Organizing Volunteers for Preservation Projects

A how-to guide for using volunteers to save historic buildings

by Judith Winters Bell and Stephen Brownell Harris

A Preservation Trust of Vermont Publication
Organizing Volunteers for Preservation Projects

Written in the volunteer spirit by
Judith Winters Bell and
Stephen Brownell Harris

The Preservation Trust of Vermont
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About the Preservation Trust
The Preservation Trust of Vermont is a charitable, non-profit organization designed to assist the continuing statewide effort to protect our special architectural resources, cultural landscape, and fabric of communities. The Trust provides assistance to other groups, communities, and individuals who are involved in historic preservation, and undertakes educational programs. Support for these activities comes from financial support from individuals, businesses, foundations, and from major gifts of property. If you would like more information, please write Preservation Trust of Vermont, P.O. Box 1777, Windsor, Vermont 05089-0021.
Introduction

Using volunteers to rehabilitate old buildings.
There are a great many reasons why old buildings are important to all of us.

Historic buildings help to shape the identity and personality of virtually every village, town, and city. The spirit of many communities resides in its meeting houses, churches, and community buildings. Very often cultural facilities like museums and theaters are found in historic buildings, and they provide added enlightenment and enjoyment for residents and visitors. Old buildings in downtowns and town centers can be the foundation for community and economic revitalization. We are especially fortunate in Vermont to have a rich collection of historic buildings.

There's no end of uses to which old buildings can be put, including affordable housing, high-tech industry, first class office space, and places where community members can meet.

In 1990, the Lincoln (Vermont) Historical Society undertook a remarkable community project. Using volunteers as its workforce and for professional guidance, the organization rescued a derelict historic barn and reconstructed it to house the Society’s collection of antique farm machinery. For those who were there, it seemed that most of the community was involved in one way or another, just like a 19th century barn-raising.

Judi Bell and Steve Harris, the authors of this handbook, were two of the volunteers who helped to make the project happen. Steve was President of the Lincoln Historical Society and organized the effort. Judi spent most of her time documenting the work.

After I first heard about the barn-raising in Lincoln, I began to wonder why historic buildings in other communities couldn't be rehabilitated in the same way.

Certainly the Lincoln experience proved that people from all walks of life really do care about old buildings and will volunteer their time to help save them. The experience also showed how
some technical assistance and guidance make it possible for people of all ages and with varying skill levels to make a significant contribution. Perhaps most importantly, it proved that a project like this can add a new dimension to the spirit of a community and reinforce the value of cooperative action.

All that, and it was also a great way to accomplish a big project with limited financial resources!

This handbook was developed to share the Lincoln Historical Society’s experience and to give other community organizations the methods and encouragement to enlist volunteers in saving critical historic buildings in places all over Vermont.

We are especially grateful to the people and contributors that made this publication possible.

Generous financial support came from the Vermont Arts Endowment Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation and a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Michigan working in partnership with the University of Vermont Environmental Studies Program.

In the spirit of a publication about volunteers, many people have been extremely generous with their time and expertise. The authors, Judi Bell and Steve Harris, and the designer, Carol Hanley, spent many hours producing this handbook. An Advisory Committee that included Eric Gilbertson, Judy Hayward, Jan Lewandoski, and Tom Visser lent their considerable expertise to the effort. Chester Liebs provided his usual thoughtful insights and encouragement in his Epilogue.

Without their generous commitment, this handbook would not have been possible. All of us at the Preservation Trust are very appreciative that they gave their talent, energy, and support to this effort.

We all hope you will put it to good use saving the special resources in your community.

Paul Bruhn
Executive Director
Preservation Trust of Vermont
How to Use This Manual

Some key points about the use of this manual:

- Begin by opening the fold-out timeline at the back. This will help you visualize the entire process. It will also be helpful to refer to it frequently to orient yourself to where you have been and where you are going. Many of the tasks described happen simultaneously, and are better understood in the context of the overall picture.

- The intent of this manual is to describe a process that is valid no matter what the size or complexity of the project that you wish to undertake. The key people described in Step 7 may take on more than one of the tasks, if your project is of a smaller scope. At the other end of the spectrum, they may require an assistant coordinator if the project is large and complex.

- More than one professional consultant may be required if you discover that a particular issue is beyond the knowledge of your assembled group. Be comfortable asking for help.

- A video tape that we created during our barn project in Lincoln is available for you to view. It will help you to envision the power of the undertaking you are considering and how it can be accomplished.

- It is our intention that this manual be a working document. We hope you will call us to let us know the kind of project you are considering, and as you begin to use it, to let us know how to strengthen the manual for others that will follow you. It is only through this process of information exchange, that we can all learn and benefit.
The Dream: Testing Project Vitality

The buildings that comprise a townscape are many and varied. On the green may be the town hall, church, or library. Perhaps there is a grange hall, historical society museum, or fire department which is a focal point for community activity. From the bridge to the village store are scattered pieces of the critical elements that comprise the stage set for our day-to-day lives.

Any of these building types can successfully be preserved, adaptively re-used, or enlivened through the process described in the following pages.

A few important points to be considered at the outset are:

**Scope and scale**
Make certain that your project is feasible—not so large and complex, that it can’t be accomplished in digestible bites. Consider phasing to make a larger project still possible. Simple maintenance is also preservation—rebuilding or painstaking retrieval of a structure that is deteriorated beyond repair can be very demoralizing.

**Strength of a sponsoring group**
The sponsoring organization should have staying power and enthusiasm. Keep your objectives clear, your meetings short. Make it fun. Remember that volunteers are fragile creatures, requiring careful attention to retain their vitality. Your own energies will dissipate quickly if you face your task alone.

**Professional guidance**
Solicit the advice of a professional early in the process to get his or her insight into your project’s feasibility.

The State Division for Historic Preservation is quite willing to give you a preliminary assessment of your project, after conversation and a brief facility tour. They can help you establish the
magnitude of the restoration/preservation tasks required. This thumbnail evaluation will keep you from jumping in over your head.

The development of a more complete preservation plan by a pro will be a critical later step in your ultimate effort. Rates for evaluations vary from “free for the asking” for a thumbnail sketch, to $500 for a technical assistance evaluation, to several thousand dollars for a comprehensive plan.

Funds are available to help you with evaluations at all levels. The trick is to secure the appropriate amount and quality of advice at the proper time.

Get all evaluations in a written report form. They will be invaluable later in securing grants to finance your project.

Ultimate Use
Consider what your building will be used for and make certain it has the potential to fulfill a community need. An empty building falls into disrepair quickly. A vital building receives attention and reflects the vigor of its occupants.

Your pro will help you evaluate the building’s suitability for the end use you envision, the potential public benefits, and the code implications regarding safety and accessibility for the handicapped.

Careful, realistic assessments of all the above points are essential to getting off on the right foot. Take your time, catch your breath before proceeding to Step 2.
Stimulation:  
The Core Group

Ideas are usually born of conversation and matured during debate. Talk about your project around town. See it renewed. Imagine it full of people doing something specific.

