

# SWEEP

Get all the Dirt



"Nothing Under the Rug"

NEWSLETTER OF THE VERMONT STATE-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS SUMMER 2008

## About this Edition

The theme of this edition of the SWEEP Newsletter is "Keep It Local!" Articles range from time banking to place-based education. Several are about local food initiatives and show the variety of shapes such endeavors can take. The current emphasis on "local" is in part driven by the desire to keep local communities vibrant and a strong sense of place, however in the future, with the rising cost of fuel, "local" will become increasingly important. In an energy-restricted future, the challenges for SWEEP members and our communities could be seen as daunting – or they can provide fresh opportunities for us to discover what makes us unique and to find ways of linking us even closer together. As Bill McKibben says in his excellent book, *Deep Economy*, "each locality...needs to figure out what its mix of tradition and resources and hopes allows." The articles in this edition will give you ideas and inspiration.

## Local Energy Takes Heart

By Nancy Nottermann

Energy is front and center these days and community energy committees are making a large impact. Groups like Hardwick Energy Action Resource Team (HEART) have become part an amazing statewide network, the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network. Local committees communicate with each other for ideas, resources and collaboration.

HEART, which I coordinate, is a prime example of what regular citizens can do. We formed two years ago as a pilot project with Efficiency VT to reduce electrical use but quickly decided to expand our focus to all fuels and all five neighboring towns and schools. To raise awareness, we launched a logo contest and also arranged for the VT

Energy Education Programs to go into classrooms. By having the public vote in stores for the winning logo, awareness of our group and of our goals shot way up. Two different student energy essay contests helped as well.

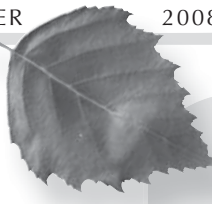
HEART has held workshops on solar energy, home weatherization, CFL sales, movies, and a VT Earth Institute's discussion course on Climate Change. We brought the climate



change show "Beat the Heat" to a community event that also celebrated the work our high school students did in energy conservation. Their work helped pass a bond vote on efficiency measures for the high school.

The two gems HEART is most proud of are a Sustainable Living Fair and an oral history project. The fair provided a fun venue to see what 'sustainable' really means. With 35 exhibitors in one room, "the light bulb went off" for many people who had no previous understanding of the concept. Senator Sanders even attended for over an hour! For the oral history project, "Electrifying Stories," high school students were trained to interview town elders about life and community before and in the early days of electricity. In the 40's and '50's, Hardwick village had power but the outlying areas didn't, so the stories were amazing and gave students a wistful view of what "community" meant years ago, not to mention life without all of the gadgets they see as necessities.

HEART's approach has included the arts, students and knowledgeable presenters in addition to the amazing resources within our own community. Don't be fooled, though. The successes are intertwined with failures and frustration. Worker bees come and go, but keeping the momentum going over years with a few dedicated folks is the key. Hardwick's electric use has decreased over the last 1.5 years, despite adding 40 + new users and the Hardwick Electric Dept. attributes much of that to HEART's work.



## A Note from the Chair

### Vermont Statewide Environmental Education Programs (SWEEP)

is a coalition of individuals and organizations promoting environmental education in Vermont since 1975. SWEEP's purpose is to foster environmental appreciation and understanding to enable people to make responsible decisions affecting the environment. For membership information, see p. 11.

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"SWEEP: Get all the Dirt" is produced twice a year. We welcome your contributions. Contact: Barry King <kinglet@together.net>

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Hello SWEEP members and friends –

A happy, productive summer season to you all! I'm delighted to be the new chair of the SWEEP board – it's a great group of people working to support high-quality environmental education throughout Vermont. We have a couple of big projects coming up, and I invite you all to become engaged in them.

At our spring general membership meeting, we announced plans for a series of public discussions to develop an environmental literacy plan for all Vermonters. We want this process to be inclusive, future thinking, creative, thoughtful, and joyful. We envision the plan as a guide for the future and a call to action. Environmental issues will be a key concern of the 21st century – we'll need everyone's best thinking and work focused on addressing these challenges. Please visit

SWEEP's website this fall to find out more.

In addition, this September we kick off a two-year process to organize the 2010 NEEEA conference to be held in Vermont. We want to build on previous year's themes as we plan for ours. Again, there are lots of ways for everyone to be involved in this event. AND it's fun!

As you will see in this newsletter, Vermont environmental educators excel at keeping it local. We are a small state with a close-knit, active, and vibrant environmental education community. Thanks to all of you for all you do. And a special thanks to Jen Cirillo for her four years of leadership in SWEEP.

May your tomatoes be ripe and your zucchinis manageable.

