



# Lamoille County Planning Commission

Spring 2012

## **2012 Commodity Flow Study**

Most communities, whether large or small, are origins, destinations, or through-routes for hazardous materials transportation. To plan and prepare for possible hazardous materials transportation incidents, emergency response organizations need basic data on the types and quantities of chemicals transported through Lamoille County. The process of acquiring and analyzing this information is termed a “commodity flow study”. Results can be used to analyze current traffic patterns, focus planning efforts on existing needs, and reduce the potential for incidents to occur.

In 2011, the LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee) won a \$3,000 grant through the 2012 Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning grant program to conduct a commodity flow study in Lamoille County. This study will enhance the emergency planning and response capabilities of first response agencies when dealing with hazardous materials. Commodity Flow Study observations analyze transport patterns of hazardous materials and substances trucked throughout the county. LCPC staff began observations in April, and flow counts will continue through August. Results will be available in late September. For more information contact Meghan Rodier at [Meghan@lpcvt.org](mailto:Meghan@lpcvt.org).



Gasoline, Gasohol and Petrol placard.  
Source: US Dept. of Transportation, 2012

### **Inside this issue:**

<i>ARRA Energy Projects</i>	2
<i>Water Quality Restoration</i>	2
<i>Community Highlight: Morristown Coop</i>	2
<i>VANR Natural Resources Atlas</i>	3
<i>RPC NADO Award</i>	3
<i>Transportation Field Season</i>	4
<i>GIS Service Center</i>	4
<i>MUTCD Sign Changes</i>	5
<i>Community Tools for Forest Stewardship</i>	5
<i>Smugglers Notch Improvements</i>	6
<i>LCPC Staff</i>	8
<i>Gravel Road Rating Manual</i>	8



## **Lamoille County's Digital Future**

The State of Vermont aims to achieve statewide high-speed internet coverage by late 2013. How will this change the way Vermont does business? What does it mean for our schools, towns, and libraries? How can we make the most of this opportunity?

The Lamoille County Regional Technology Team is part of a statewide effort to answer these questions. Vermont and other states have quickly realized that access to broadband service is critical, but access alone isn't going to effect change; knowing how to use it once we have it is the key. Based on our team's work and input from business owners, public service providers, teachers, and community leaders, LCPC has created the first draft of a Broadband Adoption Plan that will layout strategies to make the most of increased broadband technology and ensure that Lamoille County does not fall behind in the digital age. The final Plan will be available on our website this summer.

To find internet service providers in your area, test your internet speed, or report underserved areas, visit [www.broadbandvt.org](http://www.broadbandvt.org). For more information about the Lamoille County Regional Technology Plan, contact Seth Jensen at 888-4548 or [seth@lpcvt.org](mailto:seth@lpcvt.org).

LCPC  
PO Box 1637  
52 Portland Street  
Morrisville, VT 05661

(802) 888-4548  
[www.lpcvt.org](http://www.lpcvt.org)



### LCPC Completes ARRA-Funded Energy Projects

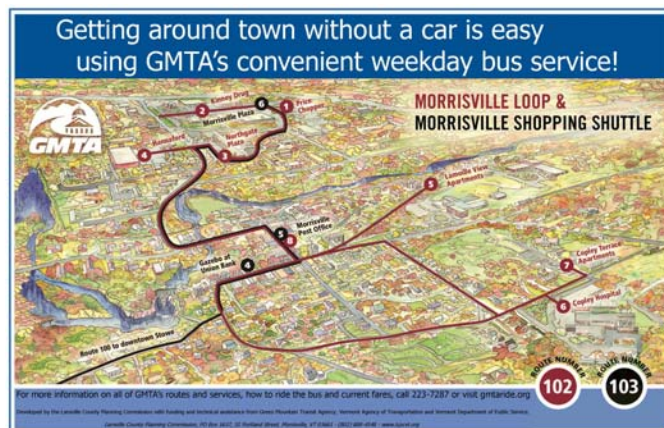
In January 2010, LCPC was awarded an Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant through the Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund (CEDF) and federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). LCPC used the funding to implement a variety of programs, including:

- A municipal technical assistance program, which provided funding for the purchase of 19 LED streetlights in Hyde Park Village and new energy-efficient luminaires and fixtures in the Hyde Park Town Garage and Municipal Offices. These investments will result in significant long-term energy savings for municipalities, while providing superior lighting quality along village streets and within public buildings. The program also supported the Town of Waterville’s effort to assess the feasibility of a micro-hydro facility at the former Laraway Dam.