Try out your idea on your family, friends and business associates. Become a nuisance. If you don’t belong to an interested group, form one. Apply for federal tax exemption as a non-profit organization. (Becoming a tax-exempt organization is time consuming and complicated.) If you already are participating in a historical society, women’s auxiliary, or civic organization, get your project listed on the agenda. Serve cookies, keep it light, concentrate on the benefits of the results. From the membership of your organization, or the community at large, form a core group with one of each of the following: a construction person, a financial wizard, a record keeper, a public relations person and a few strong backs—if you can find them.

Begin preliminary information gathering, with your core group supervising, to generate excitement and provide a basis for professional expansion later on.

Early research/documentation tasks such as photographic documentation, deed research, oral history interviews of older townspeople, and volunteer archeological digs are good examples of mini-projects for volunteers of all ages to undertake with professional guidance. Consider students, Boy and Girl Scouts, R.S.V.P., the town clerk, and church groups as volunteers. Good base data will keep professional consultation fees to a minimum.

Let the local newspaper know of your activities. Public awareness will encourage broader volunteer participation as you gain momentum.

Once your group is excited and has unearthed good base information, they need some guidance and credibility. Questions of how much, where, when, and how all need considered answers. You
will again need to locate, interview, and hire a professional consultant.

Call around. Check your local and state historical societies. Contact the State Division for Historic Preservation. In Vermont, the Preservation Trust and Historic Windsor are also good sources. Go to the library or local museums and dig up a list of private organizations which fund like projects in your area. Divide up the tasks, spread the responsibilities. Assign one person to compile the results.

You're looking for a person qualified and willing to work alongside volunteers, who has experience with similar preservation projects. Their name should be one whose very presence on a grant application will lend authority and credibility. If you are fortunate, you will find more than one qualified candidate.

Have candidates speak to your group to see how they relate to people. Show them the project. Solicit their opinions. Speak with their previous clients and present employer. The person you choose needs to be practical, personable, persuasive and effective. He or she ultimately will lead, teach and share in the project's welfare.

Make sure they understand what you wish to achieve. See how clearly they can tell you how they would do the job. Let them know what your objectives are. These might include:

- Maximum leveraging of public and private funding.

- Education and enjoyment for participants.

- Sustained community enthusiasm.

- A digestible, approvable plan as an end product.

Make sure you know how much their total fee will be and when they will start to charge for their work. The amount may seem very large, but remember that this person may help you acquire the funds to pay their salaries through grants and fundraising. This is not a place to skimp. Choose somebody with a good reputation who will enhance your team. A properly chosen consultant will increase your chances of obtaining grants by 50 to 75 percent.
Research and Development

Create a project statement.

Call a meeting and draft a clear and concise description of your objectives with the involvement of your whole group and the guidance of your professional consultant. A short paragraph of three or four sentences is enough. In front of the group, compose sentences of words suggested during responses to the following questions.

- What is wrong with things as they are?
- How would you like to see them?
- Where? When? How?
- Is this project do-able? Manageable? Appropriate?

Use an easel and a newsprint pad. Compose, erase, amend, edit.

Select words, phrases and sentences that every person agrees with. Make it clear, complete and simple. If your idea is to work, every author must believe in this statement completely and must be comfortable using it when asked, “What are you guys up to anyway?” Make sure that your pro participates in creating your statement.

This project statement should then become the basis for a project prospectus, an expanded document that will be critical to successful grant writing and fundraising. It should clearly and concisely describe your project, why it is important, and how you are organized. If this document is printed in an 8 1/2 x 11 format, it can be used to accompany grant applications or left in the hands of prospective individual donors or businesses. It will ensure that your message is strong and consistent.
Establish a preservation plan.

A well-written preservation plan will become the bible for your project. It will include a conservation assessment, historic features report, structural evaluation and building code analyses. Its creation is primarily the responsibility of your pro. However, don’t underestimate the need for active involvement of your core group. They are your reality testers. If the plan won’t bear up under their practical scrutiny, you’re headed for trouble. Their involvement will also ensure their continued enthusiasm and buying in to the process.

The preservation plan should contain answers to the following questions: what, how much, how long, and by whom.

**What:** For your preservation plan to be of sufficient utility, it will need to define the project scope—an enumerated list of required tasks which outlines the intended accomplishments. Typically it will be organized by priority, with tasks most essential to the building’s life first.

**How Much:** Your preservation consultant may seek the input of a construction manager, estimator, or small local contractor, or rely on his or her own experience to generate a total project estimate. Be certain to include an appropriate contingency amount to cover the unknown.

If organized with sufficient clarity, such a written estimate will be very useful later for a number of related uses, especially grant applications and scheduling.

Don’t forget to address the maintenance and operational costs that will be necessary for your building when you have completed your project. Begin to formulate mechanisms and budgets for ensuring its continued vitality.

**How Long:** This is an assessment of the number of person-hours required to accomplish the various tasks using professional labor forces. Your pro can help you identify which of these tasks must be done by professionals and which are appropriate for various skill levels of volunteers. This assessment will become the basis for selection and training of your volunteer group. Refer to the section entitled “KEY PERSON I” on page 31 for more details.
By Whom: This column is a reference for project pricing and task assessment when this information is supplied by a separate subcontractor. It may also serve as a potential source list for donated materials or labor. These businesses can become substantive donors and supporters for your project.

Following is a sample preservation plan estimate outline. It will of course be accompanied by lots of other appropriate text to establish project context.

**Estimate for Grange Hall Re-Hab**
Prepared by Ralph Goodkind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>HOW MUCH</th>
<th>HOW LONG</th>
<th>SOURCE OF ESTIMATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replace broken slates, repair chimney flashings, reconstruct ridge cap, re-install downspouts.</td>
<td>$1,680</td>
<td>80 hours</td>
<td>Warren’s Roofing Bill Davis 555-1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repoint foundation stones, wire brush interior, flush sump pump and clean sump pit.</td>
<td>$1,785</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Mike’s Masonry Mike 555-1247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace sidewalk and front steps.</td>
<td>$2,850</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Tom’s Concrete Tom 555-3291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repaint exterior (2 coats) replacing rotted clapboards, re-caulking all windows and replacing porch railing.</td>
<td>$3,520</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Pete’s Painting Pete 555-1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prune four maple trees, replant two flower beds, reinstall brick borders, seed and mulch old driveway.</td>
<td>$1,870</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Green Tree Co. Sheila 555-1042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance and administrative costs.</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lincoln Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUB-TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,705</strong></td>
<td><strong>681</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTINGENCY (10%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,170</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,875</strong></td>
<td><strong>681 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The uses to which this plan can and should be put are as follows:

- Deciding what work should be hired on a professional basis and which can potentially be pursued on a volunteer basis.
- Outlining projected expenses on any grant application.
- Identifying the needs that best fit a funding source.
- A check list during the formation of an action plan.
- Formulating fundraising programs.
- Establishing fall-back strategies in the event the complete project is not possible.

**Formulate a timeline.**

Identify your project’s beginning, middle and end. Know when you have started and pick a conclusion that is universally recognized as the objective, a state of closure that everyone can celebrate. While preservation is an ongoing process of maintenance and care, projects are encapsulations of energy and short endurance. If the needs of a building are extensive, do one major thing at a time, during a season or once a year. Phase the unending stuff.

