

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

2011 ANNUAL REPORT



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2011 A YEAR OF DIRECT SERVICE

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT

In preparing this Annual Report we were reminded, yet again, of the generosity of our supporters and the varied ways this support sustains and increases the impact of VYCC programs. Your support could not come at a more critical time for Vermont – our hope is that in reading this report you gain a deeper appreciation for our programs, who they serve, and why they are so very important.



Richard Darby



Thomas Hark

If you have hiked in the Green Mountains you have probably come across our crews working hard to complete a high quality conservation or trails project on public lands. These well-led crews of young people, from incredibly diverse backgrounds, learn much from meeting the challenges inherent in hard physical work, primitive living conditions, and group living. In recent years, however, we have adapted this successful model to meet other needs throughout the state.

VYCC's response to Tropical Storm Irene is one way we have recently modified our Conservation Program to provide more community service and leadership training. Before the waters had fully receded, our crews were in Waterbury and Richmond, helping families and towns to recover and clean-up. This direct service was both a powerful learning opportunity for Corps Members as well as critical support for those hardest hit by the floods.

Another example can be seen in the Farm at VYCC. The Farm, now in its fourth year, is busy growing, literally, tons of food and providing thousands of meals to food-insecure Vermonters. We are well on our way towards meeting our goal of donating ten tons of fresh, local, and organic food to area food shelves. And, Vermont youth and farm interns are now working in crews to grow the food through job training programs.

Our High School Leadership Program also builds on the Conservation Program model, but offers a full year of high school credit to students who have struggled in a traditional classroom. Students work to complete a variety of natural resource projects that have direct and relevant connections to academic skills. The public and tangible nature of this work engages students in their studies in powerful ways.

Regardless of which program you look at, all VYCC efforts are in pursuit of our mission: to teach young people to take personal responsibility for all their actions. This focus on our mission not only guides our instruction of young people, it also serves to inspire us as we work to strengthen Vermont communities. Your continued support of young people makes it all possible. Thank you.

With great appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Darby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard Darby
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Hark". The signature is more stylized and angular, with a prominent vertical stroke.

Thomas Hark
President

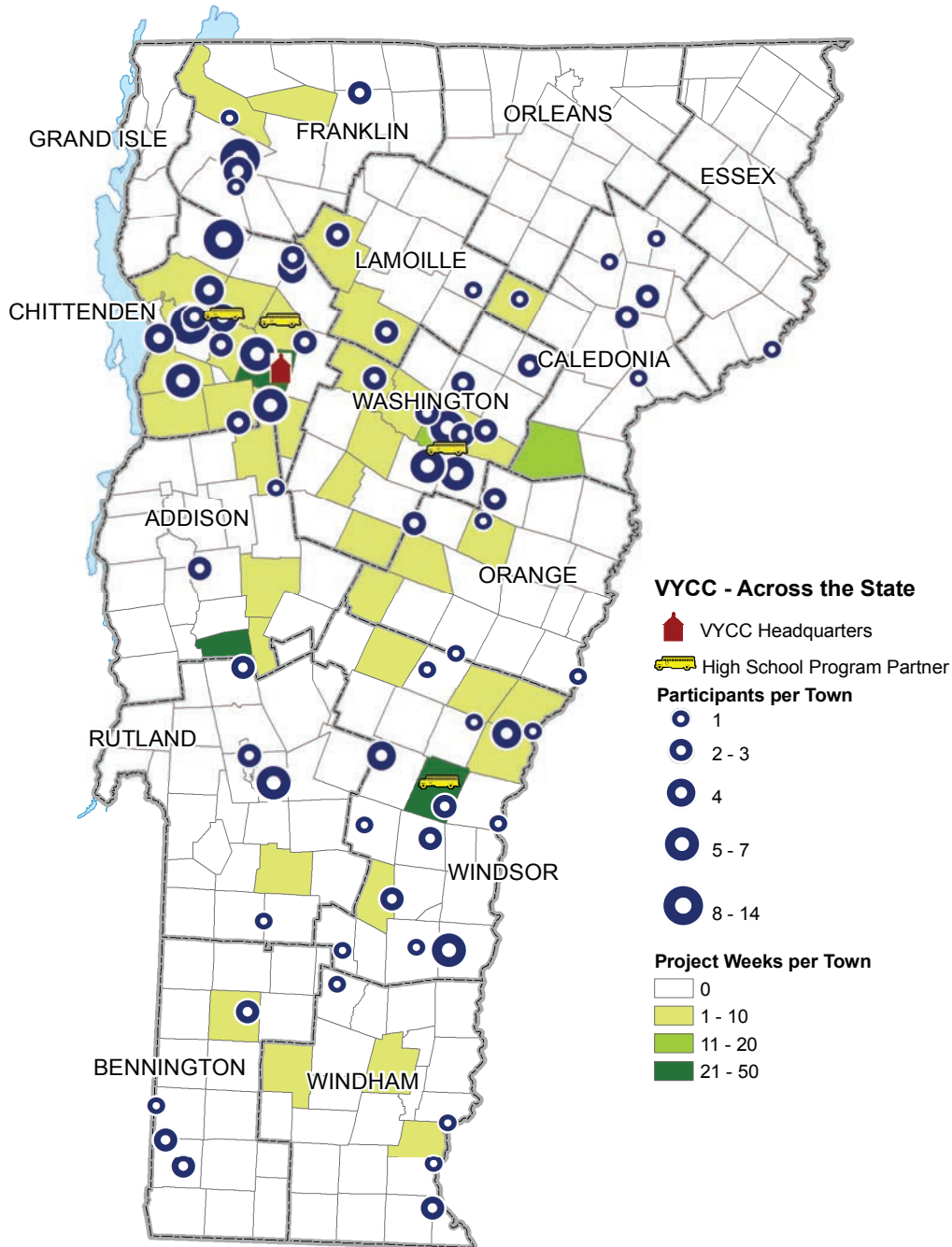
IN 2011, the VYCC engaged over 280 Corps Members, Crew Leaders, School Instructors, Farm Interns, and staff in pursuit of the organization's mission: to teach young people to take personal responsibility for all their actions.