Lisa Purcell  
Board Chair

### NEEEA Update

By Nancy Notterman

The New England Environmental Education Alliance (NEEEA) continues to move forward. It provides networking opportunities within and outside the EE profession through the annual conference and leadership retreats, prospects via the web site, the New England Journal of EE, and the list-serve for information on current EE issues and regional information. NEEEA continues to work for all of the members of all of the state organizations. Feel free to contact Nancy Nottermann or Lisa Purcell with your ideas and thoughts.

Don't forget the Oct 3 – 5 NEEEA Conference in southern NH. With its theme, A Journey Home: Fostering Ecologically Centered Communities, and 40 workshops to choose from, this conference is geared

to more than just environmental educators. Considering the state of our economy and energy sources, this conference will be incredibly relevant. More and more people are acknowledging that if we continue with business as usual, an environmental crisis awaits us. Yet a fundamental challenge remains: how to create a new and better way of living? At the heart of this issue are the concepts of community, environment and individual values. Ecological systems provide an ideal example of connectedness and interdependence needed for strong communities. The Conference will take a close look at strategies for coming home to a community built around basic ecological principles, maximizing diverse social capital and exploring ways of bringing about behavioral change.

## Environmental Literacy Planning

*"The No Child Left Inside Act would make \$500 million available to the states...to strengthen outdoor education programs, curriculum and teacher training. Only states that develop environmental literacy plans would be eligible to receive the funds. Environmental literacy plans would create a more uniform expectation for all students to graduate with a base level of environmental knowledge. Specific strategies would be set by the states and [their] schools."*

- Lara Lutz, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

The SWEEP board is committed to the creation of an Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) for Vermont. The plan will build on the work already done with K-12 schools but will expand to ages birth to 100+ and will provide a framework for Vermonters to enhance and build their environmental literacy. The ELP planning process will be similar to the one used to add Sustainability and Understanding Place and revise the Natural Resources Standards in the VT Framework of Standards.

A Board sub-committee plus other interested people will form a steering committee to guide the process. Over the next few months, this group will define the project, research what other states are doing, look for start-up funding and hire a project coordinator.

Anyone interested in serving on this Steering Committee, should contact Lisa Purcell: [lisa@fourwindsinstitute.org](mailto:lisa@fourwindsinstitute.org)

In the late fall, SWEEP will start to host public discussions about ELP to get as wide a range of views as possible. These forums will happen throughout the state and in a variety of settings over the course of the winter/spring. The project coordinator will compile and synthesize the results for the Steering Committee. These will be posted on the website and sent to all discussion attendees for further feedback. Non-attendees' comments will also be welcome at any time.

By the fall of 2010, the Steering Committee will make its final revisions and recommendations and seek buy-in from all stakeholders. Once the plan is adopted by supporting organizations and governmental agencies, it can be implemented. The ELP will create a citizenry that understands the complex relationship between humans and the natural world and how to improve and care for the environment and each other.

## Environmental Literacy Resources

### Environmental Literacy in the United States: What Should Be...What Is...Getting from Here to There

By T. Volk and W. McBeth

Volk and McBeth studied a number of research papers to determine the level of environmental literacy in the United States to see if gaps exist between an ideal literacy and the current level. The report contains their findings and recommendations for improving the level of environmental literacy. 1998, 80 pp. ISBN 1-884008-73-9. \$9.95

### A Field Guide to Environmental Literacy: Making Strategic Investments in Environmental Education

By J. L. Elder.

A true heightening of our nation's environmental literacy will require momentous educational reforms both inside schools and out. This book highlights the need for, and potential benefit of, foundation seed funding to promote these reforms. A resource for the library of every funder, administrator, grant writer, Board member, and teacher. 2003, 110 pp. ISBN 1-884008-87-9. \$34

### "Environmental Literacy in America: What Ten Years of NEETF/Roper Research and Related Studies Say About Environmental Literacy in the U.S."

[www.neefusa.org/pdf/ELR2005.pdf](http://www.neefusa.org/pdf/ELR2005.pdf)

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota Report Card on Environmental Literacy A survey of adult environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors

[www.seek.state.mn.us/eemn\\_b.cfm](http://www.seek.state.mn.us/eemn_b.cfm)

## VT Envirothon – Keeping it local makes it real

Like its counterparts, the VT Envirothon is a program for high school students. Like the others, Vermont's includes five segments – soils, aquatics, wildlife, forests and an oral presentation on a changing, current issue. It with "the issue" that Vermont's program differs from its sisters. Vermont teens go into their communities and look at the current issue on a real-world, real-time basis rather than exploring a hypothetical situation as is done elsewhere. When they present their ideas at the Envirothon, they have pursued work of real benefit to their communities and themselves, not just an academic exercise.

In the past, students have looked at how global warming will affect their community; at potential local alternative energy sources;

at how to make more sustainable the recreational impacts on natural resources in their communities. The students must consider the local environmental, social and economic impacts involved in the issue and in their suggestions.

