



# House Appropriations Committee Conservation & Legacy Lands

May 7, 2019





## **Green River Reservoir, Eden and Hyde Park**

The Nature Conservancy and The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation worked for 10 years to conserve 5,100 acres surrounding the reservoir. The Green River State Park was established, providing stewardship of public use for non-motorized boating and primitive camping.



## **Birds Eye Wildlife Management Area, Castleton, Poultney & Ira**

Popular for hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing, 2,874 acres were conserved 7 miles west of Rutland City in the Taconic Mountains. 2,305 acres were added to the existing WMA and 569 acres were purchased by a private forestland owner, subject to a sustainable forestry management plan.

Protects the headwaters of the Castleton, Poultney, and Clarendon Rivers, with 8.5 miles of headwater streams and 24 acres of wetlands.



## **Willoughby Peaks, Westmore**

2,965 acres of private forestland conserved by The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Land Trust. Adds to 12,000-acre block of protected land, connecting two units of Willoughby State Forest, Bald Hill WMA, and privately conserved forest land. Protects undeveloped shoreline, headwater streams, and wetlands; enhances wildlife connectivity and resilience to climate change.

# Farmland Conservation Protecting Land and Helping Farmers

- Facilitates transfers to new owners.
- Injects millions into the rural economy.
- Allows farmers to diversify, expand, reduce debt, make improvements in infrastructure and practices including for water quality.
- Brings 1:1 federal match for easements.
- 23 farms in the pipeline for the next year. \$6.5M (State and Federal).



Emily and Joe Donegan, Hinesburg and Charlotte  
Photo Courtesy of VLT and Organic Valley



## Businesses Owners Supported by VHCB's Farm and Forest Viability Program

Farmers and forest enterprises provided with:

- ✓ In depth, one-on-one business advising
- ✓ Coaching and technical assistance
- ✓ Strategic and financial planning
- ✓ Management workshops
- ✓ Implementation grants

In the last two years, the Viability Program served more than 300 farm and forest businesses and helped 80 farms transfer to new owners.

Conservation funding makes farmland more affordable, and business planning support helps with successful transitions.



# Legacy Projects for the Future

## **Brownsville Forest, Stowe, Lamoille County**

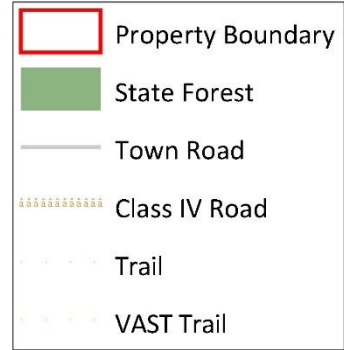
- Stowe Land Trust hopes to purchase the property and transfer it to the State as an addition to the abutting CC Putnam State Forest.
- 750 acres of working forest on the west flanks of the Worcester range.
- Largest privately-owned forest parcel in Stowe in an area with high development pressure.
- Public access in perpetuity for hunting, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, walking and more.
- Miles of Class IV roads, connects to a VAST trail and thousands of acres of state land.
- More than 3 miles of surface water forming the headwaters of Moss Glen Brook drain from the property into the Winooski River and Lake Champlain.
- high quality wildlife habitat.
- \$300,000 request to VHCB; \$5.5 million in leverage.

# Brownsville Forest

Owned by Story Ridge LLC

Located in Brownsville

Stowe, VT



## STOWE LAND TRUST

Easement Area: 750 Acres

Road Frontage:

Class 3: 2,315 ft.

Class 4: 18,376 ft.

