Celebrating our 54th year, the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) is an important resource to 27 towns of southeast Vermont, including all of the towns of Windham County, the towns of Readsboro, Searsburg, and Winhall in Bennington County, and Weston in Windsor County. In the absence of county government we are an essential link between local, state, and federal government. Our mission is to assist towns in Southeastern Vermont to provide effective local governance and work collaboratively with them to address regional issues.

Each town’s Selectboard determines who will represent the town on the WRC. Each member town can appoint two commissioners who represent that town’s interest in regional affairs. The exception is Somerset, where the commissioner is appointed by the Governor. Additionally, the WRC has up to ten citizen interest commissioners who represent other regional interests such as business and industry, healthy communities, agriculture, natural resources, energy, and housing. The WRC is organized around a strong committee structure. These committees are where most of the work gets done and the decisions made. Commissioners serve on these committees and make the decisions. The WRC has 10 highly-qualified staff with more than 80 years of combined professional experience who provide support to the committees, and execute the Commission’s program of work.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

RPCs act as a cost-effective professional planning and plan implementation staff for many of Vermont’s municipalities. Work in recent years has been focused on improving town plans and local permitting through education and enhanced consultations (on-site training), bylaw modernization, and implementing new requirements for flood resiliency, forest continuity, energy, and water quality planning. Current and clear plans and bylaws are essential to smooth state and local permitting. This work is supported through local and regional planning funds, local contributions and other grants. The technical assistance provided this year is shown on the At Work map; highlights include:

- Provided assistance to 24 towns in updating town plans and land use regulations. This included extensive work with nine towns on town plans and 15 towns on zoning bylaws, flood hazard area regulations, and subdivision regulations. Work updating town plans included assisting four towns in addressing new Act 174 energy planning standards and associated requirements. Work updating bylaws included assisting three towns with updating flood hazard area regulations to address protection of river corridors, as well as with administration and enforcement of such regulations.
- Provided general technical assistance to 22 towns on topics including Chapter 117 processes and requirements, and administration/enforcement of land use regulations.
- Worked with two towns on new Village Center designation applications and one town on a Village Center designation renewal application.
- Presented a regional training session on Basics of Land Use Planning and Regulation; participants included nine people representing seven towns. Also provided customized Basics of Land Use Planning and Regulation training for Planning Commission members and interested others, e.g., Selectboard and Zoning Board of Adjustment or Development Review Board members, in several towns.
Presented a regional training session on Housing to 21 people representing 13 towns.

Conducted nine municipal consultations, involving town Planning Commissions and Selectboards, to discuss town plan review / approval and the towns’ planning processes.

Assisted five towns in developing and submitting Municipal Planning Grant applications for a town plan, zoning updates, village wastewater, and growth center planning.

REGIONAL PLANNING
RPCs coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional plan, and related plans and studies such as the regional energy plan and regional transportation plan. These plans guide local planning and the investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

- The WRC completed its two-year comprehensive regional plan update and adopted the new plan in September, 2014. In 2018 the WRC adopted a regional energy plan as an amendment to this plan. We are now in the process of developing the scope of a regional plan update and regional transportation plan update.
- During this reporting period the WRC reviewed 28 Act 250 applications and 18 Section 248 applications. The latter were mainly solar projects. Act 250 applications included those related to Mount Snow Resort, Stratton Mountain Resort, redevelopment of the Magic Mountain ski area, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital building changes, expansion of the Boulder Ridge housing development in Dover, and a vehicle storage facility in Searsburg.
- WRC is following the decommissioning and site restoration of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station.
- The WRC is active in the deliberations over the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of dams on the Connecticut River in Vermont and Massachusetts.

