

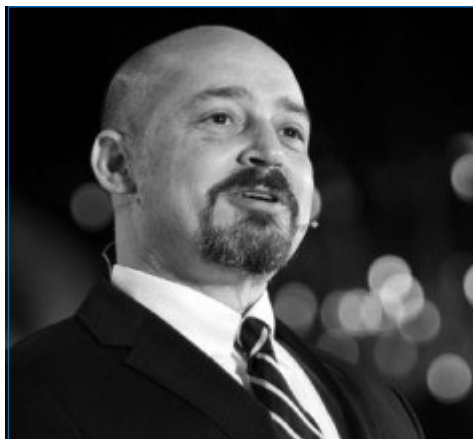


News and Notes

May 2019

BCRC Annual Meeting Features Joe Minicozzi and Special Award Presentation

The Annual Dinner Meeting of the Bennington County Regional Commission will be held at the Taconic Hotel in Manchester Village on **Wednesday** (note the day change!), **May 22 at 5:00 PM.** We are fortunate to have Joe Minicozzi as our featured speaker this year. Joe is an urban planner imagining new ways to think about and visualize land use, urban design and economics. He founded Urban3 to explain and visualize market dynamics created by tax and land use policies. His work has been featured at the Congress for New Urbanism, the American Planning Association, the International Association of Assessing Officers, and the New Partners for SmartGrowth conferences as a paradigm shift for thinking about development patterns. In 2017, Joe was recognized as one of the 100 Most Influential Urbanists of all time.

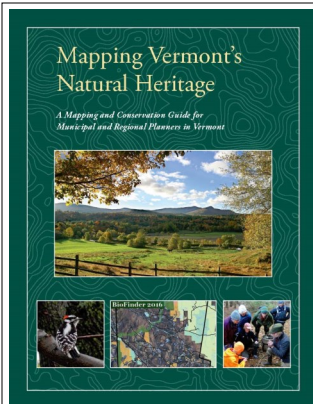


Joe Minicozzi, AICP, Principal of Urban3

The evening will begin with a cocktail hour and a delicious full-course meal in the Taconic's beautiful Trillium Ballroom. This year's Bongartz Award presentation truly is a special one, as we will be honoring Seth Bongartz with the award named in honor of his father. Seth has capably served his community and the State of Vermont in numerous capacities—please join us as we recognize Seth in his home town!

The meeting is open to the public, and we encourage anyone with an interest in community planning and development to attend. Note that advance registration is required; the cost for a memorable evening out is only \$35! Please contact [Stacey Eggsware](mailto:Stacey.Eggsware@bcrcvt.org) at the BCRC (802-442-0713) for more information, or go to our website: www.bcrcvt.org.





Vermont Fish and Wildlife Releases New Natural Resources Guide

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department has released a free copy of the new book [Mapping Vermont's Natural Heritage](#). The book and attached DVD are designed to help conservation commissions and planning commissions learn what mapped data is available on natural resources in their town and how it can be appropriately interpreted.

"The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department has a long history of working closely with Vermont communities because we consider their role in conservation as instrumental to our long-term success of keeping our forests, waters, and wildlife healthy for future generations," said

Jens Hilke. Hilke coordinates Vermont Fish & Wildlife's Community Wildlife Program, which works with all planning and conservation commissions to provide technical assistance on issues related to conservation planning. "This resource will help towns understand and celebrate the natural resources that contribute to each Vermont town's sense of place."

The guide works with the [BioFinder](#) website, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' online center for information and maps on biological diversity and natural resources. It relies on the science of Vermont Conservation Design, a tool that identifies the features necessary for maintaining an 'ecologically functional landscape' – a landscape that maintains current biological diversity and allows species to move and shift in response to climate and land-use changes.

The guide allows communities to better understand mapped ecological components, helping them interpret what each resource is, why it is important, and how to include the resource in planning and conservation efforts. It allows them to prioritize the places that are most important through a 7-step process for integrating natural resource needs with other community values. And it provides options for how to plan for and protect these resources, including non-regulatory and regulatory options, and provides examples of strategies employed by other Vermont communities.

