

WRC STAFF ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

This summary highlights staff activity during the month of JANUARY 2026

The lead staff person is listed in parentheses by each programmatic area heading.

Brownfields Redevelopment (*Susan Westa*)

- EPA Coalition Assessment Grant – Prepared and submitted grant application.
- 108 Rockingham St., Bellows Falls – Participated on call with prospective purchaser and consultant about next steps.
- Weston FEMA buyout site – Attended Selectboard meeting to address questions about next steps related to brownfields.

Community Development (*Susan Westa*)

- Southeastern VT Housing Coalition – Facilitated Housing Development Subcommittee meeting. Participated in planning meeting. Attended annual meeting with local legislators.
- BDCC Economic Development Workshop – Attended workshop about municipal economic development including CHIP (Community and Housing Infrastructure Program).
- Downtown Brattleboro Alliance – Attended Executive Committee Meeting and annual Board Retreat.
- Southeastern VT Economic Development Strategies – Participated in monthly meeting.
- Windham Aging – Attended annual retreat.
- Londonderry Village Wastewater Project: Matt assisted with general project coordination between the Town, Village Wastewater Committee, and Engineer on the development of design plans, property owner easements, and funding opportunities for the wastewater projects in the south and north villages. The south village is anticipated to be bid for construction in March 2026. The north village project is expected to be bid later this year.
- Mike worked with Grafton on Septic Pumping Ordinance rationale and methodology.

Emergency & Resiliency Planning (*Alyssa Sabetto*)

- Reviewed Vermont Emergency Management's update of the Animal Resources annex to the Local Emergency Management Plan. VEM now maintains the Resource that we originally developed.
- Review of the flood resiliency element of the draft Whitingham Town Plan and sent my feedback to Margo.
- Completed drafting the updated Rockingham flood hazard bylaw and sent it to the state for review.
- Sent Chris information requested for his testimony at the statehouse about the impacts of the loss of the Emergency Management Performance Grant on our work and what we can no longer provide to towns without that funding.
- Weston CDBG-DR:
 - Developed organizational spreadsheet for monitoring response to Award Conditions.
 - Met with the town to over the Award Condition needs and sent requests to relevant parties.
 - Town is planning for a Special Town meeting on 2/14 to hold a public vote on proceeding with the award.
 - Worked on meeting Award Conditions.
 - Met with Stone Environmental about the Environmental Review portion.

- Met with Weston to discuss and plan for the 2/14 Special Town meeting.
- Arranged for Stone Environmental to also attend on 2/14 to answer questions.
- Explored the feasibility of going for a federal DOT grant for Snow Lake called “BUILD”:
 - Met with James Earley and Julie Butler of the USFWS and they recommended applying. Shared that news with the project team and encouraged consideration.
 - Reviewed and shared the Notice of Funding Opportunity with the project team.
 - Attended a USFWS led informational session about BUILD and followed up with a meeting with Brian Cote (SLR) and Andrew Lampron (Mount Snow).
 - Mount Snow subsequently chose not to pursue the opportunity.
- Arrangements made for holding a February 5th FEMA Consultation Coordination Officer (CCO) meeting at WRC. A CCO meeting is where FEMA officials meet with local community leaders to review preliminary flood risk data, discuss changes, and plan outreach, before public meetings and official map finalization.
- Attended Emergency Planner check-in with other regional commissions.
- Participated in a FEMA webinar about floodplain mapping.
- Met with the Rockingham Planning Commission to continue the conversation about the update of their flood hazard bylaw.
- Customized and shared a draft state model flood hazard bylaw with the Weston Planning Commission to consider in their update.
- Attended a check-in meeting with VT DEC and other regional commissions about our work on the flood bylaw updates.
- Mike had phone call with Jim Pinkerton of Vernon Planning Commission to discuss progress and needs for LHMP.
- Ongoing efforts on adoption process for Athens LHMP. Mike is having regular conversations with the town on implementation and next steps.

Energy (*Mike McConnell & Anand Fedele*)

- Collaborated with the Wilmington Energy Committee on the initial review and planning needed for a local enhanced energy plan project
- Reviewed and commented on several RFPs for Wilmington’s Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) projects.
- Attended regular MERP coordination meetings with the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS).
- Attended January Energy Planners Meeting.
- Undertook inventory of current energy data resources—Anand developed a strategy to update these alongside the Regional Plan work for Act 181, and to make data resources public facing on the new WRC website.
- Submitted a MERP scope amendment request on behalf of Athens to request program funding for needed structural work. Received BGS approval for the proposed scope change.
- Met w/ Saxtons River Trustee Member to discuss MERP implementation, reimbursement, and possible scope amendment for awarded project.
- Continued with town-specific municipal project management work for MERP, including:
 - Wardsboro - closed out an insulation RFP, assisted with proposal evaluation, and awarded a bid for the majority of the thermal envelope work for the town’s five awarded buildings. Conducted outreach to HVAC designers and installers.

