



Steering Team Meeting Notes 11-12 May 27, 2025

Present

Amy Cunningham, Rachel Onuf, Eileen Corcoran, Katelynn Averyt, Tom McMurdo, Joseph Watson, Carolyn Frisa, Jane Cadwalader, Jamie Duggan, Meg Campbell, Michele Bailey, Paddy Reagan, Laura Trieschmann, Taiga Christie

Updates

The meeting began with an update on the 2025 Resilient Cultural Organizations Cohort. This disaster planning workshop is generously funded by the WaterWheel Foundation. Amy Cunningham shared that the launch will take place on June 10th when the eleven performing arts organizations will meet for a full day of training. The organizations were chosen based on geographic diversity and had to have a building and staff. The Cohort will meet over the next year working on general risk assessments and developing a disaster plan and continuity of operations plan (COOP) with guidance from VACDaRN and specialists, as needed. The Resilient Cultural Organizations (RCOs) will also receive a \$3,000 stipend. The June 10th launch will have sessions by Jesse Keel from the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) and Anna Glover; both presented at the 2024 VACDaRN Day of Learning. Jesse will hold a session on dPlan and the risk assessment. Anna will spend the day with participants and provide a summary talk at the end. After the workshop, there will be a party inviting the RCOs, VACDaRN Steering Committee, and others to build the resiliency community.

Rachel Onuf invited the members of the Steering Team to let the co-leads know if they would like to participate in any of the follow-up virtual meetings with the RCOs.

Meg Campbell asked which organizations are taking part? Amy listed the participants: Bennington Museum, Brattleboro Museum and Arts Center, Catamount Arts, Chandler Ctr for the Arts, Clemmons Family Farm, Island Arts, Northern Stage, Rural Arts Collaborative, Town Hall Theater, Vermont Studio Center, and Weston Playhouse.

Rachel updated the Steering Team on federal funding from the National Historical Records and Publications Commission (NHPRC). VHRP is eligible for the NHPRC State Board Programming Grant (SBPG) that funds activities of the Vermont Historical Records Advisory Board (VHRAB). Rachel submitted an application on May 7th and should get notice if awarded in November. It is for a two-year, approximately \$100,000 grant that helps fund the activities of VHRP. The grant proposal includes funding

for activities related to VACDaRN. The grant proposal requests funding for two cycles of RCO Cohorts of historical records repositories, \$50,000 for reprints, and \$4,000 for cultural asset mapping.

Steering Team Updates

Eileen Corcoran, Vermont Historical Society has had its IMLS grants “reinstated” after a temporary restraining order in the ALA v. IMLS lawsuit. VHS is being cautious but moving forward. Eileen gave a big thank you to the donors who helped them fund the Active Collections program for the next year. H.494 was approved by the legislature and includes \$700,000 in FY 2026 for mitigating water infiltration at the Spaulding Building in Barre.

Joseph Watson, Middlebury College, has summer classes for Middlebury Language Schools and Bread Loaf. The library recently received a dataset from GreenGlass (WorldCat) that measures the holdings of their published collections and compares them to holdings from other libraries locally and globally. They will use the data to determine the circulation of their books and weed the collection.

Katelynn Averyt, Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, didn't have any updates, but she would like to help with the RCO Cohort.

Jamie Duggan, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP), opened their historic sites last weekend. They had one of their best seasons last year and hope to have even more visitors this season. Their budget was reduced by \$200,000 but grants and taxes held them at level funding. The budget restored money for historic markers and they have 15 going up this year. On the VACDaRN related front, Jaime has been responding to moisture issues! A leaking HVAC impacted some shelving and books in the President Calvin Coolidge Historic Site requiring cleaning and remediation.

Jane Cadwalader, VHRP, attended the League of Local Historical Societies and Museums conference in Middlebury earlier in May and is looking forward to the upcoming RCO Cohort Kick Off Day.

Rachel Onuf, VHRP, thanked Laura Trieschman for offering the *Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* workshop in May. There are two upcoming VHRP workshops open to the public. On June 9th, the VHRP and Collections Care and Conservation Alliance will present an *Unfolding Documents and Humidification* workshop conducted by Carolyn Frisa, Paper Conservator and VACDaRN Steering Team member, at the Forest Center, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park. On June 17th, there is a hands-on Salvage Workshop at Shelburne Museum co-sponsored by CCCA and the VHRP to learn about and practice salvaging burned materials. Both workshops have spaces available.

