



# VRPA Advocate

Issue 82

Vermont Recreation & Parks Association

Winter 2015

## VRPA Presidents' Perspective

Andy Cappello, Newport Parks & Recreation Director



**W**hen it's 20 degrees below zero at 3 o'clock in the morning and the stars are so close you could almost reach out and grab one. The Grateful Dead

blaring over the ice shack sound system while watering the rinks with a two inch booster hose. Takes about two hours to go from one end of the rec rink, along the path, over the hockey rink, and then down to the lake. After it's covered, head back to the beginning and do it all over again.

Feels like being on another planet. Walking carefully with layers upon layers of warmth, that eventually grows into an icy shell from the mist off the hose. Gives a person time to reflect on infinite thoughts that flow like the icy ooze that settles beneath your feet. It's remarkable the things that come to mind during the most mundane of tasks, especially when you add the reminder of our existence on a rock floating through and an endless void we call "space".

Those thoughts are what make me want to get up so early in the morning and do horrid work in such harsh environments. Those thoughts are what keeps me smiling while I water (well that, and the fact that my face is frozen in place). It's the thought of the diehard skaters getting there in the morning thrilled to be skating on such wonderful ice. The thoughts of the dozens of kids learning to skate with their parents and siblings while the high schoolers strut their stuff on the hockey rink.

(Continued on page 15)

## Discovering Common Ground at the 2015 Vermont Governor's Conference

By Betsy Terry

**P**lanning is underway for the 2015 Vermont Governor's Conference on Recreation. The conference dates are Wednesday and Thursday, September 30th and October 1st, 2015. Mark your calendar – this is the premier opportunity for parks and recreation training and networking here in Vermont.

This year's conference theme is "Discovering Common Ground."

Our keynote speaker is going to be Jeff Price, Business Program Manager with the Everett, WA Parks and Recreation Department. Jeff has more than 25 years of experience in the parks and recreation field and has conducted keynotes, sessions and workshops both nationally and internationally. Jeff has authored 2 books on business development in the public sector. He has had articles published in the NRPA Parks & Recreation magazine and the Washington and California Recreation & Parks Association magazines and was recently featured in a 2013 issue of Landscape Architect magazine for business innovation in the parks profession.

**I first heard Jeff Price speak at the 2014 NRPA Congress when I tagged along with Colchester Parks and Recreation Director, Glen Cuttitta, to hear his session on Leading Optimistically.**



**As I often do after a great session, I asked him if he would be interested in coming to Vermont to speak at our state conference. He said he had never been to Vermont and he would love to.**

It's pretty easy to entice people to Vermont during fall foliage season. Jeff Price is now booked and excited about coming to Vermont this September for the 2015 Vermont Governor's Conference! [Be sure to check out Jeff's article on Social Norm Marketing on page 10.] In addition to his "Leading Optimistically" keynote and a breakout session on Thursday, Wednesday on "Raising Non-Tax Revenue". His workshop format will provide time to present the theories, share proven examples, and guide participants in developing a specific plan for generating new revenues for their organization.

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**VRPA Office**

Executive Director – Betsy Terry, CPRP  
721 Main Street, Colchester, VT 05446  
Phone 802-878-2077 • FAX 802-878-2921  
betsy@vrpa.org • www.vrpa.org

**VRPA Webmaster**

Andy Cappello – webmaster@vrpa.org

**VRPA Newsletter**

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Editor – Betsy Terry Circulation – 400

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1/4 page	\$50/100	Full page or insert	\$150/300

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**VRPA Calendar of Events**

Jan 22	VRPA Executive Committee Meeting
Mar 12	VRPA Quarterly Meeting
Apr 2	VRPA Executive Committee Meeting
May 28	VT/NH Maintenance Workshop
May 14	VRPA Annual Meeting (tent)
May 30	Summerama Summer Staff Training
Jul 25	VRPA – St. Johnsbury Academy State Track Meet
Sep 15-17	NRPA Congress, Las Vegas, NV
Sep 30-Oct 1	Vermont Governor’s Conference on Recreation
Nov 19	Vermont Performance Showcase

*Message from the Executive Director*

**W**We are a few weeks into the New Year now but I would still like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy, healthy, and successful 2015. I know the work you do and your communities and organizations are very lucky to have you working with them.

I’d like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Executive Director for the last fourteen years. In November, VRPA advertised that we would be hiring a new Executive Director when I accepted a three-month contract with the City of South Burlington to be their Interim Recreation and Parks Director. It has been an honor to serve South Burlington in this capacity as they transition to a new director but I guess you could say that I got cold feet about leaving my VRPA work and have decided not to apply for the permanent position. I asked the VRPA Executive Committee about staying on as Executive Director, they agreed to it and I look forward to continuing to serve as your Executive Director. Funny how things work out sometimes but they do say that things happen for a reason.

Wow I have just read Andy Cappello’s President’s Perspective... talk about perspective! Somehow I can’t imagine that everyone who is out making ice at two in the morning is so appreciative of the opportunity. He definitely has me thinking that I will take a walk the next time that I look out and see the stars shining brightly...regardless of how cold it is.