VYCC's programs – firmly rooted in Vermont's traditions and landscape – are designed to challenge, nurture, and teach. Our three main programs include a six-month conservation program, a year-round high school leadership program, and a working farm that provides food for food-insecure Vermonters. Within these programs, a wide array of specialized crews provide opportunities for young people to join all-female leadership crews, leadership development crews for returning crew members, farm internship crews, crews for blind and visually-impaired youth, and two dozen "traditional" conservation crews. All crew members gain professional and academic experience while developing the self confidence and leadership skills needed to affect meaningful and lasting change.

Corps Members represented 69 Vermont communities and sixteen states outside of Vermont. In this report, we hope to share 2011 program highlights and how the VYCC helps young people become environmental leaders with values that guide them throughout their lives.

CONSERVATION THAT CONNECTS VERMONT COMMUNITIES

2011 HIGHLIGHTS



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT - SARAH CLOUD

Sixteen years ago Sarah Cloud was looking for unique outdoor work when she joined the VYCC as a Corps Member on a crew working in the Northeast Kingdom's Victory Basin Wildlife Area. That year Vermont had one of the rainiest summers in history. Sarah remembers that, "everything was so wet but we had such a great time working hard and relaxing by the warm fires at night." That summer, Sarah developed skills that she continues to use today.



After earning a degree in Outdoor Education and Adventure Wilderness Leadership from Johnson State College, Sarah went on to work and study in China, Thailand, and Tanzania. When teaching English as a second language, Sarah drew inspiration from VYCC's collaborative model where the participation and work ethic of each individual is essential to the success of the group.

In 2011, Sarah earned a Master of Education degree from the University of Vermont in Educational Leadership and Policy Study. "VYCC encourages Corps Members to take responsibility for themselves including their personal health and safety in order to be ready to help others," she reflects. "It's important to me that I use the skills and experiences I've acquired throughout my career to support Vermonters. I care about Vermont's youth and I want to ensure that they are cared for in the best way possible. In turn, I hope they demonstrate stewardship toward Vermont in the future."

Sarah is continuing to support Vermonters through her work with the town of Berlin. She is writing grants on behalf residents who suffered losses incurred by Tropical Storm Irene. As a grant writer, Sarah is able to secure funding that will be used to offset property damage for individuals and the Berlin community.

Are you a VYCC alumna with an interesting story to share? If so, contact Kelsey Adams at 802.434.3969 ext. 113. Want to keep in touch with fellow alumni? LIKE us on Facebook at Vermont Youth Conservation Corps.

