



Lamoille County Planning Commission

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Planning Commission

FALL 2009

Managing Stormwater Runoff at Its Source: Utilizing Low Impact Development (LID) Practices

Low Impact Development (LID) is an approach to land development or redevelopment that works with nature to manage stormwater runoff as close to its source as possible. Stormwater runoff, defined as precipitation or snowmelt that does not infiltrate into the ground, can cause extensive damage to both private property and public infrastructure as well as adversely affect water quality across the region.

The purpose of LID is to mimic natural processes to infiltrate, evaporate or reuse stormwater on the site where it is generated thereby improving water quality and reducing the risk of flash flooding. LID practices can be easily applied to retrofit and redevelopment projects and implemented in new development to reduce the runoff volume and overall impacts of existing development on receiving waters.

Examples of LID systems and practices include:

- sub-surface gravel wetlands, vegetated swales and buffers, rain gardens
- reducing paved surfaces or utilizing permeable pavement
- rain barrels and cisterns to collect rain

These options create functional and appealing site drainage and treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product.

LCPC is part of a statewide effort funded by the VT Agency of Natural Resources to provide outreach to municipalities on LID practices, identify where LID projects have been implemented, and identify potential barriers for incorporating LID.

For more information, contact Amanda Holland at Amanda@lcpvvt.org.

Morristown Zoning Update

For nearly a year and a half, Morristown's Planning Commission and Selectboard have been working to update the town's zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations, which were guided by the previous year's town plan update. Each board conducted their own exhaustive quest for public input, including a total of four public hearings.

Some of the changes proposed for adoption by the Town are:

- Expanding the *Commercial district* at the north end of town;
- Expanding the *Business Office Park district* to the south and west, providing for some additional uses in the district and changing the district's name to the *Business Enterprise district*;

- Creating a *Sewer Service Market Area overlay district* to provide mitigation and clustering requirements to protect primary agricultural soils, while guiding future infrastructure investments; and
- Adding subdivision landscaping requirements and landscaping standards for conditional uses.

Creating a 75,000 square foot retail cap in the *Commercial district* has been tabled for more public input and a possible town meeting referendum vote.

LCPC provides Town Planner services to Morristown under separate contract and staffs the Planning Commission's work on this project.

For more information contact , Bill Rossmassler at bill@lcpvvt.org.

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Upcoming meetings:

- Oct 27, 2009 Lamoille County Housing Coalition, 2 pm at Agency of Human Services, Morrisville
- Oct 27, 2009 "What To Do About Flu" Forum, 6:30 pm at River Arts, Morrisville
- Oct 28, 2009 Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee, 12 pm at TEGU Building, Morrisville
- Nov 3, 2009 LVRT Advisory Committee, 2-4 pm at TEGU Building, Morrisville



Smugglers' Notch Scenic Highway News

For more information, contact Bill Rossmassler at bill@lcpv.org.

Spur Trail to Smugglers' Cave Reconstructed

Thanks to Scenic Byways funding, the LCPC and its Smugglers' Notch State Park and Scenic Highway partners were able to hire a seven person Green Mountain Club (GMC) trail crew for six weeks this past summer to reconstruct the heavily travelled Spur Trail to Smugglers' Cave at the top of Smugglers' Notch.

The trail starts just behind the State's information booth, is relatively short, and is the most heavily used trail in the Notch. In reconstructing the trail, the crew sourced their rock from the surrounding area, hand picking and moving each piece individually to their desired locations without the use of any power equipment. This low impact process enabled visitors to continue visiting the Cave in a safe manner, while also observing and learning about these types of trail building techniques.

The project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget. Special thanks are extended to the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation's District Parks Manager Susan

Bulmer and Park Ranger Aaron Jacobs, as well as GMC's Field Supervisor Dave Hardy and crew leaders.

Project Highlights

- Strategically placed water bars were installed, significantly improving the trail's stormwater runoff and erosion.
- Over 50 stone steps were installed, making for a much safer ascent to the Cave for visitors.
- Stormwater drainage routes, often mistaken for trails, have been closed off and signed to discourage the public from getting themselves into dangerous situations on the cliffs above.



