

## Linda Leehman

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**From:** Caroline Sherman-Gordon <caroline@ruralvermont.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 11:33 AM  
**To:** David Durfee; Heather Surprenant; Russ Ingalls; Amy Sheldon; Larry Labor; Joe Major; Anne Watson; Terry K. Williams  
**Subject:** [External] Fwd: TRORC March 2025 News

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

[External]

Dear Representatives and Senators with an interest in land use and conservation,

I'm reaching out to share with you all below this email a newsletter from Vermont's largest regional Planning Commission "TRORC."

I serve as a commissioner on this Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and wanted to point you to them sharing publicly about their implementation of Act 181 (2024) to update their "Future Land Use Maps." We at Rural Vermont believe in the good work behind Act 181 (2024) but we have to underscore that it didn't include a mandate to project where land can be used for food production in the future.

Agricultural land is under a series of conversion risks, including land use changes through projected housing development and land losses to climate change impacts such as extended watersheds and soil erosion. As a commissioner I know first hand that it is an uphill battle to get the planning commissions to do a little more than what they're mandated to do - many might reject devoting any additional capacity beyond their existing mandates with good reason. We are doing grassroots outreach on this issue but know that it will be extremely difficult to get all Regional Planning Commissions to issue Future Agricultural Land Use maps without a legislative mandate that would coordinate this effort.

Therefore we recommend for this second half of the session to find a legislative vehicle for our recommendation to mandate RPC's to develop specific "Future Agricultural Land Use Maps" that would be a **non-legally binding recommendation** in map form that would show where agricultural land is and where there's potential to bring underutilized ag land back into food production and additional acres of land into agricultural use as well. As Ryan Patch from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets testified to the House - Vermont would need to approximately double its land in agricultural production to even just produce 30% of the food consumed in the State. This work would be an important next tangible step as the basis for the planning phase of Act 59 (2023) which didn't include in its inventory phase a "community resilience" related inventory of agricultural land needed for local-self reliance by 2030 and 2050.

A sound projection of the agricultural land at stake is needed to plan for new incentives for food resilience as well as for advanced discourse on Land Access policies needed to make farmland more affordable to farmers.

Please identify "agriculture and local food production" as a public interest in land use planning and include agricultural land use in the 2025 revision of all future land use maps by Regional Planning Commissions (RPC's). Here's our recommendation as submitted to the House on 3/12. We look forward to speaking about this and other issues with both committees during our Small Farm Action Day on March 26.

DRAFT language:

"Regional Planning Commissions are mandated to develop Future Agricultural Land Use Maps that layout a recommendation to protect farmland from development as part of their Land Use revision of their regional plans. Future Agricultural Land Use Maps shall delineate more than what's currently included in soil type maps. They should build the basis for subsequent policy considerations for how and where Vermont would need to protect farmland from development to move towards the regional goal of New England Feeding New England towards more local-self reliance. For subsequent policy considerations, the Future Agricultural Land Use Maps layers shall visualize:

1. Current Agricultural Land (sourced from ANR)
2. Prime Ag Soils (sources from ANR)
3. Soils of State Relevance (sourced from ANR)
4. Agricultural Land in Current Use (sourced from Dep. Taxes)
5. Agricultural Land in Easements (sourced VHCB, VLT etc.)
6. Current Agricultural Land Certified Organic (sourced from NOFA-VT)
7. Conversion risk 1: Projected Farmland loss as Critical Resource Area (sourced from Act 250 review Board)
8. Conversion risk 2: Projected Farmland loss to retirement of a farmer 65+ yrs (sourced from American Farmland Trust, VAAFM, NRCS)
9. Conversion risk 3: Projected Farmland loss to development (sourced from Regional Planning Commissions)
10. Underutilized Agricultural Land needed in production to reach NEFNE 30x30 goal (RPC recommendation based on New England Feeding New England Data)
11. Additional Agricultural Land needed in production to reach NEFNE 30x30 goal (RPC recommendation based on New England Feeding New England Data)"

Please include this recommendation in your considerations for discussion. I would be happy to make myself available for testimony on this issue.

Best,

Caroline Sherman-Gordon LL.M.  
Legislative Director | Rural Vermont  
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pronouns: she/her

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission** <[gbaber@trorc.robly.com](mailto:gbaber@trorc.robly.com)>  
Date: Fri, Mar 14, 2025 at 11:22 AM  
Subject: TRORC March 2025 News  
To: <[caroline@ruralvermont.org](mailto:caroline@ruralvermont.org)>



# March 2025



Photo Credit: Kedron Brook in Woodstock, VT. Source: Geena Baber, TRORC.

[TRORC Website](#)

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## In This Newsletter

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**Employment Opportunities**

**Active RFPs**

**Community Surveys**

**Upcoming TRORC Events**

# TRORC NEWS

 **TRORC's 2025 Regional Plan** 

On February 26, 2025, after nearly two years of work, the TRORC Board of Directors unanimously approved the 2025 Regional Plan. The primary focus for this update was the improvement of clarity and technical accuracy, including adding links. Overall, we reduced the Plan's total page count by 35%. Important improvements related to Housing and Economic Development were included.

