



Fall 2016

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VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT

NATURAL BEAUTY

The Water Wonders of Vermont

By Karen Carlock

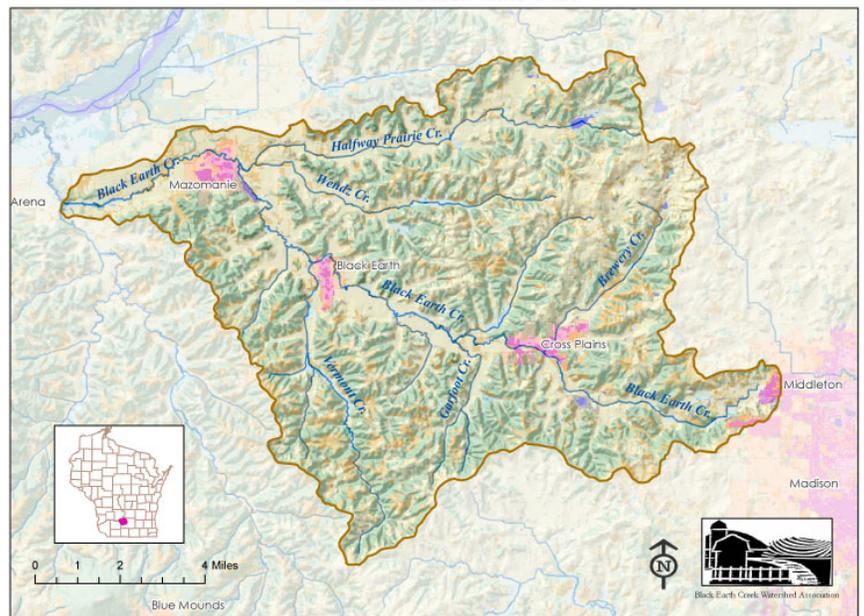
There is nearly nothing more essential and few things more beautiful than the life-giving flow of water. In Vermont, we are so fortunate to have numerous creeks that meander through the township as part of the Black Earth Creek Watershed. Sadly, I know very little about these lovely waterways and the multitude of benefits they provide to our environment and communities. I reached out to Vermonter Barbara Borns, who currently serves as the secretary for the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association (BECWA), and she graciously agreed to allow me to share with you some of the information the association has put together. The projects tackled by the BECWA are vast and varied – this is an association that has had a positive impact on the lives of many of us without us even being aware.

BECWA was formed in 1988 as a result of concern about pollution from a leaking landfill at the eastern end of the Creek. From the beginning, BECWA sought to bring “divergent, often opposing groups together” in order to “...protect Black Earth Creek while meeting the needs of the watershed citizens.”

Signs to raise the level of awareness of the watershed now appear throughout our community to remind us of this vulnerable natural resource. The association regularly leads or participates in projects related to fish populations, water quality issues and the land within the watershed area. I encourage you to learn about BECWA by exploring becwa.org and to entice you further, I leave you with an excerpt regarding the history of the Creek from an article written by John Donaldson for the BECWA Fall 2014 Newsletter.

“The first European explorers found a waterway that wound through the vast expanse of tall grasses that through the millennia had laid down layers and layers of fertile soil. The creek at its headwaters is the product of countless glacial springs that make it a classic cold water trout habitat. Black Earth Creek is essentially what remains of a giant glacial river that flowed through the valley roughly 15,000 years ago, after the most recent glacier stopped in the Cross Plains area and began to melt. As such, the creek is unique in that it starts in Wisconsin’s glaciated region and crosses the Ice Age Trail to finish its journey to the Wisconsin through the Driftless Zone. The topography of the upper Black Earth Creek is notably different, the hills ground off by the ice sheets versus the craggier hills further west.”

Black Earth Creek Watershed



VERMONT'S VOICE

Clerk's Corner by Karen Carlock

- **Calling all Vermonters!!** The Vermont Annual Picnic is Sunday September 18th from 12:00-3:00. The picnic is a free community event at Tyrol Basin with chairlift rides, yard games and food – come for a bit or come for the whole time but please come!
- **Slow Internet?** The Town Board is continuing to address issues related to internet access within Vermont Township. Additionally, the Wisconsin Public Services Commission is gathering data related to broadband access. If you are interested, take a moment to complete this online survey: <http://psc.wi.gov/broadbandsurvey.htm>
- **The Big Election** –although it doesn't feel like it yet, November is not too far off. If you need to register to vote or would like to request an absentee ballot for the November 8th election, please contact clerk@townofvermont.com. As a reminder, polls are open from 7:00 am until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.
- **Final Mailed Issue of Vermont's Voice** – this issue of Vermont's Voice is the final mailed issue of Vermont's Voice but the issues will continue in electronic form. Please go to www.townofvermont.com and you can sign up to receive Vermont's Voice by email. Issues of Vermont's Voice are also posted online at townofvermont.com – click Community in the top menu and then select Vermont's Voice. Additionally, printed copies will be available for pick-up at Town Hall.