His article also reminds me of just how refreshing it is to spend time with people who see things so positively. Take time to get to know people when you are at meetings and conferences, there are lots of positive people in this profession of ours.

Speaking of positive people...do you remember Carol and Lindsey Hartshorn who started our annual Silent Auction? They moved to Cosby, Tennessee a few years ago and they miss their VRPA friends. Maggie Leugers (Burlington) and I had a wonderful weekend visit with them on our way to the NRPA

Congress in Charlotte. They treated us to some amazing southern hospitality, toured us through Great Smoky Mountain National Park, took us to Dollywood for a day of country music, and brought us to a great recreation center managed by the son of former Middlebury Recreation Director, Tom Anderson. They asked us to tell you that they welcome VRPA guests any



time.

Happy 2015...may it be a year of positive thinking and making time to be with people who make you happy.

Your friend in recreation,

*Betsy*

Betsy Terry, CPRP  
VRPA Executive Director

# VRPA Personal Profile . . . . .

**Emily Boek, CTRS, Program Director, Stowe Recreation & Parks**

**Tessa Massett, Administrative Assistant, Stowe Recreation & Parks**

**A** lot has been happening over the last year at the Stowe Recreation and Parks Department. In addition to their new ice arena coming online, they have two new staff. Emily Boek is their new Program Director and Tessa Massett is their new Administrative Assistant. This seems like a great way to introduce them both to the VRPA membership.

Both have bachelor's degrees in recreation. Tessa graduated from Cazenovia (NY) College with a degree in Sports Management and Emily graduated from the State University of New York at Cortland with a degree in Therapeutic Recreation.

When asked what influenced their decision to become parks and recreation professionals, Tessa replied, "My passion for athletics and all that is gained beyond the experience of playing just a game. Growing up with three brothers I had to stay active and be able to "hang" with them, so I was always out running around, getting dirty, and partaking in some type of recreational activity. Throughout my life I have grown as a person through recreation and I want to be able to express and bring that opportunity to others. I have always said it's more than just a game!"

Emily replied, "I have always been an individual that wants to share smiles, laughter and fun. One of my first jobs was as an afterschool instructor and summer camp counselor for a local YMCA. I loved working with youth and found that I had a natural knack for working with children that had disabilities. Inclusive recreation has been a passion of mine from the very beginning. Initially, I began my education pursuing a degree in Physical Therapy. I found this career path to be less about the person and more about the ailment. When looking to change my degree path, I found Therapeutic Recreation and have greatly enjoyed the journey that this education has sent me on. I love what I do. "

Together these two women bring a great combination of work experience to Stowe. Tessa has worked as a counselor and director of camp and after school programs and has coordinated special events. Emily has been an Assistant Camp



Director, Recreational Inclusion Specialist, Community Health Worker, Nature Mentor, Adaptive Ski and Snowboard Instructor, Canoe, Kayak and SUP Guide, Behavioral Interventionist, and Program Coordinator. Both Tessa and Emily report being thrilled to have landed full-time positions with Matt Frazee and the Stowe Recreation and Parks Department.

With Emily focused on growing the programs, Tessa has been busy teaching herself new software programs. Just this past fall, they purchased Adobe InDesign and in two months she learned the software and led the team in the creation of their first ever program brochure. RecTrac software has all been new to her as well. She has learned that an Administrative Assistant has to be able to juggle multiple different tasks on any given day. She said, " This is a challenge for me because I had to learn to work through paperwork and meeting deadlines rather than being out in the field hands on as I had been used to. "

When interviewing folks for a personal profile I always ask them to share a bit of wisdom they would offer to new professionals. Here is Emily's advice, "Never be discouraged that you didn't land that 'dream job'. With hard work

and perseverance, you can get to places within your profession that you never saw possible. Use your recreational positions as stepping stones and learning tools to get yourself to where you want to be."

Tessa's advice is this..."Enjoy the journey and keep on climbing. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. As John Wooden stated "If you're not making mistakes, then you're not doing anything, I am positive that a doer makes mistakes." In this profession we have the opportunity to meet many different people, promote healthy living, and give people and communities a better quality of life. Embrace it and keep on learning, keep on climbing!"

Emily arrived on the Stowe recreation scene just in time for the 2014 Summerama. Tessa's first experience with VRPA came last September when she attended her first Governor's Conference. They both appreciate the continuing education and networking opportunities provided by VRPA.

When you are next on the hiking trails in Stowe, you may just run into one of them and you can welcome them to VRPA yourself. Emily and Tessa, we look forward to having you both as active VRPA members!

