

# VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, March 11, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## Teams meeting

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Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 315 981 149 #

### Objectives

- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s Outdoor Recreation Economy.
- Learn about work to build active, healthy and equitable communities in Vermont.
- Review 2018 VOREC Prioritized Action Plan and begin thinking about new challenges and opportunities that should be considered.

### Pre-meeting questions to ask Outdoor Recreation Communities

- What are the biggest changes to Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy you’ve experienced between 2018 to now? Do those changes present new challenges and/or opportunities for business growth, increase in participation among all demographics, quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources, increased stewardship, and/or the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation?
- What major efforts do you want to see happen to strengthen the outdoor recreation economy?

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
9:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	Jackie Dagger, Program Manager
9:10 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve November minutes</li><li>• Updates from chair</li><li>• Other updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ ACCD (Josh Hanford)</li><li>○ VTGC (Abby Long)</li><li>○ VOBA (Kelly Ault)</li></ul></li></ul>	Mike Snyder, Chair Jackie
10:00 a.m.	<b>Building Active, Healthy and Equitable Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn about work happening between Regional Planning Commissions and the Vermont Department of Health</li><li>• Q&amp;A</li></ul>	Melanie Riddle, Assistant Planner, Lamoille County Planning Commission  Ed Bove, Executive Director, Rutland Regional Planning Commission
10:30 a.m.	<b>Break</b>	ALL

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lead</b>
10:40 a.m.	<b>VOREC 2.0 discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share outcomes from November meeting</li> <li>• Review 2018 Action Plan</li> <li>• Discuss the current landscape of Vermont's Outdoor Recreation Economy by VOREC Pillar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are there new challenges?</li> <li>○ Are there new opportunities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Discuss next steps</li> </ul>	Jackie
11:50 a.m.	<b>Public comment</b>	ALL
11:55 a.m.	<b>Other business</b>	ALL
12:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	ALL

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

March 11, 2022 via Microsoft Teams | 9:00am – 12:00pm

**Steering Committee Attendees:** Michael Snyder, Josh Hanford, Mike Debonis, Hal Ellms, Karrie Thomas, Drew Simmons, Kim Rupe, Abby Long, Marc Sherman, Josh Ryan

**Steering Committee Members Absent:** Frank Stanley, Jeanne Gervais, Shelby Semmes

**FPR/ACCD Staff in Attendance:** Jackie Dagger, Caroline Zeilenga, Becca Washburn (joined at 10:00am)

**Public in Attendance:** Melanie Riddle (Lamoille County Planning Commission), Ed Bove (Rutland Regional Planning Commission), Kelly Ault (Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance), Lisa Lafont (Vermont Horse Council), Bryan Rivard (Ski Vermont), Steve Sharp (Mad River Valley Backcountry Coalition)

### Welcome and Introductions

#### *Business Meeting*

**November Minutes:** Mike D. motion to approve, Karrie second. None opposed, no abstentions. Minutes approved.

#### **Chair Updates**

Mike provided an update that in FPR's FY23 budget the Governor's recommendation includes another round of one-time general funds of \$5 million for the VOREC Community Grant Program. This is presently being discussed in the House Appropriations Committee. The committee conversation has included a thought of trimming this amount, but using the "trimmed" funds for other recreational support. The grant program does continue to be well received, and announcements about this year's grants will be coming very soon. He also shared that the House has now passed the reserve forestland bill for Current Use, which has raised questions about the posting of land as part of Current Use.

Mike shared that S.234, the Act 250 bill, has crossed over from the House to the Senate, and includes the language that exempts recreational trails from fragmentation criteria, but currently the Administration does not support the bill. The House may consider adding more to the bill that would possibly allow the Administration to support.

Congressionally directed spending announcements are being made, including recreation funding in Vermont. All three delegations have also reached out about another round of earmarks, and there are many big ideas that will be offered.

Mike provided an update on the Vermont State Parks seasonal workforce: Applications are extremely low. Many people are thinking creatively about recruitment and strategies to help with this. Mike invited the steering committee to share the word about working for Vermont State Parks within their networks. FPR is also working on improving connectivity for staff and visitors in parks, and working to increase wages.

Jackie shared that Frazier Blair of Orvis and Danny Hale of Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association (VASA) have been nominated and Mike is working with the Governor's Office to receive approval. Jackie also shared that she will be sending out a bi-monthly meeting hold for upcoming steering committee meetings.

Jacked provided an update on the grant program: The team is aiming to make announcements of grant recipients early next week. She thanked the steering committee members who served on the grant review committee.

Jackie shared that the Confluence of States has been meeting monthly and is working on hiring a fellow to support the group's administrative functions, and continuing to welcome new states, including Maryland most recently. Drew shared that others in the industry have noticed the decrease in news coming out of the Confluence of States and the business sector hasn't been hearing much about their activity. Jackie noted that the hiring of the fellow will hopefully include more outreach. Mike also noted that turnover in some state offices, leadership changes, and the lack of in-person events owing to COVID have impacted some of the activity and publicity. This year's National Governor's Association meeting will be held in Maine on July 10-13, with the Confluence exploring a signing summit for new states as part of the event.

### **Vice Chair Updates**

Josh shared the workforce challenges experienced in ACCD and for seasonal state historic sites. He noted that there are many open, limited-service positions, and that there are limitations because of professional experience qualifications required in many state government positions. He is also seeing these workforce challenges with the partners ACCD works with. He also spoke to the housing challenges and the many goals and solutions for re-investing in Vermont's housing and building new homes in some places, as well as moving unhoused Vermonters into long-term housing. He noted that most of the budget bills to move this work forward are complicated by additional policy layers within the bills. He invited everyone to speak with their legislators to encourage support of housing bills and initiatives.

Marc agreed with the housing needs and also noted the need for safety and for workers to feel physically safe commuting to and at work, including employees who work in loss prevention.

Josh provided an update on EDA grants, which could bring new money to infrastructure projects supporting out of state visitation and visitor experience, as well as destination marketing activities and strategic planning. He also noted efforts underway on NBRC funds for marketing, a summit, and more. Jackie added that in a recent meeting with NBRC representatives, the Northern Forest Center joined to discuss a summit for Fall 2023; Jackie will serve on the committee for planning the summit, and will be updating steering committee members on the work.



## **Partner Updates**

**VTGC:** Abby shared that the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) is creating an outreach pamphlet to educate stakeholders about what VTGC is, the work they do, and their shared values. They also submitted a request for funds for administrative support for VTGC of \$150,000 for a program manager, expecting that funds would flow through FPR. VTGC is also working toward publishing the best management practices and incorporating this into the Vermont Trails System, in partnership with FPR.

Abby also provided a legislative update that the council supports H.581, but understands that many important stakeholders do not support this bill, so they are not pressing to see the recreational trails provisions in the bill pass.

For more information see Abby's summary in the Meeting Minutes Appendix (starts on p.5).

**VOBA:** Kelly provided an update on VOBA's work on outdoor recreation economy policy, expanding workforce, supporting JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) work in outdoor businesses, and marketing to elevate outdoor communities, businesses, and recreation opportunities. VOBA's policy work includes infrastructure and stewardship, economic and workforce development, outdoor recreation marketing, and healthy landscape and climate economy, with a focus on advocating for specific policies including the VOREC grant program and economic development, workforce, and housing bills.

Mike noted that the Administration has been open to expanding career technical education initiatives to include recreation as well as forestry, and Kelly agreed that VOBA is also supporting expansion opportunities like this, as well as overlapping interests with climate policies.

VOBA is also engaging the outdoor community in focus groups and interviews to identify workforce recruitment, education, training, and retention needs. VOBA will summarize the needs and recommendations from this engagement. VOBA is also asking questions about business and technical assistance that outdoor communities need.

VOBA has received support from ACCD to provide a second Basecamp marketing initiative in Vermont Sports magazine this summer featuring VOREC communities.

## ***Building Active, Healthy, and Equitable Communities***

Jackie introduced Melanie Riddle from the Lamoille County Regional Planning Commission and Ed Bove from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission to discuss the work regional planning commissions are doing through a grant from the Vermont Department of Health (VDH).

Ed provided background on Vermont's regional planning commissions. Planning considerations include health and wellness in many other aspects of their work, from recreation to transportation to planning to agriculture to crime. This work has traditionally been more indirect, but now RPCs are partnering with the Department of Health to dedicate work specifically to healthy community design.

Melanie described the healthy community design work RPCs are engaging in through the VDH grant. The support includes health equity and COVID prevention, with funding to focus on increasing health equity and improving access to physical activity and healthy food. This work will include creating a health

equity toolkit that synthesizes health equity work being done in other states and that is applicable to both Vermont's small and large municipalities.

Jackie invited the steering committee to consider ways that VOREC can connect to this work with RPCs. The group discussed ideas to be included in the toolkit, such as tracks or categories for communities to use in their planning and encouraging communities to assess their outdoor recreation opportunities and consider how to improve them and improve access to them. Karrie suggested making sure that communities interested in VOREC grants are aware of this toolkit, and that this could also tie back to communities' readiness to apply for future VOREC grants.

## **VOREC 2.0 Discussion**

Jackie reported out on work she's been implementing as a result of the small group discussions from the last meeting.

- More regular updates – Jackie has been sending weekly legislative updates, as one example
- More tasks related to areas of expertise – Jackie has been pulling out pre-meeting questions to help steering committee members connect with their outdoor recreation communities
- Continue bringing in speakers – We heard from one today and will continue bringing more; Jackie invited suggestions for future speakers

Jackie also invited feedback and ideas or needs that she isn't already addressing. She also shared upcoming work priorities for strengthening the group, including updating the charter and bylaws. She invited steering committee members to serve on a smaller group to improve the VOREC website. Kim and Drew volunteered.

She also encouraged the group to think about how they would like to involve their outdoor communities in the work of updating the action plan.

Jackie facilitated a discussion on VOREC 2.0 planning, building on one-on-one interviews she held with steering committee members in June 2021. She prompted Steering Committee members to think about changes in Vermont's outdoor recreation economy since the 2018 VOREC Action Plan was created and asked them to identify new challenges and opportunities linked to each of VOREC's five principles (aka pillars). She facilitated the conversation using a Miro Board, and began with an overview of the 2018 plan and objectives, and how the strategies align with the VOREC pillars. As an addition to the slides Jackie shared, Drew noted that the growing of outdoor recreation businesses component also included retaining existing businesses.

Jackie invited steering committee members to engage with the Miro Board by adding their own comments to sticky notes or by sharing comments in the chat or raising hands to offer comments.

Related to one challenge noted about access issues that impact communities, including traffic challenges through Stowe, Mike invited help from VOREC and others to bring together a Route 108 corridor transportation dialogue. At the end of the discussion, Jackie encouraged everyone to continue considering opportunities and challenges and adding to the Miro Board.

For notes recorded from the Miro Board see Meeting Minutes Appendix (starts on p.5).

### **Public Comment**

Lisa Lafont: Vermont Horse Council will be spearheading a share the trail, share the road safety campaign beginning May 7, and noted that the 2018 VOREC action plan speaks to an opportunity and challenge they are experiencing allowing users to understand yield rules on trails and roads. VHC is encountering people who don't know yield laws to bypass horse riders, bikers, or others. She has observed this is more of a problem as recreation grows and encouraged VOREC's support of this safety campaign.

### **Other Business**

No other business offered.

**Adjournment:** Jackie motion to approve, Josh second. Meeting adjourned.

## **Appendix**

### **VTGC Updates Summary from Abby Long**

1.) VTGC is working on creating a snazzy looking educational pamphlet to clarify what VTGC is, what we do, and why we do it. We realized, the past few years working on an alternative program for trail oversight, taught us that many stakeholders do not have a good idea of our work and, specifically, the best management practices already deployed by our membership organizations, plus the dedication we collectively have for environmental and community stewardship. So in a nutshell the info brochure will share that The Council directly represents thousands of members, volunteers, and private landowners, and the organizational members of VTGC have considerable 'on the ground' experience stewarding recreational trails, including well-cataloged BMPs. We'll also share that The Council is an important partner in the development of trail-related policy and programs, including our statutory role advising The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on trail matters, including Recreation Trail Program grant allocations, supporting outdoor recreation education programs, and overseeing the Vermont Trail System, a role we execute through a close collaborative relationship with Vermont Forest, Parks, & Recreation. And we do all this because our Council members are the stewards of the 70+% of public access trails on private land and we are on the front line balancing equitable access with responsible use of our amazing landscape.

2.) We have submitted a request for funds for administration support to Rep Sims and Kimbel. In order to more effectively fulfill the VTGC mission to ensure that people will always have access to the trails and landscape of Vermont, and our commitment to foster trails that are both environmentally sustainable and community supported, the VTGC is requesting \$150,000 in one-time funds for a Program Manager and programmatic improvements. These funds would support a part-time (0.5FTE) staff member employed by the VTGC for three (3) years, along with enhanced member tools, materials, and communications.

3.) A third item, VTGC intends to consolidate, organize, and publish our collective BMPs and are beginning work towards integrating these management practices into the Vermont Trails System (VTS). This is a shared vision with FPR - to elevate and strengthen the VTS such that it is seen as a symbol of stewardship - and one that will take time to realize. Much of our focus this year will be dedicated towards this end.

4.) On the Omnibus bill - I would simply note that while the VTGC supports everything in H581, but we understand that other important stakeholders do not. We are not pressing to see the Recreational Trails provisions in the bill move forward, though we do believe significant portions (Sections 10-12) could pass without any real opposition and would provide helpful clarity on current oversight / Rule 71. Members of the REDWnG are keeping an eye out for other bills to which these non-controversial provisions could be added, though we understand this not to be a high priority.

### **Miro Board Notes**

#### *VOREC Principle: Grow outdoor recreation-related businesses*

- New Challenges
  - Housing
  - Workforce development
  - Worker safety
  - Small business / nonprofit \$\$ support to elevate their wages to be more competitive and encourage hiring
  - Remote workforce – access to better wifi – requires air travel
  - Remote workforce changing population of outdoors towns – how to keep them in VT when get called back to the office
  - Disconnect between marketing and stewardship
  - Safety for employees in Burlington – densifying neighborhoods are creating unsafe environments for staff in customer service facing jobs – employee harassment is heightened
- New Opportunities
  - Creating alternative education programs for teenagers
  - Remote workforce – opportunity to encourage remote workers to come to Vermont

#### *VOREC Principle: Increase participation in outdoor recreation activities among all demographics*

- New Challenges
  - Making sure messages about overcrowding don't exclude people
  - Economic, inflationary, pressure making access to outdoor recreation more challenging to lower income populations
  - Making sure people of all abilities have access and the supporting infrastructure they need (e.g. parking, lodging, etc.)
  - Capacity of NGOs to support diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ)
  - Making the outdoors a more welcoming space for all

- New Opportunities
  - Outdoors are being marketed to wider audiences
  - Can VT work with sister cities from other states to bring more diverse / economically challenged youth groups to our outdoor recreation opportunities
  - Invest in instructors and people who can facilitate development of new users – specifically target diverse leaders – seeing more diverse people with diverse interests

*VOREC Principle: Strengthen the quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources*

- New Challenges
  - Expanding definition and understanding of ability beyond what is required in ADA
  - Building a holistic experience – want to create as soon as people enter the state – to visit but also want people to want to call VT home
  - Modernizing the Vermont Trails system
  - Resources for communities planning trails and outdoor rec. opportunities
  - Range of opportunities available – developing an asset map (massive undertaking)
- New Opportunities
  - Range of opportunities available – showing people the resources that are out their backdoor
  - Good jumping off point with Town Forest Tool Kit for thinking more creatively around how we develop new assets / VT Trails System
  - User fees? Backpack tax? – Are these options for managing use? Ex: Fish and wildlife system, funded by fees / taxes – new funding source to help counter increase in user participation and impact – In NH users need a parking pass to use any trailhead (free or considerably less automatic parking pass for folks in need, on food stamps)
  - Adopt statewide code of conduct like “Ride with Gratitude” – unified messages that encourage stewardship
  - Outdoor recreation infrastructure valued same as traditional transportation infrastructure
  - Range of opportunities available – showing people the resources out their backdoor
  - More appropriate infrastructure to support users with mobility challenges
  - Disperse popular times – expand options for experiences – are there seasons that can be expanded? Locations that are set aside for one use that can be expanded to multi-users? – help reduce overcrowding – looking at how traditionally dedicated use and thinking about how to re-assess those decisions.
  - Developing standards / specifications for accessible trails – increased awareness for all users who are accessing outdoors / desire for experiences – ex: retrofit to get boat in the water for folks who need that help.
  - Inviting more communities to do a recreation assessment – economic love as much as trail resource love – start by looking at what we have and look more at what could be.

