

State Fiscal Year 2027

Governor's Recommended Budget

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation
Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner



Department Mission



The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) is responsible for conserving and managing Vermont's **forest resources**, operating and maintaining the **State Park** system, and promoting and supporting **outdoor recreation** for all Vermonters and our visitors.



www.vtfpr.org

Prior Fiscal Year Updates

One-time appropriation for **Serve, Learn, and Earn Program – 250K**

Workforce Development Across Vermont – *since 7/1 – 12/31*

- **280** participants served
- **128** new participants enrolled
- **194** service projects
- **56** communities statewide

Projects: housing, recreation infrastructure, habitat improvement, and flood recovery.

Partners: VYCC • Vermont Works for Women • Audubon Vermont
• ReSOURCE Vermont

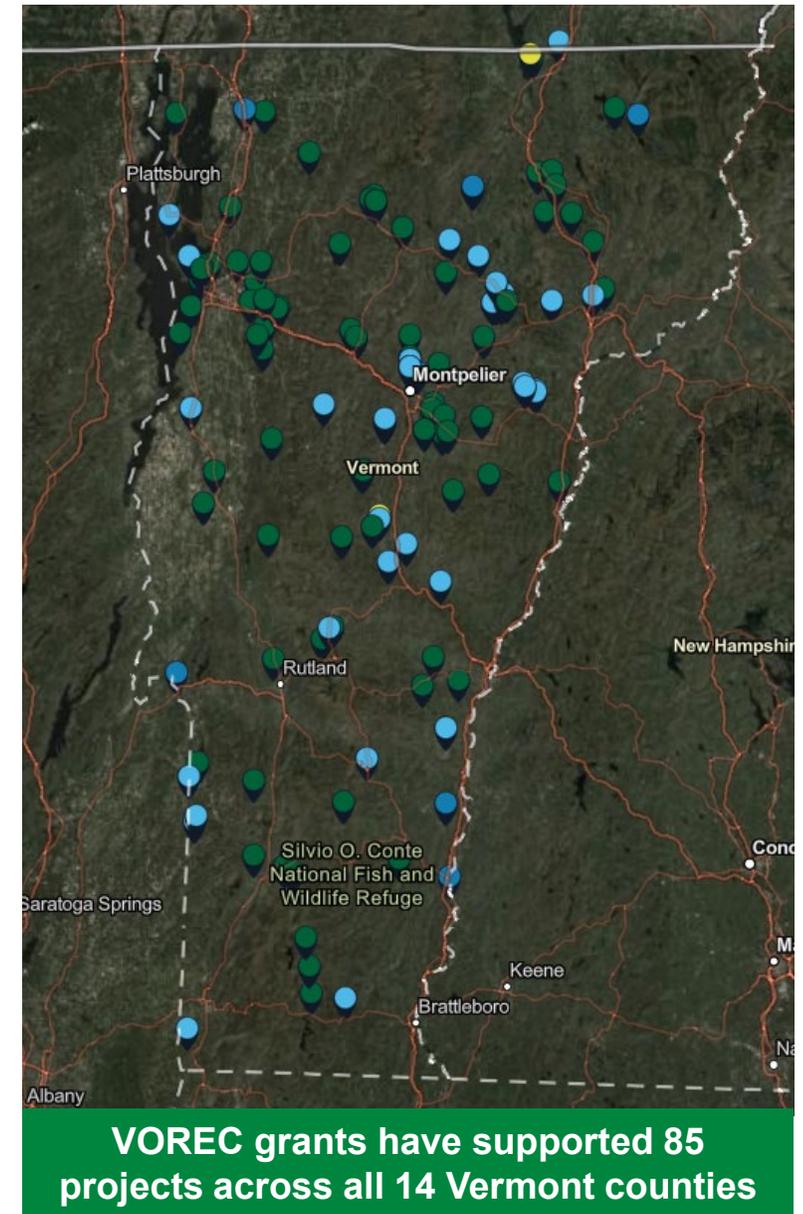


VOREC One-time Funding

Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Community Grants: *Proven, Statewide Impact*

- **\$500,000 one-time investment in FY27 Governor's Recommend** to continue a high-demand, high-return program
- **Local economic impact:** Supports downtown vitality, small businesses, tourism, and rural communities
- **Leverages partnerships:** Municipalities, nonprofits, regional organizations, and local businesses working together
- **Statewide reach:** 85 projects funded across *all 14 counties* since 2018
- **Demand exceeds funding:** Communities ready to act; limited funds constrain momentum
- **Proven track record:** Over **\$11M invested** through competitive, community-driven grants

VOREC Community Grant Program



VOREC Community Grants

Small Investments, Proven Community Returns

Waitsfield – VOREC Investment: \$400,000

- Improved **safe access**: bridges, crossings, and trail enhancements
- Linked outdoor recreation directly to **local businesses and village life**
- **Result** → *A connected recreation system that strengthens the regional economy and sense of place.*

Danville – VOREC Investment: \$97,650

- Transformed a historic **train station into a recreation hub** on the LVRT
- Draws trail users into the village to **shop, eat, and explore**
- Added **ADA-accessible amenities** and visitor information
- **Community Impact Reported** → *“Increased sales have been reported due to trail users entering the village.”*

FY27 Request: \$500,000 to continue delivering community-led, high-return outdoor recreation and economic development projects statewide.



