

# Vermont Council on Rural Development

The Vermont Council on Rural Development helps Vermonters and Vermont communities develop their capacity to create a prosperous and sustainable future through coordination, collaboration, and the effective use of public and private resources.



## 2013 Annual Report

### Building Unity for Progress

Charged by federal statute to serve as a neutral facilitator to advance rural policy and to support rural communities in Vermont, VCRD has a wonderful role to play in helping communities line up to set priorities and get things done, and in convening public policy to support their progress.

We are often called to serve as evangelists for community, and as patriots for non-partisan, Vermont unity.

2013 was an exciting year for us. As a small non-profit funded by our members and partners, we strive to make ourselves a catalyst to community action, and a bridge across party lines and organizational structures. We help working groups build common purpose, line up as teams, and galvanize for action for the collective good.

At VCRD we are proud to support local leadership and add up community and regional contributions to strong state rural policies. We're excited to participate in these dynamic days of sustainable and self-directed progress for rural Vermont communities!

Bob Ackland, *Board Chair*



*VCRD Staff and Board ~ BACK: Rob Fish, Monty Fischer, Alex Aldrich, Bob Paquin, Wright Preston, Ruth Wallman, Catherine Dimitruk, Vicky Drew, Steve Patterson, Greg Brown, Paul Costello, Doug Racine. FRONT: Caitlin Lovegrove, Jenny Nelson, Molly Lambert, Sharon Combes-Farr, Joe Fusco, Margaret Gibson McCoy, Megan Camp, Lawrence Miller*

# VCRD in 2013

## WORKING LANDS



### Vermont Working Lands Partnership (VWLP)

In follow-up to our Council on the Future of Vermont finding that over 97 percent of Vermonters value the working landscape and its heritage, VCRD created the VWLP made up of individuals and organizations dedicated to advancing the farm, forest and value-added natural resource economy as a vital foundation for the future of Vermont.

We continue to lead the **Vermont Working Lands Partnership** and coordinate the **Working Lands Coalition** that advocates for state investment in farm and forest innovation and enterprise development through the Working Lands Enterprise Board.

In 2012, a concerted economic development effort, the “Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative,” was built from language in the VWLP’s Action Plan and signed into law. The bill developed the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Fund to invest in agricultural and forestry based businesses. In 2013 through the Fund, \$1M was granted to farm and forest entrepreneurs and another \$1M is available in 2014. See how these investments are paying off at [www.vtworkinglands.org/tour](http://www.vtworkinglands.org/tour).

#### The Working Lands Enterprise Fund:

- Creates JOBS in Working Lands Enterprises
- Keeps YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS in Vermont
- Builds NEW MARKETS for value-added products
- Increases CAPACITY for in-state production
- Leverages MORE INVESTMENT for growing enterprises

### The Vermont Higher Education Food Systems Consortium (VHEFSC)

In 2013, VCRD facilitated the foundation of the **Vermont Higher Education Food Systems Consortium**. Together, the University of Vermont, Vermont Technical College and the State College system, Middlebury College, Sterling College, Green Mountain College, Vermont Law School, and leadership from the Governor and Secretary of Agriculture, are working to make agriculture, food systems and the working landscape key development areas for collaboration.

Today, members of the VHEFSC are designing new ways to collaborate, share students and resources and expand elective opportunities for place-based food systems education where “Vermont is our classroom.” We are advancing an ambitious action plan to make Vermont the epicenter of the food systems movement in higher education in this country. Members will work together to attract students and future working lands entrepreneurs to Vermont. Find out more at <http://vtrural.org/programs/facilitation/food-systems>.



*Members of the Higher Education Food Systems Consortium*

# COMMUNITY

## Community Visit Program

In 2013, VCRD led Community Visits in **Manchester** and **Guilford**. These four-month-long strategic action planning sessions set community priorities and build action task forces to move projects ahead. Over 300 community members in Manchester and 150 in Guilford were involved in the process, and task force groups are working to move key priorities forward and connecting with resources from federal, state, regional, local, non-profit, and business leaders who participated in the process.

Manchester teams are working to develop a new small business incubator; develop trails and marketing to make the town a regional biking center and destination; attract higher education opportunities to town; and redevelop the Battenkill riverside and open a riverwalk.

Guilford task forces are working to develop a downtown small business incubator; redevelop the historic Grange building; and advance the development of the church in Algiers as a community and early childhood education center.

In the spring of 2014, VCRD is bringing the Community Visit process to **Vergennes** and is working to identify towns to work with later in 2014 and beyond.

