



House Committee on Corrections and Institutions

February 12, 2020



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

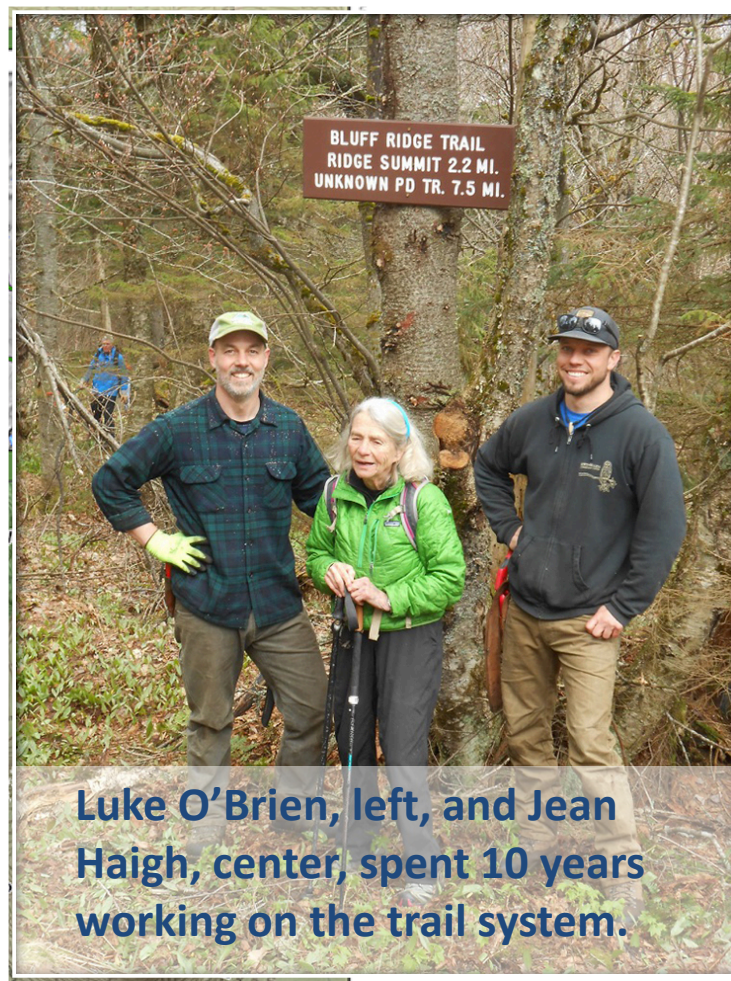
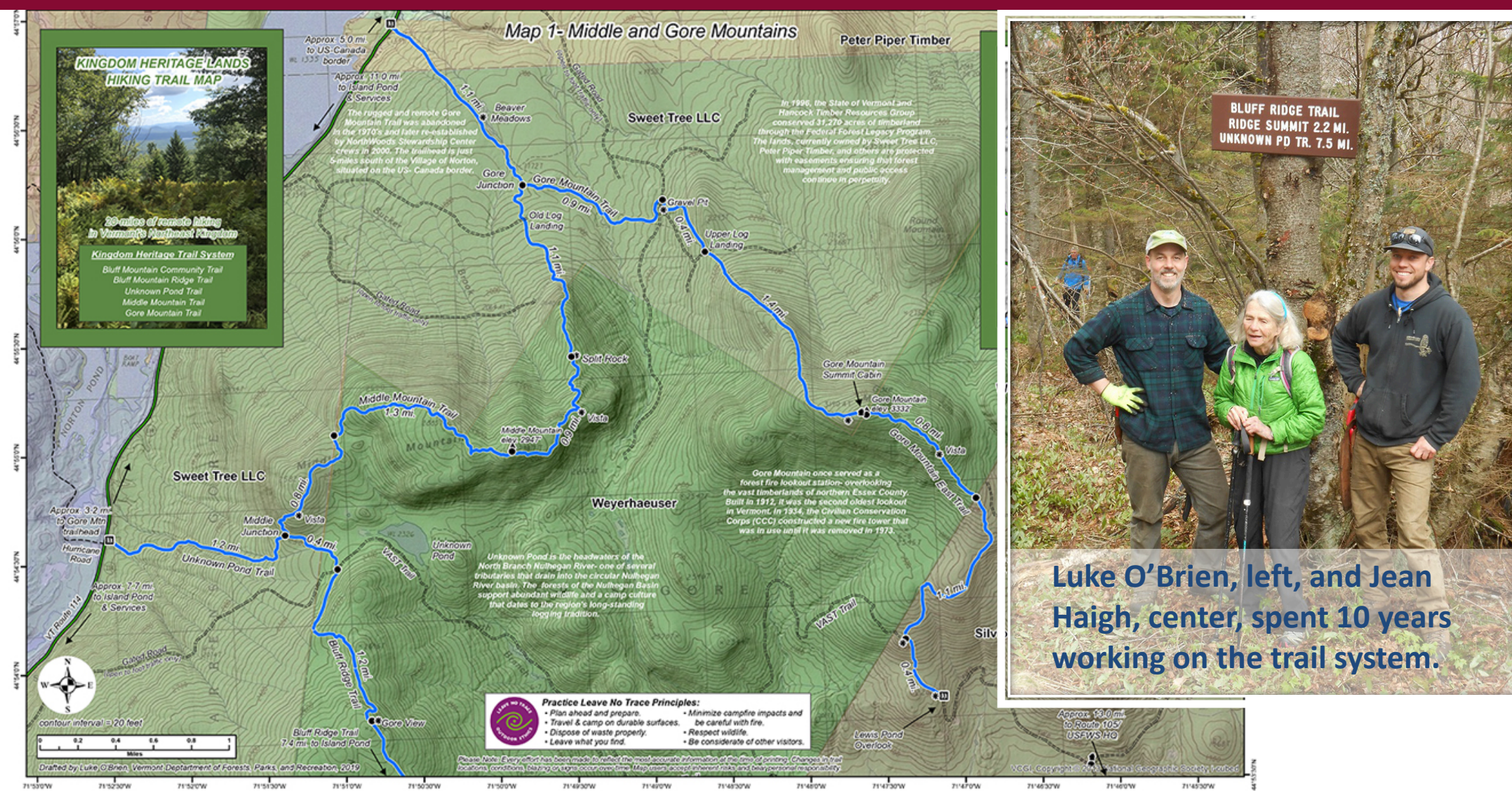
.... and Protecting Water Quality