Create a timeline. Consider doing it on a roll of shelf paper, as a draft, a working document. It will be added to, scratched out, and edited many times. It also needs to be large enough for a group to gather around it for a discussion. Post your timeline in a conspicuous place—it will serve as a guide as well as a PR tool! Expect planning to consume all of six months. More time devoted to planning and organizing activities will result in the actual work being accomplished efficiently and painlessly.

A well considered timeline will be worked backwards from the ideal time for actual construction. Spring or fall are frequently most ideal. A summer construction schedule will compromise the availability of volunteers, and winter is best used for planning and training. An ideal construction time may also be affected by other community activities, or by a historically special date or event for your organization.
Search out funding.

Start early in your project’s life to identify potential funding sources. They may be grants, in-kind donations, or local gifts. Telephone the same resources that you contacted to locate a pro, i.e. your local and state historical societies and the State Division for Historic Preservation. Ask for suggestions from your pro. At this point your task is to get feelers out, collect information, and check application deadlines. Incorporate these deadlines into your project timeline and allow enough time to prepare applications for submission.

Some funding sources may actually help you with planning costs, while others might be strictly brick and mortar grants or grants requiring matching funds.

Consider the potential of incorporating an education program into your project. With highly skilled crafts people as teachers, it may be possible to attract a wide range of volunteers from all over. Education programs may open up other grant sources.

You will find that researching funding sources will provide you with some excellent organizational tools. Applications will ask you all the hard questions that need addressed to make a project successful. Use them to get you off on the right foot.

Local families may be intensely interested in your activities and looking for a way to contribute to cultural development that has the potential to speak well of their family’s interest in town. For example, by establishing a matching grant dedicated to a specific goal, a local family can encourage as well as challenge local support while getting the good intentions of their family some deserved recognition. Surprisingly, the majority of donations come from folks with low to average incomes. Preservation projects can benefit substantially from such grass-roots support. Encourage it at every opportunity.

If you need help with organizing your fundraising effort, consider attending a workshop on the subject. Many quality courses exist to give you encouragement and savvy.
Look for co-sponsorships.

Now that you have a thumbnail sketch of what your project looks like, you may want to cast about for other organizations that may have an interest in your activities or product. Leveraging the energy of other local groups can be beneficial to all.

Perhaps they could benefit by the use of your building for meetings or special events. They may want to share in the visibility you are about to generate for your project to increase their own momentum, in exchange for a contribution or access to a volunteer pool.

There is a critical mass which is magic to successful community projects, both in terms of impact, available resources, and people-power. Your goal should be to involve as much of your community as possible, not to hide your efforts under your hat.

Consider other groups for:

- Donating materials.
- Labor pools.
- Sharing advertising costs.
- Sponsoring suppers.
- Staging educational symposiums.
Ratification and Approval

Well, you’re there. You’ve done round one of your homework, and your idea has form and substance. Assemble the core group, review your progress to date, celebrate your accomplishments, and schedule a meeting with the full membership of your organization. You need to build on your enthusiasm and receive their blessing to proceed.

Give the full membership a complete outline of your efforts to date including the timeline, preservation plan, and interim budget to get you through the organization phase. Openly solicit their thoughts and opinions and be willing to incorporate adjustments where appropriate. You’ll need to be a bit of a cheerleader at this session—within this larger group are your volunteer enlisters, your fundraisers, your ambassadors and your lifeblood.

Discuss what forms of communication and reporting will allow the larger group to be comfortable with your activities. Schedule future check-in meetings into your project timeline. Finally, ask for authorization to proceed. Get indications of potential volunteers and make sure you know how and when to contact them.

If you encounter strong opposition, you’ll need to retrace some of the previous steps to ensure consensus to whatever extent possible.
Once your project has been approved by the sponsoring organization, it is time to introduce your idea to your community. Arrange for your pro or another preservation notable to deliver an educational lecture on an interesting subject for an evening's entertainment in a local meeting place. Supplement advertising by personally inviting community leaders to attend. You can successfully infect as many of your community as practical with the enthusiasm that is born of detailing the possible.

A good method to use is to select a general topic within which your project falls and arrange with your speaker to build a thirty to forty-five minute presentation. For instance, if you wish to rehabilitate a barn, establish the subject of this presentation as "The Barn in the 18th Century."

A source for interesting educational material is the State Division for Historic Preservation. For example, the Division has available "The Vermont Heritage Series," eight video tapes that cover many topics. If people can appreciate the historical context of your project, it will become more important to them.

If you can, videotape or tape record this performance for future reference and as the first step in maintaining a complete record of your overall project. While the specifics of your project should be part of this presentation, encourage your presenters to impart as much generalized information as possible. Education needs to be one of your objectives throughout this project, and no good opportunities should be ignored to pass along knowledge.

Make this presentation an event! Accompany it with refreshments, leave time for questions, and encourage your group members and neighbors to meet your presenter personally. Public relations are as necessary in the project’s immediate neighborhood as they are anywhere else.

The true benefit of a successful preservation effort in any town is the raising of community consciousness. Thoughtful reflection on where we have been as a culture prevents rash, short-sighted decision-making in the present.
Action Plan

O.K., now you know what you intend to do and who you intend to do it with. You have the support of your group, and the community is already aware of your plans and quite probably ready to support you. Next, the specific tactics and operational plans have to be set up. At this point, you may be six months into your planning efforts with another six to go. (These time frames are suggestions to prevent you or your group from becoming overwhelmed with too short a fuse.)

Reconvene your core group with your pro and create an action plan. Consider the following nine areas of importance, discuss some strategies, write down a concise description of tasks, develop a budget, and assign a group member to take the accountability for each one. The successful selection of key people will make or break your project. You will need:

Key Person A—Project Leader.
Key Person B—Site Coordinator.
Key Person C—Grant Writer.
Key Persons D—Fundraiser and Accountant.
Key Person E—Public Relations Coordinator.
Key Person F—Tools and Materials Coordinator.
Key Person G—Hospitality Coordinator.
Key Person H—Safety Advisor.
Key Person I—Volunteers Coordinator.

Each of the above should have working budgets attached to them to allow you to develop an accurate operational budget for the entire project.
A note about accountability:
It is critical to treat your selected key people as very special human beings at every opportunity—a challenge that should be easy since they are special! Introduce them as critical to your project in their given area of responsibility. Network them into the process with recognition for their ideas and abilities. Identify them at events with a button, ribbon, or special T-shirt. Honor the key players with a commemorative thank you dinner at the close of the project.

As you review each in detail, keep in mind that for smaller projects, one person can assume more than one responsibility. The important thing is that all of the items are covered by an assigned individual. Make accountability an honor, not a burden.

An action plan should be nothing more than a one- or two-page outline with dollar amounts, deadlines for tasks, and individuals assigned to each.

Never adjourn a meeting of the “core group” without scheduling the next meeting—getting in touch by phone to arrange an acceptable time is an unnecessary nuisance. Anticipate regular meetings of once every other week for four to six months, once a week for the month prior to construction.
Task Groups

Key Person A: Project Leader

Your project leader usually becomes self-evident. As the person who received and is reading this manual, this leader is very likely you.

Look for the following telltale signs:

- You have had a clear and distinct image of this project for some time.
- You find yourself out at the site frequently.
- You enjoy people, you arrive early, hang around late.
- People look to you to forge directions and settle disputes.

