

We believe that Vermont's economic health depends on its environmental health. VCE is fighting for the economic well-being of all Vermonters by promoting the sensible use of our resources – our land, our air, our water and our people.

VCE provides facts and information so Vermonters can make informed decisions.

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Vermonters for a Clean Environment is a statewide non-profit 501(c)3 corporation.

## DOES RENEWABLE ENERGY = SAVING THE PLANET? *Can We Build Our Way to a Better World?*

Since his election as Vermont's Governor in 2010, Peter Shumlin has been making the same statement in response to questions about the appropriateness of constructing wind turbines on Vermont's ridgelines. He has varied little from his basic message: *climate change is the biggest issue facing Vermont and we need to build more wind turbines to save the planet, and it does not matter whether wind turbines kill bats or harm the environment because if we do not build more wind turbines to address climate change, there will not be any bats anyway.*



the costs and GHG emission reductions in various systems and found, "Typically, the largest reductions in GHG emissions

Governor Shumlin's Department of Public Service has developed a Comprehensive Energy Plan with the goal of having 90% of Vermont's total energy come from renewables by 2050. Renewables developer David Blittersdorf recently told an audience of Addison County Democrats that to meet that goal, Vermont will need to build 6000 MW of solar and 3000 MW of wind energy.

The assumption being made by people in power is that renewable energy will save the planet by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and fossil fuel consumption. Can wind and solar save the planet?

**The System Matters.** What we have learned about the potential for renewable technologies to address climate change is that it varies dramatically across the United States. For example, studies show that wind turbines are most effective at displacing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions when located in the Midwest, where the wind resource is excellent and wind energy primarily displaces coal-fired generators. A 2008 paper from the University of Leuven in Belgium discussed

are obtained in the more polluting systems, where wind power is outperforming coal power plants." A 2013 paper titled "Regional variations in the health, environmental, and climate benefits of wind and solar generation" says, "There are significantly greater benefits when wind or solar displace coal or oil, rather than gas generators."

New England's regional electricity system is governed by ISO-NE, which reported in its 2015 Regional Electricity Outlook that the region has already displaced most coal- and oil-fired

generation and is now heavily reliant on gas-fired generators. Nuclear plants cannot ramp in response to intermittent renewables, leaving gas and hydro to balance wind and

solar. Currently the most efficient gas plant in the New England system runs inefficiently when it ramps in response to renewables, and may be increasing its GHG emissions.

**Emissions and Fossil Fuel Reductions from Renewables Requires Expensive New Gas Plants.** ISO-NE's 2015 report says "Gas-fired generators, with their quick-start and ramp-up abilities, will prove vital in being able to pick up the slack when output drops from those units—or when demand unexpectedly increases." (cont'd on page 4)

NET ENERGY		
	2000	2014
Natural Gas	15%	44%
Nuclear	31%	34%
Renewables	8%	9%
Hydro	7%	8%
Coal	18%	5%
Oil	22%	1%

## Message from the Director



VCE's Annette Smith introducing Slate Quarry Investigation conducted by Lindsay Harris, back right, to House Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources Committee

In a few months, we can expect Iberdrola to begin destroying critical bear habitat on two mountains in southern Vermont. Forty different bears have been found to use just one of those ridges with dense beech forests. Somehow the study is supposed to make up for blasting the ridgelines with cuts in the rock 25 feet deep to build the big roads for the wind turbines. These public lands are owned by us, to protect, not destroy. Anyone want to go camping this fall? See you in Readsboro and Searsburg.

The justification for degrading the intact ecosystems, cutting the forests, and polluting the George D. Aiken Wilderness with noise and blinking red lights at night? To save the planet. Do the people in power pushing these destructive, polluting projects really believe this fairy tale?

Just in time comes the Pope's encyclical for inspiration. He wrote, "Some projects, if insufficiently studied, can profoundly affect the quality of life of an area due to very different factors such as unforeseen noise pollution, the shrinking of visual horizons, the loss of cultural values, or the effects of nuclear energy use. The culture of consumerism, which prioritizes short-term gain and private interest, can make it easy to rubber-stamp authorizations or to conceal information." VCE's experience litigating Deerfield Wind revealed bias, conflict of interest, political influence resulting in what will, if Iberdrola builds Deerfield Wind on US Forest Service Land, best be described as a crime against nature.

