

News and Notes May 2021

May Agenda Includes BCRC and BCIC Business Meetings and Regenerative Food Network Project

The May 20 meeting of the BCRC will include several annual business meeting topics including election of officers, votes on bylaw amendments, and brief updates on both planning and community and economic development activities. The business meeting will be followed by presentations on elements of the regional food system, including the food asset map and a project of the Regenerative Food Network (RFN).

Southshire Meats is a vertically integrated meat company that has been designed specifically to work with small and medium size farmers and help them with access to processing facilities and regional markets. Southshire has developed a model for a series of distributed small scale slaughter facilities (the first of these is Higley Hill processing at the Adams Farm in Wilmington VT—pictured) that will feed into a larger facility that will do finish cuts, value added products (sausages, bone broth, meat sticks, etc...), and package and ship products both direct to customers and through distribution relationships to wholesale



and institutional clients. RFN is developing this 40,000 square foot facility at Shields Dr in Bennington and certain aspects will start coming online this year with completion of phase one (roughly 12,000 sf) expected for May of 2022.

To do all of this Southshire and RFN are taking a very open and collaborative approach and have engaged multiple partners to ensure that all aspects of the complex needs of a Good Food System are addressed. RFN has been excited to work with the Southern VT Regenerative Food Systems Group, that includes BCRC and other members of the Southern VT community, as they develop these key infrastructure projects for our region.

The meeting also will include a presentation on the <u>regional food systems asset map</u> by BCRC VISTSA, Callie Fishburn.

This meeting will beheld remotely via ZOOM and will begin at <u>5:30 PM on May 20</u> and is open to anyone with an interest in the topic. Contact Jim Sullivan at the BCRC (<u>isullivan@bcrcvt.org</u> or 802-442-0713 x5) for more information.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89736026452

Meeting ID: 897 3602 6452 Phone Access: 19292056099

Southern Vermont College/Everett Estate Reuse

The BCRC has been selected by Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) to help develop a reuse plan for the former Southern Vermont College campus, also known as the Everett Estate. In late 2020, SVHC acquired the Everett Estate at auction in an effort to keep this vital community asset under local stewardship. Already, SVHC has entered into an agreement with the Town of Bennington under which the Town will maintain and manage the use of the soccer and baseball fields at the campus.

The BCRC currently is working with SVHC to identify what needs of the medical system may be accommodated on the campus. The BCRC and SVHC also will be working to engage the community through a survey mechanism to gather input on desired uses for the property and will be coordinating with the local organization that maintains and manages the extensive public trail system on the property to explore future expansion and marketing opportunities. Finally, the BCRC will assist SVHC in the development and distribution of a Request for Proposals for a developer or developers to implement desired changes at the property.





Views of the Everett Estate (former Southern Vermont College) recently acquired by SW VT Healthcare.

Energizer Reuse Plan

The BCRC also has been hired by the Town of Bennington, utilizing funding from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and a municipal planning grant from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, to produce a reuse plan for the Energizer industrial com-



One building of the expansive Energizer facility in Bennington being studied for reuse potential.

plex in Bennington. A steering committee made up of representatives from local government, area business and housing organizations, businesses and lenders, neighborhood representatives, the school system, VT DEC, and the Environmental Protection Agency has been developed to oversee the process. The plan will examine possible redevelopment opportunities for the nearly 300,000 SF facility that is positioned on just over three acres near Bennington's downtown. The associated market analysis will include an assessment of potential residential, commercial, manufacturing, and mixed-use opportunities as well as a broad based assessment of housing needs in the community. Work on this plan will wrap up by September 2021.

Rupert Village Revitalization Voted Outstanding Planning Project of the Year

The Vermont Planners Association (VPA) has recognized the Town of Rupert for recent revitalization efforts undertaken by local residents and citizen leaders to restore and elevate Rupert Village as the heart of community life in this rural town. Nominated by the BCRC, and with support from the Preservation Trust of Vermont, the Vermont Land Trust, and the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), the project was held up as an example of successful implementation of the town's vision for a vital, walkable, mixed-use area centered on an historic village.