As a Project Leader, you are responsible for:

- General, overall organization.
- Morale, enthusiasm and spirit.
- Feel, taste, atmosphere and spirit.
- Ideas, notions, concepts and brainstorm.
- Delegation, persistence and checking everything three times.
- Problem solving, pulse checking.

You cannot become intensely involved in the actual construction work! Float, facilitate, cheer and direct, don’t do!

Plan on a long-term commitment of time in this role. Space your efforts to conserve energy. You will be needed to maintain an overview of all activities to be effective.
Key Person B: Site Coordinator

Select a site coordinator from the core group. This person will be responsible for the following activities:

- Stabilize the existing building. Get holes in the roof patched, get plywood over broken windows. Post if building is an attractive nuisance. Repair fences, put up a sign.

- Photograph and document the existing property in excruciating detail and multiple media (no less than 200 exposures for an average sized house or barn) inside and out. Take black and whites for newspaper releases, color slides for grant applications and presentations, and color prints for applications and for details. Catalog your work with good written descriptions of each shot.

- Coordinate and anticipate construction site requirements from toilet facilities, tents (it always rains) and power, to first aid stations and drinking water. Install a site telephone and picnic tables. Arrange for access to dry houses and/or church basements for field meetings and refuge. Call Digsafe (1-800-225-4977) to check for underground utilities.

- Design the site. Using a site plan, lay out tool and material storage, public relations center/volunteer tables, fencing, driveway access, parking, dumpster, temporary light, exhibit space, toilets, visitors’ center (for gawkers) and anything else you can think of.

- Locate child care, preferably adjacent space with supervision. A volunteer can assign simple child-sized tasks to the kiddies so that they are safe, but involved.

- Establish and keep updated a construction schedule using the already established budget estimate.

- Address safety/legal concerns such as obtaining building permits, releases, and control of crowds. This may be delegated to the safety advisor, Key Person H, on large projects.

Good knowledge of construction is critical to this position. This person will also be working closest to the “pro” on construction day and should act as the person through whom all questions from volunteers are funneled.
Key Person C: Grant Writer

Grant applications are frequently good devices to use in organizing your thoughts and resources. The information requested about general intent and specific strategies will force your group to cover much ground that might otherwise be neglected.

The preservation plan will be referred to frequently in grant preparation. Keep it handy.

A grant writer must be selected carefully and early. Characteristics to look for include:

Credibility
A grant writer’s reputation, credentials and previous experience should carry some impact on the grant reviewers. Consider retired teachers, retired business executives or local community leaders.

Persuasiveness
A good grant writer can express ideas concisely and completely. Applications need to be typewritten and free of clerical error. They must convey passion and commitment while retaining an air of good judgment and practicality.

Organizational skills
Grant applications are received at regular intervals, and they are all different. Timing, anticipation, patience and organization are all necessary. Long lead times are critical, as one person cannot be expected to fill out more than one application at a time. If you are fortunate, you will find four organizations that apply to your project and seem likely contributors. Slides or prints are usually requested but should be sent along with good descriptions in any case. These need to be of a high quality and correctly composed.

Political acumen
Organizations applying for support need to be sensitive to the selection process and the criteria used for eligibility. Get to know the director, find out what the granting organization’s key interests are by reviewing past successful projects. Avoid pushing any of the wrong buttons. Be persistent without being a pest. Ask for realistic amounts of money.
The grant writer needs to be in periodic touch with the core group if not a member already. Get the core group to buy into the ideas and language on each application before it is sent.

All applications should be signed by the president or chair of your organization.

**Key Persons D: Fundraiser and Accountant**

Fundraising and accounting are mutually supportive but very different. If your organization already has a treasurer, he or she needs to set up a separate account dedicated to the project and separate from the operational funding of your group. This person is a lover of detail and accuracy and keeps track of where amounts come from and how they get spent.

Fundraising, on the other hand, requires massive doses of energy and imagination. All the usual techniques of bake sales, bottle drives, buy-a-brick campaigns, cocktail parties, personal solicitation and on-site brunches should be considered. Be careful to select activities which are fun and reinforce community spirit and support. Don’t send fund raisers to people’s homes unannounced. Be persistent but be polite. A willing giver feels they are also receiving benefit.

Try to invent ways in which your group members can trade their talents (labor, professional services, mutual support, advertising, etc.) for the resources you need. Use a “thermometer” to let your supporters know how you’re doing.

If you do direct mailing, follow up with a phone call, preferably from somebody who knows the person being called. Encourage support by soliciting suggestions. Schedule activities wisely. Don’t compete with other community activities—support them.

Involve other groups. Co-sponsor events like auctions, craft fairs and festivals. Get your organization’s name and enthusiasm out where the public can see it.

If you receive support from grant givers, spread the word by using their names, with permission. If business and service providers participate, encourage your membership to frequent,
compliment and support them in return. Include educational efforts with your fund raising; pictures of your project, your prospectus, and your enthusiasm are all things to communicate to your community until the message gets across.

Fundraising efforts may need to be phased. Seed money for preliminary efforts of documentation and planning may precede the major fund drive for construction. Your pro can help you target amounts and schedules for these phases.

Remember that support can also be obtained in the form of donated materials as well as cash. Ask your pro and Key Person F, the Tools and Materials Coordinator, to help you assemble a materials list from which you can solicit donations.

However, do not accept second-rate material because the price is right. Even if outright donations are not available, local suppliers may provide non-profits with materials at reduced costs. This is another task where an assigned individual should be utilized. (A retired builder is a good person for this task, as they can provide knowledge and personal familiarity with local suppliers.) Make sure not to ask the same person for the same thing twice; get the amount right the first time and ask carefully the first time. Eye to eye in a private setting is best as phone calls already represent interruptions. Get your solicitor to make an appointment and to go and visit the supplier in their place of business.

Most of all, for all donations and contributions remember to say thank you, and thank you again in a sincere, meaningful way. Your courtesy will be rewarded.

Key Person E: Public Relations Coordinator

Assign a person to the task of utilizing the local media and applying your resources accordingly. These days, a lot of mileage can be gained from the use of a copying machine and some foot soldiers.

Local papers get read the most carefully by your target audience and are usually the least expensive to utilize. A few large display ads utilizing photographs, diagrams and good graphic design are much more effective than smaller, more easily ignored copy.
Local radio and television stations can usually be counted upon for public service announcements without charge while your own press releases can sometimes become the basis for feature articles.

If you advertise for construction volunteers, include a photo of the project site and a phone number and person to contact. Respond to calls with a packet of information as well as an application. In addition, make sure that you make the following clear:

- An outline of the work to be accomplished.
- Preferred minimum skill levels.
- Location and duration of the project.
- The necessity for volunteers to be interviewed and to sign a waiver of liability for your organization before starting work.

Try to have the capacity to respond to expressions of interest at all your fundraising events. Most projects are spread over a few weekends, making good coverage of the work-in-progress an important means of acquiring more interested volunteers.

If you can, appoint a skilled copy writer to the task of developing the written portions of your media efforts.

If you are non-profit and tax-exempt, always state such at every opportunity and encourage donations frequently.

Posters and handbills are very useful, and their quality is much more important than their quantity. Send them to volunteers to post in their communities. Don’t be shy, but don’t litter either. Get your message in church bulletins and notify the local schools and social organizations.

