

## ALEX WELLS - VERNAL POOL MONITORING PROJECT COORDINATOR



Alex Wells is serving at the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) this year, managing the vernal pool monitoring program (VPMon). The busiest time of year for the program is the spring, when vernal pools are active throughout Vermont and citizen scientist volunteers are collecting data. When Alex started service, he had eleven volunteers ready to collect data at six different vernal pools. By the time the spring season had begun, and data collection was ready to take off, Alex had a total of 118 adults and 7 kids as volunteers. His volunteer recruitment benefitted from hosting several vernal pool monitoring trainings around the state, attracting almost 200 people! There are even more people who are eager to help out in 2020! Collectively, this year, the citizen science volunteers have collected data at 49 different vernal pools, completely blowing Alex's original goal of 15 out of the water. In only the second year of the program, and the first full year of data collection, Vermont Center for Ecostudies considers that a massive success. In addition to the monitoring program, Alex is also assisting with the creation of a vernal pool interactive database where members of the public can find existing vernal pools, as well as add monitoring data to it. This database will combine both the mapping and monitoring aspect of vernal pools. Earlier this year, Alex was able to take on a grant writing project solo, for the database, and was awarded \$3,600 to contribute to the project! Way to go! Alex is also diving a bit further into the audio data collected at vernal pools this year by using the program /R to analyze the sound files for frog calls. He has some trouble shooting to do with the software, but he is optimistic that he will be able to acquire the sound data that he is after. Other things that Alex has been up to in service include participating in the VCE Biothon around the state, spreading the educational gospel about vernal pools in various education workshops, and collaborating with Burlington High School students for their service-learning class. He has gone out with the high school students several times to map vernal pools around Chittenden County, finding several potential pools not yet mapped and providing outreach to landowners in order to pique their interest for vernal pools and VCE. Keep up the great service, Alex!

## ALLIE DINWIDDIE - WATER QUALITY PLANNER



It has been a busy spring for Allie Dinwiddie, ECO member at the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC)! She finished assisting 21 different towns in receiving funds through the Grants-in-Aid pilot program, which provides resources for Towns to implement road drainage Best Management Practices (BMPs) to comply with the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). Allie approved proposed BMPs for the Grants-in-Aid program and helped towns identify potential road improvement projects that could fall under the grant. Many towns are currently completing construction on projects Allie approved this Spring and Summer! Allie is also continuing to help municipalities complete Road Erosion Inventories (REIs), required under MRGP, by teaching municipal road crews how to use a spatial data collection tool ACRPC staff had previously developed, called the Fulcrum Road Erosion and Drainage Inventory (FREDI) tool. Late this past winter, Allie submitted a nomination to the Vermont Planners Association's Project of the Year Award on behalf of ACRPC staff (including herself) for the creation and implementation of FREDI, and it won! Although the accolades were nice,

ACRPC staff and Allie have continued improving FREDI over the last couple months to make it even more user-friendly. Allie has also written up an instruction manual for municipal staff on how to use FREDI, which she is currently finalizing, and collaborated closely with a fellow staff member to edit/finalize five Capital Improvement Plans for towns that have completed their REIs. These Capital Improvement Plans, which must be approved by town select boards, provide a project and budget plan for municipalities to address non-complying road segments identified through REIs. As more towns complete their REIs, Allie will continue to assist them with creating Capital Improvement Plans. Additionally, thanks to Allie completing a couple grant applications, more towns in Addison County received \$8,000 in funding from Better Roads to complete REIs! She has been indispensable during her time at ACRPC for ensuring Addison County Towns' current and continued compliance with the MRGP! In a slight change of pace, Allie also assisted the Addison County River Watch Collaborative with their surface water sampling efforts for the DEC's La Rosa program. She developed an inventory of property owners for 60+ sampling sites Collaborative volunteers have monitored over the last 6 years to *streamline* future sampling and provide further outreach to landowners about the Collaborative's efforts. She also updated volunteer sheets for all of these sites to provide graphics, driving and walking access directions, parking instructions, field photos, and safety information. For the month of July, Allie will be charged with coordinating volunteer sampling efforts at a couple sampling locations on the Lemon Fair in addition to keeping the show on the road (literally) for her other projects. Keep up the great service for Addison County municipalities, Allie!