“... the protection of lands for multiple conservation purposes, including the protection of surface waters and associated natural resources.

10 V.S.A.15 §303

Investments that Last



Luke O'Brien, left, and Jean Haigh, center, spent 10 years working on the trail system.

20 years after conserving 133,000 acres of the Champion Lands in the NEK, the Northwoods Stewardship Center, the Green Mountain Club, and the Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation celebrated opening of a 20-mile trail system through Island Pond, Avery's Gore and Brunswick. Hundreds of youth from Island Pond and other towns worked on the trail system.



Downtown Revitalization: Enosburg



Following a fire, VHCB funding helped the town of Enosburg rebuild a central downtown block

Rossetti Beach Natural Area - Colchester

Using Capital Bill funds, the Lake Champlain Land Trust purchased and saved this ecological and public access gem when it was slated for 44 homes. Its 47 acres feature free access to rare sandy beach on Lake Champlain. In addition, the natural area preserves a button-bush wetland filtering the local stormwater. This natural area also protects critical habitat for two endangered plant species.



Vermont Housing & Conservation Board



Appointed by the Legislature and the Governor, the board members meet around the state to consider applications. While in Brandon, the board visited the Brandon Falls Park, funded by VHCB in 1993.



VHCB Results: FY 2019 and FY 2020

State Investment: \$31M

Leverage: \$162M

- 875 homes and apartments
- 45 farms; 5,765 acres conserved
- 25 natural areas; forests; parks and trails: 7,908 acres conserved
- 2 historic preservation projects
- 170 farm and forest enterprises were provided business planning and technical assistance.

