

State Government Municipal Day Agenda

National Life, Montpelier – November 1, 2024

7:30 am	<i>Registration Table Opens (and is staffed all day)</i>						
8:30 – 9:30	<i>Plenary Session & Coffee in the National Life Cafeteria: Chief Recovery Officer Douglas Farnham</i>						
9:45 – 11:00	1. The Future of Land Use Regulation	2. Biofinder and Biodiversity: The Plants and Animals Behind the Maps	3. Town Forests – Funding Opportunities for Acquiring Forestland	4. Grant Funding for Reducing Flood Risk	5. Phase III Update National Weather Model	6. Vermont’s Environmental Justice Law	7. Intro to Wetland Allowed Uses and Permitting
11:15 – 12:30 pm	8. Biodiversity Basics – Inventory is the First Step	9. Integrating Wildlife Stewardship & Recreation Development on Community Forests	10. Invasive Species Identification and Management: From Pests to Pathogens to Plants	11. Using the Municipal Climate Change Vulnerability Indicators Tool	12. Step Zero: Preparing to Apply for Infrastructure Funding	13. Wastewater, Drinking Water, Zoning, and Town Records	14. Climate Action Plan 2025 Update
12:30 – 1:30	<i>Buffet Lunch in the National Life Cafeteria</i>						
1:30 – 2:30	15. Timber! Falling for Sustainable Forest Management	16. Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation: Grants for Municipalities	17. Noxious Weed Control: Coloring Inside the Regulatory Lines	18. Wildland Fire Prevention in Your Town	19. Biodiversity Protection through Environmental Permitting: Permit Navigator	20. Living with Black Bears	21. Land Use Planning for the Protection of Drinking Water from Ground and Other Surface Water Sources
2:45 – 3:45	22. Road Salt Impacts on Biodiversity in Rivers	23. State Lands in Your Town	24. CARE/Vermont Supplemental ALI	25. Municipal Fleet Electrification - \$how me the money!	26. Accessing and Using Census Data for your Community	27. Working With Farms Regulated by the Required Agricultural Practices	28. Operational Stormwater Permitting, and 3-Acre Sites



Workshop Session 1 (9:45 – 11:00 am)

1. The Future of Land Use Regulation

In this workshop, we will provide the audience with an understanding of H. 687 (Act 181) and how it affects the state, municipal and regional planning commission processes. From the Act 250 perspective, this workshop will provide an overview of the changes, then focus on the “nuts and bolts” of the interim exemptions that provide an on ramp to the “tiered” system of land use review. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development will discuss the incentive programs of the new Community Investment Board, and the Municipal and RPC representatives will discuss their roles in plan and map development for the new tiered system and designated areas.

2. Biofinder and Biodiversity: The Plants and Animals Behind the Maps

ANR’s Biofinder website is an important tool for municipal land use planning. Biofinder identifies the lands and waters that are most important for maintaining ecological function. Forest blocks, riparian areas, and natural communities and habitats all directly help protect biodiversity. This workshop will delve into the science of the Biofinder maps, and how the features mapped in Biofinder support specific species, from Blackburnian Warblers to Bobcats to Basswood. We’ll also explore how Biofinder can help municipal planners access important ecological data and comply with Act 171. Learn about and celebrate the myriad plants and animals that are part of Vermont’s Ecologically Functional Landscape.

3. Town Forests – Funding Opportunities for Acquiring Forestland

The workshop will deliver information on federal funding opportunities for the acquisition of land for town forests. Focusing on the Community Forest and Open Space Program and the Forest Legacy Program, the workshop will provide information and resources to assist municipalities in navigating the path to a new Town Forest for their town.

4. Grant Funding for Reducing Flood Risk

The Hazard Mitigation Team at Vermont Emergency Management will give an update on the development of flood reduction projects across Vermont since the July 2023 floods, as well as an overview of currently available funding, and case studies of successful flood reduction projects.

5. Phase III Update National Weather Model

The National Water Model (NWM) is a hydrologic model that simulates and forecasts streamflow across the United States. The NWM simulates the water cycle with mathematical representations of the different processes and how they fit together. This complex representation of physical processes such as snowmelt, infiltration and movement of water through the soil layers varies significantly with changing elevations, soils, vegetation types and a host of other variables. Extreme variability in precipitation over short distances and times can cause the response on rivers and streams to change very quickly. The NWM complements National Weather Service forecasts at approximately 4,000 locations across the U.S. and produces guidance at millions of other locations that do not have a traditional river forecast.

6. Vermont’s Environmental Justice Law

This workshop will explore the “Core Principles of Community Engagement”, a set of guidelines and values that outline how individuals, organizations, and communities should interact, collaborate, and communicate with each other to overcome systemic barriers to meaningful engagement. These



principles were developed as part of the implementation of the Vermont Environmental Justice Law and will guide the covered agencies in the creation of their community engagement plans. Attend this workshop to learn more about the value of meaningful engagement and some important values we must keep in mind when interacting with communities.

