



Let sleeping pigs lie...



"A proper community, we should remember also, is a commonwealth: a place, a resource, an economy. It answers the needs, practical as well as social and spiritual, of its members – among them the need to need one another. The answer to the present alignment of political power with wealth is the restoration of the identity of community and economy."

-- Wendell Berry

building soil, building community

B **A** **L** **E**
building a local economy

Building A Local Economy



It's really about creating resiliency
in our communities...



... in a thousand...



...different...



...ways....

BALE is a community resource center devoted to the development of farm, food and local economy initiatives in the White River Valley

- ⌘ A collaborative center for education, communication and information sharing
- ⌘ Located both in a physical space (drop in and talk) and online (excellent community resources in an open, shared environment)

... with BALE serving as the collaborative center of a web of area communities, initiatives, and activities.



We've organized a Local Fest...

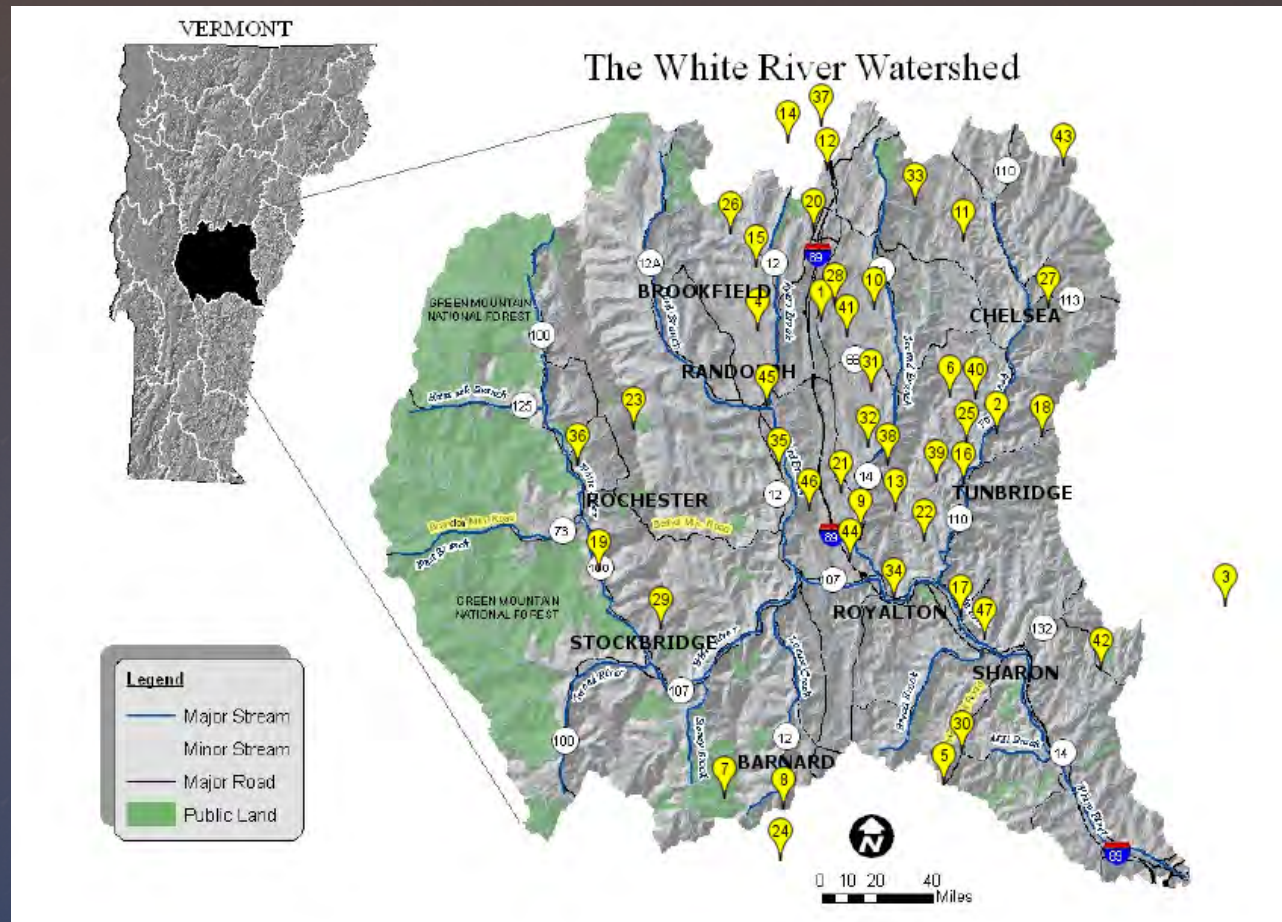


...with lots of workshops...





... and opportunities to linger at the farmers market.



