

# Eclipse Planning Check-In

02/22/24

Much of northern Vermont is within the path of totality for the April 8 solar eclipse, making this an ideal place to witness the rare natural event. State agencies are planning for thousands of people to visit Vermont to view it (see [2024 Total Solar Eclipse in Vermont](#)), and towns and cities of all sizes as well as tourism-focused organizations are planning [local events](#).

VLCT is hosting webinars every two weeks from January 25 to April 4 to keep municipalities informed about State plans and to learn about community-level plans, so municipalities can anticipate how all these plans might intersect (or conflict!).

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## State Planning Update

**Eric Forand, VEM Director**, noted that more and more articles and press releases about the eclipse are appearing. The State continues to hold internal and external meetings. State workgroups are identifying concerns and fixes. The State is considering how to transition from the working group format into SEOC functions as more things must be tracked, resources deployed, etc. The SEOC will open partially and scale up to opening fully for the day of the event. Current discussions include how to manage data and resources.

The State has contacted the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association, which is messaging to gas stations. The Vermont Towing Association will have members on standby. Towing will be deployed through the Vermont State Police. Based on information from similar events, the main concern is the flow of traffic. The State has met with Verizon and T-Mobile, which believe they have sufficient capacity for the anticipated influx of visitors without outages. The companies can increase band width if needed. Forand encouraged municipalities to reach out to cell providers if they are hosting a large event as the providers can take action to support coverage for the event. The State focus is the interstate system. Forand reminded participants that direct help to vehicles will be done through State Police.

The state is continuing messaging and education to help visitors be ready for Vermont conditions. Messages have included keeping cell phones charged, having extra batteries, having water in your car, etc. The State continues to encourage municipalities to report events through the Department of Tourism and Marketing's website as this will help with resource deployment planning.

If your municipality is thinking of opening its local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the eclipse, please let VEM know. The State is using the eclipse event as a training opportunity. It could be a good training opportunity locally too.

**Katharine Ingram, Department of Tourism & Marketing (VDTM) Trade and Partner Relations Manager**, was unable to attend this week's Check-In. Katie Buckley from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns shared updates from VDTM. VDTM also encourages municipalities to list their events on the Department's website. Ingram requested that municipalities send prospective attendance numbers to Katharine at [Katharine.Ingram@vermont.gov](mailto:Katharine.Ingram@vermont.gov). Forand clarified that attendance numbers should be the maximum capacity for the event, not tickets sold.

Every town that has ordered eclipse glasses will get some. The State has ordered more. The latest glasses are not Vermont branded. The glasses will be shipped in the next week with arrival expected by Town Meeting Day. Any excess glasses will go to Welcome Centers. If your municipality has electronic signs, the State encourages you to use them for traffic control. For exceptionally bad roads (mud season), the State asks that the road be signed to limit traffic. As traffic impacts occur, GPS might provide the road as an alternate travel route. If you have areas where hikers may stray the beaten path, the State advises municipalities to sign these locations too.

## Resources

### New or Modified

- *State of Vermont April 8 Solar Eclipse NEW webpage:* <https://www.vermont.gov/eclipse#travel>. This new link allows municipalities to list their events. To make a listing, create an account using “Manage Your Events” at the bottom of the webpage. Find events in neighboring communities to coordinate planning for impacts. Even if you aren’t having an event, another community’s event might impact your community.
- *Vermont State Parks:* A list of parks that will be opened can be found in the [Vermont State Parks blogspot](#). Park facilities will be closed for this event. Portable toilets and/or pit/composting toilets will be available. Parking will be available at each of these locations. Parking may be limited depending on the number of visitors. Check back for updates as some viewing locations may change due to on the ground conditions as the date nears.
- *The Vermont Department of Libraries* will present an Eclipse Planning Round Table discussion on Thursday, February 29, 2024, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. Library staff from across the state can share ideas and resources, including event planning and supporting community events in towns and cities. Learn more and register [here](#). The Department’s Eclipse 2024 Information webpage is <https://libraries.vermont.gov/eclipse-2024-information>.
- *Vermont Public’s 2024 Eclipse in Vermont webpage* includes events that are not included on the State Eclipse webpage. Municipalities can use this webpage to check for additional events in neighboring communities to help coordinate planning and response activities.
- *Waze crowd-sourced navigation app:* <https://www.waze.com/apps/>. The [Waze Communities Knowledge Hub page](#) includes How-To Guides and other resources. Municipalities can set up an account and use this website to list local road closures and warnings.

