



Senate Committee on Institutions

January 27, 2022



Peaslee-Smith, Guildhall

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board Statutory Purpose



“the dual goals of creating affordable housing for Vermonters, and conserving and protecting Vermont’s agricultural land, forestland, historic properties, important natural areas, and recreational lands of primary importance to the economic vitality and quality of life of the State.”

10 V.S.A.15 §302

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board Multiple Goals



VHCB's multiple goal mission illustrated in Windham County where its program supported the revitalization of the Latchis Theatre in downtown Brattleboro, the construction of 27 affordable apartments at the northern entrance to the village of Bellows Falls, and the reopening of the Putney General Store in the heart of Putney.

10 V.S.A. Chapter 15 § 322

§ 322. Allocation system

(a) The Board shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:

- (1) the need to maintain balance between the dual goals in allocating resources;
- (2) the need for a timely response to unpredictable circumstances or special opportunities to serve the purposes of this chapter;
- (3) the level of funding or other participation by private or public sources in the activity being considered for funding by the Board;
- (4) what resources will be required in the future to sustain the project;
- (5) the need to pursue the goals of this chapter without displacing lower income Vermonters;
- (6) the long-term effect of a proposed activity and, with respect to affordable housing, the likelihood that the activity will prevent the loss of subsidized housing units and will be of perpetual duration;
- (7) geographic distribution of funds.

(b) The Board's allocation system shall include a method, defined by rule, that evaluates the need for, impact, and quality of activities proposed by applicants.

Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

VHCB Sections FY24 Proposed

Section 10 Clean Water

Agricultural water quality projects:

\$800,000

Land Conservation and WQ Projects

\$2.0 M

Section 16 Vermont Housing &

Conservation Board

Housing and Conservation Projects:

\$1.8 M



Since 2020, VHCB has received \$19.2M in Capital Bond funds for investment in housing, conservation, and water quality. VHCB has \$1.39 to be committed through the remainder of FY23.

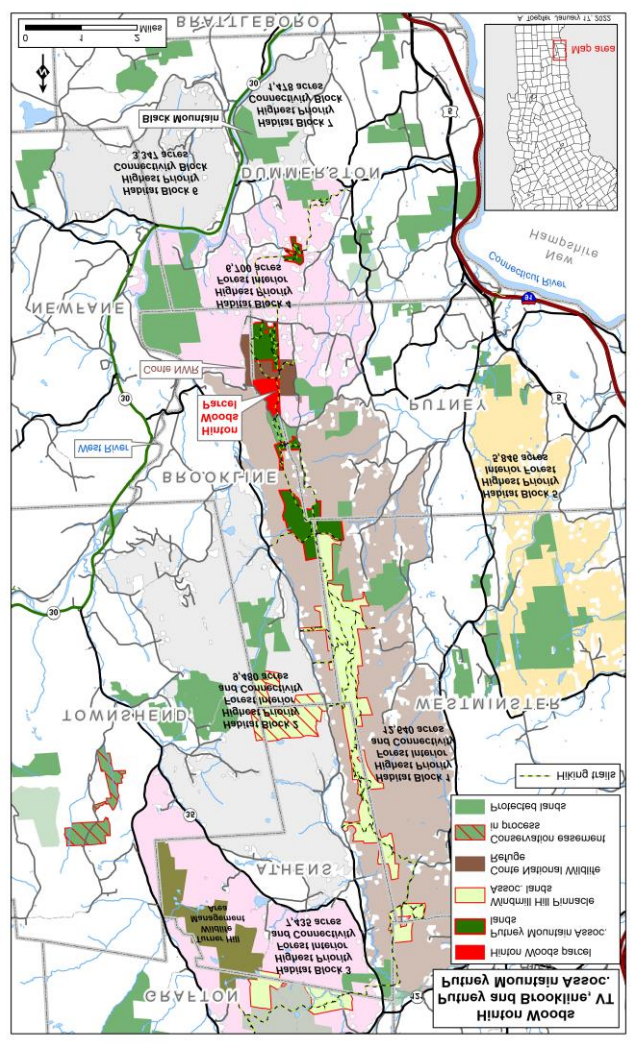
Capital Bill Funding for Land Conservation