ATC Transmissions Lines Proposed through Vermont

Written by Michael McDermott

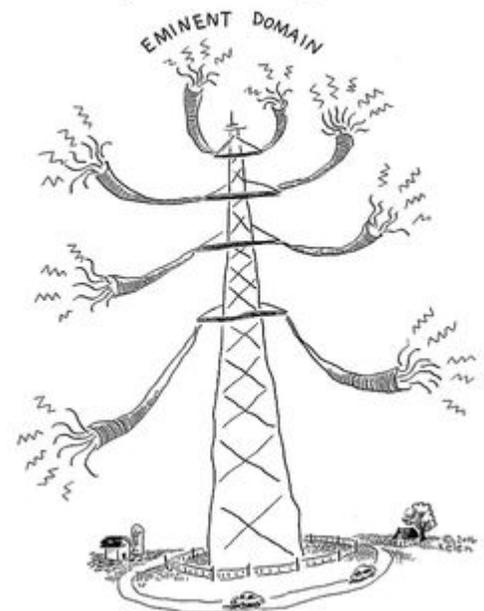
A very tall, intrusive 345 KV electrical transmission line may soon be erected in the Town of Vermont, or even in your own backyard. If so, you will have no say and a right away with giant towers may be put on your property against your will. Even if not on your property, this will affect everyone in Vermont and across the state.

ATC, the American Transmission Company, was scheduled to start a high voltage line from Iowa to the Middleton substation, called the Cardinal Hickory Creek line, in 2016. It is now delayed for several years, possibly due to investors getting cold feet about the need and profitability of the line. The delay gives all people affected by the line time to ask questions and plan what to do

Demand for electricity in Wisconsin and much of the country has been flat or declining in recent years. Even in planning documents submitted to the PSC, no or minimal growth, is projected. Why then do we need more expensive lines? This is one question that must be addressed before approval.

Law and regulations call for serious consideration of alternatives. Any need for increased demand can in fact be better met by investment in energy efficiency, conservation, proper load management on the grid, and local renewable power options before more huge transmission lines are approved and built. ATC and the PSC have not seriously considered these options as required. Nationally ratepayer investment in energy efficiency tripled from 2007 to 2012, helping to lower bills and control harmful emissions. Such investment in Wisconsin dropped over the same period. The utilities that own ATC are guilty of not supporting energy efficiency and thus would rather build new lines.

High Capacity Power Lines
Coming to a Community Near YOU!



Graphic by Linda Kelen Michael

VERMONT'S VOICE

Our beautiful land and environment whether farms, homes with land or protected prairies and special animal and plant habitat, need our concern and protection. The route through Town of Vermont threatens all of these as well as our property values.

There are two routes proposed through western Dane County, one through the heart of Town of Vermont and the other along 18/151 just south of Mt Horeb. We do not know which of these may be chosen. Even if the 18/151 route is chosen, some of which may still go through the southern part of our township, we will be on the hook for the cost.

In June, the Town Board passed a resolution laying out these concerns and listing priorities to be considered before a decision is made to build the Cardinal Hickory Creek line. The resolution calls on the PSC to address many unanswered questions ATC skipped before approval can be given.

The resolution asks for adherence to these investment priorities: a) maximize cost-effective conservation, efficiency and load management; b) rely on local, renewable power generation; c) support local ownership of de-centralized energy generation to support the local economy and jobs; and d) minimize the size, scale, voltage, and environmental impacts of electrical transmission and generation.

The resolution calls for consumer-friendly answers to our concerns and a true cost benefit analysis of options other than a line and power generation that will be environmentally destructive, costly and impact local property values. It asks ATC to be responsible for the cost of providing this information on true alternatives. If these alternatives are not sufficiently addressed, the application for the line may not be in compliance with laws and regulations and should not be approved.

We can voice our concerns and indicate how we want our money spent.

There will be hearings and an opportunity to have an impact in 2018 in many ways before then. Final approval by the Public Service Commission has not happened though they have approved every other project of ATC in recent years.

Encouraged by Barbara Grenlie, our Town Board Chair, we formed a Citizens ATC Committee. I serve as chair of the committee, which is independent from the board though we are working together.

The committee, composed of Vermont residents, is circulating a letter of support for the Board and its resolution. It also calls for our Board to take the resolution to our elected representative and state senator so they may present the issues before the PSC and ask for answers before the PSC makes a final decision. We aim to have hundreds of signatures on the letter of support. We began on election day outside the Town Hall and got 70% of all voters to sign. We plan to have a presence at the Town picnic to educate our fellow residents and get many more signatures.

Materials we have developed are posted on the Town Website and are available in a high quality printed version from committee members.

Similar activities are happening throughout South Central and Southwest Wisconsin. Groups exist in Iowa and Grant counties and have been in touch with us to work together. Legal challenges are being mounted dealing with the Cardinal Hickory Creek project and the previous Badger Coulee line.

We will work with other impacted town and villages in Dane county as well.