VHCB Program Impacts

- Homes for Workers
- Downtown Revitalization
- Outdoor Recreation
- Rural Economic Development
- Water Quality
- Housing the Homeless
- Farm and Forest next generation transfers
- Historic Community Buildings

Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

Status of VHCB Funding

	Appropriation*	Committed	Disbursed
FY17	\$4 million housing, conservation & water quality improvement grants	100%	\$3.8M
FY18	\$5 million housing, conservation & water quality improvement grants	100%	\$4.5M
FY19	\$1.8 million housing	100%	\$1.57M
	\$2.75 million conservation with water quality protections	100%	\$2.2M
	\$1.1 million water quality improvement grants and farm retirement projects	100% - water quality grants \$644,239	\$224,239
		\$453,000 - farm retirement	\$210,000 by 6/30/20; balance by 12/31/20
FY20	\$1.8 million housing	100%	\$587,841
	\$1.7 million conservation	100%	\$495,500
	\$1.1 million water quality grants and farm retirement projects	\$591,000 in WQ grants committed; \$495,000 Farm Retirement application pending	

*Appropriations are reduced by bond issuance costs before funds are made available for VHCB commitment.



Revitalizing a Rural Community through Housing, Conservation and Historic Preservation



- VHCB funding leveraged millions in other sources to revive the Country Store and to build affordable homes.
- Capital bill funds were committed for conservation and restoration of floodplain with public access along the Green River.
- Discussions are underway for a grant to transform the historic Broad Brook Grange into a community center.

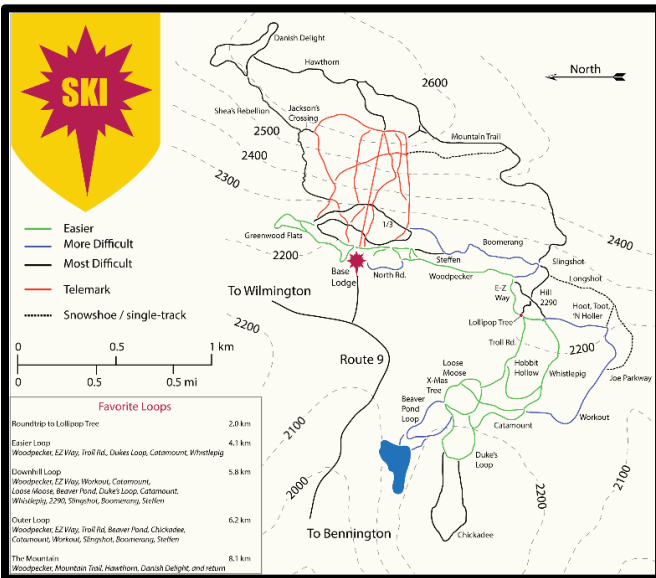
Bluffside Bike Path Recreation Corridor in Newport

VHCB committed \$199,000 targeted to economic and community development in the NEK towards a recreation corridor and bridge connecting Bluffside Farm with Newport's Prouty Beach and trails in downtown Newport and Quebec.

REDI grant-writing assistance helped secure an additional \$678,000 in federal grants for the project.



Recreation Landscape to be Protected



Prospect Mountain Nordic
Ski Area in Woodford



Trust for Public Land photo

Catamount Community Forest - Williston

\$325,000 in Capital Bill funds through VHCB is helping conserve 383 acres for this new town forest. Twenty miles of trails on the property will be managed by the Catamount Outdoor Center and include 3.5 miles of ADA-accessible trails. Conservation easements will include riparian buffer protections on headwater streams and 8 acres of wetland protection zones in the Lake Champlain watershed.

Arlington Town Forest

The town used \$150,000 in Legacy Conservation funds from VHCB to acquire and protect 407 acres on Red Mountain with 7 miles of trails, wildlife corridors and headwaters of the Batten Kill; located close to the town center and local schools.