Accomplishments since 2015 include development of a new town green, redevelopment of a number of historic properties for public and commercial use, establishment of a community garden, restoration of the beloved Sheldon General Store as a community center, and facilitation of public events to bring the community together. Events have included yoga, cooking, and art classes, a holiday market, game nights, coffee hours, live music sessions, the annual Old Home Days Parade, and in 2020 the first annual Rupert Mountain Theatre Festival on the town green. To date, an estimated \$87,000 in monetary and in-kind community donations and over \$400,000 in outside grant funds have been raised to support the village revitalization project.

The VPA award is granted to the entire community of Rupert because initiatives have been undertaken by too many individual groups and residents to name. Of particular note are the leadership and investments of the Rupert Village Trust and the support of Rupert's municipal boards and small but dedicated staff. Several projects were supported or facilitated by Rupert's official <u>village center</u> <u>designation through ACCD</u>, which provides access to tax credits, priority funding status, and other benefits for included properties.

Additional efforts are ongoing to attract a café operator to establish a small eatery and shop at the recently re-opened <u>Sheldon General Store and Community Center</u> on Main Street, and more improvements for sidewalks and a small shared wastewater system are planned for Rupert Village in the coming years. The BCRC extends its warmest congratulations to the Town of Rupert for their outstanding citizen planning work that has exemplified best practices for smart growth, historic preservation, adaptive reuse, land conservation, and community engagement.



Window Dressers

A Project of the Region's Local Energy Committees

BCRC staff has been working closely with local energy committees to help organize the effort to bring two Window Dressers Community Builds to Bennington County this fall (exact dates are to be determined). Window Dressers is a grassroots, volunteer-driven, non-profit organization based in Maine, with sub-groups all over New England. According to the Window Dressers website:



Window Dressers brings volunteers together to improve the warmth and comfort of homes, lower heating costs, and reduce CO2 emissions by producing low-cost insulating window inserts that function as interior-mounted storm windows. Our staff supplies, trains, and supports teams of community volunteers as they build affordable, insulating window inserts at local Community Builds events.

In our region, local energy committees and other interested residents have formed the *Bennington County Window Dressers*. There is a Southshire team and Northshire team that will hold separate Community Builds. Each team is meeting separately to plan the events, but also meet jointly to collaborate and share information each month via Zoom.

The Builds will be held over several days and led by volunteers who will help assemble custom window inserts. Anyone can be a part of this effort as experienced builders will be on site and will instruct the volunteers at each assembly station. Low-income residents may receive up to ten inserts for free per year, or can pay what they are able to. All other households may purchase inserts. Everyone receiving inserts is expected to participate in the community builds.

There will be a registration coming out in the next few months for households to sign up. Prior to the build, a volunteer measurer will visit each residence to measure the windows. Each measurer will follow COVID guidelines, wear a mask, and be vaccinated. The measurements will be sent to the Maine Window Dressers where all the window materials will be cut to size. When the materials arrive in our communities, they will be ready to be assembled. Window Dressers provides all the materials and equipment used to assemble the inserts.



Callie Fishburn, BCRC Vista, applied for a grant through the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund on behalf of the Bennington County Window Dressers. These funds, along with local donations, will help the Bennington County Window Dressers assist low-income families with window inserts.

If you are interested in making a donation to the effort, sponsoring some inserts for low-income families, getting your own inserts, volunteering at one of the local events, or would like to be a part of the planning effort (no need to be a part of any energy committee), contact Allison Strohl at astrohl@bcrcvt.org. There is so much information about this great organization. Please visit the Window Dressers website to learn more at: https://windowdressers.org/.



Previous newsletters have noted the BCRC's collaboration with partners in creating the Southern Vermont chapter of the Vermont Welcome Wagon Project, an initiative that pairs new and returning Vermonters with local residents who have opted in to share their knowledge, helping to accelerate the time it takes to feel at home and connected with the things that make life here so rewarding.

