



Northwest Regional Planning Commission

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Northwest Regional Planning Commission Awarded Brownfields Assessment Grants

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission has been awarded a Brownfields Hazardous Materials and a Petroleum Assessment grant for a total of \$400,000 from the EPA. This is a testament to the continued importance and success of the program in our region. This grant will allow us to continue to support the redevelopment of Brownfields sites in Franklin and Grand Isle counties. Assessment grants provide funding for a grant recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites. A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.



Before



After

Please visit our website www.nrpcvt.com/brownfields.html for more information or contact Greta Brunswick by email gbrunswick@nrpcvt.com or phone 802-524-5958.



New NRPC Staff

Amanda Holland recently joined Northwest Regional Planning Commission in May 2013 as a Regional Planner. Born in Columbus, Nebraska, Amanda stayed close to home to attend the University of Nebraska where she majored in Natural Resources Management. After college Amanda worked as a GIS Specialist for 3 years developing data for long-term management plans for state agencies and the Army National Guard. In 2003 she ventured out of the Midwest and landed in New York at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies where she worked on various projects including research on Lyme disease, riparian zones in South Africa and urban landscapes in Baltimore, Maryland. Amanda moved to Vermont in 2005 to obtain a M.S. in Natural Resources from the University of Vermont and then worked for a year and a half as a Research Technician on carbon sequestration in forested and urban ecosystems.

Most recently Amanda has worked at the Lamoille County Planning Commission for the past four years as the Assistant Planner and then Transportation Planner where she contributed to transportation, hazard mitigation and natural resources planning. Amanda brings over ten years' experience working in the environmental and planning fields. At NRPC Amanda will be working on several projects including: natural resources planning, municipal plan and zoning updates, and transportation projects.

Release of Final Report of Governor's Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission

The recently released final report of the Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission offers recommendations to adjust how and where energy generation projects are sited to ensure that Vermont adequately avoids the degradation of critical resources while significantly increasing our reliance on clean energy.

With the aim of providing greater community and regional participation in energy planning, the five core recommendations of the Energy Siting Commission are to:

1. Increase emphasis on energy planning at state, regional, and municipal levels, and provide funding and tools for such planning
2. Simplify the existing tiered approach to siting, improve predictability and timing in the permitting process, and provide incentives for community-led projects
3. Expand opportunities for public engagement
4. Implement procedural changes to increase transparency, efficiency, and coordination
5. Update environmental, health, and other protection guidelines

The Commission's recommendations, developed with broad public and stakeholder input, focus on bolstering the local and regional energy planning processes and ensuring that local and regional plans receive more consideration in the Section 248 process.

The report recommends an expansion of the role of regional planning, with the goal of identifying areas in each region that are more or less suitable for energy development. While the details are yet to be worked out, if properly structured, these strategies could help to address many of the concerns that have surrounded past energy projects.

The recommendations lay out a path for regional plans to receive "substantial consideration" before the Public Service Board (PSB). When a regional plan has been approved by the Public Service Board (PSB) as being consistent with state statutory energy targets and the goals of the Comprehensive Energy Plan, the regional plan's elements would be viewed as dispositive by the PSB. Municipal plans would also receive substantial consideration before the PSB if they are consistent with regional plans that include advanced energy planning.

The report lays out several recommendations, including outlining a potential "tiered" permitting process to move smaller-scale projects forward more quickly, while requiring a more robust public engagement process for larger projects. Recommendations also called for intervenor funding for regional planning commissions that participate in reviews. A copy of the full Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission report is available at: <http://sitingcommission.vermont.gov/publications>. For more information, or to share your thoughts on the report, please contact Allison at NRPC at: astori@nrpcvt.com.

2013 VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is soliciting application for projects through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. The intent of this program is to improve access and safety for bicyclists and/or pedestrians through the planning, design and construction of infrastructure projects.

The Bike/Ped Program provides funding for either the scoping or design/construction of the following facilities:

- Bicycle lanes (on-road facility delineated with pavement markings and signs)
- Shoulders (generally a minimum of 3-feet wide to accommodate bicyclists)
- Sidewalks
- Pedestrian crossing improvements, including median pedestrian refuge islands
- Pedestrian signals
- Improvements that address requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Shared-use paths (designed for use by both bicyclists and pedestrians)
- Pedestrian-scale lighting (not likely to rank highly as a standalone project, but eligible as a project component)



For a copy of the VTrans 2013 Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Guide and Application, visit the VTrans website: http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/sections/ltf/bike_ped.

You may also obtain a copy or ask any questions about the program or application process by contacting Jon Kaplan by phone at (802)828-0059 or email jon.kaplan@state.vt.us.

VTrans is conducting a mandatory training for potential applicants on two different dates: Monday June 3rd (1:00-3:00 PM) and Wednesday, June 5th (6:00-8:00 PM). The training will review the application process and program requirements. Attendance at these workshops is mandatory for any entity planning to apply this year. Final and complete applications are due, postmarked or in-hand, by July 26, 2013.

NRPC staff is available with grant writing assistance or review on a first come, first serve basis. Please contact Bethany Remmers for more information at 524-5958 or bethany@nrpcvt.com.

Stabilizing Lakeshore Property

NRPC received a \$75,000 Ecosystem Restoration Grant from the VT Department of Environmental Conservation to support the Shoreline Stabilization Mini-Grant Program. This funding will provide grants of up to \$10,000 to individual Lake Champlain shoreline property owners in Franklin and Grant Isle counties.