"We do so much talking and theorizing and 'what ifs' in the classroom and the rest of the world, but here we do."

**Maddy,
Corps Member**



2011 BY THE NUMBERS

197 Summer Conservation Crew Members

69 High School Leadership Program Crew Members

32 Spring & Fall Crew Members

26 Conservation Crews

16 Technical Project Crews

6 Leadership Development Crews

4 High School Leadership Crews

2 Blind & Visually-Impaired Crews

2 All Women Crews

511,830 Square Feet of Invasives Removed

246,628 Feet of Trail Maintained

42,820 Feet of Trail Built

71 Major Project Sponsors

2.2 Tons of Food Donated

9 Bridges Constructed

110,775 Work and Service Hours

1,292 Donors

164 Volunteers

14 Solar Trackers Installed

80,000 Kilowatts Produced



“This job is hard physical work and it shows you that you’re capable of doing so much more than you ever thought you could.”

Emma, Corps Member



CONSERVATION PROGRAM

In 2011, the VYCC hired 197 Corps Members from 13 Vermont counties to work on 26 crews. Many Crew Leaders began their training in April and ended work six months later in October – a six month season!

While working and learning on a VYCC crew, Corps Members gain a deep appreciation for the natural world, the motivation and know-how to be responsible environmental stewards, and a sense of personal pride in their accomplishments. VYCC alumni consistently tell us that the challenges of their time with the VYCC were transformative experiences in their life.

Projects were scattered throughout the state and in locations that ranged from town centers to the ridge lines of the Green Mountains. To field this many crews in so many locations, the VYCC works in close partnership with organizations and agencies such as the US Forest Service, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and a variety of state and local entities – ours is a collaborative approach to ensure a high-quality job and an excellent learning experience.

The VYCC makes crew member diversity a high priority: crews represent a wide range of socioeconomic, geographic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. To meet the needs, interests, and aspirations of all crew members, we field many different types of crews. For example, 2011 saw two all-female and one co-ed Leadership Development Crews, and LEAP crews for blind and visually-impaired crew members.

Regardless of crew type, all crews share a similar and time-tested model: young people work together under the guidance of well-trained leaders to complete high-quality work that communities value. In addition to the daily work, Corps Members participate in workshops on topics ranging from defining leadership to becoming an active citizen. On any given day, Corps Members are asked to assume leadership of the campsite, collaborate with fellow Corps Members, share journal entries, and present work accomplishments to community members – all of these skills are essential components of our education and job training programs.

APRIL

Crew Leaders arrive for their first round of training before heading into the field for four weeks of spring technical projects.

MAY

Spring crews complete projects and Summer Crew Leaders arrive at the West Monitor Barn for an intense, month-long training.

JUNE

Summer Corps Members meet for Start-Up and leave with their Crew Leaders for several weeks of conservation projects.

JULY

Summer crews are in the heart of their season and projects are underway building bridges, maintaining trails, restoring lean-tos, etc.

AUGUST

Summer crews wrap up projects and end the season in time for fall crews to begin their last four weeks of work.

SEPTEMBER

The 2012 season comes to an end as fall crews finish their work. Six months of important conservation projects are complete!

LEAP PROGRAM HAS GREAT FIFTH YEAR!

Like many young people, Tori's summer with the VYCC was her first experience living and working away from the traditional comforts of home. While her lack of eye sight presented challenges, her enthusiastic attitude also made her a great fit for our Learn, Earn, and Prosper (LEAP) Program.

With encouragement from family and teachers, she joined the program and made steady improvements during the session. At the end of the first four weeks, her Crew Leaders wrote that, "Tori has made an amazing transformation.... She was [at first] a shy and quiet person who would say little through the day. Now she takes initiative to complete tasks, has more comfort speaking, and her words have strong meaning behind them."

LEAP is a partnership between the VYCC, ReSOURCE, and Linking Learning to Life that provides environmental conservation, vocational training, and weekly service projects to develop independent living and job-readiness skills.



