



The Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC)

2022 Annual Report

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Dear Members, Supporters and Friends,

What a difference a year makes. In 2022, we were ready to venture outside our homes and we were able to get together in person for our annual Conservation Summit. The AVCC continued our mission to support Vermont's conservation commissions and to encourage the establishment of more in our state. Conservation commissions have the unique opportunity to understand the threats to local resources and the ability to work with their towns to protect natural resources for the future.

Speaking of new conservation commissions, we would like to recognize the two newest: South Hero and Vernon. We welcome them to the family of conservation commissions and wish them great success. There are still many towns in Vermont that do not have commissions, and we hope to add more in 2023. With the increasing threats to nature from climate change, development, and pollution, conservation commissions can play a vital role in grassroots efforts.

Our 2022 Annual Conservation Summit was a great success. After two long years, we were able to meet in person at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. What a treat it was to share stories, ideas, and smiles around protecting Vermont's natural resources. We appreciate all of you that took the time to join us this year. Our theme this year was "Planning For A Climate-Changed Future". I want to also thank all of our sponsors that made the summit possible.

The AVCC Board also held a planning retreat in 2022. As with our Conservation Summit, it was the first time meeting face to face in two years. We met to discuss the importance of local conservation and how the AVCC can work better to support local conservation efforts. We appreciate all of the individuals that completed our survey providing your thoughts and ideas.

Speaking of Board members, I am sad to report that Jens Hilke will be stepping down from the AVCC Board. Jens is a Conservation Planner for the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and has been a Board Member for over 10 years. During his time on the Board, Jens has been instrumental in planning and implementing our Annual Conservation Summits, developing and maintaining our Listserv and website, and most recently he was the driving force to rewrite and publish the on-line Conservation Commission Handbook. These are but a few of his efforts and accomplishments on the AVCC Board. And I cannot forget that he introduced all of us to the game of Mlkky! We will miss Jens' knowledge, talent, energy and his infectious smile. We wish him the best in all of his future endeavors.

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your time and work to protect our natural resources. The animals, plants, and current and future generations will benefit from your work. The AVCC Board appreciates the support of our members and friends, and we look forward to another year of collaboration as we conserve and steward Vermont's natural resources. Stay safe and healthy.

Mark Nelson, Board Chair

2022 AVCC Conservation Summit

Planning for a Climate-Changed Future

Our Conservation Summit theme this year was **“Planning For A Climate-Changed Future”**.

Over its long history, Vermont has seen its share of challenges. From deforestation, droughts, flooding, and other extreme weather events, our landscape has shown its strength and ability to recover. But Vermont has also been resilient in the way we came together to address our problems. Climate change isn't new, and historical crises like flooding and drought are worsening. Weather disruptions are coming at us all at once, and the severity of their impacts is all the more apparent. Now more than ever, Vermont communities are planning for our climate future, by putting infrastructure for resilience in place, and devising new systems that adapt to our rapidly changing reality. Much of the recent action on climate has been at the state level, but Vermont's Climate Action plan identifies strategies and actions that municipalities can engage in to prepare and respond to a changing climate.

We were fortunate to have Taj Scotland and Zoe Richards open the summit with their presentation about “Nature-Based Solutions: Strategies to Create Climate-Smart Communities,” followed by seven breakout sessions designed to educate and offer opportunity for questions and idea sharing, including the incredible Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Vermont's state climatologist.

You can find the 2022 Conservation Summit presentations on our website by copying this link into your browser: https://vtconservation.com/conservation_summit/



2022 Conservation Summit: Planning for a Changing Climate

Held at the Lake Morey Resort, conservation commissions, climate scientists, activists, and environmentalists from around the state convened to discuss community resilience, the intricacies of climatology region by region, and the long-standing structural inequities that have resulted in low-income and historically disenfranchised populations being disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. In addition to rousing Keynotes by **Taj Schottland**, Associate Director of the National Climate Program, Trust for Public Land, and Arthur Gibb Award winner **Zoe Richards**, Director of the Burlington Wildways Partnership and Burlington Conservation Board; a packed room for Vermont State Climatologist **Lesley-Ann Dupigny Giroux**, as well as **Marion Wolz, Chris Company, Ben Rose**, and many more, the mood was hopeful as attendees were engaged and poised for action.



Vermont State Climatologist Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux



Karina Dailey and Jon Groveman, VNRC.