What is the answer? In "A prayer for our earth," the Pope wrote, "Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature."

Look for ways to touch the hearts of those in power. ~ Annette



### VCE Annual Meeting And Members' Roundtable

Wednesday, July 29

5:30-8:00 p.m.

Adam Guettel's Studio

Bliss Road, Tinmouth, VT

Finger Food Potluck and Libations

### Bring Your Vision of a Positive Future

*In song, prose, poetry, theatrical or whatever medium of your choice.*

*What is your vision for our world?*

### SLATE QUARRY INVESTIGATION

Responding to referrals from Act 250, from which slate quarries were exempted in the 1990s, VCE began an investigation into the quarrying practices of the slate quarries in western Rutland County in 2014.

Thanks to our extensive prior work on quarry issues, including Omya and JP Carrara & Sons, we were able to identify a failure to follow best practices for quarry planning, blasting, notification to neighbors, adequate buffers, limitations on hours of operations, and reclamation plans. Safety and security, trash and toxic spills were all issues uncovered by the investigation carried out by Lindsay Harris, who has previously worked with VCE doing water testing for chloramine in the Champlain Water District.

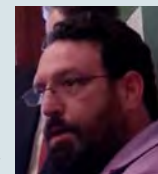
We have asked the legislative committee to consider repealing the Act 250 exemption and also assure the quarry operations are in compliance with permits issued by the Agency of Natural Resources.



Environmental Issues in the  
Vermont Slate Industry



We identified numerous serious filling of wetlands and other violations of environmental laws. Above right, one of several slate quarry operators weighs in.

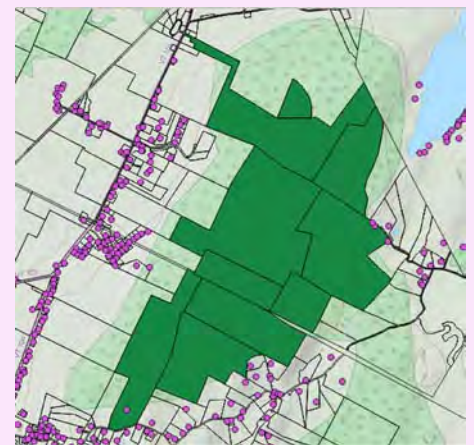
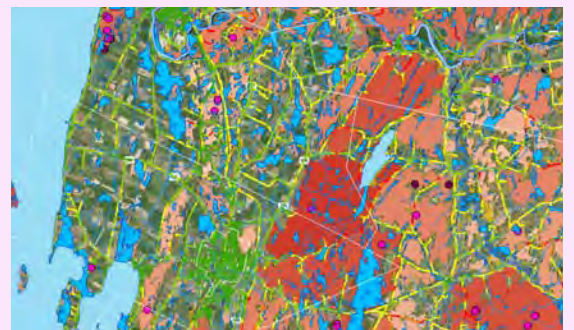
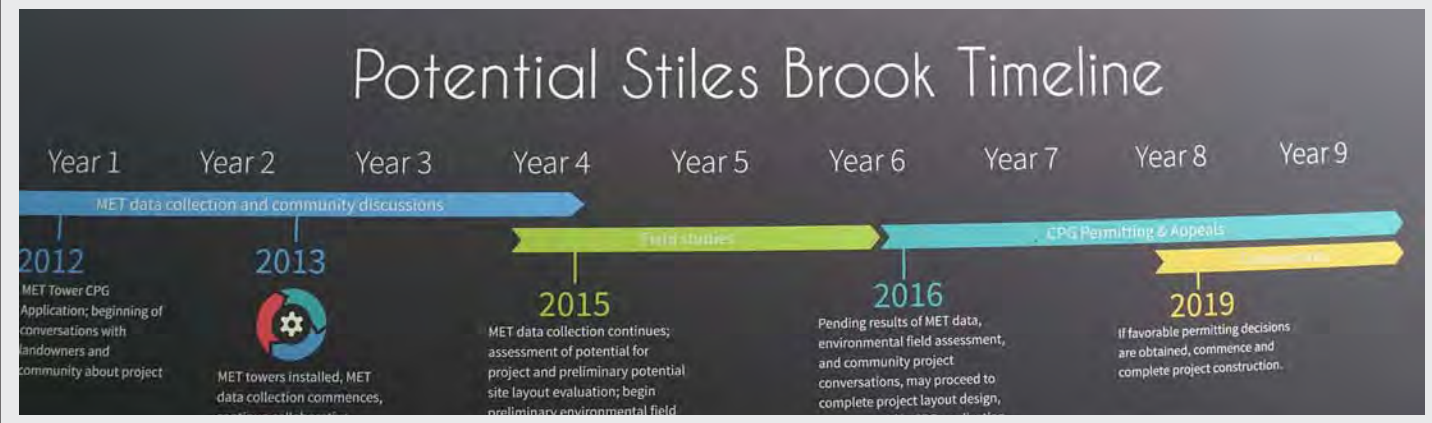