“The High School Leadership Program opened my mind up to different jobs and more opportunities.”
Calvin, High School Leadership Program Corps Member



HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

In 2011, 69 students from Mount Mansfield Union, U-32, and Woodstock High Schools, as well as the Center for Technology – Essex (CTE) enrolled in the VYCC's High School Leadership Program (HSLP). The program provides students an alternative path to graduation through a hands-on, project-based curriculum that empowers students to take personal responsibility for their education.

The HSLP is a great option for students who have struggled in a traditional classroom. Working on small crews with talented instructors, students focus on leadership development and academic improvement while completing forestry, agriculture, carpentry, and watershed restoration projects. It is a work-based approach that makes direct connections between projects, service, academic achievement, and "real life."

One example of our personalized and integrated approach to learning is demonstrated by the four raised beds built by the CTE crew. Students designed and constructed raised beds on the eastern portion of the VYCC's 400-acre campus. Students used math and design/build skills to create detailed, technical drawings of how the beds' frames (made of recycled beams) should intersect in ways that are both aesthetically pleasing and sturdy.

Once the frames were constructed, students then built covers to transform the beds into seasonal greenhouses to extend the growing season. They now serve as small plots for students to develop business plans for value-added products that are an essential component of many farms.

WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING

"I've witnessed a sea change of difference in my son since he became a [HSLPI] crew member at VYCC. He has gained confidence, his interpersonal skills have improved. In short, he has gone from being an impetuous teenager to a poised young man."

WORKING WITH STUDENTS, WATCHING THEM GROW

VYCC Field Assistant Chris Ricker has spent a great deal of time working with HSLP students. "Students who had no self-confidence are now on a higher path, and they have learned the importance of education in their lives. Whether students are presenting their watershed unit to parents and school faculty, constructing a hoop house for a local farm, or visiting the Legislature in Montpelier, these students have changed. They have also learned the importance that education plays in the lives of the people, communities, and land around them. Instead of video games, fighting, and hanging out at the mall, they are now mentioning work, college, and the environment."





**“Working on the farm is about so much more than growing veggies – it’s a team dedicating themselves to something much larger...a way of giving, a way of life, and a way of being,”
Lucy, Monitor Barns Farm Intern**



THE FARM AT VYCC

Between one of the wettest springs on record and Tropical Storm Irene's arrival during the height of the harvest season, the Farm at VYCC faced real challenges in 2011. Farms must manage what nature delivers, however, and the farm team worked with steadfast determination to maintain a successful vegetable and poultry operation and to provide fresh food for our local community.

The central objectives of the Farm at VYCC are to provide abundant quantities of food for those in need and to provide education and training for youth. Last year, the farm donated over two tons of food to area food shelves. Produce from the farm was also sold to local schools, restaurants, and at local farmers markets.

The Farm at VYCC is a powerful vehicle for learning. This is best exemplified by the integration of the farm program and the High School Leadership Program. Agriculture is one of four main curricular themes, helping students to forge genuine connections with the food they eat, a deeper understanding of food security issues, and an understanding of Vermont's agricultural history.

An agricultural highlight from 2011 was the Mount Mansfield Union High School's (MMU) "Chick to Plate" unit. Of the 1,900 pasture-raised chickens last year, MMU students raised and processed 250 of them – yes, students slaughtered and packaged these birds. Students then delivered these birds to the Richmond, Chittenden County, Duxbury and Waterbury food shelves.

Farm Interns also benefit from learning about many aspects of running a farm. Such lessons include soil health, cover cropping, greenhouse seeding, transplanting, harvesting, the CSA business model, Farmer's Market vending, animal husbandry, and leading VYCC crews.

INTERNS ON THE FARM

Lucy was one of three interns last year who took part in an intensive farm-training program. When asked to describe the experience, she writes, "while working on the farm, I was a part of a team. I was challenged and encouraged to learn new skills from everyone I worked with....It was fun, full of learning, and rewarding every week when I saw that 80 families were going to enjoy food grown sustainably by us and our students."

THE FARM AT VYCC - HOW YOU CAN HELP!

- **Summer Share:** Members will receive a weekly share of vegetables during the peak of the growing season and are able to buy organic produce and pastured-poultry at our Farm Stand and at Farmer's Markets with "Flexible Farm Bucks."
- **Poultry Share:** Secure any number of birds with a \$5 / bird deposit. No minimum order!
- **Fall Share:** Onetime pick-up of storage crops. These are the hearty vegetables perfect for making wholesome dishes for those crisp autumn days and holiday meals.
- **Holiday Harvest Basket:** Receive wholesome ingredients for your holiday meal. Including more than ten pounds of vegetables and an organically pasture-raised chicken.