Visit [vtrural.org/program/community-visits](http://vtrural.org/program/community-visits) to read community visit reports and find out more about the Community Visit program.



*Community Meeting Day in Manchester*

# CONVENINGS

## ► NEK Today and Tomorrow

Working with the Northern Vermont Development Association, VCRD produced “NEK Today and Tomorrow,” a summit conference on managing change for the best future for the Northeast Kingdom. With input from the 125 Summit participants, a follow-up session identified working lands as a key area to advance in the Northeast Kingdom. Support for farm, forest and value-added enterprises is crucial to providing an economic foundation that keeps land in production with all the associated benefits for views, recreation, ecological services and quality of life.

## ► Summit on the Future of Vermont’s Working Landscape

Our 2013 Summit on the Future of Vermont’s Working Landscape brought almost 400 people together to consider the progress that has been made, assess the work ahead, and advance the next steps needed for public policy and investment for Vermont’s Working Landscape Renaissance.

## ► Grafton Retreat on the Vermont Forest Products Economy

VCRD partnered with the Windham Foundation to convene the Grafton Retreat on Innovation in the Vermont’s Forest Products Economy — advancing economic development strategies, positive messaging, and a broader unity between the industry, policy leaders, and their partners in the food systems side of Vermont’s working landscape movement.

## ► State Rural Policy Leadership: An Innovation Roundtable

VCRD hosted the National Rural Policy Research Institute and Partners for Rural America in Vermont to highlight Vermont’s working landscape and rural best practices for policy leaders from throughout the country.

## ► Governor’s Workshop

In June 2013, VCRD convened the “Governor’s Workshop on Rethinking Government Operations to Meet Our Changing Reality: Promoting Efficiencies and Defining Priorities.”

For copies of reports, visit: <http://vtrural.org/reports>.

# Members and Donors

VCRD would like to thank the many contributors who support our work in service to Vermont's rural communities. Annual membership dues contribute to fund all of VCRD's programmatic activities.

**Individuals:** Kristofer Anderson, Alice & Richard Angney, Anonymous (8), Robert Bast, Helen Beattie & Brendan Buckley, Berlejung family, Ted Bermingham, Joss Besse, John Bloch, Putnam Blodgett, Bill & Ruth Botzow, Darby Bradley, Andrew Brewer, Greg Brown, Paul Bruhn, Samuel Burr, Jim Bushey, Megan Camp & Alec Webb, Paul Cate, Susan Clark, Alison Clarkson & Oliver Goodenough, Vaughn T. Collins, Philip A. Conroy, Jonathan Corcoran, Bartley J. Costello, III, Douglas C. Cox, Matthew Allen Derr, Jeanne Desrochers & John Miller, Senator Bill Doyle, Rachel A. Duffy, William & Marilyn Edgerton, William B. Emmons III, Nancy & Peter Engels, Chip Evans, John Ewing, Peter Falion, Monty & Cheryl Fischer, Rob Fish, Dawn & Kevin Francis, Frank & Julie Hanes, Noel & Caroline Fritzingler, Paul Gallo, Charlotte H. Gibson, Peter Gilbert & Cynthia Char, Steve Gold & Irina Markova, Wayne & Deborah Granquist, Barbara Grimes, William Haynes, George Hall, Roberta Harold, Cheryl & Ward Heneveld, Darren Higgins, Paul & Vicki Hill, Don & Allison Hooper, Nancy Wayne Jaffe, Nancy Jones, Bob Justis, Margaret L. Kannenstine, Allen Karnatz, Michael Katzenberg & Linda Prescott, Kathleen C. Keenan, Tony Klein, Candy Koenemann, Kathleen Kolb, Lee Krohn, Stephanie Lahar, Hank & Molly Lambert, Sydney Lea & Robin Barone, Lucy Leriche, Michael & Sandra Levine, Christine Lilyquist, Robert A. Lloyd, Peter Lynch, John W. Malcolm, Anne Margolis, Deb & Paul Markowitz, William Marks, Roger Marshall, Marc & Christy Mihaly, Josiah Miles, Ron Miller, Brett T. Morrison, Cherie Morse, Orly Munzing & Robert Dunbar, Susan Murray, Jenny Nelson, Phyl Newbeck, Lori Neiderer, Robert & Theresa Paquin, Scudder Parker & Susan Sussman, Nancy Patch & Kevin Conneely, Steve Patterson, Albert Perry, Philip Petty, Andrew & Jilda Pomerantz, Carl Powden, Wright Preston, Will & Lynette Raap, Sonia Rae, Martha Reid, Shirley Richardson, Andy Robinson, Eric & Suzanne Sakai, Chip Sawyer, Fred Schmidt, Brian & Elizabeth Searles, Michael & Nancy Sherman, Shari Siegel, Amanda St. Pierre, Emily Stebbins-Wheelock, Will & Judy Stevens, Fran Stoddard, Vicky Tebbetts, Caro Thompson, Peter Thoms, John Tracy, Ruth Wallman, Alex & Allison Weinhagen, Richard White, Christopher Wing, Timothy Wing, Sanford & Margaret Camara/Witherell, Julie Wolcott

