

WRC STAFF ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

This summary highlights staff activity during the month of SEPTEMBER 2025

The lead staff person is listed in parentheses by each programmatic area heading.

Brownfields Redevelopment (*Susan Westa*)

- Bellows Falls Train Station – Executed Loan and Grant Cooperative Agreement for cleanup.
- Morningside Shelter – Assisting Groundworks as they prepare for cleanup. Developed draft loan and grant agreement and other documents for closing.
- BCONE/Regional Brownfields Conference, Schenectady, NY – Attended conference and presented session with Gary Fox and Katrina Mattice, Stone.
- Brownfields Program Interview – Participated in interview conducted by Agency of Commerce and Community Development staff about RPC's brownfields programs.

Community Development (*Susan Westa*)

- 4 Town Flood Adaptation Project – Coordinated and attended team visits with towns. Attended public meetings as part of charrette process.
- Southeastern VT Leadership – Updated presentation with Erin Ladd, Mt. Ascutney Regional Commission.
- Southeastern VT Housing Coalition – Attended planning meeting.
- Southeastern VT Economic Development Strategies – Attended regular meeting.
- VT Community Development Association – Attended annual conference about redeveloping community buildings.
- Londonderry Village Wastewater Project: Matt assisted with general project coordination between the Town, Village Wastewater Committee, and Engineer on the development of design plans, property owner connection applications, and funding opportunities for the wastewater projects in the south and north villages. The projects are expected to be bid this fall and constructed in 2026.
- Matt continues to work with the consultant for the Windham Regional Cultural Plan project, Cultural Planning Group (CPG), and the towns of Brattleboro, Wilmington, and Rockingham. A final draft of the plan has been completed and a workshop to launch the plan will be held in October.

Emergency & Resiliency Planning (*Alyssa Sabetto*)

- Attended Vermont Emergency Management's (VEM) annual conference held in Killington. Was a good opportunity to hear about new initiatives and network.
- Completed drafting of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Resilience (CDBG-DR) application for the Weston bridge/dam project, including inputting available data into the separate Environmental Review application. Met with Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) staff to go over the draft base application. Town put the draft application out for public viewing and we arranged for the public hearing.
- A public hearing was held for Weston's CDBG-DR application and the project was submitted to DHCD. The Environmental Review will be completed pending an award.
- Alyssa, Margo and Chris attended a feedback session for the National Water Model tool in development.
- Met with VEM Regional Coordinator, Taiga Christie, for monthly check in about emergency planning in the region.

- Maintained status communications about the construction phase of the Whitingham Municipal Center culvert project. Construction has been delayed but is planned to start early October.
- Sent Brattleboro a support letter for their CDBG-DR application for Dettman Bridge.
- Inquired about Congressional Directed Spending (CDS) opportunity with Senator Welch's office, relative to two projects that were submitted for that funding.
- Received word from VEM that the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) funding is delayed with FEMA with any renewal being unpredictable to time. Starting October 1st WRC does not have funding for emergency planning related work until the funding is reinstated to VEM. We presume that we will still conduct local liaison work as needed for events (under a separate funding source). Active Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) are unaffected as they have their own funding sources. Information about this cut was shared with towns via email and as a newsletter article.
- Alyssa attended Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) training and is now HSEEP certified. Upon renewed EMPG funding, this will allow her to work with VEM staff and towns on exercise planning, conduct and evaluation.
- Final steps of the Snow Lake project under the Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF) are underway as that funding source wraps up at the end of the year. The draft Preliminary Report and Design Plans for Snow Lake was sent to Dover town officials and staff for comment. Alyssa will attend a Selectboard meeting in October.
- Monthly regional planning commission staff meeting with VEM. This meeting focused on the pause in EMPG funding and the transition to some work being covered by VEM regional coordinators. Alyssa met subsequently with Taiga Christie to talk about her carrying forward a few things, including the Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC).
- Suggested to Emergency Management Directors and Fire Chiefs that they discuss with their Selectboards and consider joining the Tri-State Fire Mutual Aid group in part to gain access to the Northwest MA Type 3 Incident Management Team that the REMC met at the August meeting.
- Spoke and presented at the Rockingham Planning Commission meeting to kick-off the update of their flood hazard regulations.
- Completed and received FEMA approval for the Town of Marlboro Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Energy *(Mike McConnell & Anand Fedele)*

- Worked and met with the Ad Hoc Committee in Rockingham to finalize the first draft of the local enhanced energy plan.
- Corresponded with the Wilmington Energy Committee to discuss incorporating an enhanced energy element into the town plan update.
- Reviewed the Energy Chapter of the Whitingham Town Plan and provided staff comment.
- Attended the public hearing for WRC's energy compliance determination request regarding the energy element of the 2025 Regional Plan—promoted the public hearing and prepared meeting materials.
- Attended several coordination meetings with the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) team at the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS).
- Attended MERP site visits in Grafton, Halifax, and Londonderry. Met with several contractors on-site (primarily historic window, basement, and insulation companies) to solicit recommendations and receive initial quotes/estimates.
- Finalized the municipal project management (MPM) agreement for MERP with the Town of Wardsboro.

