

**Staffing Updates:** Marian Wolz, CVRPC's AmeriCorps VISTA member, began work on 08/10. Marion is working on an analysis of housing plus transportation costs to inform Plan Central Vermont. Summer intern Taylor Norton successfully completed his internship. Taylor provided support for transportation field work, including traffic and park-and-ride counts, and culvert and road erosion inventories. Sarah McShane temporarily joined the CVRPC staff as a Regional Planner on 8/19. Sarah works 8-10 hours a week to assist municipalities with Municipal Planning Grant applications and works on Act 250/Section 248 project reviews. Interviews for the permanent Regional Planner position were held in mid-August.

**Audit:** The auditors completed field work (CVRPC office time). The draft audit is due Sept. 30 with an Executive Committee presentation in November.

**New Contracts/Grants:** The Agency of Natural Resources is contracting with RPCs for VT Clean Water Act assistance to municipalities. Dan Currier will be CVRPC's contract lead, although the work will be distributed among staff. Staff is crafting a work plan based on municipal needs; 75% of CVRPC's efforts will be the Mad River Valley storm water project (includes Duxbury and Moretown), urban municipalities addressing stormwater runoff, and municipalities that have interim status under the Emergency Relief Assistance Fund (ERAF). ERAF is the mechanism for municipalities to be reimburse for a share of damage costs for federally-declared disasters. Using transportation planning and 604b water quality funds, staff has completed road erosion inventories for 80% of our towns, and all communities have culvert inventories. *CVRPC and its communities are a statewide leader in this area!* Dan created the original road erosion inventory process still used by RPCs, the Agency of Natural Resources, and VTTrans.

**Brownfields:** Staff met with the City of Montpelier regarding its One Taylor Street project. Discussion included assessment and potential remediation needs for the project, CVRPC's Brownfields Program and site selection process/timing, funding sources for remediation activities, and project development funding.

**Technical Assistance:** Staff met with representatives of the Calais Select board, Planning Commission, and Conservation Commission regarding updates to the Town Plan. Calais is working to include directive language in its Plan as part of strengthening its input into Act 250 and Section 248.

The Caledonia Superior Court recently issued a *precedence setting* decision related to statutory notice required when a town adopts a new plan. The Court ruled that the 2012 Newark Plan Amendment was defective because it failed to comply with statutory reporting requirements under 24 VSA, Chapter 117, §4384(c). The amendment stated "oppose wind" and specifically listed a particular ridge line shouldn't have wind. A wind project had been submitted for that ridge under the Section 248 process. The court said the notice was inadequate because:

- It only mentioned the amendments were consistent with state planning goals. It did not describe how/why.
- It did not describe how it altered the designation of a land area (the ridge named and other ridge lines).
- It did not have any cost-benefit analysis for the changes. "The planning process requires more of the town than merely declaring 'not in my backyard'."

**VT Clean Water Act:** Staff participated in a public meeting for the Lake Champlain TMDL cosponsored by the EPA and VT DEC. EPA, and the VT Agencies of Transportation, Natural Resources and Agriculture presented. Pete LaFlamme from VANR stated that the 3-acre threshold for impervious surfaces will be downsized for sensitive watersheds, including the Missisquoi, Lamoille, and Winooski watersheds. For the Winooski watershed, the primary focus will be storm water from roads. LaFlamme also noted the Agency was developing an integrated municipal permit to address all municipal requirements. This reflects the Agency's recent focus on developing a Lean permit process. Lean government enables environmental agencies to work more effectively and efficiently by eliminating waste in government processes and dramatically improving the quality, transparency, and speed of processes.

**Regional Plan Update:** Drafting of the remaining elements of the 2016 Regional Plan has resumed. The Transportation Element, Housing Element, and Energy Element of the Plan will be presented in the coming months for review by the Commission. These elements are being developed by working groups under the oversight of the Draft Review Committee.