For more information, contact Farm Manager, Tucker Andrews at 802.434.3969 ext. 145 or Farm Program Coordinator, Paul Feenan at 802.434.3969 ext. 133.



“It was a difficult time in Vermont, but our crew was proud to make such a positive impact in the community.”

Ian, Fall Crew Leader





TROPICAL STORM IRENE RELIEF

Tropical Storm Irene hit Vermont with devastating force late last summer and changed Vermont in profound ways. The extent of the destruction was both astounding and heart-breaking. Before the water had begun to recede, VYCC crews got right to work.

With experience in project management, composure under pressure, and a strong ability to work together, VYCC teams worked on a total of 60 houses in Richmond, Montpelier, and Waterbury to remove dumpster upon dumpster of trash, mud, and other debris. Crews also cleaned houses, cleared downed trees in town parks, and restored the Richmond playground and playing fields to their former condition.

One Crew Leader, Shane, said, “the crew’s experience made us a powerful source of relief to affected families. In a trying time, this was made clear when a small child ran to tell her parents of our arrival by exclaiming ‘THE VYCC’s ARE HERE!’”

The work offered Corps Members an important opportunity to see how their efforts make a difference. “Our presence in the community was greatly appreciated. It was a difficult time in Vermont, but our crew was proud to make such a positive impact in the community,” explained Ian, a Crew Leader.

A CREW LEADER’S REFLECTION

“The work was filthy, cramped, bleak, and emotionally draining. In the beginning it was unclear where our efforts could be best applied, but as we gained confidence, we were able to determine where help was needed and to mobilize in numbers to provide help.”

NOT DONE YET: SNAPSHOT OF 2012 IRENE RECOVERY WORK

Sponsor / Project	Location	Number of Weeks	Project Description
US Forest Service / Irene Recovery Projects	Forest-wide	13	Trail repair and habitat improvement
SerVermont / Mold Remediation for Low-Income Home Owners	Statewide	8	Clean-up and removal of mold in homes identified by Long Term Recovery Committees
White River Partnership / Upper White and Tweed Rivers	Granville, Hancock, Rochester, Stockbridge, Pittsfield	4	Improving watershed health by removing trash, debris, and other non-natural objects deposited in riverbeds and riparian zones
White River Partnership / White River Cleanup	Sharon	2	Improving watershed health by removing trash, debris, and other non-natural objects deposited in riverbeds and riparian zones
VTrans / Valley Cares Trail Repairs	Townshend	2	Building and repairing a trail to connect housing for seniors with Townshend Village



PARTNERSHIPS

Since its founding in 1985, the VYCC has partnered with public agencies and organizations, such as the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, US Forest Service, and the Green Mountain Club to complete millions of dollars worth of priority conservation work throughout the state.

A keystone of these partnerships is the VYCC's relationship with the VTrans. Since 1997, the VYCC has partnered with VTrans to provide conservation jobs to hundreds of young people.

Together in 2011, VYCC and VTrans collaborated to field eight crews, to hire 72 Corps Members and 22 Crew Leaders, and to complete 24 weeks of work on projects throughout Vermont.

The variety and geographical distribution of VTrans-funded work projects helped conservation crews members learn technical work skills, gain exposure to an array of transportation enhancement projects, and improve critical life skills such as communication and teamwork. During the 7,764 hours of work that VTrans sponsored, crew members built bridges, constructed rain gardens, installed drainages, and constructed switchbacks along trails.

It is with great appreciation and gratitude that we recognize VTrans for their integral support for the past 15 years. Thank you!