- Drafted RFPs for air sealing, insulation, and other weatherization-related improvements in MERP MPM towns.
- Researched deadlines for the solar tax credit, and advised MERP-awardee towns with eligible projects on taking advantage of the incentive.
- Drafted an RFP for solar, electric vehicle, and battery storage for the Wardsboro Firehouse and Library MERP projects.
- Advised several MERP-awardee towns on grant reporting requirements and reimbursement request procedures.

GIS/Mapping (*Jeff Nugent & Lisa Donnelly*)

- Finished edits to Londonderry's draft proposed 2025 zoning districts; created map and provided to town.
- Continued to work with the Windham road foreman on road erosion inventory and culvert inventory updates.
- Participated in a trail accessibility assessment for the Village trail in Grafton
- Began working on trail count presentation for the Vermont Conference on Parks, Trails, and Recreation.
- Grants in Aid: did post construction site visits, ANR reporting, and assembling photographs for the following towns: Athens, Brookline, Guilford, Halifax, Londonderry, Newfane, Putney, Rockingham, Stratton, Townshend, and Weston.
- Worked with the Stratton road foreman on updates to the road erosion inventory and culvert inventory.
- Attended Vermont Trails and Greenways Council board meeting
- Provided information to both the Townshend road foreman and a Bull Creek Common Lands board member about status of a road in Townshend.
- Updated map of paved vs. unpaved roads for Halifax, added elevation information.
- Continued to work on Act 181/Regional Plan Future Land Use map: completed Windham; final draft edits for Windham, Winhall, Londonderry, and Weston; updated our online maps; created 11x17 map of Brattleboro for review by the town.
- Continued to work on the WRC website update: meeting with consultant, and met with several staff about updates to their sections.
- Wardsboro zoning map: created final edits to the map after selectboard adoption; created final GIS data layer, created metadata, and uploaded AGOL for Vermont Open Data; printed out large format mylar overlay of zoning district boundaries along with large format paper copies of town plan maps.
- Did final edits to Winston Prouty Trail map and provided information to staff on map printing.
- Assembled a chart of staff work for each program area in each of our towns, for the VAPDA end of year report and at-work map.
- Downloaded and processed traffic count data for three counts in Westminster and three counts in Whitingham.
- Completed sidewalk data collection for Jacksonville (Whitingham), Guilford, Dover, Bondville (Winhall), Stratton Mountain, Jamaica, and Putney, and cleaned up data.
- Worked with local electronics guy to get our bike counter battery replaced, then set up counter for testing.
- Worked with a member of the Wilmington Beautification Committee to map and photograph flower barrels in Wilmington, to aid the highway department when they put them out each year.

- Retrieved a pedestrian counter from Haystack Mountain in Wilmington, and set out two additional pedestrian counters on Oak Hill trails in Bellows Falls.
- Performed a traffic count on Guilford Center Road in Guilford.

Municipal Planning Assistance (*Matt Bachler & Mike McConnell*)

- Continuing to work with the Town of Whitingham Planning Commission on their Town Plan Update. Reviewed and edited the Community Profile chapter, Vision/Goals, and Public Engagement process.
- Jamaica Town Plan Update: Attended Planning Commission's public hearing for draft Town Plan. Completed final revisions to the plan and submitted to the Selectboard.
- Weston Zoning Bylaw Amendments: worked on draft red-lined edits to Weston zoning bylaws to review with Planning Commission in October.
- Dover Zoning Bylaw Amendments: Completed technical review of current zoning bylaws for compliance with statute. Held meetings with various town committees/board and town staff to gather information about current zoning bylaws and provide information about the project.
- Brookline Town Plan Re-Adoption: began to provide Brookline Planning Commissions with assistance to re-adopt Brookline Town Plan by March 2026.
- Assisted towns with draft Municipal Planning Grant applications and responded to general inquiries about the grant program.
- WRC staff continues to meet monthly to coordinate around Town Plan update projects WRC is assisting with.
- Wilmington Town Plan – Sue sent out community survey and flyer and developed public meeting post card for mailing. Attended Planning Commission meeting.