"The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is committed to providing Vermont communities with the best, most up-to-date information available on forests, habitat, and wildlife so you can make informed, thoughtful decisions for the conservation of our cherished Vermont landscape," said Vermont Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Louis Porter. "We consider maintaining a healthy ecosystem fundamental to a healthy economy and a healthy community. This guide encourages communities to keep this bigger picture in mind when making conservation decisions."

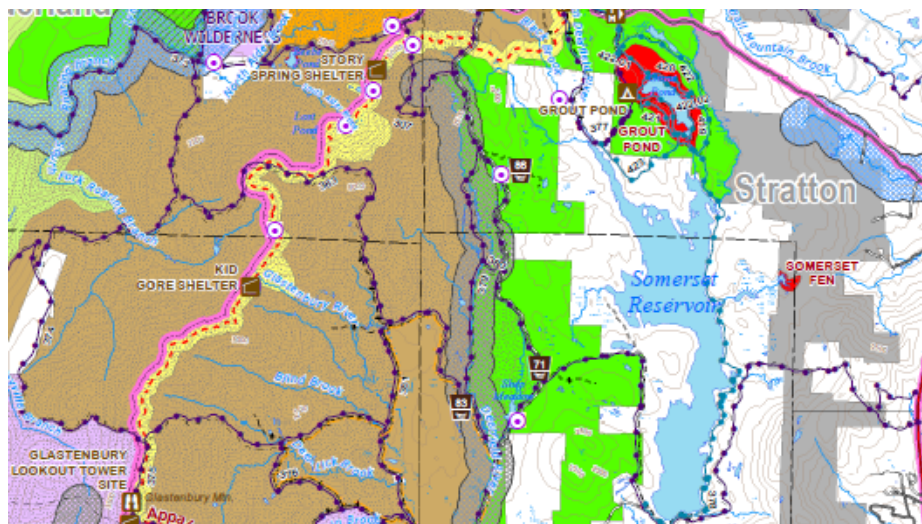
For more information, contact Jens Hilke at Jens.hilke@vermont.gov.

The Batten Kill Watershed Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association

The Batten Kill Watershed Cooperative Invasive Species Management Association (BKW Cisma) is a partnership formed in 2015 between public, private, and non-profit organizations working cooperatively to combat the threat of invasive species within the Batten Kill watershed. Members include the Batten Kill Alliance, The Bennington County Conservation District, the BCRC, Calfee Woodland Management, the Equinox Preservation Trust, the USDA Forest Service-Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests, and the Vermont Land Trust. The Cisma provides monitoring and management of invasive species and site restoration to municipalities and private landowners as well as public workshops to teach identification and management skills. Workshops are generally held throughout the spring. Over the years the Cisma has developed management plans for several sites and initiated invasive species removal. This year, upcoming events include an invasive removal and native tree planting at the Arlington Recreation Park on June 1st, parsnip removal at Dufresne Dam, and invasive plant control within Forest Service land along Richville Road. For more information, contact Elana Feldman, the Batten Kill Cisma Habitat Steward at 802-442-2275 or coordinator.cisma.bkw@gmail.com.

Green Mountain National Forest Somerset Integrated Resource Project Story Map

Story maps are tools that make it possible to combine maps with narrative text and images to tell a story online. They are particularly useful when telling complex stories. The proposed Somerset Integrated Resource Project, located on the Green Mountain National Forest, is one such story and the Forest Service has created a story map for it called “The Green Mountain National Forest Somerset Integrated Resource Project Story Map”. The story setting is the geography around Somerset Reservoir, including the reservoir itself, Grout Pond, Deerfield Ridge, Mount Snow Ski Resort, and the Appalachian Trail. In that geographic area a wide variety of management activities are proposed, divided into resource sections or chapters.



When a user clicks the link to the story map they will see it is organized with a set of tabs across the top which introduce the project, describe the process used to develop the proposed activities, and summarize the proposed activities by resource area with maps. Viewers are then invited to submit comments on the proposals. A separate tab is available for leaving a comment; click on this tab and “Proceed As Guest,” and a map with all the proposals on it will open. This interactive map allows the viewer to zoom in and out and select the specific proposals they want to see.