Through this process, students gain a better understanding of their community, its diverse members and its needs. In some cases, the fieldwork results in actual projects implemented by the students or their successors. There is even grant money to support such projects. Making the topic real and local for the kids is far more meaningful than asking them to tackle a hypothetical situation and, while much more difficult, the benefits to the students and their communities are strong.

## DON'T JUST EAT — THINK! New Green-Themed Café at ECHO Offers “Tasty Bites” of Wisdom

By Sue Schopp



Can restaurants help diners make choices that are kinder to our planet, while providing tasty food and awesome views? ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center thinks so, and opened a green-themed Think! Café to prove it.

“We want to provide healthy, delicious and local foods in an attractive and thought-provoking way,” says ECHO’s Executive Director, Phelan Fritz. “The idea is to engage people in decision-making and actually think about the food they eat, the packaging they choose... If you don’t know about your choices,

how can you make an informed decision?”

Enabling individuals to make informed decisions has been central to ECHO’s mission from the start. Through lively and engaging exhibits, ECHO, daily educates the public about the ecology, culture, history – and opportunities for stewardship – of the Champlain Basin. The café operates on the same principles. The menu features fresh local and seasonal ingredients and tasty homemade dishes – plus signature dishes from local partners like Sugarsnap and Klinger’s Bakery. Even the space itself is green, includ-

ing countertops made of pressed recycled paper from Planet Hardwood, plywood detailing from wheat straw, and whey-based wood finish from Vermont Natural Coatings. Three striking mobiles illustrate the idea of local food cycles and add a touch of whimsy.

As with all of ECHO’s exhibits, THINK! Café makes learning enjoyable. Guests are encouraged to “play with their food.” Brightly colored exhibits allow active participation, with something for virtually every age and learning style. At each table, printed cards list café food facts and include a game of eco-trivia as well as a map to show where meal ingredients come from. The interactive “You decide!” quizzes visitors on food packaging, while a sturdy scale invites guests to weigh their lunch waste at the end of their meal – and perhaps think twice about what they’re adding to the waste stream. At the recycling-and-compost center, each bin displays an example of the item being collected, enabling even children not yet able to read to take part.

With Think!, ECHO offers fresh, delicious fare and helps people make the connections between the food we choose and the state of our environment — and more importantly, to highlight some simple ways for each of us to make a difference. Because each of us can make a difference. So the next time you’re feeling hungry, don’t just grab something to eat — Think!

## Growing Options for Local Food

For NOFA’s expanded directory of CSA’s: [www.nofavt.org/find-organic-food/csa-listing](http://www.nofavt.org/find-organic-food/csa-listing)

For a list of Vermont Farmers’ Markets and information about VFMA: [www.nofavt.org/market-organic-food/farmers-markets](http://www.nofavt.org/market-organic-food/farmers-markets).

Local-food lovers statewide looking to buy fresh foods directly from farmers have more options than ever before. 69 Vermont farmers are offering Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares in 2008, a 25% increase over 2007. CSAs offer prepaid subscriptions to the farm’s harvest for the season. Traditionally, CSAs offer shareholders a weekly basket (or

‘share’) of the vegetables that have come into season on the farm; some now include other

farmstead products or offer fruit or meat shares.

In addition, there are 63 farmers markets in the state. Vermont continues to have the highest number of farmers’ markets per capita in the US. The growth in VT farmers’ markets is mirrored by the growth of cooperation among them. The Vermont Farmers’ Market Association (VFMA) was launched in January, giving farmers’ market managers the ability to work together to promote farmers’ markets statewide, share strategies, and find solutions to common issues.

## Cultivating Healthy Food and Communities

By Corrie Miller, Smokey House Center

On any given summer weekday, you can look out across Smokey House Center's four acres of gardens in Danby and spot forty high school students moving among the verdant rows of potatoes, blueberries, snap peas, and tomatoes. They are planting, weeding, harvesting, mulching, watering, and otherwise caring for their plants. These Rutland and Bennington County students are part of Smokey House's Youthwork Program and spend seven weeks actively managing our farm and forest resources. They grow organic vegetables, raise and process livestock, do carpentry, maintain the lawns and flowerbeds, and market their agricultural products to the community. The young people work in crews of six, each guided by an experienced leader who is supervisor, mentor, and instructor. In their crews, the students practice problem solving, teamwork, and communication and as they solve work-related problems, they begin to see the relevance of academic learning beyond the classroom.

Although the students' work changes as the growing season advances, the vegetable markets drive a summer routine. On Wednesdays, the students harvest, wash, weigh, and pack vegetables for Smokey House's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program that delivers fresh organic produce to approx-

imately 48 local families. On Thursdays, one of the Youthwork crews plans and cooks a meal with the vegetables they grow, serving a healthy, nourishing lunch to their peers. On Fridays, the students again harvest and wash vegetables for the community, this time in preparation for Rutland's weekly Farmers' Market. And on Saturday, two Youthworkers attend the Market to sell their produce. At season's end, they will have filled over 1,000 quarts of blueberries, packed 336 CSA boxes with organic produce, and re-tailed their products for 24 weeks at farmers' market. The weekly routine ties the students to their local community and as a result, the young people find meaning in their work. By producing and eating locally grown food, they help connect people to local farms and to one another—building community as they build their academic and workplace skills.