BROWNFIELDS
- The WRC brownfields program since its inception in 2000 has brought a total of $5.2 million dollars in federal brownfields funds to the region for assessment and cleanup of brownfields sites.
- Attended statewide brownfield roundtable meetings with other planners, Vermont Agencies and the U.S. EPA.
- Attended Mandatory Brownfields New Grantee Training
- During this past year WRC Brownfields program has worked on the following sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Town/Village</th>
<th>Brownfields Work</th>
<th>Reuse plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groundworks Collaborative</td>
<td>Brattleboro</td>
<td>WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant for asbestos removal.</td>
<td>Building demolition to make room for new structure for homeless shelter and associated support services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxtons River Park</td>
<td>Saxtons River</td>
<td>Project Management assistance for EPA Cleanup Grant, which received additional funds this year.</td>
<td>Redevelopment of former mill and gas station parcels into a community park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VAPDA Fiscal Year 2019 - Annual Report
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robertson Paper Mill</td>
<td></td>
<td>WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant. Continue to assist Town and BFADC on brownfield issues related to redevelopment. Participated as part of the Vermont’s BERA team for this site. WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant. Purchased by Bellows Falls Area Development Corp (BFADC) for Redevelopment. Cleanup completed Spring of 2019. Town marketing site and reconsidering zoning to include mixed use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Graphics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Versa I and II ESA. Additional testing this year. Redevelopment by owner of industrial building for light industrial use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Data</td>
<td></td>
<td>Versa I and II ESA. Additional testing this year. Redevelopment of industrial site for solar panels. Potential new owner interest in continued reuse for light industrial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLR</td>
<td></td>
<td>Versa I and II ESA. Redevelopment by town for museum and part of historical park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green River Floodplain</td>
<td></td>
<td>Versa I and II ESA. Additional testing this year. The site will be conserved through a conservation easement held by Vermont River Conservancy. The easement will restrict future development of the parcel and provide for public access to the property and the adjacent Green River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEYT Arts Campus - 48/64 Elm St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>WRC Brownfields Cleanup Grant/Loan Part A approved. Redevelopment by New England Youth Theatre for additional outdoor space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putnam Block</td>
<td></td>
<td>WRC Brownfields Clean Up Loan. Major mix used redevelopment in the heart of downtown Bennington underway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermal House</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase II ESA. Redevelopment for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
maple syrup warehouse and distribution facility.

| Friends of the West River | Londonderry | Phase I ESA. | Preliminary plans include redevelopment of the property for public use with a walking trail and river access. |

**ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Economic growth is supported best when development efforts are partnered with solid planning. RPCs work with towns and in strong partnership with Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) to this end in a number of ways, including development of comprehensive strategies that will help position Vermont for long-term economic gain.

- Participated on Southeastern Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) Board and the Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee.
- Continuing to collaborate with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) in assisting the State of Vermont with the administration of the Windham County Economic Development Program, funding for which is provided through the settlement agreement between the state and Entergy Vermont Yankee.
- Participation in the USDA-funded Rural Community Development Initiative being led by the BDCC to develop regional capacity to support economic development across Windham and Bennington counties. The goal of the effort is to improve coordination by and between public and private sector partners concerning economic development initiatives such as workforce training, retention, recruitment, and sustainable business investment.
- Continue to assist Windham Region communities with village center and downtown designation applications.
- Working to establish a Sister City/Region relationship for the Windham Region with a community in Sweden.

**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

Through contract with the VTrans, RPCs coordinate the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This effort has provided a statewide framework for public involvement in planning the improvements to Vermont’s transportation system, with local communities represented through regional Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs). Each regional TAC prioritizes projects, identifies local and regional transportation needs, and provides the platform for public involvement in the planning and development of the state’s transportation system. RPCs serve as the point of delivery for the statewide transportation planning process to support local, regional, state, and federal transportation network advancement.

The following five categories are performance measures reported to VTrans as part of their report to the legislature.
Objective #1: Enhance Cooperation and Coordination between VTrans, RPC Regions, and Municipalities

- Held 9 TAC meetings. Engaged 7 non-municipal TAC members actively in transportation planning.
- Actively engaged 20 municipalities in transportation planning.
- Coordinated 14 RPC activities with municipalities and VTrans.

Objective #2: Better Connect Federal, Regional, and Statewide Transportation Planning

- Regional transportation plan is current (within 8 years).
- Reviewed 2 Act 250 applications with RPC comments relating to transportation.
- Coordinated 2 activities in support of regional public transit providers.
- Staff participated on 14 VTrans committees.
- Participated in Project Prioritization.

Objective #3: Provide Technical Assistance to Municipalities

- 11 municipalities participated in road foreman meetings.
- Assisted 14 municipalities with transportation-related grants.
- Spent 45% of budget on municipal technical assistance.
- Conducted 8 municipal transportation inventories.
- Assisted 6 municipalities with transportation element of municipal/town plan.
- Conducted 4 road erosion inventories in support of the MRGP completed using TPI dollars and other funding sources.

Objective #4: Deliver Results that Advance VTrans Strategic and Long-Range Transportation Plans

- Performed 68 data collection activities specifically for VTrans.

