By Elizabeth Wood AICP, Community Planner, Town of Windham, NH

After the longest winter in recent memory the sun has finally come out and warmed the earth. Daffodil stems are appearing, trees are budding, and birds are singing the songs of spring. As refreshing as this is, you'll have to wait for sunset to enjoy another one of spring’s greatest joys. What is this nighttime phenomenon I speak of? Why—it is the mesmerizing sound of the peepers!

I don’t know about you, but after a long day at the office, and a late night Planning Board meeting I find the sound of the peepers to be more relaxing than any expensive spa treatment or night out with the girls. I first encountered this exquisite delicacy as I was driving home from work last week with the windows open for the first time in many months. I was content enough just to have a fresh breeze circulating my way—but then it hit me—the enchanting chorus of the peepers resembling the sound of sleigh bells caught me still in my tracks. Even though I was tired and eager to hit the sack, I pulled my vehicle over, stopped driving, and just listened.

This phenomenon of the peepers is a treasure—rare, and specific to this region. In my 33 years of living in various states around the US, I have never before heard this illustrious sound. Granted, I have heard the songs of other frogs, but have never had the privilege of the soothing enchanting chorus of congress of the peepers—at least not at this magnitude. A treasure such as this should be relished and preserved for future generations.

Unfortunately vernal pools, an essential factor in the lifecycle of the peeper, are threatened by development and other human activities surrounding the vernal pools. If vernal pools are contaminated or eliminated, the peepers may be but a fond memory of the past.

If we are to maintain the legacy of the peepers along with the mole salamanders, wood frogs, newts, and fairy shrimp, who also depend on vernal pools for survival, we must protect our vernal pools. Vernal pools occurring, in all of the Northern New England states, are the means by which these species are able to reproduce. In the early spring, adults migrate independently from forested areas to the pools where they meet and mate. The eggs hatch and their larvae or tadpoles develop over the next several months. In mid to late summer, they emerge and return to the forest.

These species cannot reproduce in a permanent water body such as Moosehead Lake (Maine) or Lake Winnipesaukee (New Hampshire) because the fish in these water bod-
By Carl Eppich, NNECAPA President

It’s really SPRING! What a winter we had in Northern New England. That’s all I am going to say about it!

In case you haven’t heard, the biggest news I have to report in the APA universe is that the APA Board of Directors announced on May 19th the selection of James M. Drinan, J.D., “Jim” as the new Executive Director of APA and the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). [See Jim’s picture to the right]. Paul Farmer, who has served as Executive Director for 13 years, is retiring at the end of June. Jim’s appointment will be effective on July 1st. The full news release from APA is available here.

APA National Conference – Adoption of Policy Guides:

In late April APA held its annual National Conference in Atlanta, GA, which I attended. Our NNECAPA Professional Development Officer or “PDO” Ben Frost, also attended the conference and served as our delegate to the Delegate Assembly. I want to mention that Ben volunteered for the APA committee that developed the draft Aging in Place Policy Guide which the Assembly adopted, along with a Policy Guide on Hazard Mitigation. It is good to have representation on aging issues from the ‘oldest’ region of the country. Thank you Ben! Both Policy Guides were approved at the Assembly. If you haven’t checked out the APA Policy Guides, they are all here.

APA National Conference – Anna Breinich inducted into FAICP

At a special ceremony on Sunday, Anna Breinich, past-President of AICP and Planning Director in Brunswick, Maine, was inducted into the Fellowship of the American Institute of Certified Planners or FAICP. The Chapter nominated her, and please join me in applauding her for her well-deserved recognition. You can read all about Anna’s significant contributions to community and the profession in the Chapter’s supporting letter here.

NNECAPA comes up short on Chapter President’s Council Grant for New Ruralism

While NNECAPA submitted a grant request for $9,500 (of a $39,660 project) to the Chapter President’s Council, this round they decided to fund one proposal for the New York Metro Chapter. I do not have the details on the grant request, but I heard it had to do with Super-storm Sandy recovery planning.

However, I do want to note the important project NNECAPA Past-President Peg Elmer, and Past-Treasurer Tara Bamford have been, and not doubt WILL, find funding to continue working on.