Homeownership

Capital Bill funds have helped Habitat for Humanity create affordable first homes like these in Rutland and East Montpelier, and others, with FY18 funds, in Cornwall, and Morrisville.



Appletree Lane - Fair Haven

The Housing Trust of Rutland Company acquired 40 homes with rental assistance: 5 duplexes with 10 family rentals and 30 apartments for seniors and people living with disabilities.

Rehab included thermal shell insulation, new windows, siding, flooring, cabinets, counters, plumbing fixtures, interior lighting fixtures, accessibility improvements, and advanced cold climate heat pumps for heating and hot water, resulting in a **65% energy savings**.



Legacy Opportunities for the Recreation Economy

**“continue support for VHCB to promote land conservation and public recreational access”
—Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative**

FY19-20 Recreation Investments: 7,908 acres

Legacy Conservation Projects – 5,080 acres in Londonderry, Windham, Stowe, Arlington, and Mount Holly

Reopened **public access** to the Stowe and Glebe Mountain properties

Miles of **headwaters** protected; **wildlife corridors** secured and connected



Vermonters Moving into New Homes

- \$37M in Housing Revenue Bond proceeds invested in 34 developments with 843 homes in 23 different communities across 11 counties, including 60 accessibility improvements and 5 Habitat for Humanity homes statewide.
- More than half the homes are occupied in Putney, South Burlington, Hartford, Randolph, Bennington, Montpelier, Brattleboro, Manchester, Essex, Barre, and Burlington; the balance are under construction or set to get underway by the end of 2020
- 300 additional units of privately-developed workforce housing in the larger developments.
- Bond is fully subscribed and has leveraged \$198M from other sources.

Downtowns Revitalized

New and rehabilitated housing in St. Albans, Springfield, St. Johnsbury, Vergennes, and Bennington funded by the Housing Revenue Bond.





Proposed site of new housing, Rutland



Great River Terrace, Brattleboro

Homes Created for the Most Vulnerable

- Reducing GA, health care, mental health and Corrections costs. Housing homeless individuals and providing support services saves the state \$6,300 annually per person on the cost of motels and health care, according to data from Harbor Place, a motel converted to housing for homeless households.
- W&WHT used HRB funds to renovate a former Brattleboro motel, creating 22 new rentals affordable at 30% of median and serving the homeless with on-site services.
- More than 18% of the permanent affordable apartments previously invested in by the state through VHCB are now occupied by households that were formerly homeless.

Clara Martin Center, Randolph



This previously vacant, historic building on Main Street has been renovated for permanent supportive housing for homeless persons with mental illness. Each of the 4 apartments will have project-based rental assistance from the State Department of Mental Health.



Community-Based Transitional Housing

VHCB Support Saves the Correctional System \$3.4 Million Annually

Project Name	Location	County	Units/Beds	Gender	VHCB Award	DOC Annual Funding	DOC Beds	Prison Cost	Annual Savings
Dismas House Rutland	Rutland City	Rutland	11	M	70,000	105,952	4	248,896	142,944
Dismas House Burlington	Burlington	Chittenden	7	M	70,000	87,690	5	311,120	223,430
Dismas House Winooski	Winooski	Chittenden	9	M	162,000	158,128	9	560,016	401,888
Covered Bridge	St. Johnsbury	Caledonia	5	M	90,000		3	186,672	186,672
Phoenix House	Burlington	Chittenden	19	M	162,000	178,850	14	871,136	692,286
Dismas House Hartford	Hartford	Windsor	9	M	162,000	150,000	10	622,240	472,240
CV Phoenix House	Barre Town	Washington	18	M	170,000	238,281	14	871,136	632,855
Northern Lights	Burlington	Chittenden	9	W	162,000	393,752	11	805,112	411,360
Mandala House	Rutland	Rutland	8	W	198,000	331,282	10	585,536	254,254

95 BEDS

SAVINGS: \$3,417,929

*source: Department of Corrections and VHCB 2019



VHCB Farmland Conservation Investments

What was achieved: July 2019–December 2020

- 43 farms (including 4 retroactive OPAVs)
- 5,765 acres of farmland conserved
- Federal NRCS funds match every Vermont dollar
- 20 intergenerational transfers to new or existing farmers

Helping Young Farmers onto the Land



Shannon Varley and B.J. Miller run a diversified livestock and vegetable farm in Strafford that was conserved with the Vermont Land Trust.