*VOREC Principle: Increase stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and environmental quality*

- New Challenges
  - Long term funding sources (think about ways to access resources through funds that could build over time – endowments)
  - Huge increase in users
  - Existential threat of climate change increasing
  - Need to think more strategically about management practices because of climate change and new users
  - Continue to explore way to support / compensate private landowners who generously provide outdoor rec opportunities in our state (current use type tax credit or carbon tax credits)
- New Opportunities
  - Support trail networks in making stewardship plans / policy that takes climate change / impact into consideration
  - Have more users – new residents – was about upkeep but with new users need to communicate about the need to new people
  - New dollars available for infrastructure is welcome and necessary given the incredible increase in need
  - Support trails / outdoor space in accessing Lidar terrain mapping to assess environmental impact / erosion annually to aid in mitigating this impact
    - KT looking at Lidar mapping / terrain to see the annual impact – tech being used in new ways creating new opportunities for management of trails – Carbon tax credits / working with landowners– wave the liability – ex: white out solutions in St. Johnsbury – can fly drones over areas to get better look at the terrain
  - People are noticing spike in participation – that it’s good – brings extra pressures and challenges – opportunity to go after dedicated revenue source – “Vermont Trails Stewardship Trust Fund”
  - Funding for VTGC Admin – help build capacity of stewardship practitioners in the state

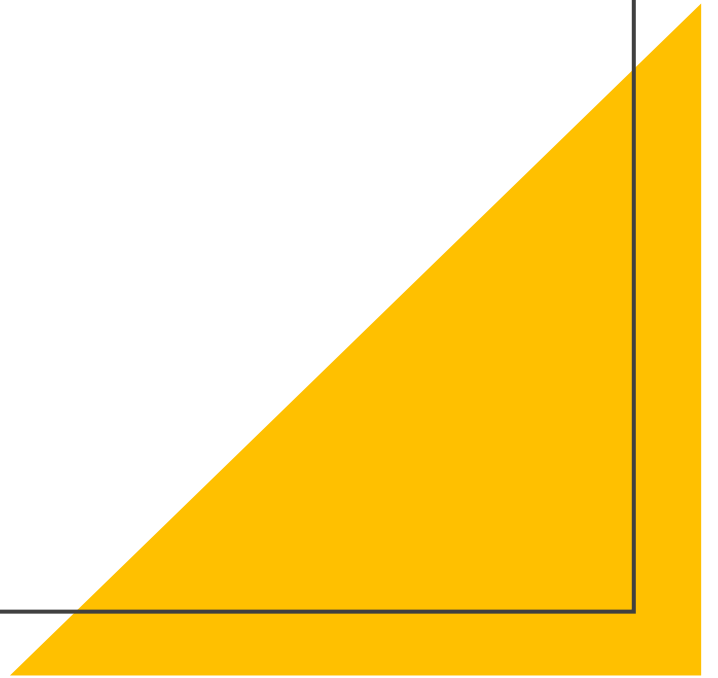
*VOREC Principle: Promote and enjoy the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation*

- New Challenges
  - Overcrowding and overuse of the outdoors – challenge in making sure all feel welcome
  - Motorized recreation does not create a healthy environment (Electric motorized OHVs)
  - Access issues with outdoor rec. assets – impacting participation negatively (inclusivity) – ex: vale resorts addressing income needs but it’s also less enjoyable
  - Issue with idling cars at ski resorts
  - Climate change/carbon – transportation solutions: public transportation / electric vehicle incentives
  - Bus rapid transit – increasing transportation potential (public transportation) – ex: Killington system
  - Defining outdoor recreation when we’re talking about VOREC – collect information from new users / continue dialogue around what we mean

- Downside of increasing use of resources
- New Opportunities
  - Mental health benefits – more awareness in the wake of COVID
  - Increase opportunities for participants to learn and hone skills
  - Also reduced air pollution
  - Nationally increased awareness of the outdoors as a welcoming place for people of all races
  - Renewed focus on value of outdoor education learning in the outdoors
  - Route 108 transportation / visioning
  - Reviving community ski hills / xc trails
  - Explore incentives for health and wellness – insurance, employer benefits
  - Data gathering – renewing commitment to gathering data to understand target pops to make recreation more accessible
  - More connector trails / paths to downtowns – mitigate recreation travel off dangerous roads

# VOREC 2.0

Action Plan Overview







# How was it created?

- Two-day Grafton Conference on Outdoor Recreation and Rural Economic Development (August 2017)
  - Community conversations held around the State
    - Arlington
    - East Dummerston
    - Hartford / White River Junction
    - Island Pond
    - Rutland
    - Saint Albans
    - Waterbury
  - Comments collected through email
  - Comments collected through write-in survey
-

# What does it look like?



## VOREC Steering Committee Recommendations and Action Plan February 2018

### INTRODUCTION:

The VOREC Steering Committee offers the following recommendations and action plan intended to enhance business opportunities, improve participation in outdoor recreation, strengthen our recreational infrastructure and stewardship of natural resources, and grow Vermont’s economy in a manner consistent with Vermont’s strong outdoor culture of respect and sustainability. The recommendations are broad, balanced, and inclusive. Through a collaborative process, including considerable public input, we have developed recommendations we think are achievable and impactful, given sufficient public and private commitment and resources. Some key principles have guided our work:

Inclusiveness. Outdoor recreation is defined broadly to be inclusive of all forms of outdoor recreation, including on-road, off-road, non-motorized, motorized, trail-based, open space, and by land, water and air. We have solicited and received feedback from many groups and individuals involved in outdoor recreation. Our motto has been: “If you’re outside, you’re in.”

Balance. We have considered all components of the Governor’s executive order including economic growth, marketing, stewardship, and access. We’ve sought to develop recommendations that balance economic growth with limited resources, balance increased outdoor participation with stewardship and sustainable infrastructure, and balance the varied needs of stakeholders and user groups.

Interconnectedness. We understand there is participation interconnectedness among outdoor recreational enthusiasts with users engaging and appreciating a variety of recreational pursuits. User groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive, i.e.

Objective	Strategy	Action/Initiative	Resources Needed	Impact to State Revenues	Timeframe
	Support other creative efforts to ensure lifelong participation in outdoor activities including beginning activity programs for all ages and families, e.g. loaner program for gear, community bike or kayak programs, etc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ID such programs in Vermont and elsewhere</li> <li>2. Replicate and support these programs</li> </ol>			
	Identify and promote access across all types of outdoor recreation and all seasons – including both				



# How is it structured?

- Guided by three key principles
    - Inclusiveness
    - Balance
    - Interconnectedness
  - Organized primarily by objective categories and strategies
-



# How is it structured?

- Objective categories
    - Regional pilot programs
    - Economic development
    - Funding
    - Workforce development
    - Marketing
    - Private / public partnerships
    - Access and participation
    - Stewardship
  - 40 strategies listed under objective categories
-



# How do strategies align with pillars?

VOREC Pillar	# of aligned strategies
Grow outdoor recreation-related business	12
Increase participation in outdoor recreation activities among all demographics	11
Strengthen the quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources	19
Increase stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and environmental quality	9
Promote and enjoy the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation	4

# VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, May 13, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## Teams meeting

[Join through Teams app](#)

Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 775 350 354#

### Objectives

- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.
- Learn about VOREC Community Grant Program recipients and discuss program feedback.
- Build alignment around future meetings and opportunities for better public engagement through the VOREC website.

### Pre-meeting questions to ask Outdoor Recreation Communities

- Are there projects you are excited about that were funded through this year’s VOREC Community Grant Program? Do you anticipate meaningful improvements for your community, or communities near you, because of this work? If so, what? Were there un-funded projects or types of work that you would like to see funded in the future?
- Have you visited the VOREC website? What information were you looking for? Were you able to find the information you needed?

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
9:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce new members</li></ul>	Jackie Dagger, Program Manager
9:20 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve March minutes</li><li>• Updates from chair<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ FPR (Becca Washburn &amp; Jackie Dagger)</li></ul></li><li>• Other updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ ACCD (Josh Hanford)</li><li>○ VTGC (Abby Long)</li><li>○ VOBA (Kelly Ault)</li></ul></li></ul>	Mike Snyder, Chair Jackie
10:20 a.m.	<b>VOREC Community Grant Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn more about FY22 grant recipients</li><li>• Grant program discussion</li></ul>	
10:40 a.m.	<b>Break</b>	ALL

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lead</b>
10:50 a.m.	<b>VOREC 2.0 discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review takeaways from March Miro Board discussion</li> <li>• Group capacity building discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss upcoming meetings (Speakers, virtual vs. in-person vs. hybrid meetings)</li> <li>○ VOREC website brainstorm</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Jackie
11:50 a.m.	<b>Public comment</b>	ALL
11:55 a.m.	<b>Other business</b>	ALL
12:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	ALL

## **VOREC Steering Committee Meeting**

May 13, 2022, via Microsoft Teams | 9:00am – 12:00pm

**Steering Committee Attendees:** Michael Snyder, Josh Hanford, Hal Ellms, Drew Simmons, Kim Rupe, Abby Long, Frazier Blair, Danny Hale, Karrie Thomas (joined by phone)

**Steering Committee Members Absent:** Mike Debonis, Frank Stanley, Jeanne Gervais, Shelby Semmes, Marc Sherman, Josh Ryan

**FPR/ACCD Staff in Attendance:** Jackie Dagger, Caroline Zeilenga

**Public in Attendance:** Kelly Ault (Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance), Jackie Cassino (VTrans), Bryan Rivard

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager, opened the May meeting of the VOREC Steering Committee and shared that the steering committee was welcoming two new members. Frazier Blair, Vice President of Merchandise Planning at Orvis, joins as one of five non-state representatives from companies within the Outdoor Recreation Industry. Danny Hale, Executive Director of the Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association and Co-chair of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC), joins as the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC) motorized recreation representative.

Frazier introduced herself and described her background in outdoor recreation and outdoor retail. She has worked at Orvis for 17 years and she also sits on the boards of the Outdoor Industry Association and the Green Mountain Valley School.

Steering committee members introduced themselves and shared one reason they participate on the steering committee. Staff and partner organizations introduced themselves.

Danny introduced himself after joining the meeting at 9:45am. Danny remarked on the importance of the management of Vermont's outdoor recreation resources to the state and to VOREC's work. Commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Mike Snyder (Mike), noted that stewardship is a foundational pillar of VOREC's work and he welcomed Danny's voice and interest in supporting this on the steering committee.

### **Business Meeting**

**March Minutes:** Hal motion to approve, Josh second. None opposed, no abstentions. Minutes approved.

### **Chair Updates**

Mike welcomed new members and asked veteran steering committee members to reach out to new members and be available to support and provide input from their experience participating on the steering committee.

Mike shared a legislative update: The session ended last night and the Governor's recommendation to allocate \$5 million to the VOREC Community Grant Program was included in the legislature's budget,



though the Governor has not yet signed the bill into law. State parks also received funding to provide internet connectivity in the parks, which is important for safety, business operations, and staffing. S.11 passed, including workforce development support that relates to outdoor recreation.

Mike shared that the Director of Finance and Administration at the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) is moving on, and this is coupled with historic workloads and strain, and he requested understanding that FPR is behind and is working hard to find solutions to provide service more quickly.

Mike also shared the Stowe Mountain Resort's decision to charge for parking in the winter. FPR is examining this internally and will be meeting with the resort's management to discuss whether FPR receives a portion of the parking fees and whether charging for parking this way is an unreasonable limitation to public access to Mount Mansfield State Forest.

Mike also provided FPR updates from Becca Washburn, Director of the Division of Lands Administration and Recreation (DLAR):

The Recreation Program Manager position formerly held by Jessica Savage will soon be posted for recruitment. The Enhancement of Recreation Stewardship and Access (ERSA) Trail grants have been awarded to 12 recipients and more information can be found on FPR's Recreation Grants website (<https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/recreation-grants>). There is an increase in funding through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and FPR hopes to host a community grant round this fall. The Recreation Trails Program (RTP) is currently taking full applications and hopes to award funding in the fall.

Jackie provided updates from the Confluence of States. She explained that the Confluence of States (the Confluence) is a group of 13 states, and growing, that have established offices of outdoor recreation and their Governors have signed on to a series of four accords that closely resemble VOREC's pillars (and were written with significant input from VOREC members). The purpose of this group is to bring outdoor recreation to the policy-making arena. She also explained that the Confluence is closely coordinated with the Outdoor Recreation Learning Network (ORLN) that was established by the NGA to support states interested in organizing an outdoor recreation office or have an outdoor recreation office but haven't signed on to the Confluence accords. Jackie participates in regular monthly meetings for the Confluence as the Vermont representative. Jackie shared that the Confluence is preparing to visit Arkansas in late May, including a visit to Bentonville to learn about the Walton Foundation and to join the ORLN Annual Meeting in Little Rock which will include a Confluence signing ceremony to welcome New Hampshire, Arkansas, and Maryland to the Confluence. She invited the steering committee to send her questions to inform her participation in both meetings. Additionally, Jackie shared that the Confluence has hired a fellow to focus on building a communications strategy and administrative backbone for the Confluence. To learn more about the Confluence and the Confluence accords visit: <https://www.confluenceofstates.com/>. Jackie will be attending the Outdoor Retailer summer show in early June and invited input from the committee before she attends.

### ***Vice Chair Updates***

Josh shared workforce challenges related to keeping up with federal funding assistance and new programs. However, there have been many legislative wins related to workforce development, training, and economic development and housing, including funding to invest in existing housing stock and new

pilots to spur modest single-family home development and mobile home parks and to create a new smart-growth neighborhood from scratch in the next five years, as well as many additional supports to housing, homebuyers, and community development.

There have been recent efforts to consider dual-language signs on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) for Canadian visitors, as one example of efforts underway to welcome more Canadian visitors back to the state.

### ***Partner Updates***

**Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA):** Kelly shared VOBA's excitement about the "The Next Outdoor Playgrounds" feature in the May Issue of Vermont Sports Magazine highlighting communities who received VOREC Community grants. Eleven communities and hundreds of businesses are included, as well as statewide recreation connections. VOBA is exploring a fall feature that would highlight the remaining 10 VOREC grant communities this year.

VOBA has received a grant from VOREC and the VOBA team is working on their plans to implement the funds for workforce and business assistance for the outdoor sector. Many opportunities have emerged, largely focused on technical occupations like bike mechanics, trail construction, and gear and apparel manufacturing as well as skill-based instructors—these jobs are in high demand and hard to fill—as well as recruiting for diversity and helping companies expand their inclusivity.

VOBA has completed work with UVM's MBA program in sustainable innovation on focus groups and interviews with 55 businesses to inform and reinforce the needs of the industry for workforce training and education. The report that was produced includes many recommendations.

VOBA's policy work focused largely on economic development, including the VOREC Community Grant Program, as well as e-bike incentives and VHCB and housing, many components of which were within S.11.

**Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC):** VTGC has created an educational document on what the council is and what they do. The VTGC annual meeting will be held in person in Montpelier on Monday, May 16. Discussion will focus on current challenges and opportunities, how VTGC can better support members, how members can be more active and engaged, and modernizing the Vermont Trail System. Abby also mentioned that S.234, the act relating to Act 250, lays out a marker that trails do not fragment forests. Mike noted that although he is not speaking for the Governor, the Governor publicly indicated that he is likely to veto the bill.

*See appendix for educational document about VTGC and what they do.*

### **VOREC Community Grant Program**

Jackie provided an update on the progress the VOREC Community Grant Program has made and presented on this year's grants. Thirty-seven projects were invited to submit a full application, of which 30 applied. After a robust review process to identify grant recipients, award decisions were announced in March to 24 recipients with over \$4.5 million in funding. She reviewed grant recipient locations and broad project categories and reviewed the grant program recommendations that were made before this grant round and the ways that these recommendations were implemented. She acknowledged that FPR

business office staff turnovers are delaying grant funds being delivered and FPR is providing support to these communities.

Danny shared that project are going to experience costs going up for bids and asked if there's a plan for that. Mike agreed that FPR is feeling the same challenge with contractors and costs, and Jackie responded that conversations haven't been had yet. Drew shared that there was initially some concern about expenditures and the pace of reimbursement, and that the project in his community is a dominating conversation with significant local media coverage and complimented VOREC for encouraging communities to think about what's possible with outdoor recreation in their communities. He also suggested a future conversation about what long-term, sustainable funding for the program looks like.