Objective #5: Provide a Mechanism for Improved Public Outreach and Education

- Coordinated with VTrans on outreach for Grafton Bridge 20 and Westminster Bridge 5 scoping alternatives presentations.
- Coordinated with VTrans outreach consultant on the Guilford Welcome Center outreach coordination.

FY 2019 Highlights

- Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Infrastructure Planning - Currently undertaking the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge project that calls for replacing the existing Route 119 bridges crossing the Connecticut River between Downtown Brattleboro, Vermont and Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Planning for the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge project began in the early 1990's. The new bridge is to be a steel I-beam girder bridge with aesthetic enhancements and a sidewalk on the upstream side. The existing Route 119 bridges will remain open at all times during project construction. After construction, the existing Route 119 bridges are planned for rehabilitation as a recreational, pedestrian, and bicycle resource. At this time the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge project is in the Final Design phase. The project will be put out to bid in May, 2020 with work completed in 2023.
- Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Scenario Planning - the Hinsdale/Brattleboro Existing Bridge Subcommittee is tasked with identifying a vision for the reuse of the existing Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridges. The purpose of the Existing Bridges Subcommittee "is to develop a vision..."
for the Charles Dana and Anna Hunt Marsh Bridges and Hinsdale Island, including the envisioned activities and uses of the bridges and island, physical changes, management and maintenance considerations, and expected impacts on economic development, tourism, transportation/access, and recreational opportunities." The committee decided to pursue a scenario planning approach to arrive at a recommended vision. The subcommittee will be able to explore how different investment options and constraints might impact alternate plans for the bridges. The subcommittee visioning process is planned as an approximately two-year process and will enable the committee to develop a publicly supported and feasible alternative to recommend to the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Project Advisory Committee. The committee will work with a local landscape design master’s program to develop professional quality design scenarios for the space. There will be extensive public outreach efforts in order to incorporate the two communities into the process.

- **Route 30 Infrastructure Study** - Currently undertaking this corridor planning project in coordination with VTrans serving as the project lead. The first Route 30 Management Plan was developed in 1999. The process will be about coordination of interests, plans, and needs along the corridor and will include community needs such as traffic calming. The extent of this project is from Brattleboro to the intersection of Route 30 and Route 11 in Winhall.

- **Studying Connections to Increased Rail Service to Greenfield, MA** - The WRC is working with the VTrans Public Transit department to explore the feasibility of a transit connection between Greenfield and Brattleboro to capitalize upon increased rail service scheduled to begin in 2019. Massachusetts plans to add two additional round trips per day from Springfield to Greenfield, and one round trip on the weekends, as part of a 2-year pilot. This would allow for one-seat trips to New York City departing from Greenfield including round trip day trips. We are also contemplating the feasibility of commuter rail service into southeastern Vermont within 10 years.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & DISASTER RESILIENCY**

RPCs play key roles in the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergency management in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, the Vermont Homeland Security Unit, VTrans, and the Agency of Natural Resources. RPC’s also help update floodplain bylaws and hazard mitigation plans, coordinate updates to municipal emergency plans, and serve as local liaisons between towns and the State Emergency Operations Center in special circumstances like Tropical Storm Irene and other hazard events.

- The WRC develops local hazard mitigation plans for our towns, with the exception of Brattleboro, which created its own. Of our 27 towns, 24 (89%) have hazard mitigation plans either adopted, with updates underway, or have a draft under review by the state or FEMA.

- Twenty-three of the 27 towns (85%) currently have updated local emergency management plans in place.

- WRC holds quarterly Emergency Management Director (EMD) and Fire Chief Roundtables. Topics are chosen by the EMD and fire chief participants. Beginning in October, 2018, three roundtables were held this fiscal year. January’s roundtable discussed the statutory role of the EMD, delegations of authority for the EMD, an after-action discussion, and an introduction to the concept of community resilience organizations. The April meeting brought Green
Mountain Power to the table, per discussion from the January meeting, and the group shared ideas from both sides on enhancing communication during long term power outages. Future roundtables are planned.