## CHRISTOPHER GAYNOR – WATER QUALITY PLANNING ASSOCIATE



Down in southern Vermont, ECO member Gaynor is serving with the Windham Regional Commission. At this point in his service, his main project has been winding down significantly. He was focused for much of his service on a feasibility study on urine diversion technologies to replace failing septic systems across Windham County. All that remains for Gaynor to do for the study is to finish some locator maps that demonstrate soil types and floodplain locations in order to compare to models for these new septic systems and help towns make the best decision based on these metrics. Currently, for the field season, Gaynor is assisting the Connecticut River Conservancy with their water sampling efforts for the La Rosa program. He has been managing around 25 volunteers for well over 50 sampling sites as well as sampling 3 sites himself along the Green River. All the sites are within the Connecticut River watershed and are for the Deerfield River Watershed Alliance and the Southeastern Vermont Watershed Alliance. When not collecting water sampling, managing volunteers, or making maps, Gaynor is involved in creating landslide models for areas along the Connecticut River (SUPER AWESOME). Through digital elevation modeling, slope stability modeling, and soil loss equations, Gaynor is creating landslide potential models for areas within the watershed. Unrelated to his regular service, Gaynor has also been serving on a restorative justice panel for Youth Services where he is able to support youth with misdemeanor offenses and substance abuse issues. Keep up the great service down south in Brattleboro, Gaynor!

## DAVID WARDROP - GIS & FIELD TECHNICIAN



David Wardrop has been serving this year with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. Most recently, David volunteered at an Agency of Ag sponsored event called Breakfast on the Farm where he was about to chat with attendees about what they enjoyed hand out surveys. In the office, he recently created a survey for farmers to fill out pertaining to the Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP), which provides financial assistance for farms to purchase equipment that will help improve water quality in surface water run-off. Also, for CEAP, David has been updating Agency of Ag map data to include the acreage that farmers use certain capital equipment on, such as a manure injection system. After reviewing survey results regarding CEAP, David will assist in making revisions to the grant to better serve Vermont farmers. David is also involved in launching a database in which water quality partners throughout the basin can access and use to collaborate on water quality improvement projects. The purpose of this database is to create an avenue for more collaboration between watershed groups in addressing the TMDL. David has been creating a tutorial for how to use the database as well as updating maps with Agency of Ag projects to be included in the database. When he is not in the office, David sometimes will go out to farm inspections with inspectors and then help with follow up reports for inspections. Keep up the great service for Vermont farmers, David!

## ELANA FELDMAN – BATTENKILL WATERSHED HABITAT STEWARD



Elana Feldman is serving at the Batten Kill Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA-BKW) in Bennington, Vermont. Ever since the weather warmed up, she has been very busy running workshops to teach people about invasive species and how to manage them. Thus far she has conducted seven workshops, totaling at a little bit over 100 people. She has held four workshops for the general public, two for school groups, and 1 for a town select board. Currently Elana is transitioning to management projects around the Batten Kill watershed. For invasive removals, she is going to tackle a fishing access site in Manchester in order to remove poison parsnip and walk roads lined with purple loosestrife to snip flowers. One of her biggest projects this service year has been an invasive species removal and native tree planting at Arlington Recreation Park. During the winter Elana was able to attend a select board meeting for Arlington to discuss the need for this project. After receiving permission from the select board she wrote a grant, which was accepted, and she has since ordered trees and is in the process of finding volunteers! Elana has also been monitoring forest service land on the Batten Kill River that has been through a removal of invasive species. She is there to see if the plants are making a comeback. During the rest of her time, Elana started an Instagram page for the CISMA, go follow her @cismabkw! Keep up the good service getting rid of those icky invaders, Elana!