*See the appendix for PowerPoint slides.*

### **VOREC 2.0 Discussion**

Jackie reminded the group of the VOREC 2.0 conversation from the last meeting and pointed people to the appendix to the March meeting minutes to see the conversation notes. She focused this meeting's conversation on building the steering committee's capacity for working with each other and building public engagement. She asked the group to brainstorm a list of topics they would like to hear from speakers about, and their interest in different meeting formats, as well as ways to make the VOREC website a better tool for public engagement. She shared questions on her screen and noted responses.

*See the appendix for discussion notes. The full discussion can be viewed by watching the meeting recording available publicly on FPR's YouTube channel*

*(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCzDdXvrzPd3pnMLpx7aM9g/videos>)*

### **Public Comment**

No public comment was offered.

### **Other Business**

Kelly shared that the Office of Racial Equity invited groups to submit projects that would advance diversity and equity and noted this as a potential funding opportunity for outdoor organizations and communities.

**Adjournment:** Jackie motion to adjourn, Abby second. Meeting adjourned.

## Appendix

### VOREC 2.0 Discussion Notes

Question: What topics should the steering committee learn more about to inform our work on VOREC 2.0 and an updated prioritized action plan?

- Learnings from other states – what are other offices of outdoor recreation doing? Learning from their models.
- Relationship between conservation and recreation advocacy – look at from both sides
- The move to electric – not just e-bikes but also e-infrastructure
- Used commerce – products that are being sold 3-4 times past first owner and how that impacts the economy
- Supply chain and inflation over the next few years and how that impacts what VOREC is trying to achieve and our role in supporting grantees
- Equity and inclusion – how VOREC integrates into our work
- Communities becoming unaffordable and driving out the local community – what can the outdoor recreation sector do to give back – are there examples of recreation industry giving back to the community?
  - Examples
    - Pine Hill Park event to benefit homeless prevention center
    - User groups working with community groups to give back and build partnerships - New River Gorge

Question: Moving out of the restrictions of the pandemic, what meeting models have you liked? Are there examples of hybrid, virtual or in-person meetings that you think the VOREC Steering Committee should consider? What are they?

- NEK Collaborative Board – regular meetings are on Zoom, quarterly in-person meetings, annual meeting is in person
- Hybrid model (e.g. in-person and virtual participation) makes it really hard to engage
- VASA – Use a hybrid meeting model. They have found that having good technology (e.g. mics and cameras) is needed to make this model work well. A moderator also makes a huge difference.

Question: Who is currently visiting the VOREC website? Who do we want to visit in the future?

- VOREC steering committee members looking for resources
- Legislators / elected officials looking for more information
- VOREC grant applicants
- Funders
- Outdoor recreation user groups (e.g. climbing groups, backcountry ski groups)
- Media

Question: What images do we want people to see when they visit the website?

- Images of different outdoor recreation user groups
- Map of communities who have received VOREC Community Grants
- Dashboard with data on towns served, trails built, projects that have been funded (update annually)
- Images from VOREC Community Grant Projects
- Succinct explanation about VOREC
- Word collage in the shape of VOREC acronym
- Images that reflect community, stewardship of resources
- Images connected to the driving principles of VOREC

Question: What key information of messages do we want people to remember after they leave the website?

- What VOREC is
- What the Outdoor Recreation Economy is
- That VOREC wants stakeholder input! People should know how to attend a meeting, how to send us a note, be able to share feedback on how we're doing, understand how to apply for a grant and who the previous grant recipients are
- What VOREC's driving principles are

Question: What else should we be thinking about?

- Navigational features – want to make sure the website is easy to navigate
- Representation – we should make sure visitors to the website know who our partner organizations are and how to get to their websites
- Making the website a hub for contributing ideas – make it a one stop place to find people / organizations working in the outdoor recreation space
- Developing a questionnaire for website visitors to fill out / gather information about the outdoor recreation economy



Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative

## GRANT PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

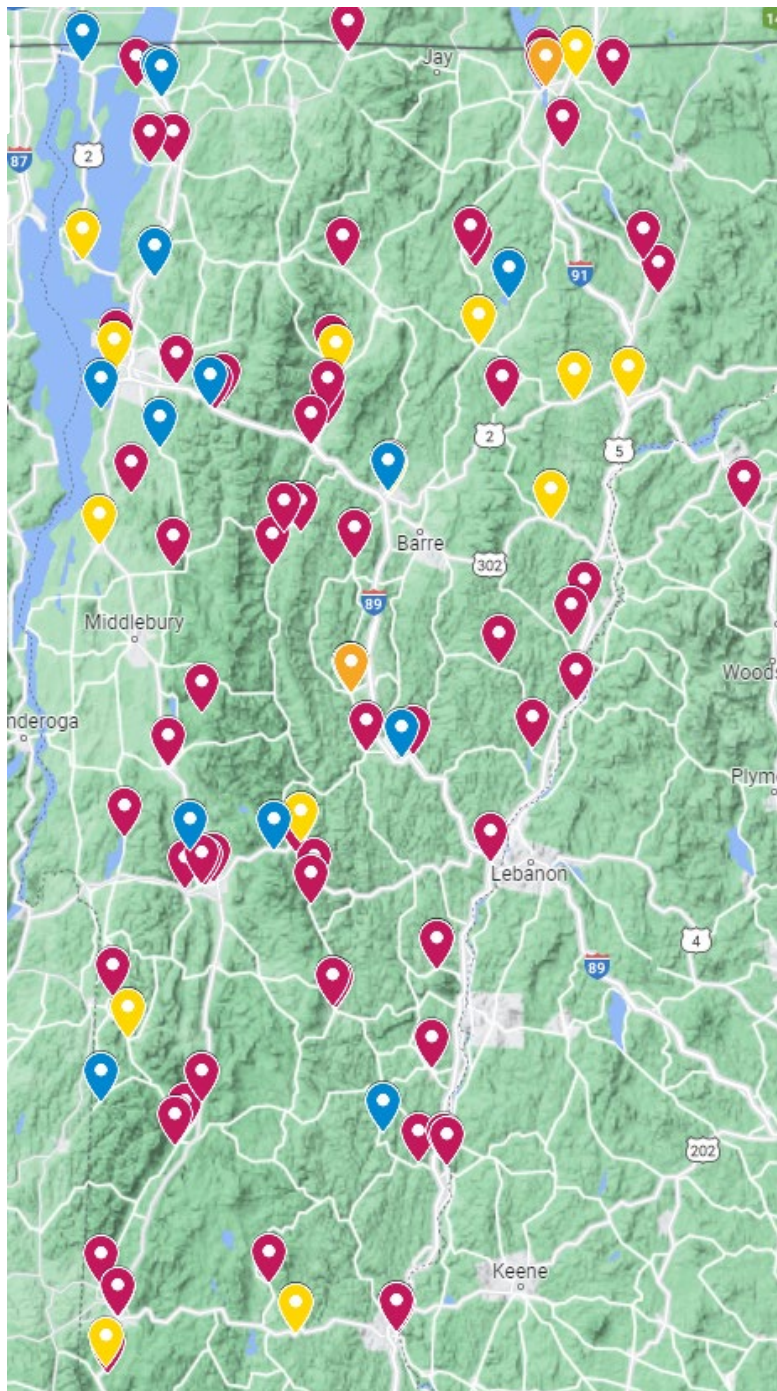
## FULL APPLICATIONS

- Received 30 full grant applications
- Requested a total of \$7.2 million dollars
- Selected 24 grant recipients and over \$4.5 million in funding

## FY22 GRANT RECIPIENTS

- City of Vergennes
- Town of Pownal
- Town of St. Johnsbury
- Town of Groton
- Town of Hardwick
- Town of Danville
- City of Burlington
- Trust for Public Land
- Sterling College
- Lake Champlain Economic Development Corporation
- Town of Derby
- Town of Killington
- Town of Pawlet
- City of Montpelier
- Town of Cabot
- Mad River Valley Recreation District
- Town of Northfield
- Vermont Museum of Natural History
- Town of Bethel
- Ascutney Outdoors
- Town of Ludlow
- Vermont Outdoor Business Association
- Vermont River Conservancy
- Town of Randolph /VT Huts





## FY2022 VOREC Community Grant Program Recipients

Purple markers = Letter of Interest Applicants

Blue markers = Applicants invited for full applications

Yellow markers = Grant recipients

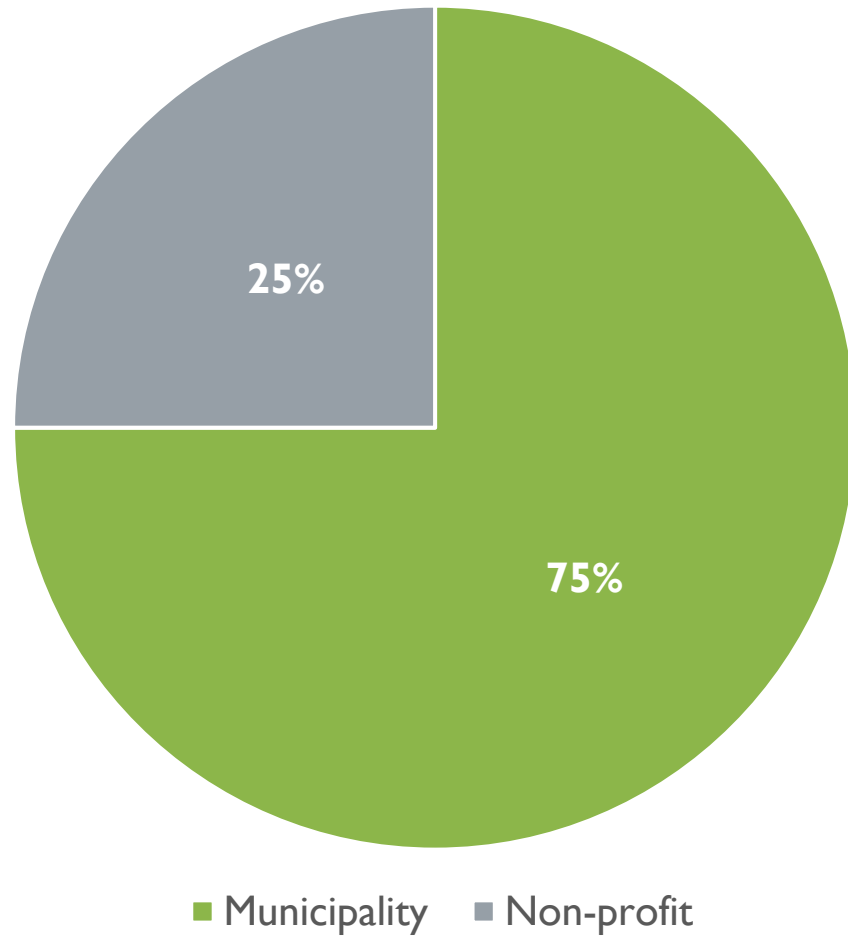
## 2022 GRANT AWARD BREAKDOWN

- Recipients will complete work in 11 of Vermont's 14 counties
- Projects will....
  - Have statewide benefits
  - Connect communities to and further develop statewide outdoor rec. resources
  - Support workforce and outdoor recreation business development
  - Create new opportunities for gear lending

## 2021 PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Set a grant minimum of \$50,000 with no maximum
- Implement a 2-step Letter of Interest and Application Invitation Process
- Expand eligibility to include non-profits
- Fund up to 25 grants across the state in several “buckets” (equity, regional / multi-community efforts, local/smaller efforts, economic impact studies)
- Provide non-reimbursement based / up front funding to grantees

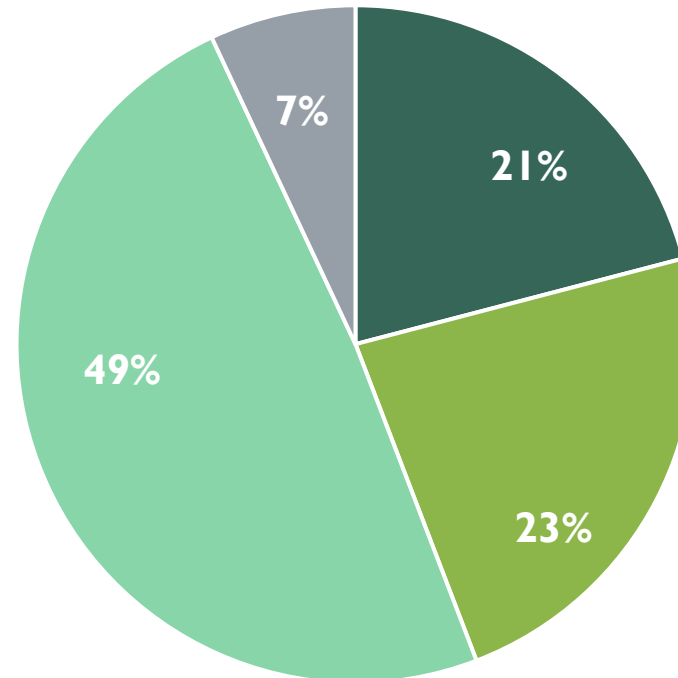
# MUNICIPALITY VS. NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION



# DISTRIBUTION ACROSS IDENTIFIED FOCUS AREAS

## **EQUITY FOCUS AREA**

*Projects counted under the equity focus area have an element of accessibility for differently abled bodies (e.g. ADA accessible trail / bathroom), provide better access to otherwise expensive equipment (e.g. gear library, low-cost rentals), and/or create programming focused on BIPOC.*



■ Equity

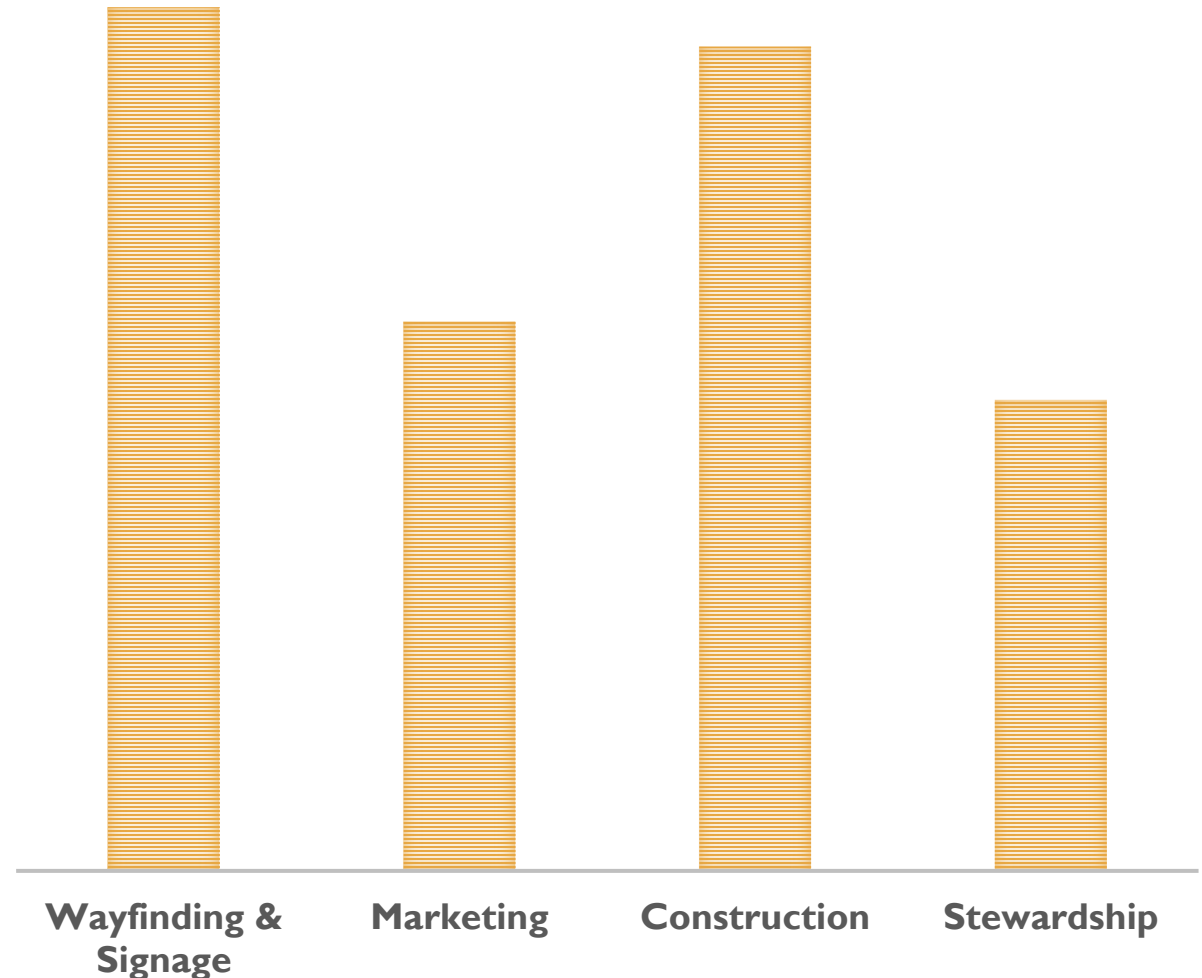
■ Local/smaller efforts

■ Regional/multi-community efforts

■ Economic impact data

# FUNDED PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Wayfinding & signage:** trail system maps, educational kiosks, marketing for local businesses
- **Marketing:** website development, logo development, outdoor recreation resource photos, messaging development, community events
- **Construction:** trail building, park improvements, pedestrian bridges, parking construction and improvements, pump track building, skate park improvements
- **Stewardship:** trail maintenance, stewardship team coordination, educational programs and signage about community natural resources
- **Other:** land acquisition, business development, workforce pathway development (trail building & bike mechanics), trail use studies





# GRANT RECIPIENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Decisions emailed to applicants on Wednesday, March 16
- Decisions announced publicly at the Governor's Press Conference on Monday, March 28
- 11 recipient communities highlighted in May Issue of Vermont Sports Magazine
- Coverage of individual projects in local news



## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Grant agreement development
  - Working with grantees to confirm project activities and budgets
  - Working with the FPR Business Office to execute grants
  - Executing grants and starting to issue re-imbursements
- Watching the Governor's recommendation to allocate another \$5 million to the VOREC Community Grant Program in the FY23 budget



# VERMONT TRAILS AND GREENWAYS COUNCIL



Ensuring people have access to the trails and landscape in Vermont.

