

UVAW Strategic Plan

Adopted September 27, 2017

UVAW's Strategic Purpose:

To foster increased regional and community resilience to the impacts from a changing climate.

GOAL A: Be a greater public educational force on climate change impacts.

UVAW will serve as a leader to keep the issues of climate resilience at the forefront in our region, and deliver the information that our communities need to understand climate change impacts, climate risks, and the range of opportunities for actions to build resilience. UVAW will:

1. Host at least two public forums per year to showcase success stories, resources, and updates to scientific information aligned with the focus of other UVAW priorities, and create a call to action.
2. Build a more robust web presence and resource bank of resilience information tools that are locally focused and accessible for lay and professional audiences.

GOAL B: Serve as a hub to convene stakeholders, build relationships and develop new partnerships for coordinated action around climate change impacts in the region.

UVAW will play a central role in bringing together partners and stakeholders to work outside of silos, across sectors, and geography to promote cross-fertilization of knowledge and opportunities to coordinate around building resilience. UVAW will:

1. Inventory UVAW members' skills and resources that can be applied toward collaborative resilience work in the region.
2. Inventory and prioritize potential partners and stakeholders, their interests, expertise, and capacity for contributing to resilience work in the region, aligned with UVAW's focal issues.
3. Build stakeholder relationships and expand UVAW membership in ways that will magnify UVAW's capacity to engage people and organizations in collaborative resilience actions.
4. Continue to connect people and issues through individual meetings, convening, and presentations in community settings.

GOAL C: Be a resource and support partner for community projects that increase resilience to climate change impacts.

UVAW can act as a “hub and lens” to help identify community priorities, offer resources, and promote action at the local level. UVAW will:

1. Partner with existing programs and resources that can address community needs and interests.
 - a. Continuously solicit feedback from a broad cross-section of residents, towns, and organizations to align UVAW efforts with their resilience-related needs and interests and to develop relevant case studies and resources.
2. Pilot tailored initiatives that engage stakeholders in building momentum for local resilience actions, where targeted UVAW support can add value and generate greater impact.
3. Engage educators, support education partners, and explore school curriculum opportunities that link climate change impacts to adaptation efforts in the region.

GOAL D: Build UVAW’s organizational sustainability, leadership, and governance structure.

1. Explore options to find an administrative home for UVAW that can serve as fiscal agent and provide administrative capacity for roles including events management (advertising, registration, and logistical support), web updates, mailing list and Constant Contact, meeting scheduling, meeting attendance and notes, and a central point for public contact and resource referral.
2. Pursue funding opportunities to support UVAW’s administrative capacity and partner organizations’ research and community engagement work.
3. Build a governance structure and leadership plan to maintain UVAW’s long-term viability.
4. Create work structures to maximize the efficiency and value-added impact of UVAW members’ time, and to advance UVAW’s strategic goals.
5. Develop a more robust website to serve as a resource for UVAW members and the broader community.
6. Raise UVAW’s public visibility and brand identity as a resource and leader on climate resilience.
7. Expand UVAW membership and partner relationships in order to increase our capacity.
8. Develop a method to track/evaluate UVAW’s work, progress, and outcomes.

About Our Planning Process

September 2017

In 2011, the Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup (UVAW) formed as a bi-state volunteer group of community leaders and organizations in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene. We saw that many groups were working on mitigation to slow the pace of climate change – but no group was working on adaptation to prepare for changes we know are inevitable, and are already happening.

Shared learning and co-production of knowledge is the only way our communities will be adapt to unprecedented change – change we are just beginning to experience, and for which no “playbook” exists. A regional approach is essential, and UVAW is the only region-wide entity dedicated to helping community leaders find out what each other is doing in the field of resilience, get ideas, and generate creative collaboration

This is our second strategic planning process, reflecting continuity in our growth through our plan developed in 2013 and our six years of experience with numerous regional forums and engagement processes. For this plan, we reached out broadly to invite regional leaders to help us flesh out our thinking.

We extend a gracious thanks to the 24 internal and external stakeholders from Vermont and New Hampshire who provided valuable input about UVAW’s contributions, opportunities, and emerging context in the field of climate resilience across the bi-state region. Their insights contributed to our thought process as we developed our plan, and the depth and breadth of information they gave us will guide us moving forward in extending our hand in partnership and in supporting each other’s initiatives. Contributors were:

Meghan Butts, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission
Matt Cahillane, NH Department of Health and Human Services
Leigh Cameron, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund (NEGEF)
Anne Duncan Cooley, Upper Valley Housing Coalition (through winter 2017))
Alice Ely, Public Health Council of the Upper Valley
Kevin Geiger, Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission
Beth Gibbons, Institute for Sustainable Communities & the American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP)
Sherry Godlewski, NH Department of Environmental Services
Anne Goodrich, Upper Valley Strong & Pathways Consulting
Mark Goodwin, City of Lebanon Planning Office
Lisa Graichen, UNH Cooperative Extension Climate Action Program and NH Sea Grant
Julia Griffin, Town of Hanover
Peg Elmer Hough and Mindy Blank, Community Resilience Organizations (CROs)
Alex Jaccaci, Hypertherm
Rosi Kerr, Dartmouth College Office of Sustainability
Kate McCarthy, Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC)
Sarah McKearnan, VT Agency of Natural Resources (through spring 2017)

Greg Norman, Office of Community Health, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
Erich Osterberg, Dartmouth College Dept. of Economics
Deb Perry, Institute for Sustainable Communities & the Resilient Vermont Project
Kevin Peterson, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Tom Roberts, Vital Communities
Beth Sawin, Climate Interactive
Michael Simpson, Center for Climate Preparedness and Community Resilience,
Antioch New England Graduate School
Gaye Symington, High Meadows Fund

Key messages that were shared included:

1. As we continue to feel impacts from a changing climate, keeping climate adaptation on the front burner, nurturing cross-sector relationships, and engaging the business sector are all imperative. UVAW should continue our efforts in filling these needs in the Upper Valley.
2. UVAW's educational forums and community outreach efforts have been very successful and should be continued. Extending UVAW's role in moving from education to action and bringing new partners to the table are important next steps – by sharing resources and success stories, joining in convening, and identifying the places where we can add unique value without duplicating the efforts of others.
3. Communities need help – the problems are complex, resources are constrained, capacity is limited, and they cannot do it alone – nor can we. Focusing UVAW's role on building multi-sector relationships will help translate knowledge and opportunities across geographic, sector, and issue boundaries, and break down silos that hinder the discovery of creative solutions and the development of political and community will to act.
4. Since our founding six years ago, UVAW has had great success. As we grow and evolve in our community impact, it is also an important time to grow and evolve as an organization so that we can sustain that work over the long-term. Our governance and work processes, financial resources, leadership and membership growth, and infrastructure capacity will be part of our workplan as well.

We look forward to continuing conversations and partnerships with our stakeholders over the coming three years, as we implement our strategic goals and help to build the Upper Valley's commitment to crucial resilience actions that will support community well-being the face of unprecedented change.

Sherry Godlewski and Alex Jaccaci, UVAW Co-Chairs