And produced a 2011 Locally Grown Guide
 (produced by BALE, UVM Center for Rural Studies & Herald of Randolph)

- ⌘ Royalton Roots
- ⌘ Tunbridge Tubers
- ⌘ Barnard Farm to School
- ⌘ Floating Bridge Food & Farms
- ⌘ First Branch Sustainability Network
- ⌘ Randolph Farm to School
- ⌘ Sharon Sprouts
- ⌘ Sustainable Strafford
- ⌘ Rochester Farm to School
- ⌘ (and more!!)

...and BALE seeks to work with existing local groups and serve as a regional network and resource space.



Ideas for the Future...

(developed in community meetings and surveys)

Educational/Research/Resources

- ⌘ Multi-session public series on “Why Build A Local Economy” (that articulate the various approaches to, rationale for, and avenues toward building a local economy); also could offer discussion series on “Choices for Sustainability”
- ⌘ Inventory of area’s resources, including those that could be put to better use (i.e. kitchens that go mostly unused)
- ⌘ Public education about the true cost of food, production practices, opportunities in local goals
- ⌘ Data collection of food consumption practices (local versus imported; how to track this over time)
- ⌘ Regional community resource inventory (data on institutions, businesses, etc.)

Supporting Farmers (and Growing Farmers and the Land-based Economy)

- ⌘ New Farmers Initiative: A multi-faceted project that includes New Farmer “mixers” with short talks by newer farmers in the area, workshops and online resources available, skills development, and the prospective Land Use/Incubator Project (access to leasable land). Also collaborate with UVM Extension New Farmers program and Valley Food and Farm
- ⌘ Land Incubator Project: A coordinated effort with the Vermont Land Trust’s Farmland Access Program, BALE and other landowners to encourage arrangements for leased land to be provided for new farmers
- ⌘ Land-based education center... demonstration farm that could be linked to Land Incubator Project in a model similar to Intervale... or a farm with focus on ag education like Cedar Circle Farm... also look at other models that exist; possible participation with Vermont Farm Viability Program.
- ⌘ Vastly expanded web-based resources and tools for farmers, such as coordinated directory of farmers looking for workers, internships, farm equipment sharing listing, searchable website for farm services and products; what other ways can we use to link farmers to sharing or coop models that benefit all?
- ⌘ Identifying agricultural law challenges; collaborate with Vermont Law School/new Ag Law Center, work with Law for Food, Marne Coit, others
- ⌘ Investigate and encourage a breeding program for regionally appropriate seeds
- ⌘ Advocate for energy efficiency technologies for farms; workshops, tools, resources, tours

Marketing and Infrastructure for Farm and Food Systems

- ⌘ Coordinated institutional food planning with farms willing to provide to institutions; establish working relationships with existing food-service-providing institutions and identify farms willing to provide needed volume of product (see next item); also possibly offer CSA direct delivery to employees at larger institutions. Possible collaboration with Upper Valley Farm to School, Valley Food and Farm.
- ⌘ Organize cooperative planning and marketing among many farms that could provide, collectively, an adequate supply of product to a buyer (likely an institution); an example would be one farm may not have enough pork to provide to VTC alone, but, together with other farms would have the reliable supply. Also locate new markets for farmers; further research and marketing
- ⌘ Research prospect of food basket CSA model or shared CSA products (farms working together with different products); and generally expanding CSA visibility and participation (coop marketing?)
- ⌘ Look into community food processing center (freezing, root cellaring, butchering, canning, etc.); or possible collaboration with nearby development of food hubs (Great Falls, Mad River, prospective Ompompanoosuc Ag Society); identify complimentary local activities and infrastructure
- ⌘ Research/develop appropriate transportation infrastructure... delivered by veggie oil vehicles??;
- ⌘ Monthly pre-buy market of winter crops Nov-April (online purchases, central pick-up)
- ⌘ Regional winter market (once a month at central, indoor location; note that Sharon, Norwich winter markets occurred monthly last year)
- ⌘ Encourage coordinated marketing among area farmers' markets (and strategic planning to strengthen markets' vitality)

Development of Community Systems and Tools

- ⌘ Support development of energy coops, town and/or regional community power (solar, wind, water, biomass and conservation)
- ⌘ Research/develop a low-power FM community radio station; web-based community news and calendar
- ⌘ Investigate the development of community controlled banks where all lending is local; could focus support on start-up of land-based businesses
- ⌘ Establish local currencies to help stabilize the local economy; local exchange programs (web based), local currency, timebanking
- ⌘ Storefront farm and nutrition education and resource center; linked to community owned café?
- ⌘ Further community garden development
- ⌘ Community dinners and localvore network
- ⌘ Supporting Farm to School activity; encourage development in towns that do not have a local f2s effort; linking f2s to community programs; serving as a coordination point for regional needs of f2s efforts
- ⌘ Development of regional composting facility (and education on composting for institutions and homes)

Community Connection to the Local Economy/Celebration

- ⌘ Annual “Meet your Farmer” celebration; could be winter dinner with local food and talk
- ⌘ Telling the stories of people who work the land (a “Story Bank” produced in video, written, documented and photographed)
- ⌘ Workshops/classes/education on food preparation, gardening, small scale farming
- ⌘ Promoting local first in consumer practices; promoting “appropriate” consumption life style
- ⌘ Getting low-income folks engaged in local buying through various strategies (i.e. Farm Shares or through schools); distribution of food for low-income and/or charitable needs (gleaning, food shelves)