[VERMONTTGC.ORG](http://VERMONTTGC.ORG)

## WHO WE ARE

A collective voice for Vermont trails. The **Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC)** gathers together an active membership of nonprofit trail organizations representing all types of trails statewide. Membership also includes community groups, local businesses, cities and towns and public land management agencies.

### The members of the Council:

- Represent **50,000+** individual members
- Log **100,000+** hours of volunteer time annually
- Manage and maintain **7,750+** miles of public access trails
- Support **50,000+** jobs statewide through the broader impact of our work
- Steward trails on private land, which hosts over **70%** of public access trails in Vermont
- Partner closely with state and federal agencies to manage trails on public land



## WHAT WE DO

The Council serves as the consolidated, expert voice for recreational trails in Vermont and provides guidance to policymakers in the following ways:

### INFORM

The Council directly represents thousands of members, volunteers, and private landowners and can provide their perspectives along with those of our member organizations to help inform decision-making, including as testimony.

### GUIDE

The organizational members of the Council have considerable on the ground experience stewarding recreational trails, including well-cataloged best management practices, positioning the Council as an important partner in the development of trail-related policy and programs.

### ADVISE

The Council has a statutory role advising The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on trail matters, including Recreation Trail Program grant allocations, supporting outdoor recreation education programs, and overseeing the Vermont Trail System (VTS), a role we execute through a close collaborative relationship with Vermont Forest, Parks, & Recreation.



The Council is eager to engage with policymakers at any time to discuss how we can assist on trail-related topics.



## WHY NOW

Demand for outdoor recreation access has risen dramatically over the last decade, growth that was only accelerated through the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, 7.1 million more Americans participated in outdoor recreation than in 2019 (OIA, '21). This explosion in trail popularity has been especially acute in Vermont, a five-hour drive from over 80 million people and a regional epicenter for outdoor recreation.

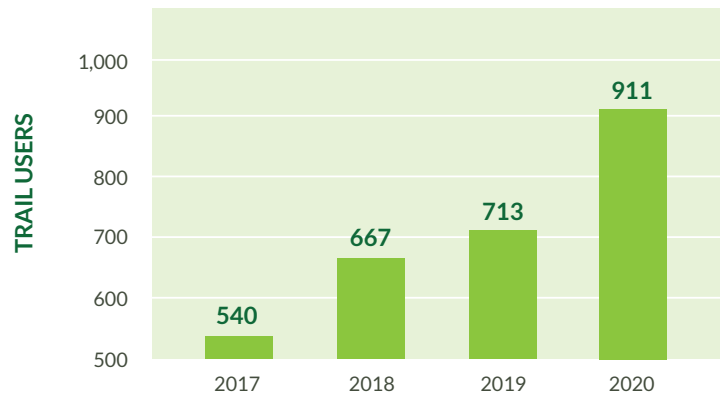
### Vermont was no exception:

- Daily usage at the Blueberry Lake trail system in the Mad River Valley grew over **150%** from 2016 to 2021 (Mad River Riders, '22).
- Catamount Trail Associations annual trail user counts at Brandon Gap and Nebraska Valley **doubled** between 2017 and 2020.
- Sales of VASA Trail Access Decals, required to access ATV trails on private land without individual landowner permission, have increased over **150%** from 2016 to 2021

## Year Over Year Trail Counts (Winter Use)

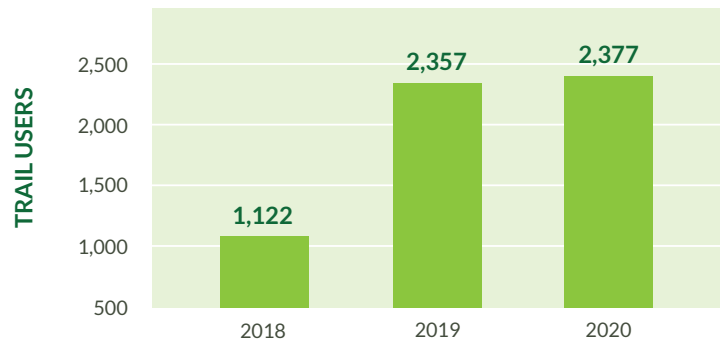
### Brandon Gap - No Name Backcountry Area

Year Over Year Trend



### Nebraska Valley - Catamount Trail Section 22

Year Over Year Trend



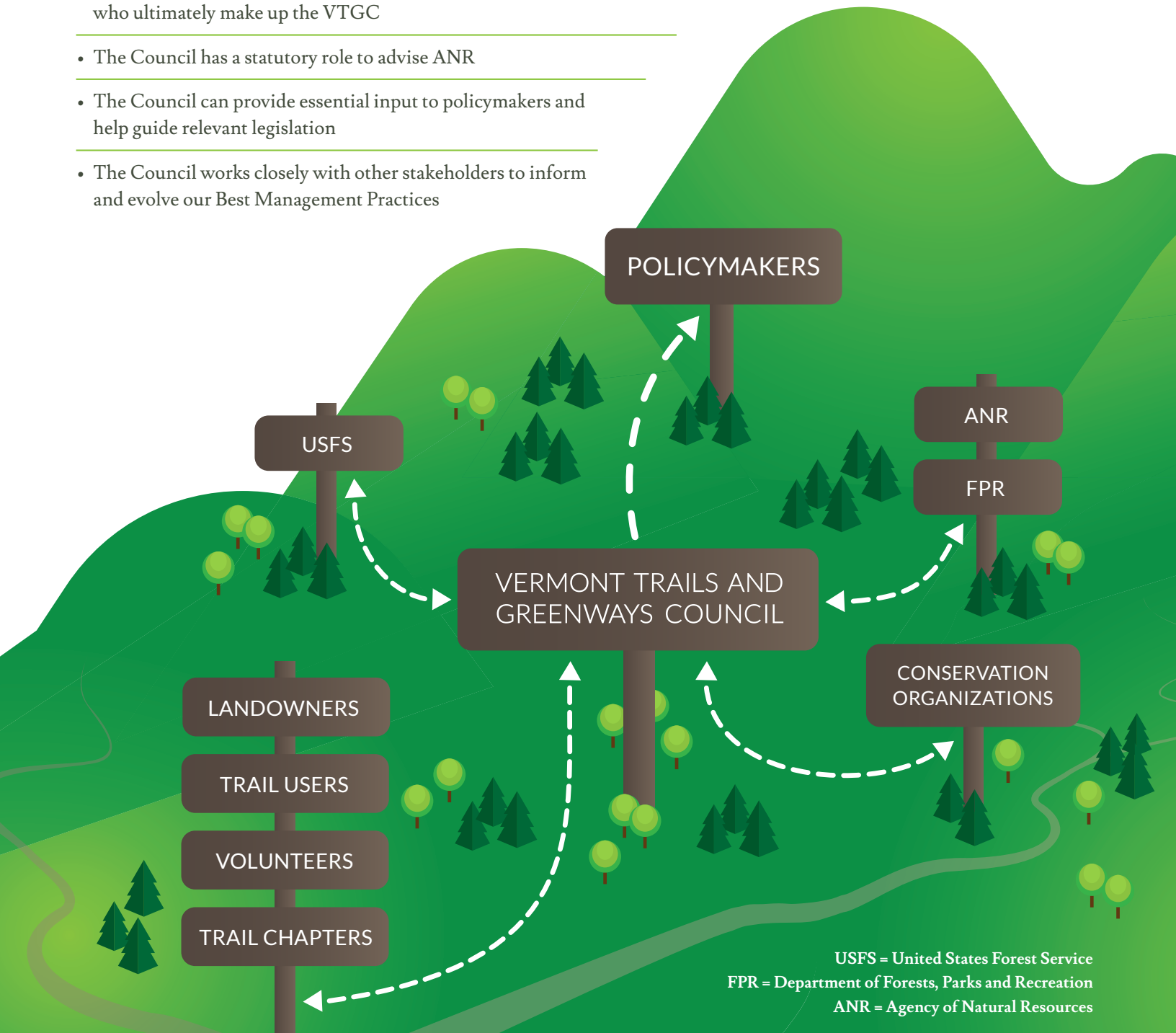
Now, more than ever, the Council seeks the support from and active dialogue with Vermont's policymakers to ensure we chart a supportable, sustainable path forward. [VERMONTTGC.ORG](https://VERMONTTGC.ORG)

## OUR STEWARDSHIP COMMUNITY

As stewards of the 70+% of public access trails on private land and in concert with public land managers, the VTGC is on the front line balancing equitable access with responsible use of our amazing landscape. Our members best management practices, which address trail design, construction, use, and maintenance, demonstrate our commitment to environmental stewardship.

### Key points of how we work

- Our Council members represent landowners, volunteers, and members, who ultimately make up the VTGC
- The Council has a statutory role to advise ANR
- The Council can provide essential input to policymakers and help guide relevant legislation
- The Council works closely with other stakeholders to inform and evolve our Best Management Practices





# OUR MEMBERS

## Board of Directors:

Danny Hale, Co-Chair – VASA

Nick Bennette, Co-Chair – VMBA

RJ Thompson, Co-Vice Chair  
Vermont Huts

Mariah Keagy, Co-Vice Chair  
Sinuosity

Greg Western, Secretary  
Cross Vermont Trail

Cindy Locke, Treasurer – VAST

Matt Williams, Board Member  
Catamount Trail Association

Eric Remick, Board Member  
Hardwick Trails Committee

Abby Long, Board Member  
Kingdom Trail Association

Caitrin Maloney, Board Member  
Velomont Trail Collective

Rosy Metcalfe, Board Member  
Community Representative

Rachel Fussell, Board Member  
Community Representative

## Organization Members

Caledonia Trail Collaborative

Catamount Trail Association

Craftsbury Outdoor Center

Cross Vermont Trail Association

Green Mountain Club

Hinesburg Trails Committee

Kingdom Trail Association

Mad River Path

Nature Conservancy

North Country Trail Association

Northern Forest Canoe Trail

Northwoods Stewardship Center

Stowe Trails Partnership

The Nature Conservancy

Town of Hardwick

Town of Lyndon

Upper Valley Trails Alliance

Vermont Association of Snow Travelers  
(VAST)

Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association  
(VASA)

Vermont Horse Council

Vermont Huts Association

Vermont Mountain Bike Association

Vermont Off Highway Vehicle  
Recreation Association (VORA)

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

## State and Federal Agency Members

Green Mountain National Forest

National Park Service

Vermont League of Cities and Towns

VT Agency of Transportation

VT Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

VT Dept. of Forest, Parks and Recreation

## Commercial Members

Sinuosity, LLC



**Please contact these VTGC Council members for more information:** Mariah Keagy – [mariah@sinuosity.net](mailto:mariah@sinuosity.net)  
Nick Bennette – [nick@vmba.org](mailto:nick@vmba.org), Danny Hale – [director@vtvasa.org](mailto:director@vtvasa.org), RJ Thompson – [rj@vermonthuts.org](mailto:rj@vermonthuts.org)



Photo by John Atkinson



Photo by Marius Becker



# VERMONT TRAILS AND GREENWAYS COUNCIL

VERMONTTGC.ORG

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, July 8, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

### Teams meeting

[Join through Teams app](#)

Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 775 350 354#

### Objectives

- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.
- Plan to meet in-person for September Steering Committee Meeting.

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
9:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	Jackie Dagger, Program Manager
9:10 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approve May minutes</li><li>• Updates from chair</li><li>• Sector updates<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ FPR (Becca Washburn &amp; Jackie Dagger)</li><li>○ ACCD (Josh Hanford)</li><li>○ VTGC (Danny Hale)</li><li>○ VOBA (Kelly Ault)</li></ul></li></ul>	Mike Snyder, Chair Jackie
10:10 a.m.	<b>September Steering Committee Meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss meeting format and length</li><li>• Brainstorm locations</li></ul>	Jackie
10:40 a.m.	<b>Public comment</b>	ALL
10:50 a.m.	<b>Other business</b>	ALL
11:00 a.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	ALL

## **VOREC Steering Committee Meeting**

July 8, 2022 via Microsoft Teams | 9:00am – 11:00am

**Steering Committee Attendees:** Michael Snyder, Mike Debonis, Hal Ellms, Josh Ryan, Marc Sherman, Drew Simmons, Frank Stanley, Danny Hale, Karrie Thomas, Frazier Blair, Shelby Semmes

**Steering Committee Members Absent:** Jeanne Gervais, Josh Hanford, Abby Long, Kim Rupe

**FPR/ACCD Staff in Attendance:** Heather Pelham (filling in for ACCD steering committee member Josh Hanford), Jackie Dagger, Becca Washburn, Caroline Zeilenga

**Public in Attendance:** Kelly Ault (Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance), Jordan Rowell (CRAG-VT), Parker Riehle (Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports), Ethan Murphy (Middlebury Skate Park), Stephen Gladstone

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager, opened the meeting by welcoming steering committee members and guests and reviewing the agenda. Jackie led introductions of steering committee members, staff, and partners playing an active role in the meeting. Jackie explained that the July meeting would be the last VOREC will be holding in their “pandemic format” (e.g. only virtual meetings) and that moving forward the goal is to start meeting in-person again on a more regular basis likely in combination with virtual meetings. To mark the transition she led steering committee members in a “live journaling” exercise to share what they’ve appreciated about meeting in this virtual format.

### **Business Meeting**

#### ***May Minutes***

Frazier motion to approve, Danny second. None opposed, no abstentions. Minutes approved.

#### ***Chair Updates***

Mike shared that the FY23 budget passed and was signed by the Governor and includes \$5 million in funding for the VOREC grant program. He mentioned that H.606 passed but was vetoed by the Governor, owing to ANR’s challenge of definitions of conservation in the bill and the significant workload the bill required of staff with no additional support to implement the strategies in the bill. ANR is excited to be working with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) on enhanced conservation planning without legislation, including the tremendous nexus between conservation and outdoor recreation.

Mike shared that ANR has been petitioned by Standing Trees Vermont claiming that the Camel’s Hump Management Unit state land has been managed illegally and calling on ANR to go to rulemaking to make rules for timber harvesting and to demand a moratorium to timber harvesting on Camel’s Hump and to all state land generally. This is a significant development that FPR and ANR are taking seriously and welcome public accountability to stewarding public lands, but the Agency believes the petition is inaccurate and misrepresentative; a comprehensive response from ANR will be forthcoming, and ANR feels confident in the laws supporting the role of ANR and FPR on these public lands, and the science supporting them.