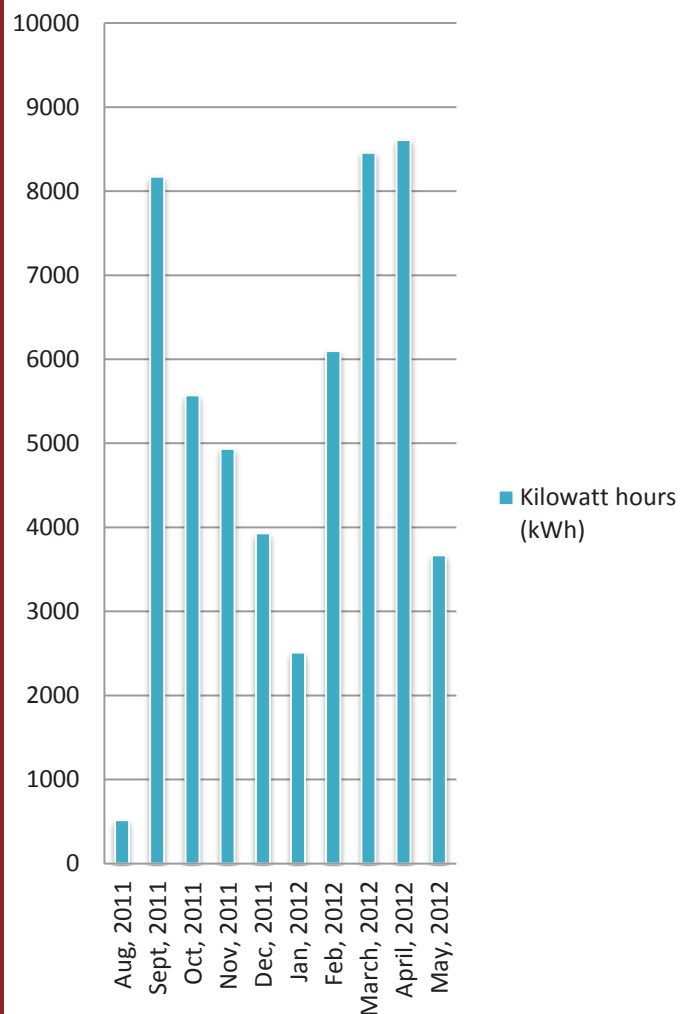
SOLAR ORCHARD

In August of 2011, the VYCC installed a 14-panel “Solar Orchard” and began harvesting the solar energy from the sun. Over the past nine months, the panels have produced over 52,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and we expect them produce at least 80,000 kilowatt hours annually. The VYCC currently uses approximately 40,000 kilowatt hours per year which means that, in addition to producing all of our own electricity, we are generating renewable electricity for the local community.

In many ways, the solar installation on the VYCC’s campus represents a prevalent contemporary challenge: how do we meet 21st century needs while honoring the aesthetics and values of the past century. And, can we do this in ways that create a shared connection to the land and form the foundation of the VYCC experience?

As a conservation organization, the installation of the Solar Orchard represents our on-going commitment to model responsible energy use, and now, production.

Total Production 2011 and 2012



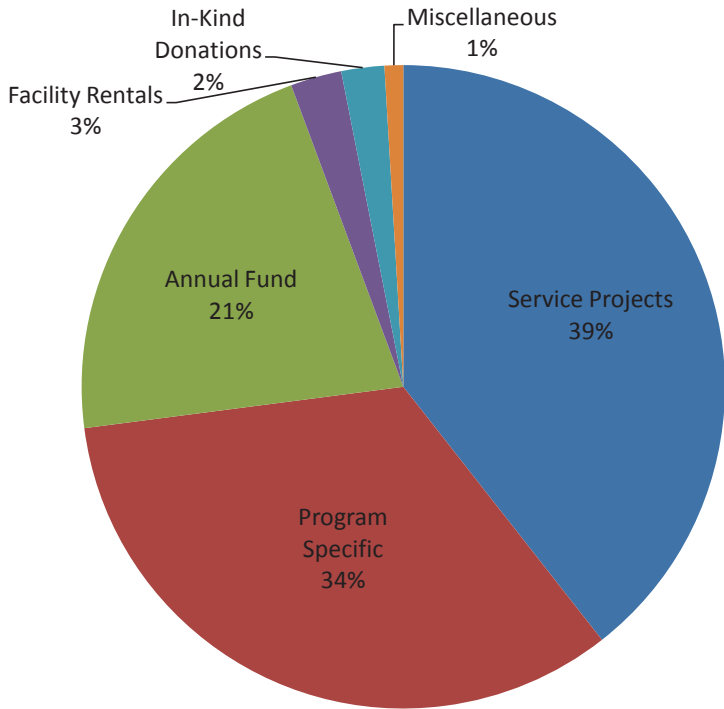


“This was an amazing experience that pushed me physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The VYCC has helped me recognize my strengths and weaknesses and encouraged me to become the person I want to be.”

