



ACRPC

update

February 2013

Nine Addison County Towns Compete in the Vermont Home Energy Challenge

Nine Addison County communities are competing in the Home Energy Challenge, a statewide program to encourage Vermonters to weatherize their homes.

Under the Challenge, which is being promoted by Efficiency Vermont and the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN) in partnership with town energy committees and ACRPC, towns will strive to meet a goal of weatherizing 3% of the homes in their communities by the end of 2013.

Vermont HOME ENERGY CHALLENGE

At the end of the year, towns, regions, and local partners will be recognized for the effectiveness of their efforts to encourage participation in their communities. The town in each of the six regions in the state getting the highest percentage of homes weatherized by the end of the year will receive \$10,000 to be used toward a municipal efficiency program in their town.

Addison County towns participating in the Challenge include Bristol, Cornwall, Goshen, New Haven, Middlebury, Monkton, Orwell, Starksboro and Weybridge. There is still time for others to sign up!

As part of the Challenge, Efficiency Vermont and its partners will support a number of turnkey projects that local partners can implement in their communities, including home energy visits, door-to-door community outreach, home energy workshops, and free home energy saving kits.

Weatherizing 3% of homes in every Vermont town would represent a 6-fold increase in the number of weatherization jobs currently taking place and it would put the state on par to meet its climate change goal of weatherizing 80,000 homes by 2020.

Efficiency Vermont provides up to \$2,000 in assistance to homeowners who install energy improvements through the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. They are also offering a special \$100

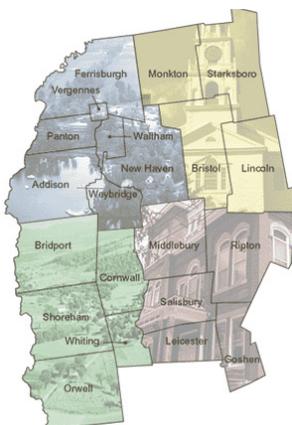
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Commission Calendar

February 2013

12	3:00-4:30	Vermont Invasives Middlebury Project
12	7:00	Natural Resources Committee
13	7:30	Full Commission Meeting
20	4:30-6:00	Addison County River Watch Collaborative
20	7:00	Transportation Advisory Committee
21	6:00	ACSWMD Meeting
27	6:30	ACRPC Executive Board
28	7:30	ACRPC Energy Committee

Meetings are held at ACRPC, 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, and are open to the public.



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News

discount on all home energy audits this year to encourage homeowners to participate.

Visit <http://efficiencyvermont.com/homeenergychallenge> or contact Regional Planner Kevin Lehman to find out more (388-3141 or kevinl@acrpc.org).

Riverwatch Group Reaches Out

The ground is frozen, the creeks are shelving with ice, and water critters are still comatose, but the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative (ACRWC) is busy gearing up for the 2013 spring-summer season of taking water samples from our local streams and rivers.

“February and March are as busy as our sampling months,” said local ACRWC coordinator Matthew Witten. “We are taking stock of last season’s results, completing our proposals for this summer’s monitoring around our county, and also gathering financial and volunteer support to continue our work.”

ACRWC, a consortium of several watershed groups that conduct water quality monitoring, has teamed up with some town Conservation Commissions to request funds for its ongoing citizen work at upcoming Town Meetings. Both Lincoln and New Haven Town Meeting warnings will include such a request for financial support.

This year the Addison County Regional Planning Commission has also received grant funding from the Vermont DEC to update water quality maps for the municipalities in the region.

Kristen Underwood, member of the Collaborative and also its technical consultant, said, “Last season was somewhat drier than normal – a welcome change from the year before when so many communities were impacted by Tropical Storm Irene and spring flooding. In the driest month of September, we saw E.coli concentrations spike at some of the county’s swimming holes, including Bartlett’s Falls on the New Haven River.”

ACRWC will send an annual report to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in March. Around the same time, they will request analytical support from the DEC LaRosa Laboratory for monitoring in the 2013 season.

Underwood said, “This year we plan to sample at 31 separate stations located on the Lewis Creek, Lemon Fair River, Little Otter Creek, Middlebury River, New Haven River, and Otter Creek. We test for E.coli, phosphorus, nitrogen and turbidity.”

[See Events section of newsletter for Volunteer Training opportunity and Fundraiser.](#)

Vergennes Senior Housing Receives Novogradac Award

Armory Lane Apartments, Vergennes, has been selected in a national competition as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit development that employs the most innovative use of HUD program financing.



The senior housing rental property was recognized as a Development of Distinction by the Novogradac Journal of Tax Credits for its innovation and outstanding contributions in the field of tax credit development. The award noted that Armory Lane Apartments serves as a consummate example of how tax credits may be used to create jobs, develop affordable housing, or provide new opportunities and economic vitality of communities in need.

ANR's New Natural Resource Atlas is Now Online

A new Vermont interactive map viewer was released by the Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) on December 1st. The new map viewer replaces the Environmental Interest Locator, is easier to use and includes additional features – such as the ability to print and save maps. The map viewer is available online at <http://www.vcgi.org/mapcenter/> A free online webinar is available to view at www.vcgi.org.