18th Annual

# NERPTCS 2015

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Tuesday, January 27 • 4:30pm-7:30pm  
*with reception*  
Wednesday, January 28 • 10am-5pm  
*Live Auction 4pm*  
Thursday, January 29 • 9am-1pm

### Educational Session Hours

Tuesday, January 27 • 9am-11:30am *Sports Turf Session*  
• 9am-4:30pm *USGA Session*  
*Trade Show and Reception*  
Wednesday, January 28 • 9am-11am & 2pm-4pm  
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*Lawn Care & Landscape*  
Thursday, January 29 • 9am-11am *Golf / Lawn Care & Landscape*

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# RecFit St. J

**B**ig news in St. Johnsbury! The St. Johnsbury Recreation Department quietly opened a new facility, “RecFit St. J,” in the space formerly occupied by the Club at Old Mill on November 1st. The Club at Old Mill was a beloved racquet and fitness facility that had been in operation for 30 years in St. Johnsbury and unexpectedly closed in late June. According to Joe Fox, St. J Rec Director, “when the Club closed, our team looked at the situation as really kind of a public health crisis. Hundreds of people who relied on the Club for weekly fitness needs were suddenly displaced and facing a lack of both physical and social engagement. We gathered an emergency meeting and tried to figure out what programs the rec department could offer or to see if the Field House at the Academy could perhaps absorb an influx of new members. After several months of meeting with stakeholders, the building owners and previous members, and drafting numerous business plans, we decided to give it a shot and lease the facility, re-envisioning it as a community recreation and fitness center, hence our name “RecFit St. J.” In fact, the facility really helped us re-evaluate who we are and what we want to be as an organization. From here on out, our entire operation is known as RecFit St. J as recreation and fitness are what we know and do best. We are excited to launch a new website early in the New Year that will be a one stop shop for both our gym, our rec league sports, community park info, and links to the amazing local recreational resources in our area.”

According to Fox “We wanted to make the facility feel like less of an exclusive club and make it a community hub by increasing programming for all demographics and getting more people in the door by having the front desk also act as the recreation department office. We are still in the very early stages of operation, but the facility has been a hit so far.”

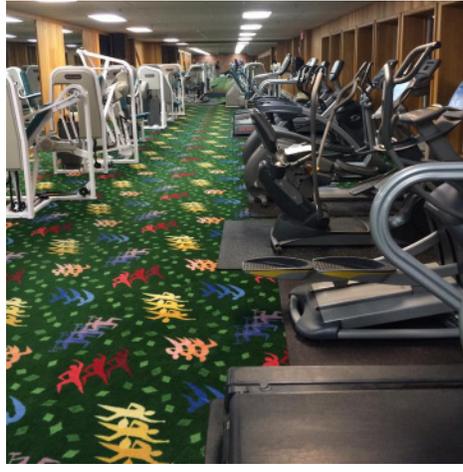
The facility has a tennis court, two racquetball courts, one racquetball court that has been converted into what most closely resembles a Crossfit® “box” (RecFit calls it the “H.I.I.T. Fit room” for high intensity interval training), a full weight and cardio room, a sauna, a dance/aerobics studio, an indoor group cycling studio, and a large open lobby space for quiet recreation like checkers, chess, and reading the paper.



H.I.I.T. Fit Room

front page of the paper that Saturday as well as 2,000 business flyers to hand out at the football game. We opened the doors the following Saturday after replacing 20 pieces of cardio equipment, rewiring the building for our IT needs, ordering new weight equipment, installing and learning a new facility management software, and rolling out over 20 gallons of paint to freshen up some of the spaces. Just reliving that gives me anxiety” he said laughing.

“A huge key to our success was an early collaboration with Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital. Their CEO, Paul Bengston, agreed that the Old Mill’s closing was a public health crisis and so to help us minimize our risk and set a strong example for local businesses, they committed a large financial contribution to purchase memberships for all hospital employees. We were and still are immensely grateful for this incredible support. Several businesses have followed



Cardio Room

Fox laughed talking about how things came together and said “Basically this was nuts. Our timeframe was bananas. Luckily I’m blessed with access to some great minds at the Academy (St. Johnsbury Academy) or else this wouldn’t have been possible. Between our business office helping me out with business plans, the Headmaster’s support for community recreation, our maintenance and IT departments’ help in getting the facility up and running, our creative director helping to establish branding and logos, and my wife putting up with me, everything kind of fell into place miraculously. We signed the lease at 2pm on the Thursday before a huge Saturday home football game with our rivals, had a working business name by 4pm, a logo by 1:30am Friday, T-shirts in production by 9am, a website launch at noon, and a press release to run on the



Cycling Studio

suit and our future looks bright.”

As for long term plans for the facility, RecFit has plans of adding child care, continuing to update the equipment, making renovations to locker rooms, and drastically increasing programs by offering things like vacation day camps for kids, group training, and partnering with agencies like the Area Agency on Aging.

If you’re in St. Johnsbury, be sure to check it out.



RecFit Lobby Makeover

# \$5 5K or Go Play Series

By Cindi Wight, Superintendent Rutland Recreation and Parks

**W**e started the Summer Sunset 5K series in 2002, modeled after a series I started in Middlebury that was modeled after a 5K series in Canton, NY. The idea behind the series was to motivate folks to do all three races by providing a “free” shirt if they participated in all three races. By 2009 we had added the Droopy Pedal Mountain bike races and in 2012 we added the CSJ (College of St. Joseph) 5K series. The running races were all no medals, no ribbons, and no awards and the mountain bike series had end of season awards only.