**Organizations:** Amoskeag Woodworking, Anonymous (2), Bardill Land & Lumber Co., Bradford Community Development Corporation, Cabot Creamery Marketing, Center for an Agricultural Economy, Central Vermont Community Action, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, City Market / Onion River Coop, Digital Wish, Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC, Duey Associates, Flynn Avenue Self Storage, Gilman Housing Trust, Inc., Global-Z International, Harry Hunt Architects, Hunger Mountain Cooperative, Landworks, Lyndon State College, Maple Landmark Woodcraft, Marlboro College, PW McCoy Corp., National Bank of Middlebury, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Northshire Bookstore, Northshire Information Inc, Onion River Sports, The Orton Family Foundation, Putney Food Coop, Richford Economic Advancement Corp., Ryegate Power Station, Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, Springfield Housing Authority, The Vermont Standard, Town of Newfane, Two Rivers - Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission, Union Bank, US Small Business Administration, Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition, Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies, Vermont Community Garden Network, Vermont Community Loan Fund, Vermont Energy Investment Corp, Vermont Realtors Association, Vermont Technical College, Vermont Telephone, Vermont Woodlands Association, Village of Essex Junction, Washington Electric Cooperative

**Leadership Donors (\$500-\$999):** Bob Ackland, Casella Waste Systems, Betsy Chodorkoff, Chroma Technology Corp., Concept2, Inc., Paul Costello, Rosanne Greco & Higley Harmon, Marie Houghton, Housing Vermont, IBM, Main Street Landing, Northfield Savings Bank, Passumpsic Savings Bank, People's United Bank, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Smugglers' Notch Resort, St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Town of Killington, Vermont Economic Development Authority, Vermont State Employees Credit Union, Waitsfield & Champlain Valley Telecom, The Woodstock Foundation, Inc., Yankee Farm Credit

**Rural Champions (\$1,000+):** Cellars at Jasper Hill / Mateo & Andy Kehler, Cooperative Insurance Companies, Green Mountain Power, Smith Foundation, Vermont Transco - VELCO

**Foundations and Special Project Funders:** The Right Track Fund of the Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund, Ben & Jerry's, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Anonymous, Community National Bank, David Blittersdorf Family Foundation, Eagleridge Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF), Edwin & Helen Lynch Fund of the VCF, Green Mountain College, Green Mountain Fund of the VCF, The High Meadows Fund, IBM, Johnson Family Foundation Fund of the VCF, Kathy & Richard White Northeast Kingdom Fund of the VCF, Lyman Orton Fund of the VCF, Mary & Tom Evslin Fund of the VCF, Philanthropic Leadership Fund of the VCF, Partners for Rural America, Riverledge Foundation, The Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development, The Vermont Country Store, Vermont Technical College, Vermont Mutual Insurance Company, Richard & Katharine White, Wicopee Hill Fund of the VCF, The Woodstock Foundation, Inc.

**Working Lands Summit Sponsors:** Action Circles, David Blittersdorf Family Foundation, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, City Market / Onion River Coop, Cooperative Insurance Companies of Vermont, FairPoint Communications, Gardener's Supply Company, Golden Russet Farm, Green Mountain Dairy Farmers Coop, The High Meadows Fund, Hunger Mountain Cooperative, Johnson Family Foundation Fund of the VCF, Lyman Orton Fund of the VCF, National Life Group Charitable Foundation, Plum Creek Timber Company, Pomerleau Properties, Riverledge Foundation, USDA Farm Services Agency, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, UVM Extension, Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont Creamery, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Technical College, Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association, Vermont Woodlands Association, Yankee Farm Credit

**Vermont Digital Economy Project:** US Agency of Commerce Economic Development Agency, Heart of Vermont Productions, IBM

**Digital Economy In-Kind:** Front Porch Forum, Microsoft, Snelling Center for Government, Vermont Small Business Development Center

# DIGITAL ECONOMY

## Vermont Digital Economy Project

Vermont's flooding in 2011 demonstrated the potential of online tools to support community resilience and recovery, but also exposed the vulnerability of businesses and communities that are not making full use of these resources.