Our next step will be updating the Housing and Land Use chapters, which we intentionally set aside to prioritize efforts in getting comprehensive feedback from our communities. This process will take another year, with updates expected in 2026.

As always, we welcome your input in shaping the future of our region. Please contact Kevin Geiger, Chief of Staff, with questions about this process.

## TRORC is Coming to Your Town: Future Land Use Mapping

TRORC is updating our Regional Future Land Use map as required by the new Housing/Act 250 reform. As part of that process, we will be meeting with each town in our Region to discuss the new maps. View [this page](#) to see when meetings will be scheduled.

In advance of meeting with towns, we will host several regional information sessions.

The next regional meeting is scheduled for **April 24, 2025, at 6:00 PM**. Check out our [events page](#) for more information! We encourage anyone to participate in these meetings, as your input will guide the future land use for the Region.

## TRORC's Active Request for Proposals (RFP)

Flood Community Assistance Program (FCAP)

Audit Services

[See RFPs Here](#)

## TRORC Employment Opportunity: Municipal Assistance Specialist

TRORC has an immediate opening for a fast learner to join our amazing team based in Woodstock, VT. A successful applicant is willing to undertake various tasks with sound judgement, humor, and minimal supervision. We can teach relevant specific skills. You must be a people person with an attention to detail who understands

likes to work in small towns. You don't need a planning degree, but a college degree is required. Experience with coursework in government, policy, business, management, or environmental science are a plus. You need to be able to speak well in public, have good writing skills, and be comfortable with basic math. Reliable transportation and occasional evening hours are required.

This is a full-time, 2-year term position with the opportunity to become permanent. Flexible schedule is possible. Starting pay is \$24/hour and up, depending on experience. We offer outstanding benefits.

Interested applicants must email a cover letter with salary requirements to Peter G. Gregory, TRORC Executive Director, at [pgregory@trorc.org](mailto:pgregory@trorc.org) and also attach a list of three references and a resume. Position open until 3/31/25. TRORC is an equal opportunity employer.

## **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE: Disaster Recovery Funding (CDBG-DR)**

The State of Vermont's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will be holding a virtual and in-person public hearing to get input from Vermont residents before submitting its U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Block Grant Disaster Recovery CDBG-DR Action Plan for 2025. The purpose of the hearing is to listen to residents' views that were impacted by the June 2023 floods to help address the state's unmet needs for planning, housing, infrastructure, economic revitalization, and public service recovery from flooding.

To participate virtually, go to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) website at [link here](#). The event takes place on **Thursday, March 20, 2025, from 6 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.** In-person attendance is also available at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center Community Room, 58 Barre Street, Montpelier.

## **Severe Weather Preparedness Survey**

TRORC is working with three Dartmouth seniors on their project for creating a strategy to support elderly Upper Valley residents in preparing for and recovering from natural disasters. Please take a moment to complete the Google Form survey. Contact Eva at [eva.g.hymes.25@dartmouth.edu](mailto:eva.g.hymes.25@dartmouth.edu) with any questions.

[Take the Survey Here](#)

## **Granville's Transportation Needs Survey**

TRORC and the Town of Granville are disseminating information to Granville residents to solicit their feedback on transportation needs. The feedback from this survey will inform TRORC, Granville's Town Plan, and prioritize transportation projects. Through a Thriving Communities grant from the US Department of Transportation, TRORC is supporting the Town over the next two years in applying for and implementing these transportation projects. Responses to the survey will remain anonymous.

## Accessible Practices Day of Learning

The Accessible Practices Day of Learning is a free full day workshop on “Disability Language, Context, and Disability Artistry” for Vermont teaching artists across all disciplines interested in building accessibility into the foundation of their teaching practice. Get ready for a day of interactive workshops and opportunities to network with peers. For more information, please click on this link [here](#). Space is limited! **Please RSVP by March 15.**

Registration is open for the Council's [2025 Accessible Practices Idea Exchange](#). Dates vary, March-June.

Join the Vermont Arts Council and the Division for Historic Preservation for [Grantseeker Workshops](#) throughout the state. Dates vary through March 2025.

## The time is now: Spring Input Sessions on Vermont's Climate Action Plan

Don't miss your chance to weigh in on the 2025 update to Vermont's Climate Action Plan!

Voice your climate priorities through diverse engagement activities. Choose from in-person options around the state or virtual events. Climate Councilors will listen, and then consider public input when revising the Plan (effective July 1, 2025). Background materials will be emailed to you a few days in advance of the meeting.

View upcoming meetings on the [calendar](#). Join a meeting to share your thoughts with the Council, or [submit a written comment](#).

[View the current draft priority actions](#). *Please note that the Climate Council has not yet reached consensus on these actions.*

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# UPCOMING TRORC EVENTS

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### The Regional Plan and You - Session 2

**When:** Thursday, April 24, 2025 @ 6-7:30pm

**Where:** Woodstock area, TBA | Zoom option available

[Training Details](#)

**Staff Contact:** Kyle Hansen, Planner, [khansen@trorc.org](mailto:khansen@trorc.org)

## Windsor County Selectboard Meet-Up

**When:** Thursday, May 8, 2025 @ 6-8pm

**Where:** In-person | Windsor Welcome Center, Windsor, VT

**Audience:** Selectboard members

### Event Details

**This event is hosted jointly by VLCT, TRORC, and MARC.**

Food and soft drinks will be provided.

