



# The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions

## 2019 Annual Report

### Board Members

Nancy Everhart  
Stephanie Gomory  
Jens Hawkins-Hilke  
Robert Hyams  
Nancy Jones  
Matt Lacey  
Bob Linck  
Mark Nelson

### *Please note our new mailing address:*

AVCC  
c/o Vermont Natural  
Resources Council  
9 Bailey Ave  
Montpelier, VT 05602

*Find us online at  
vtconservation.com  
and email us at  
vtconservation@gmail.com*

Dear Members, Supporters and Friends,

For 29 years, the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions has been supporting conservation commissions and other community groups in protecting and stewarding natural resources, taking action and providing education at the local level, and effectively engaging in town and regional government.

AVCC is proud to support the work of conservation volunteers and commissions throughout the state by offering technical, program, and capacity support. Here are some highlights from 2019:

- AVCC awarded eight Tiny Grants to conservation commissions in Bradford, Brattleboro, Huntington, Middlesex, Northfield, Randolph, Ripton, and Warren, for projects including trail management and signage; invasives management and education; and a caterpillar lab to educate students, teachers and community members about local caterpillars. These small grants leverage groups' other funding and support impactful projects.
- We held our annual summit at the Bread Loaf Campus of Middlebury College on September 28. Our theme was "Investing in Vermont's Conservation Future: Vermont Conservation Design". Conservation commission members and grassroots conservationists from around the state convened at this beautiful location to network and to be inspired, to learn with and from each other, choosing from a rich program of knowledgeable presenters.
- AVCC continues to offer an active listserv with more than 500 members, providing a lively discussion forum on topics such as building climate resilience, managing town-owned forests and their varied uses, and establishing and maintaining a town conservation fund.
- Regional meetings and trainings hosted or sponsored by AVCC have helped facilitate collaboration among conservation commissions and other groups.

As we feel the impact of the changing climate on our farms, communities, forests, wildlife, and streams, the urgency of our work has never been greater.

The AVCC Board appreciates the support of our members and friends. We look forward to another year of collaboration as we work to conserve and steward Vermont's special places and build a resilient landscape for future generations.

**Nancy Everhart, Board Chair**



# 2019 AVCC Conservation Summit

## Lessons from Liz Thompson

It was an honor to have Liz Thompson, Director of Conservation Science at the Vermont Land Trust, deliver our 2019 keynote address.

Drawing on a layered history of conservation in Vermont, Thompson offered a history of Vermont Conservation Design (VCD), from its creation to its practical application at the local scale, using her own town (Jericho, alias "Ridgeville") to provide real-world examples from her research.

Thompson also discussed the history of conservation planning in Vermont and in the larger region, highlighting advances in our thinking over the last 50+ years and how they have culminated in the latest conservation plan for Vermont.



Thompson's keynote address was informative, engaging, and inspiring as we set off on a day of learning about Vermont Conservation Design.

We thank her for sharing her great breadth of knowledge and perspective with us!



## Investing in Vermont's Conservation Future: Vermont Conservation Design

Held on Saturday, September 28 at the gorgeous Bread Loaf campus of Middlebury College in Ripton, our 2019 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 Conservation Design (VCD).

VCD is Vermont's current framework for investing in the state's conservation future so that we can sustain our valued natural areas, forests, waters, wildlife, and plants for generations to come.

Breakout sessions focused on using VCD maps on forest blocks and habitat connectors; VCD as a model for guiding bird conservation efforts; working effectively with your community to protect natural resources; land conservation for community value and ecological function; and much more.

Keynote speaker Liz Thompson, Director of Conservation Science at the Vermont Land Trust, provided a layered history of conservation planning in Vermont, and highlighted how these concepts can be applied at the local level.

The 2019 Summit also featured an optional post-Summit field trip: a short hike to a rare patch of old growth hemlock forest. Field trip participants learned how natural resources, habitat, and ecological features informed the permanent conservation of the Bread Loaf campus in 2015. We also got a closer look at just how complex forest soils can be.