To date, we've been in touch with more than a dozen individuals – most with families – who have relocated to towns across the region from all corners of the country: Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Maine, New Jersey, New York, and Oregon. We've also received notice from more than a dozen and residents who have volunteered to welcome our newest Vermonters. Our next efforts will focus on connecting employers to help new recruits get acclimated year-round, and finalizing a partnership with Front Porch Forum to expand the Welcome Wagon's reach. We welcome participants of all ages, and we encourage everyone interested to learn more about this initiative at: <a href="https://www.www.new.edu.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new.gov.new

Bennington College Receives Vermont's Greenest Building Award

Vermont's Going Green Building Award for Commercial Buildings was awarded to the Bennington College Commons Renovation. This project features a 45,120 square foot renovation project of the college's Commons building, the original center of the 1932 campus plan. The renovation reinforces the Commons' character and history while envisioning how it can continue to serve the college for decades to come. Envelope improvements supported the introduction of a full-building mechanical system configured for geothermal transition. Heat pumps on a single water loop allow energy to be shared throughout the building, while two large energy recovery ventilators provide fresh air. The Bennington College Commons Renovation project restores the combined learning, social, and dining spaces under one roof while creating new learning spaces to restore the Commons' position as a vibrant center on campus. Energy Use Intensity (EUI): 103.4 kBtu/sf/yr.



- Owner + Project Manager: Bennington College
- Architect: Christoff: Finio Architecture
- ♦ Contractor: PC Construction



Green Mountain National Forest Schedule of Proposed Action

Bennington County Region

<u>Cobb Log Landing Special Use Permit:</u> The purpose of the project is to respond to an application for winter use of an existing log landing and skid road from Cobb Lumber Inc. on National Forest Lands. Use of this log landing would be needed for two years. Landgrove.

http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=59248.

<u>Macintyre Permanent Opening Reclamation</u>: This project would remove trees on 21 acres from two permanent wildlife openings to allow for planned maintenance of the openings. This would be a complimentary action to a timber sale implemented for the Early Successional Habitat Project. Sunderland. http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57923

South Fork of the Roaring Branch Stream Restoration: This project consists of large wood placement on approximately 2.1 miles of stream along the South Fork of the Roaring Branch where chainsaws will be used to directionally fell and position trees from the adjacent streamside. Sunderland and Glastenbury. http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57931

<u>Spruce Peak VAST Trail Additions</u>: Add two sections of existing snowmobile trail totaling about 1.1 miles in use and maintained by the VT Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) to the Forest Service trail system. Winhall and Manchester. http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56382

<u>Wilcox Special Use Permit Amendment</u>: This project would consist of the issuance of a special use permit amendment to the Wilcox Cultivation Permit. The amendment would allow Mr. Wilcox to cultivate the 8.3 acre field adjacent to his current permit area. Manchester. http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57935

<u>Woodford Estates Right-of- Way Authorization</u>: The purpose of this project is to respond to an application for a right-of-way (ROW) permit from Woodford Lake Association Inc. for winter access by snow-mobiles to an existing trail system. Woodford. http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=59257

For additional information: Martina Barnes, District Ranger Manchester Ranger District Green Mountain National Forest—2538 Depot Street—Manchester Ctr., VT 05255- 802-362-2307.

BCRC Seeks AmeriCorps VISTA for 2021-2022

The BCRC is seeking a Community Development Coordinator through the SerVermont AmeriCorps VISTA program to serve a one-year term beginning in August 2021. The VISTA member will work on community and economic development initiatives which include helping rural residents access high-quality broadband through the Southern Vermont Communications Union District (CUD), connecting local businesses to pandemic resilience and recovery resources, and assisting with the Southern VT Welcome Wagon project. The VISTA member will also work closely with Bennington College on food security projects funded by the Mellon Foundation.

Thousands of AmeriCorps VISTA members nationwide are united in our mission to lift people and communities out of poverty. Through capacity building activities such as fundraising, grant writing, research, and volunteer recruitment, AmeriCorps members in the VISTA program serve in an office setting and gain experience and leadership skills. This opportunity prepares members for a life of service in the public, private, or nonprofit sector. VISTAs with SerVermont, will become part of a cohort of 30+ members who are serving at non-profit or public sector organizations throughout Vermont.

See the posting on the AmeriCorps portal for more information.