**SNOW ON SOLAR in North Clarendon, North Springfield, Coventry and Barton**

## WIND DEVELOPERS' RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF VERMONT



Residents of Grafton (*left*) and Windham listen to Iberdrola and Meadowsend Timber's (company reps, *right*) plans to keep their communities in an uproar for many more years. The proposal has numerous problems, including turbulent winds, too close to too many homes in Windham, excessively wet site, and a headwater area that has a unique weather pattern that historically floods out Grafton. Windham's town plan prohibits wind turbines. Iberdrola representatives told those present they will honor town votes, though their assumption is the vote is after there is money on the table. They say they will not know that for another year. Meanwhile, Iberdrola is diligently doing the studies necessary to file its application with the Public Service Board next year.



A small hill on the Swanton/St. Albans town line east of Route 105 is the next target for wind development, up to 20 MW, up to seven turbines, up to 600 feet tall, and as close as 1200 feet to the nearest homes. The project area is shown in green on the image, *right*. Homes are in purple.

The site has numerous wetlands and streams, deer yards, and has the highest values as a wildlife habitat block as shown on the ANR Atlas. See above right, the reddest block in the center is the most important, and that is the proposed wind project site. Neighbors were recently invited to a meet and greet, and the developer is conducting bird and bat studies.

# WILL RENEWABLE ENERGY SAVE THE PLANET? *(cont'd from p.1)*

*“Every electron produced by a turning blade is one that does not have to come from a more polluting or dangerous source.”*

*– NH Legislator, January 29, 2014*

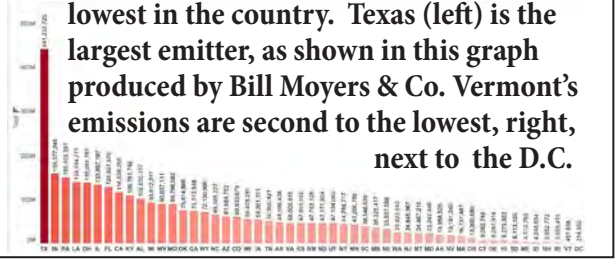
**How Much Thermal Back-Up Power is Needed?** A study of the New England region does not yet seem to have been done. A 2010 paper looked at several western electricity systems under various levels of wind penetration. The author, a member of Cal-ISO's Market Surveillance Committee, found that large investments in wind only modestly reduce the need for thermal generation. “In California, going from no wind to more than 11 GW reduces the need for fossil-fuel power only by 1,200 MW – from 20,810 MW to 19,561 MW.” The results were the same in the Northwest Power Pool, the Arizona-New Mexico area, and the Rocky Mountain Power Pool – “the reduction in thermal capacity averages only about 15 percent of the new installed wind capacity.”

**Does 1MW of Wind Offset 1MW of Fossil Fuel Generation?** Another study found that rather than 1:1, the amount of wind needed to displace fossil fuels may be more like 1:10. “From our analytics, compensating for random probability energy production requires planning for wind energy far in excess of the macro exchange equation that suggests 1 GWh of wind energy may replace 1 GWh of fossil-based energy. To make wind energy reliable, the total nameplate capacity must exceed the demand profile by a possible factor of 10. And this fundamentally assumes that the wind is blowing.”

**Tens of billions of dollars.** ISO-NE's 2013 report notes that new ramping generators will come at substantial cost: “The hour-to-hour variations in wind energy (speed) will create large hourly energy deficits that require installation of other, more predictable, compensation generation capacity and infrastructure. Compensating for the energy deficits could potentially cost tens of billions in additional dollar expenditure for fossil and/or nuclear generation capacity.”

**Storage.** Some energy experts envision utility scale storage as a solution to the problem that there are times, such as New England experienced for two weeks in December 2014,

**Compounding the challenge for Vermonters of reducing emissions via renewable energy technologies is the fact that Vermont's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from total energy are already the lowest in the country. Texas (left) is the largest emitter, as shown in this graph produced by Bill Moyers & Co. Vermont's emissions are second to the lowest, right, next to the D.C.**



## UPDATES ON WIND AND SOLAR COMPLAINTS

### *or, how the PSB ignores, avoids, and does not address problems*

VCE has worked closely with neighbors of GMP's NPS 100 wind turbine in Vergennes, neighbors of Essex Capital Partners' Barton Solar project, and neighbors of SunEdison's Sheffield wind project, assisting them in participating in the regulatory process and attempting to get post-construction issues addressed. In every case, the PSB protects the developer and treats the public badly. Currently, Sheffield wind neighbor Paul Brouha is suing SunEdison in federal court. DPS hired biased acousticians to conduct continuous monitoring at the former Nelson home in Lowell. In more than three years, nothing has been done to stop the noise.



Michael Mammoliti, left, of Vergennes explaining to PSB members why the wind turbine next door has caused harm to his family. The PSB says neighbors are not the "average person" and do not matter where aesthetics like noise, shadow flicker and glare are concerned.



Sediment running off the Barton Solar site, built on a Class 2 wetland. The neighbors' fence was damaged by a delivery truck arriving after hours. The PSB held a hearing and chose not to fine the developer.

The Therrien family at their trailer in Derby. Six months after abandoning their home next to Sheffield wind turbines, they have been diagnosed with PTSD. The children are sleeping and no longer have dark circles under their eyes.



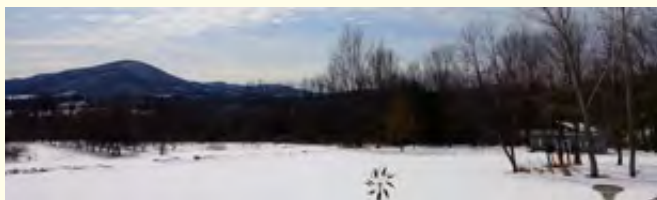
## THE LITTLE GUY COUNTS

*by Libby Harris, Bennington*

I love Vermont. From the first day that I entered the state, I knew unequivocally that my soul would be nourished and contented by living here.

My upbringing in Brooklyn, New York, negated any sense of inner peace. Brought up in a lower middle class neighborhood of semi attached brick houses and cement streets and playgrounds with the elevated train one block away, I just normalized to that world. But when I married in 1975, my husband and I being both educators and looking to get out of the hot summer in the city, came to Vermont for the summer. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. Fresh air, grass all over the place, ancient mountains ringing lush valleys and running waterways everywhere. From having to factor in an hour and a half to drive seven miles into Manhattan, I now would drive seventy miles through visually exquisite mountain roads and not have any traffic nor one red light to stop for.

We bought a Vermont house in 1978 and in 2001 when I retired, I moved permanently to Vermont. My house is at the end of the road with no through traffic and overlooks five mountain ranges. Every day I get up and look out and thank God for my good fortune.



But now all of that has been seriously threatened by a solar company buying the property directly in front of my house with the intention of using it as an entry point to a 27 acre solar field surrounding my community and

denuding the 27 acres of all of the trees. The wind issues are already formidable but removing 27 acres of trees to the southwest of the land will only serve to further threaten our safety and peace of mind.