*Thank you to everyone who participated in AVCC's 2019 Conservation Summit! We look forward to seeing you in 2020.*

# AVCC Funds Eight Tiny Grant Projects in 2019



## Bradford Holds Caterpillar Lab for Educators & Kids

In collaboration with Bradford Parks & Recreation and the Bradford Public Library, the Bradford Conservation Commission offered a teacher workshop at its Caterpillar Lab, a day-long event for summer schools and camps that focused on local caterpillars and their host plants. The event was an immense success, with 8 teachers participating in the workshop portion, 60 kids attending afternoon sessions, and 250 people of all ages participating overall.

## Brattleboro Implements Knotweed Management Program

With its Tiny Grant, Brattleboro Conservation Commission undertook a second season of managing Japanese knotweed along the banks of the West River in the West River Park. The funding allowed the group to purchase loppers, pruners, and work gloves so community volunteers could help steward the site. In early spring 2020, a consultant will be brought in to show people how to manage common invasives found in the area.



## Huntington Takes "Science to Action"

The Huntington Conservation Commission (HCC) enlarged, printed, and professionally mounted five "Science to Action" maps of the town, which have been used to engage and educate residents about determining road classifications, wildlife movement, and development in certain areas. The maps are also being used in classrooms, helping students identify boundaries, wetlands, and wildlife crossings, and develop a better understanding of and appreciation for the community's natural resources. HCC is looking forward to using the maps in the process of conserving 245 acres for a community forest, which it is working on with the Trust for Public Land and Vermont Land Trust.

## Middlesex Succeeds at Trail Work

The Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) completed a 2.2-mile hiking trail to the summit of Chases Mountain and constructed a kiosk and signboard at the trail head. Since opening to the public in the summer of 2019, the trail has become a popular day hike for Middlesex residents and nearby communities. A signboard is also being designed and printed for the kiosk that includes wildlife, geology, and usage information about the town forest. There will be an official trail opening ribbon cutting ceremony in late spring 2020!



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

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>



## Northfield Marks the Spot

The Northfield Conservation Commission improved signage in the Northfield Town Forest by designing and purchasing 500 small diamond signs that will clearly mark the forest's boundaries. A Northfield Girl Scout troop, together with the Northfield tree warden and others, will put up these signs in the spring. The conservation commission will also be putting up 5 larger "Welcome to the Northfield Town Forest" signs, complete with contact and other relevant information.

## Randolph Improves Forest Access

As a part of a larger effort to improve and increase access to town forests, the Randolph Conservation Commission (RCC) used its Tiny Grant to help build a small bridge over a wet area used by hikers and mountain bike riders and to create two substantial informational kiosks which will be finished up next spring. RCC is grateful for its collaboration with the Rochester Randolph Area Sports Trails Association on these projects.



## Ripton Tackles Invasives

The Ripton Conservation Commission organizes yearly work dates to pull invasive plants, which are monitored in the town. In 2019, the group used its Tiny Grant to purchase 5 Parsnip Predators and 1 Uprooter, which are specialized tools to assist with removing invasive plants. The group then pulled invasive plants (garlic mustard and wild parsnip) over 6 days for a total of 15 hours of work.

## Warren Gets Strategic about Knotweed

The Warren Conservation Commission used its Tiny Grant to partially fund an intern to help with its Knotweed Control Program: a local high school student who worked over the summer mapping knotweed infestation in the town and assisting the coordinator and crews with eradication efforts. Work consisted of manual extraction of knotweed at more than 100 individual sites, the establishment of a Town Knotweed Dump, and mapping of all higher elevation knotweed sites.