Energy efficient lighting installed in the Hyde Park Town Garage

- A Lamoille County Travel Pattern Survey, which captured driving habits and origin-and-destination data for commuters across the region. The survey, developed in collaboration with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates of Burlington, also gathered a range of information on residents’ journey-to-work and public transit ridership, among other things. This data will inform the work of the Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), efforts of regional public transit organizations and activities such as park-and-ride location.



You will find these Transit Placemats in area restaurants.

- A Transit Placemat was designed and distributed to several local businesses to bring awareness about transit options.
- A regional park-and-ride assessment helped define the level of use at existing facilities and the need for additional facilities.
- A spatial analysis for the feasibility of a wood-burning Combined Heat and Power (CHP) facility in Lamoille County, based on a range of factors including system efficiencies, market conditions, and land use and environmental constraints. The products of this effort—including a series of maps highlighting potentially ripe CHP locations throughout the county—will be of assistance to prospective developers in determining where the appropriate physical infrastructure and regulatory environment exists for CHP.
- An update of the Lamoille County Regional Plan Energy and Utilities Strategy launched a larger Regional Plan update effort. The Commission intends to focus on Economic Development, Natural Resources and Transportation in the coming year.

For more information on LCPC’s energy planning efforts, please contact Amanda Holland at [Amanda@lcpv.org](mailto:Amanda@lcpv.org).



## Water Quality Restoration



LCPC will be working in partnership with the Lamoille County Conservation District (LCCD) to identify projects that reduce nutrient and sediment pollution as well as stormwater runoff in the Lamoille River watershed. The goal of the project is to secure commitments by municipalities and landowners to complete restoration and protection projects for the Gihon River, Centerville Brook, Elmore Branch, and Wild Branch sub-watersheds. The work is funded by a 2012 Ecosystem Restoration Grant from the VT Agency of Natural Resources and a Tributaries Restoration grant from the Vermont Community Foundation.

Beginning this summer, LCPC and LCCD will be in the field to identify potential projects in Wolcott, Johnson, Hyde Park, Elmore and Eden. Projects can address a number of water quality problems related to undersized bridges and culverts, stormwater management, roadside and streambank erosion, and a lack of riparian buffers. LCPC will be contacting towns to gauge interest in partnering on projects before developing an implementation plan and providing engineering services as needed to further scope projects. For more information, contact Amanda at 888-4548 or [Amanda@lpcvt.org](mailto:Amanda@lpcvt.org)



## Community Highlight: Morristown Coop

The genesis for a food coop in Morrisville was sparked as a result of the community winning a grant from the Vermont Council on Rural Development. Through this important grant, a food coop was identified as an area to pursue.

Since spring 2011, 15-20 interested Lamoille County residents have been holding regular meetings to shepherd the idea to reality. They initially visited a number of VT coops. A few attended a conference in Greenfield, MA, aptly titled, "It Takes Cooperation to Build a Food Coop." Bringing all the information together led to the formation of four sub-committees: Feasibility/Funding, Outreach/Membership, Governance, and Buildings.

The committee identified securing a feasibility study as the first crucial task. In March 2012, the Town of Morristown won a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant for the study and a market analysis for the town. The balance of study funding was secured through the Morrisville Alliance for Culture and Commerce and the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation.

At present, the committee is preparing to solicit consultant services for the studies. Guest speakers from coop organizations have been invited to discuss next steps. A Facebook page ([facebook.com/morrisvillecoop](https://facebook.com/morrisvillecoop)), and blog ([morrisvillecoop.wordpress.com](http://morrisvillecoop.wordpress.com)) help keep the community updated.

There appears to be support behind the effort to bring a member-owned food cooperative to town—one where all are welcome to shop for healthy, affordable, locally-farmed (as much as possible) and value added foods.

For information, contact Tricia Follert, Community Development Coordinator, Town of Morristown, phone 888-6669 x231, email [tfollert@morristownvt.org](mailto:tfollert@morristownvt.org).



## **Agency of Natural Resources’ Natural Resource Atlas**

The Agency of Natural Resources’ Internet Mapping Site provides a low-cost and widely accessible method of displaying environmentally interesting GIS data to Agency staff, project partners, and the public. The base data layers include town and county boundaries, roads, waterbodies and streams. This easy-to-use site allows you to select many natural resource data layers, including significant wetlands, rare threatened and endangered species, deer wintering areas, Indiana bat hibernacula and summer range, water source protection areas, priority streams and ponds, special flood hazard areas, and more. By zooming into a particular location and turning on layers of interest, users can do a preliminary review to see the potential impacts of a planned project. However, such a cursory review should not be considered a complete assessment of natural resources.

Besides viewing the locations of different features, you can use various tools to query the map. For example, Identify Features gives you more details about particular map features. You can find features using a GPS XY coordinate, an address, or a text search string. You can also measure linear distances or areas. Users can also upload geographic data either as shapefiles or as GPX files and draw their own graphics. After you have zoomed into an area and turned on the layers of interest, you can print out or save the map as a PDF.

There are a number of help videos accessible from the help menu that explain the site’s functionality and how to access and use the various features. You can also call LCPC and ask a staff person to walk you through the atlas. Explore the Natural Resource Atlas yourself at <http://maps.anr.state.vt.us/ANRAv2/>.



## **NADO Presents Award to Vermont RPCs**

The National Association of Development Agencies (NADO) awarded a NADO 2012 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award to “Lessons Learned from Irene—RPC Involvement in the Recovery of Vermont’s Transportation Network” at the 2012 National Rural Transportation Conference.

Intense rainfall from Tropical Storm Irene caused flash flooding and inundation across Vermont, particularly in the southern regions. Within 24 hours, the flood waters washed away and severely damaged roads, bridges, culverts, utilities and buildings, leaving behind devastated communities and a crippled transportation network. Due to the extent and magnitude of damage, the VT Agency of Transportation requested assistance from the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) that was beyond the normal scope of their work, training, and funding. There were no advance plans or procedures in place for this type of response and recovery effort. RPCs assisted local towns with recovery efforts while VTrans focused on repairing the State highway network. The RPCs set up a Regional Center to coordinate, collate, and share information between various partners and agencies. RPCs in badly hit areas focused on collecting detailed damage assessments, updates on recovery progress and unmet needs, and provided other transportation-related assistance. RPCs in less impacted areas provided support staff at the Regional Center and State Emergency Operations Center. LCPC is proud to have been part of this statewide recovery effort.





## Transportation Data Collection Field Season Begins



The Commission is gearing up for the summer field season, preparing to collect various types of transportation data. LCPC, through its Transportation Planning Initiative agreement with the Vermont Agency of Transportation, collects highway traffic data, road surface and bridge and culvert information, and various other types of data. This information allows for tracking trends and informed planning based on quantitative measures.

Road surface and bridge and culvert condition assessments provide valuable information to municipalities for planning and budgeting for annual road repairs and longer term improvements to the local road network. This is always a good practice but in times when funding is especially tight, having an accurate inventory of infrastructure is critical to inform decisions about investments in roads, bridges, and culverts. LCPC has worked with its towns and villages over the years to collect data. Having an inventory of this infrastructure updated at least every three years and adopting road and bridge standards reduces a municipality's match requirements for state administered town highway structures and paving programs.

LCPC will also be operating its annual traffic count program as well as conducting bicycle and pedestrian counts along sidewalks and paths. Contact Amanda Holland at [Amanda@lpcvt.org](mailto:Amanda@lpcvt.org) if you have questions about your transportation infrastructure inventory or would like a traffic study or bicycle or pedestrian count in your town.