- Londonderry - Collaborated with the Town Hall Renovation Committee and Town Administrator to post and distribute an RFP for historic window restoration at the Londonderry Town Hall.
- Grafton - Attended Selectboard meeting to discuss insulation/air sealing RFP and coordinate content and posting.
- Halifax - Site visit for boiler replacement project.
- Non-awarded towns – Held conversations on their needs and ways WRC can assist.
- Windham - Phone call about Grant Management Services.
- Attended site visits throughout the region in January for MERP.
- Worked on connecting MERP awardee towns with Efficiency Vermont to assist in accessing custom/prescriptive incentives.
- Attended January's monthly energy planners meeting.

GIS/Mapping (*Jeff Nugent & Lisa Donnelly*)

- Whitingham town plan maps: completed final drafts of updated transportation system and community facilities maps.
- Worked on maps for Grafton's Highway Safety Improvement Project grant application.
- Meeting with WRC staff to discuss Aquatic Organism Passage data; provided UMass with information on the statewide Stream Crossing data layer.
- Watched FEMA flood maps webinar.
- Participated in the quarterly RPC GIS online meet-up.
- Summarize voice and data service options for WRC to Chris, our IT consultant, and phone service provider.
- Created a map for Westminster to use for their Route 121 paving Request for Bids.
- Looked at VCGI's imagery services in more detail, to begin updating changed URLs in our ArcPro projects.
- Spoke with a consultant about sub-contracting for mapping on an RPF.
- Drafted letters of support for Recreational Trails Program grants for the following organizations: Southern Vermont Trails Association; Windham County Trails Alliance; Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, and Vermont Trails and Greenways Council.
- Sent information to Windham on upcoming meeting to present results of their culvert and road erosion inventories; set them up with a VT Culverts account.
- Downloaded and updated our master E911 GIS layers.
- Information to Vtrans District 2 about VT Culverts and Class 1 town highways.
- Began updates to Guilford's E911 map.
- Participated in Vermont Trails and Greenways Council monthly board meeting.
- Updated documentation and posted our 2024 regional plan future land use data to our ArcGIS online open data group, so it's accessible to the public.
- Planning, prep work, and hosting, with the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council, a Windham Region trail manager's meet-up. 28 people attend from across the region, both large and small organizations, pedestrian, mountain bike, snowmobile, and ATV groups.
- Update work on regional trails GIS data.
- Attended meeting at the Retreat Farm to discuss a "trail hub".
- Act 181/future land use: completed draft mapping for Dummerston, Wardsboro, Stratton, and Wardsboro; created new Brookline and Winhall maps: updated web page.
- After many months of work, WRC launched its new website, developed by Amy Hale of Design Develop Train.

- Information to Wilmington trails committee on mapping out mile markers for the Hoot Toot & Whistle Trail.
- Provided shapefiles to Town of Brattleboro from their current town plan.
- Mid-year ACCD reporting.
- Looked into re-design of our E911 maps.
- Continued to work on Windham's road, culvert, and road erosion inventory maps.
- Downloaded long-term pedestrian counter data, processed and updated master spreadsheet and summary sheets.
- Completed processing all 2025 bike and pedestrian count data, added count locations to shapefile, updated master spreadsheet, updated summary sheets and uploaded to google drive.
- Did seasonal maintenance, cleaning, and repairs as needed for pedestrian counters and accessories.
- Completed the first two North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative training modules for non-tidal aquatic and terrestrial stream crossings.
- Worked on updates to surface waters data in Windham and Whitingham.
- Created point data for region highway shields geodatabase annotation.
- Assembled town and state bridge data for Halifax and Whitingham.
- Collected bike parking data in Brattleboro for January; finalized and cleaned up bike parking data cleanup for the year 2025.
- Assembled census data for Halifax.

Municipal Planning Assistance (*Matt Bachler & Mike McConnell*)