I am fully aware of climate change and hail the direction that Vermont is going in to take action to reverse the effects of such change. This is not a case of "anywhere else as long as it's not in my backyard". There are many projects that have been built, such as the extensive one in Pownal near the old Green Mountain Race Track, that are hidden from public view and ensure the continued feel of the pristine beauty of Vermont while also helping to get us off fossil fuels.

The problem lies with the enormous, unilateral power of the Public Service Board which has rubber stamped projects and bypassed town boards from joining in decision making for the good of residents of the town.

The average citizen of Vermont, like myself, is rendered powerless to have a voice because we are told that if we want to fight any of this we have to go to Superior Court to fight this solar company for using deed restricted residential land for commercial use. That costs at least \$10,000; or that if I want to hire a wind expert of my own to prove the devastating consequences of removing 27 acres of trees, I may do so at another cost of at least \$10,000. We have been rendered moot as these giant companies with teams of lawyers and very deep pockets steam roll over us, the citizens of Vermont.

When did the state of Vermont, the state that has filled my heart with bliss for its protection of all that is dear for a pristine environment and lifestyle, become so hardened to the needs and voices of the private citizens, the ones who've worked hard all of our lives to live safe and protected by our progressive lawmakers.

It is my daily prayer that our lawmakers will hear our cries from people all over our state to remember that we little people count too.

## Watching, Listening and Recording

### *A Perspective from Behind the Video Recorder*

Much of my time over the last few months has been spent attending and making record of public meetings, Public Service Board (PSB) hearings, and development project site visits. I watch, listen and record. Through the range of issues presented, be it from neighbors and communities confronted with proposed energy development projects, citizens opposed to having fluoride in their drinking water, or community members living near quarries confronted with violation of environmental regulation and property rights, I notice an undercurrent of common laments and grievances. "It's as if we were not even there." "Is anyone listening, what do we need to do to be heard?"

At times I go away from meetings and hearings feeling discouraged by the often insulting and condescending rhetoric from the 'other side'. But, I remind myself that change only happens when the status quo is questioned and it is the people that are voicing their concerns and grievances that are the real change makers. It is a privilege to listen, watch, and work with people with a determination to make things different.

In late winter a group of neighbors in **Poultney** were faced with a solar project proposed to be developed on prime agricultural land that bordered their properties. They connected with VCE and Annette facilitated a meeting of the neighbors and worked



with them to send comments and enter into the PSB process. Their collective intentness resulted in one of the neighbors purchasing the property following the withdrawal of application to the PSB by the developer.

VCE has been assisting the monumental ongoing effort in **Rutland Town** focused in a campaign against a solar development on Cold River Road that has united neighbors and town officials in a push to set siting standards that will give neighbors and townspeople a say in where solar development happens.



*Public Service Board at their first ever solar site visit, on Cold River Road in Rutland Town, looking out onto the field that has some of the finest agricultural soils in Rutland County, across from historic homes.*

Community members in **Bennington** confronted with big solar developments in their neighborhoods contacted VCE. Two contiguous projects would



require clearing nearly thirty acres of woodlands bordering an established residential association, Apple Hill, and in view of the new multi-million dollar Bennington Visitor Center in Route 7 and the Bennington Battle Monument. Annette has

worked with one Apple Hill resident to file a Motion to Intervene. Though the neighbor has been subject to hostile, cold demands from the developers to drop her intervention, she is holding her ground.

Another solar project on town land next to Route 9 and Barney Road in **Bennington**, brought to VCE's attention last winter by a neighbor, has recently been cancelled due to legislation requiring 100 foot setbacks from the traveled edge of the road.



Neighbors of a solar project in **Pownal** proposed near their homes on a wellhead protection area have been up in arms and have said they 'will fight to the hilt' to stop the development. The project has been scaled back from 500

kW to 150 kW because of the new legislation requiring setbacks from roads. Residents petitioned for a vote on the project which is scheduled for July 20.