We can have a choice of what happens to our land, our electricity bills and how power is generated and distributed. Join us to have your voices heard.

Editor's note: the author can be contacted at mmcdermott7862@asbcglobal.net.

VERMONT'S VOICE

Voices from the Valleys and Ridgetops

By Dean C. Bossenbroek

As a newcomer to the pool of *Vermont's Voice* contributors, I was not clued in to the rich history of this people's publication. Over the years as a reader, I have been happy to receive it in the mail and to read points of interest and lore, which likely pique the curiosity of few outside of our township. The regularity of its printing and the fact that it remains an independent, volunteer driven endeavor were not lost on me. Until I was asked to shed some light on the background and purpose of *Vermont's Voice*, however, I was unaware of the concerted collective effort made by many folks to keep it going.

Like others, I was recruited to write for our town's newsletter by Earl Brandt, author of the long running "Hidden in the Hills" series in *Vermont's Voice*. Naturally, he was the first person I talked to about our township's newsletter. Earl told me the seed for a regular publication was planted by former Town Clerk John Bird in the 1980s. John confirms this saying, "When I was clerk I started sending out two newsletters a year to the residents. One in the fall with a notice of the budget hearing and a proposed budget. I sent another in the spring with a notice of the annual meeting and a financial summary of the past year. I would include some additional info of local note. It had no name."

Later, according to Earl, a group of like-minded residents got together to work on beefing up the content and increasing the number of issues produced. This led to crafting the mission statement. From my viewpoint, the pivotal point of the mission statement upon which *Vermont's Voice* levers its existence and purpose is the word communication. Current publisher Lisa Orman underscores this idea, "I think *Vermont's Voice* really brings a neighborly feeling that is hard to come by in a rural setting. It makes (the township) feel like a neighborhood."

As an example, Lisa cites an issue facing many folks in the township, "*Vermont's Voice* is a way of communicating the woeful internet progress (or lack thereof), and to let people know this is the time to raise their voice."

Current editor Chris Coffin comments on the impact the newsletter has on town residents, "I get a lot of positive feedback about it. People really enjoy it. It keeps the community together . . . and informs people about things that are happening. Our town has so many interesting and knowledgeable people."

Keeping ourselves informed certainly plays into the Town of Vermont's reputation of leading Dane County in voter turnout election after election. *Vermont's Voice* is effective and timely when it comes to publishing election alerts and candidate profiles. It is a key cog of what keeps our collective mindset active and focused on issues which impact us. It's an informational bulletin designed to help us stay abreast of important stuff like town road maintenance, large organized bike rides, and the Town Picnic.

If other readers are interested in adding to the continuing history of *Vermont's Voice*, please contact Lisa Orman, Chris Coffin, or Town Clerk Karen Carlock to discover ways to contribute. Their contact information is on the back page. There are a lot of moving parts to our newsletter, and more help is always appreciated.

Let's remain connected.

NextDoor: Online Community Bulletin Board

By Warren Gaskill

There is a new web-based "community bulletin board" called Vermont Township NextDoor. It is designed to be used just by Town of Vermont area residents. The site provides a pretty useful means to ask a network of community neighbors questions or to list events, or to recommend resources, or announce a lost dog, or offer eggs for sale, or find some firewood, or give something away and more.

You can sign up via this link: <https://nextdoor.com/find-neighborhood/> Put in your address (include city and state) and your email and it will take you to the Town of Vermont. There is no cost, no ads, and you can adjust settings to meet your preferences. Right now, there are about 25 residents signed in, not yet enough for a critical mass of users. Sign in. See what you think.

The Vermont Township NextDoor serves as a complement resource to the Town's official website — <http://www.vermonttownship.com> — where you can also subscribe to receive public meeting notices. Warren Gaskill, who lives on Bell Road, customized the NextDoor site for the township after becoming aware of its utility in other communities. Let Warren know if you have questions or comments. Email him at wgaskill@mac.com

VERMONT'S VOICE

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Mission Statement: It is the mission of Vermont's Voice to provide information about our town and articles of interest to the residents of our town in order to promote a sense of community, encourage participation in and understanding of town government, and improve communication among residents. Vermont's Voice is a volunteer, citizen-run publication that encourages and depends on citizen participation in providing information, articles, or suggestions for articles, photos, criticism, and help with mailings. The cost of printing and postage is included in the town budget. Vermont's Voice is not the official voice or viewpoint of the town government.



Lisa and Chris

Keep up to date on town ordinances, meetings and other business at <http://www.townofvermont.com>.

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Supervisor #3 Todd Culliton, 767-4145
Supervisor #4 Doug Meier 767-8860
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Or email: clerk@townofvermont.com

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Town Patrolman Jack Schulenberg 437-5490
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Mary George, 576-0905
Katie MacDonald, 438-4253
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Vice Chair Jim Elleson 767-3553
Secretary Karen Carlock 767-2457

Fire Warden

Shirley Brandt 767-3030

Summer 2016

VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE GOVERNMENT NATURAL BEAUTY

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