The proposal was to expand on NNECAPA’s New Ruralism initiative specifically a project to identify case studies highlight online the "ingredients that have made for successful innovation in rural communities, and to put that information into a format that can be easily shared with planners and communities around the country. The web portal can then be shared with other chapters and expanded with additional examples and lessons learned.

Our supporting narrative included, “Although the vast majority (84%) of Americans live in suburban and urban areas, the vast majority of the American landscape (90%) is rural. All but two APA chapters serve some rural communities. Yet the vast majority of tools written about and presented on are of little use to this 90% of the country. Most smart growth tools require a density that will not be seen in most of our country’s land area in our lifetimes. In the three Northern New England states for example, most communities do not have the water or sewer infrastructure needed to support village areas where one could walk to school, jobs and services.”

If anyone out there knows of other grant opportunities, Peg can be reached at elmer.pe1@gmail.com and Tara at tebamford@aol.com. Thanks to you both!

NNECAPA 2014 Conference – September 11th and 12th, Stoweflake Resort and Spa in Stowe, VT.

Before we all go into summer-mode, please think of registering ASAP for the NNECAPA Conference in Stowe, VT (especially if you have education/training funds that disappear on June 30th). My thanks to Mark Kane, the Vermont Director for NNECAPA, and all the Vermont members of NNECAPA and the Vermont Planners Association for their efforts to put on the conference!

Talk to yah in the summer, have a great one!
Carl F. Eppich, AICP
NNECAPA President
The New Hampshire Planners Association hosted “The Incredible Shrinking House,” a Brownbag Lunch training at the New Hampshire Municipal Association in Concord on March 28. The 90-minute event explored factors behind rising demand for smaller homes in the Granite State, examined best practices for cottage-style developments, and looked at model ordinances to accommodate and encourage such development in New Hampshire. The event was followed by a lively interactive discussion focused on some of the barriers to development of cottage-style developments, which traditionally involve the construction of high quality small homes clustered over a relatively small area with access to shared amenities like a central green or park space.

The brownbag consisted of presentations by Kyle Barker, principal and sole proprietor of Concord, NH-based Barker Architects, and Anne Duncan Cooley, executive director of the Upper Valley Housing Coalition serving communities along the Connecticut River Valley in New Hampshire and Vermont. Barker has taken an active interest in the design of cottage-style developments as part of his architecture practice while Cooley’s interest in such developments peaked in part due to her work in disaster recovery efforts. Cooley served as chair of Upper Valley Strong, the regional Tropical Storm Irene Long Term Recovery Committee, a multi-year collaboration of agencies, government, individuals and local organizations leading the local individual recovery effort. The committee helped design a cottage prototype for those displaced by natural disasters.

Approximately 14 planners and planning board members attended the event. There was a general consensus among those in attendance that while many NH communities would welcome such developments, zoning and land use requirements, in addition to a lack of familiarity regarding such developments hampered their expansion in the state. Those attending the annual NH Planners Conference on the UNH-Durham campus June 5 and 6 this year will have an opportunity to take a self-guided tour of one of the state’s few cottage-style developments, the Cottages at Durham, a student housing development located approximately one mile from the University of New Hampshire campus. To register for the conference, visit http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=q1rf99dal&oeidk=a07e99991c94f8f15ad.

After the conference, NHPA plans to host another educational event exploring redevelopment and revitalization efforts in Lowell, Massachusetts. The event, tentatively scheduled for late summer, will include a National Park Service canal tour. For more information, contact Mark Connors, NHPA professional development officer, at MarkC@nashuarpc.org.
ies eat the young before they are able to develop into adults. Even Mad River (Vermont) would be a difficult habitat for breeding because it too contains fish which love to feed on eggs and small hatchlings.

Fortunately, some towns are taking steps to protect Vernal Pools. The town of Windham, NH has an ordinance in place that should help preserve the continuance of the peepers and other delicate species. No cutting of vegetation or surface alteration is permitted within 25’ from the edge of a vernal pool. Additionally, junk yards are not permitted within 100’ of a vernal pool.