## "Local and Delicious"

By Barry King

That's how the food at the Warren, VT Elementary School is described. Claire Simpson isn't the cafeteria lady from my elementary school days and what she serves her students resembles what we were served even less.

Claire, along with a cadre of parents, is committed to provided healthy, local food. The eggs come from an organic farm; the root vegetables are from Pete's Greens. American Flatbread, a few miles up the river from Warren, supplies leftover produce twice a week. The school gets fabulous, pre-cleaned greens from a local market garden. Even the bread is local – day-old loaves from the Warren Store and from the Red Hen Bakery in nearby Middlesex. Claire frequently makes use of her own garden, bringing in

seasonal produce and treats like fiddleheads. When the school's allotment of government meat runs out, she gets beef from Gaylord's Beef and also the Royal Butcher, both local. Local educator Kristen Gettler has started a program at the school called "Sowers and Growers." She and the kids built cold frames, which provided the spring, produce until the other sources of produce started to increase. Claire uses local Cabot milk but wishes she had a source for local organic milk. She figures that about 20-30% of the food she serves is sourced locally. And after all the effort, how do the kids respond? They love it as can be seen by the fact that 75-80% of them opt for the school's lunch program each day.



## New VEI Discussion Course on Food

Vermont Earth Institute (VEI) recently debuted Menu for the Future, a six-session discussion course or study circle for community groups of 8-12 people. Menu for the Future offers an opportunity to examine the effects of modern industrial agriculture on both human and ecological health, to explore emerging food-system alternatives, and to consider how we as

For information visit:  
[www.vtearthinstitute.org/programs.html](http://www.vtearthinstitute.org/programs.html)  
 or Barbara Duncan at [vei@valley.net](mailto:vei@valley.net).  
 The courses are free; the coursebook anthologies are \$18 or \$20.

individuals can contribute to a more sustainable food supply.

“Vermont Earth Institute

is dedicated to transforming an unsustainable consumer culture into a sustainable culture through the intentional practices of informed citizens,” said Executive Director Barbara Duncan. “We believe Menu for the Future will inspire personal and collective actions to help create sustainable food systems.”

VEI partners with environmental education centers as well as with community groups, libraries, workplaces, and faith communities to bring community members together to wrestle with contemporary environmental and social challenges such as climate change, living simply and sustainably, and raising children in a consumer society.

## Middlebury College Food Mapping Project

Middlebury College student Kayla Race sourced the food for several different meals that the College serves and used Google Earth to graphically show where the multiple foods originate. The resulting interactive maps make it easy to see the difference in total food miles traveled by the ingredients of a Chicken Parmesan Dinner and those of the College’s locally sourced Thanksgiving Dinner. Currently, there are two

You can view the Middlebury College Food Mapping Project at:  
[www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/majors/geog/student\\_work/ir/Food+Mapping+Project.htm](http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/majors/geog/student_work/ir/Food+Mapping+Project.htm)

other meals on the website: a breakfast with many local products and a taco/fajita lunch. Bill Hegmann, of the Middlebury College Geography Dept., says that in addition to allowing members of the college community to learn more about where their food comes from and the choices they have as consumers, the project partners hope students will map more meals and eventually demonstrate “Middlebury’s economic impact on the local and national economy by showing the flow and distribution of a dollar through a local vs. national food purchase. We would also like to highlight how Middlebury’s food purchasing impacts our carbon footprint.”

## Local Food, Food Choices and Climate Change

By Barry King

Although many of us know the statistic about the distance traveled by the average American meal – more than 1250 miles from farmer to our local store – and consider local foods a much better option with regards to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, few of us think about the GHG output in the total life cycle of our food. When these are added in, the mileage of that average meal becomes 5120! This according to a paper in Environmental Science Technology by Christopher Weber and Scott Matthews. The additional mileage includes the production inputs, such as getting livestock feed and fertilizers

to the farm, not generally included in other studies. The paper posits that the total GHG emissions created by raising red meat are huge in comparison to the GHG emissions of transporting it or any other foods. They state, “Shifting less than one day per week’s worth of calories from red meat and dairy to chicken, fish, eggs or [vegetarian] achieves more GHG reduction than buying all locally sourced foods.”

