



Welcome to the VCDA 2023 Fall Conference!

Climate Resilient and Adaptation: Ways Vermonters Can Mitigate Disasters

Thursday, November 2nd, 2023 | 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM | Brandon Inn

With the recent flooding this past summer, rising temperatures, and extreme climate events becoming more common across the nation, how can Vermont look ahead and build resiliency in communities across the state?

This conference will investigate how our communities can become more equipped to deal with disasters. From streamlining processes, to adapting our downtowns, to the grassroots efforts between neighbors at the local level, panels and sessions will provide tips and discussions on what has worked for Vermont communities in order to ensure preparedness for future climate change.

Not a VCDA member? Learn how to join at <https://www.vtcda.org/become-a-member.html>

Take our feedback survey at

<http://bit.ly/VCDA-Fall-Conference>



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AGENDA

9:00	Welcome	Jenna Koloski, <i>President</i>, VCDA
9:10	Keynote	Doug Farnham, Vermont Chief Recovery Officer
9:30	Panel	Community Mitigation Strategies: Resources and Strategies for a Resilient Vermont
10:45	Special Presentation	
11:00	Break	
11:10	Panel	Rebuilding for the Future
12:25	Lunch	Provided by Kamuda's Country Market
1:30	Brandon Walking Tour/Open Forum Discussions	
3:00	Break	
3:10	Panel	Volunteer and Community Response - Social and Community Efforts for Resilience
4:25	Closing	
4:30	VCDA Annual Meeting - Open to anyone who would like to attend	
5:30	Adjourn	

Keynote Presentation

Douglas Farnham

Chief Recovery Officer, VT Agency of Administration

douglas.farnham@vermont.gov

After six years of military service in the 82nd Airborne, in 2011 Douglas Farnham joined the Vermont Department of Taxes and served in several roles: Deputy Commissioner, Policy Director and Economist, and Director of Property Valuation and Review. In 2020 he joined the Agency of Administration and served as the Chief Operational Officer, Deputy Secretary, and was appointed Chief Recovery Officer in August of 2023.

He has responsibility for coordinating statewide pandemic and flood recovery efforts and maximizing the value of monies directed to recovery and mitigation by working with philanthropic, municipal, and federal partners.

Panel

Community Mitigation Strategies: Resources and Strategies for a Resilient Vermont

Moderator | Julia Connell | Community Development Specialist, Vermont Community Development Program, Department of Housing & Community Development | Vice President of the Vermont Community Development Association | julia.connell@vermont.gov

Julia Connell works as a Community Development Specialist within Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) at the Department of Housing & Community Development. VCDP administers Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds through the state, into municipalities. She assists projects with their applications to VCDP and manages grants as projects are awarded funding. Prior to joining the State, Julia worked with non-profits in development and fundraising. She is a graduate of the University of Vermont's Community Development and Applied Economics program with a focus in Public Communication. Julia has served as the Vice President of VCDA for the past year.

Ethan Swift, Vermont's Watershed Planning Program Manager | ethan.swift@vermont.gov

Ethan Swift is the Manager of Vermont's Watershed Planning Program within the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Water Investment Division. As the WPP Program Manager, Ethan oversees a dynamic and integrative work environment that integrates surface water monitoring, assessment, analyses, and watershed management planning services to the regulatory, implementation and planning efforts in the Division and across the Agency of Natural Resources.

Ethan is a water quality monitoring and assessment specialist with expertise in limnology and biological assessment of surface waters. He holds a B.S. in Natural Resource Planning and an M.S. in Water Resources, both from the University of Vermont. He has authored peer-reviewed research publications and has worked with EPA and many states to research the impacts of watershed stressors on the ecological integrity of surface water at regional and national scales. He coordinated the development of the Vermont Surface Water Management Strategy, oversees water quality remediation planning and high-quality water identification for Vermont, and leads Vermont's watershed planning efforts to implement the 2015 Vermont Clean Water Act ("Act 64").

Lesley-Ann L. Dupigny-Giroux, Ph.D, Professor of Climatology & Vermont State Climatology, College of Arts & Sciences, University of Vermont | lesley-ann.dupigny-giroux@uvm.edu

Dr. Dupigny-Giroux is a Professor of Climatology in the Department of Geography & Geosciences, the Vermont State Climatologist since 1997, and the immediate Past President of the American Association of State Climatologists. In 2020, she was appointed by the Vermont House of Representatives to the Vermont Climate Council as the member with expertise in climate change science.

An applied climatologist by training, Dr. Dupigny-Giroux is an expert in floods, droughts and severe weather and the ways in which climate change affects the landscape and peoples of Vermont and the US Northeast.

A Fellow of the American Meteorological Society, Dr. Dupigny-Giroux is currently serving a 3-year term on the Board of Atmospheric Sciences and Climate of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Mathematics.