In 2013 after seeing a grad school proposal by a colleague out in Portland, OR for his \$5 5K series, we made some adjustments. We approached our local hospital for a \$1500 title sponsorship, which they approved within 24 hours. We changed the cost to \$5 per race (range was \$6-\$10 previously) and had kids run for free. We also partnered with the humane society and changed the CSJ race to a Walk, Wag and Run. The races then went under the umbrella of the Go Play Series and we dropped the free shirt if you did all three races in one series.



*Team Cioffi enjoying one of the races. Mom, April Cioffi, is one of Rutland’s Program Directors.*

The races are all simple with no frills. The hospital has a table for each event and brings watermelon to slice up for participants. We provide water. We use an ipad mini with a race app to time all the races. The sponsorship the first year covered the cost of the ipad, race app and money towards a really nice pop up tent that has our name and logo on all four sides.

The mountain bike race has 3 different distance options and the Walk, Wag and Run is a 2 loop 5K so we added the one loop as a distance option. The Summer Sunset is a 5K through the single-track trails of Pine Hill Park so we don’t get as many kids on their own. We are considering adding a shorter loop next summer to encourage younger kids to participate.

We have a race box where we keep just about everything we need and I have a to-do list that makes getting ready for the races a simple operation. We do run the races on trails so we need to get up into

the woods to mark them each time. This is no hardship as it is a great excuse to get out of the office! Jay Thomas oversees the mountain bike series (Droopy Pedal) and I oversee the two running series (Summer Sunset and Walk, Wag and Run).

We keep the costs pretty low for the races and with a \$5 entry we still make a profit. The direct costs for the races are paint for marking the courses, end of season mountain bike awards and one bag of ice per race. We have tried selling shirts but have had limited success and will just sell off what we have left and not purchase any additional shirts. We did have the cost of watermelon for each race but the hospital offered to provide it. They chose this option to keep the food on their table to allow the staff to interact more with the participants.

If you are looking for simple, fun community events I encourage you to add a \$5 5K series to your mix!

# 2014 Governor's Conference ... a Picture Recap



The winners of 2014 Theresa S. Brungardt Awards (from L to R) – Jane Ewing and John Ewing from Burlington received the Friend Award, the Vermont Senior Games Association received the Organization Award and VSGA President, Don Kjelleren, accepted the award, and Craig Whipple, Vermont State Parks Director was presented with this year's Professional Award.



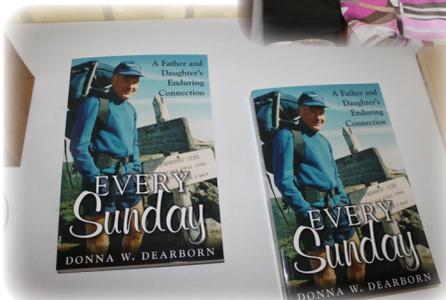
The family of Barre Recreation Director, Stephanie Quaranta, makes the Governor's Conference an annual event. Husband Mike (left) has been taking pictures for us for years and daughter Katie (center) did another fantastic job managing the registration desk.



The 2014 Silent Auction netted over \$6,000 that will be used for education programming in the year ahead. Thank you auction coordinators Jenny Bartlett, Jess Booth, Jessy Cudworthy, and Norma Maurice. Special thanks also to all our bidders and to everyone who picked up auction items and brought them to the conference. This event is truly a group effort.



Donna Dearborn, daughter of former Brattleboro Recreation Director, Frank Dearborn, was in the exhibit hall signing copies of her book "Every Sunday: A Father and Daughter's Enduring Connection" and shared stories about Theresa Brungardt as a neighbor and her father's mentor during the Awards Luncheon.





## Governor's Conference (Continued)



The Wednesday education program included a hands-on Disc Golf workshop led by Massachusetts's based Explore Disc Golf. They even set up a 3-hole course on the Lake Morey grounds so that everyone would have the chance to try out the sport for themselves.



John McConkey, Market Insights Manager with Landscape Structures Inc, introduced the keynote, Dr. Zach Clements. For the fifth straight year, Landscape Structures has sponsored our conference keynote.

Vermont Recreation & Parks Association

### 71st Annual Vermont Governor's Conference on Recreation

Thank You Sponsors!

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September 24-25, 2014 ~ Lake Morey Resort



Thank you Northstar Fireworks for an AMAZING fireworks display. What a treat for the conference attendees who came for both days.



### Thank you exhibitors – you are such an important piece of our conference!

Don't forget that our conference exhibitors are great resources throughout the year! They have lots of knowledge and experience to share if you ask them. They are all VRPA members and you can find a direct link to each of them from the VRPA website in the "commercial members" tab.

**Please remember to include them on your bid list when you are purchasing products and equipment.**

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# Dreaming of Becoming a Certified Park and Recreation Professional? YOU CAN DO IT!

By Holly Baker, Assistant Director, South Burlington Recreation and Parks

*I was never a straight "A" student, but when I first took the practice CPRP exam at the Governor's Conference a year ago last fall, I was dumbfounded when I calculated my grade. A 54%, you have got to be kidding me! And what's worse? My least proficient section was programming, not a big confidence booster when your title is "Recreation and Parks Program Coordinator". I decided then and there that I was going to pass this test and began my journey of studying.*

Immediately I fantasized about myself studying in my college sweatshirt and flannels, hair pulled back, glasses on, listening to Dave Matthews Band (yes dating myself) as I lay on my bed studying in the warm glow of a softly lit lamp - sounded like perfection. Flash forward two months. A group of my professional peers and I are going to gather the next day to "review" the first chapter of the study guide. It was on my schedule for weeks to read the chapter and take notes, but studying kept getting bumped

down the priority list as I continued my constant juggling act of being a full time professional (let's face it we all work more than 60 hours a week), wife (love him, but could he pick up his dirty laundry....) and mother of four (did I mention I have twins? It is 9:00 before the house is finally quiet, kids are asleep and the only sound I hear is the lull of the dishwasher. I put a pot of hot water on to boil for tea and set out to secure the rest of my study materials.

The first ten or twelve pages are just forwards and thank yous, so I quickly skip those. Chapter 1- Finance! With all my might I try to stay focused, but with the day I have had, my heavy eyes close somewhere between cash flow statements and break-even analysis. It is midnight when I wake up to find I had fallen asleep on the manual and now had a spiral ring binder imprint on my forehead. Looking like Frankenstein, I decide to give up on the efforts for the night and get some sleep. Perhaps tomorrow will bring opportunities to study at work.



As I am sure you know, there is never any time for anything at work. I leave for the study group having read three pages of a chapter- not a good start. I am paralyzed by the fact that I am about to walk into a room with five of my peers and I will be the only one who hasn't done the reading (you know that dream you have when you go into the midterm after having never showed up for your class...at least I wasn't naked). I open the door and am greeted by the warm smiles and generous spirits of fellow recreation professionals and it isn't

*(continued on pg 15)*

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# The Power of Social Norm Marketing

By Jeff Price, Business Program Manager, Everett, WA Parks and Recreation

Most of you will love this article! Recently my wife was in a discount store near where we live to purchase some party favors. While in the line to make her purchase she observed the cashier asking the customer at the check stand if she would like to donate \$1 to a certain charitable cause. I'm sure most of you have experienced this yourself at least once or twice, right? But what happened next was truly fascinating.

Once the customer indicated a willingness to make a \$1 donation, the cashier proceeded to get on the store intercom, and with great enthusiasm, announced to the entire store that, "Another customer has donated" to this particular charity. You can probably imagine what happened next. My wife observed every customer in line in front of her make a donation to the cause. My wife also made a donation when she made it to the checkout clerk. That same intercom announcement also notified every shopper in the store of their fellow shopper's contributions, which essentially primed the donation pump. The cashier told my wife that she was the 36th person to donate during this particular cashier's shift! What happened?

The phenomenon at work here is referred to as social norm marketing. Social norming is the concept that people's behavior can be significantly shaped by the behavior of those around them. Social norms are nothing new. However, what is new is how businesses are quickly adopting these tactics to drive customer response and increase revenue. My own dentist has even engaged in this practice. After each of my twice yearly checkups, the dental assistant hands me a post card. I hand address the post card to my home address and I wrote down my next appointment date on the card. Upon the conclusion of my most recent appointment, the dental assistant said to me, "Join our other patients who complete their own appointment cards." It is genius. I don't want to be unlike all the other patients who comply with his wishes, do I? Of course not!

Another prevalent application has been on college campuses. Universities such as Northern Illinois University initiated

a marketing campaign in 1999 aimed at students with the message that, contrary to student's beliefs, most university students did not consume more than a few drinks at parties. Once students understood that their fellow students weren't drinking as much as they thought, their behavior began to change. Student drinking dropped by 44% over a 9 year period. Another example is the IRS. In 2008 they were successful in reducing the amount of people who cheated on their taxes by promoting the fact that most every tax filer was honest about their taxes. Again, people have a strong, innate sense to act like others. Once people understood that most people were honest about their taxes, it ended up driving the desired behaviors (more honest tax filers!).

Are there opportunities in the parks and recreation industry to apply these (no cost) principals to generate revenue and improve the customer experience? Absolutely! Here are a few ideas and tips to implement these marketing strategies without costing your agency anything.

First, consider publishing your customer survey results. Numbers that suggest overwhelming popularity of a program can create a social norm, and get people to participate who may ordinarily not. For instance, here at Everett Parks we now include our latest survey results in our marketing collaterals. In a new marketing guide, for example, we proudly state that, "95% of our customers describe their experience with us as good or excellent", and "96% say they would recommend our services to a friend." An important component of this, based upon the research, is to have testimonials from customers who match the demographics (e.g. age) of the people you are targeting with your message. Again, people want to behave like others who are like themselves. Therefore, providing testimonials from seniors when targeting youth will not be effective. For some of us, this will mean taking a more active approach in gathering survey data and recruiting testimonials from customers.

Second, consider utilizing the social norm of urgency. One example, for someone operating a conference center or rental facility one might consider stating, "Holiday party bookings are extremely

popular. Be sure to book one now to insure your event while openings remain!" The image of a truly popular activity, which has a finite capacity, has been shown to prompt people to action. People don't want to left out of what others are doing or pursuing.

The research indicates a great way to get people to engage in desired behaviors is to include the desired behaviors in your verbiage. For instance, recently in the region there have been some concerns related to dog illnesses around dog parks. While we haven't had any confirmed cases of the illness in any of our dog parks here in Everett, we have utilized social norming language to influence dog owner behavior toward a positive action. As a result, our new dog park signs include the following language, "Responsible dog owners like you make sure their dogs have up-to-date vaccinations". We want to ingrain in people's minds what responsible dog owner's behavior should look like and thereby influencing the desired behavior.

A final tip, based upon the research, as a way to increase involvement or activity where public behavior does not match public opinion, is to cite popular opinion (even if it does not reflect people's actions). For instance, if you coordinate fitness or wellness programs, consider mentioning in your marketing collaterals how national surveys overwhelmingly indicate that people acknowledge the value of participating in healthy activities. For example, in our marketing collaterals we say, "Surveys indicate people believe in a healthy, fit lifestyle." By citing this true statement, it can create a sense of social norm and get people to respond accordingly, even if most people nationally don't actually engage in wellness-related behaviors. The research indicates that people will be drawn to what they believe others are doing or believe in, such as engaging in some type of wellness or physical activity. This has been a proven and effective way to get people involved.

An important word of caution is needed. We should always provide survey information, testimonials, and other targeting promotional pieces that are true and accurate.

Another important consideration is how to measure performance for such

## Social Norm Marketing (continued)

practices. Since these behavioral decisions don't happen at the conscious level, it will be ineffective to survey participants on how these strategies impact their behavior. Rather, it is recommended to test verbiage on your targeted audiences and then compare your results. This is something we've been working on here at the City of Everett.

While we have a long ways to go here at Everett Parks & Recreation in employing these strategies, we've been experiencing some encouraging results. For instance, we utilized some of these tactics to significantly drive response rates to a recent participant satisfaction survey. Our most recent response rate utilizing these principals exceeded 50% (up from a previous response rate of 38%). Phrases such as, "Join others like you who have completed the customer satisfaction survey", have proven fruitful. The increased response rate has really helped us obtain good feedback and data from our customers.

Most importantly, have fun with it. Experiment with different approaches

and compare results. Finally, I highly recommend the excellent book, "Influence", by Robert Cialdini. The research he provides into the effectiveness of these approaches is overwhelming as it is compelling.

I'm not sure how much money was raised at the discount store the day my wife visited. I do believe, however, based on what I now know of social norms, that they more than likely exceeded their revenue goal. Opportunities abound for us in parks and recreation, and for many others, too. Isn't it time we take advantage of these strategies to enhance the customer experience and improve our bottom line? It sure is! I'm sure most of you would agree with this statement!

*Jeff Price is going to be the keynote speaker at the 2015 Vermont Governor's Conference on Recreation.*

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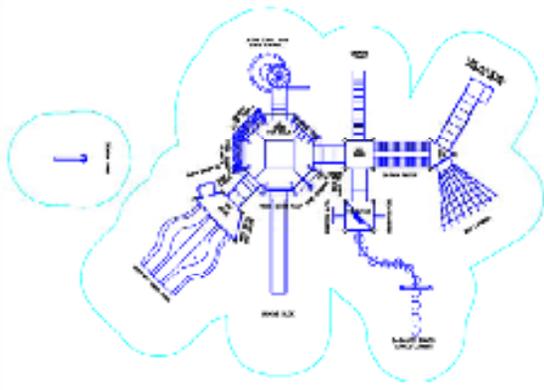
## 2015 VT Governor's Conference (continued)

Would YOU like to be one of our speakers this year? The Request for Proposals for education sessions is now available on the VRPA website. Proposals received by March 15th will receive priority.

Commercial members and past exhibitors, the exhibitor registration packet will be available in early April.

The Governor's Conference Committee meets once a month and always welcomes new members! Contact Conference Chair, Todd Goodwin, at [tgoodwin@willistonvt.org](mailto:tgoodwin@willistonvt.org) if you have enjoyed the conference in the past and want to contribute to the success of this year's conference.

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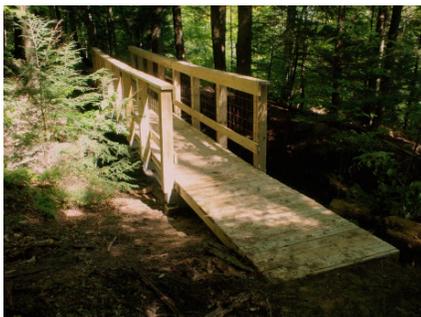
# VYCC Crews Complete Wide Range of Conservation Projects

By Keegan Tierney, Operations Director, Vermont Youth Conservation Corp

The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), a private, nonprofit organization modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, was founded in 1985. Since that time VYCC has served more than 5,900 young people, ages 16 to 24, from every county and nearly every town in Vermont. VYCC's mission is to teach individuals to take personal responsibility for all of their actions. This manifests itself through forming small teams of young people to work with highly-trained adult leaders to complete meaningful and lasting conservation projects.

In 2014 VYCC crews spread throughout the state to complete a wide range of conservation projects to address critical public needs such as watershed restoration, historic preservation, recreation, and trail maintenance and construction. This work included maintaining and building new multi-use recreation trails, improving drainage on backcountry roads, stabilizing stream banks and other waterways to reduce erosion, and constructing alternative transportation routes. As crews surmount technical and communal living challenges inherent in our program model they develop essential life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and effective communication. Over the course of the 2014 season 208 young adults on our Conservation Crews completed over 62,000 hours of work. The following are highlights from a few additional projects crews completed this season:

## Audubon Center Bridge Construction



VYCC was contacted by the Green Mountain Audubon Center in Huntington, Vermont after a devastating flash flood in the spring of 2012 destroyed a major bridge on their trail system. The VYCC

worked with an engineering firm to design a 35' modular steel bridge that could be hand carried to the remote and difficult to access stream crossing. Over the course of two weeks a crew of 2 Crew Leaders and 7 Corps Members carried the bridge to the site and completed site preparation, construction of the bridge. In addition, 100' feet of adjacent trail work were completed to reestablish through traffic on the trail.

## Mud Pond Boardwalk



The town of Williston contacted the VYCC as it was preparing a recreation trails grant application for a boardwalk linking trails that connect to Oak Hill Road and South Road in Williston, VT. The town had a general idea of their needs and strict parameters around property boundaries and their desired impact on the sensitive wetland ecosystem. VYCC professional staff worked with town officials to craft a grant application that would secure a 50:50 match to available town funds needed to build the 800 foot long boardwalk.

Design and construction of the boardwalk emphasized minimal impact on the wetland ecosystem while also keeping project costs within a reasonable level. Native non-treated lumber was used to build a boardwalk that winds its way through the wetland environment minimizing the amount of vegetation required to be removed and allowing adequate passage for wildlife and continued vegetative growing conditions.

The VYCC crew dedicated to the project hand carried all the materials into

the site and completed the construction in four weeks, leaving behind them a recreational and environmental experience for the use of the town residents for years to come.

## Bill Ballard Trail Reconstruction



When Hurricane Irene struck Vermont in 2011 the Bill Ballard Trail in Norwich, VT suffered major impacts that included lost tread, washed out bridges, and destabilization of nearby embankments. Over the course of the last three years the VYCC has worked with the town of Norwich Trails Committee to secure funding to rebuild the impacted sections of trail. This included stabilization of the stream bank and construction of 500' of re-routed trail in 2012, construction of a 25' bridge in 2013, and in 2014 included the installation of a 46 step stone staircase to bring the project to completion.

Due to a lack of native material on-site the staircase was constructed entirely from imported stone quarried in Chester, VT. The stone was delivered to residence near the work site and transported to the site via rigging system allowing the crew to move the stone 800' down a steep and sensitive hill with minimal negative impact to the environment.

**The VYCC is soliciting projects for its 2015 field season currently. If you have a shovel ready project or just an idea of what you would like to accomplish you can contact the VYCC's Operations Director, Keegan Tierney, at (802) 434-3969 x 141 or [Keegan.tierney@vycc.org](mailto:Keegan.tierney@vycc.org)**

Around the State...





## Around the State (Continued)

# Universal Recycling Comes to Vermont

By Bryn Oakleaf, Environmental Analyst, Agency of Natural Resources

At the December Vermont Recreation and Parks Association quarterly meeting, I had the pleasure of presenting just what the Universal Recycling law (UR law) means for shared community spaces across the state. I shared the podium with Frank Spaulding, Parks Projects Coordinator for ANR's Forest, Parks, and Recreation and Deryk Roach, Superintendent of Park Operations and Maintenance for Burlington Parks and Recreation. The discussion was vibrant. We shared recommended practices, covered challenges, and explored next steps as the law is rolled out.

The Universal Recycling law was adopted as Act 148 in 2012 by a unanimous legislative vote. This is the greatest change to management of materials since the first solid waste law was passed in Vermont 25 years ago. In order to move the state forward in sustainable materials management, baseline services needed to be established that were uniform and require valuable materials to be banned from landfilling. That is the goal with the adoption of this law. The law focuses on easily recycled materials, food scraps and leaf and yard debris with the intention to increase convenience and consistency of services for their collection. It is written in a way that phases infrastructure development in before a landfill ban is placed on the material. While some changes will be significant for certain portions of the state, other areas already implementing these practices will not be as effected by the law.



What does this mean for community spaces that VRPA members operate and

oversee? In the near future the most important items are related to collection of recyclables and placement of containers to collect recyclables. As 2020 approaches food scraps will need to be diverted as well but for 2015 the focus is on the recyclables.

Beginning July 1, 2015 the law requires:

(1) Recycling containers to be paired with trash containers in all public buildings and public lands (except in bathrooms) that are clearly labeled and are placed as close to each other as possible.

(2) Bans landfilling of paper, plastic #1 and #2, metal, and glass.\*

Common Questions:

Q: Do I have to offer recycling if we do not offer trash collection?

A: No. In situations where carry-in/ carry-out of trash is in place, there is no requirement for recycling to be collected. To help with implementing this, ANR has adopted standardized symbols which can be downloaded for free from our website.

Q: What if our hauler does not offer recycling collection?

A: Under the Universal Recycling law, all commercial haulers that collect trash are required to collect recyclables beginning July 1, 2015. If they are not doing so already, and it is not included in your contract for service call your contractor to discuss when they will begin to offer the service and ask how they can help you meet the requirements to divert recyclables from trash disposed at your properties.

Q: What about contamination?

A: To prevent the recyclables from going in the trash, and from trash going in the recyclables there are some recommended practices to follow.

(1) Proximity to trash bins. Placing the containers as close as possible is key. Having the containers across the room from one another is not meeting the convenience needs of the person disposing of the material and will likely use whichever container they are closest to.

(2) Size of containers. Second, ensure the containers are the same size and are large enough to handle the amount of

material likely to be collected between being emptied by staff. Having recycling containers smaller than trash gives the subliminal message that there are fewer things that can go in them.

(3) Color of containers and labeling. Third, in addition to labeling them as "Recycling" and "Trash" it is a good idea to have the recycling container the typical blue color associated with recycling and trash as gray or black if possible to clearly distinguish the two.

(4) Educational Posters. A final recommendation is to use ANR's standardized recycling symbols on the containers themselves, and to place posters over each respective container that indicate what can go in each bin. Pictures are often the most helpful with this. If you need posters reach out to your hauler and local solid waste management entity for assistance.\*\*



For more resources visit ANR's webpage at [www.recycle.vermont.gov](http://www.recycle.vermont.gov), or call 802/828-1138.

The full list of recyclables banned from the landfill include aluminum and steel cans, aluminum foil and pie pans, glass containers for food and beverages, #1 and #2 plastic containers, corrugated cardboard, white and mixed paper, newspaper, magazines, paper mail, envelopes, boxboard, and paper bags.

To access the recycling symbols visit: <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/URsymbols.htm>. To find a list of local solid waste management entities visit: <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/swmdlist.htm>.

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# President's Perspective *(continued)*

Knowing that what we're creating are the memories that I hear about time and time again from former kids now eager to share with their children the same wonderful experiences that shaped them. The kind of memories that grandparents share during the holidays.

I compare flooding the ice rinks to mowing the lawn or weeding the garden. It's an opportunity to be intimately involved with the process and facility that delivers the end product. I easily notice potential improvements previously overlooked, with big benefits resulting. It's also a meditation time that enables my mind to dream up great ideas that add opportunities for new memories.

Those mundane tasks provide thoughts

that become the building blocks that are smoothed and developed into programs, events and facilities. Thoughts dreamt during those times are usually the most valuable because they occur while minds are the most open. Just like the stars that twinkle like jewels in space, bright thoughts come through the noise and shine.

Getting dirty and doing those tasks is an opportunity that I cherish not only for the fact that it gets me out of the office, but most importantly for the chance to dream. For I know that I could come up with an idea that will bring pure joy to someone that will value those moments for the rest of their lives.

From my perspective, being in a

position to offer opportunities for such memories to take place is an incredible honor. One that needs to be handled with utmost care and consideration. Finding flow and staying there for as long as possible will ensure that what is being offered is effective in building our communities, one memory at a time.

Respectfully,



Andrew Cappello



## CPRP *(continued)*

too long before most of us reveal that we haven't done the reading. Phew- I am not alone!!!! We spend the next two hours reading the chapter together, pausing for discussion when someone was stuck and taking the practice test, this time 75%! Not too bad for a girl who struggles to balance her check book.

The remaining months go by and we meet regularly to review chapters. Sometimes there is a jeopardy game involved, sometimes there is test review but always- always there is FUN! This study group was a life line for me. It forced me to take the time to do the reading, to ask questions and complete the task. But more than that, it was a great opportunity to chat with my peers, make a deeper connection and take time for myself.

I will never have an MD before my name or a PHD after my name, but I am proud of my accomplishments and look back on this past year with gratitude for my fellow recreation professionals who helped keep me focused through fellowship and fun.

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Holly Baker, CPRP (I know, right?)



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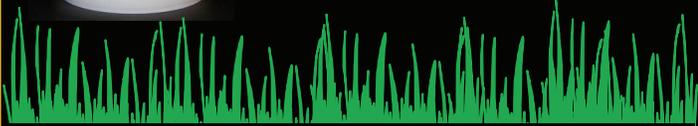
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