Once the project gets underway, plan on a center for information and reception for guests and interested by-standers. Make sure to staff such a facility with people who know the whole story. Plan to conduct tours of the site at least informally. Set up mini exhibits of photographs, special skills and educational boards in addition to the “main show.” Credit donating organizations and individuals in your exhibits.
Check your schedule and use your budget accordingly. Don’t advertise for volunteers when you are too close to the activity starting.

Cross pollinate. Use every opportunity to sell the project to the public right up to the point where their assistance is no longer required. Then make sure to thank everyone adequately.

A permanent display at the close of your project should be kept in mind. Begin to assemble materials and ideas for this display now.

Once your project is underway, get the press to cover it by notifying them in time and reminding them often.

**Key Person F: Tools and Materials Coordinator**

Your tools and materials coordinator should be a construction worker or hobbyist, familiar with the proper care and handling of tools. On a small project, this person might also be the safety advisor.

With the help of your core group and pro, make lists of the tools, materials, and safety equipment you are going to need to accomplish your task. Include a description of the hand tools required along with your advertising for volunteers. Turn a copy of the tools and materials list over to your fund raiser so they can solicit donations.

For larger and more specialized equipment, seek out local builders and tradesmen. Rental shops are increasingly available, and if you are well organized, you can limit the amount of time such tools will be required by arranging for all of one activity to be done in predetermined blocks of time.

Once you start to assemble tools and materials, make sure you have a secure place on site to inventory and store them. If you cannot find a place within your structure, rent a box trailer. Try to schedule delivery of materials on a one-day supply basis and also arrange delivery as close to the day of use as possible.

Assign an individual to the task of checking tools in and out. If you have tools requiring special skills, get your volunteers to
wear some kind of identification showing certified capability so that the tool checker does not need to know everybody.

Some volunteers may wish to bring and use their own tools. They should not be expected to share them.

Keep a close watch over power cords and make sure all grounding devices are in good shape. Do not use worn out tools or worn cords.

To properly anticipate breakdown and surprises, always have twice the tools you think you will need. Nothing is as disruptive to progress as having to wait for the right tool to show up.

Allow funds in your budget to replace broken or worn tools on loan to your project. Label them carefully and check on their whereabouts frequently. If possible, assign the same tool to the same person for the duration of the project. It will likely receive better care.

**Key Person G: Hospitality Coordinator**

The mission of this committee under the guidance of an appropriately enthusiastic coordinator is not only to nourish the workforce and nurture their children, but to boost morale and provide relaxation. On occasion, their efforts will create a forum for workers and families, pros, and community members to celebrate together. Well done, the work of this committee can vastly increase the visibility and success of your project.

Well cared for and entertained workers who can make a family event of their donated time are much more willing to return and/or extend their commitment of hours. Remember they are frequently giving up entire weekends of free time to work on your project.

Your goal should be to have all items for this effort donated. Make your fundraising and volunteer coordinators fully aware of your needs in this area. They can extend the possibility of food donations or serving to potential benefactors as they solicit donations of money and time.
The responsibilities of this committee are:

**Hospitality/Food**

- **Planning/Gathering**
  In all your food planning, be certain to allow for flexibility in quantities. This can be accomplished by selecting a good number and variety of items that are non-perishable or by allowing refrigerator/freezer space for spare perishables.

  Layout your suggested menus and manner of serving—lunch box pick-up or sit down at tables. Create a shopping list of items. Don’t forget serving utensils, cups, plates, napkins, silverware, condiments.

  Be as creative as you can about potential sources. Wholesale food and beverage houses might consider sponsoring your event in exchange for some advertising. Your local grocery or general store might be tapped. Local church groups or fire department auxiliaries might consider sponsoring a particular meal in total or allowing you to use their kitchen and hall. Local restaurants might want to promote a new menu item.

- **Snacks**
  Plan to have on hand plenty of pick-up items—fresh fruit, cookies, energy bars and brownies. Coffee, hot chocolate, fruit juices, soda and an abundance of fresh, cool water are critical. Have volunteer runners available (a good job for children) to take snack trays and water among the workers every hour or so. They get busy and appreciate the personal attention. No alcohol should be permitted.

- **Meals**
  Mealtime is a magical part of the workday. Lunch time serves well as a bonding experience for the crew who have all been off doing individual projects in the morning hours. Frequently discussions will tend toward similar experiences that each has had. Sometimes it offers an opportunity for the pro to talk informally about his or her experiences and to answer questions about techniques or processes that are intriguing. Keep these sessions as a private time for crew only and don’t run out of food. Lingering and getting re-energized are important.
The evening supper should be more of a festivity. You can introduce an educational or entertainment component and make it an all-community event, mixing workers and their families with townspeople. Lots of good homemade food is key. This should be a sit-down-and-get-comfortable event.

Consider the possibility of mealtimes for fundraising. A kick-off pancake breakfast (with crew as guests of honor and the rest of the community donating a modest amount) or dime-a-dip supper or pig roast will generate some enthusiasm. You can also consider selling items from the snack table to passers-by. No funding source should be ignored.

**Childcare**

A successful preservation project has childcare at its core to encourage whole families to volunteer. Make certain not to forget or underestimate the value of each family member’s contribution. In the team spirit, a water-runner’s efforts are just as important as those of a finish carpenter.

Safe, integrated childcare, planned by qualified volunteers is key. Children should be integrated into activities as much as is practical, considering their age, attention span, personal safety, and desires. Frequently, a good approach is to create parallel smaller scale activities to those their parents are experiencing. Drawing, building models, and sanding small parts are examples of good activities. (Don’t allow children to sand painted surfaces.) Allow for break time exchanges between parents and children for each to share their efforts and progress with the other.

**Key Person H: Safety Advisor**

If you utilize the efforts of twenty-five or more volunteers, a key volunteer of the right temperament and background should be chosen to be the safety officer, rather than delegating these duties to the site coordinator. This person should be familiar with O.S.H.A. regulations, hazardous materials/techniques, and proper disposal procedures.

While any recommendations we could make would subject us indirectly to liability concerns, we urge you to use common sense when considering these issues. Items you should not ignore include:
- Liability releases for your volunteers to read and sign.
- Fences, barriers and warning signs, fire extinguishers.
- Site work ground rules, safety and clean-up procedures, buddy systems, etc.
- Pre-qualification of volunteers for use of certain tools or participation in particular activities. Identify with badges, arm bands, etc.
- Parking, dog control and the safety of children.
- First aid/eyewash stations.
- Hazardous materials information.
- Access to a telephone for emergency calls.

Make sure adequate lighting is assured by providing temporary fixtures of the right size and type. Allow no smoking on the job.

If a lot of high work requiring ladders, scaffolding and roof jacks is part of the program, accept only the highest quality donations and be extremely careful about who is authorized to leave the ground. Many rental companies will erect scaffolding for you and check it periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.

Provide a good supply of safety boots and equipment, hard hats, hearing protectors, eye protection, and dust masks, and insist on their use. Check all materials for potential hazard. Make the welfare of your volunteers your number one priority.

**Key Person I: Volunteers Coordinator**

Big subject, big job! Securing a good quality, enthusiastic labor force is perhaps the single most critical task to the success of your project.