Another highlight was **Jon Groveman** (Policy and Water Program Director, Vermont Natural Resources Council) and **Karina Dailey** (VNRC's Restoration Ecologist) who led an informative discussion on how intact freshwater systems build climate resilience, and the importance of freshwater ecosystems—including our rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, riparian areas, and floodplains—as critical resources we must protect in the interest of public health and combating the effects of climate change.

We encourage you to check out the entire program, and watch recordings, which are available on our website.



An Update from Four 2022 AVCC Tiny Grant Projects



Monkton and Marshfield Mitigate Invasives

Monkton Conservation Commission purchased two Uprooter tools to be used for mitigation of buckthorn and other invasives. On June 18, at Monkton Central School, they held a workshop/presentation with VT Fish and Wildlife's Travis Hart, who talked about how to combat buckthorn, honeysuckle, and other invasive trees and shrubs. Afterwards, participants were able to try out the Uprooters. Twenty-one people attended the presentation. They then sponsored two buckthorn removal work sessions at the Monkton Central School woods, August 27th and October 1. Eight MCC and community members participated in the first session and 5 in the second. They plan to hold more work sessions in April and May 2023 and again in the fall, with the intent of continuing these efforts annually. The Uprooter tools are also available to community members on loan. (Top left photo.)



In **Marshfield**, there is also hope to clean up invasives - mostly honeysuckle and barberries - with the plan to get a party out to saw the tops off the shrubs, then later grub the stumps, and plant the bare spots with wilding trees. (Immediate left photo)



Bethel Builds Bluebird Houses

Bluebird houses are pictured here, awaiting their new spring home at Carla's Meadow in Bethel, Vermont.



Burlington Creates Native Plant Garden for Edmonds Elementary School

A fledgling master naturalist, Betsy Hands, paired up with an expert botanist with Grow Wild, Kate Kruesi. Grow Wild seeks to support biodiversity and climate resilience in Burlington through increasing and connecting native plant habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife across public and private lands. At Edmonds Elementary school, this motley crew includes teachers and students who have come together to design and plant a native plant project, which was made possible through AVCC and Burlington Parks and Recreation. If you are driving or walking along Main Street, you will see two pollinator gardens, one under the Edmonds school sign and the other along the playground fenceline. There have been two workdays - one in May and one in October. They are planning their next workday May 2023. (Photos at left.)



AVCC's Annual Tiny Grants provide seed money and/or matching funds for specific conservation projects at the local level, in the broad categories of land conservation, education and outreach, stewardship and management, and planning. To learn more, visit <http://vtconservation.com>

Basic Information

Grant range: \$250 - \$600

Grant application due: **March 31, 2023** **Grant award announcement:** **April 28, 2023**

Evaluation Criteria: Demonstrated need; Evidence of matching funds and/or in-kind services; Closely aligns with grant goals; Project readiness; Local support and volunteer involvement

How to apply: Please email ALL completed applications to vtconservation@gmail.com (AVCC Board). We are strongly discouraging mailed applications, but if it is not possible for you to email your application, our mailing address is on the front page of this Annual Report.

2023 Application

In a separate document, please provide the following information:

- Contact Person
 - Organization
 - Mailing Address
 - Email
 - Phone
 - Fiscal Sponsor, if any (legal name)
 - Fiscal Sponsor contact information
1. Brief description of the project (300 words max)
 2. Total budget for this project
 3. Amount of grant money requested (min. \$250 – max. \$600)
 4. Other funds, if any, for this project
 5. List the source(s) and amounts of other funds and/or in-kind contributions
 6. Explain how these funds will make a difference to the success of your project (600 words max)
 7. Explain how you will measure the success of your project (300 words max)



To be eligible for an AVCC Tiny Grant, groups must be: Vermont conservation commissions or local committees/groups that are working towards becoming a conservation commission **AND** paid members of AVCC. To check your membership status, please email vtconservation@gmail.com.