Sarah Waring, State Director for USDA Rural Development for Vermont and New Hampshire | sarah.waring@usda.gov

Vermont native Sarah Waring serves in the Biden-Harris Administration as State Director for USDA Rural Development for the twin states of Vermont and New Hampshire, where she directs the agency's 74 grant and loan programs for economic opportunity and improved quality of life for rural Americans. Previously, she worked as Vice President for Grants and Community Investments at the Vermont Community Foundation, assisting to build public-private partnerships during the COVID pandemic, and serving on the Governor's Task Force for Economic Mitigation and Recovery in 2020, as well as co-authoring a toolkit for Municipal Engagement for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Waring has led the Center for an Agricultural Economy, and worked at the Vermont Council on Rural Development and the Sonoran Institute, in rural communities in New England and across the Rocky Mtn West. Waring resides in central Vermont with her family.

Timothy Baker, Infrastructure Branch Director, FEMA | timothy.baker@fema.dhs.gov

Panel

Rebuilding for the Future

Moderator | Jenna Koloski, Community Engagement and Policy Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development | jenna@vtrural.org

Jenna Koloski has been the Director of Community Engagement and Policy at the Vermont Council on Rural Development since 2015. In that role, she coordinates statewide policy discussions on issues that impact rural communities and facilitates community-level prioritization for the future of Vermont towns. Prior to the work at VCRD, she worked in several Vermont organizations focused on outdoor recreation, community development, and food security. Jenna studied Conservation and Biodiversity at McGill University and holds a master's degree in Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School. Jenna serves as the President of the Vermont Community Development Association. She lives with her family in Huntington Vermont.

Stephanie A. Smith, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Vermont Emergency Management | Stephanie.A.Smith@vermont.gov

Stephanie is the State Hazard Mitigation Officer at Vermont Emergency Management where she supports communities in planning and project development to reduce future risk, predominantly from flooding. Stephanie manages funding for the State under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) funding programs as well as the State's Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF). She holds a Masters in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Rebecca Ellis, State Director, Senator Peter Welch | Rebecca_Ellis@welch.senate.gov

Rebecca Ellis joined the Office of Congressman Peter Welch, now Senator Peter Welch, as State Director in March 2019. She previously worked at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (2015-2018 Senior Counsel; 2018-2019 Deputy Commissioner); served in the Vermont Legislature (2011-2015), on the Waterbury Select Board (2006-2014), and on the Waterbury Planning Commission (2001-2006). She has degrees from Harvard University (B.A. 1986), Princeton University (M.P.A. 1991), and Georgetown University (J.D. 1996). After Tropical Storm Irene, Rebecca served as chair of Waterbury's Long Term Community Recovery Committee. She grew up in Burlington, Vermont.

Kevin Geiger, AICP CFM, Director of Planning, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission | kgeiger@trorc.org

Kevin Geiger is Director of Planning at the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. He specializes in land use planning and regulation, brownfield assessment, water quality, housing, climate change, and emergency management. Kevin has served in the past as President of the Vermont Community Development Association, as well as on other boards in Vermont, including the State Emergency Response Commission, White River Partnership, Connecticut River Commission, Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup, NEK Travel and Tourism Association, VCGI, and others. He is a Certified Flood Manager and co-led the state's buyout program after Tropical Storm Irene. He is a longstanding member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and has won regional and national planning awards. He has a Masters in Resource Management and Administration from Antioch New England Graduate School and a Bachelors in Human Ecology from College of the Atlantic. He is the Town Moderator for Pomfret. Besides his family, he loves dogs, cooking, pruning apple trees, splitting firewood, and a good book.

Melissa Bounty, Executive Director, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation | mbounty@cvedc.org

Melissa acted as one of two statewide navigators in the Small Business Administration-funded Community Navigator Pilot Program to fund and facilitate pandemic-responsive projects that linked Vermont businesses with Vermont vendors on service projects. Prior to working with CVEDC, Melissa spent 16 years working with Waitsfield-based book publisher Chooseco, where she managed editorial, print production, and licensing for the company. She currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center. Melissa graduated from Johnson State College in 2005 after attending Hampshire College and the Aegean Center for the Fine Arts. Melissa enjoys writing, reading, and art, and was twice a Full Fellow at the Vermont Studio Center. She lives in Waitsfield with her husband Nermin and her stepdaughter Zara.

Charlie Willner, Director of Energy Services, Evernorth | cwillner@evernorthus.org

Charlie Willner is the Director of Energy Services as Evernorth, a nonprofit organization that serves the low and moderate income people of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont with affordable housing and community investments. Charlie oversees and takes part in the development of Evernorth's in house data collection system for building performance optimization, commissioning and retro-commissioning projects, performance studies, design review of the MEP systems for Evernorth developments, and advocacy. Charlie joined Evernorth in 2017 as a project manager. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Vermont and a Master of Architecture degree from the University of Oregon.