Start with your pro, your construction expert, and your site coordinator to assemble lists of tasks, crews, and hours per task. This should be simply an elaboration on the preservation plan.
already generated. (See page 12.) Remember there is a fine line between critical mass and chaos. Don’t have either too many or too few volunteers scheduled in a particular time slot. Have a process identified to select crew leaders and to sort out and identify the skill levels of volunteers. (See Volunteer Assessment on page 33 for more detail.)

Work together as a group, asking the coordinators for each of the other committees what they will need for volunteer power and when. No potential volunteer should be overlooked. All ages and interests can be accommodated. Don’t forget to solicit your local community college or vocational education programs for volunteers. They might love the opportunity to combine hands-on educational opportunities with a community service project.

Assemble a master chart of shifts, crew leaders and crews for use on construction day. Keep a card index of volunteers. As people express interest, a card should be filled out with full name, address, telephone number, age, experience, specific interests, and availability. Keep track of volunteer hours, tasks performed and skills learned. Give volunteers a name badge as they arrive on site at the hospitality/volunteer tent. Connect them up immediately with the person they will be working for. Sort out their capabilities, introduce them to fellow workers, and get them involved immediately.

When planning your event, have a complete list of tasks of all lengths and complexity available to match up with volunteers. Allow slots for miscellaneous jobs such as go-fer, water-runner, and clean-up crew. Plan for flexibility, shifting people around to other tasks if schedules and priorities change.

It is preferable to under-commit rather than over-commit a volunteer. Get them signed up for a shift or two, and if their interest is piqued, they will stay on for more. Over-extended, they will fade and general morale will follow.

An outgoing “people person” should take on this job. He or she will need to be well networked in town and trustworthy. The job of this person is to continually search out, assign, stroke, and thank volunteers.
The hospitality/volunteer tent will need some message runners, so that it can always be staffed.

Once it is clear how many volunteers you need and when, establish a day or two for intense phone calling. Have all callers in the same area if possible (i.e. someone’s office where more than one phone is available). With a master schedule on the wall, you can avoid duplicate assignments or understaffed shifts. Callers can also benefit from each other’s enthusiasm.

Follow up with a thank you letter for each offer to participate. Include shift assignment unit, crew leader name, things to bring, etc.

**Volunteer Assessment: More Detail**
Every project offers the dual challenge of a physical object which needs attention and repair and the priceless opportunity to inform, challenge, and educate your fellow citizens.

Volunteers that respond to calls for help arrive with *interest, energy and enthusiasm*. The best way to preserve all three is to provide each person with work that is suited to their particular interests and abilities. These attributes need to be screened and analyzed with some care.

Once the nature and scope of the work is determined, the types of tasks can be pre-determined and categorized so that a list of job descriptions can be assembled. By using your project hours estimates, projections can be made.

Using the simple example of the grange hall rehab on page 13, assume for a moment that you have two weekends (or thirty-two project hours) to accomplish your task. Because of the work which needs to be accomplished, you can tell that you need the following types of people for the following amounts of time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADE</th>
<th>TOTAL HRS + 32 PROJECT HRS = PROFESSIONALS REQUIRED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roofers</td>
<td>80 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>400 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete crew</td>
<td>55 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone masons</td>
<td>84 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree surgeons</td>
<td>82 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You now have a clear idea of how many of what type people you need to rehabilitate your grange hall. Of course, the original estimate was made based on the assumption that professionals would be doing the work. Volunteers may be less skilled or unaccustomed to working together and thus less efficient.

Your pro should help to determine which required skills can be taught through pre-construction training. Your most enthusiastic volunteers may be those hoping to learn a new skill they can apply to their own homes.

A multiplier should be applied to your person-hour projections to come up with a final volunteer/professional mix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADE</th>
<th>PROFESSIONALS REQUIRED</th>
<th>VOLUNTEER MULTIPLIER</th>
<th>VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roofers</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete crew</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone masons</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree surgeons</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A multiplier is a gut level understanding of the skill level of the craft against what the average American is likely to be familiar with. Your pro should estimate this for you.

With the information on the above chart, you must now make some decisions. First, decide which trades you will hire professionally. In the grange hall example project, obvious targets for professional help are stone masonry and concrete masonry, since these are the skills with the highest multipliers, making your money go the farthest. However, you can allow your labor pool to make some of these decisions for you. Perhaps other criteria such as the desire to learn new skills will enter into the formula more than the overall amount of time and money resources consumed.

If you feel that thirty-five volunteers is about what you can expect from your community, you can see that you can cover your requirements by substituting professional masons for volunteers.

If money is the element that is known from the beginning, go back to your budget and analyze which tasks you choose to undertake on a volunteer basis.
Once the personnel requirements are assembled, consider how to best train your volunteers. All of the indicated trades have to be approached with care on any project involving restoration. Vermont is very fortunate to have Historic Windsor’s Preservation Institute for the Building Crafts, offering courses and training in approved techniques of restoration and reproduction. Call them for ideas.

On a more casual level, you can organize a pre-project workshop day for all your volunteers to attend. In a one- to two-hour training session their skills can be assessed by crew leaders (competent volunteers), and each volunteer can become familiar with the tools he or she will be asked to bring along and use during the project. In larger groups, establish a means to readily identify various skill levels on-site.

Try to get your volunteers to commit to some amount of time on each project day, as the accumulating experience will accelerate production and add excitement and a sense of accomplishment to the project. Continuity of work force also prevents having to start all over again every day.

Remember to recognize your key contributors. Reward advances in skill. Hand out badges at lunch breaks, create an official awards committee, keep everything light and supportive.

Video tapes of proper technique can be useful at breaks. Arrange to view the video tape as it is taken. Spend some time and effort on certificates of participation (frame them), hand out keepsakes, get your volunteers’ names in the paper, in the video credits, out where people can see them. Treat your participants as the real reason for your project, as their good will and gratitude will serve your efforts in immeasurable ways.
Re-evaluation

About eight to ten weeks into this planning process, your committees and accountable key people should be organized and ready to report on their progress. They may be unaccustomed to working together as a team, unaware of each other's strengths and weaknesses, or inexperienced at their assigned task. Convene the core group with your pro and solicit progress reports from each player. Anticipate some holes, overlaps, disorganization. Don’t panic! The project leader’s organizational skills will be tested here, pulling together disparate ideas and approaches, acknowledging successes and offering aid where there are shortfalls.

Schedule this meeting to occur within a few weeks of the first big day, to allow yourselves enough time to maneuver around obstacles, but not so much time that you allow the group to cool down.

Consider the following possible loose ends:

- Prepare yourselves for rain so you can rejoice in the unlikely event of sunshine.

- Ask for suggestions.

- Prepare lists of small, unfinished tasks to hand out to new recruits.

- Ensure that your PR person is ready to pull out all the stops—plans, flyers, models, video tape recordings.

- Arrange to have all your facilities in place a full day before you actually need them.

- Ask crew leaders to arrive an hour early to set up their individual areas and catch their breaths.

- Set an agenda and date for a ratification session/pep rally with the full membership.
Pep Rally

This full membership kick-off meeting/pep rally is critical and exhilarating. Your plan should be laid out clearly, simply, and with enthusiasm. Let your PR committee and your pro do a dry-run for this larger group. Seek a clear approval to proceed.