**JAC HUETTENMOSER –  
MONTPELIER PARKS & WATERSHED STEWARD**



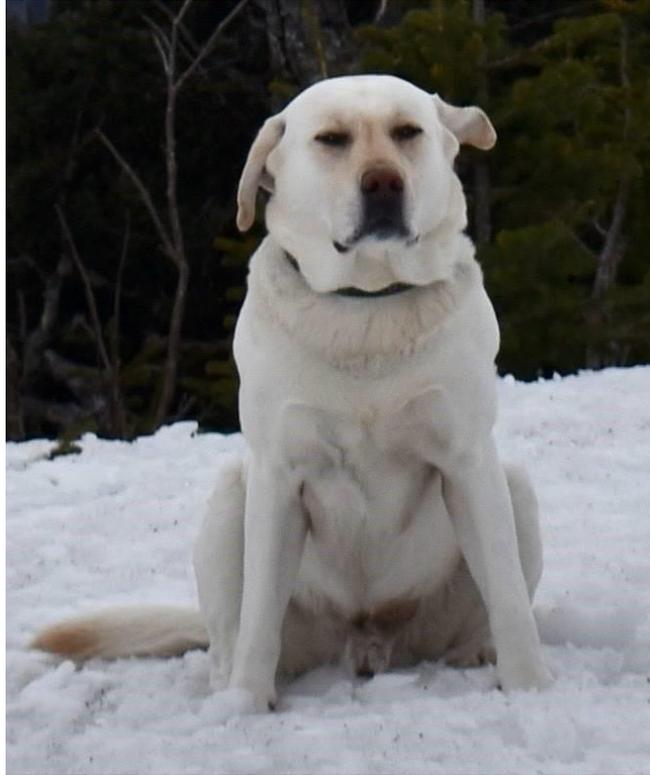
ECO member Jac Huettenmoser is serving at the Montpelier Parks and Trees Department this year. Jac's service this spring and early summer has been busy with volunteer groups and events. For Earth Day, in April, Jac hosted several ECO members in Hubbard Park for an invasive pull and tree planting. Most recently Jac and her team has been hosting an NCCC group from Iowa for a total of 7 weeks. Jac has led the NCCC group in service projects such as tree planting, pulling invasive plant species, and some trail work. She has also had the crew help at the Montpelier Parks event, Parkapalooza in Hubbard Park. For the Parkapalooza event, Jac has been very busy helping organize for the event by doing things like recruiting volunteers and people for skill swap lessons! Some other ECO members were able to participate in the skill swap, teaching skills such as spoon carving and sock mending! The NCCC volunteer group has wrapped up their service and pretty soon Jac will be hosting another group, Volunteers for Peace. Of the many duties this group will have, one will be installing the new park signs that Jac created using the Generator Makerspace in Burlington. Currently, Jac is starting projects that will continue into her next year of service with Montpelier Parks and Trees, one of which consists of some major bike path improvements. Jac will be collaborating with a landscape architect to develop some features along the bike path, improving the flow overall and adding noteworthy features. So far this year, Jac and her crews have planted over 1,000 trees in the parks. Keep up the great service for Montpelier's wonderful parks, Jac!!