### Previously Included

- Visit <https://www.vlct.org/resource/eclipse-planning-check-recordings-and-resources> for check in slides and notes, updates, and new information.
- Email Katie Buckley ([kbuckley@vlct.org](mailto:kbuckley@vlct.org)) or Bonnie Waninger ([bwaninger@vlct.org](mailto:bwaninger@vlct.org)) from VLCT’s Federal Funding Assistance Program if you have questions after the call.
- Waze (<https://www.waze.com/apps/>) is a free, Google-owned GPS app that provides travelers with up-to-date navigation and traffic information. Municipalities can sign up and use Waze to alert residents and visitors to local road closures and day-of events. Waze will not have its transfer to 511 capacity in place by the April 8 eclipse. The [Waze Communities Knowledge Hub page](#) includes How-To Guides and other resources.

- *Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing Events page:* <https://plan.vermontvacation.com/events>. This original page also works for listing your event.
- *Vermont Tourism and Marketing Program Basic Listing Request Form:* <https://form.jotform.com/223616006195149>. This form allows people to list their tourism-related services, including one-time lodging for the Solar Eclipse. One complimentary listing is permitted per business or organization.
- “How Can You Tell If Your Eclipse Glasses or Handheld Solar Viewers Are Safe?” *American Astronomical Society*, 2024. <https://eclipse.aas.org/eye-safety/iso-certification>.
- Howells, Kate. “Are Your Solar Eclipse Glasses Safe?” *The Planetary Society*, 7 September 2023. [https://www.planetary.org/articles/are-your-solar-eclipse-glasses-safe?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAlJKuBhAdEiwAnZb7lZsJbeFq-G3BIQ5V7lQepLhkMPXAvryEB7TF1yP46owv-K\\_OXa8EpBoCNm8QAvD\\_BwE](https://www.planetary.org/articles/are-your-solar-eclipse-glasses-safe?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAlJKuBhAdEiwAnZb7lZsJbeFq-G3BIQ5V7lQepLhkMPXAvryEB7TF1yP46owv-K_OXa8EpBoCNm8QAvD_BwE).
- American Astronomical Society (AAS) list of approved reputable vendors: <https://eclipse.aas.org/eye-safety/viewers-filters>.

## Q&A Report

- Q1.** Will there be any information regarding how to set up a municipal Waze account to mark closed roads or roads that shouldn't be traveled, say due to mud?
- A1.** Municipalities must set up their own account. The [Waze Communities Knowledge Hub page](#) includes How-To Guides and other resources. Municipalities should note that 511 only includes State roads.
- Q2.** Can we get a link to the Waze municipal account?
- A2.** There isn't a municipal Waze account. Each municipality must set up its own Waze account. The [Waze Communities Knowledge Hub page](#) includes How-To Guides and other resources. Katie will add Waze to VLCT's Eclipse Check-in website as a Frequently Asked Question. The eclipse offers a good opportunity to learn how to use and manage a municipal Waze account prior to a disaster event.
- Q3.** When do we find out if our Town will receive glasses?
- A3.** Every town that has ordered eclipse glasses will get some. The State has ordered more glasses. The latest glasses are not Vermont branded. The glasses will be shipped in the next week with arrival expected by Town Meeting Day.
- Q4.** Is there a minimum number of participants for events that should be reported to the State?
- A4.** Please only report anticipated participant numbers if the municipality expects 100 visitors or more. VEM would like to know how many people are expected in the community, not attendance at specific events within the Town. Ex. 500 people are anticipated to attend events in the community, not 50 people at library, 20 at town hall, etc. VEM has a survey it will send out through VLCT. Responding to the survey will help the State plan and respond on event day.
- Q5.** Is there access to Mt. Mansfield support? Has the Green Mountain Club been engaged?
- A5.** The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) participates in the State's safety group. The eclipse is

occurring during mud season so trails will be closed. ANR will install signs to that effect and will update information on [Trail Finder](#). ANR will work to message through their work and with the Green Mountain Club.

- Q6.** Has there been discussion about State Police or local authority for parking concerns on trailheads? There may be out of state visitors traveling bad roads to access trailheads.
- A6.** Locals are best positioned for Google traveler protection. The State advises municipalities to put up signs. Road closure is within municipal purview. The Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation is looking into managing situations where a State road crosses the Long Trail in mountain passes.
- Q7.** Is there a direct contact for the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) so that municipalities can coordinate efforts locally?
- A7.** Eric Forand will provide a contact. FPR will open some state parks for day use and some for overnight use. A list of parks that will be opened can be found in the [Vermont State Parks blogspot](#).
- Q8.** Will New England 511 include local road closure information?
- A8.** No, 511 only includes State roads. 511 is working on a function to upload Waze information, but this function will not be ready by the April 8 eclipse. The State is recommending that municipalities use Waze to keep their road information updated. Waze takes traffic input from municipalities and citizens. It uses algorithms to verify information submitted by citizens.