When you are ready to share your concerns or interests – tell your part of the story - just click “Submit A Comment” in the lower right of the screen to start the process. The Somerset Integrated Resource Project interactive web map and specific instructions for its use can be found here:

[SOMERSET INTEGRATED RESOURCE PROJECT.](#)

Damage Reporting for Severe Storms

There have been several severe storm events in our region over the past few months. Most recently, a storm with heavy rains caused significant damage to roads, culverts, and bridges in the northern towns of Bennington County, as well as many other towns in Vermont. Over the years we have been working on streamlining the damage reporting process. These recent storms have showed that the system in place is working well, thanks mostly to the emergency management directors and other municipal officials that collect and relay vital information..

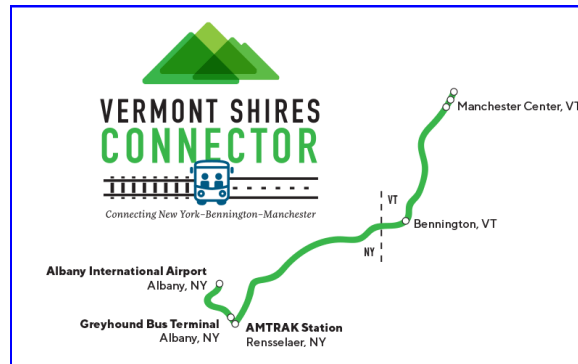
On April 17, the Director of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) requested a Preliminary Damage Assessment from FEMA to determine if the state qualifies for a federal major disaster declaration for the storm event that occurred April 14th-15th. Because of the wealth of information provided by

EMDs and municipal officials, Bennington County is one of the counties included in the request.

In order for municipalities to apply for damage reimbursement through FEMA, several thresholds need to be met. The state needs to meet a \$1 million dollar threshold, while counties must meet a \$3.78/per capita threshold. After Vermont receives a disaster declaration, each town must have at least \$3,200 in damages per damage site to have a project worksheet written up, which is essentially a federal grant. FEMA reimburses 75% of damage costs for approved eligible locations. This is why it is important to provide damage estimates immediately following an event. VEM and FEMA will work with towns individually after a disaster declaration has been made to determine the actual dollars spent, based on all the municipal documentation. It is extremely important to maintain records and to document everything: pictures, receipts, number of hours worked by everyone involved. This thoroughness will give your municipality a better chance of receiving reimbursement.

The BCRC and VEM are here to support and assist Bennington County municipalities through the damage collection and recovery process. In addition, we are always looking to improve our damage reporting protocol, and welcome any suggestions to improve this process. For any questions you have about this process, please email Allison Strohl at astrohl@bcrct.org.

Shires Connector Shuttle Service Improvements



The Shires Connector provides direct connections from Manchester and Bennington to major transportation hubs in the Albany, NY area: the Amtrak Rail Station in Rensselaer, the Greyhound Bus Terminal in Albany, and Albany International Airport. A new Bennington stop was added recently at the Hampton Inn while the downtown stop was relocated to the Green Mountain Community Network transportation hub on Pleasant Street. Information and tickets are can be found at:

<https://www.vttranslines.com/vermont-shires-connector/>

and, as always, direct Amtrak, ticketing is available at www.amtrak.com. Contact [Mark Anders](#) at the BCRC for more information on this and other public transportation topics.

Future-Ready Economic Development Organizations

In mid-March, BCRC's [Jonathan Cooper](#) hosted a webinar as part of the Southern Vermont Economy Projects "Knowledge Bites" series. Jonathan discussed recent trends in economic development from a series presented by the International Economic Development Council. Jonathan's presentation contextualized much of the series through a Southern Vermont lens, which is much more connected to emerging trends in economic development than it may seem at first blush! The webinar, and the entire Knowledge Bites catalogue, is online at:



<https://brattleborodevelopment.com/knowledge-bites/>.

