



# ACRPC

*update*

June 2004

## commission calendar

JUNE	7	7:00 p.m. Natural Resources Comm. Location: ACRPC Office Date may change to June 14. Call office for more information.
	9	7:30 p.m. ACRPC Full Commission Meeting Location: Vergennes Fire House
	16	7:00 p.m. Transportation Advisory Comm. Location: ACRPC Office
	21	7:00 p.m. Utilities, Facilities & Services Comm. Location: ACRPC Office Agenda: Cultural Facilities
	30	7:00 p.m. ACRPC Executive Board Meeting Location: ACRPC Office
JULY	5	7:00 p.m. Natural Resources Comm. Location: ACRPC Office
	7	8:30 a.m. GIS Roundtable Location: Cyprian Learning Center, Waterbury For more info: <a href="http://www.vcgi.org/commres">www.vcgi.org/commres</a>
	14	7:30 p.m. ACRPC Full Commission Meeting Location: TBA
	19	7:00 p.m. Utilities, Facilities & Services Comm. Location: ACRPC Office Agenda: Municipal Facilities
	21	7:00 p.m. Transportation Advisory Comm. Location: ACRPC Office
	28	7:00 p.m. ACRPC Executive Board Meeting Location: ACRPC Office

### Changes to Vermont's Planning Law

Those of you following the activities of the last legislative session are probably aware that Chapter 117, the section of state law that governs nearly all matters related to planning and zoning, has been revised. You may have been wondering exactly what this means for your community. Here are a few of the highlights; expect to hear a lot more on this topic in upcoming months.

The new law will become effective as of July 1, 2004 and new copies of Chapter 117 will be published and distributed this summer (replacements for the little gray books many of you have a copy of). Any town bylaws amended after that date will need to be in conformance with the provisions of the revised law. If your municipality is in the midst of a bylaw change, please contact us to for assistance.

Starting September 1, 2005, certain provisions of the new law will override any inconsistent local bylaws, whether or not municipalities have updated their bylaws by then or not. Finally by September 1, 2011, all municipalities will need to have amended their bylaws to be in conformance with the revised Chapter 117.

The exact changes between the old and new Chapter 117 will be covered in future newsletters. Over the next year, ACRPC and others will be offering a range of educational materials, programs and assistance to municipalities to inform local officials about the changes and hopefully make for a smooth transition to the new system. So stay tuned.

### ACRPC Appointments

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission would like to thank the towns of Cornwall, Ferrisburgh and Whiting for returning complete annual update packages.

ACRPC would also like to remind those municipalities that have not returned ACRPC appointment forms that their representatives to the commission need to be appointed in writing by the end of June. Appointment forms have NOT been received from:

- |           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Bristol   | Leicester | Lincoln    |
| Panton    | Salisbury | Starksboro |
| Vergennes | Weybridge |            |

If you need another form, please contact the ACRPC office at 388-3141.

Meetings are open to the public.  
Minutes are available on-line at [www.acrpc.org](http://www.acrpc.org).  
For further information, contact ACRPC at 388-3141.

## GMNF Plan Revision

The next meeting to discuss the Green Mountain National Forest Plan Revision will be Tuesday, June 15th at Mt. Abraham Union High School Auditorium from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

The topic of discussion will be the Revised Forest Plan Draft Alternatives. The alternatives offer different ways to manage the GMNF and an opportunity for comparison of different management plans. The GMNF staff will present the rationale behind the alternatives, how they were developed and the future direction of the planning process.

A portion of the evening will be devoted to an open house when the public can view the alternatives and provide feedback. The GMNF staff would like to know what the public likes about the alternatives and how they might be improved.

For more information please contact Melissa Reichert at 802-747-6754 or visit the web site at [www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/nepa\\_planning/plan\\_revision.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/nepa_planning/plan_revision.htm).

## Transportation Study Requests

Do you have a transportation or traffic-related problem affecting your community? The Transportation Advisory Committee is requesting a list of transportation planning studies to fund in Addison County.

Each year, ACRPC sets aside \$50,000 of its annual transportation funding received to hire consultants to perform various transportation studies in the region.

If you have a project idea that you think may qualify, please contact your Selectboard, Planning Commission or TAC delegate. These funds cannot be used for construction projects - only for planning.

Applications are due on June 11. The TAC will evaluate all requests at their June 16, 2004 meeting. Applicants chosen for further consideration will be asked to submit a proposal and make a presentation on the project at the July TAC meeting. For more information contact Garrett Dague, 388-3141.

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## State Hazard Mitigation Draft Plan Available

Vermont Emergency Management is currently submitting a draft of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan to FEMA. As most of you are aware, by November 1, 2004 the state of Vermont must have an approved State Mitigation Plan in order to receive certain emergency assistance funds. FEMA-approved regional or local mitigation plans are also required as a condition for municipalities to receive mitigation grant funding from the federal government.

The State Hazard Mitigation Plan is a collaborative effort of VEM and its partner agencies. The purpose of this Hazard Mitigation Plan is to assist local governments in identifying all hazards facing their communities, and identifies and outlines strategies to begin reducing risks from identified hazards. The

plan is also intended to better integrate and consolidate efforts of state agencies with those of regional and local government, as well as efforts of quasi-governmental organizations, such as the Regional Planning Commissions.

A preliminary draft of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan will be available for viewing on VEM's website beginning the first week of June at <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/vem/StateHazardMitigationPlanMay27draftII.doc>

Any comments or suggestions on the State Plan draft should be forwarded to Ray Doherty ([rdoherty@dps.state.vt.us](mailto:rdoherty@dps.state.vt.us)), State Hazard Mitigation Officer, at Vermont Emergency Management (103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671-2101) no later

## Make Your Community's Mitigation Grant Applications More Successful

In late April, Tim Bouton, ACRPC's Emergency Planner attended a FEMA sponsored class in the use of FEMA's benefit/cost (B/C) software. The software determines the B/C ratio for proposed mitigation projects.

Any municipality who has applied for a mitigation grant recently should realize that over 50 percent of the evaluation of a project is related to a favorable B/C ratio. Tim is now trained in the use of the software and can perform a B/C evaluation on request.

As a result of the training, an interesting pattern surfaced that should allow our municipalities to be more successful in the future when applying for these grants. A higher B/C ratio occurs when a project prevents damage that happens often than for a project that only protects against the "big one." Because of this quirk in FEMA's system, it is important that every cost associated with damage be documented, every time any damage occurs.

As little as \$25 worth of documented labor after a downpour could justify \$20,000 or more for a culvert upgrade if damage happens in the same location on

a regular basis. Additionally, simply closing a road to traffic during a flood can rack up costs from detours that would surprise most people.



As an experiment, the class evaluated a proposed Route 73 upgrade between Brandon and Sudbury. Using data supplied by VTrans, a \$3.5 million up-

grade cost was easily justified by the amount of detoured traffic that occurs every time the road is closed due to flooding. In this case, the B/C ratio was favorable even before any damages were factored in.

Municipalities should also be aware that as far as FEMA is considered, if you cannot show them records including when, where, and what expense are incurred, those expenses never happened. Even if the expenses are low, today's documentation can make the difference 20 years from now when a request is made to fix an ongoing problem.

As the FEMA representatives in this class pointed out, the three most important things you can do on a daily basis are: DOCUMENT-DOCUMENT-DOCUMENT.

