

# THE YANKEE PLANNER



American Planning Association  
Northern New England Chapter  
Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association

## Wantastiquet Hellgrammites - Source to Sea Clean Up Day in Brattleboro

**Volume 32, Issue 1  
Winter 2014**

**By Dinah Reed - Windham Regional Planning Commission, VT**

The Windham Regional Commission in Brattleboro, VT organized a successful day of shoreline clean up on Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>. The team, appropriately dubbed the *Wantastiquet Hellgrammites*, was formed for the Connecticut River Watershed Council's annual Source to Sea clean up day, to pick up garbage along the shores of Connecticut River and its main tributaries. The team name was chosen because hellgrammites, the larval stage of a dobsonfly, are an indicator of clean water, and commonly used as fish bait – and because it's catchy!



Grant funding obtained from the Connecticut River Joint Commissions Wantastiquet Local River Subcommittee was used to plan the event, recruit volunteers and solicit donations from local businesses. Over 30 volunteers participated including; 19 students from Brattleboro Union High School and Hinsdale High School, two WRC Commissioners (Maggie Bartenhagen and Steve Skibniowsky), and other adults from the community. Everyone spent about five hours cleaning up the island in the middle of the Connecticut River under the Hinsdale Bridge. The accumulation of collected trash added up to 28 sacks of recyclable garbage, more than 40 large bags of trash, 2 loveseats, scrap metal, and a lot of abandoned gear from homeless camps.



A big "thank you" goes out to the volunteers, and to those who made donations: Bellows House Bakery, Grafton Village Cheese and Green Mountain Orchards. The *Wantastiquet Hellgrammites* plan to make this an annual effort, building on our efforts from the previous year. For more information please contact Dinah Reed at (802) 257-4547 ext. 109, or [dreed@windhamregional.org](mailto:dreed@windhamregional.org).



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## Professional Development Updates

**By Ben Frost, Professional Development Officer**

### **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Planning Webcast Series Consortium Free Webinars:** We're wrapping up another great year of free planning webcasts sponsored by the Planning Webcast Series Consortium. NNECAPA has again joined with over 40 other chapters and divisions in this effort. You can earn all of your required CM credits from wherever you are! You can see the full listing of 2013 programs on the Utah APA website at <http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts>.

You can also find a listing of **free training sessions** offered by APA as distance education products at [www.planning.org/cm/free](http://www.planning.org/cm/free). There are over 30 hours of free training available. Programs include "Social Media for Planners," a guide to promoting citizen participation in planning and encourage the public to use planning resources through social media.

### **AICP EXAM SCHOLARSHIP**

AICP offers a limited number of reduced fee scholarships for individuals to take the AICP Examination. For the May 2014 test, NNECAPA has been allocated one scholarship. The fee reduction is as follows: First time applicants pay \$135, candidates who have tested before and are Scholarship recipients this cycle will only pay \$65. The scholarship is competitive, and selection of the recipient is based on the criteria listed below.

The selection of the scholarship recipient rests solely with the Chapter Professional Development Officer and shall be final.

#### **Reduced AICP Exam Fee Scholarship Selection Criteria:**

Applicant shall submit a written explanation of financial hardship (including financial hardship caused by a budget cutback in a firm or agency), which necessitates the request.

Members of ethnic or racial minorities shall be given preference.

The applicant(s) selected will be otherwise unlikely to take the exam without the reduced fee.

The applicant's employer will not subsidize the exam fee.

If you would like to be considered for this scholarship, please submit in the body of an email a statement of up to 250 words addressing the above criteria. *All submissions will be held in strict confidence, as will be the award.* Scholarship application statements should be submitted to me at [bfrost@nhhfa.org](mailto:bfrost@nhhfa.org) no later than Friday, January 17, 2014.

Please note that the awarding of a scholarship does not guarantee that a recipient will be approved to sit for the AICP Exam. The scholarship recipient's exam application will be evaluated like any other.

### **CHAPTER EVENT SPONSORSHIP POLICY FOR CM CREDIT**

Please remember that the Chapter has a policy regarding sponsorship of Certification Maintenance applications for events hosted by other organizations. This requires contact with the Chapter PDO (that's me) as early as possible in the event planning process, as well as completion of a form acknowledging the policy and submission of all information necessary for filing the CM applications.

Chapter CM sponsorship may be made in situations where:

- The host organization is a non-profit or governmental organization based in the NNECAPA region, including any of the three state planning associations affiliated with NNECAPA;
- A NNECAPA member is significantly involved in the development of the event;
- The event meets minimum standards for CM credit for delivery and administration, as established by the AICP and described in the provider handbook (<http://planning.org/cm/activities/pdf/cmproviderhandbook.pdf>); and

NNECAPA CM sponsorship will be consistent with APA's sponsorship guidelines.

## 2014 NNECAPA Conference - Call for Proposals for Sessions

### ***BIG Picture Planning***

**September 11-12, 2014**

Stoweflake Resort and Spa – Stowe, Vermont

#### **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

The 2014 NNECAPA Conference will explore the issues of infrastructure, climate change and rural economic development through the theme of BIG Picture Planning. How aware are local communities of the big effects of climate change? How are communities adapting to innovation in energy production, new modes of transportation, and supporting local rural economies while preserving community character. This year's conference will bring out the best of our region to help us answer those questions and more. We invite you to submit a proposal for a presentation for one of the three tracks outlined on the next page.

Please e-mail a one-two paragraph summary of your proposal to Mark Kane, Conference Chair, at [mkane@segoup.com](mailto:mkane@segoup.com).

#### **OVERVIEW**

Northern New England finds itself at a crossroads. On one hand we are blessed with unparalleled natural beauty, distinctive culture, world-class recreation and arguably some of the best, locally-sourced food in the world. On the other, we find ourselves challenged with low growth rates, burdened with an aging infrastructure, tested by greater competition in an increasingly global economy and troubled by the results of climate change. Gone are the days when thinking two, three or five years into the future was enough. Decisions today will have implications decades from now. It's time to think BIG.

What constitutes "infrastructure" is changing. Communities now are planning for expansion in broadband connectivity along with roads and sidewalks. Solar and wind farms are re-shaping rural communities through the extension of the electric grid. Transportation now addresses a wide spectrum of mobility; cars, buses, trains, bicycles and feet. Forest lands are now sources for biomass and farms are harvesting methane. This evolution in infrastructure has and will continue to have a BIG impact on Northern New England.

Professor Katharine Hayhoe, co-author of the National Climate Assessment, a report written every four years as required by law, states "This is no longer a future issue. It's (global warming) an issue that is staring us in the face today." The White House Science Adviser states that this report will help leaders, regulators, and city planners figure how to cope with the coming changes. Although planning policies may continue with a 5 year horizon as ways of identifying immediate goals and actions, visioning must now reach for a horizon that includes the big effects of a much warmer planet. Town, counties and States are adapting policies in response. If you think Northern New England will be immune to the BIG changes, think again.



## **OVERVIEW Con't**

The qualities that make Northern New England such a wonderful place to live also create real challenges to economic vitality. Population growth in Northern New England has remained low as compared to other parts of the United States while the median age of our residents is increasing. While we do better than some, the US Census estimates that over 280,000 residents in our communities are at or below the poverty line. The nature of agriculture is evolving – niche markets, value added production and support of localvore efforts. Recreation and tourism are driving local investment. Communities and business are leveraging public-private investment with tools as diverse as TIF and EB-5. Northern New England is finding its place in this BIG world.

## **PROPOSED TRACKS**

### **Transportation and Infrastructure**

For many communities nothing is bigger than transportation and infrastructure projects. Whether it's a revitalized streetscape, dealing with a new wind or solar electric facility or the extension of broadband internet connectivity; transportation and infrastructure projects can and have transformed many Northern New England Communities.

*We invite proposals for presentation on how transportation and infrastructure projects have affected your community. How have you managed the complexities of such projects? How have these projects influenced your long-range planning? What lessons have you learned or are you learning from these experiences? Share your stories, knowledge and information with your fellow NNECAPA planners.*

### **Climate Change and Resiliency**

On a global scale the long-term impact of climate change will have a profound effect on the futures of countless people. Here in Northern New England, the potential future impact of climate change will create new challenges and perhaps some opportunities? The recent impact of Tropical Storm Irene on Vermont and parts of New Hampshire, the Christmas 2013 Ice Storm and ongoing changes in our local/regional climate has shaken many and driven others to arms.

*We encourage NNECAPA planners to submit proposals for how they have been addressing the impact of climate change on their communities. What role has the idea of "resiliency" played in your planning? What are you doing to plan for the changes ahead? Where are you starting on such a big issue? Share your stories and strategies with your fellow NNECAPA planners.*

### **Economic Development and Growth**

Things in Northern New England tend to move slowly when compared to many areas of the country. In an age of shrinking federal dollars and increased scrutiny on expenditures at the state and local level, finding innovative ways to maintain economic vitality while managing for relatively low population growth is not easy. Luckily the Yankee spirit is alive and well and NNE is leading the innovation around the creative economy, the localvore movement, agri-business, and the nexus between outdoor recreation and tourism. All this is leading some to wonder about the evolution of a "New Ruralism"; borne out of the challenges of our setting but indicative of the notion that economic development can coexist with a more rural scale and sensibility.

*We invite NNE planners to submit proposals highlighting how their communities have embraced our region and have found creative and innovative ways to support economic development. How have the arts been leveraged in your locality? How has lower population growth influenced your economic development efforts? How have you used public financing to support local economic development initiatives? How are farms and recreation shaping your tourism scene? How have these efforts been integrated into your long-term planning strategies? Let's hear your stories and learn from each other on what makes NNE such a special place.*



## State Grapevines

### Vermont

#### **By Mark Kane, VT State Director**

Greetings fellow Northern New England Planners!

I'd like to open this "report" with perhaps the most obvious of news; **Jim Donovan**, FASLA is not writing this column! After many years as Vermont Director, Jim has been elected as the new Treasurer for NNECAPA; taking over the responsibilities from **Tara Bamford**. Jim set a very high bar for the Vermont Director position, so I'll be working hard to live up to that legacy. With Jim moving up and Tara taking a well deserved break, I have stepped into the fray as the new Vermont Director. By way of introduction, I am **Mark Kane**, Director of Community Planning and Design for the firm SE Group based in Burlington. I've lived and worked in Vermont for most of my life and have had the pleasure of working with many local, regional and state level planners during this time. I look forward to the opportunity to engage more deeply with the Vermont planning community in the coming years. To that end, please send me an email ([mkane@segroup.com](mailto:mkane@segroup.com)) if you have any news or ideas you think are worth sharing with the rest of our Northern New England colleagues.

The Vermont contingent of NNECAPA has begun the process of planning for the 2014 annual meeting. Vermont will be hosting the event and has formed an organizing committee consisting of **Alex Weinhagen, Amanda Holland, Jackie Cassino, Jim Donovan, Ken Neimczyk, Peg Elmer, Sarah McShane, Sharon Murry, Steve Lotspeich** and (not completely out of the woods in helping the Chapter) **Tara Bamford**. The theme for the 2014 annual meeting will be "*Big Picture Planning*". The organizing committee is in the process of reviewing venue options (Stowe, Vermont is presently in the running) as well as brainstorming on ideas for programs and tracks. Please contact any of us if you have ideas or thoughts to share about how to make the 2014 annual conference the best one yet!

Other happenings in the Green Mountain State include the transition of **Wendy Tutor** (Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development) from her long-time role as grants administrator to disaster recovery duties with the Vermont Community Development Program.

Congratulations Wendy and many thanks for all your dedicated service to Vermont's communities.

In another notable transition, **Lee Krohn**, AICP the long-time planning director for the Town of Manchester has taken a new position as Senior Planner with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Welcome to Chittenden County Lee!

Word on the street is that **Jim Matteau** is back at the Windham Regional Commission as a special projects planner after his work with FEMA. I'm sure his experiences in FEMA will be of tremendous benefit to the Commission. **Stephanie Smith** from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns is also transitioning to a new role at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.

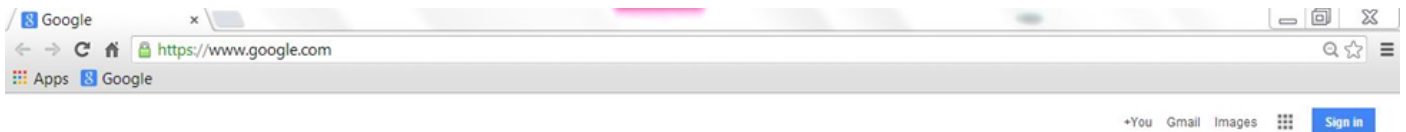
We should all give a Vermont welcome to **Maren Hill**. Maren has recently assumed the position of planning director for the Town of St. Albans. Best of luck in your new efforts!

### New Hampshire

#### **By Elizabeth Wood, NH State Director**

The Town of Merrimack, NH has hired Donna Pohli as their new Assistant Planner in the Community Development Department. Donna comes to us from a recently completed fellowship with the City of Dover, NH's Community Development Department and completing her Master of Public Administration degree from the University of New Hampshire. Donna replaces Jeff Morrisette, who left Merrimack in May for the Town Planner position in Westford, MA.

## Tools of the Trade - Dusting Off the Website



### **By Tara Bamford**

Many planning offices, firms and even municipalities are using Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook and Twitter. These social media tools are about relationship-building, and great when used thoughtfully and deliberately for that purpose. However, an organization's website remains the go-to place for many people to learn about the agency, business or program, check on upcoming events, and look up contact information. In addition, websites are where most of us expect to be able to access plans, reports, agenda and minutes. Many offices have not been able to keep up with the growing array of outreach tools available, and websites have sometimes been let go while attention shifted to social media. Here are some questions for a quick check-in on yours:

1. Is the contact information up-to-date?
2. Are meeting notices and calendar events current?
3. Are the topics and projects highlighted current?
4. Are all of the links still working?

With so many competing sources of attention, the "look" and usability of the website is even more important now. The website will be the first and possibly only point of contact for many members of the public. For private firms, this first impression may very well affect whether or not there is a follow-up contact. Software for creating and maintaining our own websites is inexpensive and relatively easy to use now; this means more of us using "do it yourself" approaches without the guidance of design and media experts. Here are a few tips for making sure your website is making a great first impression:

1. Make sure users can easily get an idea of what kind of content is available through your website at a quick glance. This means having clearly readable and understandable text, no frustrating acronyms or lingo.
2. Avoid too many layers of information - have a limited number of user-friendly tabs and drop-down menus.
3. Have some clear simple graphics to make it attractive, but not so much it feels cluttered.
4. Avoid multiple bright colors and moving parts.
5. Less is more – don't be afraid of white space. Large amounts of text should be in links, not on the main pages.
6. Do what you can to improve accessibility – here is a link to quick-tips - <http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/glance/>
7. Ask a nonplanner friend or family member to spend a few minutes glancing through your website and consider their feedback.
8. Know when to seek professional help!



## Another writer amongst our ranks!

### PRESS RELEASE

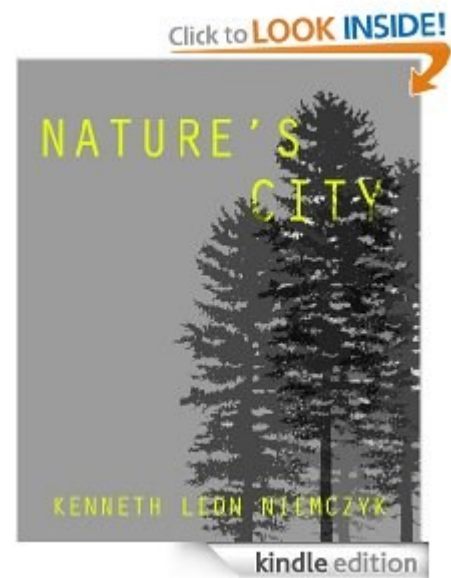
Kenneth Niemczyk, former city planner of Lebanon NH and town planner of Woodstock VT has published his book *Nature's City*.

*Nature's City* is a commentary on the struggle between the need for land by humans to accommodate an ever-increasing population and the need by Nature for land-based natural resources. It begins with the question: Where can human societies build their cities, towns, and villages and otherwise use land without destroying the resources needed by Nature to maintain the evolutionary trend?

Human societies indiscriminately located, and still locate, their cities and their other uses of land with little or no regard for its effects on Nature. *Nature's City* addresses the need to protect the resources needed by Nature to keep the evolutionary trend on track and the biosphere viable for human existence.

*Nature's City* proposes that human societies must change the way they build cities, towns, and villages. Human societies must first determine which areas of Earth are resources for natural systems; those areas then are sacrosanct and cannot be touched. Humans can then use the remaining areas for their cities, towns, and villages.

*Nature's City* presents a philosophy for the human interaction with Nature. The Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy Division of the American Planning Association published in the Environmental Planning Quarterly a 3,000-word version in celebration of its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The editors noted the philosophical nature of the work that *argues forcefully that planners must rethink fundamental premises and structures for planning and be more aware of the need to preserve Nature.*



*Nature's City* is available from Kindle at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## Events Calendar

### Annual NNECAPA Conference

**September 11-12, 2014**

Stoweflake Resort & Spa, Stowe, VT

### APA Webcasts

- February 28 - New England Chapter - [Planning Out of the Box and Keeping your Plan off of the Shelf](#) - Speakers: Sandrine Thibault, AICP and Elizabeth Bar-El, AICP - CM Approved
- January 31 - Maryland Chapter - [The Practice and Principles of Form Based Codes](#) - Speakers: Geoff Ferrell, Jason Beske, Philip Dales - CM Approved
- January 24 - Northern New England Chapter - [How Department of Justice's ADA Rules on Mobility Devices Apply to Land Open to the Public](#) - Speaker: Janet Zeller - CM Approved

**To register for the webcasts visit: <http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts>**

**Consult our Calendar frequently for additional professional development opportunities: [www.nnecapa.org/calendar](http://www.nnecapa.org/calendar)**

**ARE YOU WORKING ON AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

**HAVE YOU JUST FINALIZED THE CREATION OR UPDATE ON A PLAN YOU ARE PROUD OF?**

Please share your successes with your peers and submit an article for the NEW Northern New England Community Highlight section of the Yankee Planner!

Contact NNECAPA PIO Sandrine Thibault ([sthibault@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:sthibault@burlingtonvt.gov)) for information and publication deadlines.