Each year, TRORC hosts trainings for municipal officials and the public about many pertinent topics such as municipal capital budgeting, hazard planning, grant applications, etc. From April 7 to May 21, we have four trainings for you. If you can't make it to a live training, the recording and materials will be posted on our website.

## Transportation and Land Use

**When:** Monday, April 7, 2025 @ 6-7:30pm

**Where:** Zoom only, materials and the recording will be available online

**Audience:** Planning Commissions, Zoning Administrators, Development Review Boards

### Training Details

**Staff Contact:** Bryan Kovalick, Planner, [bkovalick@trorc.org](mailto:bkovalick@trorc.org)

## Flood Resilience

**When:** Wednesday, April 16, 2025 @ 6-7pm

**Where:** Zoom only, materials and the recording will be available online

**Audience:** Planning Commissions, Zoning Administrators, Development Review Boards

### Training Details

**Staff Contact:** Kyle Katz, Planner, [kkatz@trorc.org](mailto:kkatz@trorc.org)

## Development Review Board with the Town of Braintree

**When:** Tuesday, April 22, 2025 @ 6-7:30pm

**Where:** Braintree Town Office and Zoom

**Audience:** Development Review Boards and Planning Commissions

### Training Details

**Staff Contact:** Kevin Geiger, Chief Planner, [kgeiger@trorc.org](mailto:kgeiger@trorc.org)

## Grant Facilitation

**When:** Wednesday, May 21, 2025 @ 1-2:30pm

**Where:** Zoom only, materials and the recording will be available online

**Audience:** Town Admin, Town Clerks, Grant Managers, Town Managers

### Training Details

**Staff Contact:** Kyra Wood, Grants Manager, [kwood@trorc.org](mailto:kwood@trorc.org)

For general information about these trainings, please contact Kyra Wood at [kwood@trorc.org](mailto:kwood@trorc.org).

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## 2025 Rural Roadside Ash Tree Removal

The VT UCF's Rural Roadside Ash Tree Removal program provides assistance for ash trees within the municipal right-of-way along unpaved roads. You are eligible if you are (1) a town, and (2) have an existing ash tree inventory. With \$24,000 available, awards range from \$6k to \$12k. Projects must be completed by June 1, 2026.

**Deadline: March 28, 2025**

## Check out Forestry

This is a financial and technical assistance package designed to unite the practice of tree care with the vibrant role of public libraries in our communities. \$15,000 is available for up to three partnerships with Vermont public libraries. Applications are due March 31, 2025.

**Deadline: March 31, 2025**

## Climate Smart Schoolyards

This is a financial and technical assistance package offered in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health. The goal of this project is to collaborate with one school to assess and implement a tree planting plan that meets the needs of the school.

**Deadline: March 31, 2025**

## **TRORC 2025 Scholarship Opportunity**

TRORC has authorized establishment of a Scholarship Program to encourage high school students pursuing career and life choices consistent with the vision of vibrant, diverse and sustainable communities, as articulated in our regularly updated Strategic Plan. Up to ten (10) \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded. Check your eligibility at [www.trorc.org](https://www.trorc.org).



application requirements. For questions about the TRORC Scholarship Program contact Kyra Wood, Grants Manager, at [kwood@trorc.org](mailto:kwood@trorc.org) or (802) 457-3188 ext. 3008

**Deadline: April 11, 2025**

### Community Tree Fund

The Community Tree Fund is a collaboration with the Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO). This partnership is dedicated to supporting Vermont's communities by addressing the need for more flexible funding for small-scale tree planting projects. Through the Vermont Utility Community Fund (VT UCF) can provide resources for projects under \$5,000, which are often restricted by grant structures. Applications are due April 18, 2025.

**Deadline: April 18, 2025**

### Vermont Arts Council Grants and Opportunities

Join the Vermont Arts Council and the Division for Historic Preservation for Grant Workshops throughout the state. Dates vary through March 2025.

Applications are open for the Animating Infrastructure Grant. Deadline: April 15, 2025.

Applications are open for the Creation Grant. Deadline: April 8, 2025.

Applications are open for the Cultural Facilities Grant. Deadline: May 15, 2025.

Applications are open for the Arts Project Grant. Deadline: May 20, 2025.

Coming Soon: Arts Operating Grant

### Enhanced Rebates for Nonprofits

501(c)(3) nonprofits that provide health, safety, or welfare services in Vermont are eligible for an enhanced incentive, covering 100% of costs up to \$7,500, with a limit of 4 products per year over and above to standard rebate offers from Efficiency Vermont.

**Deadline: December 30, 2026**



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pronouns: she/her

*My Rural Vermont work hours are mostly concentrated between Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please excuse any inconvenience resulting from delayed responses.*

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