



For Immediate Release  
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## **Helping the Upper Valley Plan for Climate Migration, Nov 9** *Forum brings together citizens, scientists, planners, business owners and more*

**October 22, 2021, White River Junction, Vt.** – In a rapidly changing global climate, rural New England has been highlighted as one of the nation’s most climate-resilient regions and should expect climate-related in-migration over the next several decades. With its many amenities in a mostly rural setting, the Upper Valley should expect its share of this influx. How can this change benefit our region and its people? What do we need to do and plan for now to make that happen?

These questions are the focus of a free, online community forum, “[Planning for a Just, Prosperous, and Resilient Future with Climate Change Migration,](#)” on **Tuesday, Nov. 9, 6 to 8 pm**, hosted by the [Upper Valley Adaptation Workgroup](#) (UVAW) and [Vital Communities](#).

The forum will begin with a presentation by [Elena Mihaly](#), Vice President and Senior Attorney, Conservation Law Foundation Vermont, laying out the reasons the Upper Valley and other rural New England regions rank in the top of the EPA’s Cumulative Resilience Screening Index, and what climate effects our region can expect. The rest of the meeting will be largely devoted to hearing from participants, especially in small-group “Zoom rooms” that will report to the larger group.

“We want to hear what is on people’s minds,” said [Erich Osterberg](#), UVAW chair and Associate Professor of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth College. “We know there are concerns about real estate and the housing market. But we’re also trying to have this conversation from the positive perspective of it being an amazing opportunity, particularly for the rural Northeast, which has seen its population decline and industry and manufacturing leave. Here in the Upper Valley, we’re desperate for both skilled and unskilled labor. This is a way we could start attracting people and having this conversation about how we want rural New England to look in 50 years in terms of being climate resilient, economically vibrant, and just, and in terms of preserving what we love about this place. It’s all about planning and starting these conversations about what we want this place to look like in the future instead of just letting it happen and being reactionary.”

UVAW intends to use the forum’s findings to develop questions to research and explore in future programs. It also could be part of a New England-wide project that Osterberg recently proposed to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, realizing that the forum the workgroup had been planning could be part of something bigger. Osterberg expects to hear by mid-November from NOAA about whether that broader proposal will go forward.

UVAW is a bi-state, multi-stakeholder working group of leaders and partner organizations. Started in December 2011, the workgroup meets monthly to focus on building climate-resilient communities in the Upper Valley. Since 2017, UVAW has been housed at Vital Communities, a nonprofit based in White River Junction, VT, with a mission of bringing people together, bridging boundaries and engaging our whole Upper Valley community to create positive change. UVAW’s previous public forums have

explored such topics as protecting land and wildlife in a changing climate, impacts on farms, managing droughts and downpours, and mobilizing local communities for resilience.

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*[Vital Communities](#) cultivates the civic, environmental and economic vitality of the Upper Valley. We bring people together, bridging boundaries and engaging our whole community to create positive change. Learn more at [vitalcommunities.org](http://vitalcommunities.org).*