



VECAN

VERMONT ENERGY & CLIMATE
ACTION NETWORK

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March 2021 E-News

Dear Local Energy Leaders,

We hope you are enjoying these sunny days!

We wanted to share some timely news and put several exciting events on your radar. Find out far more below about:

- **Climate Action Film Festival (CAFF) Happening Now!** - CAFF brings together activists, filmmakers, and communities to witness and celebrate stories of climate action. The two-week festival features a selection of climate action short films, a feature-length documentary, and exclusive Q&A panels with activists & filmmakers. It's not too late to participate – [get your tickets and see the full schedule of events here!](#)
- **Join VECAN For Our Next “Lunch and Learn” Focused on Communications - March 15 at Noon** - Connect with other energy committee leaders from around the state to share tips about proven outreach strategies, share lessons learned from past communications efforts, and discuss strategies, tools, and resources available to help your energy committee build and execute a strong communications plan. [Click here to register to attend.](#)
- **Tune Into VNRC’s Weekly Climate Dispatch to Stay Informed This Legislative Session** - Curious about what’s happening at the State House and how you can make your voice heard? Watch VNRC’s Weekly “[Climate Dispatch](#)” – a short, timely update every Friday on key climate action opportunities. Watch the latest episode below.
- **Climate Action Works Webinar Series Kicks Off March 10 at 6:30 PM** - The [#ActOnClimateVT coalition](#) introduces the Climate Action Works Webinar Series, a deep-dive into the work currently underway by the Climate Council. Join the first webinar of the series happening Wednesday, March 10 at 6:30pm, with special guest Kiah Morris, Movement Politics Director at Rights and Democracy (RAD). [Register here!](#)
- **Mark Your Calendars for VNRC's 13th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival Happening April 8** - VNRC is back with another installment of this acclaimed film festival celebrating the world's most wonderful places and the people who care for them. [View the film line-up and get tickets here.](#) Find more information below.
- **Green Mountain Power (GMP) Announces Exciting Microgrid Project in Panton, VT** - GMP will break ground this spring on a utility microgrid in Panton, pioneering a new way to keep the power on for

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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 rkuster@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

residents, farms and municipal buildings in the town center during power outages. [Learn more about the project here](#) and below.

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

- **11 New EV Fast-Charge Stations to Be Installed Across Vermont! - Governor Phil Scott recently announced** that 11 new plug-in electric vehicle (EV) fast-charge stations will be installed across Vermont over the next two years. With these additions, nearly every Vermonter will be within 30 miles of a fast-charger! Find more information below.
- **Join Patagonia, Burton, 1% and Others for See Change Climate Summit March 24-25** - This two-day virtual summit focuses on the intersection of climate action, sustainable entrepreneurship, and winter mountain sports. Tune into 50+ incredible speakers over two days to upskill, learn, and connect with passionate people just like you. [Learn more and get tickets here!](#)
- **Join New Vermont Climate Action Forum Facebook Group** - The group, created by Gary Beckwith, a member of the Richmond Climate Action Committee, serves as a public forum for Vermonters to discuss, share ideas, plan and promote events and political action, ask and answer questions, share memes, and help spread information, all around the subject of climate change. If you are interested, [join the group here!](#)
- **Bill McKibben Featured in New Episode of Muse Mentors Podcast** - In the newest episode of Muse Mentors Podcast, hosted by Grammy-nominated Vermont flutist Karen Kevra, Bill McKibben, tells his origin story and how he became the co-founder of 350.org and one of the most well-known climate activists in the country. [Listen to the episode here!](#)
- **2021 Ford F-150 Hybrid Pickup Trucks Save the Day During Texas Winter Storm** - The plug-in pickup's optional 7.2-kW PowerBoost generator helped power several Texas residents' homes during the severe winter storm as they waited for power to return. Learn more about this story below.

As always, thanks for all that you do.

Best,

Bekah Kuster, Community Energy Coordinator, AmeriCorps Member, VECAN
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The 2nd Annual Climate Action Film Festival Kicked Off Last Week!



