

State of Vermont
Commissioner's Office
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Agency of Natural Resources
Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Russ Ingalls, Senate Institutions Committee Chair
Representative Alice Emmons, House Corrections and Institutions Committee Chair

FROM: Danielle Fitzko, Interim Commissioner

DATE: February 2, 2023

SUBJECT: **Proposed Joint Resolution Pertaining to State Lands**

The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) submits the following proposal seeking General Assembly approval and authorization for the Commissioner to engage in the following land transactions involving the State of Vermont.

Jamaica State Park, Land Exchange, Jamaica, VT:

This proposed transaction involves a portion of Jamaica State Park forestland, approximately 24.7 acres, which FPR will convey to an adjoining landowner (Peter Winslow) in exchange for an inholding in the center of the park lands, consisting of approximately 5.4 acres, currently owned by the Nancy J. Winslow Revocable Trust. The Trust will convey the 5.4-acre parcel (referred to as the Salmon Hole Lot) to Peter Winslow, and Peter Winslow will convey the parcel to FPR in exchange for the 24.7 acres of forestland. As a result of this land exchange, FPR will acquire a significant inholding with frontage on the West River. The West River Trail runs through the inholding, which would be impacted by any development on the property. Further, the inholding benefits from a legal right of way along the West River Trail. Any use of this right of way for access to the property would impact the sustainability and the public's use of this recreational resource. By acquiring the property, this private right of way will be extinguished, thereby protecting the condition and use of the West River Trail into the future. This area along the West River has also been identified to have important archaeological and historic values, which will be better protected under public ownership.

Through its assessment of the 24.7 acres to be conveyed, FPR determined that the land does not have significant natural or public values. It is remote and unrelated to the recreational uses of the state park proper. FPR will convey the land subject to deed restrictions, restricting all future development on the parcel and limiting use to recreation, forest management, and vehicular access for the landowner. Conveying the land will also resolve an encroachment onto State land that FPR discovered during its development of the land exchange. FPR and the public will retain legal access across the 24.7-

acre parcel to be conveyed for the purposes of management and public access to the State Park via an existing Legal Trail and a retained right of way.

Coolidge State Forest, Land Exchange, Woodstock, VT

This proposed transaction involves a portion of Coolidge State Forest, approximately 102 acres, which FPR will convey to an adjoining landowner in exchange for an adjacent parcel, approximately 102 acres, owned by that landowner, as well as a 400-foot public recreational trail corridor easement across the private land to the summit of Old Baldy Mountain. Currently, the “Allen Slayton Lot” of Coolidge State Forest has no legal access and is separated from nearby State land by land owned by Jamie Ellertson. The Allen Slayton Lot separates the Ellertson parcel, from Ellertson’s additional holdings to the north. The Ellertson parcel has no legal access and relies upon Special Use Permits across FPR land for access. Similarly, FPR and the public have no legal access to the Allen Slayton Lot. In the past 25 years, FPR has only secured permission for access once and it involved permission from three separate private landowners. FPR and Ellertson propose to exchange a portion of each of their holdings in order to connect each party’s lands and eliminate the need to rely upon outside lands for access in the future.

The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) holds a conservation easement on the Ellertson parcel, restricting the use of the parcel to agricultural, forestry, educational, non-commercial recreation and open space purposes. However, the easement allows for the subdivision and development of one residential lot. This proposed exchange will extinguish that development right, preventing further forest fragmentation. VLT has agreed to hold a conservation easement on the land to be conveyed from FPR to Ellertson, which will protect that parcel from future commercial or residential development. FPR will convey this easement to VLT prior to conveying the land to Ellertson. This will ensure that all the land involved in the exchange remains permanently protected.