- Margo continued to work on the Whitingham Town Plan Update, including drafting and finalizing the Transportation Chapter, revising the Economic Development Chapter, updating the Community Facilities map, and completing required progress reports. Coordinated closely with the Whitingham Planning Commission through meetings and ongoing communications to support plan review and advancement.
- Provided technical assistance advising to Putney on funding options for regulatory stormwater planning at gravel pits.
- Weston Zoning Bylaw Amendments: Met with Planning Commission to review and decide on final edits to zoning bylaws. Assisted with notice requirements for Planning Commission public hearing.
- Dover Zoning Bylaw Amendments: Met with Planning Commission to review draft revisions to zoning district allowed uses table. Worked on updates to PUD and affordable housing standards.
- Brookline Town Plan Re-Adoption: Assisted Planning Commission and Town Clerk with public hearing notifications.
- Attended Executive Board meeting and presented staff recommendation for approval of Londonderry Town Plan and confirmation of municipal planning process.
- Assisted Londonderry with public hearing requirements for zoning bylaw amendments.
- Met with Weston and Winhall Planning Commissions to discuss zoning bylaw update projects that received Municipal Planning Grant awards.
- Assisted Halifax Planning Commission with Town Plan update process and requirements.
- Wilmington Town Plan Update – Sue reviewed Introduction, Community Profile and Community Facilities chapters and developed preliminary comments. Attended Planning Commission meeting and led discussion of goals and policies.
- Participated in ongoing conversations with Marlboro for Zoning Administration assistance.
- Continue working on Putney Zoning Bylaw update including meeting with DRB chair.

- Worked on final report for Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP), including MTAP program materials.
- Attended Westminster Planning Commission meeting to present updated implementation matrix.
- Participated in ongoing efforts related to Athens Town Plan submittal to WRC.

Natural Resources & Water Quality (*Margo Ghia*)

- Advanced multiple stormwater and watershed efforts, including continued drafting of EDA applications (Bellows Falls Slope Stabilization), finalizing the Deerfield Watershed Grant in conjunction with Deerfield River Watershed Alliance (DRWA), and providing a letter of support to the DRWA for the Federal Wild & Scenic nomination of the Deerfield River and its major tributaries.
- Supported regional water quality and flood resilience initiatives through participation in a Flood Safety Act webinar for the general public, FEMA mapping training, and collaboration with VT DEC, DRWA, UVM Extension, and other regional partners.
- Worked on project administration and reporting, including completion of progress reports (Spencer Drive, Rockingham Transport, Gates Pond Road), WISPr paperwork for Whitingham, and participation in Regional Tactical Basin Planning meetings.
- Advanced ecosystem connectivity and conservation work, including Aquatic Organism Passage coordination, Forest Block and Wildlife Connectivity project planning, interviewing UVM students, and onboarding a UVM Environmental Studies intern.
- Provided an interview with a journalist on the National Water Model and Flood Savvy application.
- Chris continues to serve on the Vermont conservation plan technical advisory committee.

Project Review (*Alyssa Sabetto*)

- Attended an Act 250 hearing for a project in Grafton involving the Windham Foundation (2W0157-7).
- Prepared for a February Committee meeting.

Regional Plan Update (*Matt Bachler*)

- Act 181
 - Alyssa began in the project management role to coordinate the WRP update needs with staff and eventually roll everything together.
 - Worked on draft revisions to Land Use Chapter of Regional Plan.
 - Attended the monthly project meeting with other regional commissions.
 - Continued work on draft regional land use mapping based on Act 181 standards.
 - Continued with outreach to towns to provide draft regional land use maps and set up times to meet with towns about Act 181.
 - Responded to general inquiries from towns about Act 181 and new regional plan requirements.
 - Attended Full Commission meeting to provide an update on the Regional Plan update schedule.

Transportation (*Colin Bratton*)

- Continued project coordination and compliance, including advancing National Environmental Policy Act review for the Stratton Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) project and communications with project teams and consultants.

- Managed grant and contract administration, completing progress reports (Newfane and Windham Salt Sheds, Windham 121 Culvert, Stratton FLAP), processing invoices, and executing contract amendments.
- Provided technical and project management support to municipalities, including coordination on Windham Bank Stabilization and engineering discussions for the Newfane Salt Shed project.
- Continued to provide project management support for Spring Hill Road culvert replacement project in Londonderry. Attended public informational meeting. Met with Town staff to review proposals for Construction Inspection Services and made recommendation to Selectboard.

Other

- Bond Bank project with public water suppliers (Alyssa Sabetto)
 - Connected with RCAP Solutions regarding needs in Putney and set a meeting for February.
 - Attended the monthly project meeting with other regional commissions.
- Matt is working with other RPC staff to update the Essentials of Land Use Planning training.
- Conway School project
 - Chris, Matt, Jeff and Alyssa met with the Conway School team to kick-off the project and followed up by sharing mapping resources and existing tools.
 - Followed up with a second meeting to check-in.
- VPA Executive Committee – Sue attended regular meeting.
- NNECAPA Conference – Sue attended initial conference planning meeting and Social Subcommittee meeting.
- VAPDA – Sue participated in work plan check in meeting.
- Chris is working with classes at UVM on 1) research into councils of government and how that structure might be able to support intermunicipal shared services, and 2) the development of a guide for towns on reuse of flood buyout properties. He's also participating in a UVM research project looking into settlement on alluvial fans and the risks to it by fluvial erosion/channel migration.