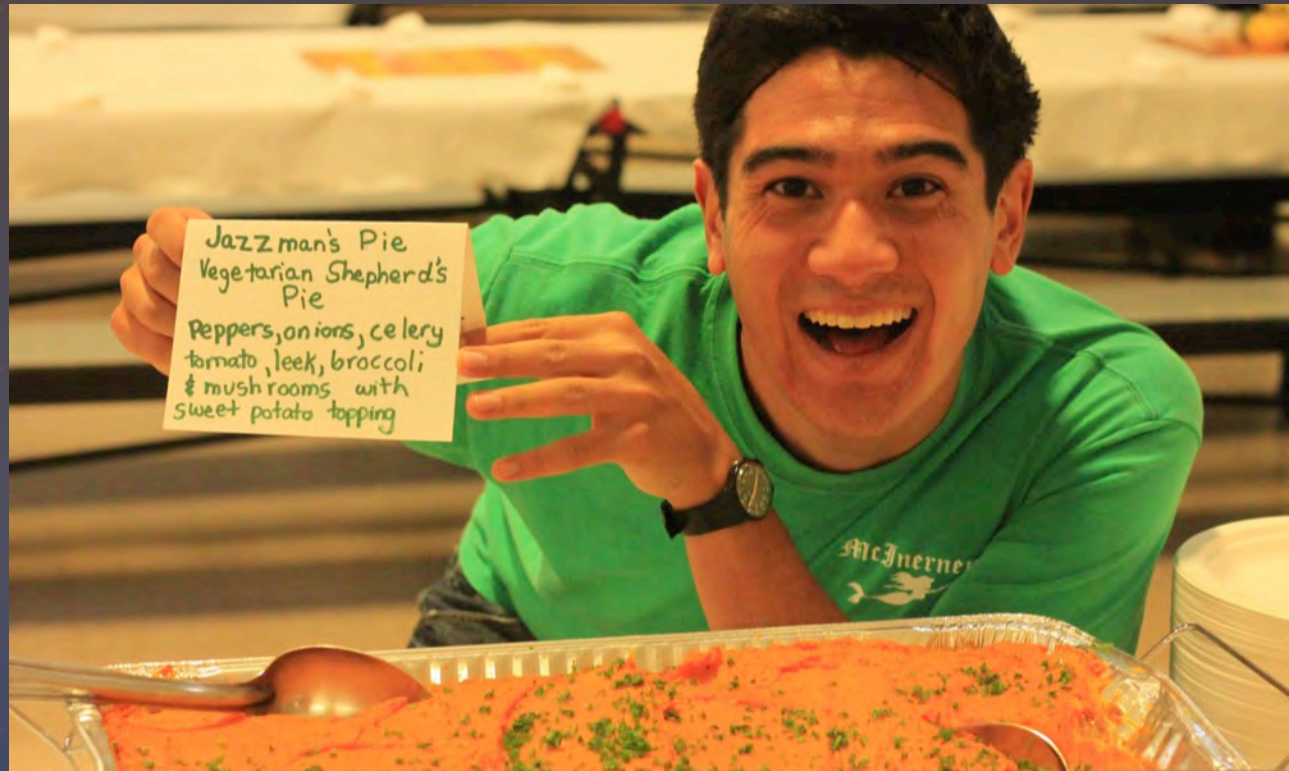
**A story of community and resilience:
Hurricane Flats Farm before the flood (at farmers market)**



Hurricane Flats Farm after the flood



Chefs prepare the meal at the Harvest Dinner in late October in the school kitchen...



...and volunteers serve it up.

“It has been a rough fall for all of us with Tropical Storm Irene. Many area farms have suffered significantly. One small story that cuts to the core of why we are driven to support our farms – and build community – is part of tonight’s dinner. 140 people showed up on the Saturday after Irene to clear the fields at Hurricane Flats Farm... including many of you. The donated greens in tonight’s salad were grown from seedlings started at Hurricane Flats before the storm. Since they could not be planted, Geo Honigford (of Hurricane Flats) gave them to Jenn Megyesi at Fat Rooster Farm who planted them in her hoop house. When asked what she might want to provide for the dinner, Jenn thought that it would be the perfect thing to donate the greens in appreciation of all the hard work the community offered in helping farms recover.

It should be noted that our goal is to pay all farmers their going rate (we made this one exception this year). And all money raised goes to pay for local food from area farms in the school menu.”

Part of the Harvest Dinner welcome this year.

Building A Local Economy (BALE) creates vibrant communities in the White River Valley by:

- ⌘ strengthening our agricultural and land-based economy
- ⌘ building a sustainable local infrastructure
- ⌘ cultivating cultural and community activity
- ⌘ raising awareness and providing educational programs about all aspects of a local economy

BALE Mission Statement