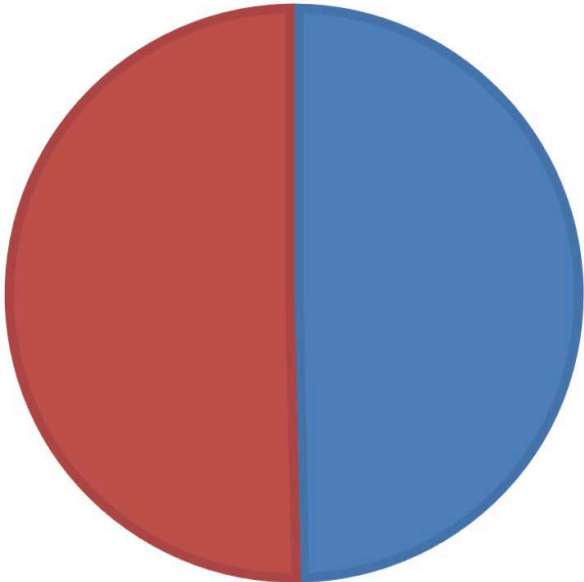
Other Stipulations: Groups must be a municipality or IRS certified 501(c)(3) public charity, or have fiscal sponsorship by a municipality or IRS certified 501(c)(3) public charity. Prior recipients of grants from AVCC must have completed those grants and closed them out. Grants cannot be used for general funds, dues or subscriptions. Grantees will be required to submit a Conservation Success Story online using the AVCC website (vtconservation.com/success-stories), presenting evidence of grant completion with photographs and text detailing outcomes and challenges.

Timetable: Applications must be submitted (or postmarked if sent by mail) on or before **March 31, 2023**. Grantees will be notified of funding approval by **April 28, 2023**. Projects must be completed and a final report submitted **May 1, 2024**. The funds awarded under this grant will be available approximately a month after the awards are announced. Checks will be issued by the Vermont Community Foundation.