# 2019 Financial Year in Review

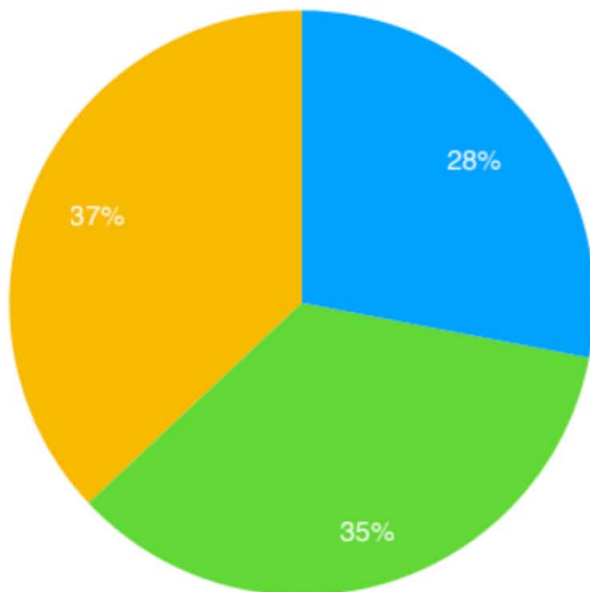
## Overview



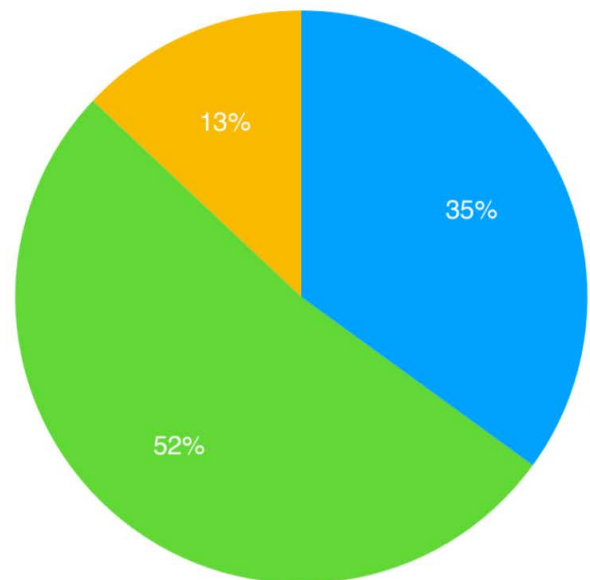
- Income
- Expenses

In 2019, AVCC funded more in Tiny Grants than in previous years and received less revenue from membership.

## Income



## Expenses



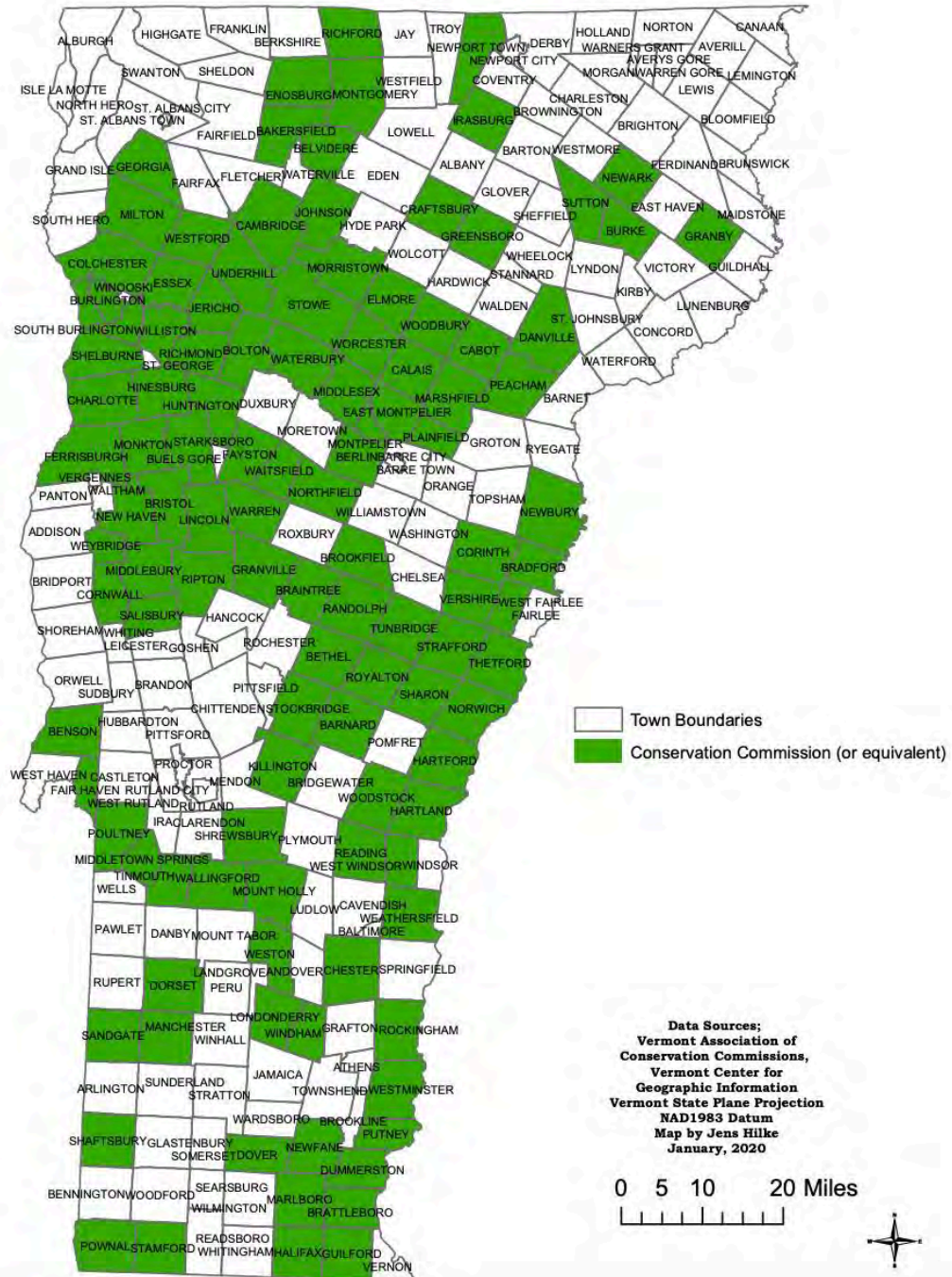
- Membership
- Summit/Education Events
- Summit Sponsors
- Summit
- Tiny Grants
- Operating