Southern Vermont CEDS Update

Following over a year of work among partners in Windham and Bennington Counties, the Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (SoVT CEDS) has now been submitted to the United States Economic Development Administration (US EDA) for review and approval.

The process was coordinated by Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) and Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) in the Windham Region and the BCRC and the RED Group in the Bennington Region. Camoin Associates served as the consultant on the project. Development of the SoVT CEDS included significant public participation through thirteen public hearings and twelve focus groups held throughout the two counties. This input helped shape the goals, objectives and actions included in the SoVT CEDS.

The two overarching goals for the CEDS are simply stated, yet powerful:

Strengthen Business - Support People.

The SoVT CEDS contains five primary objectives:

- ◇ Increase our population
- ◇ Improve our physical infrastructure
- ◇ Enhance our social infrastructure
- ◇ Expand our business infrastructure
- ◇ Build our economic development capacity.

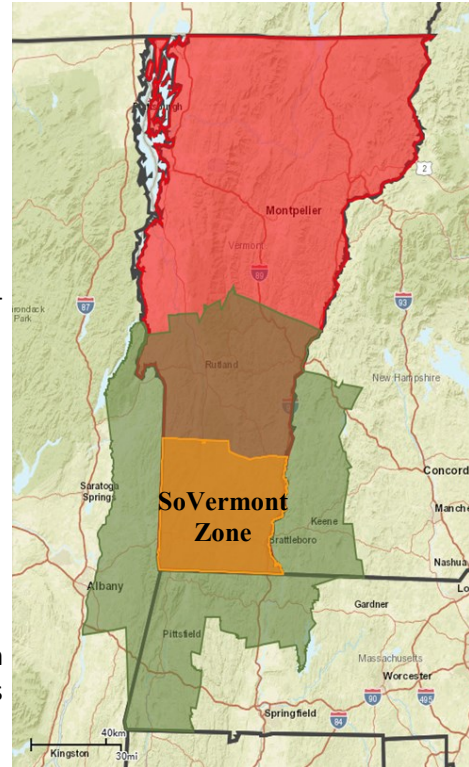
Each objective is supported by multiple strategic actions.

The final element of the SoVT CEDS was the submission of projects for inclusion in the strategy and for consideration as one of the region's vital projects. Over seventy projects were submitted. A project review committee made up of business and community leaders from the two counties reviewed each submission and selected the projects deemed to have the greatest potential impact on Southern Vermont's economy. These projects will be announced at the Southern Vermont Economy Summit to be held at Mount Snow on May 23rd.

Implementation work has already commenced with partner organizations across Bennington and Windham Counties. The relationships fostered through the development of the document should serve the area well as we look to build a stronger, more resilient Southern Vermont economy.

The complete draft of the SoVT CEDS can be found by following this link:

<https://www.sovermontsummit.com/2019-zone-ceds> .



Planning for Substance Misuse Prevention and Marijuana Commercialization

On April 17, the BCRC and The Collaborative held a meeting for area towns in Winhall about the [Health Planning Primer](#) published last fall by the Bennington County Regional Prevention Partnership (RPP). The community planning primer provides a menu of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to improving overall health and preventing youth substance misuse in your community (see and download primer [here](#)). In addition to this resource, [The Collaborative](#) has prepared a presentation on municipal approaches for addressing the commercialization of marijuana in Vermont. For more information on these resources, please contact BCRC staff Cat Bryars at cbryars@bcrcvt.org or 802-442-0713 x310.

Municipal Energy Committees Getting to Work

Reaching regional and state energy goals requires substantial strategic work. As a recent, and oft-quoted, [Boston Globe article](#) highlighted: these goals cannot and will not be met without local action and dedicated time and resources.

In Bennington County, most municipal plans recommend the establishment of energy committees or coordinator positions to facilitate the implementation of energy—and enhanced energy—plans. Yet, until late, only Dorset and Manchester boasted organized energy committees.