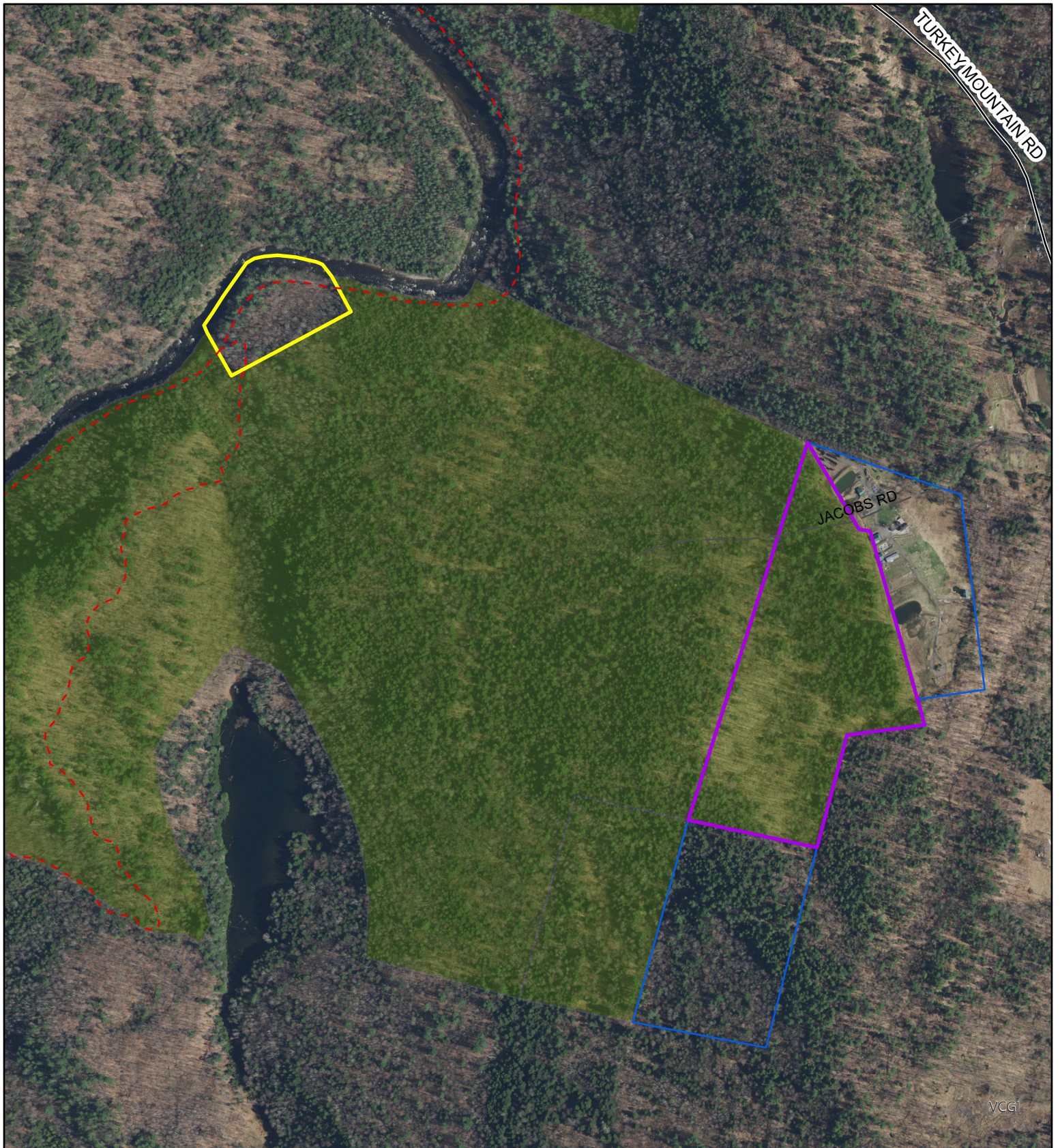
The summit of Old Baldy Mountain (2,409’) is located on the Ellertson parcel. Though Ellertson will retain ownership of the summit, he has agreed to permit a permanent trail easement for public access to the summit of Old Baldy, demonstrating additional public benefit of the exchange. FPR will hold and manage this trail easement.

As always, we look forward to meeting with your respective Committees to discuss this proposal at your convenience.

Encl.