Panel

Volunteer and Community Response: Social and Community Efforts for Resilience

Moderator | Laura Cavin Bailey, Climate Economy Program Manager, Vermont Council on Rural Development | laura@vtrural.org

Laura Cavin Bailey (she/her) is the Climate Economy Program Manager at the Vermont Council on Rural Development, where she manages the initiatives to support local leaders, town energy committees, or other community groups in developing equitable climate solutions. Laura's diverse work experience includes solar electric system design and installation, biodiesel production, an instructor at Yestermorrow Design/Build School, and as a practicing architect of net-zero energy buildings. Laura serves as the president of the Vermont Green Building Network and can be found exploring the forests and rivers around her home in Fayston with her family.

Jill Davies, President, Woodstock Community Trust | jill@jillmdavies.com

I'm involved in my Woodstock area community helping drive some innovative initiatives that create homes for locals and a community relief fund. I work with the non-profit Woodstock Community Trust and with Woodstock Town's Housing Group on those initiatives. I have leadership and worker bee roles in both organizations. I use my professional training as a management consultant and my life skills learned on The Avatar Course to help people move forward to play a bigger game!

I believe we can change most things because once you learn to change the beliefs in your head you can change anything!

Katie Trautz, Executive Director, Montpelier Alive | director@montpelieralive.org

Born and raised in Cabot, Vermont, Katie is a musician, mother, teacher and arts advocate. Katie is the co-founder of the non-profit folk music school Summit School of Traditional Music and Culture based in Montpelier, VT. Following her 8-year directorship at the Summit School, she became the Executive Director of Chandler Center for the Arts in Randolph, VT. She became the Executive Director at Montpelier Alive winter of 2023, and has been with the organization since 2021 bringing vibrant programming to the Capitol City.

Shawn Trader, Executive Director, Rainbow Bridge Community Center |

s.trader@rainbowbridgevt.org

Parent, partner, caregiver, server, out and proud nonbinary trans woman; Shawna's mission is to create meaningful relationships that bring the community together. She has a bachelor's degree in anthropology and religion, and a master's in Healthcare Administration. She worked in healthcare for 20 years, creating compassionate care for those in need. She loves musing over a cup of black coffee with a cat in her lap, singing, dancing, and hanging out with her two kids. Music, love, connection, and the beauty of Earth inspire her to fight for a future where all can live with freedom and joy.

David Upson, Town Manager, Town of Hardwick | david.upson@hardwickvt.gov

David graduated from (then) Johnson State College with a BS in Environmental Science while working full time on a Dairy Farm and began his professional career with an Environmental Service company operating Water and Wastewater Facilities in the Northeast Kingdom. In 2012 he became full time law enforcement certified with the Vermont State Police and worked as a Field Force Trooper until taking his current position as Hardwick Town Manager where he has been for 2 years.

Tara Reese, Co-Founder and Community Director, The Civic Standard |

thecivicstandard@gmail.com

Tara is a cook, artist, event producer, and mutual aid organizer. She creates collaborative and unexpected gatherings in which to share food, experience, and grow a shared understanding. She lives in Walden with her son and a small herd of sheep.

Chloe Tomlinson, Community Division Director, Front Porch Forum | chloe@frontporchforum.com

Chloe Tomlinson is the Community Division Director at Front Porch Forum, where she leads the team of Online Community Managers to produce FPF's 200+ local Forums. She comes from a background in the nonprofit sector, focused on community development with a lens on increasing civic engagement and social capital. She's worked in a range of contexts, from neighborhoods of Philadelphia to towns in rural East Africa. She lives in Winooski.

FEEDBACK SURVEY
VCDA FALL CONFERENCE 2023

Please circle your response to the questions below

1. How valuable to you was the **Keynote from Doug Farnham**?

Did Not Attend Not At All Valuable Somewhat Valuable Very Valuable

2. How valuable to you was the **Community Mitigation Strategies panel**?

Did Not Attend Not At All Valuable Somewhat Valuable Very Valuable

3. How valuable to you was the **Rebuilding for the Future panel**?

Did Not Attend Not At All Valuable Somewhat Valuable Very Valuable

4. How valuable to you was the **Brandon Walking Tour**?

Did Not Attend Not At All Valuable Somewhat Valuable Very Valuable

5. How valuable to you was the **Open Forum Discussions**?

Did Not Attend Not At All Valuable Somewhat Valuable Very Valuable

6. How valuable to you was the **Volunteer and Community Response Panel**?

Did Not Attend Not At All Valuable Somewhat Valuable Very Valuable

7. How valuable to you was the overall conference?

Did Not Attend Not At All Valuable Somewhat Valuable Very Valuable

8. Was the **food** satisfactory? Yes No

9. Was the **venue** satisfactory? Yes No

10. Would you attend another VCDA conference? Yes No

What topics would you like to see covered at future conferences?

Please share with us any additional feedback you may have on the back of this form.