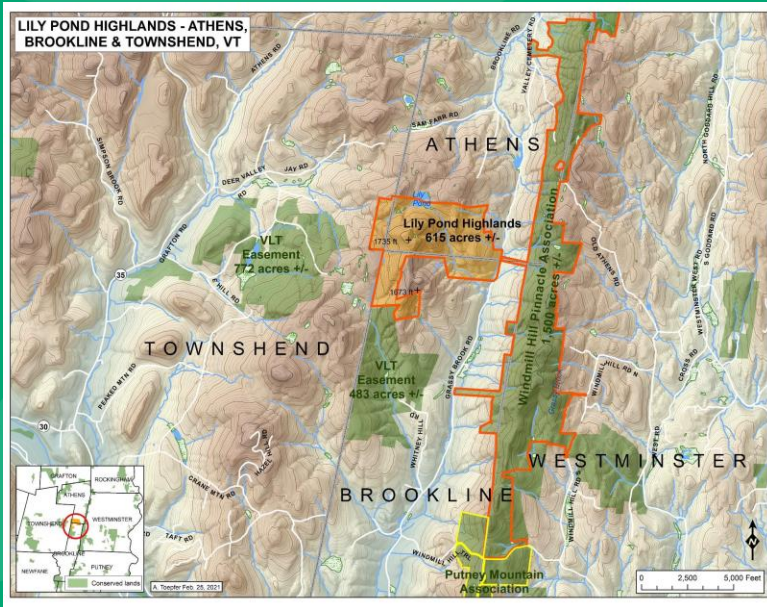
Alburgh Bluffs

Capital Bond funds supported Forest Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy, in the purchase of the 160-acre Alburgh Bluffs. The parcel adjoins Alburgh Dunes State Park.

Putney Mountain



Lily Pond Heights, Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

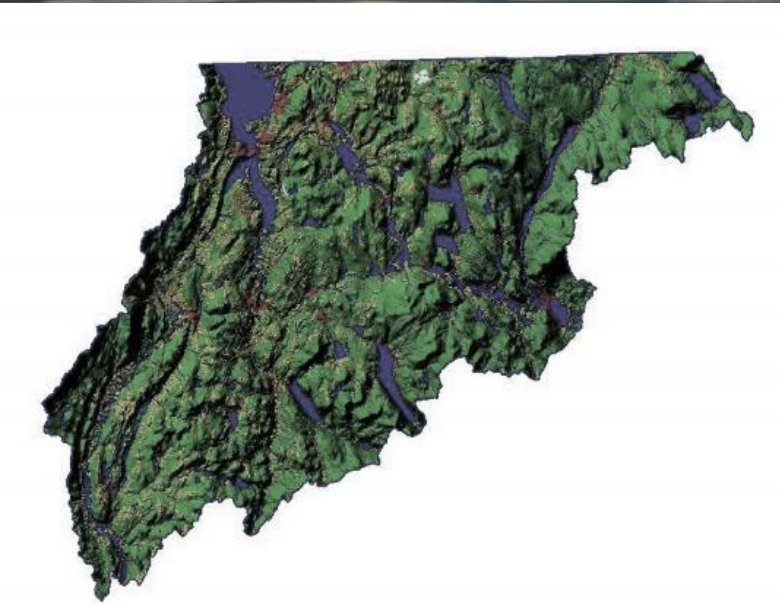


Lamoille River Access, Cambridge Junction

5.5 acres providing permanent public access to the river along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail while also securing floodplain and water quality protections.



Clean Water Service Provider for the Lake Memphremagog District



VHCB is serving as CWSP for the district, collaborating with partners to protect and improve water quality in the 687-square mile basin which straddles the Canadian border

Clean Water Initiative

Land Conservation and Water Quality



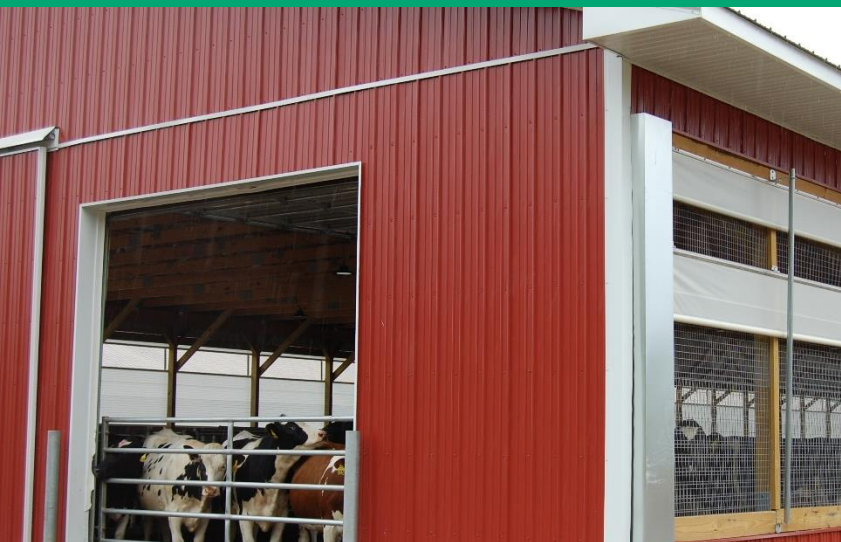
Marquis Farm, Newport Center

- 90-cow grass-based organic dairy
- 124-acre parcel conserved in 2015; 122-acre home farm conserved in 2017
- Located in Mississquoi watershed (critical source area for phosphorous loading)
- Buffers in easement for small streams protect surface water
- Farm needed manure pit, barnyard, ditching, pasture watering system—all installed in 2017 with NRCS cost share