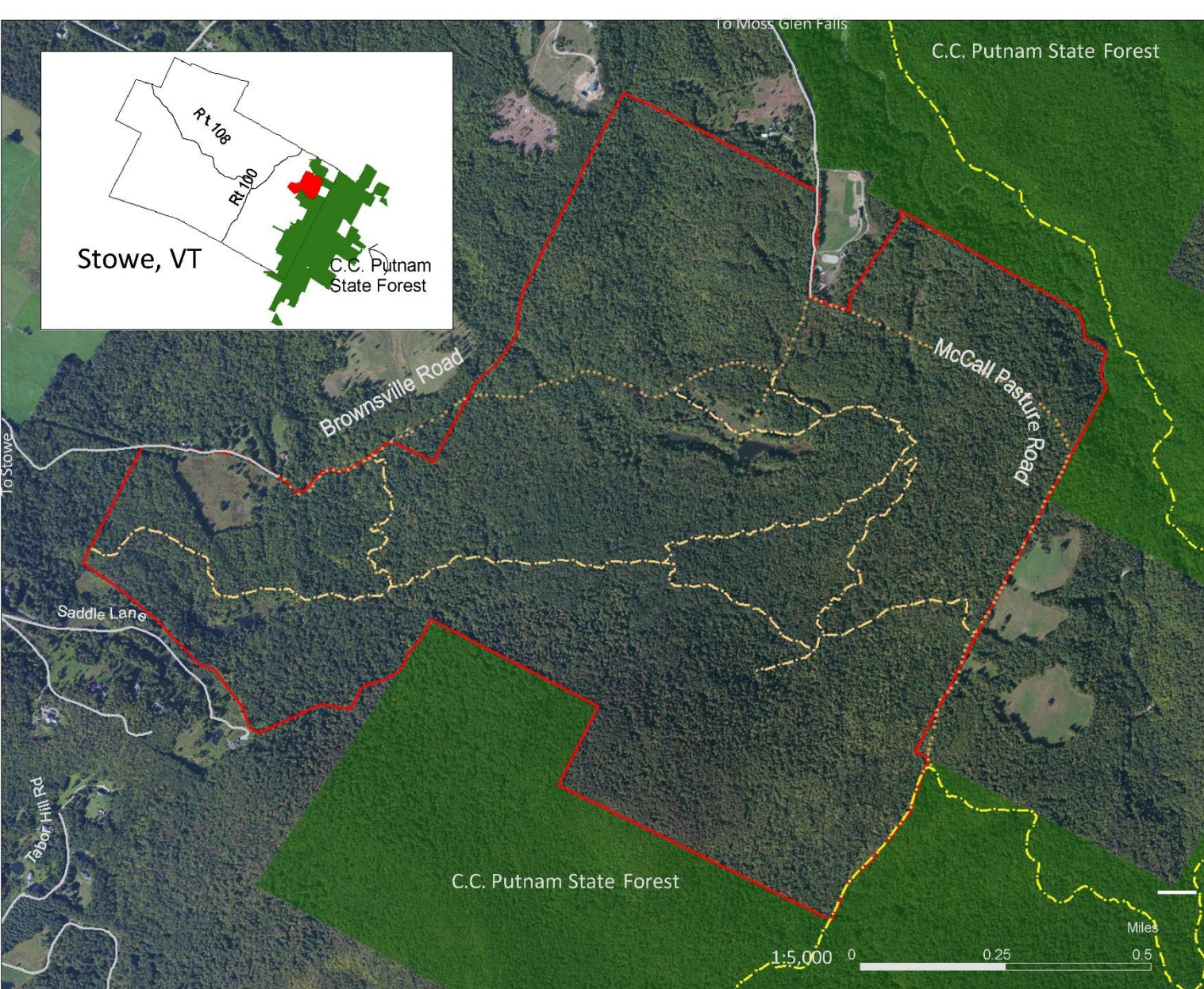
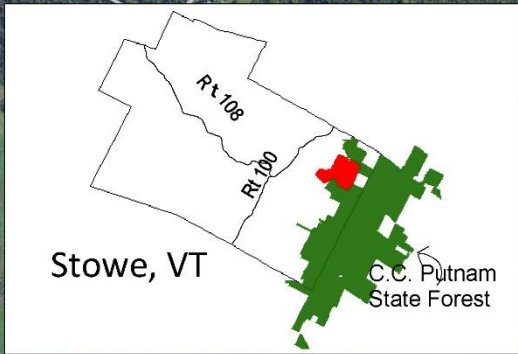
Total: 20,691 ft.

Date: 2/21/2019

Data: Town of Stowe, Stowe Land Trust,  
State of Vermont

Map created by Elisabeth Fenn

THIS MAP IS NOT A SURVEY







## Glebe Mountain, Londonderry and Windham, Windham County

The Nature Conservancy will protect 3,469 acres of forest land located next to Magic Mountain Ski Area with contiguous bear habitat, high-elevation ridgelines, rare plants, state-significant natural communities, and caves that provide habitat for a state and federally endangered bat. Traditional public uses of the land include hunting, fishing, hiking, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling; a VAST trail crosses the property.