Waitsfield: VOREC-funded trail connections improving safe access and linking outdoor recreation to downtown.

VOREC Community Grants

Small Investments, Proven Community Returns

Newport – VOREC Investment: \$235,000 over 2 grants

- Built an outdoor recreation collaborative, bringing together businesses, nonprofits, and government partners.
- **Result → Shared resources that increase outdoor recreation tourism and catalyze further investments.**

Bradford – VOREC Investment: \$106,000

- Invested in park master planning to increase park accessibility and use
- **Result → Designs that prepared the town to actively pursue additional federal funding to implement plans.**

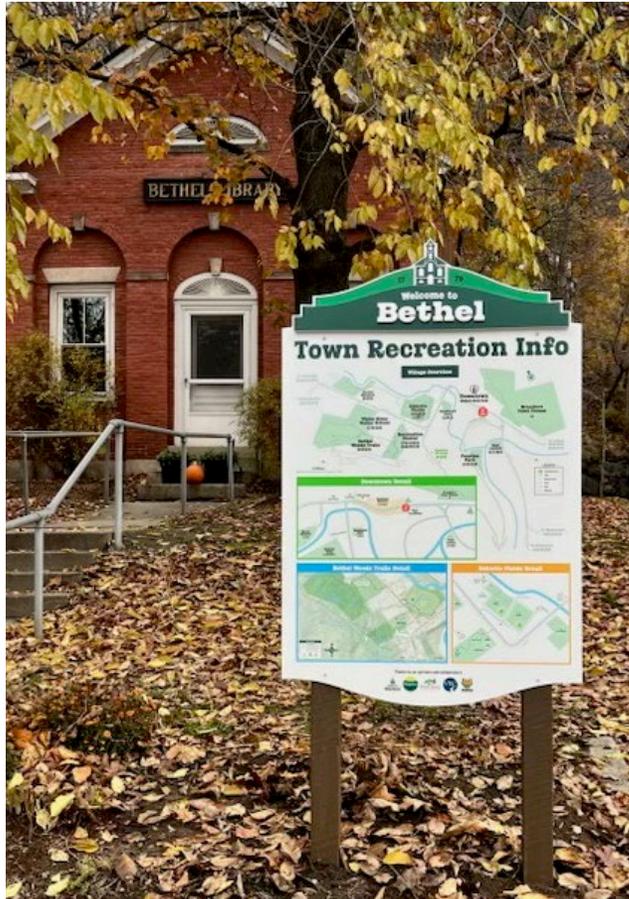
Wilmington – VOREC Investment: \$227,000

- Redevelop the historic Hoot, Toot, and Whistle rail trail
- **Result → A safer and more accessible trail to attract a broader user base to the Village retail hub and Deerfield Valley area.**



Bradford: VOREC-funded park master plan to enhance a regional recreation hub

VOREC Grant Program Impacts



Bethel: Community Wayfinding funded by VOREC

VCGP has grown tremendously since its launch in 2019. To date, FPR has hosted four competitive grant rounds, funded through a series of one-time appropriations

Year	Dollars Awarded	Number of Projects
2019	\$100,000.00	2
2020	\$238,191.00	7
2022	\$4,549,313.00	24
2023	\$6,371,217.75	52
TOTAL	\$11,258,721.75	85

VOREC Grant Program: 2023 Unmet Need

	Funded Projects*	Unfunded Projects	2023 Total Requests
Dollars Awarded/ Requested	\$ 6,371,217.75	\$13,559,762.22	\$19,930,979.97
Number of Projects	51	70	121
Average Request/ Award	\$ 124,925.84	\$ 193,710.89	\$ 164,718.84

32% of requested dollars were funded, comprising 42% of the total projects submitted

**Does not include ineligible or unfunded requests for selected grantees. Total originally requested from all funded projects was \$7,629,256.03.*



Newport: VOREC-funded Bluffside Bridge

VOREC Grant Program: Next steps

Move Forward Together Vermont

- A statewide vision to promote health and vibrant communities through outdoor recreation
- Grounded in climate resilience and equity with priority actions in stewardship, wellness and economic development
- Based on input from over 2,000 Vermonters

Integrated outdoor recreation grant administration

- Outdoor recreation grants team administers state and federal funding
- Identify and fill gaps in funding opportunities for communities
- Support system for communities during full grant process

2017-2027: Ten years of VOREC!



East Charleston: VOREC-funded NWSC programs



FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION

VERMONT



AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