Timothy and Brooke Hughes-Muse grow 15 acres of organic sweet potatoes in the Mettowee Valley.



Barbara and Richard Stickney conserved their Rockingham farm and transferred it to their grand-son, Robert, who will run a contract beef operation.

These farmers all participated in the Farmland Access Program, working with the Vermont Land Trust to buy conserved farms, reducing their purchase price. The Viability Program helps farmers with business planning, budgeting and accessing capital. 100 farmers have used the Farmland Access Program to become owners.

Clifford Farm, Starksboro



Eric and Jane Clifford conserved 190 acres of cropland for their 8th generation dairy farm. A 31-acre river corridor in the easement will protect water quality in Lewis Creek. A dairy improvement grant from the Viability Program helped the Cliffords acquire this no-till cultivator.

Impaired Waters in Every Watershed



- Lake Memphremagog TMDL
- Deerfield River segment
- Rock River segment
- Connecticut River TMDL Pending
- Lake Carmi TMDL
- Otter Creek
- Winooski River segment
- White River, third branch
- Hoosic River
- Mettawee River segment
- Lake Champlain TMDL

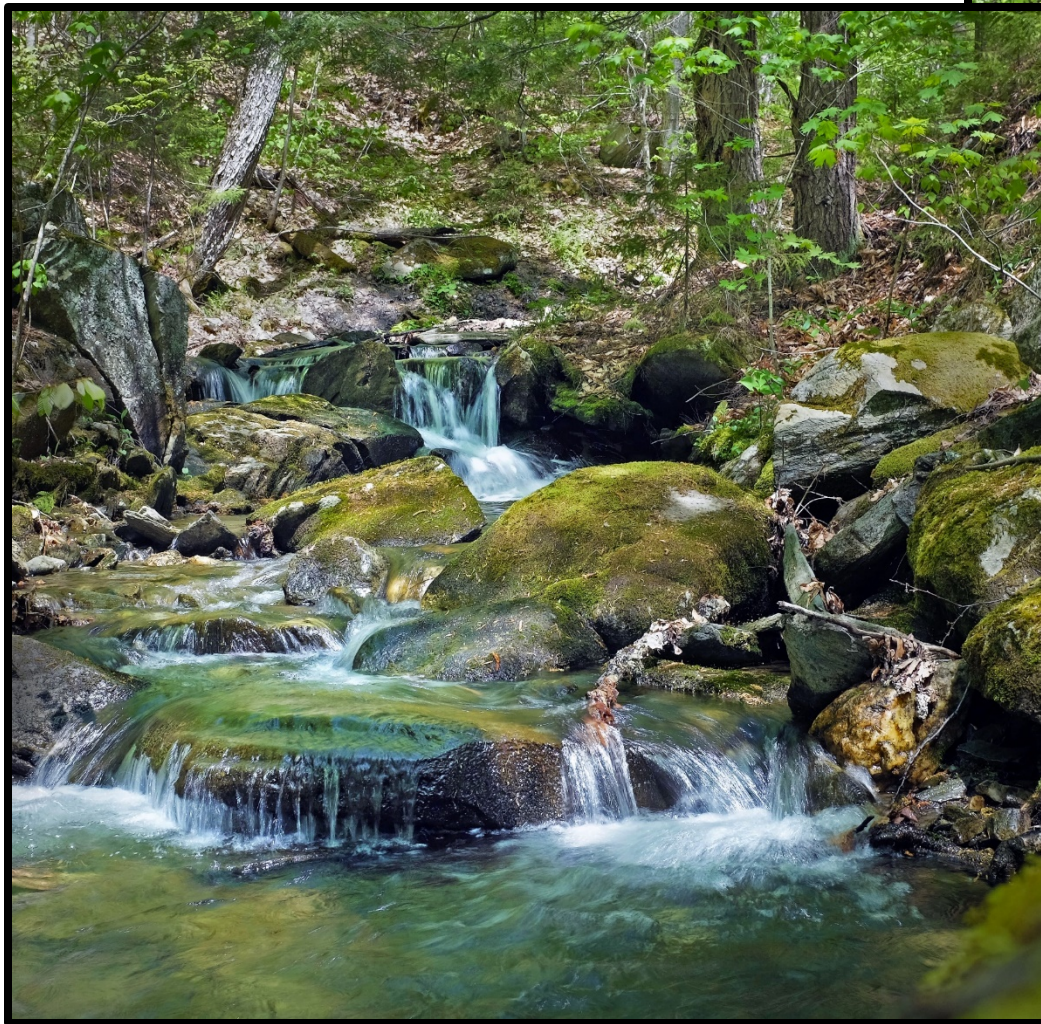


VHCB and Water Quality

- Pledged over \$5 million match to the state's \$16 million Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP) award from NRCS. Used to conserve 22 farms in the Lake Champlain basin. VHCB is pledging \$2 million in match for a \$10M renewal of the RCCP grant.
- In FY19, the Viability Program awarded \$1.1 million in water quality and dairy improvement grants to 32 farms. These grants leveraged nearly \$6 million for infrastructure and equipment to improve water quality.
- In FY19-20, VHCB awarded funds to 25 projects conserving 7,908 acres of forested uplands, wetlands, and floodplains and 43 farm projects. Together, these projects will provide buffers for 57 miles of streams.

Natural Resource Conservation and Water Quality

Two tributaries of the Ottauquechee River run through the Bridgewater Hollow Bramhall Preserve which is being permanently conserved and protected with the help of capital bill funding.