## JENEVRA WETMORE - WATERSHED OUTREACH TECHNICIAN



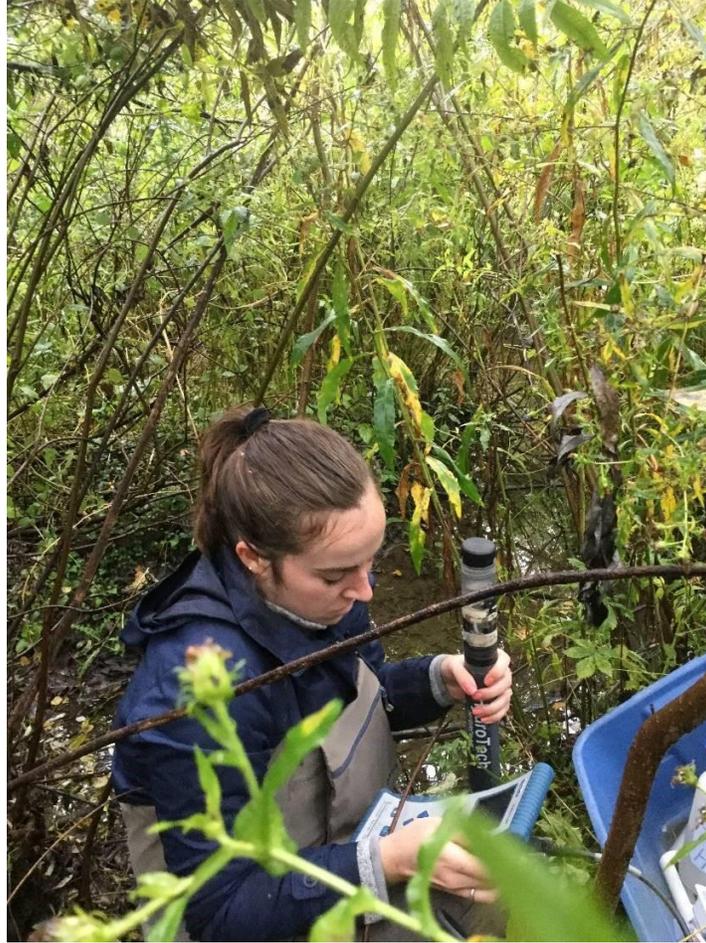
Jenevra Wetmore is serving at the Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA) and the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee (VTWSR) this year. Most recently Jenevra had the pleasure of attending conferences centered around water quality: The Lake Between and Watersheds United Vermont. For her service with the MRBA, Jenevra has been assisting with grant applications, collecting water samples at 24 different La Rosa sites, and preparing for tree plantings coming up this summer. The MRBA is in its 15th year of sampling for the La Rosa partnership, a statewide effort facilitated by the Agency of Natural Resources that is bent on gathering data about our surface waters in order to find out where to allocate conservation efforts. Jenevra's role in participating in this program is to collect water samples (monthly, with three rain events), as well as consult past sampling maps, GIS data, and Google Earth, in order to figure out where to put more sampling sites. As a result of monitoring surface waters in the Missisquoi River Basin, Jenevra is now organizing three different tree plantings as a part of a pollution prevention grant: one planting in a tributary to the Missisquoi and two plantings directly on the river. As a part of an education and outreach grant that was awarded to the MRBA, Jenevra has been interviewing farmers for conservation and stewardship success stories in order to share these stories via the website and a series of postcards. Sharing the stories of the successes of conservation efforts will help other people who share the river to conserve their land as well. When a farmer shares a story that is not a "success story", Jenevra visits the farm to investigate and brainstorm about what can be done to fix the problem. For her service in VTWSR, Jenevra completely redesigned the organizations newsletter while she was writing the most recent publication. She has been highlighting success stories on the website for community grants that VTWSR gives out to community members; the stipulation for these grants being that they benefit the river while also maintaining community values. Lastly, Jenevra has been preparing for a community sojourn down the entire length of the Wild & Scenic Trout and Missisquoi Rivers. Nothing like a good paddle down the river to celebrate their beauty! Keep up the wonderful service for our surface waters, Jenevra.

## JENN SMITH - STEWARDSHIP AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR



Jenn, as the Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator at the Middlebury Area Land Trust has been very busy in the final few months of service as she gets ready to embark on motherhood! Just recently, Jenn organized a tour of Monument Farms for the public to learn about their waste management strategy and use of their anerobic digester, since they are a huge dairy operation situated immediately adjacent to the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM). Jenn also has been instrumental in preparing Middlebury for Green Up Day, as the coordinator for the event. In addition to taking suggestions from community members about the event, she has been communicating with the public about the location of trucks, bags, and drop off locations, as well as coordinating volunteer groups in order to cover the most ground. The long-time care taker of the TAM is soon stepping away from his maintenance role, so Jenn has also been developing a trail management plan for when the next person takes over. The North Country Trail, winding through eight states already, has been approved to be connected to the Appalachian Trail in Vermont! Jenn has been talking to landowners, the Forest Service, and the Green Mountain club about connecting the TAM to both the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail and the North Country Trail. This would be an awesome opportunity to create an intersection between two trails spanning multiple states, while also involving the TAM and the Long Trail. In order to get things ready for her departure from the position at MALT, Jenn has been developing a list of her tasks along with status so that they can be taken over accordingly.