Reinforce your direction and assign any remaining tasks to revolve as many members as possible. Community outreach is critical. Formal advertising must be supplemented with across-the-fence excitement building. If your membership does its job well, more volunteers will surface. Be prepared to offer them satisfying involvement.

Look for ideas to stimulate other activity in your community on the day of your event. Parades, yard sales, church breakfasts all will get folks out and contribute to the sense of a big day in the life of your town. Keep your event the center of attention, the destination for all who pass through.

Encourage your membership to continue their ambassador status on the big day. Give them badges and encourage them to mingle with visitors and volunteers as well.
The Big Day

Big Day Pointers

Your months of preparation have brought you finally to these
days. If all of your key people have performed their tasks well, it
will all fall together like a familiar picture puzzle. Relax, step
back to reflect on your travels, take a deep breath, and then
plunge headlong into the task at hand—making reality of your
dream.

Pull your key coordinators together for an early morning coffee
on site. Review last minute details only as necessary—try to keep
everyone calm, positive, and focused on success.

A few pointers to keep in mind:

- The Project Leader should have no specific tasks to perform
  but to see the big picture and keep the pulse steady and strong.

- Crew leaders should supervise and support, not do the work.

- All key people should function as a team—support, cheerlead,
guide, supplement.

- Start each day with a kick-off meeting, outlining procedures,
  protocols, courtesies, and goals for the day.

- Remind everyone to pace themselves and keep the safety of
  those around them uppermost in their minds.

- Be flexible and realistic about your goals for each day—
  weather and circumstances must be allowed their say. Rejoice in
  progress, learning, and safe, fulfilled participants.

- If some element isn’t working smoothly, pull together a quick
  meeting of key coordinators and re-group.
Clean-up management is critical for efficiency and safety. Everyone should be reminded that they will be participating in the end of day clean-up. This should be a scheduled event, not to be lightly dismissed.

Waste handling and disposal should be considered. Instructions should be given to volunteers regarding what to do with nails, glass, wire, insulation, and hazardous materials.

Keep in mind that demolition and structural repairs requiring jacking or winching can be extremely dangerous. Carefully consider when, how, and by whom these activities are carried out.

Maximize PR opportunities—provide knowledgeable personal tour guides for the news media, photographers, public figures, and key supporters.

Provide a bulletin board for announcements, messages, lost and found, upcoming events.

Gather momentum for subsequent days’ activities. Add to your lists of potential volunteers and supporters. Some folks simply need to see success before committing.

Keep your head, answer impatience with calm problem solving. Indulge the difficult and maintain control by delegating authority to as many as possible.

Give thanks freely and sincerely.

End of day suppers will tie a bow around the whole package. Use them to the fullest. They will be your reward, as well as the springboard for your project’s future.

One final note
The activities of this finale are always photogenic and are the visible and tangible result of all your months of effort. For most of your volunteers, this will be the only activity which they see and in which they will participate. If you can arrange for an all-day photographer (or even better, a videotaper) the results will be cherished by all of those involved.
Celebrations

What you choose to do after you have accomplished your immediate goal will determine the continued success of the finished product as well as set the stage for future undertakings.

Your most immediate task, however, is to thank formally everyone whose efforts made your project possible.

Easy things include letters and published lists of names in local papers. Honorary one-year memberships in your club or organization, plus the inclusion of volunteers on your mailing list, are simple and always appreciated.

Tokens such as certificates, key chains, videotapes, photographs and plaques are slightly more elaborate tools used to make the same impression. A commemorative T-shirt is a sure-fire hit as well as good free advertising of your group’s existence. Remember to treat your volunteers as potential members and future participants. There is no better way to expand the influence of your group than to build a nostalgic warmth around the contribution of your donors and volunteers.

Awards to key participants also need to be carefully considered. Plaques, dedications and commemorative ceremonies are excellent opportunities for further promotion and media exposure. Published lists of participating merchants and donors will encourage non-participants to reconsider in the future.

To properly acknowledge your success, erect some sort of permanent display in honor of your project. Exhibit artifacts found during your archeological dig or uncovered during construction. Describe the activities through photographs or text, story line, donated artifacts—any mechanism that will celebrate the event. Hang a plaque to honor the volunteers and donors. Lay out your future events as well as your master plan. The more you can establish yourselves as a vibrant, growing organization capable of achieving your goals, the more likely you are to attract the volunteers you will need for your next project.
Finally, encourage your group to speak to other organizations who are considering a preservation project. Success is contagious, and this germ is a valuable one, capable of tapping our human resources to save the world around us.
Epilogue

Congratulations! You have read the handbook through to this epilogue and are thinking about launching a volunteer preservation project in your own town. Imagine if the citizens of just ten Vermont communities rehabilitated an historic structure each year? After only ten years over 100 community landmarks, from houses and town halls to covered bridges and barns, as in the case of Lincoln, would be assured a continuing and useful place in Vermont’s renowned landscape.

If people in every state in the union were to do their share—3,600 projects in New York, 6,000 in California—thousands of historic properties could be conserved within a decade. What a contribution this would make towards the restoration of America’s infrastructure! Railroad stations, libraries, and countless other facilities could be granted extended life, while everything from new units of low-cost or elderly housing to community and cultural centers would emerge from buildings which need to be adapted to new purposes. Such an economic and spiritual boost would be an incredible gift to our own and succeeding generations as the nation enters the next millennium.

While the potential of volunteer community preservation projects is enormous, the success of the whole (to paraphrase the advertising slogan of one national investment banking house) must be measured “one project at a time.” By outlining the process of how to make a successful volunteer project work, this manual is a very effective “toolkit” for igniting community preservation volunteerism here in Vermont. However, tools in the hands of the enthusiastic, without requisite skills and a clear vision of the desired outcome, can be a danger as well as an asset.

Historic buildings form more than attractive community stage sets. They are fragile resources which embody the thoughts, ideas, and values of those who came before us, wrought in three dimension. An overzealous attack on an historic building by a group of well meaning volunteers could easily turn today’s project into tomorrow’s embarrassment. Projects guided by well thought-out preservation plans for conserving a structure over the
long run, where tasks are carefully delegated to match the skill of the volunteers so as not to compromise the historical integrity of the structure in question, have the best chance for enduring success.

As the handbook stresses, having preservation professionals involved in the earliest stages of any volunteer effort is extremely important. This does not mean, however, that the object is simply to turn the thinking over to the so called “pros” and the action over to the volunteers.

Involving volunteer amateurs along with professionals in thinking through a plan is perhaps as valuable an outcome as the actual preservation of the structure itself. It can help the volunteers better understand why they are doing what they are doing and manage their expectations so that they are not disappointed when they are directed away from work requiring specialized skills.

Many volunteers, once having experienced the planning and execution of a preservation project, will no doubt want to learn more. Fortunately many courses, workshops, and educational materials are available in Vermont through the University, the state, and non-profit organizations to help satisfy their desire for further knowledge. What begins as a donation of time to save a community building has the potential for developing into a lifelong commitment to sound community planning, a better environment, and the conservation of one of America’s most important yet too little thought of non-renewable resources, its historic structures.