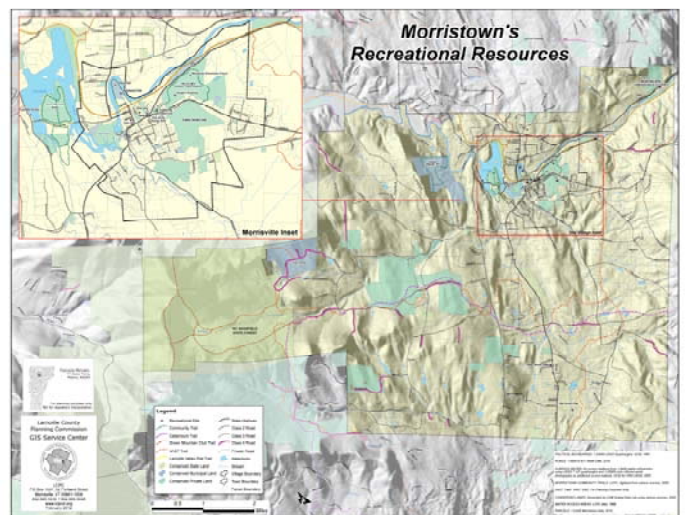
## LCPC's GIS Service Center

Lamoille County Planning Commission serves as a regional GIS service center, providing mapping, data, and analysis services to our 10 member towns. We provide GIS services on projects that involve transportation, land use and natural resources planning, emergency planning, and community and economic development.

The GIS Service Center creates, maintains and updates data layers, as well as providing technical assistance for data and application design, development, documentation, conversion, spatial and tabular analysis, and information policy and dissemination. The Center also provides limited GIS software support.

LCPC has created a wide range of Regional Maps for a number of projects. If you are interested in a specific regional map, please contact us with questions. A limited online catalog of town maps is currently available, including some town plan maps, zoning maps and transportation maps, etc. These are accessible from LCPC's home page at [www.lpcvt.org](http://www.lpcvt.org) under the individual town name.

The GIS Service Center does provide a limited amount of for-fee GIS services to private companies and the general public. These services include data conversion, map creation and printing. Appointments can be made by contacting Melinda Scott at (802) 888-4548 or [Melinda@lpcvt.org](mailto:Melinda@lpcvt.org).





### **FHWA Final Rule Changes & Revisions to 2009 MUTCD**

A final rule to revise the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) was made on May 10, 2012. These changes were proposed in August 2011 and open for comment through October. This final rule summarizes the elimination of 46 regulations on traffic signs to reduce the cost and impact of compliance dates on state and local governments and to streamline and simplify information without reducing safety. The DOT has retained 12 deadlines for sign upgrades that are critical to public safety. The table below highlights some changes to the 2009 MUTCD.

Section Title	Specific Provision	Compliance Date
2A.08 - Minimum Retroreflectivity Levels	Implement an assessment, such as a sign inventory, to maintain traffic sign retroreflectivity at or above the established minimum levels	2014
2A.08 - Minimum Retroreflectivity Levels	Replacement of regulatory, warning, and post-mounted guide (except street name) signs that are identified as failing to meet the established minimum levels	Upon sign replacement
2A.08 - Minimum Retroreflectivity Levels	Replacement of street name signs and overhead guide signs that are failing to meet the established minimum levels.	Upon sign replacement
2D.43 - Street Name Signs (D3-1 or D3-1a)	6-inch letter height for lettering on post-mounted Street Name signs, 40 mph or less Can reduce to 4-inch letter height on local 2-lane roads with speed limits of 25 mph or less 12-inch letter height on overhead signs	Upon sign replacement

These rule changes will allow communities to replace and upgrade these signs when they reach the end of their useful life rather than requiring signs to be replaced by a specific date. In addition, FHWA will allow communities to retain historic street-name signs in historic districts. These rule changes will not be valid until after June 13, 2012. For more information on the ruling contact Amanda or visit FHWA's MUTCD website at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>.



### **Community Tools for Forest Stewardship**

Lamoille County's forests are a major piece of our culture, communities, and economy. But our forest economy is rapidly changing. How can the forest products industry and forest landowners adapt to increased foreign competition? What can communities do to support a changing industry and maintain vibrant, working forests? How can we support wildlife habitat, water quality, and other natural resources provided by forests while respecting the rights of property owners to use their land?

LCPC, three other Regional Planning Commissions, and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation have partnered in a project aimed at developing strategies and tools to encourage stewardship of our forested landscapes. The project is funded with a grant from the US Forest Service. The methodology is replicable in other regions of Vermont and potentially other areas of the country. Each of the four commissions has formed a regional Steering Committee made up of professional foresters, local officials, forest landowners, wood products business owners, and members of conservation organizations to refine the project and develop local tools and strategies.



One of the first steps in landscape scale forest stewardship is to identify specific “priority landscapes”, or areas in which to focus stewardship efforts utilizing GIS mapping. We developed maps to help identify locations of forest resources such as timber stands, wildlife habitat, rare and threatened species, pristine waterways, trails, camping areas and other recreational assets; locations of threats or constraints to forest resources such as areas experiencing development pressure or forests sensitive to acid deposition; and locations of conserved forests and forests enrolled in the use-value appraisal program. A joint analysis of forest resource richness and threats as revealed by the maps will highlight priority areas where community and/or regional stewardship efforts might best be directed.

LCPC staff has worked with the regional Steering Committee to develop a report that will identify important forested landscapes and resources in the region, discuss barriers to responsible forest stewardship, and provide tools and strategies communities, landowners, and the regional planning commissions can use to encourage forest stewardship. This report will be completed in July 2012

In addition to creating the maps and report for Lamoille County, LCPC is the lead among the four RPCs, and is responsible for overseeing the project. By working with RPCs serving regions with varying landscapes, demographics, and planning resources, the project will determine how GIS can best be utilized for forest stewardship and develop strategies that can be used by communities throughout Vermont to maintain their forest resources.

For more information about forest mapping, contact Melinda Scott at [Melinda@lpcvt.org](mailto:Melinda@lpcvt.org). For more information about the Steering Committee or planning tools to encourage forest stewardship, contact Seth Jensen at [seth@lpcvt.org](mailto:seth@lpcvt.org).



## **Smugglers Notch Scenic Highway Improvements**

For nearly two decades, LCPC has worked with six partner organizations to implement the 1995 Smugglers Notch Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan. The Smugglers Notch Scenic Highway is a 3.7 mile stretch of VT 108 between the Spruce Peak entrance of the Stowe Mountain Resort and the Madonna Base area at Smugglers’ Notch Resort. Past accomplishments have included building and upgrading parking areas, constructing two composting toilet facilities, installing area-appropriate guardrails, and improving drainage and erosion control.

LCPC and its partners are now ready to undertake the capstone effort of the Corridor Management Plan—renovation of historic Barnes Camp to serve as a visitor center and hub for activities occurring throughout the Notch. Barnes Camp was originally built as a logging camp and once provided food and shelter to hikers and skiers alike. When renovated, Barnes Camp will once again welcome visitors to this unique scenic area.

Work with the Partners and with assistance from Johnson State College Business Professor Jim Black, LCPC completed a draft business plan for operations and maintenance of Barnes Camp. The business plan outlines oversight, staffing, hours of operations, and future programs for the Barnes Camp Visitor Center.

Thanks to generous support from public and private partners, LCPC has raised over \$100,000 to support Barnes Camp and other projects in the Notch. In addition to Barnes Camp, LCPC is working with the Green Mountain Club to reroute the Long Trail to enhance safety and provide a more pleasant crossing of Route 108. LCPC is also working with Smugglers Notch State Park to develop a series of informational kiosks and low profile interpretive panels through-out the Notch. For more information, contact Seth Jensen at 888-4548 or [seth@lpcvt.org](mailto:seth@lpcvt.org).



Lamoille County Planning Commission  
PO Box 1637  
Morrisville, VT 05661-1637

### **LCPC Staff**

Bonnie Waninger, *Executive Director*  
Bonnie@lpcvt.org

Seth Jensen, *Senior Planner*  
Seth@lpcvt.org

Melinda Scott, *GIS Planner*  
Melinda@lpcvt.org

Amanda Holland, *Transportation Planner*  
Amanda@lpcvt.org

Steve Munroe, *Regional Planner*  
Steve@lpcvt.org

Meghan Rodier, *Assistant Planner*  
Meghan@lpcvt.org

Georgeana Little, *Bookkeeper/Office Manager*  
Georgeana@lpcvt.org

### **Gravel Road Rating Manual**

Vermont Local Roads has posted a new resource about gravel roads on its website. It was put together by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The information is universal and applicable to the conditions we deal with here in Vermont. This manual is intended to assist local officials in understanding and rating the surface condition of gravel roads. It describes types and causes of distress and provides a simple system to visually rate the road segment's condition.

Evaluating and rating gravel roads requires a different perspective than similar evaluation of asphalt or concrete pavements. This is due to the nature of gravel roads and their variability. Surface conditions can change literally overnight. Heavy rains and local heavy traffic can dramatically change the surface characteristics of gravel roads from one day to the next. You can download the Gravel Roads-PASER Manual as a PDF at: <http://vermontlocalroads.org/Materials/Materials.html>.