The [Climate Action Film Festival \(CAFF\)](#), brought to you by SunCommon, brings together activists, filmmakers, and communities to witness and celebrate stories of climate action. The two-week festival, which kicked off last week, features both short and feature length films, as well as panel discussions and breakout conversations with filmmakers, climate activists, and

organizations committed to facing the climate crisis head-on. This year the festival is fully online, with one "by donation" ticket giving you access to all two weeks of films and discussions!

Watch the final screenings this week, including:

Tuesday, March 9: "Beyond the Films" Q&A 7:00 - 8:00 PM EST

Thursday, March 11: "Beyond the Films" Q&A 7:00 - 8:00 PM EST

Friday, March 12: Feature Film + Q&A 7:00 - 8:30 PM EST

[Check out the trailer for the festival here!](#)

[Click here to learn more and get your tickets!](#) All ticket donations from CAFF 2021 will support CAFF's local climate action partners, New York Renews and 350 Vermont.

Watch Last Week's Climate Dispatch to Hear About What's Happening at the State House!



In last week's [Climate Dispatch](#), Johanna Miller introduced Carolyn Wesley in her new role as Chief of Staff to Senate President Pro Tem Becca Balint. Some of you may remember Carolyn as the Network Manager at the Energy Action Network. Carolyn now brings that talent and her knowledge of energy and climate issues into the legislative arena, working with

Senator Balint — a long-time climate justice and clean energy champion.

Get an update on legislative happenings, how Senator Balint and the Senate are operating in these still-challenging times, and some of the arenas they see as promising for much-needed progress.

[Click here to find full episodes and to sign up to receive the Climate Dispatch in your inbox!](#)

Climate Action Works Webinar Series - March 10 at 6:30 PM



VNRC is pleased to introduce—with our partners in the [#ActOnClimateVT coalition](#)—the Climate Action Works Webinar Series! The first webinar of the series will take place on Wednesday, March 10 at 6:30pm, with special guest Kiah Morris, Movement Politics Director at Rights and Democracy (RAD). [Register here.](#)

Come hear Morris in conversation with Ben Edgerly Walsh, Climate and Energy Program Director at VPIRG. They will discuss what equity means in the context of the climate movement, with a focus on how Vermont can ensure our transition to a clean energy economy can work to uplift all Vermonters and create just outcomes.

Each installment of the Climate Action Works Webinar Series will highlight a different aspect of the work currently underway by the [Climate Council](#), as they develop a plan to meet the emission reduction mandates required by the Global Warming Solutions Act, which became law last fall. [Learn more about the Climate Council here.](#)

[Sign up for the webinar here!](#)

13th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival - April 8 6:30 PM



VNRC is hosting the acclaimed Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Vermont for the 13th year! Join us for a night of inspiring short films, from the safety and comfort of your own home!

This year's films explore the resilience of people and the environment, from the bikepacking adventures of an all-Black female team, to a project

turning marine debris into 3D-printed prosthetic limbs, to the uncertain fate of penguins on a remote island off Antarctica.

Tickets are by donation. A donation of \$10 or more enters you in this year's raffle (prizes will be announced soon). Each household only needs one ticket to view the films. Some ticket options include VNRC memberships.

[Get tickets and view the film line-up here.](#)

We'll see you then!

Green Mountain Power Announces Microgrid Project in Panton



Green Mountain Power recently announced that it plans to break ground this spring on a utility-scale microgrid project in Panton, enabling the utility to keep the lights on for residents, farms and municipal buildings in the town center during power outages. A microgrid is essentially a smaller grid that uses distributed energy resources to operate independently that can be disconnected from the larger grid during

outages or larger grid disturbances.

The project will take advantage of the existing 4.9-megawatt solar facility with utility-scale batteries, which has been up and running in Panton since 2019.

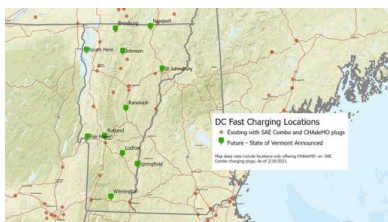
“It is heartbreaking to see the impacts of extreme weather across the country, and it’s a sad but important reminder that we must innovate to build resiliency to protect from extreme, unpredictable weather,” said Mari McClure, GMP’s president and CEO.