To those of us who advocate eating locally, this is quite a shock. However, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First,  
*continued on top of next page.*

**Local Food, Food Choices... continued**

the method of raising red meat and dairy animals is not identified; I assume they used confined feeding as their basis. Animals that are pasture-raised do not require all the production inputs that drive up the total mileage. Second, there are many more reasons to "buy local" than just GHG reduction. Local food purchases support the local economy, frequently allow the consumer and farmer to connect personally, and help assure the consumer that foods are safe, healthy and fresh. However, if your major concern is GHG and climate change, this

paper says it is far more important to cut down on red meat and dairy than to eat locally. That's food for thought. To read this interesting, informative paper, go to: <http://pubs.acs.org/cgi-bin/abstract.cgi/est-hag/2008/42/i10/abs/es702969f.html>



**Local Treasures – Valley Quest!**

To celebrate a dozen years of the Valley Quest program, Valley Quest has a new book and a new curriculum. The book, *Best of Valley Quest: Treasure Hunts to our Special Places*, is a culminating volume. It gathers natural and cultural sites and community stories of enduring value, to cultivate a regional sense of place for successive generations of residents and visitors. The book features 70 Quests from 50 Upper Valley towns. The book can be bought locally or through Vital Communities. Individual copies are \$24.95; organizations can purchase multiple copies wholesale for resale. *Civil War Quests: Viewing U.S. History through a Local Lens* is the new curriculum. Students study cemeteries, adopt soldiers, and use primary and secondary sources to connect with history personally. Students practice being historians and their culminating product – a quest - serves as a recreational tool, extending learning to the broader community.



Best of Valley Quest and the new Civil War Quests curriculum are available at [www.valleyquest.org](http://www.valleyquest.org) or [Laura@vitalcommunities.org](mailto:Laura@vitalcommunities.org)

**Neighbor to Neighbor: Local EE**

By Lisa Purcell

It's mid-March, and it's been dark for hours, though it's only 9:30 p.m. I've got my pajamas on and am prepping tomorrow's Four Winds workshop, when someone knocks on the back door. That's unusual, given the rural location of my home. After some hurried apologies for the late visit, my neighbor says, "There's an owl on the road a couple miles down. I think it got hit. I've got my kids in the car so I didn't want to stop..." So, on go my Sorels, I holler for my husband, who by now is accustomed to these odd excursions, and off we go to try to find the owl, hurt and hunkered down by the side of a country road.

Ask any environmental educator in Vermont and you'll get similar stories – whether it's being called to rescue the yearling moose stuck on the ice in the river or to organize the transport squad during vernal pool migration. This is what community-based environmental education is all about – knowing your neighborhood and your neighbors, and having them know you. It's being regarded as a community resource for all things environmental. So we get the phone call questions: "There's a skunk in my cellar!" "Are these carpenter

ants?" "My spring water smells bad. What could it be?" "What are the black spots on my maple leaves?" "How do I get rid of the woodpecker drumming on my metal roof?"

But it's a two way street. Our neighbors happily phone us when there's an awesome northern lights display. They save bark beetle logs for us or loan us their bee-keeping equipment to wear at a workshop. The best present I ever got was a slice of trunk from a 150-year-old maple with the scars from old taps discoloring its wood. My neighbor left it on my doorstep. Next time I saw him, he said he knew I'd want to show it to the kids at school. And he was right. That maple had lived here a long time, so the students and I talked about our town's history as we counted its rings. We imagined the changes that tree had witnessed from where it had stood since before the Civil War, an historic view of our town from a tree's perspective.

These local connections – people-to-people, people-to-place, place-to-time – are a vital part of our communities, of our children's education, and of our future. Keep it local!

## Local Time Banks: It's how you spend your time

By Annie Reinhart

Over twenty years ago, Dr. Edgar Cahn's book, *No More Throw Away People*, focused on the belief that everyone in society has value and something to offer. Cahn created Time Banks USA as a way to equalize peoples' time. The premise is that one hour of time equals one Time Dollar, no matter what service is provided. So if you spend an hour mowing a member's lawn you earn one Time Dollar. You can use that Time Dollar to get a hair cut, a massage, your oil changed, childcare, etc. from other members. Time Banks encourage community involvement and making new connections. Members are an amazing group of people who believe in social change and actively make it happen! The Banks are also about empowerment.

Last summer a Burlington member taught yoga classes on the beach for Time Dollars. The more she taught the more confidence she gained. She is now a full-time yoga instructor. She isn't sure she would have become an instructor if it weren't for the Time Bank.

Time Banking came to Burlington in November 2006. Middlebury's started the next spring and Montpelier launched one a few months ago. The Burlington Time Bank currently has 130 active members with a waiting list of 35 more. There is a ton of information online. Googling "Time Banks" + the town will get you where you need to go. Or contact Annie Reinhart, 802-363-4698, Burlington.timebanks@gmail.com.

## Spending Your Money and Time Locally

By Caitrin Noel

Everyday, the signs of a fast growing Local movement abound in my corner of the state, the Mad River Valley. "Buy local" bumper stickers multiply, the produce section of the locally owned market sports brightly colored signs touting "Hartshorn strawberries" and "locally harvested wild edibles", and each time I check my e-mail, I receive at least one notice about a food event organized by the Mad River Localvores. Even the school lunch programs serve up lunches laden with local produce.

