists used these maps - created just days

after the storm - to gather data needed for municipal reimbursement.

Recovery efforts will continue through 2012. The Agency of Natural Resource has asked Regional Planning Commissions to assist in providing technical assistance to towns for river management and debris issues. Vermont Emergency Management is relying on the RRPC to assist municipalities develop hazard mitigation grant applications that will reduce the impact of future disasters. The LEPC organized an After Action Review on November 8, part of a statewide process to identify the successes and failures of disaster response and to identify improvement steps. We will continue to assist towns with emergency operations plans, mitigation projects, disaster exercises, and first responder training.



Route 73 Brandon



US 7 Clarendon

# NEWSLETTER

## **VISIT THESE GREAT PLANNING SITES:**

Planetizen - [www.planetizen.com](http://www.planetizen.com)

American Planning Association - [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association - [www.nnecapa.org](http://www.nnecapa.org)

Vermont Planning Info. Center - [www.vpic.info](http://www.vpic.info)

The Atlantic Cities - [www.theatlanticcities.com](http://www.theatlanticcities.com)

The Original Green - [www.originalgreen.org](http://www.originalgreen.org)

Arch News Now - [www.archnewsnow.com](http://www.archnewsnow.com)

Law of the Land - [lawoftheland.wordpress.com](http://lawoftheland.wordpress.com)

Project for Public Spaces - [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

Place Shakers and Newsmakers  
[placeshakers.wordpress.com](http://placeshakers.wordpress.com)

## 2011/12 RRPC MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings held at RRPC offices

### NOVEMBER

17th Transportation Council, 6:30 pm  
Public Hearing on VT Public Transit Policy Plan

### DECEMBER

**No Committee or Commissioner Meeting**  
**No Transportation Council Meeting**

### JANUARY

17th RRPC Committees & Commission meetings, 5:30 & 7:00  
26th Transportation Council, 6:30 pm

### FEBRUARY

21st RRPC Committees & Commission meetings, 5:30 & 7:00  
23rd Transportation Council, 6:30 pm

### MARCH

20th RRPC Committees & Commission meetings, 5:30 & 7:00  
22nd Transportation Council, 6:30 pm



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