



THE ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS

2018 Annual Report

Board Members

Amber Collett
Karen Douville
Nancy Everhart
Stephanie Gomory
Robert Hyams
Jens Hawkins-Hilke
Nancy Jones
Bob Linck
Mark Nelson

Dear Members, Supporters and Friends,

For 28 years, the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions has been supporting conservation commissions and other community groups to protect resources, take action on issues, and effectively engage in town and regional government.

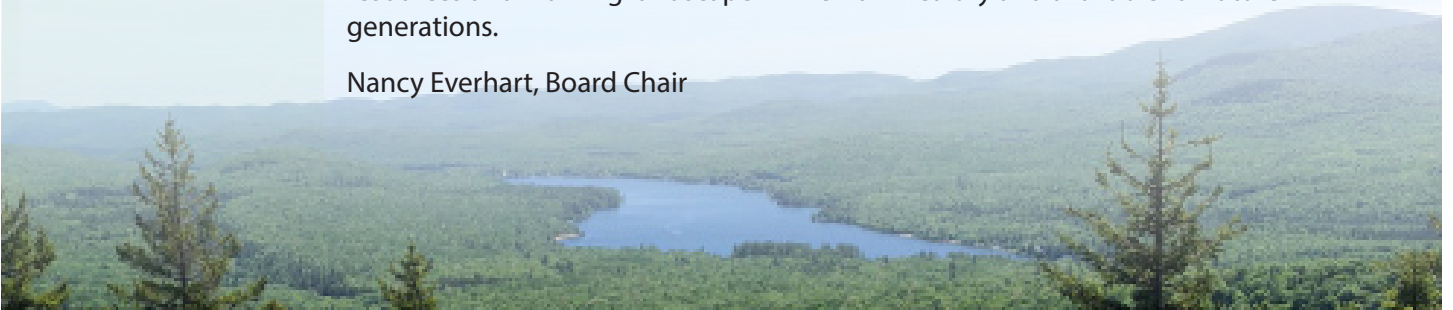
With its roots in Vermont's communities, AVCC is proud to support the work of conservation volunteers and commissions throughout Vermont by offering technical, program and capacity support. Here are some of the highlights from this year:

- Tiny Grants were awarded to conservation commissions in Cambridge, Dummerston, Greensboro, Hartford, Hinesburg, Putney, Sharon and Tinmouth for projects including bat house construction, assessing and/or improving trails on town-owned properties, creating a multi-town web-based platform to coordinate conservation activities, and providing river access. These small grants support impactful projects.
- "Caring for Vermont's Waters: What We Can Do", this year's AVCC statewide summit, was held in September at Green Mountain College. Conservation commission members and other grassroots leaders from across the state converged in Poultney for an action-oriented day of networking, learning and inspiration.
- Our Conservation Success Stories on-line platform keeps growing. With a searchable database of more than 100 stories, the tool is an accessible resource for sharing of partnership ideas, challenges and critical elements of conservation success.
- AVCC also continues to offer an active listserv with more than 500 members; this platform provides a lively discussion forum on topics such as how to establish and manage a town conservation fund, managing trails on town-owned lands, and building climate resilience.

Regional conservation meetings held around the state have helped facilitate opportunities for collaboration among conservation commissions and other groups and entities. It has been exciting to see so much great work happening and people's eagerness to work across town boundaries!

The AVCC board is looking forward to another great year. Together, we are building the state's conservation legacy, ensuring that Vermont's wild places, outdoor recreational resources and working landscape will remain healthy and available for future generations.

Nancy Everhart, Board Chair



2018 AVCC Conservation Summit

Lessons from David Deen

Before retiring in 2018, David Deen served in the Vermont Legislature for 30 years as Chair of the Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Committee and as Vice-Chair of the House Rules Committee, among other roles. As a legislator, he was a champion for water quality and expanding clean water protections.

As you can imagine, we were thrilled to have someone with Deen's background deliver the keynote address at our Annual Summit that focused on caring for Vermont's waters.