One idea that has popped up recently is the idea of a local currency. Local currency creates a local exchange since it must be spent locally. Also, local currencies return the competitive edge that local economies lose in the global marketplace when goods are produced abroad using cheap labor and shoddy business practices. From 1998 through 2006, the Burlington Currency Project (BCP) managed a local currency called Burlington Bread. It was designed to increase local transactions and to create a new cooperative economy where the community becomes more self-reliant by providing for basic needs like food, energy, health care and personal services. BCP Executive Director Amy Kirschner recently created the Vermont Sustainable Exchange, a statewide business-to-business trading system. Vermont is a small state with a small population, and

Kirschner believes taking the local currency initiative statewide is key to its success: "We believe that in order to have a significant impact on the community, we need to dream big. We will not believe we have arrived until 10% of all Vermont's economic transactions are conducted with local currencies... and until it has become so ingrained... that citizens don't think twice about it and tourists come to experience it." Vermont Sustainable Exchange strives to connect businesses statewide and engage them in local currency exchange in hopes of moving closer to this 10% goal.

While the Mad River Valley doesn't have a local currency, there are a couple of initiatives in this direction. A Valley time bank (similar to the one in Burlington described elsewhere in this newsletter) will be piloted this summer by the Valley Futures Network, a citizens' group helping guide community and watershed planning. Also, a "Buy Local" discount card, started by a local high school student, is for sale through the Chamber of Commerce. It costs \$10, and is valid for a 10% discount at more than 30 local businesses. Many of the goods and services available in the Valley often cost slightly more than in nearby areas. The discount card brings their costs near or below prices found elsewhere. What's more, proceeds from the sale of the card fund community and environmental causes.

## Barred Owl Bounty

By Meghan H. Oliver, VINS Wildlife Services Intern

Everyone has a pretty good idea of what's in the backyard: the favorite oak tree, the creek, the best place to grow sunflowers. But not everyone is aware of the diversity of life in these familiar places. VINS educators inform the public of what may be living, flying, or nesting in their backyards, and how the health of their immediate surroundings may affect the neighborhood, community and beyond.

"One of VINS' goals is to make people care about what lives in their own backyard so they actively participate in protecting those species," explained Chris Collier, Nature Center Program Manager. Collier said that what people do to care for—or neglect—their surroundings can have a ripple effect.

This effect was apparent last winter. A population decline of red-backed voles, a mainstay in the diet of barred owls to the north, caused the owls to migrate south to Vermont in search of food. As a result, local barred owls experienced great competition in hunting prey. Also, Vermont experienced higher than average snowfalls, making prey even harder to find. "We ended up with increased competition for our resident barred owls in an already difficult winter," said Allison Stark, Wildlife Services Director at VINS. From January through March, VINS took in about 45 barred owls for rehabilitation, com-



pared to 50 for the entire previous year.

"A lot of people noticed the barredreds had a hard time this year," said Collier. In public programs, educators talked about why. "We try to get them to understand the importance of these birds in helping to maintain a balance in the natural world."

To give the public a better understanding of the importance of rehabilitating local wildlife, VINS' recently opened a new exhibit called "Rehab in Action." It features a one-way window that allows visitors to see into a baby bird-feeding station and exam room. This window prevents birds inside from seeing the visitors—a possible stress for animals. "'Rehab in Action' allows the public to learn what it takes to rehabilitate wild birds," explained Stark. "It will hopefully pique their interest in wildlife and encourage them to become better environmental stewards in their own backyards."

## Place-based Education is All About Local

By Kathleen Diehl, Conservation Education Coordinator, Green Mountain National Forest

One of the most encouraging education "movements" to overtake our country is the old/new idea of getting kids outdoors to reconnect to their natural world. In New England, this movement has been called "place-based education." Recently, it has become "No Kids Left Inside" for many of us.

It doesn't matter what it is called: conservation education, experiential education, education for sustainability or service learning, place-based education is about the work we in SWEEP already do: create programs that promote learning rooted in the land use, history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of our particular place. This place could be a community, a schoolyard, a nearby forest or park, a watershed, a nature center, the local historical

society. It is kids and adults getting intimately involved with the ground upon which they stand. Place-based education is hands-on, real-world problem solving and scientific inquiry about what is just outside. Often there is a service-learning component where students and teachers and the local community solve community challenges. Both kids and adults improve environmental literacy by experiencing, firsthand, the growing pains of their local schools and communities. Some people feel this effort is a reaction to offset the No Child Left Behind Act where so many teachers felt compelled to drop environmental studies and concentrate mostly on math and language arts. Others say it is far more than that.