Coronavirus Relief Funding Options Proposed

With the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which includes a \$2.7 billion package of aid for Vermont, we have an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen our economy and communities through significant investments in one-time ARPA dollars. More than half of these dollars are directly appropriated to federal agencies, individuals, local governments, educational institutions, and others, leaving approximately \$1 billion for the state to expend over the next four years. Below is a summary of ideas advanced by the Scott Administration; similar proposals are being debated in the Legislature. Remember that these funds will be in addition to, and in some cases may supplement, direct payments of relief funds to municipalities. Here is an outline of the Administration's proposal.

Governor Scott's American Rescue Plan Act Proposal Amounts depicted below are in millions

Economic Development					
Initiative	FY'22	FY'23	FY'24	FY'25	Total
Economic Recovery Grants	50				50
Capital Fund	30	30	30		90
Expedited Permitting for ARPA projects	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	3
Total	80.75	30.75	30.75	0.75	143
Climate Change					
Initiative	FY'22	FY'23	FY'24	FY'25	Total
EV Infrastructure	5	10	10	1 1 40	25
Weatherization	5.5	8	7.5		21
Fuel Switching/Electrification Incentives	10	10	9		29
Hazard Mitigation Buy-Out	5	10	10		25
Climate Action Plan	3	25	50	25	100
Total	25.5	63	86.5	25	200
Water/Sewer Infrastructure	20.0	0.0	00.5	20	200
Initiative	FY'22	FY'23	FY'24	FY'25	Total
Stormwater Retrofits	10	30	35	1125	75
Village Water/Wastewater/Pretreatment	10	10	15		35
CSO Abatement/Elimination	10	10	10		30
Dam Safety	5	5	5		15
Healthy Homes (Water Systems)	5	5	5		15
Total	40	60	70	0	170
					2.0
Housing	****				
Initiative	FY'22	FY'23	FY'24	FY'25	Total
	10		31-1231-12 -07 13	All All St. II	200 00000000000000000000000000000000000
Increase Shelter Capacity	12		3 63 6 7 6	AN AN STORY	12
Rapid Housing for the Homeless	90	25	25		12 90
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income	90 20	35	35		12 90 90
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units	90 20 5	5	5		90 90 15
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program	90 20 5 2	5 20	5 20	0	12 90 90 15 42
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units	90 20 5	5	5	0	90 90 15
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program	90 20 5 2	5 20	5 20	0	12 90 90 15 42
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total	90 20 5 2	5 20	5 20	0 FY'25	12 90 90 15 42
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity	90 20 5 2 129	5 20 60	5 20 60		12 90 90 15 42 249
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative	90 20 5 2 129	5 20 60 FY'23	5 20 60 FY'24		12 90 90 15 42 249
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80	5 20 60 FY'23	5 20 60 FY'24		12 90 90 15 42 249
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment FiberConnect Network	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80 0.5	5 20 60 FY'23 80	5 20 60 FY'24		12 90 90 15 42 249 Total 225 0.5
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Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment FiberConnect Network Telecom Plan Total Administrative Costs	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80 0.5 10 90.5	5 20 60 FY'23 80 15 95	5 20 60 FY'24 65	FY'25 0	12 90 90 15 42 249 Total 225 0.5 25 250.5
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment FiberConnect Network Telecom Plan Total Administrative Costs Initiative	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80 0.5 10 90.5	5 20 60 FY'23 80 15 95 FY'23 3.5	5 20 60 FY'24 65 FY'24 3.5	FY'25 0 FY'25 3.5	12 90 90 15 42 249 Total 225 0.5 25 250.5
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment FiberConnect Network Telecom Plan Total Administrative Costs Initiative Administrative Costs	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80 0.5 10 90.5 FY'22 6.5	5 20 60 FY'23 80 15 95 FY'23 3.5	5 20 60 FY'24 65 FY'24 3.5	FY'25 0 FY'25 3.5 FY'25	12 90 90 15 42 249 Total 225 0.5 25 250.5
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment FiberConnect Network Telecom Plan Total Administrative Costs Initiative	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80 0.5 10 90.5	5 20 60 FY'23 80 15 95 FY'23 3.5	5 20 60 FY'24 65 FY'24 3.5	FY'25 0 FY'25 3.5	12 90 90 15 42 249 Total 225 0.5 25 250.5
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment FiberConnect Network Telecom Plan Total Administrative Costs Initiative Administrative Costs	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80 0.5 10 90.5 FY'22 6.5	5 20 60 FY'23 80 15 95 FY'23 3.5 FY'23 312.25	5 20 60 FY'24 65 FY'24 3.5 FY'24 315.75	FY'25 0 FY'25 3.5 FY'25 29.25	12 90 90 15 42 249 Total 225 0.5 25 250.5
Rapid Housing for the Homeless Expediting Affordable/Mixed-Income VHIP Rental Units Home Builder Program Total Connectivity Initiative Broadband Deployment FiberConnect Network Telecom Plan Total Administrative Costs Initiative Administrative Costs	90 20 5 2 129 FY'22 80 0.5 10 90.5 FY'22 6.5	5 20 60 FY'23 80 15 95 FY'23 3.5 FY'23 312.25	5 20 60 FY'24 65 FY'24 3.5	FY'25 0 FY'25 3.5 FY'25 29.25	12 90 90 15 42 249 Total 225 0.5 25 250.5