Deen gave a thorough presentation about the risks of climate change for US coastal cities, and how Vermont needs to be prepared for a wave of climate migration resulting from rising sea levels. He also shared concrete tips for how conservation commissions and other advocates can influence policy in Montpelier at this urgent time.

Thank you, Rep. Deen, for sharing your valuable perspective with our audience!



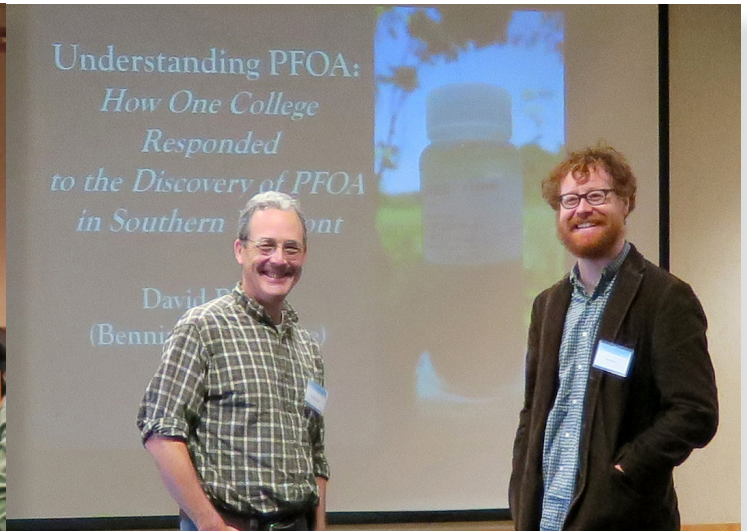
David Deen gave the keynote address at AVCC's Annual Summit



Deen and AVCC Board Chair Nancy Everhart



Deen points out the dire implications of climate change for our coastal cities



Caring for Vermont's Waters: What We Can Do!

Held on Saturday, September 29 at Green Mountain College in Poultney, our 2018 Summit was a day-long educational and networking event for professionals and community volunteers engaged in planning and caring for natural resources, with a particular focus on Vermont's waterways.

Breakout sessions focused on obtaining higher levels of protection for wetlands, streams, and rivers; protection and restoration of fish, amphibian, and reptile populations; drinking water and wellhead protection areas; understanding PFOA, and other timely and vital topics in protecting our state's waters. We also offered sessions on social media for communication and impact; effective leadership and facilitation; and managing different points of view when working to improve water quality.

Keynote speaker, former State Representative David Deen, spoke about fighting for water protection under the golden dome in Montpelier.

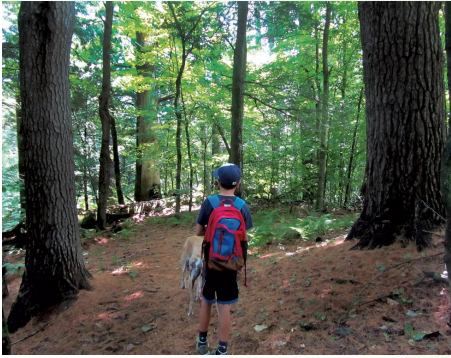
The 2018 Summit also featured an optional post-Summit field trip with river scientist Shayne Jaquith from The Nature Conservancy. Participants enjoyed an afternoon field walk to the banks of the Poultney River along a trail through diverse terrain.

Thank you to everyone who spoke at, attended, and participated in AVCC's 2018 Conservation Summit!

Above: Some photos from the 2018 Annual Summit. We hope you'll join us in 2019!

AVCC Funds Eight Tiny Grant Programs in 2018

Cambridge Conserves Land Abutting Town Forest



Cambridge Conservation Commission received a \$300 Tiny Grant as seed money toward the establishment of a Capital Campaign Promotion to inform the public about the opportunity to acquire and conserve two parcels of land abutting the Cambridge State Forest, and to seek financial support for this acquisition. To date, the CCC has met with the Cambridge Selectboard to establish a Conservation Reserve Fund, and is soliciting bids for an appraisal of the two parcels.