Cheyenne, LEAP Corps Members

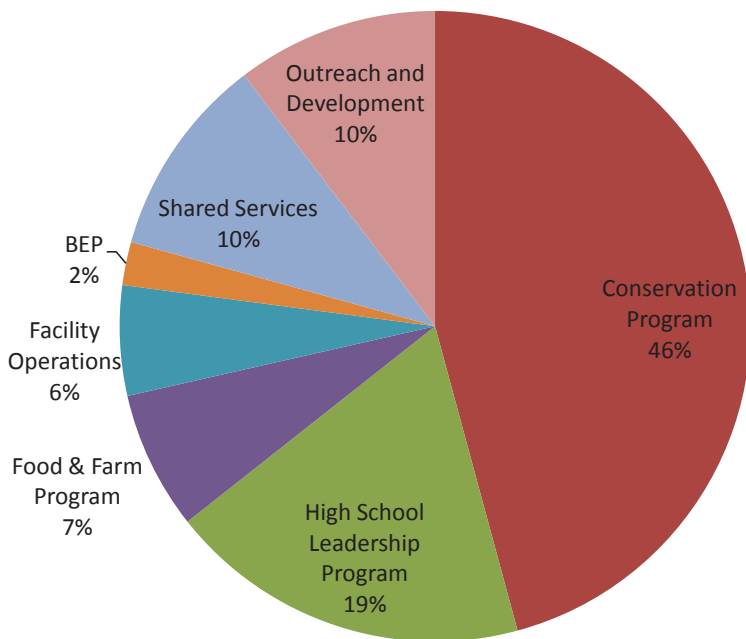
ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Our primary revenue streams remain consistent from previous years with Fee-For-Service (39%), Annual Fund (21%), High School Leadership Program (17%), Education and Training (13%), providing the primary revenue streams. We ended the year with a \$58,765 deficit, the vast majority of this being non-paid depreciation.



REVENUE

Service Projects	861,045
Program Specific	732,830
Annual Fund	467,293
Facility Rentals	56,158
In-Kind Donations	47,173
Miscellaneous	20,507
Total Revenue	2,185,006



EXPENSES

Conservation Program	1,027,270
High School Leadership Program	416,896
Food & Farm Program	159,057
Facility Operations	126,516
Business Enterprise Program (BEP)	49,586
Shared Services	232,346
Outreach and Development	232,099
Total Expenses	2,243,771

VYCC programs are possible because of individuals, families, and communities that care about Vermont's young people and landscapes. It is with great appreciation that we recognize all those who contributed to the VYCC in 2011. The preceding pages highlight the projects our crews completed this past year. But, it is because of the dedication of more than 1,200 donors that crew members have the opportunity to work and learn with the VYCC. Your support has been integral to our work and we are grateful for your continued support.

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culvert was a huge
accomplishment!
To see it go from
unusable to a
beautiful, working
culvert was a great
motivator for hard
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of hard work, but
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it makes you feel
amazing. It's also
a chance to do
something good for
your community."
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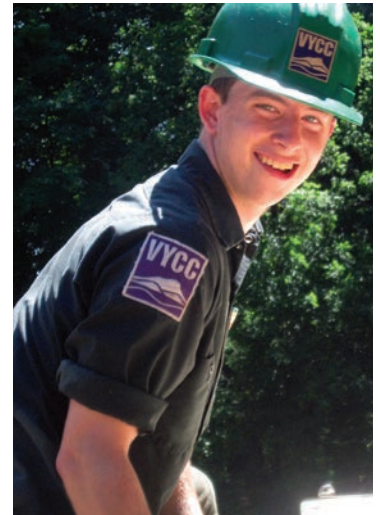
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Moosalamoo Association
Mt. Mansfield Union High
School
National Park Service
Northern Vermont Resource
Conservation and Development
Norwich Land Management
Council
Osprey Hill Farm
Recreational Trails Program
ReSOURCE
Richmond 4th of July Committee
Richmond Land Trust
Rumney Memorial School
Shelburne Paths Committee
Sleepy Hollow Inn, Ski and Bike
Center
Stowe Land Trust
The Big Heavy World
Foundation, Inc.
The Corps Network
The Edge Academy
The Farm Between
The Nature Conservancy
Town of Charlotte
Town of Essex
Town of Jericho
Town of Sharon