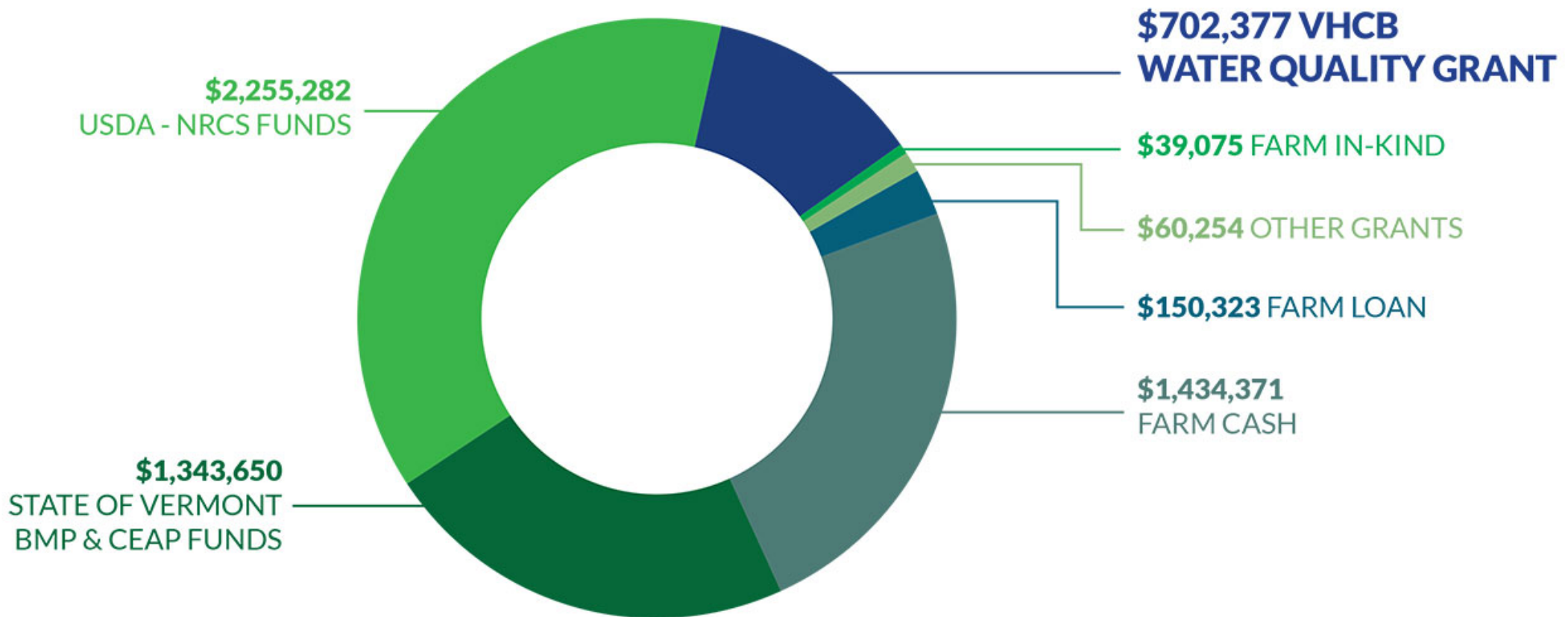


There are many more opportunities to protect headwaters, streams, rivers, wetlands and shoreline. VHCB has a short-term pipeline of 73 natural resources and recreational areas projects seeking \$8 million.

Water Quality Grants to Farmers

In FY19, the Viability Program made awards to 22 farms totaling \$702,377. These grants leveraged nearly \$5.3 in other investments, nearly 7.5:1.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR FY19 PROJECTS \$5,985,331 OF VHCB & LEVERAGED FUNDS





Shire Beef: Niko and Lianna Horster, Vershire

The conserved Horster farm received a \$11,500 grant towards a \$44,500 woodchip barnyard they built with a combination of VHCB and VAAFM BMP support. One of the first woodchip barnyards in the state, this pilot project will test the effectiveness of woodchip filtration on barnyard runoff. The farm has hosted educational workshops for other farms to see the new facility in use.