2022 Financial Year in Review

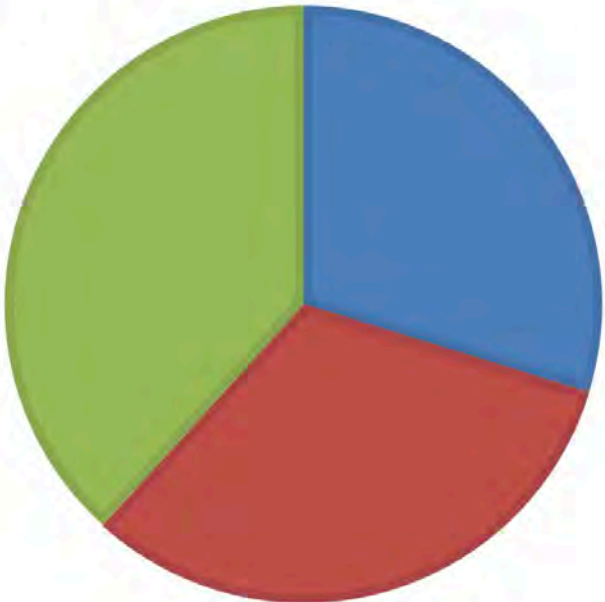
2022 OVERVIEW

■ Revenues \$6,925 ■ Expenses \$7,022



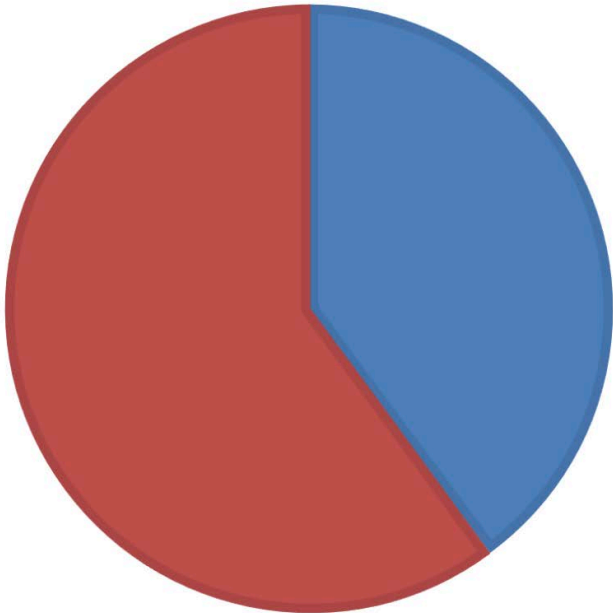
REVENUE

■ Fundraising \$2,061 ■ Membership \$2,213 ■ Sponsorship \$2,650



EXPENSES

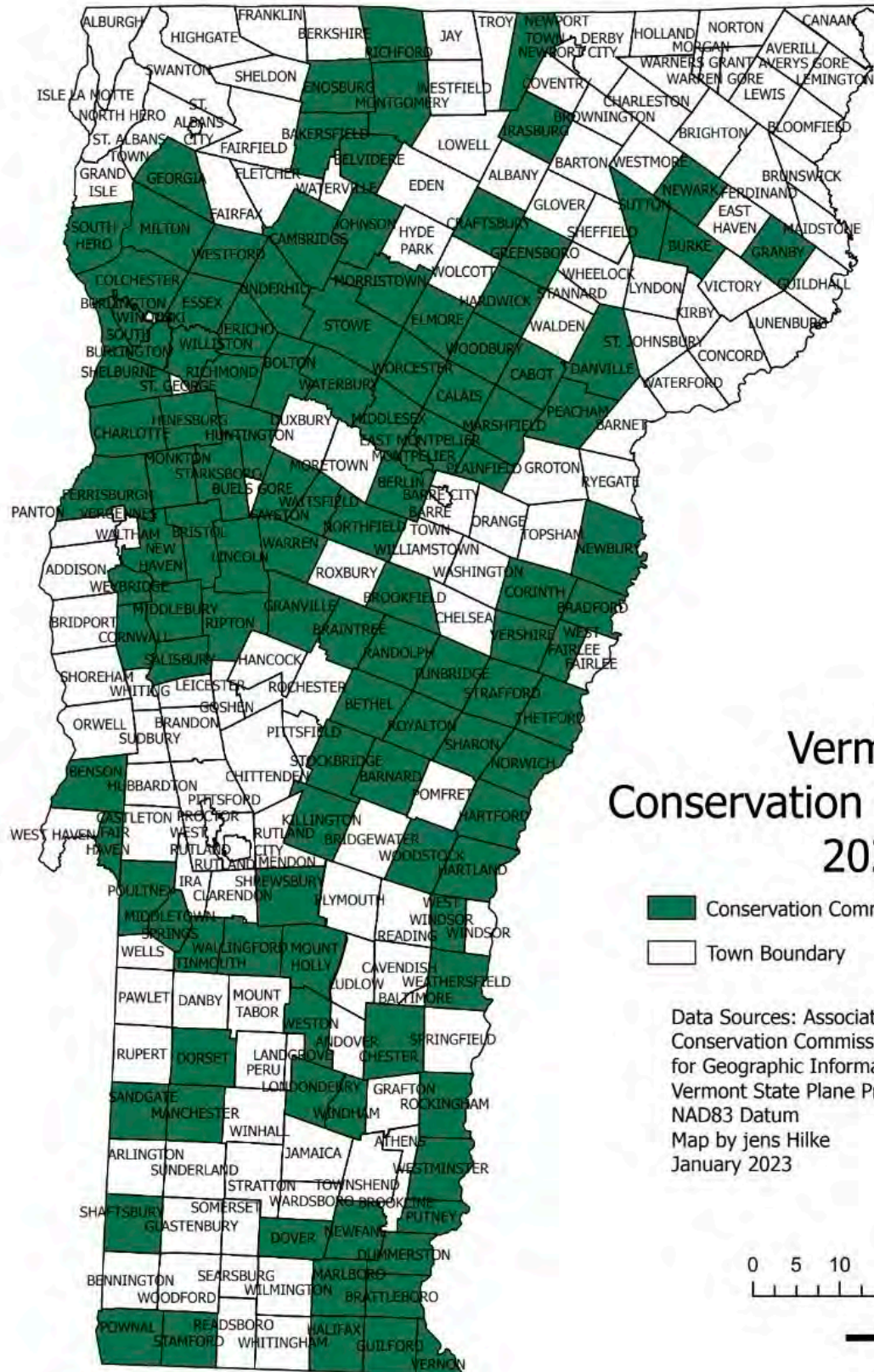
■ Tiny Grants \$2,800 ■ Operating \$4,222



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!

Map of Vermont Conservation Commissions



Do you know of a conservation commission that is missing from the map? Please let us know! Email us at vtconservation@gmail.com

Become an AVCC member today!

We offer two types of AVCC membership: organizational (\$50) and individual (\$20). Memberships are effective through the calendar year. Members receive discounted admission to our annual summit. Renew or join today if you haven't already!

To become a member, renew your membership, or check on your membership status, visit vtconservation.com/join-us/

You can pay online or mail a check to:

**AVCC c/o VNRC
11 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05602**

To join our listserv, send an email to: vtconservation+subscribe@googlegroups.com

Thanks for reading! 2022 Annual Report