## KRISTEN SWITZER - ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICIAN



ECO member Kristen Switzer is serving at the Department of Environmental Conservation within the Monitoring, Assessment, and Planning Program (MAPP) in Watershed Management. The bulk of Kristen's service is involved in the La Rosa Partnership Program as support for the partners enrolled in the program. Lately the program has been going through a review process, allowing partners to comment on changes they wish to see in the program in the future. Back in late March she held a meeting for partners to discuss the LPP guidelines and funding procedures for the year. With all the rain Vermont has gotten this year it has been a busy season of sampling for our watershed groups! Kristen will be leading a focus group sometime later this month to work out some of these changes in the program. She is also conducting site visits with partners in the program for purposes such as water sampling, volunteer training, and sampling site identification. One program partner for La Rosa has been trying different ways to utilize and organize their data, so Kristen has been using GIS to map out all their projects and prioritize sampling efforts above and below these projects to assess water quality data for changes. Unrelated to La Rosa, next week Kristin will be helping to teach a course called Wildlife Management for Educators. She will be teaching about stream health, biodiversity, fish, bugs, and how the state collects and uses data to analyze these metrics. For most of the spring, Kristin was involved in the long-term monitoring of acid impaired lakes in Vermont. She was tasked with hiking up to these high-altitude lakes to collect water samples to bring to the lab for the study. You've done some great service this year for water quality projects in Vermont, Kristen!

## LAURA PRATT - EDUCATION & OUTREACH COORDINATOR



Laura Pratt is serving at the Lake Champlain Committee this year and has had a busy spring thus far! Throughout the month of April, she was heavily involved with planning for and organizing April Stools Day events. April Stools Day was celebrated all month long by Lake Champlain Committee, with four separate events happening in St. Albans, Winooski, South Burlington & Burlington, and Williston. During April Stools Day events volunteers and organizers alike are armed with gloves, bags, trowels, and buckets and sent out into parks to scoop up dog poop to keep it from washing away in our surface waters. These events are crucial for water quality this time of year because all the spring rains are bound to wash away the dog poop that pet owners leave behind to get buried in the snow. Laura's outreach for these events garnered over 75 volunteers! At just one of these events, volunteers picked up a total of 327.6 pounds of dog poop. What a great month for water quality. Laura has also been writing a few nature articles here and there, discussing things like water conservation during the rainy season versus the dry season. She is planning an invasive species water chestnut pull in St Albans Bay for July 10<sup>th</sup> and has secured an aquatic invasive species expert from the Agency of Natural Resources to guide the identification and removal of water chestnut. Very soon Laura will be coordinating the volunteer effort of monitoring cyanobacteria on the lake, including monitor trainings in late May and early June that are open to the general public. Keep getting those volunteers excited about water quality initiatives, Laura!