Events and Opportunities....

Electric Vehicle and Commercial Charging Program GMP Webinar: May 4th at 6 to 7:30 pm

Topics include rebates and other financial incentives on electric vehicles and charging, plus a new program to help businesses, condo associations, and other organizations install EV charging easily. GMP's Workplace charging program allows businesses to install EV chargers with no upfront costs. A flat, monthly subscription-style charge covers the charger, installation, software and maintenance, and includes optional low-interest financing through the Vermont Economic Development Authority. Join us!

Register for this event: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN kulQ5UJ8RRaBTZqo2LlpyA

2021 Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan & Public Review Process: Following extensive input from the Vermont System Planning Committee and the Vermont utilities, VELCO has prepared this **Public Review Draft of the 2021 Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan.** From April 12 through May 28, VELCO will be seeking input on the public review draft plan. The input will be used to create a final plan to be filed with the Vermont Public Utility Commission and the Public Service Department by July 1, 2021. This plan focuses on the work of the Vermont System Planning Committee and the Vermont utilities for the next three-year cycle, and provides information to the public and utility regulators about the needs of Vermont's electric grid. The public input process includes public meetings on Wednesday, April 28, from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and Wednesday, May 5, from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. For more information and to receive a link to these virtual meetings, go to: 2021 Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan & Public Review Process | Planning | Our Work | Safe & Reliable Electric Power Transmission in VT | VELCO .

VT ANR Clean Water Lecture. May 6 | 12:00-1:00pm. Join this event to hear more about how to reconnect rivers and restore streams, wetlands, and floodplains. Register here.

2021 round of Downtown and Village Center tax credits: Applications are due <u>Thursday</u>, July 1, 2021, and the Vermont Downtown Board will make its allocation decisions by mid-August. Applicants are encouraged to register for a FREE Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Applicant Webinar, scheduled for <u>May 11, 2021 at 10:00 AM</u>. Click on the link below to register. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5435316299417291533 Webinar ID 775-856-619

Along with basic information, the webinar will review the program's scoring criteria which is used to evaluate and score applications. The webinar discusses sample responses and covers information about required attachments which must be submitted with every application. If you are unable to attend the live webinar, a recording will be made available at this website following this training. For more information go to: 2021_HTCGuidelinesandApplication.pdf (vermont.gov) or contact caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov.

2021 Southern Vermont Economy Summit: RECONNECT. May 12, 13, 14th—registration for the virtual event is available at: Summit | SoVermont Zone. The 2021 Southern Vermont Economy Summit is a virtual learning and networking event for municipal, community and business leaders that focuses on the long term development of Southern Vermont's economy. It's a time for our region to gather, think big, learn something new, ask questions and connect.

Bennington Local Food Summit: Registration for the Bennington Local Food Summit is now live! The free, public/virtual event will take place on <u>Saturday</u>, <u>May 15th</u> and feature a keynote from Amber Arnold of SUSU Healing Collective, an Ask a Master Gardener Q&A session, a think tank on food security, and more! More information and registration can be found at:

Bennington Local Food Summit | Bennington College.

The first 100 registrants will receive a goody bag of local treats, and everyone who registers will be entered to win a \$50 gift card to the Bennington Farmers Market.

BCRC May Meeting: May 20. Annual business meeting of the BCRC and the BCIC, with presentations on aspects of the regional food system from the Regenerative Food Network. See page 1 for details.

Healthy Communities Grant Program (application deadline: May 20)

The Healthy Communities Grant Program is EPA New England's main competitive grant program to fund work directly with communities to support EPA's mission to reduce environmental risks, protect and improve human health and improve the quality of life. The Healthy Communities Grant Program will achieve this through identifying and funding projects that:

- Target resources to benefit communities at risk
- Assess, understand, and reduce environmental and human health risks.
- Increase collaboration through partnerships and community-based projects.
- Build institutional and community capacity to understand and solve environmental and human health problems.
- Advance emergency preparedness and ecosystem resilience.
- Achieve measurable environmental and human health benefits.

Eligible applicants include: State and Local Governments, public nonprofit institutions/organizations, private nonprofit institutions/organizations, quasi-public nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, K-12 schools or school districts; and non-profit organizations. Private businesses, federal agencies, and individuals are not eligible to be grant recipients, however, they are encouraged to work in partnership with eligible applicants on projects.

EPA Contact: Katie Marrese; EPA New England, 5 Post Office Square, Suite 100 (OEP06-2), Boston, MA 02109-3912; E-mail: Marrese.Katie@epa.gov; Phone: 617-918-1658

Vermont's CDBG-CV Round 2 Sole Proprietor Stabilization Grant Program is designed to assist sole proprietors with no employees that have been impacted by COVID-19 and have remaining unmet need that can be documented. Businesses will be required to provide a duplication of benefit affidavit to document unmet need. Grant Amounts will range between \$1,500 and \$10,000 based on eligibility and the ability to document unmet need. Applications open through May 26, 2021 at 5:00 PM EST. For details and to apply: Home | VT CDBG-CV Round 2 (vermont-cdbg-cv.com).

Summit on the Future of Vermont: May 26 & 27, 1-5pm | Virtual future of vermont.org/summit

Join us to consider transformational goals and actions for the future of our economy, environment, communities and people at VCRD's Summit on the Future of Vermont! Consider ideas for a Proposition for Vermont's Future. Think with experts and leaders. Contribute your ideas for action. Engage in partnership for the future of Vermont!

Share your voice and shape action for Vermont's future. Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development. Questions? Visit futureofvermont.org/summit or contact info@vtrural.org or 802-223-6091.

2021 Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program: The Vermont Agency of Transportation has issued a grant solicitation for new infrastructure projects that improve access and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. In 2020, awards totaled \$3 million for construction and planning projects throughout the state. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program improves access and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians through the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure projects. To learn more about the 2021 grant program and to access the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Guide and Application, visit https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped. Applications must be received by 1:00 p.m., June 4, 2021. For more information about the 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Program or other AOT initiatives related to bicycling and walking, contact Jon Kaplan at 802-498-4742 or Jon.Kaplan@vermont.gov.

The Vermont Arts Council is now is accepting applications for its **Cultural Facilities Grant.**<u>Cultural Facilities Grants</u> award up to \$30,000 to Vermont nonprofit organizations and municipalities to enhance, create, or expand the capacity of an existing building to provide cultural activities for the public. Projects such as wiring, heating, adding ADA accessibility features (e.g. elevators, lifts, assistive listening systems, ramps, and bathrooms), lighting, and stage improvements are eligible.

<u>Deadline: June 7.</u>

The **VT Agency of Natural Resources** has launched an <u>online training for Municipal officials</u>. Seventeen informative videos, most around 10-minutes long, are intended to help new, and not-so-new, municipal officials learn about ANR's work and the tools available to help communities. While trainings are specifically tailored to municipal officials, any community member who would like to learn more about ANR's work is invited to participate.

Training topics range from invasive species to recycling laws to dam safety. Tutorials help attendees gain proficiency in tools such as the Permit Navigator, BioFinder and the Clean Water Projects Explorer. One video even shows you how to clean a bat house. A visually engaging platform known as a StoryMap has been used to combine stunning photographs, instructional video trainings and, in one case, music to showcase a sample of what ANR has to offer. Click the image below to go to the videos:



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