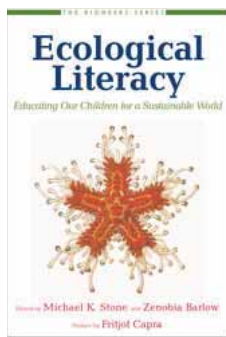
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The bottom line for SWEEP members is to look at/borrow/steal/ and redesign your programs to try to get more people into the outdoors and set your performance goals higher to improve local environmental literacy for each age group, including adults. Googling place-based education will get you scads of resources.

Keep your eye on the proposed No Child Left Inside Act, (HR 3036 and S1981.)

[Editor's note: The status of this bill appears to not have changed since SWEEP's winter '08 newsletter: it has been sitting in committee for nearly a year. SWEEP members are encouraged to ask their organizations to join the NCLI coalition and to request that Sen. Leahy and Rep. Welch join Sen. Sanders as a co-sponsor. The best website for more information is [www.cbf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=act\\_sub\\_actioncenter\\_federal\\_NCLB](http://www.cbf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=act_sub_actioncenter_federal_NCLB)]

## Book Reviews



### Ecological Literacy: Educating our Children for a Sustainable World

Reviewed by Gary Fuhrman

Adapted with permission from *Green Teacher* #83, Spring 2008, [www.greenteacher.com](http://www.greenteacher.com)

David Orr first put “ecological literacy” on the map with his 1992 book of that title; three years later, systems thinker Fritjof Capra, philanthropist Peter Buckley and ecology activist Zenobia Barlow founded the Center for Ecological Literacy (CEL.) In *Ecological Literacy: Educating our Children for a Sustainable World*, editors Barlow and Michael K. Stone present articles epitomizing the holistic vision and transformative practices promoted by CEL. Some of the authors are well known, such as Capra, Orr, Donella Meadows, Wendell Berry and poet Robert Hass. Others are local activists and organizers who contribute lucid and well-tested advice on encouraging systemic change and enhancing community decision-making. Some report on how these ideas have been realized in school-based projects; many focus on agriculture and food systems. The authors bring personal experience to bear on their shared sense of “place” and bioregional perspective. The result is brimful of reading that should inspire and inform us all toward “educating our children for a sustainable world.”



### Adirondack Alpine Summits: An Ecological Field Guide

Reviewed by Peg Goldman

Hiking weather is here! *Adirondack Alpine Summits*

is a pocket field guide that will help you identify wildflowers and birds found both in New York and Vermont. This is a new edition by Nancy G. Slack and Allison W. Bell and is published by the Adirondack Mountain Club. Not only are Allison Bell's photographs superb, Dr. Slack's ecological descriptions of the forest communities, the krummholz, the Alpine communities, ecology, and conservation are readable and understandable. This volume complements their AMC Field Guide to the New England Alpine Summits

I have used the previous version for many years and am very pleased with the revised edition. Should you cross Lake Champlain in your travels and find yourself facing trails to the summits, be sure to have this treasured volume with you. It is a must!



# Resources & Opportunities

“Venture Vermont” is a state-wide, outdoor scavenger hunt created by VT FP&R to entice kids and their families



outside this summer. Participants just have to download a score sheet from [www.vtstateparks.com](http://www.vtstateparks.com) and participate in a variety of fun outdoor activities for which they receive points. If they accumulate a certain number of points by mid-October, they are awarded a free pass to state park day-use areas for '08 and '09. It's simple, inexpensive and fun. Please provide a link to this program from your website!

**Kids Outdoors Magazine** helps adults reconnect children with nature. It makes getting kids outside fun and easy and promotes the benefits to their physical and psychological health. It has four sections: outdoor recreation, healthy and green living, nature-based family vacations, connecting with nature (crafts, scavenger hunts, etc.) The quarterly magazine will be distributed free at nature centers etc. starting next spring. If your organization would like to distribute them, contact Kimberli Bindschatel at [kim@whisperinthewoods.com](mailto:kim@whisperinthewoods.com). The multiple single copies are free although paid subscriptions will also be available. *Download a sample at [www.whisperinthewoods.com/sample/sampleissue.htm](http://www.whisperinthewoods.com/sample/sampleissue.htm)*

**NAAEE EE-Link Web site (eelink.net)** - thousands of resources in hundreds of categories for people seeking information about the environment. Also, the EE Jobs Report is sent to over 1200 subscribers every Monday morning and lists the newest jobs added during that week. *Subscribe by sending an email to [jobs-report-subscribe@naaee.org](mailto:jobs-report-subscribe@naaee.org)*

**TogetherGreen** is a new National Audubon Society program to build conservation leadership, engage people in conservation action, and achieve lasting conservation results. The Innovation Grants are for projects that engage diverse communities and contribute to measurable conservation outcomes. The Conservation Leadership Program invests in leaders committed to empowering others and to creating positive environmental change in their communities and organizations. <http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/7088140>