The Draft Health and Communities Element of the 2016 Regional Plan is completed and will be reviewed by the

Commission for acceptance of the language at the September 8 meeting. This element covers a number of Regional issues ranging from food security to healthy community design. The draft has been edited by the Regional Plan Draft Review Committee. Questions regarding the 2008 Regional Plan amendments or development of the 2016 Regional Plan may be submitted to Assistant Planner, Gail Aloisio, at [aloisio@cvregion.com](mailto:aloisio@cvregion.com)

**Forest Stewardship:** Staff continues this work in partnership with the Dept of Forests, Parks and Recreation, as well as seven other regional planning commissions. The Town of Marshfield is incorporating forest conservation into revisions to their land use regulations. Staff will be assisting the Town to revise a GIS analysis of land development potential to inform their decisions. Please contact Gail Aloisio at [aloisio@cvregion.com](mailto:aloisio@cvregion.com).

**Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMP):** Twenty towns have received final FEMA approval of their local hazard mitigation plans (LHMP). The Town of Calais LHMP has been formally approved by FEMA. Staff is assisting the Town of Waitsfield to address comments on its draft LHMP received from the Vermont Dept. of Emergency Management Homeland Security. Marshfield's LHMP has been resubmitted to FEMA Region 1 for review. If your community is interested in getting involved with any of the current LHMP updates or is interested in technical assistance from CVRPC, please contact Gail Aloisio at [aloisio@cvregion.com](mailto:aloisio@cvregion.com).

**Transportation Planning Initiative:** Staff is updating the transportation section of the 2016 Regional Plan and draft sections of the highway, transportation recommendations, and transportation executive summary are under review. Staff is assisting the Towns of Fayston, Waitsfield, Warren, Moretown, Waterbury, and Middlesex with their byway work. Staff continues to work on the Central Vermont Regional Path with Berlin, Barre City, Barre Town, and Montpelier. Staff worked on the Moretown culvert inventory. Staff did traffic counts in Waitsfield, East Montpelier, and Woodbury. Work continues on the Berlin US Route 302 bike and pedestrian plan. Consultants are working with Northfield, Plainfield, Woodbury, Cabot, Calais, and East Montpelier on road maintenance activity programs, and a study on flood resiliency and impacts on the transportation network in the Mad River Valley. Staff is evaluating the effects of safety improvements at VT 63/Miller Road (Barre Town). Staff attended the Agency of Natural Resources rivers and roads training and participated in a phone call on VTCulverts to review the list of possible enhancements.

**Town Technical Assistance:** Four towns have requested assistance from staff to prepare applications for the Municipal Planning Grant Program. Three towns will propose to make revisions to land use regulations, and one proposes a village build-out analysis. Staff has also been assisting towns with the municipal plan amendment report that must accompany proposed amendments to municipal plans. The Town Plan Review Committee will review Montpelier's 2015 City Plan for regional approval and confirmation on September 3. Towns seeking technical assistance may contact Assistant Planner, Gail Aloisio at [aloisio@cvregion.com](mailto:aloisio@cvregion.com).

**Brownfields:** The Town of Northfield is developing an area wide plan for Northfield Village. This plan will start with building a database of information on environmental concerns. CVRPC will assist Northfield with the development of this database. The work plan for CVRPC's new Brownfields funding was finalized and staff attended an award ceremony in Brattleboro to accept CVRPC's award. Interested Commissioners may contact Gail Aloisio, Assistant Planner, at [aloisio@cvregion.com](mailto:aloisio@cvregion.com).

**GIS/Fluvial Erosion Hazard:** Updated and/or developed the following: Barre Town manhole cover mapping, Montpelier City Plan review, and maps for VAST showing the statewide trail network. GIS staff also spent considerable time in the field assisting communities with bridge and road culvert inventories. Staff also assisted in the development of the Clean Water Act scope of work for the Agency of Natural Resources contract, assisted in writing the Marshfield Municipal Planning Grant application, and provided assistance to the Town of Plainfield in responding to special conditions for their Community Development Grant. Staff also met with local watershed groups to identify possible projects for a Lake Champlain Basin Program grant.