Meg Campbell, Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV) has several grants funded from the Historic Preservation Fund that are appropriated through Congress and managed on the Federal level. PTV is preparing for the funding to stop, however they are still moving forward. The Vermont Marble Museum (VMM) Board has ceased operations. PTV owns the building and Vermont Marble Company records and is working with Erica Donnis, UVM Silver Collections, and Amy Cunningham, Vermont Arts Council (VAC) to develop a disposition plan.

Laura Trieschmann, SHPO, stated that the Historic Preservation Fund is zeroed out on the U.S. budget bill that's currently in the Senate. This will impact VDHP who receives 60% of their budget from these funds.

Laura is working with the Association for Preservation Technology International (APT) on flow charts for buildings to help people decide how best to mitigate hazards from flooding. Seventy people attended the *Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* workshop in May. There are currently two historic sites closed for mildew and mold remediation. Uncontrolled humidity has caused mold outbreaks and Carolyn is working with VDHP on treatment. The books from the Morrill Homestead currently held at Vermont Department of Libraries (VTLIB) may be moved back to the site this summer.

Tom McMurdo, VTLIB was pleased to work with VDHP on the Justin Morrill project. Tom asked if everyone saw the Johnson Library being moved in early May. The whole building was relocated to a higher lot due to continued flooding on the old site. This is one example of the 14 capital improvement projects funded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which totaled \$15.9 million. Another \$10 Million in Public Facilities Preservation Initiative Grants for small, rural public libraries in Vermont is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through their FY2023 Economic Initiative Community Project Funding program. Tom is very excited about the impact these funds will have on local communities. VTLIB is currently looking at options if the IMLS is not funded in the Federal FY2026 budget.

Paddy Reagan hit some recent milestones. He hosted his last Waking Windows Festival in Winooski. Paddy graduated from UVM! And, recently put out a new album. Congrats!

Carolyn Frisa is co-hotline responder for the National Heritage Responders Hotline for the month of May. The hotline is volunteer run, but NHR's onsite responders require funds; their services could be impacted by cuts.

Michele Bailey, VAC is pleased that the Cultural Facilities Grants funding passed through the VT Legislature. Cultural Facilities has received 40 grant applications this year which is a record! Michele is working on a couple of other grants and the upcoming RCO Cohort.

Taiga Christie, Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), is busy with local emergency management season. Updates to municipal emergency management plans are due June 1. Taiga reported that VEM is stable so far but most of their positions are funded by FEMA, which could be impacted by the U.S. Budget Bill currently passing through the Senate. Taiga was asked if NOAA has reported any news on weather impacting VT in the upcoming months. So far, VT sites are not impacted.

Amy Cunningham, VAC receives 40% of their budget from the National Endowment of the Arts. She is aware that NEA staffing is down by 75 employees; nearly half of what it was in January 2025. There is a high level of confusion about what will happen, but as of now VAC funding is in good shape.

Rachel added that the Vermont Humanities representative to VACDaRN, Noel Clark, lost his job in the wake of funding cuts from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Elizabeth Malone of VT Humanities will join the VACDaRN steering team.

Upcoming Events

Unfolding Documents and Humidification workshop conducted by Carolyn Frisa is on Monday June 9 from 10 am – 2 pm. RSVP to sos.vhrp@vermont.gov.

Hands-on Salvage Workshop at Shelburne Museum on June 17 from 9:30 am – 4 pm. To Sign Up: Please email Allison Harig, Archivist & Digital Asset Manager at Shelburne Museum: aharig@shelburnemuseum.org. Please specify any food preferences (vegetarian, vegan, gluten free) and any specific types of objects you would like to learn how to salvage.

The Charity & Sylvia Vermont Roadside Historic Marker Dedication will take place on June 21 from 1-4 pm at the Sheldon Museum. <https://www.henrysheldonmuseum.org/events/celebrate-charity-sylvia>

Taiga announced that the 2025 Vermont Emergency Management Conference will occur September 4-5 in Killington. The call for proposals is open until noon on June 18. <https://vem.vermont.gov/conference>