Woodlawn Holsteins, Pawlet



Seth and Brian Leach are the next generation at Woodlawn Holsteins. They received a \$25,000 VHCB grant towards the purchase of a \$51,769 no-till grain drill to be able to fully implement their transition to a no-till planting system. They previously received funding from VAAFMM for a no-till corn planter.



Dalestead Farm and Maple Enosburgh Falls

Matt and Jennifer Hull are using a \$40,000 Water Quality Grant as part of a larger project to improve manure storage and management.

Two funding rounds have been held in FY19 with the third to come in April. Fifteen requests totaling \$562,000 will compete for the \$295,000 in remaining funds.



VHCB Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program Businesses Assisted in 2019

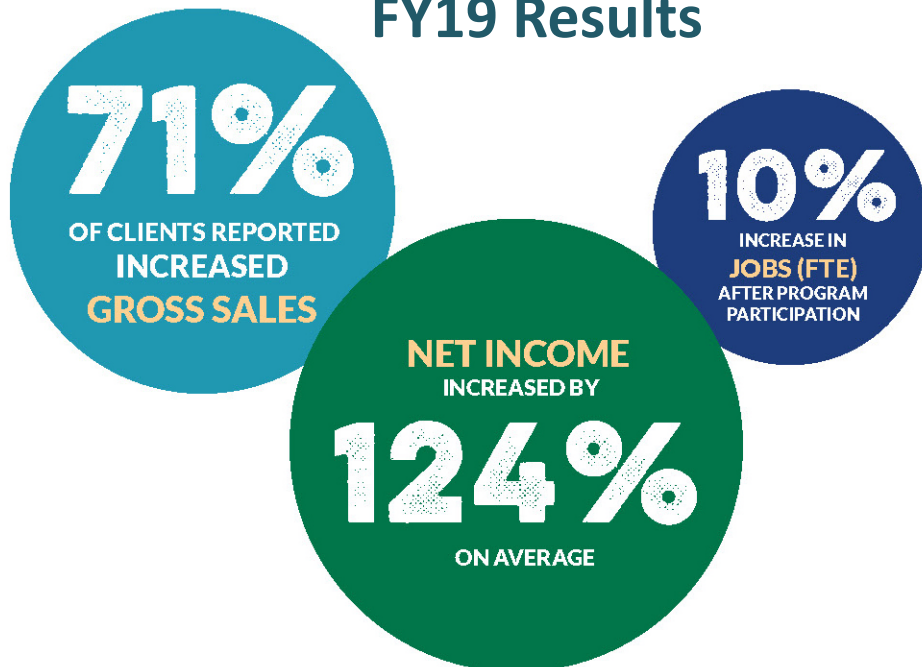
172 farm, food and forest products businesses served