Over the past five months, the BCRC's VISTA, Madison Kremer, has worked with communities in the county to organize around their local energy goals. In January, she organized an event, in partnership with VECAN and Efficiency Vermont, to empower county members to organize local energy committees. The great attendance and discussion of this event, in part, led to the formation of five new energy committees: in Shaftsbury/North Bennington, Bennington, Arlington, Pownal, and Rupert.

Currently, Madison is working to provide these new energy committees, as well as the more established Dorset and Manchester committees, with resources and opportunities to promote sustainable energy in their municipalities. For example, on May 2nd, the BCRC will be hosting a panel with speakers from NeighborWorks of Western Vermont and BROCC Community Action to explore residential energy needs and resources in the region. Madison also helped the Village of North Bennington to apply for funding for an EV charging station, and looks forward to assisting other towns in applying for grants and building support for energy planning efforts. Contact Madison at mkremer@bcrcvt.org for more information.

Events and Opportunities....

Lye Brook Study Public Meeting: The Town of Manchester will hold a public meeting on Thursday, May 2, 2019, from 5:00 to 6:30 PM at the Manchester Town Hall, 6039 Main St., to discuss the findings of a study commissioned by the Bennington County Regional Commission on Lye Brook. The study, completed by Northstar Hydro, reviewed hydrologic impacts of several alternatives to address potential flooding from Lye Brook, from US Route 7 to Richville Road in Manchester. Northstar Hydro used "2D" modelling, which can visually show water and water depth flowing across the land surface under different storm events. The project was funded by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources through the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP). The purpose of the meeting is to present the findings to the public and answer questions on the study. For more information, please contact John O'Keefe, Manchester Town Manager at 802-362-1313 x 2 or Michael Batcher, BCRC Regional Planner at 802-442-0713 x 2.

It Starts at Home: Toward Residential Energy Efficiency in SW Vermont. Thursday, May 2, 5:30 PM, at Cole Hall in South Shaftsbury. The BCRC is [hosting a panel of local residential energy experts](#), including representatives from BROCC Community Action and NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, followed by a roundtable discussion of the progress town energy committees have made, the challenges you are having, and the advice you have for others wanting to take action. This event is free and open to all.

VCDA Spring Conference: Community Strategies for Addressing Addiction, Recovery, and Prevention. Tuesday, May 7— City Hall Auditorium, Saint Albans. For more information and to register, go to:

<https://www.vtcda.org/spring-2019.html>



NRRA Compost and Battery Safety Workshop. Friday, May 10, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Manchester Town Office - 6039 Main St., Manchester. Learn composting basics and techniques, waste audit methodologies and safe handling of batteries. The workshop is designed specifically for solid waste facility operators, schools and businesses and will help attendees:



- ⇒ Learn organics management techniques as you navigate the organics waste stream.
- ⇒ Increase your understanding of the best management practices for waste batteries.
- ⇒ Connect with community waste reduction efforts.
- ⇒ Earn credits for professional development & certification.

For more information and to register, go to [NRRA WORKSHOP](#).

BCRC Annual Dinner Meeting - Wednesday, May 22 - 5:00 PM
- at the Taconic Hotel in Manchester Village. See page 1 for more details; email [Jim Sullivan](#) or [Stacey Eggsware](#) at the BCRC for more information or call 802-442-0713.