Hartford Conducts Trail Assessment

The Town of Hartford contracted with the Upper Valley Trails Alliance to conduct a Trail Assessment of the Hartford Town Forest trail system, including an interactive map and analysis of areas of concern (erosion, standing water, unsafe structures, inadequate signage, etc.). The Trail Assessment will be used as a tool to evaluate and help facilitate the implementation of needed improvements to the network of trails within the Town Forest. Hartford's \$500 Tiny Grant covered nearly 60% of the cost of this project.



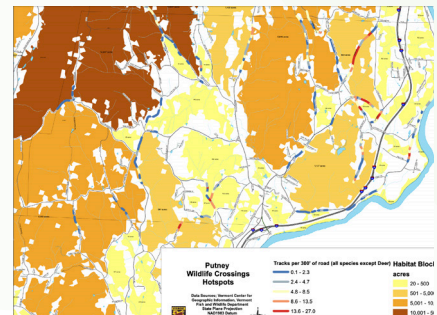
Sharon Creates River Access



Sharon Conservation Commission received a \$500 Tiny Grant to support the development of a River Access Area on town-owned land on the White River. Working collaboratively with the White River Partnership (WRP) and the Sharon road crew, SCC plans to construct a parking area and a trail to the river's edge, and to develop a management plan for maintaining and regularly inspecting the site.

Putney Analyzes Wildlife Road Crossings

Since 2011, the Putney Conservation Commission, with the help of nearly 40 volunteers, has tracked wildlife crossings on town roads. With its \$600 Tiny Grant, PCC hired an expert to prepare a computer script to analyze the data, which, combined with the state's habitat block information, will be used to create a map for community discussion. The map will show not only busy road crossings, but also possible corridors animals use to meet their needs for food, water, mates, cover, and adjustments required by climate change.



The AVCC's annual Tiny Grants Program helps support local projects around the state. The grants provide seed money and/or matching funds for specific conservation projects at the local level. Individual grants are available in the range of \$250-\$600.

All conservation commissions and groups working to become conservation commissions that are members of AVCC are eligible. To learn more, become an AVCC member, or apply for a Tiny Grant, visit: <http://vtconservation.com>



Greensboro Gets into "PLACE"

Greensboro used its \$500 Tiny Grant to support a Place-based Landscape Analysis and Community Engagement (PLACE) study of Greensboro Bend under UVM's Field Naturalist and Ecological Planning Program, carried out by UVM M.A. candidate Lauren Sopher. Through public and private conversations with community members and ecological field work, Lauren developed conservation recommendations for Greensboro Bend that fall into three major themes: street beautification, healthy rivers, and forests and farms.

Tinmouth Completes Ridge Trail

Tinmouth Conservation Commission used its \$300 Tiny Grant to extend and complete its Ridge Trail Bog Bridges Project by building bog bridges out of hemlock and cedar logs, adding place signage for hikers, and ensuring that the trail is listed on pertinent websites and in other Vermont State resources. In 2019, Tinmouth hopes to connect the Ridge Trail with another loop trail in town.



Hinesburg Builds Bat Houses

The Hinesburg Conservation Commission used its \$400 Tiny Grant to construct and install bat houses with Champlain Valley Union High School students in Geprag's Park. In May, the students will speak publicly about the bat houses and exhibit the ones that were placed on school grounds. Following this fruitful collaboration, HCC is actively recruiting students to join the commission.

Dummerston Gets Organized

The Dummerston Conservation Commission is using its \$300 Tiny Grant to increase coordination and amplify the collective work of conservation-focused groups and organizations in southern Vermont. While strategizing about establishing a regional calendar and other coordination efforts, DCC has already seen more collaborative work among local environmental groups.