So take up the challenge, and initiate a project! You will help yourself, your neighbors, and your state and community, and a take a small yet important step towards the physical renewal of a nation.

Chester Liebs
Director
Historic Preservation Program
University of Vermont
Resources

Where to go for help

The following organization and agencies have a wealth of knowledge about the field of historic preservation and are extremely anxious to share that knowledge with you and to support your efforts. Call with your questions and concerns. In addition, it’s always helpful to talk with people who have undertaken similar projects. For that reason, the folks from the Lincoln Historical Society could be especially helpful to you.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
58 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602. (802) 828-3226.
The Division for Historic Preservation is the public agency designated to promote historic preservation in Vermont. The Division administers federal and state preservation programs, operates the state-owned historic sites, and maintains an inventory of historic and archeological resources. Technical assistance and information on preservation planning and tax credits are also available.

Preservation Trust of Vermont
Burlington Office: 104 Church St., Burlington, VT 05401. (802) 658-6647.
The Preservation Trust makes grants for technical assistance to historic preservation projects, undertakes publication and education programs, accepts gifts of property, and holds easements on historic properties.

Architectural Conservation and Education Service
Historic Preservation Program, Dept. of History, University of Vermont,
Burlington, VT 05405. (802) 656-0577.
ACES is the outreach service of the University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program. Services include conservation assessments for historic buildings, technical and historical research, and National Register nominations.

Historic Preservation Program
Dept. of History, Wheeler House, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405. (802) 656-3180.
The Historic Preservation Program offers a full-time Master of Science degree in historic preservation. It also offers evening, weekend, and summer courses on the interpretation of the built
environment, architectural conservation, rural preservation, and heritage education through the Division of Continuing Education.

National Trust for Historic Preservation
The National Trust is a membership organization of individuals and groups interested in historic preservation. The Trust publishes the monthly newsletter “Historic Preservation News,” the magazine, Historic Preservation, and also administers the Main Street Program for community renewal, among other programs. The Regional Office provides a range of technical advice and preservation information, and administers a grants program.

Preservation Institute for the Building Crafts
Historic Windsor, Inc., Box 1777, Windsor, VT 05089. (802) 674-6752.
The Institute conducts classroom and on-site workshops to give interested laymen and professionals training in preservation craftsmanship, and maintains a directory of preservation craftspersons and contractors.

The Lincoln Historical Society
R.R. 1 Lincoln, Bristol, VT 05443.
In 1990, the Lincoln Historical Society and their volunteers reconstructed a 19th century barn adjacent to their museum. Steve Harris and Judi Bell, the authors of this handbook, could provide you with lots of practical advice based on their experience.

Reading about Historic Preservation
Respectful Rehabilitation: Answers to Your Questions about Old Buildings*
By the National Park Service and published by the Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation. Respectful Rehabilitation is a “Dear Abby” for old buildings, answering 150 of the most asked rehabilitation questions. A great resource for the budding historic preservationist. $14.95.

Caring for Your Old House: A Guide for Owners and Residents*
By Judith Kitchen and published by the Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation. Although written for the homeowner, this illustrated handbook will be useful to anyone who is undertaking any rehabilitation project. The book provides comprehensive advice and guidance on repairing and maintaining historic homes. $16.95.

"Historic Preservation in Vermont"
Published by the Preservation Trust of Vermont. A 36-page guide and survey of preservation activity in Vermont. Available from the Preservation Trust for $3 to cover postage and handling.

_The Complete Guide to Capital Campaigns for Historic Churches and Synagogues_
By Peggy Powell and Susanna A. Jones and published by Partners for Sacred Places. This is a terrific resource for non-profits attempting to undertake a capital campaign. The manual provides a thorough education for the layman as well as step-by-step plans for experienced fundraisers. Available for $45 from Partners for Sacred Places, 1616 Walnut St., Suite 2210, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

_Keep the Money Coming_
By Christine Graham and published by Pineapple Press. A step-by-step strategic guide to annual fundraising, this book will be especially helpful to community organizations. Available for $18.95 plus postage and handling from CPG Enterprises, P.O. Box 199, Shaftsbury, VT 05262, or by calling (802) 447-0256.

"Preservation Briefs"
Published by the National Park Service. The ever growing series of pamphlets on specific preservation issues now has thirty titles. One of the more recent "Briefs," Number 28, is devoted to Painting Historic Interiors and includes information on the hazards of lead paint. Generally copies are available from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Call (802) 828-3226 with your specific request.

"Information"

* These books are available from the Preservation Press of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Call (800) 766-6847 to order or to request a complete catalog.
Published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Trust publishes a total of forty-four pamphlets on general preservation issues, organizational development, and guidance on preserving special building types. An order form with descriptions of each title is available by writing Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington D.C. 20036, or by calling (202) 673-4286.

*Saving Place: A Guide and Report Card for Protecting Community Character*

By Philip B. Herr and published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This guide will be a helpful tool for residents and local officials interested in community conservation. Available for $17 from the Northeast Regional Office of the National Trust, 7 Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston, MA 02109.

“Lincoln Saves a Barn”

**STEP 1**

The Dream: Testing Project Vitality

**STEP 2**

Stimulation: The Core Group

**STEP 3**

Research and Development

Co-Sponsorships

Funding

Timeline

Preservation plan

Project statement
**STEP 4**
Ratification and Approval

**STEP 5**
Presentation to Community

**STEP 6**
Action Plan
Tools and Materials Coordinator

Safety Advisor

Public Relations Coordinator

Volunteers Coordinator

Hospitality Coordinator

Grant Writer

Fundraiser and Accountant

STEP 7

Task Groups

Project Leader
STEP 9
Pep Rally

STEP 10

STEP 8
Re-evaluation

The Big Day

STEP 11
Celebrations
Volunteers can help save buildings.

Here’s help for organizations and communities who want to save treasured old buildings for community use. This practical handbook tells you how to carry out a successful preservation project using a volunteer workforce and limited funds.

No matter what the size of your organization, you can benefit from following the 11-step process detailed in this manual. From preliminary evaluation to final celebration, it covers planning, public relations, hospitality, tools and materials, participant safety, and much more. Included is advice on:

- How to create a project statement.
- The four parts of a preservation plan.
- Key people you didn’t know you needed.
- How long will it take?
- Seven possible loose ends.
- The importance of the pep rally.

Plus there’s a fold-out step-by-step chart to help you keep track of what you’ve accomplished and what needs to happen next. An epilogue explains how what begins as a donation of time to save a community building has the potential for developing life-long interests in community planning and conservation.

Authors Judi Bell and Steve Harris write from experience. With other volunteers in Lincoln, Vermont, they helped turn a run-down barn into a new home for the local historical society.

“This handbook shares the wisdom of veteran preservationists with countless community organizations whose volunteer members love an old building in need of repair. It provides a framework for project organization and offers the reader ‘can-do’ inspiration for what can often be a formidable task.” —Judy Hayward, Executive Director, Historic Windsor

“Our historic buildings need all the help they can get. Each building saved adds to our local, state, and national heritage. Some can be saved by government effort, some by private owners, but volunteers must be prepared to help. This handbook prepares volunteers to organize, direct, and gather community support for preservation projects.” —Eric Gilbertson, Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation