



November 13, 2025
UVTPC FALL CONFERENCE

Find Your Place, Find Your Partners

Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT

www.uvtpc.com



UVTPC 2025 Workshop Descriptions (subject to change)

Dive into this year's amazing workshop lineup! Each one is part of a strand (look for the matching symbol) so you can easily spot what excites you most. Some presenters shared who their session is best suited for, you'll find that listed in parentheses before the workshop title.

Conference Strands:

Agents of Change: Student Voice, Action, and Community Stewardship

This strand showcases the power of student agency and leadership in shaping the places they call home. Presenters will highlight youth-led projects that extend learning beyond the classroom, blending academic study with community impact. Sessions will feature examples of student-driven climate and sustainability initiatives, service-learning that responds to local needs, and approaches that position young people as doers, leaders, and changemakers.

Care in Community: Supporting Each Other Through Partnership

This strand highlights the power of relationships to sustain our work, care for one another, and strengthen our collective capacity. Presenters will share examples of collaborations that lighten the load for educators, showcase peer networks that foster resilience, and explore creative ways schools and communities are showing up for each other through co-teaching, program co-design, and mutual support.

Rooted in Place: Cultivating Belonging and Connection

This strand explores how to nurture a sense of place, belonging, and stewardship by engaging with local landscapes, stories, and traditions. Presenters will highlight practices that build student connection and curiosity, share approaches to equitable access to outdoor learning, and uplift local history, Indigenous knowledge, and cultural perspectives that deepen our relationships with place.

Morning Workshops (10:45am-11:45am)

 **Embodied Connection: Teaching with Nature's Patterns and Body - Based Calming Practices** by Karen Ganey, Certified Permaculture Teacher & Designer, Somatic Embodiment Facilitator and [ReGeneration Corps](#) Education & Program Director

Learn how to bring environmental ethics to life with permaculture—designing with nature's patterns—and somatic practices—body-based activities that help people feel calm and focused. Explore ways to plan lessons using permaculture principles and create supportive learning spaces. Leave with tools to inspire deeper nature connections in your students. ([Lakeside East/West](#) (20 max))

 (PreK-HS) **Student-Driven, Standards-Aligned Place-based Projects** by Alyssa Castellini, [Woodstock Elementary](#) STEM Teacher; Shannon Pogue, [Hanover High School](#) English Teacher, and Joan Haley, [Education for Climate Resilience](#) Founder *Find out about the new revisions to Right Here! An Educator's Guide for Equitable Climate Action in the Upper Valley and Beyond and the contributions from over a dozen local educators. Learn how a teacher uses it with her students, how to create student-led, standards-aligned units on local issues, with hands-on projects, planning tools, and our abundance of UVresources. Leave with actionable strategies, a mini-unit outline, and renewed inspiration. ([Edgewater](#) (30 max))*

 (MS-HS) **The Solstice Project: A Network for Climate Leadership & Action in Education** by Mike Peller, [VT Academy](#) Head of School; Christine Armiger, Director of Sustainability; Whitney Barrett, VT Academy Humanities Department Chair; and Jake Miller, VT Academy Science Department Chair *Discover The Solstice Project, a national network of schools committed to climate leadership, curriculum transformation, and community action. Hear Vermont Academy's journey from traditional independent school to climate-forward learning community. Explore the Seven Pillars of Climate-Centered Education and leave inspired with ideas, resources, and an invitation to join the movement. ([Lakeside Theatre](#) (30 max))*

 (PreK-HS) **Plot Twist! Unexpected Place-Based Learning at the Farm and Forest** by Christine Scales, Mollie Surprenant, Kat Robbins, and Jennie Friedman, in partnership with [Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park](#), [Billings Farm and Museum](#) and [Woodstock Union HS](#) *Poems in the forest? Phonics on the farm? Explore how "unexpected" subjects like literacy, art, and social studies can be incorporated into place-based learning. Try hands-on activities that build critical thinking, observation, care, and communication. You'll grow an engaged and empowered learning community while meeting your curriculum standards! ([Gardenview](#) (30 max))*

 (MS) **Cooking Like a Middle Schooler: Empowering Young Chefs Through Hands-On Learning** by Kelsey Head, [Cedar Circle Farm](#) Education Department Manager *Explore how hands-on cooking engages and empowers middle schoolers to create fresh food, build community, and enjoy learning together. Craft a snack, share strategies for designing engaging programs, discuss challenges with engaging this age group, and collaborate on resources to support healthy eating, teamwork, and creativity in young chefs. ([Terrace Ballroom](#) (10 max))*

Combined Afternoon Workshops (12:45pm-2:45pm)

 (PreK-4th) **Why Env. Ed. Needs Racing, Chasing, and Singing Circle Games** by Edith Pucci Couchman, [Evolving Beauty](#) Author & Web Editor

If children are to love their Place on this marvelous planet, enjoyable learning experiences are helpful! Typically, these harmonize with evolved predispositions towards health, sociability, understanding, and compassion (with a modicum of competitiveness). Let's consider a few active, empowering games that blend science and the arts for this beautiful purpose. (Meet in the Lounge then head outside to Gaebo area (15 max))

 (MS-HS) Details coming soon....

 (MS and above) **Listening to the Land- Deepening Communication Skills, Deepening Connections** by Mike Loots, [Woodstock Union Middle School High School](#) Wellness Teacher

Practices for deepening listening, speaking and even myth making skills with one another: be we human, red oak, lake or loon. We'll explore simple and meaningful ways we can invite the more than human world to be central in our classrooms, sure, but also in the way we live our lives. Participants will walk away with several activities geared towards school grounds, but applicable anywhere people are listening to the land. Meet in Terrace Ballroom then head outside to hike to Morey Mountain Conservation Area and back about 3 miles total on easy flat trail (15 max)

Afternoon Workshops Session 1 (12:45pm-1:45pm)

 (PreK-4th) **Digital Documentation in Outdoor Classrooms** by April Zajko, [Bradford Elementary School](#) Preschool Teacher/[Community College of VT](#) Higher Ed Faculty and Karina Weiss, [Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium](#) Education Director

Transform outdoor learning moments into powerful visual stories that cultivate belonging and connection. This engaging workshop empowers educators to capture compelling photographs, revisit images to deepen thinking, and use digital documentation to strengthen family and community ties, making student learning visible, reflective, and celebrated in dynamic, nature-rich environments. (Lakeside Theatre (30 max))

 (MS) **Composting: Students Turning Problems into Solutions** by Dulce O'Hare, [Sharon Elementary School](#) 5th grade teacher and Compost Coordinator; Christiana Morley, [Marion Cross Elementary School](#) Environmental Education Coordinator; Cat Buxton, [Upper Valley Super Compost Project](#) Project Director

Students at Upper Valley Super Compost Project schools transform cafeteria food waste into compost for school gardens. Collaborating with peers, educators—and even microorganisms—they build sustainable habits, reduce landfill waste, and strengthen school communities. We'll play interactive games and get our hands dirty to discover how students at two local schools are leading environmental change while deepening engagement and ownership in their learning. (Lakeside East/West (30 max))

 Trash into Treasure: Community Crafting with rePlay Arts by Melanie Adist and Jamie Rosenfeld, [rePlay Arts](#) Co-Directors

Come and make art using materials that were destined for the landfill! This session will allow educators to get creative with reuse materials and leave with resources and project ideas for upcycling and sustainable artmaking in their classroom. ([Edgewater \(20 max\)](#))

Afternoon Workshops Session 2 (2:00pm-2:45pm)

 (Pre-K-4th) **Bring Magic & Wonder to Outdoor Learning by Angela Hotvet, Leslie Connoly, Michelle Landry, and Sophie Doiron, [Ray School](#) Kindergarten Teacher Team**

Discover how one kindergarten team used Thomas Dambo's Trolls as a spark for a playful, cross-curricular outdoor learning adventure. Explore strategies for designing curriculum that connects with community resources, launches with storytelling, and lets children lead with wonder. Engage in hands-on activities to dream up your own "magical" outdoor learning adventure to inspire stewardship. ([Lakeside East/West \(30 max\)](#))

 AI as Educational Partner: Navigating Ethics Through an Ecosystem Lens by Andrew Powers, [Greentime.ai](#) Mad Scientist

Join Andrew Powers and his AI partner Claude for an exploration of AI ethics in education. Through interactive demonstration and the AI Ethical Ecosystem framework, participants will engage with navigating complex ethical questions, analyze current AI controversies, and discover how AI can be an ethical thought partner supporting place-based teaching. ([Edgewater \(30 max\)](#))

 GenZ Leaders: Growing a Sense of Place and Purpose in the Next Generation of Environmental Educators by Sarah Strew, [VINS](#) Nature Camp & Adult Education Director

Who are GenZ and how does this rising generation of educators fit into our workplaces and classrooms? How can our organizations and schools help them find their sense of belonging with us? Discuss strategies and tips to tap into the many strengths of GenZ and hear from members of this generation, young educators at VINS Nature Camp, about finding their voice and purpose within our organization. ([Lakeside Theatre \(30 max\)](#))