Municipalities Can Help Reduce Flood Insurance Rates

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed the Biggert Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, authorizing the extension of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through 2017. The law made significant reforms to NFIP. Among other things, this law requires FEMA to take immediate steps to eliminate a variety of existing flood insurance subsidies. The changes to NFIP are designed to encourage long-term mitigation to properties in flood areas. In the short term, the result will be an increase in flood insurance rates in 2013 and 2014. Below is a list of some of the changes:

- Premiums will increase on many properties in Special Flood Hazard Areas.
- Subsidies will be phased out on January 1, 2013 and premiums will increase toward actuarial rates at 25% per year for certain properties.
- Policy rates will also increase after ownership changes, coverage lapses, when flood maps change, and/or for substantially damaged structures.
- Premiums will increase for all other properties, and grandfathered rates will disappear, in 2014.
- Premiums will increase for homes located in a high-risk flood zone that have not been substantially damaged or improved.

Municipalities and property owners can work together to reduce the cost of insurance premiums. Municipalities can help property owners access funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to complete activities that lessen or mitigate damages

or to buy out flood prone properties. Municipalities can also participate in the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS).

Flood insurance premium rates are discounted in increments of 5% based on 18 creditable activities, organized under four categories: public information, mapping and regulations, flood damage reduction, and flood preparedness. Communities choose which activities to implement. Please contact Tim Bouton with questions (388-3141 or tbouton@acrpc.org).

Updated Online Vermont Planning Information Center

VAPDA and ACCD have just announced the new and improved Vermont Planning Information Center (VPIC) website www.vpic.info. The website for Vermont's volunteer and professional land use decision-makers consolidates access to the resources you need including:

- All planning and zoning publications produced by Land Use Education and Training Collaborative
- Links to key websites and documents
- An improved calendar of training events (trainers can post events directly)

Go! Vermont Gets You There

Go! Vermont is a resource for commuters who want to reduce the cost and environmental impact of driving. If you're looking for a different way to get to work (or anywhere), this state-run program features free carpool/vanpool matching services and lots of practical info about other ways to get around. It's easy to use and full of benefits so visit www.connectingcommuters.org today.



Grants / Events

Rural Design Request for Proposals

The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) is issuing a request for proposals to rural communities facing design challenges to host local workshops in 2013. Successful applicants will receive a \$7,000 grant and in-kind design expertise and technical assistance valued at \$35,000. The RFP is on the new CIRD website: www.rural-design.org. The deadline for submitting a proposal is Tuesday March 5, 2013 at 5:00 pm EST. Please contact ACRPC Planner Claire Tebbs with questions at 388-3141 or ctebbs@acrpc.org.

Transportation Alternatives Program

VTrans is now accepting applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program, which is part of the new federal transportation legislation entitled Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century. The Transportation Alternatives Program provides funding for a variety of project types. Visit the VTrans Transportation Alternatives website for more information.

Health and Wellness in Addison County: FREE HBO Film Screening and Discussion

March 19th 2013, 5:30pm

*Middlebury Volunteer Ambulance Association, 55
Collins Dr. (next to Porter Hospital)*

Weight of the Nation is an HBO series on the Nation's obesity epidemic. Come see the film and discuss barriers to physical fitness and accessing healthy food in your community. Meet others interested in school food programs, physical activity programs, community gardens, worksite wellness, community planning and design for walking and cycling. RSVP to Megan Lausted at the Vermont Department of Health at megan.lausted@state.vt.us.

Benefit Dinner for the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative (ACRWC)

Wednesday, February 13th, Bobcat Cafe, Bristol, VT

The event -- called "Won't You Be My Ripariantine: Feel the Love for our local streams & rivers" -- is an

opportunity to enjoy a delicious dinner while contributing to the volunteer organization, Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative (ACRWC). 20% of food sales will be donated to the ACRWC. See the News section of this newsletter to learn about their work.

For reservations call the Bobcat at 453-3311. To find out more about ACRWC, please contact Matthew Witten at mwitten@gmavt.net or 434-3236. Or visit <http://acrpc.org/addison-county-river-watch-collaborative/>

Annual Training Session for the Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative (ACRWC)

*Sat., March 16, Addison County Regional Planning
Commission, 14 Seminary St., Middlebury*

At this training session ACRWC will go over the routines for preparing sample bottles, collecting samples, and filling out data forms. All the monitoring that the group's volunteers conducts must be done according to an EPA-approved protocol. When the prescribed methods are adhered to, the state and federal governments approve the validity of the data and the information can be used to guide management decisions.

If you are interested in getting to know our local streams and helping protect them, please contact ACRWC coordinator Matthew Witten: mwitten@gmavt.net; 434-3236.

Annual Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference

*Friday, October 18th and Saturday, October 19th at
the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, VT*

Vermont's only statewide emergency preparedness conference! Interested in becoming a speaker? Please visit <http://vem.vermont.gov/preparednessconference/SpeakerInformation>. Interested in becoming an exhibitor? Please visit <http://vem.vermont.gov/Preparedness-Conference/ExhibitorInformation>. Attendee registration will be available this summer!