Unfortunately, Windham must rely primarily on individual property owner to be aware of the ordinance and cognizant of its importance. The ordinance only works as far as it is enforced. Anyone who violates Windham's ordinance is subject to Code Enforcement; however, the down side of this is enforcement most often happens after the fact. Once the disturbance to the 25’ vernal pool has already occurred, the peepers and other wildlife that depend on the vernal pools will have already been displaced and there is no guarantee that they will return post mitigation to restore the area. This is because the peepers and other amphibians often return to the same vernal pool where they were born for mating purposes.

One idea for further preventing disturbance is to mark the vernal pool buffer areas with placards. However, even this would be just one small step towards further protection. We must continue to seek out ways to protect our fragile habitat if we are to ensure the perpetuity of peepers and other amphibians within the Northern New England region.

For more information regarding vernal pools and Windham's vernal pool ordinance, please feel free to contact me at: ewood@windhamnewhampshire.com or (603) 965-1291.

Fun Fact: Peepers eat pesky fruit flies!

Vermont

By Mark Kane, VT State Director

As the season changes from winter to spring I find myself renewed and refreshed for a summer of outdoor activities in the warm sunshine of Northern New England. This idyllic mood is somewhat dampened, however, by the recent clarion call on climate change released by the White House (2014 National Climate Assessment) and its projection of more volatility in weather, generally warmer summers and more rain. While the news certainly isn’t surprising to anyone who has been following these issues, the consistency in the message only reinforces in my mind the need to get our strategic thinking caps on. With that in mind, the Vermont Planners Association team has been working hard on planning for this fall’s conference.

The upcoming Northern New England Planning Conference (NNECAPA 2014) will be held at the Stoweflake Resort and Spa in Stowe on September 11th and 12th. As noted in the last Grapevine Report, the topic for this year’s conference is “Big Picture Planning” and our conference planning committee (Amanda Holland, Jackie Cassino; Jim Donovan, Ken Neimczyk, Peg Elmer, Taylor Foster, Maren Hill, Cathynn Larose, Mickey McGlasson, Sarah McShane, John Adams, Sharon Murry, Tara Bamford and Steve Lotspeich) has been working diligently over the past months. From the main topic the committee has settled on three tracks that, collectively, squarely address the big picture issues in our region:

Transportation and Infrastructure: For many communities nothing is bigger than transportation and infrastructure projects. Whether it’s a revitalized streetscape, dealing with a new wind or solar electric facility or the extension of broadband internet connectivity; transportation and infrastructure projects can and have transformed many Northern New England Communities.

Climate Change and Resiliency: On a global scale the long-term impact of climate change will have a profound effect on the futures of countless people. Here in Northern New England, the potential future impact of climate change will create new challenges and perhaps some opportunities? The recent impact of Tropical Storm Irene on Vermont and parts of New Hampshire, the Christmas 2013 Ice Storm and ongoing changes in our local/regional climate has shaken many and driven others to arms.

Economic Development and Growth: Things in Northern New England tend to move slowly when compared to many areas of the country. In an age of shrinking federal dollars and increased scrutiny on expenditures at the state and local level, finding innovative ways to maintain economic vitality while managing for relatively low population growth is not easy. Luckily the Yankee spirit is alive and well and NNE is leading the innovation around the creative economy, the localvore movement, agri-business, and the nexus between outdoor recreation and tourism.

We are very pleased to announce that Vermont’s own Sue Minter will be our keynote speaker this year. For those of you who have not had the pleasure of meeting her, Sue is currently the Deputy Secretary for the Vermont Agency of Transportation and was Vermont’s point person for recovery efforts following the devastation wrought by Tropical Storm Irene nearly 3 years ago. Sue is a trained planner and has been carving a niche in the climate change adaptation/resiliency world that we believe will be informative and inspirational for all of us.

We are also pleased to announce our plenary panel entitled Regional Perspectives on Climate Change in the Northeast will be presented by Dr. Michael Rawlins and Dr. Alan Betts. Dr. Rawlins is an Assistant Professor, Department of Geosciences, and Manager at the Climate System Research Center at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Dr. Rawlins has focused his research on detailed analysis of climate change impacts in the north-
east; including extensive high resolution modeling work. Dr. Betts is an independent atmospheric scientist who has worked extensively under contract with the National Science Foundation, and is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union, the American Meteorological Society (AMS), the Royal Meteorological Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The focus of their presentation on our region will provide valuable insight to all NNE planners.