VCRD's Vermont Digital Economy Project (VDEP) is working directly with more than 25 of the towns that were affected by 2011's floods to help businesses, nonprofits, and municipalities expand their innovative use of online tools that will spur economic development and job growth, and improve community resilience to future disasters.

Providing services together with IBM, the Snelling Center for Government, the Vermont Department of Libraries, the Vermont Small Business Development Center, Microsoft, Front Porch Forum, and the Vermont State Colleges, VDEP is putting technology to work by increasing digital literacy and online workforce training, adding Wi-Fi and other public access points, bringing a community-based social network to every Vermont town, creating town websites and community calendars, promoting the use of "cloud" applications, and providing customized business training.

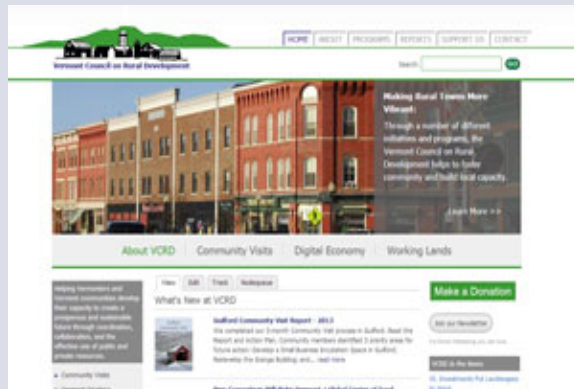
Expanding the use of online resources has benefits far beyond emergency management. Downtown businesses, service providers, farmers, and the tourism industry are all finding opportunities to reach new audiences and markets. At the same time, the social fabric of our communities is getting stronger as a result, as neighbors share local online conversations. Through this project businesses are improving their bottom line, while government and nonprofit organizations are developing ways to deliver services more effectively. Find out more at [vtdigitaleconomy.org](http://vtdigitaleconomy.org).



VCRD's Vermont Digital Economy Project staff

## VCRD Website Redesign: [www.vtrural.org](http://www.vtrural.org)

When you visit [vtrural.org](http://vtrural.org), you may notice something new. We recently redesigned our website with improvements to the navigation and a more modern look. The expertise of our Digital Economy Project staff was instrumental in helping lead the redesign.



You can also find us on:

Facebook: [facebook.com/vtcrd](https://facebook.com/vtcrd)

Twitter: [twitter.com/vtdigitalecon](https://twitter.com/vtdigitalecon)

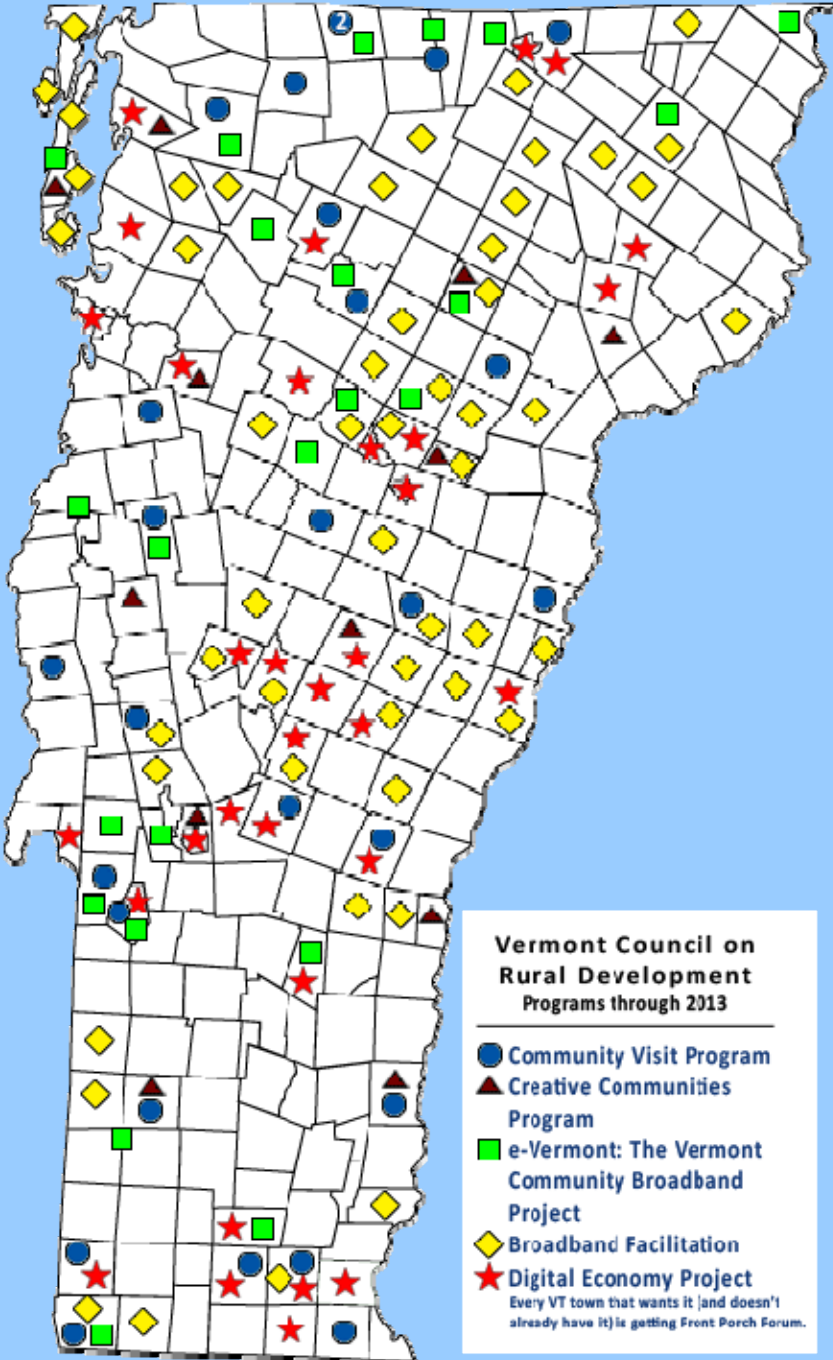
Youtube: [youtube.com/TheVCRD](https://youtube.com/TheVCRD)