7. Intro to Wetland Allowed Uses and Permitting

Got an area that's a bit squishy underfoot in the springtime? Wondering what the deal is with those pink hydric soil polygons on ANR Atlas? Trying to figure out how to go about expanding the Town Hall or adding a broadband optic line terminal to the local substation? Come learn about the ins and outs of wetland permitting, including what can be done without a permit as an Allowed Use (AU) and what steps you can take to make navigating the permit process easier. We'll go over the basics of spotting a wetland in Vermont, check out tools on the ANR Atlas, and answer general questions about wetlands and wetlands permitting.

Workshop Session 2 (11:15 am – 12:30 pm)

8. Biodiversity Basics – Inventory is the First Step

Knowing what you have is the first step in figuring out how to move forward. Lots of Natural Resource Inventory data already exists that is actionable information to help a town advance its land use planning. Often, a more detailed Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) is the appropriate scale of data for town land use planning or better managing a town forest. But they aren't necessarily easy or inexpensive to do. Learn more about the data that is already available to you and the process you'd use to contract for additional inventory in your town.

9. Integrating Wildlife Stewardship & Recreation Development on Community Forests

Community and Town Forest Committees have recently become recipients of large trail and infrastructure development grants for local, municipal-run forests. These areas of public lands are also important habitat blocks for our wildlife. This workshop will discuss ways to be intentional with trail-based recreation to address both the needs of the wildlife and the people who utilize these conserved areas.

10. Invasive Species Identification and Management: From Pests to Pathogens to Plants

This workshop will cover the identification and management of invasive species of concern in Vermont. From emerald ash borer, to beech leaf disease, to the myriad invasive plant species present in the state, there are many ways in which the public can assist in detection, prevention, and management of invasive species. Members of the Forest Health Program within the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation will lead this workshop.

11. Using the Municipal Climate Change Vulnerability Indicators Tool

The Municipal Vulnerability Indicators Tool (MVI) is a recently launched mapping tool aimed at helping municipalities understand and explore potential vulnerabilities to climate change across a range of social, economic, and environmental factors. It includes both climate hazard data (for hazards where mapping is feasible), and community characteristics that could indicate vulnerability to climate hazards. This session will include an introduction to the MVI, an example case of how the MVI can be used to inform municipal planning, and an overview of the resources and training



materials being developed to help you use the MVI in your work. Participants will leave this session with an understanding of how the MVI can be used to incorporate climate change considerations into planning and project implementation work.

12. Step Zero: Preparing to Apply for Infrastructure Funding

Securing funding and financing for infrastructure projects is a necessary part of running a utility, but where do you start? This session will outline the ‘Step 0’ tasks necessary to prepare for applying for the three most common sources of capital in Vermont to make infrastructure investments—the State Revolving Funds, USDA-RD, and the Vermont Bond Bank. In addition, a discussion of budgeting, rate setting, asset management, capital improvement planning, communication with users, and the importance of establishing policies and procedures will be covered.

13. Wastewater, Drinking Water, Zoning, and Town Records

Land division and development are tied to a property’s ability to meet water supply and wastewater system needs. There are close relationships between the land records for a property and Drinking Water and Wastewater System permits and requirements. This presentation will go over the relationships, focusing on lister cards, SPAN designations, property owner’s responsibilities, how to enforce compliance conditions, such as occupancy and operating failed systems, when WW Permits are needed, and why the relationships are important for the protection of human health and the environment.

14. Climate Action Plan 2025 Update

Vermont’s Initial Climate Action Plan is due to be updated by July 2025. The Climate Council’s subcommittees are hard at work prioritizing and refining climate actions to make the updated plan strong and implementable. In this session you will gain an understanding of the priority climate actions that are relevant to municipalities, discuss key challenges and opportunities for implementation, and offer feedback and input that can help shape the Plan’s update

Workshop Session 3 (1:30 – 2:30 pm)

15. Timber! Falling for Sustainable Forest Management

Join us for an opportunity to explore case studies on how to promote biodiversity, climate adaptation, and community sustainability through forest management, participate in a Q&A session, and learn how to apply these strategies in your community and region.

16. Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation: Grants for Municipalities

Did you know FPR offers multiple grant opportunities to help your municipality build trails, parks, and other outdoor recreation assets? This session will introduce you to two upcoming grant opportunities for the Recreational Trails Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We’ll provide an overview of each grant, highlight key things to know about each program, and then share tips and resources for applying.

17. Noxious Weed Control: Coloring Inside the Regulatory Lines

Weeds are everything from an eyesore and environmental issue to a hazardous liability. Learn what you need to know before sending someone out to manage those weeds. There are many tools in the toolbox, including pesticides. However, pesticide choices should be based on a solid Integrated Pest



Management (IPM) plan. We'll cover the basic regulatory framework and provide a bevy of resources for managers looking to make the right choices. We'll also provide an update of the major changes coming to pesticide regulation as US EPA comes into compliance with the Endangered Species Act. This workshop qualifies for pesticide continuing education credits!

