

VECAN

VERMONT ENERGY & CLIMATE
ACTION NETWORK

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April 2020 E-News

Dear Local Energy Leaders,

During these times of social distancing, we know that it can be hard to stay active. However, we also know that many of you are looking for new and meaningful ways to give back to your communities in these challenging times. Thankfully, many organizations are stepping up their online offerings to help you stay connected with ways to support your communities in this time of crisis, as well as to help respond to the climate crisis. Below, you'll find a compilation of volunteer opportunities, webinars, and articles offering opportunities for action:

- **Capstone Community Action Seeks Volunteers to Receive Helpline Calls** - Volunteer to help Capstone Community Action with Capstone's helpline by emailing Allison.Levin@wnocrcc.org.
- **VNRC Launches New Lunchtime Webinar Series** - Learn about statewide environmental issues from VNRC staff and experts. Click [here](#).
- **Burlington Launches "Green Stimulus Package"** - Find out about how Burlington companies are preparing for "green recovery" to help Vermonters weather the pandemic [here](#).
- **Interesting Perspectives on the Need for Green Investment** - Read two perspectives on the importance of a strategic and sustainable response to the COVID-19 crisis and the climate crisis [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Take Part in Earth Day EcoChallenge** - Throughout April, join the Earth Day EcoChallenge to take action that helps protect the planet. More information [here](#).
- **Sierra Club Vermont Hosting Community Conversations Series** - Learn about upcoming issues affecting the state with Sierra Club Vermont every Wednesday [here](#).
- **UVM Extension Hosting Watershed and Aquatic Science Webinar Series** - Learn from experts about Lake Champlain and climate change effects every Tuesday and Friday [here](#).
- **350Vermont to Host Resistance and Resilience Webinar Series** - Learn more [here](#).
- **Bennington College Hosts Virtual Film Series on Plastic Pollution** - Watch films about plastic pollution around the world [here](#).

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We are always looking for great stories of local action for our blog, social media and as helpful resources for our network. Please consider sending along anything you or others have accomplished or are working on by responding to this email or emailing abaad@vnrc.org

About Us

VECAN is a network of statewide Vermont organizations helping communities across the Green Mountain State to reduce energy costs and climate impacts through conservation, increased energy efficiency and conversion to renewable energy sources.

VECAN's mission is to start, support and strengthen town energy committees.

Committee Changes?

Help us keep our network up to

As always, thanks for all that you do.

Best,

Johanna Miller, VECAN Coordinator and VNRC Energy Program Director
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Volunteers Needed to Receive Helpline Calls for Capstone Community Action



Capstone Community Action, is setting up a Helpline as part of the Washington & Northern Orange Counties Regional Response Command Center (WNOC-RRCC).

Many volunteers are needed to help receive phone calls from the community seeking support and provide them guidance through the challenges of COVID-19. Training provided! This is a totally from home volunteer activity. If you would like to sign-up to join the call center team please email Allison.Levin@wnocrrcc.org.

WNOC-RRCC is a unified regional response of local community wellness and support services formed to provide emergency protective measures during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Their goal is to save lives by reducing hospital surge and ensure the safety of Central Vermont's vulnerable populations and communities. They need your help in their work providing non-critical, but essential social services to municipalities, organizations, and individuals in need, including but not limited to providing or securing food, shelter, information, medical supplies, transportation, volunteers, etc.

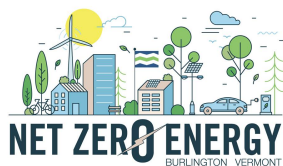
VNRC Launches New Lunchtime Webinar Series



The Vermont Natural Resource Council (VNRC) is launching a new lunchtime webinar series to discuss a broad range of environmental topics surrounding the state. The VNRC lunchtime series will look to host webinars with different experts from around the state. This upcoming Thursday, April

16th, VNRC's Executive Director Brian Shupe and Policy and Water Program Director Jon Groveman will provide updates on Act 250, Vermont's landmark environmental law. Future webinars will focus on issues ranging from climate issues, protecting our waterways, and how elections might be impacted by the social distancing measures in place. Look for more updates and chances to register for the webinars on VNRC's website [here](#) or facebook page [here](#).

Burlington Launches "Green Stimulus Package"



In response to the Coronavirus, Mayor Miro Weinberg of Burlington announced that the city would be launching a "green stimulus package" to encourage environmentally friendly behavior when the city reopens after the shutdown. "We're not going to stop working on the climate emergency

even while we're battling COVID-19," Mayor Weinberg said during his regular afternoon update. "In fact, whenever possible, we're going to pursue strategies that advance our progress in both of these crises".

One company that is leading this initiative is the Burlington Electric Department (BED).

date! Email changes in committee leadership or contact info to abaad@vnrc.org

While BED already has in place measures to help with customer relief during this time, such as a suspension of late fees and disconnections, they are also seeking regulatory approval for a bevy of recovery programs. These programs include incentives for weatherization, cold-climate heat pumps, and electric vehicles as well as zero interest loans for nonprofits and small businesses for energy efficiency projects. Darren Springer, BED's General Manager, said at the press briefing, "The green stimulus package ... could provide a boost and particularly help our low- and moderate-income customers, help renters and homeowners, help small businesses and nonprofits be able to save energy, save money, and help reduce carbon emissions". To learn more about BED's green stimulus proposals, go to BED's website [here](#).

Interesting Perspectives on the Need for a Green Investments



As we consider the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we ensure that our response to the COVID crisis sets us up to respond to the climate crisis as well. The ideas at the heart of green investments will be more important than ever as we seek to rebuild our economies in the aftermath of this crisis. A recent [op-ed](#) in *The Hill* by former U.S Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz lays out the many benefits of green investments. Secretary Moniz writes that "we need to create new jobs, protect the livelihoods American people, and ensure the future resilience of our economy". He states that the best way to do this is to support the creation of clean energy jobs and to provide incentives for Americans to switch to renewable energy and save fuel use through home weatherization programs.

A recent [article](#) in *Rolling Stone* also illuminates the benefits of a switching to renewable energy through green investments. It states that "by 2050, this transition avoids \$3.1 trillion a year in climate damages ... and saving \$1.3 trillion a year for consumers over the fossil-fueled status quo".

Take Part in Earth Day EcoChallenge this April



The [Earth Day EcoChallenge](#) is a yearly event every April where people from across the globe come together to take action in saving our planet. For the month of April,

participants pledge to take action in any way they can to help build habits to create a healthier planet. This year is even more important as the EcoChallenge allows us to see how all of our actions make a large impact, even if we can not be around each other while we do it. To take part in the Earth Day EcoChallenge, register on their website as either an individual, as a group or as part of an already existing group. Once you register, you can choose which actions you take, which will give you points based on their impact. These actions can range from one time or daily tasks and you can even choose from categories such as wildlife, climate, food and more. Most of the actions have been tailored so that they can be done in quarantine. One of the larger groups in Vermont, the [Upper Valley Climate Action 2020 team](#), already has 32 members who have scored over 1,800 points. To join a team or take action by yourself, register at the Earth Day EcoChallenge website [here](#).

Sierra Club Vermont Hosting Community Conversations Series



SIERRA CLUB
VERMONT CHAPTER

The Vermont Chapter of the Sierra Club is hosting a weekly "Community Conversations" series on environmental issues in Vermont. The series will be hosted every Wednesday at 7 p.m. and will look at different issues affecting the state. The next conversation, "The

Transportation Climate Initiative, Reductions in Regional Climate Emissions with Peter Walke” will be held on April 15th. The webinar will look at how states in the Northeast may move forward with the Transportation and Climate Initiative, and what opportunities there are for Vermonters to influence its effects.

Sierra Club Vermont will also be hosting webinars later this month about topics such as earth day and the youth climate movement, May day and a just transition blue-green collaboration, and a look at Energy Action Network’s 2019 Annual report. To find out more information about the webinar series and register for the upcoming webinars, check out Sierra Club’s facebook page [here](#) or email Robb Kidd at robb.kidd@sierraclub.org

UVM Extension Hosting Watershed and Aquatic Science Webinar Series



The University of Vermont Extension [Lake Champlain Sea Grant Education Team](#) is hosting an [interactive webinar series](#) focused on watershed and aquatic science. The webinar series, titled “Zoom a Scientist”, is free to attend and will be held every Tuesday and Friday from noon to 1 p.m. All webinars will be recorded for later viewing.

The webinars span a wide range of topics from life cycles of fish, mapping of water basins to climate change’s effect on Lake Champlain. While all the topics are interesting and in-depth, two webinars specifically focus on the effects climate change will have on Lake Champlain.

On April 17th, “Climate Change in the Lake Champlain Basin” will look at the effects climate change has already had on Lake Champlain and what future effects we might expect.

On April 28th, “Long-term Effects of Climate Change on Lakes and the Importance of Winter Sampling” will look at research already done on how climate change impacts lake metabolism during winter months. To find out more about the webinar series and to register for them, check out their Lake Champlain Sea Grant’s website [here](#).

350Vermont to Host Resistance and Resilience Webinar Series



In response to the global call to action by the youth during the Climate Strike last September, [350Vermont](#) is hosting a three day [resistance and resilience webinar series](#) in April.

On Tuesday, April 14th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. the “Regenerative Agriculture for the Home Gardener” webinar looks at how to sequester carbon and build soil health while growing your own food.

On Wednesday, April 22nd from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. the “Radical Forest Management” webinar will look at the role forests and forest management play in our past, present, and future with a focus on social and environmental justice in Vermont.

On Thursday, April 23rd from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. the “Storytelling Day: Tales of Fossil Fuel Resistance” will share stories from Vermonters about Vermont’s gas pipeline resistance to Middlebury’s successful Divest campaign.

If you wish to share a story about your own fossil fuel resistance, email Julie at Resist@350vt.org. 350Vermont is also asking climate activists to share videos and photos with a caption about the places you love and what it will take to protect them for their Earth Day celebration. Email all videos and photos to jaiel@350vt.org before April 21st. To find out more about all the webinars and to register for them, go to 350Vermont's website [here](#).

Bennington College Hosts Virtual Film Series on Plastic Pollution



[Beyond Plastics](#), a nationwide project based at Bennington College, aims to empower community leaders and students to reduce their plastic pollution. Beyond Plastic has been hosting a [virtual film series](#) and creating a list of plastic pollution movies to promote environmental awareness and advocacy during this time of social distancing.

The next film in the series, *The Story of Plastics*, will be shown on Wednesday April 22nd at 2 p.m. on the Discovery Channel or streamed via Discovery Go.

Beyond Plastic is also hosting an [Earth Day poster contest](#) for children ages 5-18. Submissions are due by April 22nd at midnight.

To learn more about Beyond Plastics recommended films click [here](#) or to see how your kid can get involved in the Earth Day poster contest check out the rules and submission details [here](#).

Donate

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