View of 2007 landslide area in Smuggler's Notch.

Smugglers' Notch Slope Instability Report

Those familiar with Smugglers' Notch know it for its towering, vertical cliffs which randomly deposit countless boulders at the floor of the valley. Like most dramatic natural features, the cliff's scenic beauty draw visitors to the Notch, and the vertical faces invite rock climbing and other recreational activities.

Concerns over the potential safety risks from landslides prompted partners to conduct a study to better understand the overall slope instability hazards in the Notch. The study delineated high landslide areas within the Notch, determined when such landslides are most frequent, and calculated how heavy rainfall and landslide events are related. The report provides a number of recommendations for improving safety in the area which are being implemented by the sponsoring agencies – VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, VT Geological Survey, VT Agency of Transportation, and VT Emergency Management.



GMC Trail Crew: Samantha Lash, Kurt Melin, Zach Barna, Jill Stone, R. Matthew Burke, **Leaders:** Sol Cooperdock, Emily Hernandez Goldstein

Left: Waterbar installed along Sterling Pond trail to prevent trail erosion.

Sterling Pond Trailhead Reconstruction

The Sterling Pond Trailhead at the top of Smugglers' Notch was reconstructed with the help of a Vermont Youth Conservation Corps crew and funding from a Recreation and Trails Grant. The crew relocated the trailhead sign down the trail to a

more visible location, constructed a number of waterbars to prevent erosion, and defined more clearly the desired walking trails while closing off and revegetating the undesired bootleg trails.





Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Act 250 Appeal

Coordinators for Act 250 Districts 5, 6 and 7 have reversed their original Jurisdictional Opinion and concluded that a land use permit is required for development of the LVRT. The Coordinators concluded that the proposed construction is an upgrade and that the purpose of the corridor will be different under VAST's control. Therefore, the physical action constitutes "construction of improvements" rather than "repair and maintenance". Geoffrey Green, District #6 Commission Coordinator, issued a dissenting opinion.

VAST will appeal the decision to the Environmental Court. As the property owner, the State of Ver-

mont, through VTrans, will likely join in the appeal as the decision could have significant implications for repair and maintenance of roads. If a land use permit is required, VAST would need to identify and notify all landowners adjacent to the trail, as they would have the right to participate in the Act 250 process. As part of its transportation planning contract, LCPC is completing a joint project with Northwest RPC and Northeastern Vermont Development Association to develop a GIS database of property ownership along the trail. That effort is nearly complete and will assist VAST with landowner outreach, regardless of the appeal's outcome.

Barnes Camp Study Investigates Building's Use as Visitor Center



Above: Present day view of Barnes Camp

Left: Historic view of Barnes Camp

LCPC and the Smugglers' Notch Scenic Highway Partners have hired the firm of Robert Carl Williams Associates (RCW) to conduct a feasibility study and conceptual designs of the proposed Barnes Camp Visitor Center at the Southern Gateway of the Scenic Highway in Stowe. RCW has completed the building conditions assessment, the historic structures report and program analysis and is now working with the project partners to narrow the design alternatives to a preferred design.

Once a preferred design has been chosen, RCW will be developing preliminary designs that attempt to preserve as much of the historic structure as is possible, while at the same time using green technologies wherever possible to increase the building's efficiency. RCW will also be providing site plan designs and cost estimates for the preferred alternative, which will then be used to take the project through permitting and final design. This project is being funded by a Transportation Enhancement grant.

NFIP Biennial Reports

Did your town submit its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) 2009 Biennial Report forms? The April mailing was addressed to the Chief Executive Officer or Floodplain Administrator and helps keep local communities up to date on the latest NFIP programs and initiatives. The Report itself gathers data to help FEMA respond to ongoing changes occurring in each participating community's flood hazard area. If you missed the September 30 reporting deadline, please contact the Report Coordinator at 1-877-336-2114.

