Regional Emergency Networks
VACDaRN’s Response to Vermont’s Severe Weather and Flooding
May 1, 2024
1:00-2:00 pm ET

Presented by
Carolyn Frisa, Founder & Head Conservator of Works on Paper, LLC
Rachel Onuf, Director of the Vermont Historical Records Program
Introduction
- History of VACDaRN
- Summary of Storm Events

Disaster Response
- Initial Outreach & Communications
- Deployments across the State
- Continued Communications

Ongoing Recovery Efforts
- Salvage Workshops for Communities
- Funding Resources
- Conservation Projects

What We Learned

Moving Forward

Other Regional Emergency Networks & How to Start Your Own
Who is VACDaRN?

Our Funders:

- Vermont Secretary of State
- Craft Emergency Relief Fund
- Vermont Humanities
- Middlebury College
- Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative
- Vermont History
- Vermont Department of Libraries
- CC+ Collections Care & Conservation Alliance
- Waking Windows
Storm Details - July 9-10, 2023

2 months of rain in 2 days

6 to 9 inches of rain fell across numerous areas of the state on already saturated ground

Flash flooding in Vermont’s cities, towns and rural areas

Localized landslides

Evacuations
Ready or Not...
The day after: stuck at home.

...and that was OK.
1. With Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF)
2. With VACDaRN
3. With the Media
4. With Impacted Organizations
5. With “Eyes on the Ground”
The Great Sculpture Rescue

Photo credits: Amy Cunningham/Vermont Arts Council
DISASTER RESPONSE

Deployments across Vermont

1. Vermont Studio Center, Johnson
2. Corporate Office Archives, Barre
3. Montpelier City Hall
4. St. Augustine Church & United Unitarian Churches, Montpelier
5. Strafford Historical Society at The Justin Smith Morrill Homestead, Strafford
DISASTER RESPONSE

Vermont Studio Center

Collection of 266 prints
DISASTER RESPONSE

Corporate Archives Collection
DISASTER RESPONSE

Strafford Historical Society Archives
After the Floods, Vermont’s Preservationists Come Together to Save Damaged Documents and Artifacts

By ABIGAIL SYLVA GREENBERG
Published July 26, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Last week, the floor of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier was still under two inches of water as a result of the flooding in the city and other parts of Vermont earlier this month. During the cleanup, a young congregant discovered two dampened 1928 blueprints. Where others saw a ruined artifact, volunteer Carolyn Frisa, a conservator with
Salvage Workshops for Communities
Funding Resources

- Vermont Community Foundation (several rounds)
- Grassroots fundraisers
- Vermont Arts Council Flood Relief Funding
- Vermont Humanities Council Flood Relief Grants (NEH and VHC funds)
- Vermont Main Street Flood Relief Fund

ONGOING RECOVERY
Navigating Public Assistance for the Arts & Culture Sector

A webinar for Vermont arts organizations and cultural institutions

Heritage Emergency National Task Force | 31 August 2023

FEMA
ONGOING RECOVERY

MOLD!

- Raising awareness
- Fielding questions
- Doing remediation
Remediation and Conservation Projects

1. Vermont Studio Center Print Collection Project
2. Corporate Office Archive Project
3. Montpelier UU Church Records
4. Montpelier City Hall
5. Strafford Historical Society
   16mm films & pocket diaries
Vermont Studio Center Print Collection

- Conservators developed protocols and trained volunteers to treat smaller and less complex/risky prints on-site
- 101 more complex prints identified for treatment by paper conservator
ONGOING RECOVERY

82 of 165 prints conserved to date by 62 volunteers

Over 400 hours of volunteer time to date!

Treatment of first 41 prints by conservator at average cost of $550 per print – Total Cost of $22,550
  ○ $15,000 from Vermont Arts Council Flood Relief Funding
  ○ $7,500 in-kind donation from conservator
ONGOING RECOVERY

- Most important objects brought immediately to studio and dried; most have been approved for conservation treatment
- 10 boxes of archival records and photographs were frozen and recently dried and rehoused only. Will be reformatted.
- Approximate cost of conservation treatment $8,500 plus $3,000 in-kind donation of services by conservator

** None of this was covered by insurance, which was a big surprise to the client!
Boxes of records remediated by document recovery vendor Polygon have been returned.

Continue to work with City Clerk to assess condition and to identify record types to determine disposition.
ONGOING RECOVERY

- VACDaRN worked with conservators to develop two day-long workshops at the preservation lab to safely dry and then repair the diaries (still frozen)

- Workshop goals:
  - Address flood damage to diaries
  - Build a network of people with confidence & skill in collections recovery work
WHAT WE LEARNED
Goals for VACDaRN

● Discuss & document how VACDaRN supports the Historic and Cultural Restoration Task Force (HCRTF)
● Continue to offer trainings and one-on-one support
● Have damage reporting form and communications for organizations and general public ready to go
● Create map of the arts & culture organizations on our list of lists overlaid with floodplain data and other mapped information
● Identify communications tasks for VACDaRN team members
OTHER REGIONAL NETWORKS

There are 33 Alliance for Response (AFR) Networks

https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/alliance-for-response/networks
EXISTING AFR NETWORKS

- Atlanta
- Berks-Lehigh-Northampton
- California
- Central Pennsylvania
- Central Virginia
- Charleston
- Colorado
- Massachusetts
- Minneapolis - St. Paul
- Mississippi Gulf Coast
- New Orleans
- New York Capital Region
- New York City
- North Carolina
- Northeast Pennsylvania
- Northwest Pennsylvania
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Philadelphia
- Pittsburgh
- Portland, Oregon
- Sarasota Manatee
- Savannah
- Seattle
- South Central Pennsylvania
- South Florida
- Spokane
- Suburban Philadelphia
- Texas
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- Utah
- Vermont
- Washington D.C.
BUILD YOUR OWN NETWORK

- Start with your existing networks
- Think broadly about which organizations and people to invite
- Invest in training exercises and community-building events
- Use the Alliance for Response resources from AIC/FAIC
Thanks! Questions? Comments?

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