Natural Resources & Water Quality (*Margo Ghia*)

- Working with the Town of Whitingham, drafted and released the Gates Pond Stormwater Assessment and Conceptual Designs RFP.
- The Imtec Lane Stormwater team is pursuing an Economic Development Administration Disaster Supplemental application for stormwater treatment and an erosion gully restoration in the Town of Rockingham.
- Working with the Town of Rockingham, drafted and released the Rockingham Transport Park Stormwater Assessment and Conceptual Designs RFP.
- Provided information on municipal status for NFIP, stormwater assessments and river corridor bylaws for the State of Vermont DEC Tactical Basin Plan 11 (West, Williams and Saxtons Rivers) update.
- Worked with Wastewater Infrastructure Sponsorship Program team for Whitingham to gather information on all clean water project potentials in the Town of Whitingham that might be eligible to receive funding through the program.
- Continue to work with the Rockingham Outstanding Resource Waters team. Closing in on finalizing the applications and assisting with outreach for letters of support.
- Participated in the Connecticut River Joint Commission Executive & Full Commission Meetings.
- Met with Massachusetts and Vermont planning, land conservation, and river organizations for a Resilient Deerfield Watershed meeting.
- Met with the Berkshire Wildlife Linkage Municipalities subgroup. Discussed providing language that could be incorporated into municipal plans/ open space plans on wildlife linkages.
- Organized and hosted a public information meeting on the recently completed Upper West River Corridor Plan: Presentation was by Fitzgerald Environmental, who outlined plan

recommendations for projects that would improve water quality and reduce flooding in the Upper West River watershed.

Project Review (*Alyssa Sabetto*)

- Project Review Committee meeting held in September. We discussed and met with the applicant of the Wrenegade short term rental project in Jamaica (2W0265-2).
- Drafted and sent an Act 250 comment letter for the Wrenegade short term rental project.

Regional Plan Update (*Matt Bachler*)

- Attended bi-monthly RPC roundtables about Act 181 and the Regional Plan update process.
- Continued work on draft regional land use mapping based on Act 181 standards.
- Updated WRC website to include informational materials about Act 181 and regional plan update process and schedule.
- Began outreach to towns to provide draft regional land use maps and set up times to meet with towns about Act 181. WRC will be completing mapping and doing outreach to towns approximately 4-5 towns at a time over the course of this fall and into early winter.
- Responded to general inquiries from towns about Act 181 and new regional plan requirements.

Transportation (*Colin Bratton*)

- Municipal Project Manager assistance with the Town of Windham 121 Culvert project. Construction has been extended beyond the period of the permits. Permit extensions are being pursued to determine when construction might occur.
- Municipal Project Management for the Newfane Salt Shed. There were no bids on updating the Design Engineering RFP. The town is determining how they would like to move forward.
- The Stratton Grout Pond Improvement project will be applying for a second round of Federal Lands Access Program. Assisted in gathering project documents and updating the project budget for the application.
- Provided Municipal Project Management services for the Spring Hill Road culvert replacement project in Londonderry. Worked with town on final ROW acquisition process. Developed RFP for construction inspection services.

Other

- Alyssa attended a Bond Bank Water Supply Administration Contract meeting to learn about this new project supported by the Vermont Bond Bank and meant to strengthen the administrative capabilities of public water suppliers. Alyssa then met privately with Steffanie Bourque of Rutland RPC to game plan approaching the first steps of the project. Reviewed project materials and gathered contact information for the suppliers in the region.
- Chris continues to represent the RPCs on the Vermont Evaluation of Rural Technical Assistance project technical advisory group. The purpose of VERTA, which was required by Act 181, is to create actionable recommendations for an integrated approach to delivering rural technical assistance to Vermont's towns.
- Chris chairs the 4-state CT River Watershed Partnership, which is in the process of convening legislators and RPC directors from the 4 states to discuss greater collaboration, and the potential for a 4-state watershed compact.
- Chris continues to serve on the technical advisory committee of the state to develop a local outdoor recreation economy planning toolkit.

- Chris continues to serve on the legislative Building Energy Code Working Group, the state Hazard Mitigation Grant Project Review Committee, the Urban and Community Forestry Council, the state wastewater and water technical advisory group, the Forest Stewardship Committee, and the Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel. He had served on the legislative Dam Safety Advisory Committee, which has completed its work and released its report.