When I went for a PSB site visit for a **Bondville** solar project in the rain in March, a neighbor met the group as we trudged up the hill in deep, wet snow. She had her rifle with her in the event that we had a bear encounter. She and another neighbor are working with an attorney doing their best to prevent this development from being constructed. Clearing



fifteen acres of forested land for this development would have a major impact on fragile hydrologic systems and areas downhill that are already subject to flash flooding.



## A Perspective from Behind the Video Recorder, *continued*

Community members in **Taftsville** and **Woodstock** have come together to oppose a solar development proposed for a wet field that borders historic homes and a historic cemetery in Taftsville. Walking the site with Annette and community members and then attending a public meeting with the developer, it is clear that this is a bitter battle. Adjoining neighbors are united in concerns about water issues that would occur should the site be developed; other community members join them with concerns about the integrity of the developer and the economic ramifications of development of this site. This project is what led to last minute legislation enabling towns to adopt solar siting standards that will be given due consideration by the PSB. Woodstock's Select Board adopted solar siting standards two days before the developer planned to file his application with the PSB. The developer has not yet filed his application.



This winter **Bennington** residents were blindsided by a well-orchestrated campaign to put fluoride in the town's water supply. Bennington has already defeated fluoride several times. Resident Mary Lou Albert led the effort once again. VCE facilitated the community's discussion, hosting a TV panel discussion and a public forum for the Bennington Citizens Against Fluoridated Water.



This group, first established some years ago in a fight to keep fluoride out of their water, organized an awareness campaign to counter pro-fluoride activists. In the end they educated town voters and the measure to put fluoride into the municipal water

system was overwhelmingly defeated with 1,117 voting "yes" and 1,539 voting "no."

Residents of **Rutland City** and **Proctor** are working to get fluoride out of their water, while **Hardwick** is considering adding fluoride to the public water supply.

I have come to realize that I work with VCE as part of a cadre of concerned, determined citizen activists. We are the people who will not keep quiet. We give voice to our concerns. We attend public hearings and Legislative committee meetings to give testimony and to engage with legislators and public officials. We organize campaigns to raise awareness about issues of concern in our communities and in the end we move to bring about positive change. ~ Elizabeth Cooper, Community Outreach Coordinator



Fluoride the hot topic at Bennington Town Floor Meeting

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

2015 is the first time in a decade that VCE did not have Matt Levin watching out for our interests in the Statehouse. We worked with other colleagues friendly to our efforts, and VCE's Annette Smith testified several times on energy and environmental issues. The energy legislation known as RESET or H.40 was greased to pass no matter what reasonable people suggested.

VCE testified to the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee that the legislation was lacking the necessary siting components and was therefore only half a bill. In the Senate, she advised the committee not to rush through such a complicated piece of legislation with far reaching ramifications for Vermonters, and suggested they take the second half of the biennium to more fully address the problems we are already experiencing with renewable energy development.

Despite our best efforts, the legislation landed on the floor of the Senate in the last four days of the session without any siting standards or any other changes suggested by many of the good people who attempted to improve the bill.

Perhaps thanks to our friends in Taftsville who raised the issues at the right time with their Windsor County Senators, several last minute siting standards were added. It was amusing to watch Senators attempt to write the equivalent of zoning bylaws in the final days of the session. In some instances, the standards have been beneficial, such as 100 feet from the road. However the setback of 25 feet from a neighboring property line has already resulted in litigation. Towns can now adopt standards, are automatic parties, and a solar siting task force will meet and report back in January, 2016. Efforts to improve the standing of town plans for wind projects were rejected 19 - 10.

At the end of the day, the reason that H.40 passed the 2015 legislature is because House Republicans who could have held it up by not suspending the rules to allow it to pass without going through proper procedure instead chose to use H.40 as a trading chip to enable a manufacturer in northern Vermont to get a contract to make gun suppressors.