Phelan & Kelsey O'Connor, Pigasus Meats, South Hero (\$40,000 Water Quality Grant for winter pig housing)

“Before the new storage facility, the hogs were outside all winter. We’d get those crazy freeze thaw events, and they were up to their bellies in muck. The new concrete pad is great. It’s so much cleaner, the pigs are so much happier, and it’s improved farmer comfort. We aren’t worried that their waste is flowing into the lake, which is huge. The water is everything. We need to manage it, no matter where we are in the watershed.”



Richard & Mandy Hulett, Deer Flats Farm, Pawlet (\$40,000 Water Quality Grant for a new heifer barn)

The new facility has upgraded the quality of life of the young Holstein herd as well as the efficiency and safety of Richard’s employees. He reports the new infrastructure has knocked hours off his employees work days, greatly improving their quality of life and overall happiness.



Bread & Butter Farm, Shelburne (\$40,000 Water Quality Grant for regenerative grazing)



Adrian Fortin, God's Country Farm, Holland (\$40,000 Water Quality Grant for cement manure pit)

This project will use fencing and water systems and perennial grassland seedings to protect 33 acres of wetland clayplain forest and 0.7 miles of additional wetland frontage, convert 36 acres of conventional corn land to perennial grassland, and replace 70 acres of intensive cropping and haying practices with proven, profitable, regenerative grazing practices.

The Fortin's new cement pit will better channel water runoff and prevent leaching, which will eliminate their current water quality issues and help prevent others in the future.



Dorset Peak Jerseys, Danby (\$38,500 Water Quality Grant for Baleage Equipment)



With their \$38,500 VHCB Water Quality Grant, the Smiths were able to purchase new baleage equipment that eliminates erosion, runoff and leachate management concerns from crop storage. In addition, the equipment allows the farm to transition to 100% grass/legume cropping system.

Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

Since 2003, 900+ farm, food & forest products businesses served

In FY22:

- 154 enterprises engaged. Combined, they generate 462 jobs (FTEs) and \$34.7M in annual gross sales.
- 71% of clients reported increased gross sales
- 61% of clients reported increased net income

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

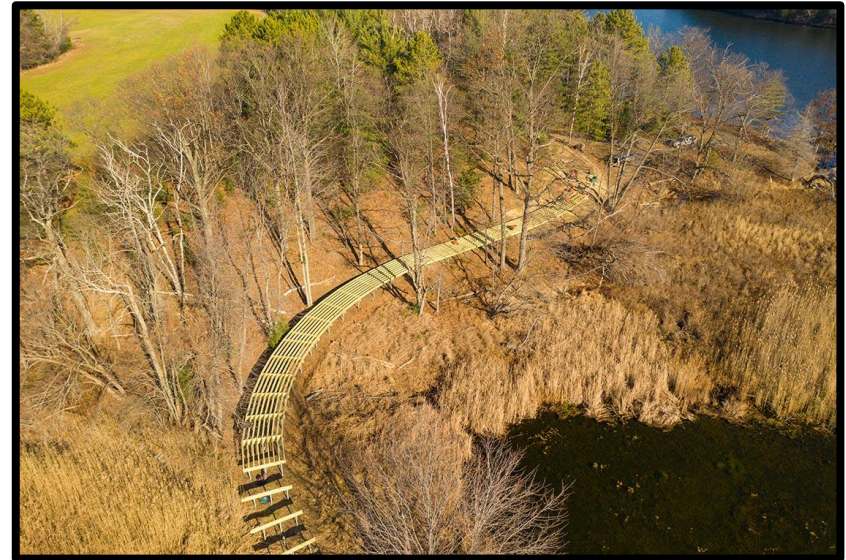
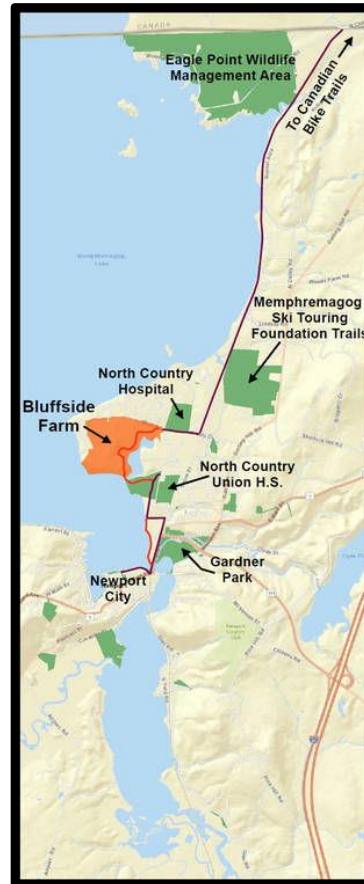
- *Since 2017, \$525,000 in REDI funds has helped secure more than \$10M in grants for businesses & communities*