- WRC has re-established the WRC Emergency Planning Committee. The group met in April 2019 and began an initiative to develop a phone-tree tool to connect towns with agencies serving vulnerable populations living independently. This initiative is getting traction, with a tabletop exercise to practice the phone tree planned for the next fiscal year.
- A series of brown-bag lunches were held for Floodplain Administrators in the region to learn about topics related to floodplain regulation, as well as to serve as a roundtable discussion opportunity about the responsibilities of the role.
- The WRC serves as the local liaison to communicate damages and the needs of towns to the State during disasters. WRC staff, in conjunction with the regional ANR River Management Engineers and VTrans Districts 1 and 2, has in place a damage reporting/situational awareness protocol that expedites the gathering of accurate information from towns with the goal of minimizing duplicate requests for information. That protocol is kept updated and shared with new staff members that have a role.
- WRC worked with three towns on developing updated flood hazard bylaws, which incorporate state-designated river corridors. All three towns utilized the WRC model bylaw for their update.
- A buyout and demolition of a structure located in a floodway in Wardsboro was completed. This grant was started last fiscal year and the work was completed this fiscal year.
- WRC staff participated in numerous FEMA sponsored trainings as part of the new State Emergency Operations Center training program.
- Staff attended the annual Vermont Emergency Management conference.
- WRC’s executive director was elected to serve as the vice chair, and later chair, of the Vermont Disaster Recovery Fund.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES
In addition to enhancing the RPC work, RPCs provide municipalities, state agencies, and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

- GIS staff provided support to the Transportation Planning Initiative for data collection activities, which included culvert inventories, sign inventories, parking inventories, traffic counts, park and ride counts, and bike/ped counts.
- WRC began an effort to study bike parking in downtown Brattleboro by conducting an inventory of bike racks, and on one day each month of bikes parked in the downtown district.
- Town plan maps were updated for Grafton, Vernon, Wardsboro, and Wilmington. Additional mapping was done to support the Jamaica Planning Commission as they work on their town plan update. Updated census data was provided to Marlboro for their town plan update. Zoning map updates were done for Westminster, and mapping support was provided to Windham as they work to update their zoning bylaw.
- We helped in the Village Center application process for two towns (Grafton and Townshend) as they work to develop village center boundaries.
- WRC continues to support towns in their efforts to update their flood regulations and incorporate river corridor protection, and information for local emergency management
plans. GIS staff provided maps and analysis of the impacts of such protection to Guilford, Jamaica, Vernon, Rockingham, Stratton, Wardsboro, Whitingham, and Wilmington.

- WRC continues to provide data and mapping assistance to numerous agencies and organizations in the region, including this year Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Grace Cottage Hospital, Strolling of the Heifers, West Brattleboro Association, Windham and Windsor Housing Trust, and Windham Solid Waste Management District.

- GIS staff continues to provide support for transportation-related inventory and mapping work. We updated culvert inventories and/or maps for Dover, Jamaica, Readsboro, Searsburg, Vernon, and Wilmington and worked on a sign inventory for Wilmington. Support for towns as they prepare for Vermont’s Municipal Roads General Permit has been extensive. One aspect of this support is conducting road erosion inventories; we worked on inventories for Dover, Dummerston, Jamaica, Putney, Readsboro, Searsburg, Vernon, Wardsboro, and Wilmington.

- WRC continues efforts to provide support for our communities regarding trails and recreation paths. We have been working with the Brattleboro District Office of the Vermont Department of Health to provide mapping support and trail information for their “Windham on the Move” initiative, and in cooperation with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, the RiseVT passport program. We continued to work with Vernon to create a map of their revived town forest trail system and develop that system more fully. WRC provided trail mapping support to Scott Farm/Landmark Trust and Friends of the West River Trail, and worked with Wilmington on mapping issues with the Valley Trail and enhancing their trail mapping and kiosks.

- WRC continues its robust pedestrian counting program on sidewalks, recreation paths, and trails. We undertook 56 counts in 15 towns. We also conducted counts at five different times over the course of a year on sidewalks in Wilmington’s downtown district to provide a more comprehensive view of pedestrian traffic there.

- WRC continues do traffic studies, generally at the request of towns. We did 25 studies in seven towns in FY19.

- WRC continues to further efforts to improve the status of digital parcel data in the region. We worked with VCGI to convert Somerset’s data to the a format that meets the State’s new Parcel Data Standard, and hosted a Statewide Parcel Mapping Program meeting, which representatives from seven of the region’s towns attended.

- WRC purchased a bicycle tube counter to begin inventories of bike use on both recreation pathways and highways. WRC conducted nine counts in six different towns during FY19.

- WRC provides mapping support to towns when they apply for various grants, including Dummerston and two for Wilmington.