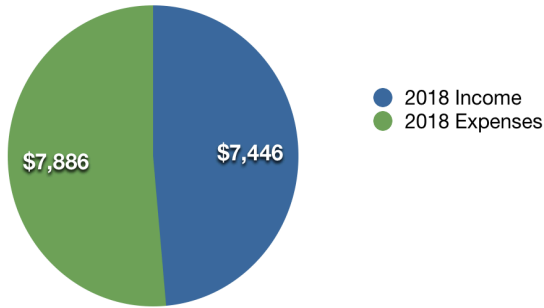
2018 Financial Year in Review

Your Membership Dues at Work

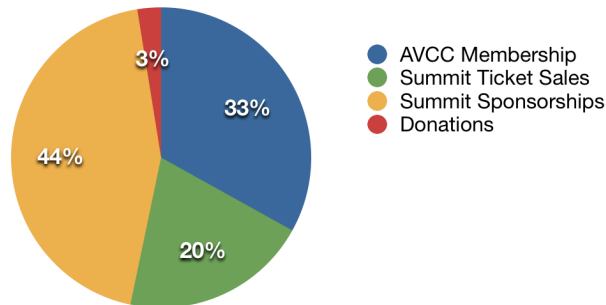
Financially, AVCC continues to be in the black. We are a volunteer-run organization that relies on individual and conservation commission memberships.

If you or your conservation commission are not AVCC members, we encourage you to join. If you are members, thanks for your support!