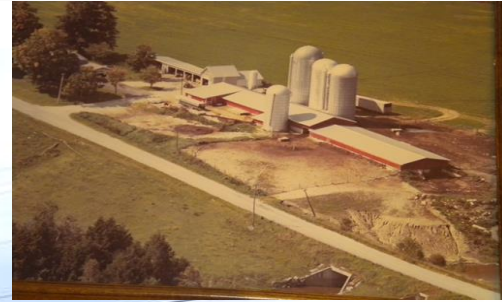
Rebop Farm, Brattleboro

Capital Bill Appropriations and Rural Economic Development

VHCB committed \$199,000 targeted to economic and community development in the Northeast Kingdom towards a recreation corridor and bridge connecting Bluffside Farm with Newport's Prouty Beach and trails in downtown Newport and Quebec. REDI helped secure an additional \$678,000 in federal grants for the project.



The farm in 1999,
previous to
conservation practices
put into place by Guy
Choiniere, who
purchased the farm
from his parents.



Choiniere Family Farm, Highgate

The Choinieres implemented numerous conservation practices: installed buffers along the river, installed cattle lanes and fencing, and kept manure under cover using bedded pack barns. The farm now produces milk without feeding grain. The Choinieres have also purchased a neighboring conserved farm.

Capital Bond Funding for Housing



Hopkins St Family Housing

- Supplements other state and federal funding for new and rehabilitated affordable housing serving low-income households.



Appletree Apartments, Fair Haven

- Provides critical funding for construction.

Permanent Affordability



Northgate Apartments in Burlington, 336 homes 100% owned and controlled by the Northgate Residents Ownership Corporation.

Bove Brothers Plan to Evict Low-Income Refugee Families in Winooski – and Raise Rents

By **DEREK BROUWER** and **LIAM ELDER-CONNORS (VPR)**



Published February 16, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. | Updated March 7, 2022 at 6:34 p.m.



300 North Main apartments

DEREK BROUWER © SEVEN DAYS

After substantial advocacy work, the landlords agreed not to evict the residents.

Smart Growth and Revitalizing Downtowns



Heritage Court, Poultney



Groundworks Collaborative, Brattleboro

- Capital Bill funding supported the construction of a new facility for Groundworks, the Brattleboro-area homeless services provider.
- The building houses 34 shelter beds and provides space for services.



Foundation House, Barre City

Housing for
women in
recovery
from
Substance
Use Disorder
and their
children



This historic home was re-configured by Downstreet Housing & Community Development into apartments with support services provided by Vermont Foundation for Recovery, an organization operating statewide. A family-like atmosphere is created where the members are nurtured and energized by others who share common experiences, struggles, values, and goals.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice



Habitat homeowner Janet Brown and her son, Bennington



Since 1987, VHCB has provided \$3.6 million to secure land and permanent affordability for 157 Habitat for Humanity Homes.

The Champlain Housing Trust constructed 20 new condominiums in Winooski on a lot donated by the City. Marketed to BIPOC households, all the homes quickly sold and will be occupied in 2022.



Bay View, South Hero



Sanborn Covered Bridge,
Lyndonville



Clemmons Family
Farm, Charlotte

Future Pipeline

Housing, Conservation & Historic Preservation

- \$185 million for more than 2,000 rental housing developments, homeownership and accessibility
- Agricultural and natural resources projects in the near term exceeds \$30 million in requests to conserve over 43,000 acres including 56 farms.



Gus Seelig
Executive Director
gseelig@vhcb.org

Pollaidh Major
Policy Director
p.major@vhcb.org

Trey Martin
Director of Conservation and
Rural Community Development
t.martin@vhcb.org



Eagle Mountain, Milton