## LIZA LEMIEUX - CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN



Liza Lemieux is serving at the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD) for the year. A bulk of her service is now managing the water sampling programs that the District oversees. In conjunction with the La Rosa surface water monitoring program through the state, Liza collects samples from 32 total sites in Franklin county. The Hungerford Brook and Black Creek watersheds contain a bulk of the sites (28 total), thus necessitating the coordination of volunteers for helping to collect samples. Liza also applied for and was accepted to sample four more sites along Deer Brook in Georgia, each of which represents different land uses in the watershed: agriculture, wetland, roads including interstate 89, and an industrial park/developed town center area. These four sites will help determine the impact of the different land uses and guide future conservation efforts to improve the water quality of Deer Brook. Over the winter, Liza assisted with completing a report about water sampling results from La Rosa monitoring sites last year which was shared widely throughout the county's watershed groups and with the tactical basin planner. In addition to all of the La Rosa program sites that Liza is managing, she has also been put in charge of the District's part of a statewide tile drain study - collecting water samples every other week from various farms throughout the county, managing the data and results, and writing quarterly reports which are submitted to the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. Prior to becoming very busy with water sampling, Liza provided invaluable assistance to a local farmer by conducting a feasibility assessment for planting no-till corn on several of his fields. Since she was taking a no-till intensive webinar training at the time, she was able to provide technical advice about soil erosion while also evaluating the cost/benefit of his options along with the environmental impact. In her dealings with this farmer, Liza was able to get him signed up to take a grazing class through the district after he decided to forgo planting corn and improve his grazing strategy instead. In addition to all of Liza's conservation efforts, she organized a world water day celebration in her office by holding a weeklong competition to bring awareness to water consumption. Not only did she have a wonderful time putting this event together, her efforts for world water day were profiled in the Natural Resources Conservation Service monthly leadership newsletter! Liza is developing a display for the conservation district to use at events and will soon be helping the district get ready for their tree sale coming up! Keep up the great service, Liza!

## MATT LACEY – CONSERVATION OUTREACH COORDINATOR



Matt Lacey is our new ECO member serving at The Nature Conservancy for the remainder of the service year. Coming from the Vermont Natural Resources Council, Matt was able to connect with The Nature Conservancy during his time with VNRC, and through this connection he joined their team via the ECO AmeriCorps program! Matt's main focus at The Nature Conservancy is on the reclassification of the Otter Creek Wetland Complex. Currently the wetland is all a Class 2 wetland, but many stakeholders in the area are seeking to reclassify sections of the swamp into Class 1. Changing the classification would provide greater protections for the wetland, such as doubling the required riparian buffer area. Matt's role in this process as an AmeriCorps member at The Nature Conservancy has been as a part of a steering committee formed by TNC and conservation commissions in Cornwall, Salisbury, and Middlebury. He has been facilitating meetings in Addison County with the conservation commissions as well as reaching out to select boards to do some outreach about the reclassification. In order to educate landowners about the potential change and reasons for doing so, Matt is developing promotional educational material for landowners and plans to host several informal public meetings intent on clearing misconceptions about what a reclassification might mean for the area. A petition is being put together for the idea, with Matt serving as the coordinator between conservation commissions. Another project that Matt has been researching for in his service is designating TNC property surface waters as Outstanding Resources Waters Designation. Specifically, two brooks in TNC properties: Cobb Brook and Calivale Brook. Having this designation would ensure further protections for these surface waters. Keep up the great service for these water bodies, Matt!

## NATHANIEL SHARP – CITIZEN SCIENCE OUTREACH NATURALIST



As the citizen science outreach naturalist at Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Nathaniel's main role is to teach people how to participate in citizen science projects using tools such as iNaturalist and eBird. He has been giving presentations and conducting workshops across the state since the fall, the next one being on April 27th at the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. Nathaniel's workshops usually start with a short presentation before moving outside to identify and document flora and fauna using eBird and iNaturalist. For those who have not been able to make it to Nathaniel's workshops, he holds live events every Wednesday at noon on VCE's Facebook page, answering questions and providing helpful tips and tricks for contributing citizen science data. More opportunities to take a walk in the woods with Nathaniel will be available when he starts his birding trips to interesting places for anyone who would like to tag along! Beginning in the spring and continuing throughout the rest of his service, VCE will be conducting a pilot year of the Vermont Native Bee Survey in Chittenden County with Nathaniel's help in order to assess the diversity and abundance of native bee species. Another interesting project that Nathaniel is involved in is called the Birder Broker program. VCE partnered with Bridget Butler aka. "The Bird Diva" to implement a program to connect private landowners with birders in an effort to get more birders out on private property at locations that they may not have been able to access otherwise. The goal is to have more documentation of breeding bird species in Vermont, since well over 70% of land is privately owned. Keep up the great birding, I mean service, Nathaniel!