Town of Stowe
Town of Wallingford
Town of Williston
Union 32 High School
United States Forest Service
Upper Connecticut River
Mitigation and Enhancement



Fund
US Fish and Wildlife Service
UVM Extension Watershed
Alliance
Valley Cares Inc.
Vermont Agency of
Transportation (VTrans)
Vermont Association of Snow
Travelers
Vermont Department of
Environmental Conservation
Vermont Department of
Environmental Conservation,
Water Quality Division
Vermont Department of Labor
Vermont Division for the Blind
and Visually Impaired
Vermont FoodBank
Vermont Land Trust - King Farm
Vermont Mountain Bike
Association
Vermont Watershed Grants
Waitsfield Conservation
Commission
Wake Robin
White River Partnership
Winooski Natural Resources
Conservation District
Winooski Valley Park District
Woodstock Union High School
Wrightsville Conservation
Commission

*Note: Bold, italicized names
represent VYCC staff or Board
Members*



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an integral part of the VYCC. With their help we are able to accomplish tasks that keep all aspects of the organization operating smoothly.

Last year 164 volunteers completed 1,049 hours of work with the VYCC.

Groups of students, corporate employees, and individuals helped harvest produce, prepare meals for Corps Members, transport crews to work sites, and keep the West Monitor Barn looking beautiful....and this is just a partial list!

The VYCC can accommodate volunteer groups of all sizes, ages, and skills. From gardening and sumac removal, to interior painting and carpentry, there are a lot of project options. If you are interested in volunteering with the VYCC, contact Kelsey Adams at 802.434.3969 ext. 113.



THE HISTORIC WEST MONITOR BARN

Surrounded by four hundred acres of conserved agricultural and forested lands, the West Monitor Barn was originally constructed by the Whitcomb Family in 1903. Renovated by the VYCC in 2005, the barn now serves as the VYCC headquarters for year-round education and job training programs. This unique community venue is also available for weddings, meetings, and events. Interested in learning more about this historic and iconic treasure? For more information, call Kelsey Adams at 802.434.3969 ext. 113.





2012 CALENDAR

SPRING LEADERSHIP CREWS

Saturday, April 21st - Saturday, May 19th

SUMMER START-UP

Friday, June 22nd

SUMMER CONSERVATION SEASON

Saturday, June 23rd - Saturday, August 11th

FALL LEADERSHIP CREWS

Saturday, August 25rd -
Saturday, September 22nd

SCHOOL PROGRAM START UP

Friday, August 31st

ANNUAL MEETING AND DENIM & DIAMONDS

Saturday, September 22nd

ONLINE HOLIDAY AUCTION

Friday, November 23rd -
Sunday, December 16th



2011 HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Lauren Abrami

Youth Development
Coordinator

Tucker Andrews*

Farm Manager

Tim Birmingham

School Program Manager

Cailie Burns*

Development & Events
Manager

Jennifer Charter

Administration & Finance
Coordinator

Libby Copeland*

Administration & Finance
Coordinator

Harry Frank

Vice President of Programs

Kristin Freeman*

Administration & Finance
Manager

Paul Feenan*

Food and Farm Program
Coordinator

Bethany Sargent

Development &
Communication Manager

Thomas Hark*

President

Kate Hilfiker*

Operations Coordinator

Eliza Kenigsberg

Conservation Program
Coordinator

Breck Knauff*

Vice President of Program
Development

Mary McQuiggan

Conservation Program
Coordinator

Abigail Mendenhall

Administration & Finance
Manager

Lisa Nelson*

Conservation Program
Coordinator

Ry Parcell

Conservation Program
Manager

Amanda Payne

Farm Coordinator

Chris Ricker*

Conservation Program
Coordinator

Paul Schmidt*

Vice President of Operations

Pam Schriener*

Business Enterprise Program
Coordinator

Aaron Thurston*

Conservation Program
Manager

Keegan Tierney*

Operations Director

Don Bicknell*

Volunteer Extraordinaire

Note: Asterisk () represents
current VYCC Headquarters staff*



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West Monitor Barn

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YOUTH
CONSERVATION
CORPS**

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TEACHING INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL THEIR ACTIONS