In the event of storm damage or a prolonged grid outage, the Panton microgrid will enable backup power from the batteries and solar panels to flow to a network of customers served by the traditional grid, a concept called “islanding.” GMP is the first electric utility in the country to “island” a distribution circuit using inverter-based sources with no reliance on fossil fuel generation backup.

Resiliency zones like the one created by Panton’s microgrid are a core feature of [GMP’s Climate Plan](#) to make communities even more resistant and resilient to outages. This year, GMP will be working with three additional towns that are among those most affected by outages due to severe weather to create resiliency zones, and plans to continue to add resiliency zones in more towns each year.

[Learn more about the project here!](#)

11 New Fast Charging EV Stations Are Scheduled to Be Installed Across Vermont



[Governor Phil Scott](#) announced that 11 new plug-in electric vehicle (EV) fast-charge stations will be installed across Vermont over the next two years. Fast chargers provide compatible vehicles with an 80% charge in just 30-60 minutes.

The charging stations will be located in Newport, Enosburgh, St. Johnsbury, Johnson, South Hero, Springfield, Fair Haven, Wilmington, Ludlow, Randolph and Rutland. The chargers will be a part of the [Blink Network](#) and available to all EV drivers. With the addition of these 11 chargers, nearly every Vermonter will be within 30 miles of a fast-charge station.

The new charging stations will be paid for using money from the [Volkswagen emissions cheating settlement](#) and administered by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Information about the State of Vermont's EV charging funding programs can be found [here](#).

Learn more about electric vehicle incentives and charging options at [driveelectricvt.com](#).

First-Ever See Change Sessions Coming March 24-25



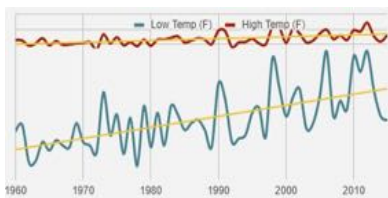
The first-ever See Change Sessions, presented by Vermont-based company Hula, will focus on climate change through the lens of the winter mountain sports ecosystem.

CEOs, founders, athletes, investors, tech leaders, entrepreneurs and others will gather to speak, listen and seek solutions to some of the most important issues facing, not only the winter mountain sports industries, but the planet at large — from greenwashing and emerging tech to impact investing, resort sustainability, and more.

The summit will feature more than thirty sessions, fifty speakers, and several opportunities for hands-on, interactive, and face-to-face content, workshops, and networking.

[Learn more about the summit and purchase tickets here!](#)

Follow Vermont Climate Action Forum Facebook Group



[This new group](#), created by Gary Beckwith of the Richmond Climate Action Committee, is a public forum for people in Vermont to discuss, share ideas, plan and promote events and political action, ask and answer questions, share memes, help spread information, and even promote products and services,

all around the subject of climate change and the environment.

One of the most powerful uses of this forum is to share event information. If your organization has an event, or if you just know about an event, all you have to do is share it on the forum and it will be added to the Forum's events, creating a powerful "shared calendar" for people to find out about climate change events in Vermont.

[Join the group here](#) and don't forget to invite your friends to join too! Power in numbers!

2021 Ford F-150 Hybrid Pickup Trucks Powered Homes During Texas Winter Storm



Some Texans turned to their trucks during the recent cold snap last month. The 2021 Ford F-150 hybrid pickup truck saved the day for several Texans who had lost power during last month's severe winter storm. The plug-in pickup's optional 7.2-kW PowerBoost generator helped power several homes during the outage, allowing residents to keep their lights,

refrigerators, and space heaters on as they waited for power to return.

Unlike other trucks, the Ford F-150 Hybrid is standard with an onboard generator that possesses enough power to heat a home and power appliances during a blackout. The truck's engine charges the battery while running and inverts it to the Pro Power Onboard outlets.

This is an incredible demonstration of the value of battery storage in ensuring uninterrupted power to consumers amidst outages and other grid disturbances. And, ultimately, storage can save consumers money, improve reliability and resilience, integrate generation sources, and help reduce environmental impacts. [Learn more about the benefits of storage here.](#)

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