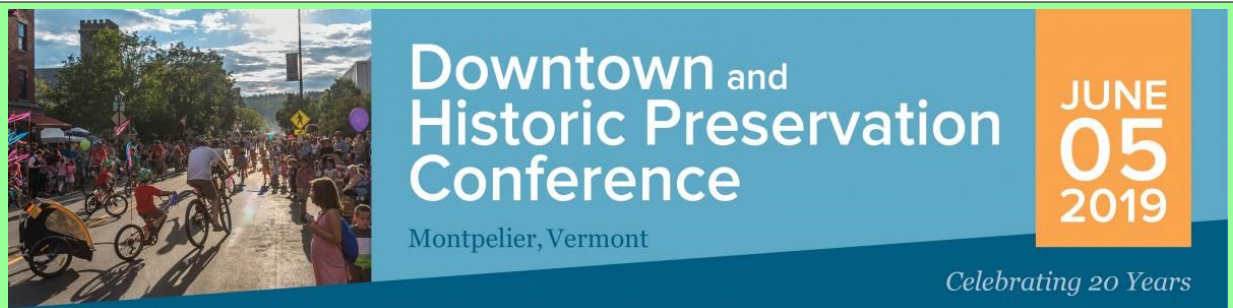


The **3rd Annual Southern Vermont Economy Summit** will take place on May 23 at Mount Snow's Grand Summit Hotel in Dover. BCRC's Community and Economic Development staff have been working with colleagues in Windham County to plan and prepare for the Summit, which will address several topics of interest to the region's residents, businesses, and community leaders. Featured presentations from Joe Minicozzi of Urban3 and Angela Evancie of VPR's "Brave Little State" podcast will follow a rural broadband connec-

tivity breakfast for municipal officials and community partners to start the day. The Summit will also announce the inaugural selection of "Vital Projects" submitted by organizations around the region in support of the 2019 CEDS for Southern Vermont, a federally-approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy completed earlier this year. For more on the agenda, and to register, please visit <https://www.sovermontsummit.com/>. Look for an episode of GNAT-TV's "News Project" with Andrew McKeever in early May, when BCRC's Bill Colvin and Jonathan Cooper will join BDCC's Adam Grinold and Sarah Lang to discuss the Summit in greater detail. We look forward to seeing you there!

Training on Essentials of Land Use Planning. Thursday, May 30th from 5:30- 7pm at the [Martha Canfield Library in Arlington](#) – The BCRC is hosting a workshop on planning and zoning essentials for municipal officials. Following the presentation, there will be round table discussion of common and recurring planning issues that towns face. Bring your questions and topics for discussion! Light refreshments will be served.

Rivers and Roads Workshop. May 29 and 30 at the Winhall Town Garage. Participants will gain the skills needed to develop riverside infrastructure maintenance and repair to increase the stability of rivers and the lifespan of infrastructure. This two-day workshop includes lecture and related field work to help accomplish river infrastructure maintenance and development goals. **REGISTER ONLINE AT:** www.localroads.vermont.gov **OR THROUGH THE LMS AT:** vermont.csod.com.



Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference. Wednesday, June 5, 2019 in Montpelier. The event is made possible by a partnership with [Preservation Trust of Vermont](#), [Montpelier Alive](#), the [City of Montpelier](#) and participating sponsors.

This year marks 20 years of the [State Downtown Program](#). The State House is an ideal location for the opening plenary as we reflect back on two decades of downtown revitalization and chart a new path for the future. The keynote speaker is [Ethan Kent](#), Senior Vice President of the [Project for Public Spaces](#). Project for Public Spaces is an international leader in placemaking, helping to improve public spaces and build strong communities. Ethan will also lead a session on the [Power of 10](#), a powerful tool for generating conversations to identify targeted placemaking efforts.

Please visit the [conference website](#) for more information about the program, registration and additional conference information. **Take advantage of the early bird rate until May 15th by [registering now](#).** Space is limited and the conference may sell out quickly.

The conference culminates with the *Creativity Thrives Downtown Reception*, supported by National Life Group, a street party on Langdon Street that bridges the Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference and New England Foundation for the Arts' Creativity Communities Exchange. The reception is a celebration of creativity, including art, music, food, and drink.

In addition, the [Creative Communities Exchange \(CCX\)](#) will be held on June 6th and 7th in Montpelier. The CCX is a biennial event that gathers people from across New England interested in putting creativity at the center of a communities vitality and identity. To learn more about CCX please visit their [website](#).

If you have any question, please contact gary.holloway@vermont.gov or 802-828-3220.

8th Annual Vermont Environmental Consortium Conference: The State of Vermont's Water II June 11th 2019 - Vermont Technical College - Randolph, Vermont. The conference will include topics like groundwater, waste water, storm water rule updates, site reclassification, watershed protection, planning & permits, and more. For the agenda and to register, go to:

<http://www.vectogether.org/vec-events/spring-conference/>