- WRC participated in the US Census Bureau’s Participant Statistical Areas Program to recommend updates to census tracts, block groups, and census designated places. WRC proposed to add 13 census designated places to be able to get detailed census data for villages and hamlets, and changes to block group boundaries in five towns so that they better align with the town’s local geography.

- Staff provided E911 data and mapping support to Marlboro and Somerset, and provided updated building footprint data to the Vermont E911 Board. We also created a new map showing Brattleboro’s 300-plus road names for their dispatch center.

- We participated in an effort coordinated by VAPDA to create a statewide database of industrial parks.
ENERGY CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT
A renewed focus on clean, renewable, sustainable, and affordable energy presents Vermont with great opportunity and significant challenges. RPCs integrate energy planning with land use, transportation, and natural resources planning, and work with municipalities to assist with project implementation. RPCs participate in Section 248 proceedings and support comprehensive planning at the local and regional level to inform the permitting process.

- The WRC has continued to manage the Windham Wood Heat Initiative. The program has assisted 7 institutions (4 schools, 1 municipal building, and 2 public serving institutions) in switching to modern wood heating systems through technical and financial assistance in the past year, and has funded 3 comprehensive energy audit reports in the past year. The program is also working with 3 modern wood heating systems that are currently upgrading and fixing their previously installed systems. Several more projects are being considered or are getting underway with the conversion. Outreach and public education have been central to this program. Marion presented on the program at the REV2018 annual conference as well as several local organizational meetings. During the Windham County Capital for a day tour, the Green Street School installation was featured as a success story. The installations have been featured on the Feel Good Heat website as “Stoked Stories” or testimonials for automated wood heat. The program continues to be advised by strong local partner organizations. The funding for this $1.6 million project is through the Clean Energy Development Fund (CEDF), which was made possible through the state’s settlement agreement with Entergy Vermont Yankee.

- WRC continued to manage the Windham County Renewable Energy Program. This program awards grants towards the development renewable energy generation projects. The projects awarded went to 2 rooftop solar installations, 2 ground-mounted net-metered solar projects. The Windham County Renewable Energy Program has awarded $592,523 to date and has displaced or avoided over 6,800 tons of CO2 emissions.

- The WRC worked with 4 towns (Halifax, Putney, Newfane, and Townshend) on the development of their Act 174-compliant town plan energy elements. This was the third round of towns to receive this technical assistance. The plans are currently being drafted. The towns which participated in the previous rounds of technical assistance (Londonderry, Westminster, Vernon, Grafton, Wardsboro, Weston, Windham, Rockingham, and Jamaica) worked towards adopting their energy plans as part of their town plans. Westminster and Londonderry’s plans were reviewed for Determination of Energy Compliance and received the certificate of compliance from WRC. This grants the plans substantial deference from the PUC during Section 248 reviews.

WATERSHED PLANNING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
RPCs work with the Agency of Natural Resources to implement the state’s Clean Water Initiative through basin planning and assistance to municipalities in meeting statutory and regulatory requirements. RPCs also work with municipalities and watershed organizations to implement river corridor assessments in local planning and regulations which result in better and safer growth management decisions. The WRC has gone a step further in organizing community efforts to connect people with their watersheds, and to create watershed “identities.”
● Developed, proposed, and finalized a charge for the Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) to the Windham Regional Commission’s Executive Board. The CWAC’s role includes providing local and regional input regarding project priorities and water quality issues important to the Windham Region, and serving in an advisory capacity to the WRC Executive Board and Full Commission.

● Additionally, the CWAC began to help the VT DEC’s Watershed Coordinator develop the draft of the Tactical Basin Plan for the Deerfield River Watershed (Basin 12-13) and provide appropriate outreach or assistance to towns. The WRC Water Quality Planner has attended all Regional Water Quality Coordination meetings, hosted by the VT DEC Watershed Coordinator.

● Wrote a grant proposal to, and secured, a VT DEC Watershed grant to support public education and outreach within the on-going Green River Watershed Alliance initiative (started in 2017). These public events addressed environmental issues, placemaking, watershed study, place-based education, and ecological restoration; all of which highlighted the importance of watershed awareness in the Green River watershed for water quality and flood resilience.

● Successfully assisted with the enrollment of 24 towns in the FY20 Municipal Roads Grants in Aid Program to proactively reimburse towns for road drainage improvements that bring hydrologically-connected road segments up to fully-meeting the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) standards.

● For the previous FY19 Municipal Roads Grants in Aid program, facilitated the reimbursement of over $300,000 to 20 Windham Region towns that had completed work on these road segments.