18. Wildland Fire Prevention in Your Town

This interactive session will connect Fire Chiefs, Town Managers, Emergency Managers and others with the Vermont State Wildland Fire Program to learn about how we plan for, mitigate, and respond to Wildland Fire in Vermont and how we can engage together to ensure preparedness across the state. Attendees will learn about various programs and grants available to support wildland fire emergency preparedness and prevention in their towns, as well as how and when to activate this State resource in an emergency.

19. Biodiversity Protection through Environmental Permitting: Permit Navigator

Are you interested in learning more about the environmental permits that are needed for a project or what natural resources may be potentially impacted by a project?

The Agency of Natural Resources' Permit Navigator is a free service that offers guidance to Vermonters on what state environmental permits may be needed for their projects. Vermonters can use the Permit Navigator (<https://dec.vermont.gov/permitnavigator>) to make informed decisions about a project, including the cost of permitting and average permitting time. Identifying permitting requirements and potential natural resource impacts early in the process ensures a minimum impact project that meets the State's requirements and keeps costs down for the landowner. Join us to learn: 1) where to find the tool, 2) how to use it, and 3) and how you can use the results in your municipal review of projects.

20. Living with Black Bears

This workshop will provide community leaders with strategies to improve coexistence with black bears. Access to human foods can attract bears into human dominated spaces and create conflicts between people and bears. To prevent or resolve ongoing conflicts it is important for communities to work together to remove access to these food sources. This workshop will offer helpful strategies to remove and secure common bear attractants and discuss strategies to help communities effectively work together. This workshop will benefit communities already struggling with bear issues and will help those not yet experiencing problems take effective preventative measures.

21. Land Use Planning for the Protection of Drinking Water from Ground and Other Surface Water Sources

Are you looking at development in your community? Possible locations for affordable housing? How does land use and land management activities affect the ground water and surface water resources needed to support safe and adequate drinking water necessary for development? This workshop will explore these questions and more. A review of resources, planning tools and informational materials will be provided to assist you in your decision-making process. Bring your ideas, working solutions, and success stories to share with other participants.



Workshop Session 4 (2:45 – 3:45 pm)

22. Road Salt Impacts on Biodiversity in Rivers

Road salt application is a part of Vermont's state strategy for keeping roads safe and passable during winter conditions. However, this comes at a cost to biodiversity in our rivers, streams, wetlands and lakes. Managing road salt piles and avoiding over-application is crucial to protecting streams and rivers from the toxic impacts of road salt. This workshop will cover how road salt adversely impacts biodiversity in rivers and streams in Vermont and a discussion of how towns can protect aquatic ecosystems from the adverse impacts of road salt.

23. State Lands in Your Town

This workshop will cover how State lands are acquired and managed for a diverse range of public values. We will focus on touch points with the local community along the way.

24. E911: Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies (CARE) and Vermont Supplemental Additional Liability Insurance (ALI)

In this workshop, we'll be discussing the safety benefits to Vermont's population of registering for the CARE program and/or Supplemental ALI as well as its support for our first responder community.

25. Municipal Fleet Electrification - Show me the money!

Several federal and state programs can help municipalities reduce expenses and transportation GHG emissions! The Electrify Your Fleet incentive program was authorized by the 2023 Transportation Bill (Act 62, Section 21) to accelerate the retirement of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and help Vermont municipalities and business entities enjoy the benefits of cleaner transportation options. Combined with other potential federal, state, and electric utility incentives, eligible fleet owners have an opportunity to save thousands of dollars on clean transportation alternatives. This workshop will provide town officials an overview of the potential cost saving options.

26. Accessing and Using Census Data for your Community

This workshop on census data about your community includes participant gifts! Learn about common Census community data points or indicators that help you understand your community. We'll cover where to find data, tips and tricks on getting data into your hands, and ways to do comparative and longitudinal analyses to set your community in context.

27. Working With Farms Regulated by the Required Agricultural Practices

Have you ever wondered about the difference between a large garden and a small farm? Are there times you aren't sure if an activity is regulated by the Agency of Agriculture or by your town? Want to know how to tell if a structure is a "farm structure" or not? The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is hosting this workshop and presentation to answer your questions regarding the State's Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs), what they do, and what landowners and municipalities need to know about them.

28. Operational Stormwater Permitting, and 3-Acre Sites

The Stormwater Program will go over current statewide permitting thresholds for new development, redevelopment, and expansion of impervious surfaces in consideration of threshold changes, including 1/2 acre. During this workshop, we will also discuss the most recently enacted 3-acre site requirements, currently applicable to the Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog, and stormwater-impaired watersheds, which will be applicable statewide in 2032. Many of these sites include municipally owned surfaces within previously permitted developments.