Cc:

Julie Moore, ANR Secretary
Michael Chernick, Legislative Council
Rebecca Wasserman, Legislative Council
Meghan Purvee, FPR General Counsel
Rebecca Washburn, FPR Director Lands Administration & Recreation
Danielle Fitzko, FPR Director of Forests



Property Map

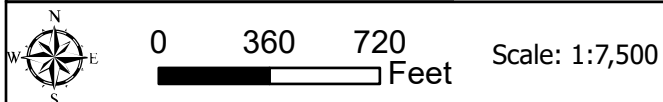
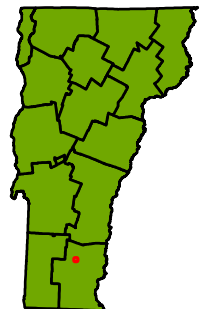
Winslow Land Exchange

Jamaica, VT

Cartographer: Gannon Osborn
Date: 10/27/22



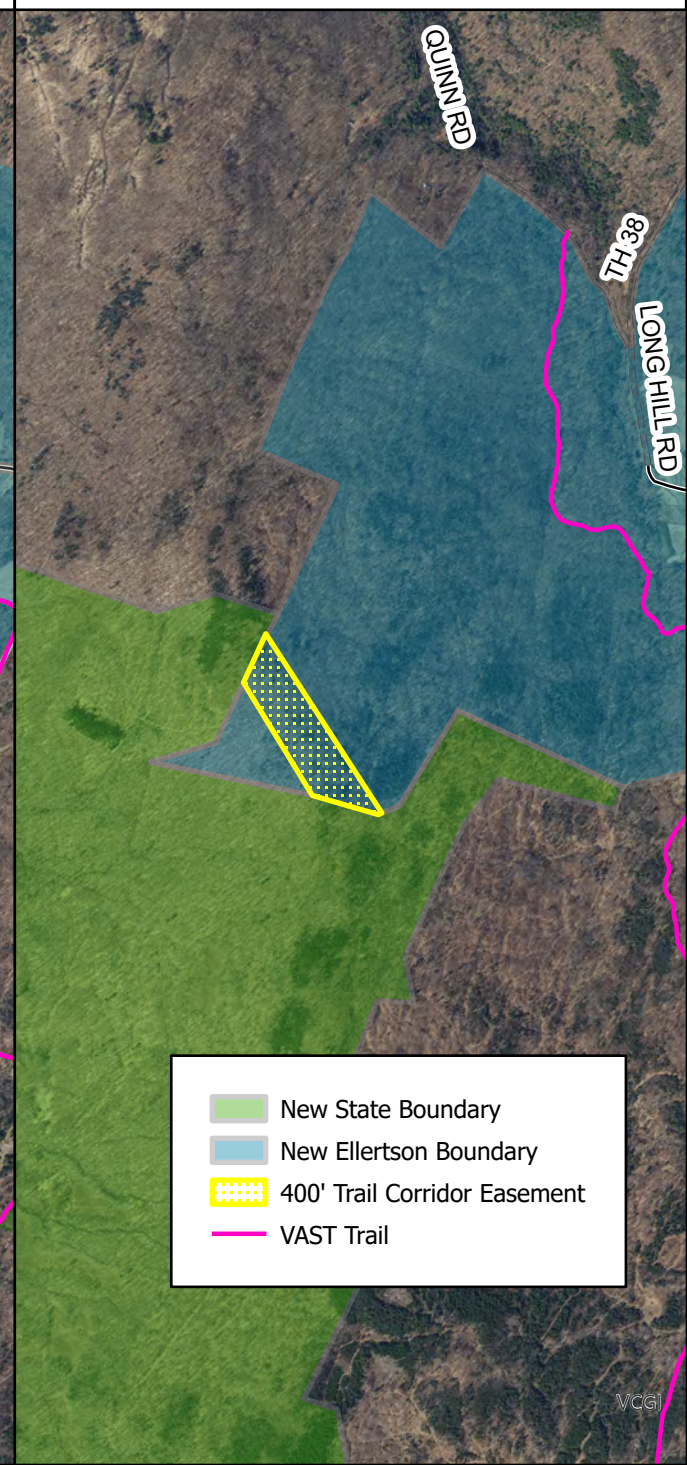
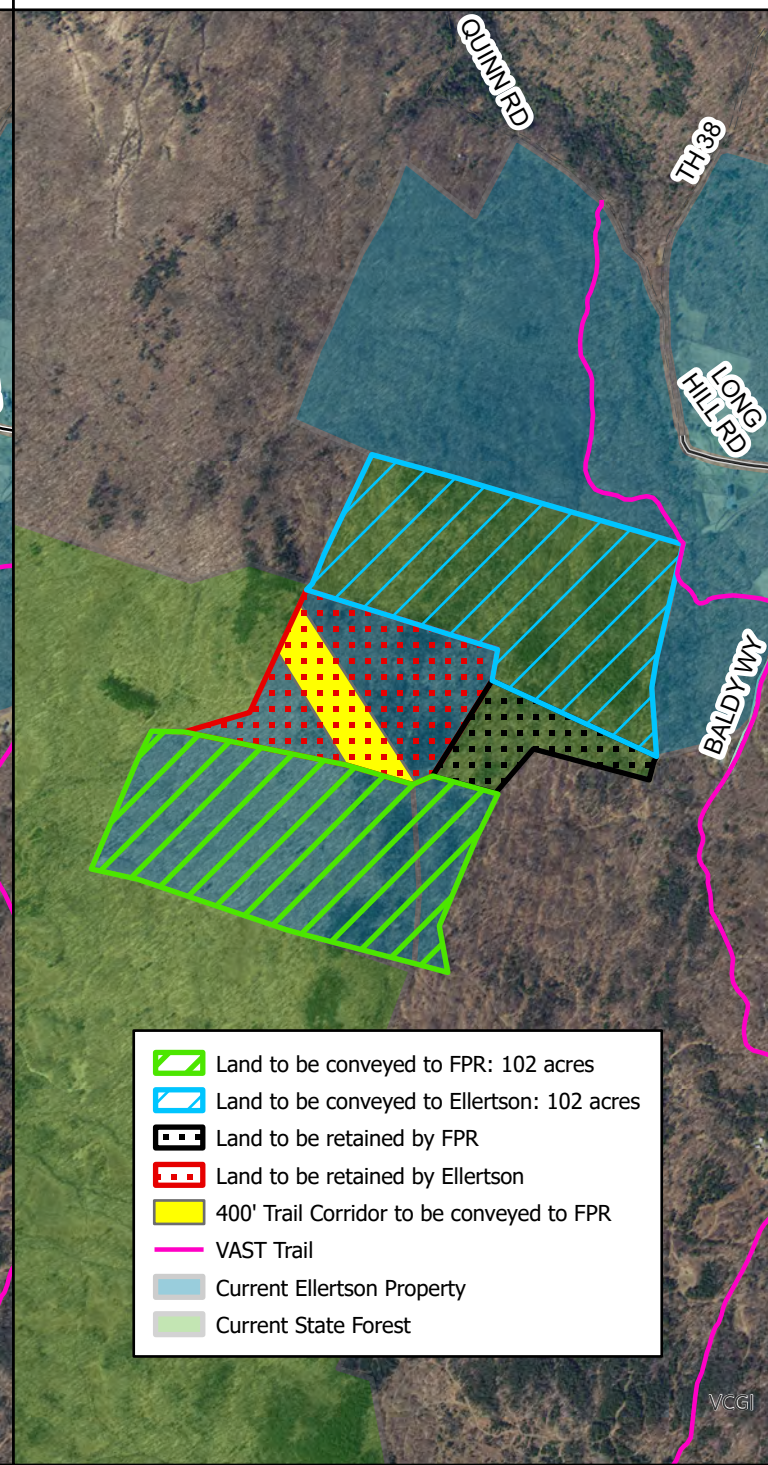
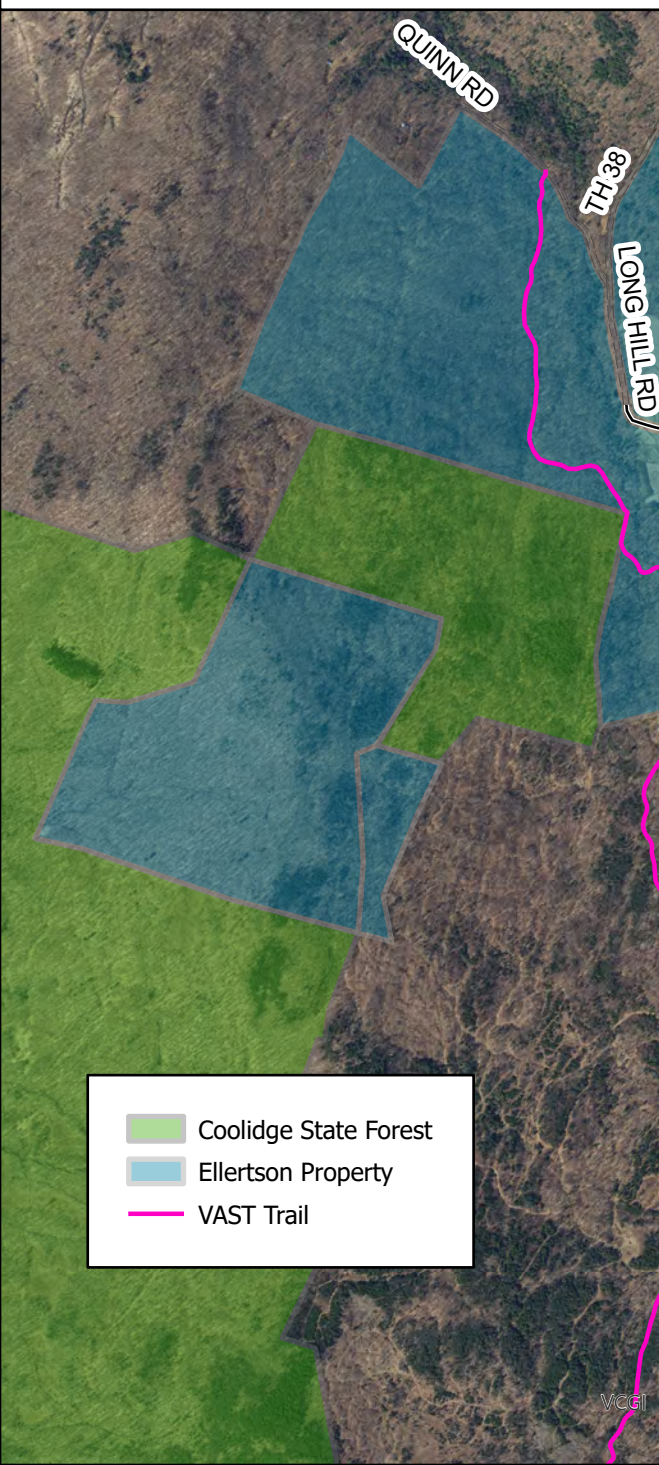
- Winslow Salmon Hole Lot to be added to JSP: 5.4 acres
- Land to be conveyed to Winslow (subject to deed restrictions): 24.7 acres
- Parcels to be retained by Winslow
- Class 3 Town Road
- Legal Trail
- Recreation Trails
- Jamaica State Park



Current Boundaries

Explanation of Exchange

Final Configuration



- Coolidge State Forest
- Ellertson Property
- VAST Trail

- Land to be conveyed to FPR: 102 acres
- Land to be conveyed to Ellertson: 102 acres
- Land to be retained by FPR
- Land to be retained by Ellertson
- 400' Trail Corridor to be conveyed to FPR
- VAST Trail
- Current Ellertson Property
- Current State Forest

- New State Boundary
- New Ellertson Boundary
- 400' Trail Corridor Easement
- VAST Trail