We are also pleased to announce that the 2014 Annual NNE Planning Awards will be presented at an evening reception at this year’s conference. In addition to highlighting the awards recipients in a more visible way to all NNECAPA members, we are going to ask each award recipient to provide a short (5 minute) slide show highlighting their work. It will be a great way for all of us to learn a little more about the work of our colleagues.

We have received nearly 20 excellent session proposals and will be distributing the program at the end of May. We are soliciting sponsorship, so if you know of an organization who might be interested in sponsoring this important event, please let me know. We look forward to seeing all of you in September.

**VPA AWARDS**

The Vermont Planners Association is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2014 planning awards. These awards are an annual event that has occurred for more than twenty years to recognize outstanding achievement in community planning in Vermont.

**Hugh Tallman**, of Belvidere, Vermont, is recognized as the 2014 Citizen Planner of the Year, for his commitment to improving his community.

**Sarah Hadd**, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town of Colchester, has received the 2014 Mark Blucher Professional Planner of the Year Award.

**The Town of Brattleboro** is the recipient of VPA’s 2014 Plan of the Year Award for their development of the 2013 Brattleboro Town Plan.

The award for 2014 Project of the Year Award is given to the **Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development** for their Vermont Downtown Action Team (VDAT).

The awards will be presented in the fall at the organization’s annual meeting. Please visit [http://www.vermontplanners.org/awards.html](http://www.vermontplanners.org/awards.html) for more information about the awards and our 2014 award winners.

**New Hampshire**

*By Elizabeth Wood, NH State Director*

The Town of Merrimack, NH has hired Jillian Harris, AICP, as their new Planning & Zoning Administrator in the Community Development Department, starting May 5, 2014. Jillian comes to us after spending the last 5 years with Southern NH Planning Commission in Manchester, and earned her AICP certification in November. Jillian replaces Nancy Larson, who left Merrimack in March for the City Planner position in Concord.

Registration is now open for the New Hampshire Planners Association 2014 Annual Conference. The two-day conference, “The Art of Placemaking,” will be held June 5 and 6 on the University of New Hampshire campus in Durham. This year’s conference will explore a diverse range of topics including complete streets, mill redevelopment, landscape architecture, the state’s booming microbrewery industry, the challenges of permitting new development in historic districts, the rise of the citizen planner, and the association of walkable communities to social capital, among others.


Attendees should register here: [http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=q1rff9dab&oeidk=a07e99991c94f8f15ad](http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=q1rff9dab&oeidk=a07e99991c94f8f15ad)
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Events Calendar

Annual NNECAPA Conference
September 11-12, 2014
Stoweflake Resort & Spa, Stowe, VT

APA Webcasts
- July 11 - Northern New England Chapter - Current Perspectives on Inclusionary and Affordable Housing - Speakers: Kevin Walsh, Chelsea Maclean and Benjamin Frost, Esq. - CM Pending - Law Credits!
- June 20 - Florida Chapter - Planners and Planters: What Planners Need to Know about Creating a Sustainable Landscape for Today and Tomorrow - Speakers: Laura Sanagorski, Ted Kozak, AICP and Eric Power, AICP - CM Pending
- June 6 - Economic Development Division - Retail, Race and Regional Economic Development in Chicago’s Southern Suburbs - Speakers: Mike Hoffman, AICP, Bridget Lane, David Mekarski, AICP, Michael Brown and Janet Smith - CM Pending

To register for the webcasts visit: http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts

Consult our Calendar frequently for additional professional development opportunities: www.nnecapa.org/calendar

ARE YOU WORKING ON AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

HAVE YOU JUST FINALIZED THE CREATION OR UPDATE ON A PLAN YOU ARE PROUD OF?

Please share your successes with your peers and submit an article for the NEW Northern New England Community Highlight section of the Yankee Planner!

Contact NNECAPA PIO Sandrine Thibault (sthibault@burlingtonvt.gov) for information and publication deadlines.