Conservation will protect 9 miles of surface waters including almost the entire upper watershed of Cobb Brook, a class A(1) high quality trout stream. Other potential public uses include backcountry skiing and mountain biking. The property provides linkages between Magic Mountain and trails on the former Timber Ridge ski area.

\$800,000 request to VHCB; \$4.4 million leverage.



## **Okemo Wildlife Corridor, Mount Holly, Rutland County**

- The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation has the opportunity to purchase 331 acres for addition to Okemo State Forest, providing a wildlife linkage between the state forest and the Green Mountain National Forest along Route 155.
- Residential development associated with the ski areas in this area is causing forest fragmentation and interfering with wildlife connectivity.
- A VAST trail and the Catamount Trail both pass through the property.
- The property has headwaters for three watersheds in the Connecticut River Basin, 3,600 feet of the West River, and an associated wetland complex.
- \$224,000 request to VHCB; \$815,000 in leverage.



## Victory Hill, Victory, Essex County

- Conservation of 1,030 acres of privately-owned forestland on the slopes of Umpire Mountain adjacent to Victory State Forest and Victory Basin Wildlife Management Area.
- 21 miles of trails for mountain biking that connect to Kingdom Trails and trail networks on abutting state land.
- Habitat for the federally-threatened Canada lynx and the state-endangered spruce grouse and American marten; internationally-significant wildlife linkage.
- Rare plants, state-significant natural communities, high-elevation forests, and expansive wetlands would be protected with conservation easements.
- Almost 3 miles of headwater streams drain into the Connecticut River.
- \$230,000 request to VHCB. \$515,000 leverage; Right of First Refusal to be held by the state.



## **Arlington Town Forest, Arlington, Bennington County**

- Potential for a 400-acre town forest on Red Mountain close to the town's center and local schools.
- Permanent public access to 7 miles of trails, including a scenic overlook above Arlington, and improvement of the currently limited access.
- Enhancing economic development through tourism and sustainable timber management.
- Protection of the headwaters of the Batten Kill and wildlife corridors.
- Other town forest projects in the VHCB pipeline include 1,000 acres of forested land in Chester, 500 acres in Shrewsbury and smaller wooded tracts in Cambridge and Bradford.
- \$168,000 request to VHCB. \$118,000 leverage.



## 9:1 Return on the State's Investment

Every \$1 invested in land conservation returns \$9 in economic value in natural goods and services\*

- ✓ water quality protection
- ✓ food production
- ✓ flood control
- ✓ wildlife habitat
- ✓ carbon sequestration and storage.

Also supports the tourism and outdoor recreation economies as well as the farm and forestry sectors.

\*The Trust for Public Land – ROI Report 2018

## Conservation Pipeline: Public Access to Land and Water - \$3.3M

- **Town Forests:** Requests of \$850,000 to conserve more than 2,000 acres in Arlington, Chester, Shrewsbury, Cambridge and Bradford for other town forest projects which would leverage in excess of \$1.5M in other funds.
- **Town Parks and Swimming Holes:** Projects in Bethel, Vershire, Cabot, Groton, Johnson, and South Royalton totaling nearly \$400,000 for town swimming holes and water access for boating, fishing and other public recreation, and floodplain protection upstream of population centers.
- **Public Access and Lakeshore Protection:** Over \$700,000 in requests including a lakefront parcel on the Burlington-Colchester line, properties in North Hero, Grand Isle and Shoreham, as town without public access to Lake Champlain.
- **Trail System Expansion:** \$550,000 to expand a 14-mile ridgeline trail, conserving parcels in Rockingham, Brookline, and Westminster, including the final parcel at the northern terminus, and tracts to the east and west that widen the corridor for buffer protection and connectivity.
- **State Parks & Wildlife Areas:** \$700,000 in requests for additions/in-holdings to Coolidge, Mount Mansfield and Roxbury State Forests; \$100,000 for a parcel in Vernon with endangered bat habitat, leveraged by a \$450,000 federal grant.

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