*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!***

# Vermont Conservation Commissions

## Vermont Conservation Commissions 2019



Do you know of a Conservation Commission that is missing from the map?

Please let us know! Email us at [vtconservation@gmail.com](mailto:vtconservation@gmail.com)

# Memberships, Donations, and Sponsorships

## Town Memberships

Bethel  
Bradford  
Braintree  
Brattleboro  
Bristol  
Burke  
Cabot  
Dorset  
Enosburg  
Fayston  
Ferrisburgh  
Georgia  
Greensboro  
Guilford  
Hartford  
Newbury  
Norwich  
Putney  
Ripton  
Salisbury  
Sharon  
Shrewsbury  
Stowe  
Tinmouth  
Tunbridge  
Underhill  
Wallingford  
Weathersfield  
Westford

## Individual Memberships

Ruth Botzow  
Richard Butz  
Amber Collett  
Nancy Everhart  
Peter Harvey  
Jens Hawkins-Hilke  
Nancy Jones  
Barry King  
Warren King  
Matt Lacey  
Rose Paul  
Lee Rosberg  
Mark Shilling  
George Springston

## 2019 Summit Sponsors

Addison County Regional Planning Commission  
(& Addison County River Watch Collaborative)  
Front Porch Forum  
Lintilhac Foundation  
Redstart Natural Resource Management  
SunCommon  
The Nature Conservancy  
Trust for Public Land  
Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission  
Vermont Center for Ecostudies  
Vermont Land Trust  
Vermont Natural Resources Council

## Summit Donations:

Copeland Furniture  
Nancy Jones

**IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP NOTE:** As of January 1, 2020, AVCC memberships are now effective through the calendar year. Prior to 2020, our membership schedule ran from July 1st – June 30th.

Members who are set to lapse on June 30th, 2020 will have their memberships extended through December 31, 2020. To check on your membership status, visit <http://vtconservation.com/join-us/>.

**PLEASE NOTE OUR  
NEW MAILING  
ADDRESS:**  
AVCC c/o VNRC  
9 Bailey Ave  
Montpelier, VT 05602



Photo by Bob LoCicero, courtesy of the Vermont Natural Resources Council

## Your Work is Making a Difference. Thank You!