Mike also asked for continued understanding of the capacity challenges in the FPR Business Office and requested continued patience as this team tries to dig out. He expressed appreciation for support from ACCD, and he announced that an offer has been made and verbally accepted for a new Director of Finance and Administration.

### ***FPR Updates***

Becca announced that FPR's Recreation Program Manager position received many qualified applicants and includes a hiring committee with FPR and partners represented. This position has been changed to focus in a more targeted way on supporting the outdoor recreation community's work on private land, and partnerships with municipalities and with FPR's state lands, including modernization of Act 250 work, supporting the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, supporting grants administration, and managing the update of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Candidates will soon be selected for interviews.

Becca also provided an update on the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that has just announced \$2.2 million for the state of Vermont. The National Park Service is scaling up their staffing and examining project readiness, which may include administrative funding that could help FPR increase its staff capacity as well as requirements regarding having permitting in place and community readiness occurring up front.

Becca shared that the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) schedule shifted this year, so that those interested in applying for the Enhancement of Recreation and Stewardship Access (ERSA) program would know whether they received this grant to be able to apply for RTP funding. Becca also thanked Hal for his service on the RTP ranking committee as he steps down.

Jackie shared updates on the local and national outdoor recreation economies. In May, she attended the Confluence of States and Outdoor Recreation Learning Network conference in Arkansas. The group toured several outdoor recreation opportunities in Bentonville and learned about the impact of outdoor recreation on the town's economy and culture, and participated in panel lead discussions on advancing equity in outdoor recreation, federal legislation in support of outdoor recreation, and the importance of data in supporting the narrative of outdoor recreation offices. Karrie suggested it would be interesting to hear more about the incubator programs to get businesses and communities ready to support mountain biking as Vermont could consider this in regards to many outdoor recreation opportunities.

In June, Jackie attended the summer Outdoor Retailer show in Denver, visiting booths and panels on trends in outdoor recreation, outdoor equity grant programs, and state outdoor business alliances. One of the highlights was connecting with state and regional groups at the show and learning how they have used state funding to support new and small outdoor recreation businesses to connect with buyers outside of their regions.

In June, Jackie also attended the 360 Collective New England Summer Expo with Kelly Ault, to learn more about the format for regional shows that many businesses and outdoor representatives are turning to, and to be there with Kelly to represent VOREC and VOBA's partnership.

### ***ACCD Updates***

Heather shared that summer is off to a busy start and Vermont is seeing many visitors, which is very important to the tourism sector. Due to savings from previous years, the Department of Tourism and Marketing (DTM) is able to put out a campaign for the summer and fall, leaning on outdoor recreation to tell Vermont's story. DTM is running two parallel digital campaigns, including one targeted at new visitors who haven't spent money in Vermont in the last four years but have spent money elsewhere in New England. DTM has recently been working on a new video focused on the culture of skiing in Vermont, a digital travel guide to mountain biking, a biking feature with Outside and Backpacker magazines, and other content partnerships.

DTM gave out \$600,000 for regional tourism and economic recovery grants, with a maximum award of \$30,000. Of 41 applicants, 22 were funded, including support to launch the first annual Battenkill fly fishing festival, funding for the Northern Forest Center for developing digital maps and curated adventure guides, Vermont Adaptive to help them produce content about accessible adventures, and the Vermont River Conservancy to build an interactive map of water recreation areas and Spanish-language videos promoting these areas.

Vermont is also slated to receive \$10.4 million from the Economic Development Association (EDA) as a state tourism grant; the scope of work for this funding is currently in development but can include destination marketing and business and destination development projects.

Heather noted the outcome of the legislative session includes \$40 million in the community recovery program and \$19 million for the VEDA forgivable loan program, as well as workforce development and housing programs that received funding.

Similarly, Mike noted that Vermont State Parks' visitation numbers for this season are already ahead of last year's historic visitation figures.

### ***Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC)***

Danny shared that VTGC had its annual meeting and the focus for the next year is securing a critical part-time staff position, working on best management practices, and the modernization of the Vermont Trail System. VTGC released a survey to current and past members to assess common needs and concerns, and launched an online membership platform to make it easier for members to join the council.

### ***Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)***

Kelly noted that many of the legislative updates from Commissioners Snyder and Pelham were also followed and supported by VOBA.

VOBA had a recent networking event focused on economic development and entrepreneurship, featuring entrepreneurs and startup businesses, the Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development, and the ACCD liaison in Montreal.

VOBA is excited about its partnership with DTM under a Northern Borders Regional Commission grant to develop a collaboration on diversity marketing, including a photo session with Vermont businesses and organizations and a group of ten BIPOC models, to tell the story of the vision of inclusivity in the outdoors in Vermont.



VOBA is developing a statement on reproductive rights and liberties based on the recent Roe v. Wade decision, in support of reproductive organizations in Vermont including the Vermont Women's Fund.

VOBA is working to promote a new sustainable trails certificate offered by Northern Vermont University as well as a registered apprenticeship with the Department of Labor for a mechanical technician for bike mechanics, ski techs, and other outdoor sector businesses that offer technical positions. VOBA is also working to organize a cohort of gear and apparel manufacturers for employee training, as well as a BIPOC affinity wilderness first aid and CPR training, and examining how to create an outdoor career guide for the outdoor recreation sector.

Jackie invited any additional brief updates from steering committee members and encouraged updates to be sent by email as well.

### **September Steering Committee Meeting**

Jackie introduced this agenda topic and provided background on planning for the next VOREC steering committee meeting to be held in person, using this meeting to consider new goals and determine direction for the organization into the future.

Mike provided a comparison between VOREC's evolution and that of the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative. He reflected on a similar arc in VOREC's creation and development and how VOREC's development and impact on communities has come together quickly and with significant impacts. Jackie presented a graphic on the typical lifecycle of an organization and described where VOREC is positioned in this cycle. Drew noted that VOREC may not be at an earlier growth stage, but at a full-circle renewal stage, with the opportunity for the September meeting to create new energy and new ideas (see appendix for typical lifecycle of an organization graphic).

Jackie described the goals of the September meeting: to allow the group to reconnect and meet new members in person, to launch a more robust process to professionalize the VOREC action plan and to better define the resources and network to help the steering committee capitalize on partnership opportunities that push forward VOREC's goals and provide clarity to partners and stakeholders on how to engage with VOREC; and to confirm emerging areas of interest for further discussion and exploration by the steering committee.

Steering committee members suggested meeting locations and communities of interest for the group to visit, as well as learning opportunities for future meetings, and the date and format of the next meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Ethan Murphy introduced himself as a Middlebury skate park representative and said that this group hoped to submit a strong VOREC application for the next grant round.

### **Other Business**

No other business offered.

**Adjournment:** Jackie motion to adjourn, Hal second. Meeting adjourned.

# Appendix

## Renewal

It can take many forms:  
a change or reorganization  
in the right direction,

## A decline stage

Growth and innovation slows  
and the organization becomes  
a self-perpetuating bureaucracy  
that creates diminishing returns.



## A birth event

- Governor signs Executive Order 11.17 in June 2017

## A maturity stage

The dangers are stagnation,  
bureaucracy, and failure to innovate.

## A growth stage

The organization  
either grows or fails.

- VOREC Action Plan 1.0 created
- VOBA established
- Grant program established and expanded
- VOREC Program Manager hired

We are here

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

Friday, October 7, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### In Person

Former Green Mountain College Campus (1 Brennan Cir, Poultney, VT 05764)

Withey Student Center – see included map for directions

*After parking enter the Withey Student Center at the south entrance. You will immediately see a whiteboard pointing you to the right where you will find our meeting room.*

### Teams meeting

[Join through Teams app](#)

Join by phone: +1 802-828-7667; Conference ID: 775 350 354#

*This meeting will be primarily in-person with the option to join virtually during the Business Meeting only.*

### Objectives

- Spend time together in person! Network and catch-up.
- Share and discuss updates on Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy.
- Learn about work in progress in the Town of Poultney to boost the Town’s outdoor recreation economy including what’s been accomplished with VOREC funding.
- Complete an initial assessment of VOREC Action Plan priorities.

### Agenda

Time	Topic	Lead
9 a.m.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager
9:10 a.m.	<b>Business meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and introductions</li> <li>• Approve July minutes</li> <li>• Updates from chair</li> <li>• Sector updates                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ FPR (Becca Washburn &amp; Jackie Dagger)</li> <li>○ ACCD (Josh Hanford)</li> <li>○ VTGC (Danny Hale)</li> <li>○ VOBA (Kelly Ault)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Other business</li> <li>• Adjourn</li> </ul>	Mike Snyder, Chair  Jackie
10:30 a.m.	<b>Town of Poultney: VOREC Grant &amp; Outdoor Recreation Economy Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation</li> <li>• Community Tour</li> </ul>	Sarah Pelkey, Town of Poultney Economic Development Coordinator  Jonas Rosenthal, Town of Poultney Village Manager  Caitrin Maloney, Slate Valley Trailhouse and Sustainable Trailworks
12:00 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b>	

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1:00 p.m.	<b>VOREC 2.0 Planning Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on priorities for upcoming year</li> <li>• Small group breakouts – Action Plan Assessment</li> </ul>	Jackie
2:30 p.m.	<b>eBike Pilot Program - Hinesburg Town Forest Presentation</b>	Rachel Fussell, People for Bikes
3:00 p.m.	<b>TBD Recreation activity</b>	Town of Poultney
4:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	

## VOREC Steering Committee Meeting

October 7, 2022

In-person and via Microsoft Teams | 9:00am – 4:00pm

**Steering Committee Attendees:** Michael Snyder, Mike Debonis, Hal Ellms, Josh Ryan, Marc Sherman, Drew Simmons, Karrie Thomas, Frank Stanley (via Teams), Abby Long (via Teams), Shelby Semmes (via Teams), Jeanne Gervais (unavailable for business meeting)

**Steering Committee Members Absent:** Danny Hale, Josh Hanford

**FPR/ACCD Staff in Attendance:** Jackie Dagger, Becca Washburn, Lauren Honican, Caroline Zeilenga, Tim Tierney (designee for Josh Hanford)

**Public in Attendance via Teams for Business Meeting:** Carolyn Lawrence (Stowe Trails Partnership and Vermont Trails and Greenways Council), Rachel Fussell (People For Bikes)

### Welcome and Introductions

Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager, opened the meeting by welcoming steering committee members, partners and other attendees to the Town of Poultney for their first in-person meeting since the beginning of the pandemic. She reviewed the agenda and lead introductions, asking steering committee members and partners to introduce themselves with their name, organization and one thing they were excited about for the day.

### Business Meeting

#### *July Minutes*

Drew motion to approve, Karrie second. None opposed, no abstentions. Minutes approved.

#### *Chair Updates*

Michael Snyder, Commissioner of VT Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) and Chair of the VOREC Steering Committee, provided an update on legislation that created the Vermont Forest Futures Roadmap to create a strategic plan for the forest economy, creating a stakeholder engagement process and an advisory panel to advise on the process. The membership of the advisory panel is representative and diverse, including outdoor recreation representatives codifying this as part of the forest economy. Abby Long (Kingdom Trails Executive Director and VOREC Steering Committee member) is serving on this panel and providing a strong recreation voice in the forest economy framework that is being built. Michael welcomed, through Abby and VTGC, a VOREC connection and input in this process to create recommendations for actionable policy change in support of the forest economy.

Michael shared that FPR is preparing for a new legislative biennium with new opportunities and is building a legislative agenda and budget for the coming year, although it's early in these processes. He invited VOREC steering committee members to be in touch with legislative recommendations. The budget is early in development and there is additional one-time funding available for this year (for one-

time, transformational investments for the governor's consideration) but less is expected to be available in the year ahead and this could be a challenge that FPR is preparing for..

As mentioned at previous meetings, the FPR business office has been facing challenges, but now has a new Director of Finance and Administration on board as well as a Grants Program Manager position in recruitment, and is planning to create an additional "second chair" business office position. FPR is digging out but circumstances are still challenging and FPR appreciates everyone's patience.

Michael shared that the annual FPR weekly foliage report with the Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) is underway and that these reports focus on experiencing fall foliage in Vermont through recreation and outdoor activities. He invited the steering committee to offer any events, places, and features they would like to suggest including.

Michael shared that the 100th anniversary of Vermont State Parks is coming up in 2024 and FPR is beginning to think about initial planning for a year-long celebration. Michael encouraged VOREC steering committee members to get in touch if they have ideas. One idea Michael is proposing is free state park day use for all Vermonters for 2024.

### ***FPR Updates***

Becca Washburn, Director of FPR's Division of Lands Administration and Recreation (DLAR), shared that Claire Polfus will be the new FPR Recreation Program Manager beginning November 1. Claire brings relevant experience from TrailFinder and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in Maine and FPR is very excited about what she will bring to this position. More updates will be coming on the scope of work for this position, but it will, at least initially, focus on support and partnership with our recreation partner organizations as well as supporting grant administration work through technical assistance to towns and non-profits, and reinforcing the connection between state lands and outdoor organizations that manage recreation.

Becca also provided brief updates on the following:

- FPR received approval recently to create a full-time position for a Recreation Grants Administrator position.
- the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program is adding 120 federal staff through 2023 to provide better support and service, with a plan for dedicated support to states on administering the program.
- FPR is hoping to launch the next round of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) next week with a letter of interest and full application process.
- The Inflation Reduction Act passed funding for the Forest Legacy Program, which adds \$700 million to be obligated through FFY27 with the aim of many new conservation projects completed by 2029.

Jackie provided updates on outdoor recreation work locally and nationally. She will be joining the 2022 Outdoor Media Summit and meetings with the Confluence of States in Lake Tahoe at the end of October. The group will meet with outdoor brands to discuss policy issues, Confluence operations and goals for 2023, and discuss outdoor media challenges with Outdoor Media Summit participants.

Jackie also shared that the Confluence of States fellow has been working to build the Confluence's platforms for public engagement, including creating a [LinkedIn page for the Confluence](#), updating the [Confluence of States website](#), sending out a monthly newsletter, and leading the development of the Confluence's first Annual Report. Steering Committee members and interested members of the public can sign-up for the Confluence's newsletter by visiting [www.confluenceofstates.com](http://www.confluenceofstates.com) and scrolling to the very bottom of the page.

Jackie worked with VOBA, Vermont Sports Magazine, and VDTM on a [second edition of the Next Outdoor Playgrounds](#) featuring VOREC grant recipients published in the September issue of Vermont Sports Magazine. [The first edition](#) was published in Vermont Sports Magazine's May issue. This work was supported by a grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission and a Rural Business Development Grant from USDA Rural Development. VOBA has also been using this funding to work with BIPOC leaders developing photo and video assets for VDTM to use in their promotion of outdoor recreation in the state of Vermont.

Jackie also shared that the New Hampshire outdoor recreation office director departed a few months ago and a new director has been hired. She is excited to continue working with the incoming director on future opportunities for regional collaboration.

### ***Agency of Commerce and Community Development***

Tim Tierney, Director of ACCD's Business Recruitment and International Trade, shared that next year there will be a near 75% increase in NBRC funding that will dovetail well with outdoor recreation. He shared that ACCD will soon be rolling out the Community Revitalization and Recovery Program which will support many lodging, hospitality, and non-profit organizations.

Michael inquired about the status of NBRC organizing a regional recreation summit and Jackie shared that the Northern Forest Center is helping to coordinate this event and it's likely a year away. Michael expressed interest in VOREC playing a role in the planning for this event through Jackie's participation.

### ***Vermont Trails and Greenways Council (VTGC)***

For VTGC updates, Abby shared that VTGC has been meeting to distill priorities and better communicate with the public and stakeholders. VTGC is striving to be more public facing and is working to find funding for an administrative position. They recently received funding through the Lintilhac Foundation to support the creation of this position. VTGC is also strengthening their ability to participate in VOREC by having Jackie join VTGC Board Meetings and capture their collective feedback ahead of VOREC meetings.

### ***Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA)***

Kelly Ault, Executive Director of VOBA, provided updates from VOBA. VOBA and partners have been hosting outdoor activities and connecting with Vermont brands to elevate accessible outdoors for all. There was an e-bike, birding, and rock climbing outing on the Island Rail Trail, which focused on finding community and creating digital assets. A second outing on the West River in Brattleboro focused on sculling and fly fishing, which will create three short videos elevating these sports and companies and showcasing some of the outdoor assets and manufacturers in Vermont. A third video will feature BIPOC outdoor professionals sharing their stories pursuing their passion into careers and starting outdoor businesses. She also shared the Next Outdoor Playgrounds guide, building on earlier guides and

featuring all 30 communities that have received VOREC grants. This has been a great opportunity to highlight many lesser-known towns and better distribute outdoor recreation participants across the state and to visit the accompanying downtowns and businesses.

Kelly also provided an update on VOBA's strategic planning process and VOBA's consideration of how they can best support economic development and the outdoor economy. VOBA has hired a consultant from the conservation and environmental community to develop a process over the next five months to create extensive dialogue and planning. She encouraged everyone to attend the VOBA Annual Meeting on November 10, 2022.

### **Public Comment**

No public comment offered.

### **Town of Poultney: VOREC Grant and Outdoor Recreation Economy Update**

Sarah Pelkey, Economic Development Coordinator for the Town of Poultney, and Caitrin Maloney, Co-owner of Sustainable Trailworks, introduced themselves and presented on the Town of Poultney's growing outdoor recreation economy and the work they have been able to do with VOREC Community Grant program dollars (See appendix for presentation slides). Some of the key takeaways included:

- For Small communities like Poultney it's important to engage the community in recreation, not just tourists. Poultney does this through organizations like Slate Valley Trails and the many events they host intended to engage different groups and users.
- Poultney has been able to leverage VOREC funding with other efforts the town is working on using federal assistance, including the Recreational Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) program run through the EPA. They have also been awarded a Better Places grant through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.
- Key factors in Poultney's success include:
  - The formation of a strong local steering committee focused on outdoor recreation.
  - Identifying well-defined desired deliverables.
  - Establishing an economic development office.
- Dynamics Poultney has struggled with include:
  - The pace of the work needing to go very quickly due to required deadlines for using federal and state assistance but having limited volunteers to get the work done.
  - Changing cost of materials impacting their ability to deliver desired outcomes of grant funding.
  - Challenges managing outdoor recreation due to user conflicts with cyclists on gravel roads, conflicts between different user groups on the D&H Rail Trail, amenities and infrastructure that aren't yet in place, missed opportunities and growing pains, limited resources at the town and village, and continuing support needed from regional planners, development partners, and the state.
  - Permitting and regulatory hurdles to install wayfinding and signage on the D&H Rail Trail.
- Benefits Poultney has seen from investing in outdoor recreation include:



- Families moving into the town citing outdoor recreation as a reason for their relocation.
- A new restaurant opening.
- The relocation of a popular bike shop to downtown Poultney.
- Poultney also shared some feedback about the VOREC Community Grant Program: They have experienced delays in receiving re-imburement for their work and a needed extension to their grant agreement, They shared that Poultney would have benefited from additional assistance and guidance on developing their grant proposal especially in regards to understanding how much work was reasonable to do in two-years and with their proposed budget.

Karrie suggested the idea of VOREC pulling together market research on what outdoor recreation users are looking for when they visit a town, such as activities and products they're looking for.

Following the presentation, the steering committee toured several recreation and community destinations in downtown Poultney.

### **VOREC 2.0 Planning Activity**

Jackie led a presentation on VOREC priorities for the upcoming year (see appendix for presentation slides). She started by highlighting and explaining that the conversations and actions she's had with the steering committee have amounted to a program assessment. From this program assessment are several key areas of action:

- The VOREC Network needs to be activated
- Outdoor recreation priorities need to be re-assessed and prioritized
- VOREC needs to take action in support of outdoor equity
- There is an opportunity for VOREC to play a role in consensus building on complex outdoor recreation issues

Based on the identified action areas, Jackie shared that she has set four priorities for VOREC in the upcoming year. These are:

- **Action Plan 2.0** – Assess and update priorities, define VOREC's collective impact network and activate partners, identify large-scale outdoor recreation challenges for VOREC to examine.
- **Continue improving the VOREC Community Grant Program** – Collect data to be able to report on successes and the impact the program is making for communities. Design a new opportunity to fund projects focused on outdoor equity.
- **Plan for Public Engagement** – Professionalize the VOREC website, develop an email listserv, and design a newsletter.
- **Strengthen Steering Committee Structure** – Make updates to charter & bylaws, formalize Director communication to steering committee members, create opportunities to connect between meetings.

Jackie shared that she'd like to use VOREC Steering Committee meetings in 2023 to work together on revising the VOREC Action Plan and shared her goals for this update and draft timeline for completing the revision process (see appendix for Action Plan Update slides).

Jackie explained that the first step to revise the VOREC Action Plan is having the steering committee review and assess progress on actions identified in 2018. She had steering committee members break out into small groups to assess and rank action plan items according to VOREC pillars. The group came back together to share their discussions and wrap up.

### **Hinesburg Town Forest EBike Pilot Program**

Rachel Fussell from People for Bikes presented on the eMTB pilot project in Vermont, a partnership with VMBA, Fellowship of the Wheel, and the University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies (see appendix for presentation slides). This project seeks to understand the impacts of allowing Class 1 Electric Mountain Bikes (eMTBs) on trail networks in Vermont. Rachel also described the Vermont eBike incentives that the state offered this year.

### **Vermont Adaptive Bike Demo**

The Steering Committee wrapped up the October meeting with an adaptive bike demonstration led by Vermont Adaptive on the D&H Rail Trail which runs through downtown Poultney. Vermont Adaptive provided a variety of adaptive bikes for steering committee members to test ride and explained how they use those bikes in their programming.



# Welcome to Poultney

VOREC Steering Committee Meeting | 10.7.22



Photo credit: Martin VanBuren III



# Today's Agenda

10:30 – 10:50: Presentation

10:50-11:00: Q&A

11:00- 11:15: Break

11:15 – 12:00: 'Stretch it Out' Tour of Poultney Village

- Town to Trails Demonstration Project @ D&H Rail Trail/  
Main Street intersection;
- South: REclaimED Makerspace 'Rest & Recharge  
Station' visit with Danny Lang;
- North: FPR Interpretive Panel at Village Offices;
- East: Slate Quarry Park

# Introductions

## **Presenters:**

Caitrin Maloney, Co-Owner of Sustainable Trailworks

Sarah Pelkey, Economic Development Coordinator, Town of Poultney

**Poultney VOREC Advisory Committee:** Hilary Solomon (PMNRCD), Paul Donaldson (Town & Village Manager), Jaime Lee (Planning Commission Chair and DRB Member), Chuck Helfer, Jonas Rosenthal (Recreation Committee)

With help from others including: Slate Valley Trails, Nic Stark, Poultney Snowdevils (VAST Club), Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce, Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR), Naga Bakehouse and VT Forest, Parks and Recreation

# Project Context

- Poultney applied for VOREC in Round 1/Pilot Year (2018), - which was not awarded - and again in Round 2 (2019).
- The application committee developed a project scope of work and the application materials quickly in response to the community's expressed desires and the clear opportunity to develop the town's recreation economy through existing assets such as Slate Valley Trails, the D&H Rail Trail, and Lake St. Catherine State Park.

# Project Context

- The 2019 VOREC application happened in the same year that Green Mountain College closed.
- The Town also applied (and was selected for) the inaugural round of the EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities planning assistance project.

# Project Goal

“The ultimate goal of the project is to attract visitors to the area to enjoy out extensive and growing recreation opportunities, from enjoying our world class mountain biking and hiking trails to fishing or kayaking on the Poultney River...

...the project is also designed to encourage greater participation in recreation activities by local youth.”

*Poultney VOREC application*





Photo credit: Chuck Helfer



# Deliverables

- ✓ Marketing consultation and recommendations for strategy;
- ✓ A new display advertisement at the Fair Haven Visitor Center;
- ✓ A recreation brochure with maps and key destinations identified;
- A new recreation website for Poultney Recreation;
- Wayfinding signs (to trailheads);
- Economic Impact Assessment


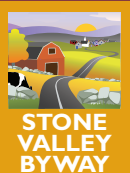




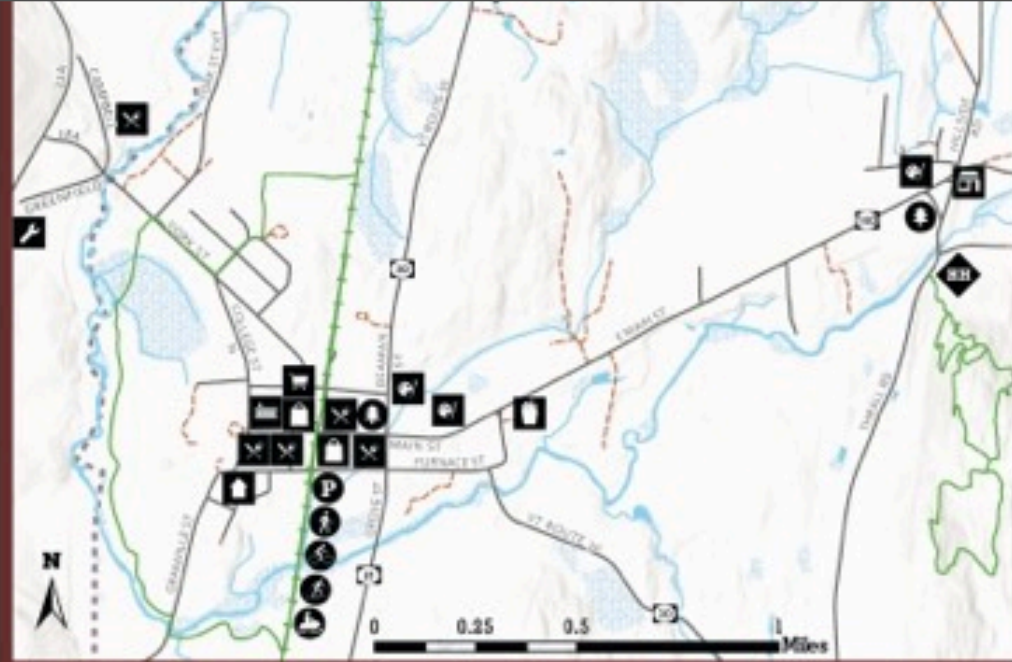
**POULTNEY**  
VERMONT

Home to  
Lake St. Catherine,  
Slate Valley Trails,  
a historic downtown,  
and more!

*10 minutes south of Route 4*  
Take Rte. 22A or Rte. 30



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@FeerysMainStreetEatery
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Greek Pizzeria, Family-friendly  
245 Main St. (802) 287-5439  
@poultneyhouseofpizza
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Pub fare w/craft beers and cider  
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tapsvt.com
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Lunch, dinner, & Sunday brunch  
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- E POULTNEY GENERAL STORE**  
Classic general store and deli  
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@eastpoultneygeneralstore
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Deli, beer, wine, liquor  
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@poppysplacepoultney
- ANALOG CYCLES**  
Enlightened gravel bikes & gear  
188 Main St. (301) 456-5471  
analogcycles.com
- HERMIT HILL BOOKS**  
Independent bookstore  
35 Main St. (802) 287-5757  
hermithillbooks.com
- MART'S SPORTING GOODS**  
Traditional VT sporting goods  
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VT gifts, decor, toys, & fudge  
163 Main St. (802) 287-9111  
originalvermontstore.com
- WILLIAMS HARDWARE**  
Independently owned w/supplies  
33 Main St. (802) 287-5791  
truevalue.com/williams
- JOHNSON & SON BIKEWORKS**  
Bike shop, sales, service, rental  
41 Greenfield Ln. (518) 262-8089  
shop.plazamendocarbikeworks.com
- BENTLEY HOUSE B&B**  
Historic B&B with 3 rooms  
366 Bentley Ave. (802) 287-4004  
thebentleyhouse.com
- SHAW'S MARKET**  
Chain grocery store  
55 Depot St. (802) 287-4387  
shaws.com
- SLATE QUARRY PARK**  
76 Main St.  
@SlateQuarryPark
- EAST POULTNEY GREEN**  
Classic village square  
1 On the Green
- STONEBRIDGE VISITOR'S CENTER**  
Restored historic structure  
66 Thomas St. (802) 287-2810
- POULTNEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
1499 E Main St. (802) 287-5832  
poultneyhistoricalsociety.org
- STONE VALLEY ARTS**  
Visual, performing, literary art  
145 E. Main St. (802) 325-2603  
stonevalleyarts.org



**LAKE SAINT CATHERINE AREA**

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American fare, beer on tap  
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lakestcatharinecountryclub.com
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ottosconespoint.com
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Rental cabins with lake access  
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birdseyediner.com
- BLUE CAT BISTRO**  
Italian fare. Unique atmosphere  
575 Main St. (802) 468-2791  
bluecatcastleton.com
- CASTLETON PIZZA PLACE & DELI**  
Pizza, deli. Dine in & take-out  
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castletonpizza.com
- SUNRISE FAMILY RESTAURANT**  
Affordable family fare  
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@sunrise-family-restaurant-benecoon
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Pizza, calzones and more  
385 Main St. (802) 671-8113  
3rdplacepizza.com
- ROXIE'S**  
Burgers, dogs, famous fries  
151 VT Rte. 4A (802) 468-2800  
fb.com/roxies.fries
- BROWN'S ORCHARD & FARMSTAND**  
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1080 Rte. 30 South (802) 468-2297  
@BrownsOrchardFarmstand
- FLANDER'S FARMSTAND**  
Fresh produce. Hours vary  
424 VT Rte. 30 (802) 868-3005  
fb.com/paul.flanders1
- CASTLETON AMTRAK STATION (CNV)**  
Operating train station c. 1850  
366 Main St. (802) 672-7243  
amtrak.com
- HARBOR VIEW GENERAL STORE**  
Snacks, drinks and deli  
30 E. Creek Dr. (802) 276-8363  
@harborviewgeneralstore
- CASTLETON VILLAGE STORE**  
Grocery, beer, wine & more  
580 Main St. (802) 468-2213  
castletonvillagestore.com
- PRUNIER'S MARKET**  
Groceries, propane, ATM & more  
672 VT Rte. 4A (802) 365-4516  
pruniersmarket.com



**MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS**

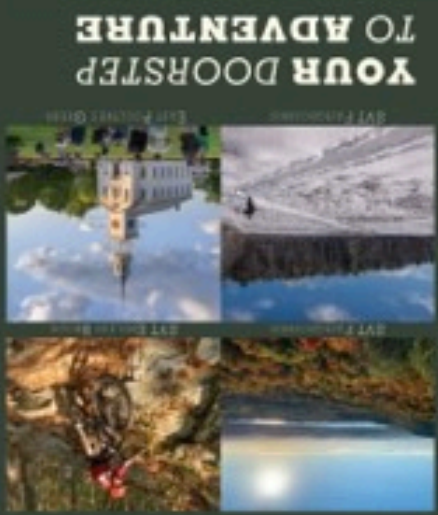
- GRANT'S VILLAGE STORE**  
Snacks, drinks and general store  
8 East St. (802) 235-2251  
@grantsvillagestore
- MINERAL SPRINGS PARK**  
Historic spring w/ springhouse  
10 Burdock Avenue
- MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
4 Park Ave (802) 235-2261  
middletownspringshistoricalociety.org

**WELLS**

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Lunch, baked goods, drinks  
1450 VT Rte. 30 (802) 643-0332  
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- WELLSMERE FARM**  
Produce, local meat and cheese  
197 VT Rte. 30  
(802) 664-5431

The Poultney area is home to a diversity of world-class outdoor recreation opportunities. Whether you're called by the over 50 miles of mountain bike and foot trails at Stone Valley Trails, the gentle waters of Lake St. Catherine, gravel rides in the Poultney area, or the scenic views everywhere you go, Poultney has you covered. Visit these websites for more information on lodging, food, events and attractions.

Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce  
PoultneyHistoricalsociety.org  
PoultneyPublicLibrary@poultneyvt.org  
PoultneyBorough@poultneyvt.org  
StoneValleyTrails@stonevalleytrails.com  
VT Dept. of Forests Parks and Recreation @vtstateparks



**POULTNEY VERMONT RECREATION GUIDE**



# Project Update

- An extension request for 2023 is in process.
- Partnering with Poultney Area Chamber of Commerce and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission for survey work and economic impact assessment.
- Town, Village and partners continue to leverage VOREC grant and deliverables for other projects such as #Town2Trails & VOBA/VOREC Workforce Development Project with statewide partners.



# Key Takeaways

- Strong Local Steering Committee
- Timing has been good and bad...
  - Good: The local committee took advantage of a 2020 delay in administration to apply for matching grant, connect with CEDRR re: priorities, and develop content for the website.
  - Good: the VOREC Project happened at the same time as the RERC Planning Assistance and set Poultney up nicely for the Better Connections project.
  - Good: Establishment of Economic Development Office
  - Bad: The pace of planning and development has been a lot for the limited capacity of volunteers.





Photo credit: Chuck Helfer



# Financial Expectations

- Budget for Application | Staff Capacity & Project Management
- Prices & Cost of Materials
- Recreation Economy & Asset Development
- Marketing & Promotion



# The Benefits...thus far

- The quantified benefits derived from Poultney's VOREC project are not known yet.
- Anecdotal evidence suggest that, yes, people are coming here for outdoor recreation! Outdoor recreation businesses are seeing an increase in visitorship and sales.
- The VOREC wayfinding signs will have a big impact. People are getting lost on the way to destinations.
- Community is starting to adopt change and attract new residents. Participants at Slate Valley Trails Meeting of the Grinds saw 'Intersections Poultney', and are excited about Poultney. They tell us it's cool!





*“make way for the new kid on the block”* | ‘Intersections Poultney’ by Brice Shirbach



# Challenges

- Cyclist conflicts on gravel roads;
- Multiple user groups on Rail Trail;
- Amenities and infrastructure aren't in place -  
Poultney isn't meeting the demands of recreation  
tourists yet;
- Missed opportunities and growing pains;
- Limited resources at the Town and Village;
- Still need support from regional planning and  
development partners and the state.

# The Hurdles

- Rail Trail permitting, requirements, and state goals for this recreational asset. Development and use of Rail Trails in VT's downtowns are vitally important!
- Permitting a series of wayfinding signs. Multiple organizations and regulatory systems involved (MUTCD, Travel Information Council, AOT). Some agencies meet quarterly.
- VOREC grant administration

# Next Steps & Priorities

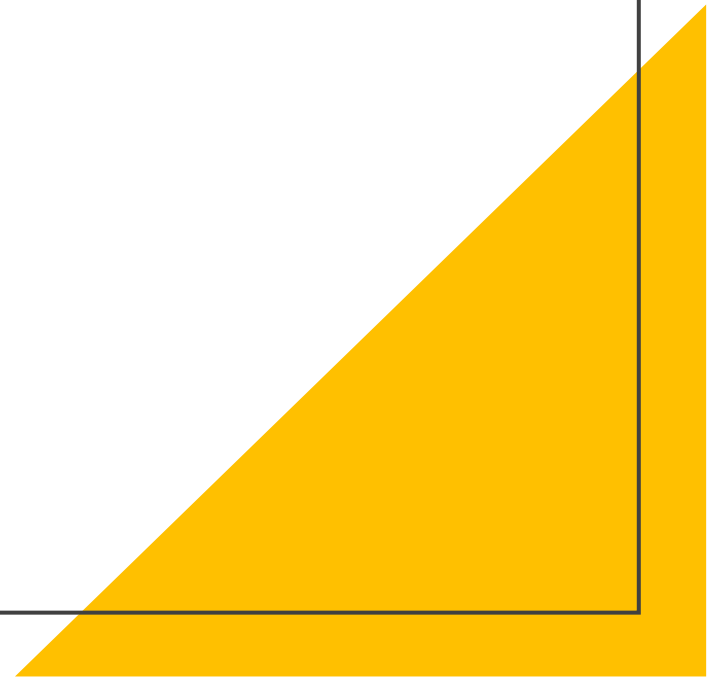
- Implementation: assistance with improving infrastructure, leadership and capacity at town level and planning for growth.
- Outdoor recreation workforce development and promoting trail stewardship mindset.
- Business development that is supportive of outdoor recreation economy.
- Communicating effectively with the community. Improved websites and social media.
- A comprehensive wayfinding and information system

# Thank you VOREC!

We couldn't do it without you!



VOREC 2.0





# Work pre-Program Manager

## Highlights

- June 2017: Executive Order 11-17 signed
  - January 2018: VOREC Action Plan published & creation of VOBA is endorsed
  - June 2018: First Time Happy Campers program begins
  - May 2018: VOREC Community Grant Program established (\$100,000)
  - May 2019: Second year of grant program funded (\$200,000)
  - October 2019: VOBA Outdoor Recreation Economy Summit
  - April 2021: VOREC Community Grant Program expanded (\$5M)
-





# Work in review

## **2021 highlights**

- April 2021: Program Manager hired
  - May 2021: VOREC program assessment /one-on-one interviews
  - July 2021: Expanded VOREC Community Grant Program launched (\$5M)
  - November 2021: Discussion about working together in new ways
-

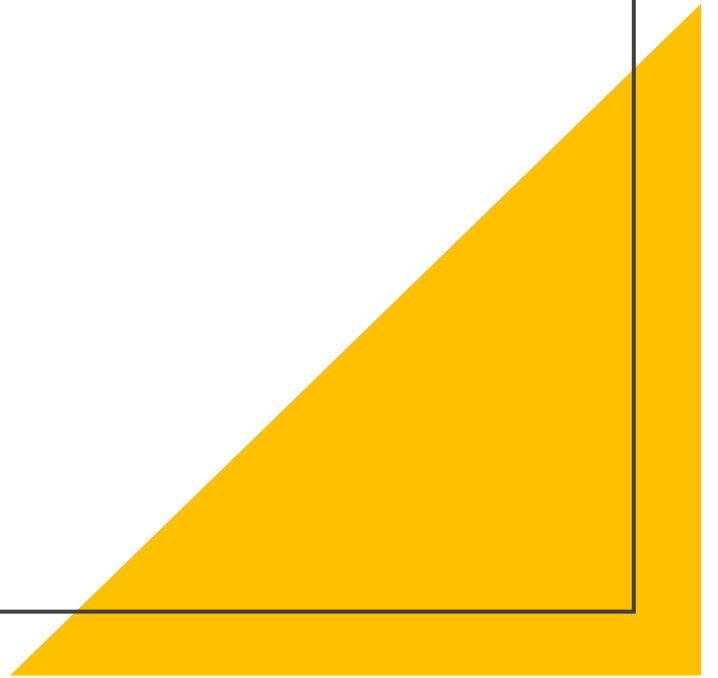


# Work in review

## **2022 highlights**

- March 2022:
    - Discussion to evaluate what's changed since 2018
    - 24 grant program recipients announced
  - May 2022: Discussion about steering committee meetings / Updates to the VOREC website
  - July 2022: Discussion about the lifecycle of VOREC as a program
-

What's been  
learned?





# The VOREC Network needs to be activated

VOREC is intended to be the backbone organization for a collective impact network of government, public, and private partners working together to advance the outdoor recreation economy in Vermont.

## **The Need**

VOREC needs to define the network, how partners should engage, and what priorities align with their work that they can lead and/or help move forward.

---



# Outdoor recreation priorities need to be re-assessed and prioritized

The VOREC action plan published in 2018 identified big priorities for outdoor recreation in Vermont but a lot has changed since the pandemic.

- Emergence of climate change
- Awareness about the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Awareness about the importance of language accessibility

## **The Need**

Priorities in the action plan need to be assessed, prioritized and feedback gathered from partners in the VOREC network.

---



# VOREC needs to take action in support of outdoor equity

During the last round of the VOREC Community Grant Program staff received feedback from non-profit organizations, particularly those lead by BIPOC and adaptive communities, that the grant program's minimum requirements excluded them from applying.

## **The Need**

VOREC needs to take a more active role in supporting outdoor equity. There may be an opportunity to allocate a portion of funding through the VOREC Community Grant Program to non-profit organizations who are leading outdoor equity work.

---



# Consensus building on complex outdoor recreation issues

A multi-stakeholder approach is needed to find points of commonality and develop recommendations for moving forward on topics where there are multiple perspectives. Points for VOREC to lean-in on could include:

improving outdoor recreation policies (e.g. eBikes), trail best management practices, workforce development, outdoor equity, support and sustainable funding for stewardship, support for outdoor businesses, and developing a shared vision for outdoor recreation in Vermont.

## **The Need**

Create a forum for VOREC to hold forward looking conversations about complex outdoor recreation issues and work with partners in the network to identify the places to lean into that would be most valuable now and into the future.

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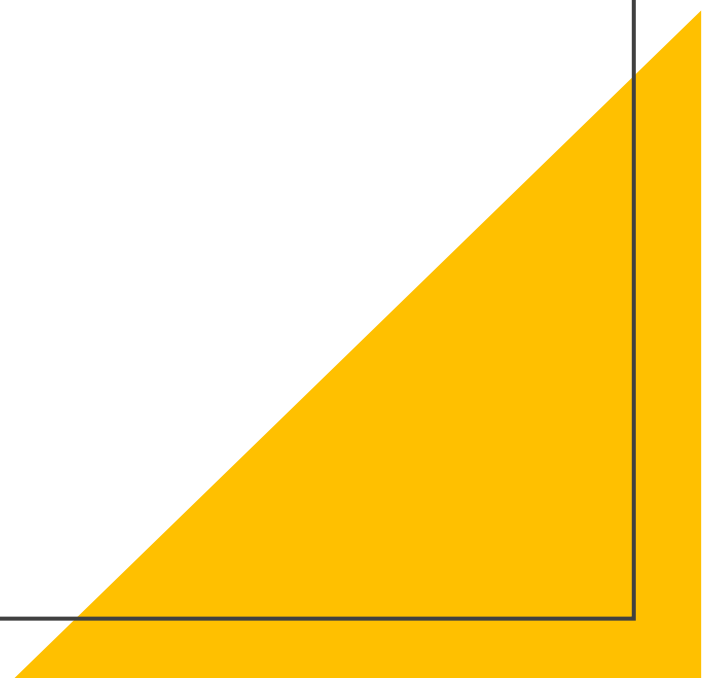
# Priorities for the next year

- **Action Plan 2.0** – Assess and update priorities, define VOREC’s collective impact network and activate partners, identify large-scale outdoor recreation challenges for VOREC to examine.
  - **Continue improving the VOREC Community Grant Program** – Collect data to be able to report on successes and the impact the program is making for communities. Design a new opportunity to fund projects focused on outdoor equity.
  - **Plan for Public Engagement** – Professionalize the VOREC website, develop an email listserv, and design a newsletter.
  - **Strengthen Steering Committee Structure** – Make updates to charter & bylaws, formalize Director communication to steering committee members, create opportunities to connect between meetings.
-



# Action Plan

# Update

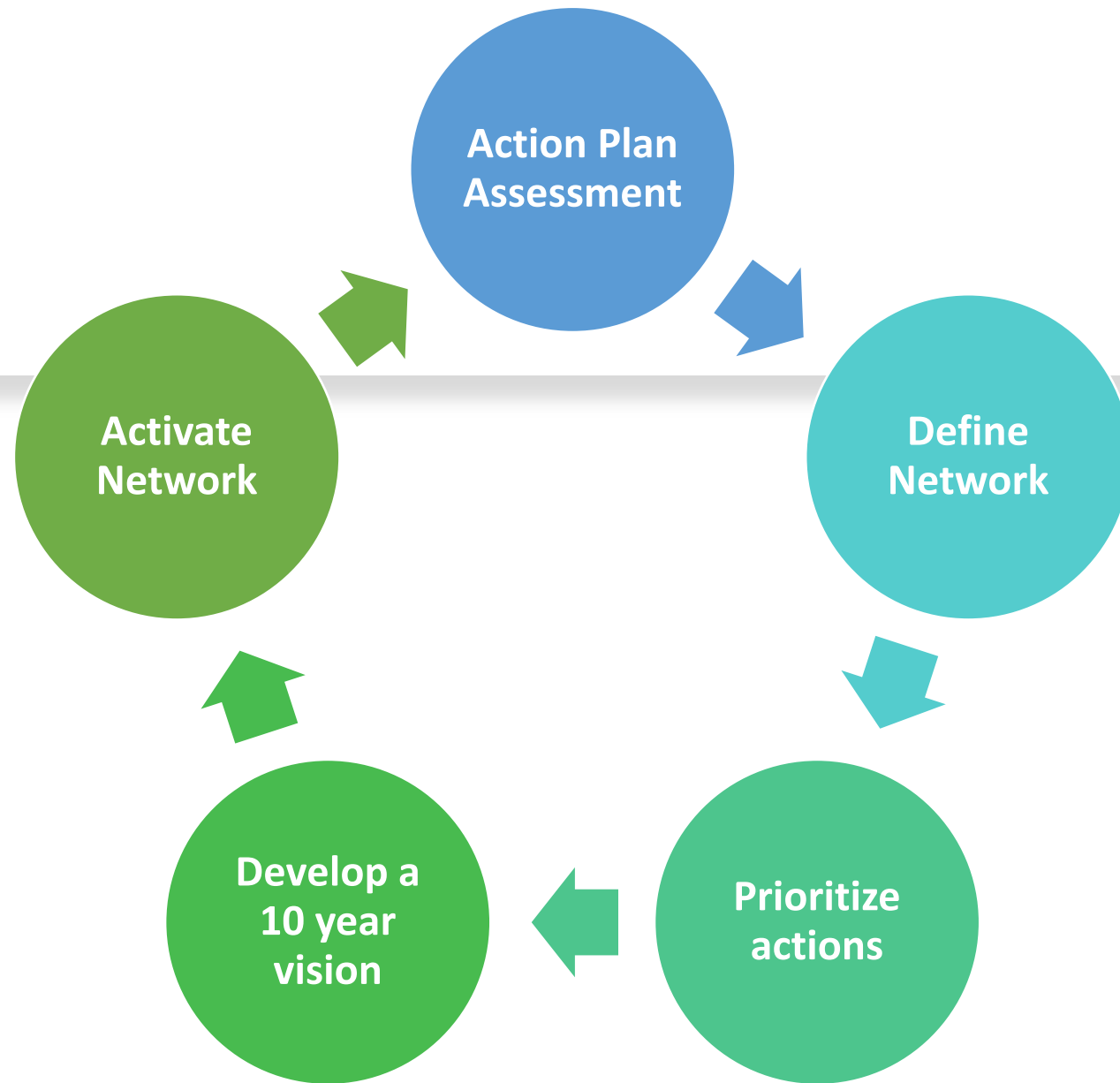




# Action Plan Update Goals

- Create a visual map of the VOREC network
  - Describe how partners engage with each other and VOREC
  - Show prioritized actions organized by VOREC Pillars
  - Define a 10-year vision and 5-year goals for Vermont's outdoor recreation economy
-

# Overview



# DRAFT Timeline

**October 2022 – March 2023**

*Action Plan Assessment*

Review 2018 Action Plan Priorities to assess progress and needed updates.

★ Bring on consultant to help develop the updated Action Plan

**March – June 2023**

*Define Network*

Map out what the VOREC network looks like, who are the organizations and partners under each pillar who can help move forward priority actions.

**June – October 2023**

*Prioritize actions & create a 10-year vision*

Determine the most important priorities to take action on under each pillar. Develop an achievable 10-year vision for Vermont's outdoor recreation economy.

**July – October 2023**

*Gather public input*

Meet with identified partners to gather feedback on prioritized actions and 10-year vision. Collect public input as part of SCORP process.

**November 2023 – January 2024**

*Develop a professional Report*

Resources will help steering committee engage partners and members of the public in VOREC's work and allow VOREC to follow an agreed on and defensible process.

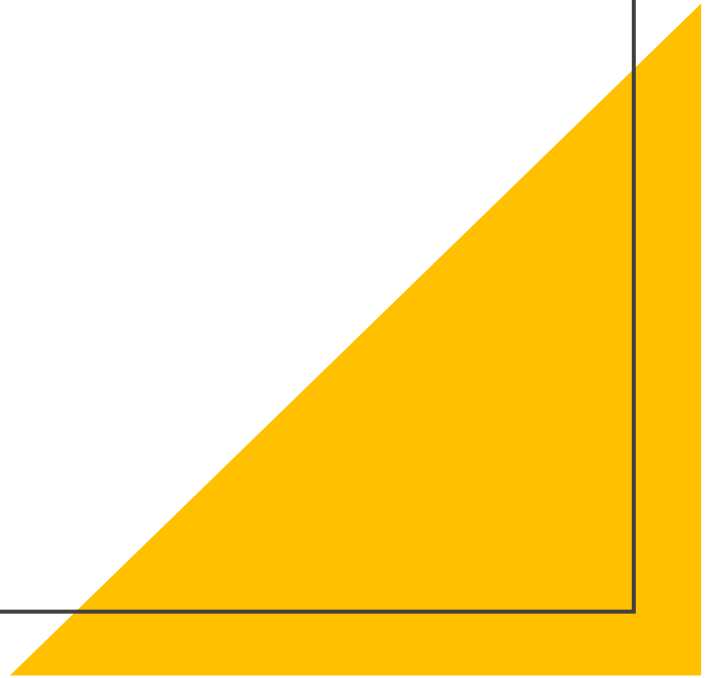
**Activate Partners and begin work on prioritized actions in 2024!**



# Next Steps

1. *We're starting today!* Action Plan Assessment Activity.
  2. *VOBA event in November* – Discussions will focus on the outdoor business sector, Who's part of it and what their priorities are.
  3. *Applying to Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)* – The RTCA program provides professional services to help achieve conservation and outdoor recreation project visions.
-

# Action Plan Assessment Activity



# Spreadsheet Format

## Instructions

### VOREC STEERING COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

**VOREC Driving Principals:** XXX

**Group members:** XXX

**Assigned notetaker:** XXX

#### *INSTRUCTIONS*

1. Assigned note taker reviews instructions and makes sure they have all present group members.
2. Hide rows 1- 14 so that the table below is only visible
3. The assigned notetaker reviews the actions underneath your pillar.
4. Dive in! Select an action to discuss, start with the question in column D and work your way over to column J.
5. As you go capture any actions that are missing in the "What's missing" tab and any opportunities for further discussion in the "VOREC Discussion Opportunities" tab.

# Spreadsheet Format

## Columns A - C

	Action	VOREC Driving Principal	Action Plan Category
16			
20	Support the inclusion of outdoor recreation business development in Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) lending programs	Business	Economic Development
21	Revise Act 250 review process for public trails on private lands to make it easier to develop trails and to adequately address environmental	Quality / Extent; Stewardship	Economic Development



# Spreadsheet Format

## Columns D - F

<b>Action</b>	<b>What is the status of this action?</b> <i>Not started, In progress, Complete</i>	<b>What priority is this action for strengthening the outdoor recreation economy in Vermont in the next 1-2 years?</b> <i>High, Medium, Low</i>	<b>Use this column to note reasons for your decision in column F</b>
Support the inclusion of outdoor recreation business development in Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) lending programs			
Revise Act 250 review process for public trails on private lands to make it easier to develop trails and to adequately address environmental			

# Spreadsheet Format

## Columns G - J

Action	What organizations / groups / partners could VOREC activate to move forward on this action? If the action is in progress, who is VOREC already working with?	Should VOREC play a lead role in this action? <i>Yes / No / Unclear</i>	What should VOREC's role look like?	What is the biggest challenge right now for moving forward on this action?
Support the inclusion of outdoor recreation business development in Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) lending programs				
Revise Act 250 review process for public trails on private lands to make it easier to develop trails and to adequately address environmental				



# Instructions

1. Break out into small groups. Look for the table with your small group's pillar.
2. Each group has a notetaker / facilitator.
3. Review the actions under your pillar, decide where to begin with the guidance of your facilitator/notetaker.
4. For each action, walk through the questions in columns D – J.

*Remember this is not meant to be a comprehensive conversation about each action, it should be an initial assessment of progress made since 2018.*

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# VT EMTB PILOT PROJECT

Rachel Fussell

eMTB Policy & Program Manager



**peopleforbikes**

# VT EMTB PILOT PROJECT

PeopleForBikes

Center for Rural Studies at UVM  
VMBA & Fellowship of the Wheel

**The eMTB pilot study seeks to understand the impacts of allowing Class 1 Electric Mountain Bikes (eMTBs) on trail networks in Vermont.**

- The perceived impacts that Class 1 eMTBs have on physical trail conditions compared to analog MTBs.
- The potential social impacts related to the introduction of eMTBs on nonmotorized, multiuse trails.
- Considerations for initiating educational outreach opportunities about eMTBs
- Diversity and inclusion implications

# Pre-Implementation Survey

## Overview

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The eMTB preliminary data collection tool was designed to gauge perceptions of eMTBs from across the Vermont mountain biking community. The knowledge generated through this statewide preliminary study informs and complements the development and utilization of the user intercept study during the trail season.

# Trail Intercept Survey

## Overview

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UVM created a trail intercept survey that was administered during the implementation period at the local trail network, Hinesburg Town Forest. The intercept survey collected data on the perceived impacts Class 1 eMTBs have on physical trail conditions compared to analog MTBs, potential social impacts on non-motorized, multiuse trails, considerations for initiating educational outreach opportunities about eMTBs, and diversity and inclusion implications



# Focus Groups

## Overview

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UVM will organize and hold up to three focus groups with approximately 5-8 participants. Post-implementation focus groups will provide feedback on findings and generate knowledge for future educational outreach.



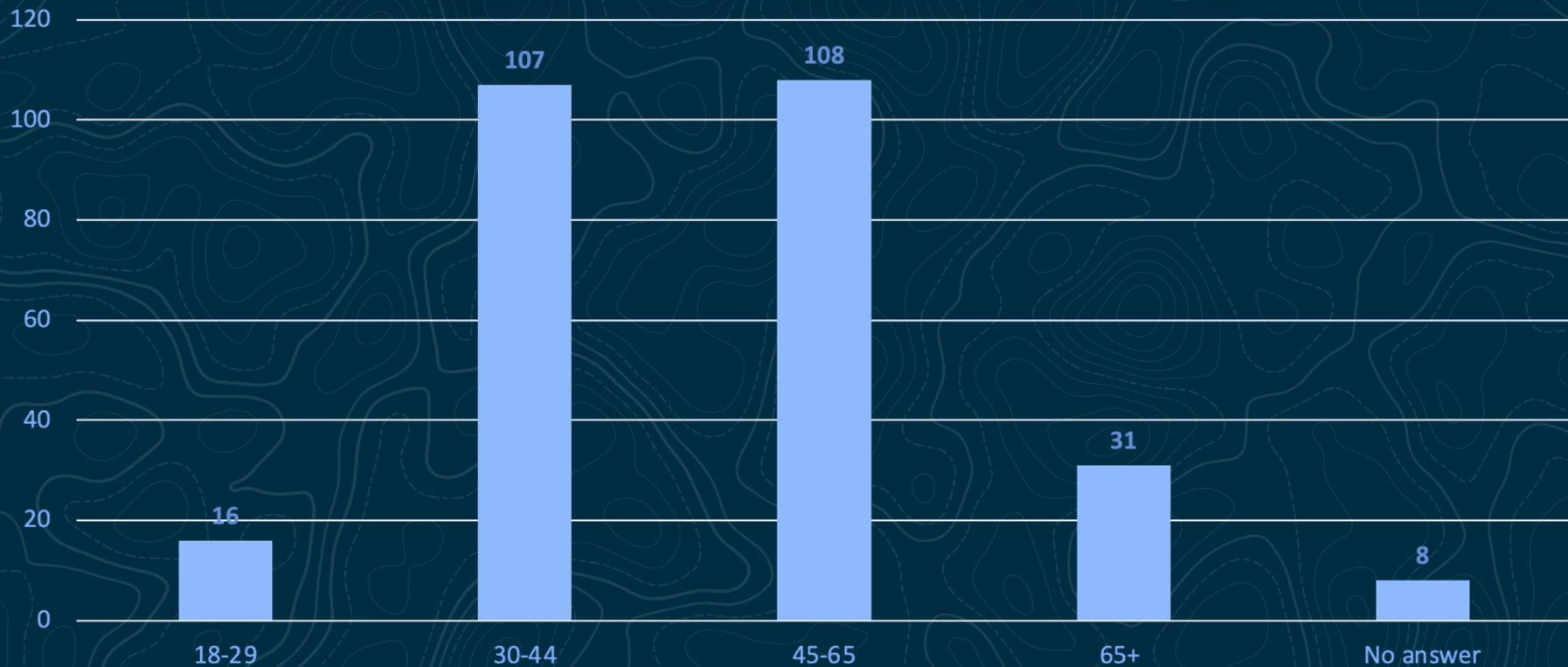
# Pre-Implementation Survey

## Preliminary Results

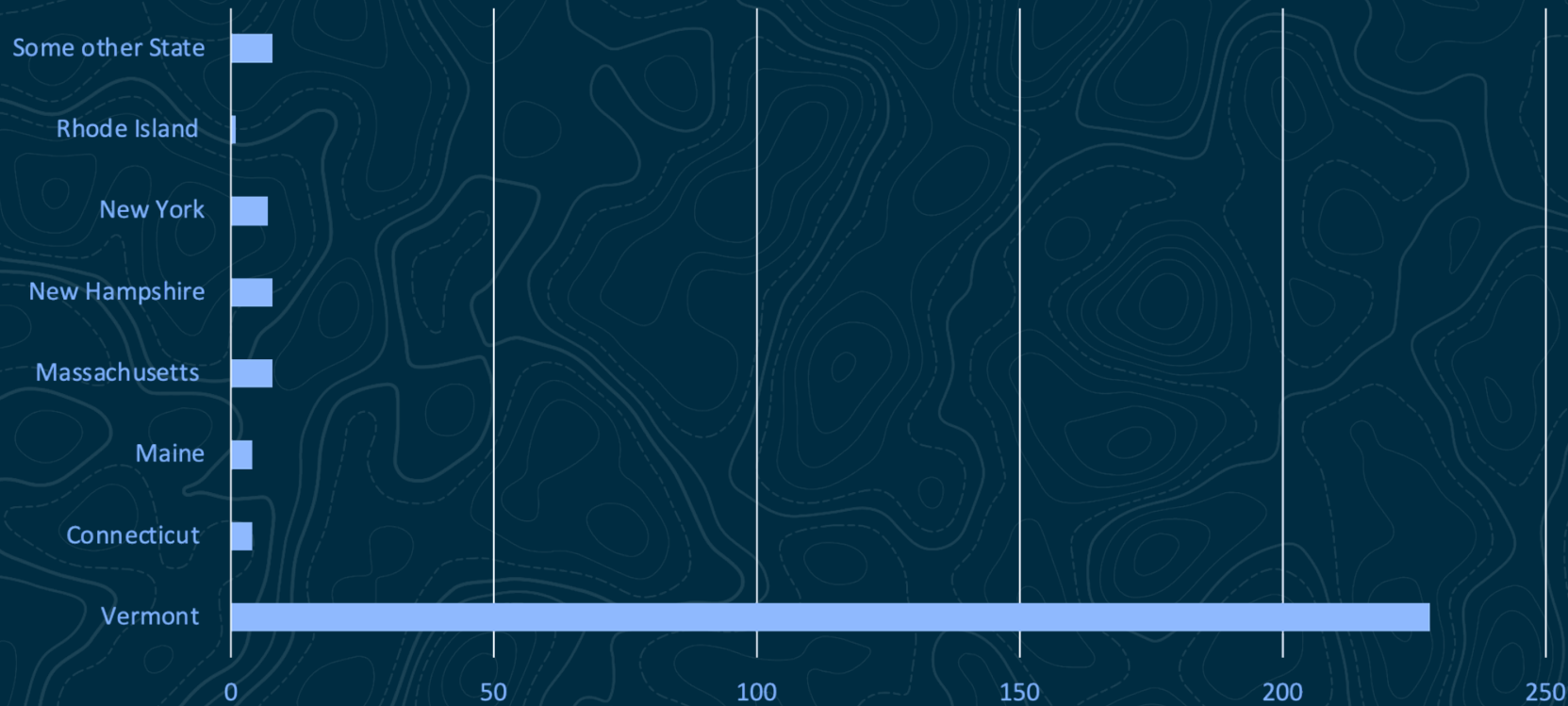
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Preliminary results from the Center for Rural Studies at  
the University of Vermont

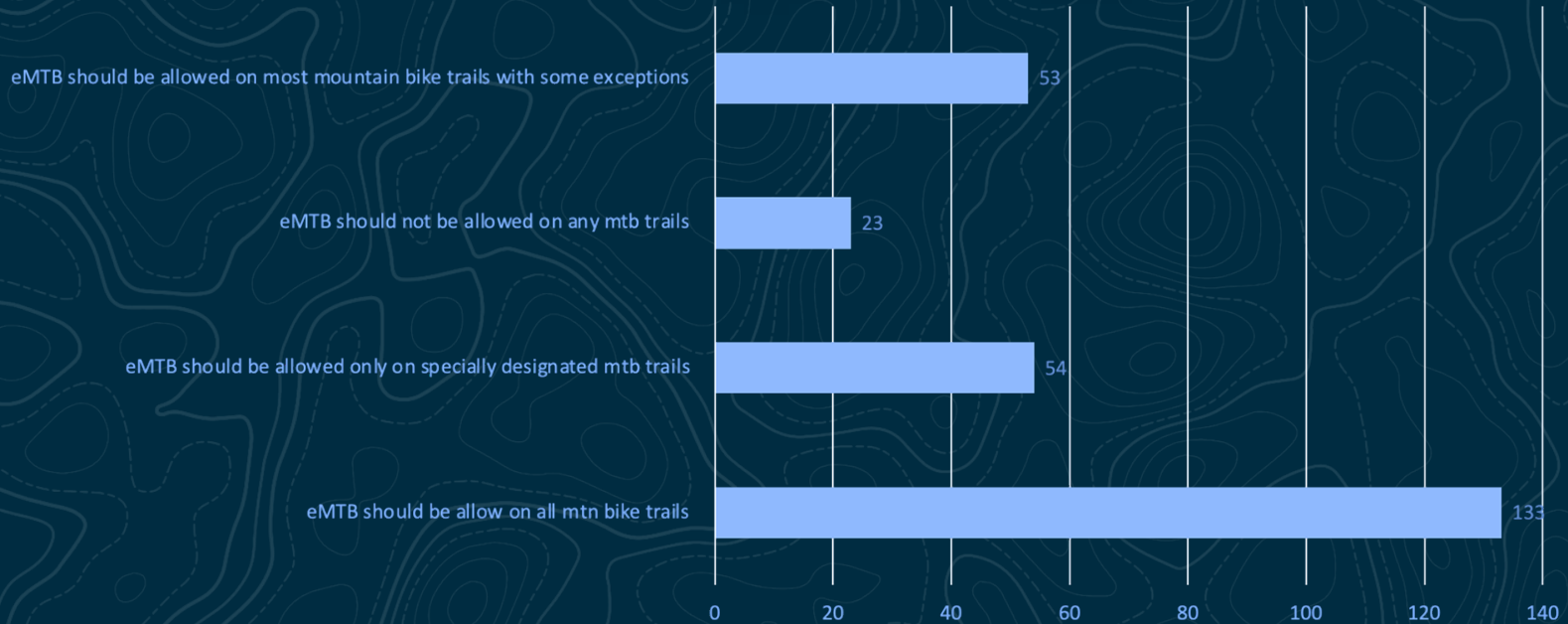
# Age of Respondents



# Location



# Select the statement that describes your opinion



# How answers differed among groups

- Out of 271 respondents, only 23 said eMTBs should not be allowed on any trails (8%)
  - Older adults more likely to support eMTB
    - Of 23 respondents who said eMTB should not be allowed on any trails, 61% were from 30-44 age category versus 21% from 45-66 age category.
- eMTB supporters almost entirely supportive over eMTB everywhere
- People who had never ridden an eMTB were evenly split across allowing everywhere, on most, or only on designated trails



# Why not eMTBs?

Safety	8
Trail damage	8
Social frustration	5
Overcrowding	2
"Not mtn biking"	6
Total	29

# VT E-Bike Incentives

Up to \$400 off an e-bike through the State of Vermont

The State of Vermont is offering a limited time incentive program to consumers for the purchase of eligible electric bicycles to reduce vehicle miles travelled in personal automobiles and their associated greenhouse gas emissions. This Program was established by section 28 of the 2021 Transportation Bill (Act 55).

The new E-bike Incentive Program is applicable to purchases of new e-bikes both through local bike shops and online retailers. It can be used in combination with rebates available through many Vermont power utilities.

VTrans has \$100,000 available for the Program. The total incentive pool is available to eligible Vermont residents on a first-come, first-served basis contingent upon funding availability. Once this funding is exhausted, State incentives under this program will no longer be available.

<https://www.driveelectricvt.com/incentives/vermont-state-incentives#ebikes>

The background of the slide is a dark teal color with a white topographic map pattern. The map features numerous irregular, concentric contour lines that create a complex, organic texture across the entire surface.

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!

Rachel Fussell

[rachel@peopleforbikes.org](mailto:rachel@peopleforbikes.org)