Successful Appeal Brings Millions to Vermont

LCPC participated with Vermont's 10 other Regional Planning Commissions in an appeal to the US Department of Energy (DOE) regarding county allocations of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants stimulus funding. The 10 most populous counties in each state were to receive automatic funding. Vermont was denied its county allocations because DOE concluded that it did not have county government. The RPCs successfully demonstrated that Vermont's county court system qualified as county government. Judges in the 10 most populous counties agreed to accept the automatic allocations and will hire RPCs to manage the funds, bringing an additional \$1.8 million in energy funding to Vermont.

Lamoille County will not be receiving an automatic energy allocation; however, LCPC's participation was critical in demonstrating that county government exists throughout the state. Based on this successful appeal, Vermont has since been awarded other county-based stimulus funding, most recently \$135 million of low interest bonding authority for economic development projects and \$90 million in Recovery Zone bonds for municipalities. Lamoille County businesses and municipalities can access this funding through the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA).



Lamoille County Planning Commission

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Letting Rivers Wander: Vermont's Fluvial Erosion Hazard Program

Nearly every stream and river in Vermont is undergoing change. Sometimes these changes are natural or imperceptible. More often, streams and rivers are adjusting to channel, flood plain, or watershed changes imposed in years past by human activity. The Vermont River Management Program has developed a program to supplement the National Flood Insurance Program called the Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) Program. This program maps a river corridor using a method that identifies the predominant form of flood damage in Vermont — erosion. An FEH corridor is designed with the recognition that rivers are *not static*. They bend from side to side; they can move up or down a valley; and river beds can scour down or build up. Flood damages in Vermont are often a result of river erosion rather than inundation.

The FEH corridor is a mapped area that includes both the stream channel and adjacent land. It is delineated based on a scientific, location-specific assessment of the fluvial geomorphic (or physical) condition of a river. Its purpose is to identify the space a river needs to re-establish and maintain stable conditions. If a river has access to its floodplain and an area to wander, the danger of erosion during floods can be reduced over time.

In partnership with the Vermont Clean & Clear Program, LCPC has contracted with Bear Creek Environmental to assess river conditions for the Elmore Branch, Gihon River, Centerville Brook, and Wild Branch. The resulting River Corridor Plans will identify locations where active and passive restoration and conservation projects can affect river stability. Restoration projects include a variety of activities, such as stream bank plantings, bridge and culvert upgrades, and floodplain restorations. Conservation opportunities include purchase of land or easements and various land use planning and incentives programs. During the upcoming year, LCPC staff will meet with local communities to review the plans and discuss ways communities and landowners might want to participate in restoration or conservation projects. Planning and zoning can play a central role in mitigating flood and erosion damages through avoidance of hazardous situations; however, they are only one of many tools municipalities and private property owners can use to protect against flood and erosion damages.

Farewell Dave!

LCPC would like to congratulate Dave Pelletier on his new position as Public Transit Administrator for the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Dave managed LCPC's regional transportation planning program for 9 years, served as the LCPC's Assistant Director for the last four years, and served as Interim Executive Director in 2008. In his new role, Dave oversees financial and technical assistance to public and non-profit transit providers throughout Vermont. Congratulations, Dave!

Do I have the flu?

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- fever *
- cough
- sore throat
- body aches
- runny or stuffy nose
- sometimes diarrhea & vomiting
- headache
- chills
- fatigue



**It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

Know What to Do About the Flu!

October 27th, 6:30 - 8:30 pm at River Arts Center, Morrisville

Please join the Vermont Department of Health and Vermont Emergency Management for up-to-date information about the seasonal and H1N1 flu. This community forum will brief local leaders and residents about the preparations underway for the new flu – 2009 H1N1 influenza – along with the regular seasonal flu.

The Morrisville Health Department team of Jeff Hunsberger, Val Valcour, and Julie Benedict will be on hand to discuss preparations the state is making – including plans for offering H1N1 vaccine to those groups most at risk as well as the actions communities and individuals can take to cope with flu. For more information on the Swine Flu and Seasonal Flu go to <http://www.healthvermont.org>.