VCE's Annette Smith testifies with vtdigger.org reporter and GMP's lobbyist looking on

**Yes, I want to be a member of VCE  
and make a difference, too!**

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\$15 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_  
\$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: VCE, 789 Baker Brook Road,  
Danby, VT 05739

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Your contribution is tax deductible.  
Thank you!*

Members receive two newsletters a year.  
*Printed on 100% recycled paper*

### **FUNDRAISING THANK YOUS**

In the last six months,  
VCE's work has been supported  
by the Rodgers Family Foundation,  
the Johnson Family Foundation  
and donations from individuals!

**THANK YOU!!**

### **CHICKEN BBQ**

#### **SPONSORED BY THE LOWELL MOUNTAINS GROUP**

**JULY 18th 11:30-5:00 P.M.  
RAIN OR SHINE**

**BBQ CHICKEN, BAKED BEANS,  
COLE SLAW, ROLLS, AND  
BEVERAGE**

#### **Fundraiser for Vermonters for a Clean Environment**

Live music

**DONATION: \$12 ADULTS  
\$6 FOR CHILDREN**

Silent auction, T-shirts, 50-50 Raffle  
and More

**LOCATION: Hazen Notch Camp Ground  
RSVP BY JULY 11th IF POSSIBLE**

Directions: RT. 58 West From Lowell VT  
3 1/2 Miles Right on Green Hill Rd.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**CALL 802-744-6612**

Email [rsclark@myfairpoint.net](mailto:rsclark@myfairpoint.net)

*This is a wonderful event! See you there!*

### **Vermonters for a Clean Environment**

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(802) 446-2094

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**July 2015**

**[www.vce.org](http://www.vce.org)**

#### **Meetings VCE staff attended**

Rail Council  
Water Caucus



### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **VCE's Annual Meeting**

Wednesday  
July 29, 2015  
5:30 p.m.  
Bliss Road  
Tinmouth Vermont  
*Bring Your Vision of a  
Positive Future*

**VERMONTERS FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT  
789 BAKER BROOK ROAD  
DANBY, VERMONT 05739**

***Join us for VCE's Annual Meeting***

***July 29, 2015, 5:30 p.m.  
Bliss Road, Tinmouth VT***

# Vermonters for a Clean Environment

789 Baker Brook Road, Danby VT 05739 (802) 446-2094 [www.vce.org](http://www.vce.org)

July 1, 2015

I, Dhyan Nirmegh, co-authored the booklet “Impacts of Industrial Wind on Wildlife and Ridgeline Habitat”. It concerns the mountains of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. I have been doing my part with little funds, but with steely determination to protect this land on which I have had the unbelievable fortune to have been raised, in this beautiful Northeastern part of the United States.

Yes, Vermont is my home! Vermont has been a leader on many social fronts over the past generations. Some have been noble causes. Some were not.

During it all, the land stood firm behind us, we went forth, moved on, reflected and could heal. I feel the idea that we must lead the nation in fighting Global Warming by erecting Green Energy facilities is compromising our fragile environment and inviting disaster. We have sacrificed ridgelines, habitat, water quality and the quality of life of our wildlife communities and our very people.

Vermont's other environmental groups were once leaders and advocates for the ordinary Vermonter. In the last eight to ten years they have morphed into lobbyists for the Renewable Green Energy complex. Instead of being responsible and advocates they have sided with government and its agenda to promote Green Energy without much thought or reflection on what each project is doing to the immediate environment. There is no understanding how these projects affect the daily lives of our people living near the projects, or how our quality of life has changed. These groups use young students to collect money by talking about Global Warming, “We must do something now,” they state, when in fact each one of them knows very little about how these green projects are pushed through and sited.

Vermonters for a Clean Environment, VCE, is us. We live here. We want a say about our future also. We do not want to be told what is good for us and blindly accept it.

Vermonters for a Clean Environment has helped us to have a clear vision of how we would like to see Vermont progress. Please support us. The people of Vermont need to have a say where these projects are placed and if in fact they are worthy and needed. Are they compatible with our environment?

VCE is the strongest voice we have to date and we need your support to continue.



Dhyan Nirmegh



Photo by Roger Irwin

## VCE Vermonters for a Clean Environment

Your contribution will help preserve and protect the environment in Vermont.  
Please enclose a check in one of the following amounts (circle):

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\$15      \$25      \$50      \$100

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