This program is aimed at addressing shoreline erosion resulting from the Spring 2011 floods, which reached historic levels in Lake Champlain. The Mini-Grant Program will provide technical assistance by a qualified consultant to develop a site-specific design plan that will address eroded lakeshore property and funds to allow the landowner to install the identified design. The design of projects will focus on non-structural (re-vegetation and drainage), bio-engineered (planned vegetation plantings) and bio-technical (combination of structural elements and plantings) methods to control the erosion and stabilize banks.

A project funded in the 2012 round of mini-grants is currently midway through implementation. This property, located on the Georgia Shore, experienced heavy damage from the Spring 2011 Lake Floods. It consists of a long shoreline, which was severely eroded, endangering a mature maple tree at the top of the bank. The consultant reused concrete debris located on site to stabilize the bottom of the bank and back filled the area with earth to create a gentle 2:1 slope, which is covered with biodegradable coir (coconut fiber) matting. The area has been seeded and will soon be planted with "live stakes" of willows, dogwood and elderberry. As they grow, the root systems of the live stakes will provide long term, natural bank stabilization. These plantings can be cut low to maintain a view and still provide erosion control, water quality and wildlife habitat benefits.

The goal of the Mini-Grant Program is to support efforts to protect and enhance the Lake Champlain shoreline in a way that restores it to a more natural and resilient state in order to improve water quality, restore habitat, and educate people. By creating a shoreline that supports a mix of trees, shrubs and non-lawn groundcover it can typically withstand the erosive forces of water and waves better than structural controls (like rip-rap).

Applications for landowners will be available in June 2013 and preliminary assessments of sites to determine eligibility in the program will occur in the summer of 2013. Grant applications will be made available on NRPC's website www.nrpcvt.com, contact Amanda at aholland@nrpcvt.com or 524-5958 for questions.



Before: showing eroded bank



Mid-Planting: showing the new slope of the bank prior to full planting

Northwest Regional Board of Commissioners

Alburgh Town:	Terry Tatro Vacant Seat
Alburgh Village:	Andrea Beaderstadt Vacant Seat
Bakersfield:	Dennis DeBevec Bill Irwin
Berkshire:	Cláude Charron Richard Ross
Enosburg Falls:	Michael Manahan Richard Roberge
Enosburgh:	Ronald Duso Vacant Seat
Fairfax:	David Shea Colleen Steen
Fairfield:	Jason Booth Marilyn Savoy
Fletcher:	Lynn Douglas Mary Jane Featherstone
Franklin:	Yvon Dandurand Clark Hubbard
Georgia:	Jerry Baitz Kirk Waite
Grand Isle:	Edvin Gelfinas David Borthwick-Leslie
Highgate:	Richard Noel Tom Racine
Isle La Motte:	Paul Hinman Sylvia Jensen
Montgomery:	Carol McGregor Vacant Seat
North Hero:	Vacant Seat Vacant Seat
Richford:	Rowena Brown Vacant Seat
Saint Albans City:	Lazarus Scangas Jeff Young
Saint Albans Town:	Bruce Cheeseman Albin Voegele
Sheldon:	Patrick Howrigan Greg Stebbins
South Hero:	Bob Buermann Michael Guernsey
Swanton Town:	Harold Garrett Ross Lavoie
Swanton Village:	Christopher Leach Neal Speer

Northern Border Regional Commission Announces Next Round of Grant Funds Availability

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) has announced their next round of grant funds and is now accepting applications. The NBRC was created by the Congress to target resources to promote economic growth strategies and projects throughout the most severely distressed portions of the Northeastern United States, including our Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. These efforts focus on leveraging the public, private and philanthropic resources needed to develop and sustain the community building blocks for economic competitiveness and development in this highly distressed region.

The NBRC plans to award approximately \$1.2 million by late Summer, 2013, with the maximum grant \$200,000. Applications are due to NBRC for screening on July 15, 2013. Distressed Counties and Isolated Areas of Distress qualify for grants up to 80%; all other counties within the NBRC region qualify for up to 50% grants. Franklin and Grand Isle Counties have not been identified as distressed or as isolated areas; therefore projects in our region will require a 50% match.

Eligible projects must:

- develop the transportation, water, sewer, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure of the region (these projects will receive additional credit in scoring preferences);
- assist the region in obtaining job skills and employment related education, as well as entrepreneurship, technology and business development;
- provide basic health care and other public services for those areas that are severely economically distressed and underdeveloped;
- promote resource conservation, tourism, recreation, and preservation of open spaces in a manner consistent with economic development goals; and,
- promote the development of renewable and alternative energy sources.

For more information or to obtain an application package, contact Greta Brunswick (gbrunswick@nrpcvt.com) or Catherine Dimitruk (cdimitruk@nrpcvt.com) by email or phone (524-5958).



Efficiency Vermont Offers An Additional Incentive - Start Saving Energy NOW!

Efficiency Vermont will be offering a summertime incentive of an additional \$500 per completed job to its customers participating in its Home and Building Performance programs. This offer will be extended to qualifying homeowners and businesses completing jobs by August 31st and sending in their paperwork (completed signed incentive form) by September 30th. Along with the customer bonus incentive, a contractor incentive of an additional \$100 per completed job will also be offered.

To find out more please visit www.encyvermont.com or contact Allison at NRPC at astori@nrpcvt.com.



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