**MEERA (My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant)** is a free, online tool to help educators evaluate the quality of their programs. Created at the University of Michigan in response to the growing need to report on program successes to funding agencies, MEERA helps educators choose an appropriate evaluation and provides a step-by-step guide through the process, including sample evaluations. <http://eelink.net/cgi-bin/ee-link/newclick/7088164>



**Earth Newswire** is a new social networking Web site for people interested in environmental science, ecology, and conservation issues to connect with one another and share news and information. The site features generalized forums but also allows members to create specialized discussion groups. [www.earthnewswire.com](http://www.earthnewswire.com)

## Calendar

**JULY 11–12 Montpelier BioBlitz**  
Hosted by North Branch Nature Center. Free event is a blend of science and celebration and is open to everyone. Nature walks and talks, kids' activities and a citywide search for plants

and animals of all types. [www.northbranch-naturecenter.org/bioblitz](http://www.northbranch-naturecenter.org/bioblitz)

**JULY 27–AUGUST 2 Education in a Changing Climate**  
Orion Society Workshop, Unity ME. [www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/gatherings/item/2935/](http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/gatherings/item/2935/)

**SEPTEMBER 5–7 Natural Resources Management Academy** for high school students, Buck Lake Green Mountain Conservation Camp, Woodbury, VT \$90 [lauren.traister@uvm.edu](mailto:lauren.traister@uvm.edu)

**OCTOBER 3–5 • A Journey Home: Fostering Ecologically Centered Communities**, NEEEA annual conference, Hancock, NH. [www.neeea.org/conference.html](http://www.neeea.org/conference.html) (See NEEEA News)

**NOV. 7 • SWEEP's Fall Meeting**  
Time and place t.b.a.

**Join SWEEP's Listserv!**  
If you're a SWEEP member go to: <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/VermontSweep/>. Click on the blue "Join This Group!" box (right side of page). If you don't have a yahoo ID, you can easily create one. SWEEP's Webmaster will make sure you are a SWEEP member and then you can post messages to the group by emailing: [vermontsweep@yahoo.com](mailto:vermontsweep@yahoo.com)

*Get Swept Away!*  
Vermont StateWide Environmental Education Programs (Vermont SWEEP) is a coalition of individuals & organizations promoting environmental education in Vermont

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \$40     Individual: \$15

**MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:**

- Twice-annual membership meetings; periodic development workshops & conferences
- Representation to the six-state New England Environmental Education Alliance (NEEEA)
- Inclusion in SWEEP's directory of members' environmental education services, distributed to VT teachers and educators.
- SWEEP's newsletter

Please make check payable to SWEEP, and mail to: SWEEP 9 Bailey Avenue, Montpelier, VT 05602. Thanks!



Grady Edward Hagenbuch



Bailey Elizabeth & Carter John Antos-Ketchum



Sophia Kestrel Clough

## *SWEEP People (and babies!)*

**Shana Stewart** is the new Environmental Field Studies and Internship Coordinator at Smokey House Center. She replaces **Joe Przypek** who will be teaching natural history and environmental science courses at the Community College of Vermont.

In VINS news, Nature Center Program Manager **Chris Collier** completed a week-long bird-training workshop with Natural Encounters. Chris's challenge for the week was to train a collared raven to pull a dollar bill out of his pocket. **Beth Roy** is now Camp Programs Manager and has increased their number from three to five locations, including a new Community Camps program, which will take VINS camps to communities around the region for two weeks at a time. **Hannah Putnam**, an environmental educator at VINS, recently earned her master's degree in integrated learning from Antioch New England.

Shelburne Farms has three job changes to announce. **Sarah Kadden** is a full-time Educator working in both on- and off-site programming. **Matt Dubel** now coordinates

Shelburne Farms' Sustainable Schools Project and **Jen Cirillo** has taken on the role of Director of Professional Development.

**Grady Edward** was born to Dana Hudson and Steve Hagenbuch on Feb. 5.

**Pete Antos-Ketcham** and **his wife Katie** welcomed twins on February 6: **Bailey Elizabeth** and **Carter John**. They were at the hospital at the same time as Steve and Dana and had fun visiting in the hallway.

**Tracy Truzansky**, ECHO's Director of Education, and **her partner Beth** are new foster parents to 13-month-old **April**. "We hope to adopt her someday, but for now it's about love, laughter, security, diapers, bottles and navigating the Vermont foster care system!"

**Mike Clough** joined the Four Winds staff as a naturalist-educator leading Nature Program and Knee High Nature workshops in southern Vermont. Mike is owner-operator of Rockhopper Outdoor Education. In May, **Sophia Kestrel** was born to Mike and **his wife Christina**.



## *Vermont SWEEP*

Statewide Environmental Education Programs  
9 Bailey Avenue  
Montpelier, VT 05602

Save the Date!  
FALL SWEEP MEETING:  
**NOVEMBER 7, 2008**