**Wrightsville Beach Recreation District:** Staff provides administrative, fiscal, and technical assistance to the District. The beach and park are open daily from 9 a.m. to dusk through Labor Day weekend. The website for Wrightsville Beach has photos of the shelters and amenities; take a look at [www.wrightsvillebeachvt.com](http://www.wrightsvillebeachvt.com). The Agency of Natural Resources has reached out to the Wrightsville Beach board to assess the Board's interest in owning and managing all the land around the Wrightsville Reservoir outside of the dam. More information and further discussion will happen over

the course of the next several months.

**Emergency Planning and Hazard Mitigation:** Staff supported Northfield in their 2015 LEOP adoption and acceptance by DEMHS. Currently, twenty two of the twenty three towns have a 2015 adopted and accepted LEOP. ICS certification training continued in August with 14 town officials attending ICS 402 training in Moretown from the Towns of Fayston, Moretown, Duxbury, Waitsfield, and Northfield. The ICS 100 training scheduled for September 10 from 8 am to 5 pm at the Barre Town Municipal Building has sixteen registered from Barre Town and Orange. Follow-up and support to municipalities affected by the July 19 & 20 severe storm has occurred. Staff participated in the disaster follow-up meeting with officials from Barre City, Plainfield, Barre Town, DEMHS, VTTrans, and ANR. Staff reviewed and drafted the Health and Communities Element of the 2016 Regional Plan, and attended River and Roads Tier II training targeted to RPC's and Emergency Management Planners. Staff continues to provide support to the LEPC #5.

DEMHS tells us that all first responders are required to be trained in ICS 100 and ICS 200 by October 2015. CVRPC will continue to promote and encourage training in our Region. Contact Laura Ranker at CVRPC to schedule trainings in your community. To view the DEMHS Training & Exercise calendar for the latest trainings being offered across the State, go to <http://vem.vermont.gov/event>. Contact Laura Ranker for assistance with any specific emergency management planning and training needs for your community at [ranker@cvregion.com](mailto:ranker@cvregion.com).

**Urban Forestry:** Staff worked with the Northfield Conservation Commission on drafting an Urban Forestry Management Plan as part of the municipal *Care of the Urban Forest Project*. An initial draft was presented to the Conservation Commission and subsequent edits and additions to the draft are being prepared for a final draft.

**Project Review Committee:** CVRPC reviews development requiring an Act 250 permit or Section 248 Certificate of Public Good for substantial regional impact and conformance with the 2008 Regional Plan. The following project reviews and comments were provided in July and August:

Calais VTel Wireless Telecommunications Tower: A 140' wireless telecommunications tower to provide broadband services is proposed at 1056 Bayne Comolli Rd. A determination was made that the project is of substantial regional impact. However, insufficient information was available regarding feasibility of collocation to make a determination on conformance with the Regional Plan. The project was determined to be of substantial regional impact due to its visibility from Nelson Pond and the Lake Tour Bike Route, and the opportunity for improved broadband service in multiple towns.

Maplewood Convenience Store at Berlin Corners: The applicant proposes a 9,000 sq. ft. convenience store and fueling station to replace the existing facility. The project is of substantial regional impact as it will increase traffic at the intersection of VT-62 and Paine Turnpike, a regional arterial. The project was found to be in conformance with Regional Plan policies regarding optimization of traffic signals for efficiency and safety improvements at high or potential accident locations. 2008 Regional Plan policies also support in-fill and appropriate expansion of existing settlements. This project is considered in conformance because it is surrounded by existing development in historically settled Berlin Corners and takes advantage of existing water supply and wastewater infrastructure.

Berlin Mall, LLC (Kohl's): A permit has been issued to construct a 55,550 sq. ft. free-standing Kohl's department store, located on Berlin Mall Road. CVRPC issued a letter commenting on a Motion to Alter that permit from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. CVRPC supported the ANR's Motion to Alter. CVRPC's opinion was that the expectation should be maintained that a State-issued storm water permit creates a presumption that a project will not cause undue water pollution.

***Remember to visit CVRPC's web site at [www.centralvtplanning.org](http://www.centralvtplanning.org) to view our blog and for the latest planning publications and news.***