● Participated in various collaborative watershed efforts, including:
  o Worked with the Vermont Rivers Conservancy on pursuing river conservation easements and associated site restoration of two parcels on the Green River and Whetstone Brook.
  o Worked with and staffed the Green River Watershed Alliance in securing a VT DEC Watershed grant to extend public outreach and education into the 2019 field season.
  o Participated in the VT Resilience Networks conference at Norwich University in May 2019. Presented on the role of placemaking and community engagement in watershed planning and watershed resilience efforts overall.
  o Worked with the Connecticut River Conservancy to fund an engineering plan, and secure grant funding for the construction phase for the removal of a defunct dam on the Crosby Brook in Dummerston, with two grants secured through the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP).
  o Worked with the Connecticut River Joint Commission’s Wantastiquet Local River Subcommittee to link and represent Connecticut River towns to relevant planning issues along the River.
  o Hosted and planned a panel discussion at the 2019 Leahy Summit at the ECHO Center to link watershed science and placemaking statewide, as a result of the WRC’s expertise and experience with The Confluence Project partnership.
  o Attended the Watersheds United Vermont Spring Meeting in Waterbury in March, 2019. Discussed and collaborated on issues relevant to water quality planning, watershed groups, and Conservation Districts, and legislation related to clean water funding.

● In coordination with the Rich Earth Institute, launched the Village Sanitation Pilot Study, which provided Westminster West and West Dummerston with technical assistance and customized
information regarding their septic systems and proposed alternatives to those systems, such as urine diversion or composting toilets. This pilot project aims to inform a neighborhood about how eco-sanitation systems might be more broadly applicable to help sustain our historic village centers.

- Developed a position for and hosted, an ECO AmeriCorps Service Member in the role of “Wastewater Planning Associate” for 2019. This position is designed to support the Village Sanitation Pilot Study, wastewater planning in affected Windham Region municipalities, and clean water efforts overall.
- Worked with the Deerfield River Watershed Association and the VT DEC to host an ECO AmeriCorps Service Member to assist with water quality monitoring sampling throughout the Windham Region, and especially the Deerfield Basin. This member organized volunteers and assisted with sampling day logistics.
- Attended the meeting of the Staying Connected Initiative, a visionary partnership working to restore and enhance landscape connections for the benefit of people and wildlife across the Northern Appalachian/Acadian region of the eastern U.S. and Canada, in Orford, Quebec.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Continued collaboration with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, and our counterparts in NH and MA, to address the economic impacts of the closure of Vermont Yankee.
- WRC continues to make the case at the Federal level for the substantive inclusion of host communities in the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s policymaking process that is creating nuclear power plant decommissioning policy, as well as the U.S. Department of Energy’s consideration of a consent-based spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste siting initiative.
- Participated in the first federal roundtable sponsored by the Nuclear Decommissioning Collaborative. The purpose of this meeting was for nuclear host communities to share their experience and how federal agencies might use existing programs to help mitigate the economic impact of nuclear plant closures.
- Actively engaged with the Vermont Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel, which was created by the legislature to advise state agencies, the Governor, the Legislature, and others about matters related to the decommissioning of Vermont Yankee. Executive Director Chris Campany chairs the Panel.

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

Virtually all of the WRC’s revenue sources are tied to contracts with scopes of work, guidelines, and/or performance measures. This means that the WRC has limited control over how it chooses to use the vast majority of its funding. Funding received through town assessments is the exception, which makes this funding stream particularly important because it gives us the greatest latitude to respond to WRC-identified needs in the region. Town assessments, and the funding received through the WRC’s performance contract with the state, are also necessary to provide matching funds required by grantors. The grants we receive enable us to work with our towns on areas such as transportation, emergency planning, community development, brownfields redevelopment, energy, and natural resources. Revenue from virtually all federal and state grantors requires matching funds,
and typically non-federal matching funds. Required match ranges from 10 percent (Transportation Planning Initiative) to 50 percent (Emergency Management Planning Grant).

The WRC has an audit on an annual basis.

The WRC has adopted a Municipal Services Policy that is intended to provide guidance for the Commission in the delivery of professional services to member municipalities. It describes technical assistance available to member towns as part of the commission's core activities, and the opportunities for expanded service when funded as a special project.

‘AT WORK’ MAP
A map depicting the range of services provided by the WRC to member municipalities is included on the next page.