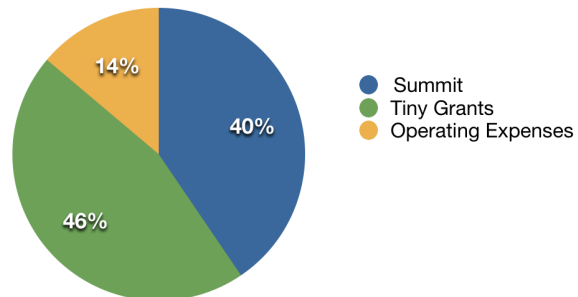
2018 AVCC Financials



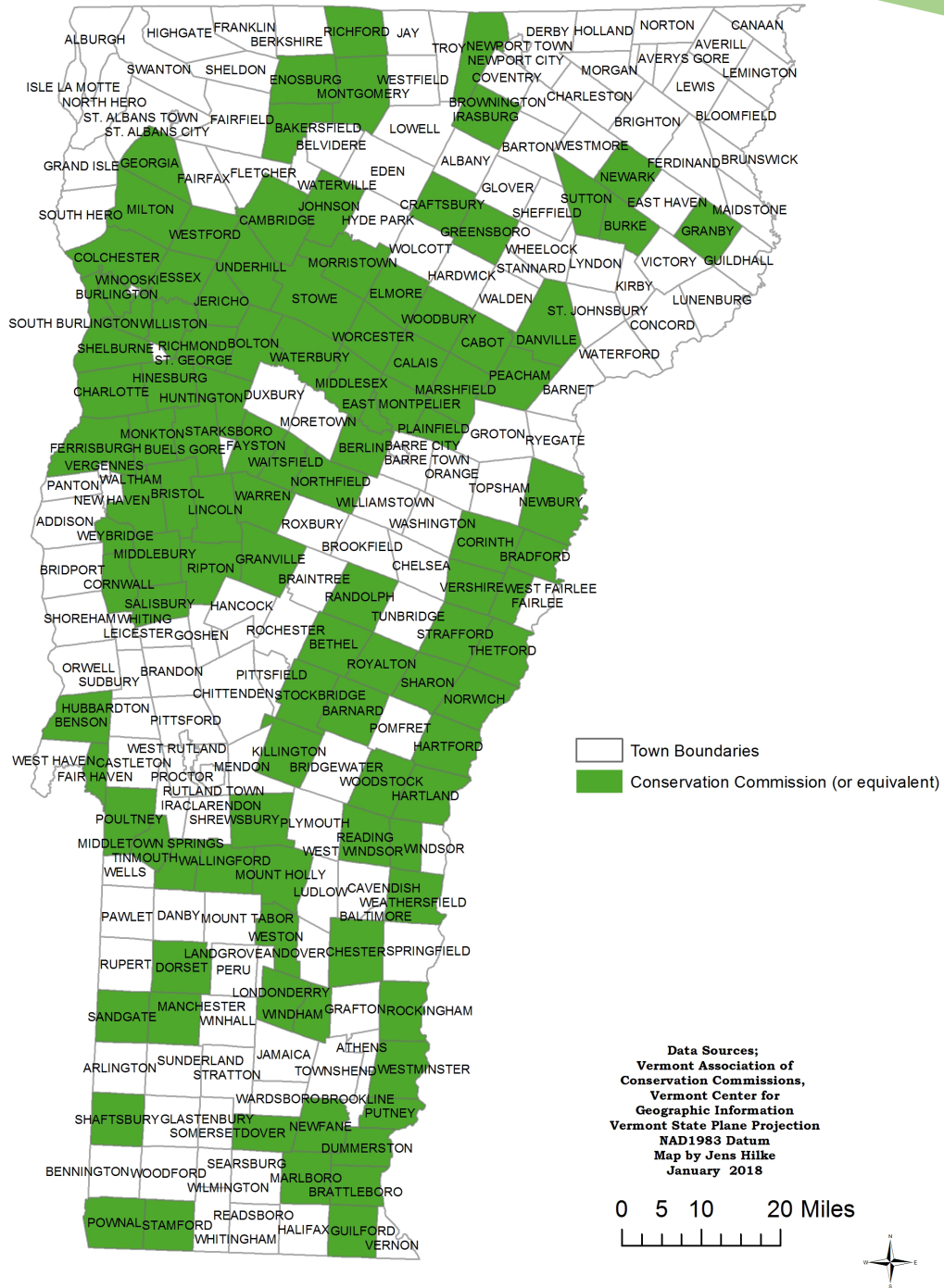
Income



Expenses



Vermont Conservation Commissions



This map shows the 110 towns that have a conservation commission or related committee, and represents 43% of Vermont municipalities.

Please email corrections to: vtconservation@gmail.com

Memberships, Donations, and Sponsorships

Town Memberships

Expiring June 30, 2019:

Bolton
Bradford
Burke
City of S. Burlington
Colchester
Cornwall
Craftsbury
Danville
Dummerston
Fayston
Granville
Guilford
Hartford
Hartland
Hinesburg
Huntington
Johnson
Londonderry
Marlboro
Middlesex
Middletown Springs
Montgomery
Montpelier
Northfield
Plainfield
Putney
Randolph
Royalton
Salisbury
Shrewsbury
S. Burlington
Tinmouth
TRORC
Underhill
Warren

Expiring June 30, 2020:

Ripton
Weston

Individual Memberships

Expiring June 30, 2019:

Karen Douville
Susan Houston
Nancy Jones
Bob Linck
Mark Nelson
Lisa Stepancic
John Widness

Expiring June 30, 2020:

Amber Collett
Stephanie Gomory
Nancy Everhart
Jens Hilke
Rose Paul
George Springston

Donations:

Northwest Regional Planning
Commission
Trust for Public Land
Nancy Everhart

2018 Summit Sponsors

Chittenden County RPC
Copeland Furniture
Front Porch Forum
Green Up Vermont
Lintilhac Foundation
Northwest Regional Planning Commission
Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources
Conservation District
Redstart Natural Resource Management
Seiche
Suncommon
The Nature Conservancy
Trust for Public Land
Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional
Commission (TRORC)
Vermont Land Trust
Vermont Natural Resources Council

Summit Donations:

Copeland Furniture
Nancy Jones



You Are Making a Difference.

Thank You!

To check up-to-date
membership status, visit
<http://vtconservation.com/join-us/>