## SUJATA GAUTAM - OUTREACH & EDUCATION SPECIALIST



Sujata is serving her second year at the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District and having loads of fun in service! Just this past week, Sujata had the opportunity to present at a conference in Chicago called The New Horizons in Conservation; focusing on diversity, equity, and justice in the environmental field. Sujata's presentation was titled: #Gettingthingsdone: Navigating Vermont's Universal Recycling Law, and it was followed by a panel featuring other young professionals answering questions from conference attendees about their positions in environmental fields. Sujata will also be presenting at another conference coming up this month, the Northeast Resource Recovery Association conference in New Hampshire. She will be discussing her projects that she has done throughout her service as an AmeriCorps member. Way to represent AmeriCorps, Sujata!!! In the meantime, she has been busy with managing and leading the Lamoille Waste Warriors Volunteer Program. Currently, the volunteers are gearing up for Green Up Day this Saturday! As May contains International Composting Awareness Week, Sujata plans on celebrating composting with the community- all month long! She will be promoting several "Basics of Backyard Composting Workshops" and communicating about special deals on composting products so that people are well equipped to manage their food waste. This winter Sujata was able to assist the Lamoille Community House, a warming shelter, with managing their food waste. This led to about 125 gallons of food scraps being diverted to the Lamoille Soil Composting Facility! Now that the community house is closed for the season, Sujata is developing an infographic to share with them to let them know the impact of their efforts! Now that the growing season is upon us, Sujata is excited to get back out to farmers markets in her region to do some community outreach about composting and the Universal Recycling Law. Of the many things that Sujata does in her position, one she really enjoys is visiting classrooms to teach kids about recycling. She has a lot of fun and the kids love playing the sorting game and grading the trash and recycling bins in the classroom. Sounds like you're finishing off your second year strong, Sujata

## Theron Lay-Sleeper – Community Zero Waste Assistant



Theron Lay-Sleeper is serving at the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District this year. As we approach the full implementation of ACT 148 (Vermont's Universal Recycling Law), Theron has been conducting outreach with businesses in the district about their waste management practices and how the new law is going to affect their current methods of recycling and composting. He teamed up with his colleagues and some folks from ANR to help educate businesses on how to remain compliant under the full effect of the new law. Theron has organized and staffed events in the district including the state's first ever mattress recycling event, the Montpelier repair cafe, and an E-Waste Collection event. The repair cafe was held at the end of March, and about 50% of the items that were brought in were able to get fixed! On Earth Day Theron and the district held an E-Waste Collection event with the help of volunteers and were able to recapture and divert loads of electronic waste. In May, Theron and the district held the first ever (in Vermont) mattress recycling event in Barre! With the help of a handful of awesome volunteers, they were able to divert 124 mattresses from the landfill! In the coming weeks, Theron is assisting Twinfield High School by building a waste sorting station for the cafeteria so students can sort food scraps, recyclables, and trash. He is also helping build a new community compost site at a housing development in Barre to help residents turn their food scraps into compost. Keep up the great service for central Vermont, Theron!

## TOMMY OTT - ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING ASSISTANT



Tommy is serving as the planning and assessment assistant at Vermont Land Trust. During the long winter, he was tasked with day to day project support for the farm side of Vermont Land Trust. Tommy has been assisting by making preliminary maps for farms seeking conservation easements, as well as supporting grant projects from the NRCS for on-farm conservation projects. Since field season is coming up, Tommy has been getting ready to make his own visits to VLT conserved properties to check in with the owners personally as well as make sure they are following the terms of the easement. He will be making these visits at about 50 different properties conserved by VLT. If any landowners are looking to make changes on their land, Tommy will assist them with going through the proper proposal process in order to stay within the terms of the conservation easement. For the most part, the lands that he is conducting these monitoring visits on are in southwestern Vermont. In addition to these visits, Tommy is getting ready for a buffer planting project that he has been organizing for a farm up in Newport! Keep up the great service in land conservation, Tommy!