## 2013 VCRD Summary Budget

<b>Revenue:</b>	
Federal Grants	\$947,319*
Foundation Grants	119,500
Private Contributions	66,800
State Support	45,125
Membership Dues	28,011
Fee for Service	25,581
Registration Fees	10,703
In-Kind Contributions	317,995*
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,561,564</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>	
Personnel	\$378,446
Contract Services	665,078*
Federal Grant Subrecipients	233,795*
Board of Directors	1,582
Supplies, Grant Equipment & Inkind	153,135*
Facility and Equipment	32,169
Travel and Meetings	29,355
Other	3,771
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,497,542</b>

\*Vermont Digital Economy Project

A member of the National Rural Development Partnership, the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Vermonters and Vermont communities develop their capacity to create a prosperous and sustainable future through coordination, collaboration, and the effective use of public and private resources. A dynamic collaboration of federal, state, local, non-profit, and private leadership, VCRD is uniquely positioned to build partnerships to address policy questions of rural import. We welcome your comments, suggestions, membership, and support.



### 2013 BOARD MEMBERS

- Bob Ackland** (CHAIR), Consultant
- Greg Brown** (TREASURER), Town of Dummerston
- Paul Bruhn** (SECRETARY), Preservation Trust of Vermont
- Megan Camp**, Shelburne Farms
- Catherine Dimitruk**, Northwest Regional Planning Commission
- Vicky Drew**, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Michael Dupee**, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters
- Monty Fischer**, Center for an Agricultural Economy
- Joe Fusco**, Casella Waste Systems, Inc.
- Thomas Hark**, VT Youth Conservation Corps
- Marie Houghton**, IBM
- Molly Lambert**, USDA Rural Development
- Lucy Leriche**, Agency of Commerce & Community Development
- Deb Markowitz**, Agency of Natural Resources
- Lawrence Miller**, Agency of Commerce & Community Development
- Robert Paquin**, USDA Farm Services Agency
- Steve Patterson** (VICE CHAIR), Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- Wright Preston**, Northfield Savings Bank
- Doug Racine**, Agency of Human Services
- Chuck Ross**, Agency of Ag, Food & Markets
- Ruth Wallman**, Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce

### CONGRESSIONAL LIAISONS

- Tricia Coates**, Office of Congressman Welch
- Jenny Nelson**, Office of Senator Sanders
- John Tracy**, Office of Senator Leahy

### STAFF

- Paul Costello**, Executive Director
- Margaret Gibson McCoy**, Office & Communications Manager
- Sharon Combes-Farr**, Director, VT Digital Economy Project (VDEP)
- Rob Fish**, Non-Profit Advisor, VDEP
- Caitlin Lovegrove**, Outreach & Communications Director, VDEP



**Vermont Council on Rural Development**

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