- 63 farms newly enrolled for business/transfer planning
- 36 farms in a second year of planning
- 66 farms received shorter-term planning assistance
- 5 food hubs received one-on-one technical assistance
- 7 forest products businesses received planning assistance
- 68 loggers attended 2 business workshops
- 78 forest landowners received advising on land succession planning at 7 workshops across the state
- 7 forest landowning families received succession planning assistance

VHCB Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

- 17 years of in-depth advising
- More than 850 farm, food, and forest product businesses served
- Approximately 30% of enrollees are conserved farms

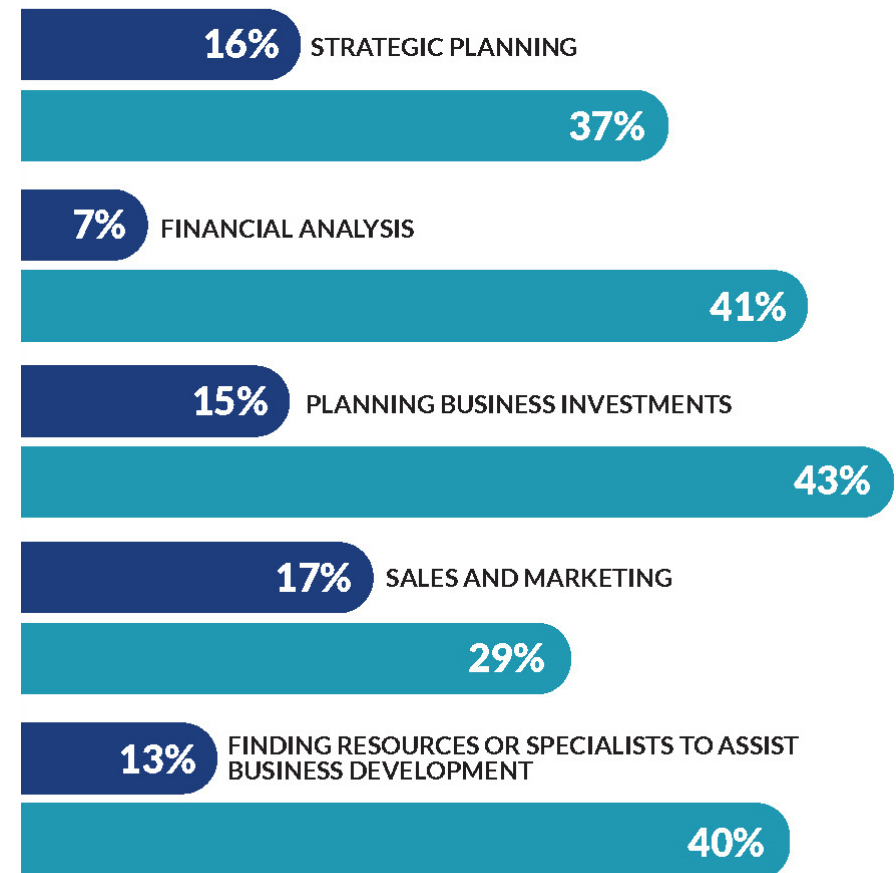
FY19 Results



Skills: Before & After

PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESSES REPORTING HIGH SKILLS IN:

- Before Program Participation
- After Program Participation





Chris Milliman

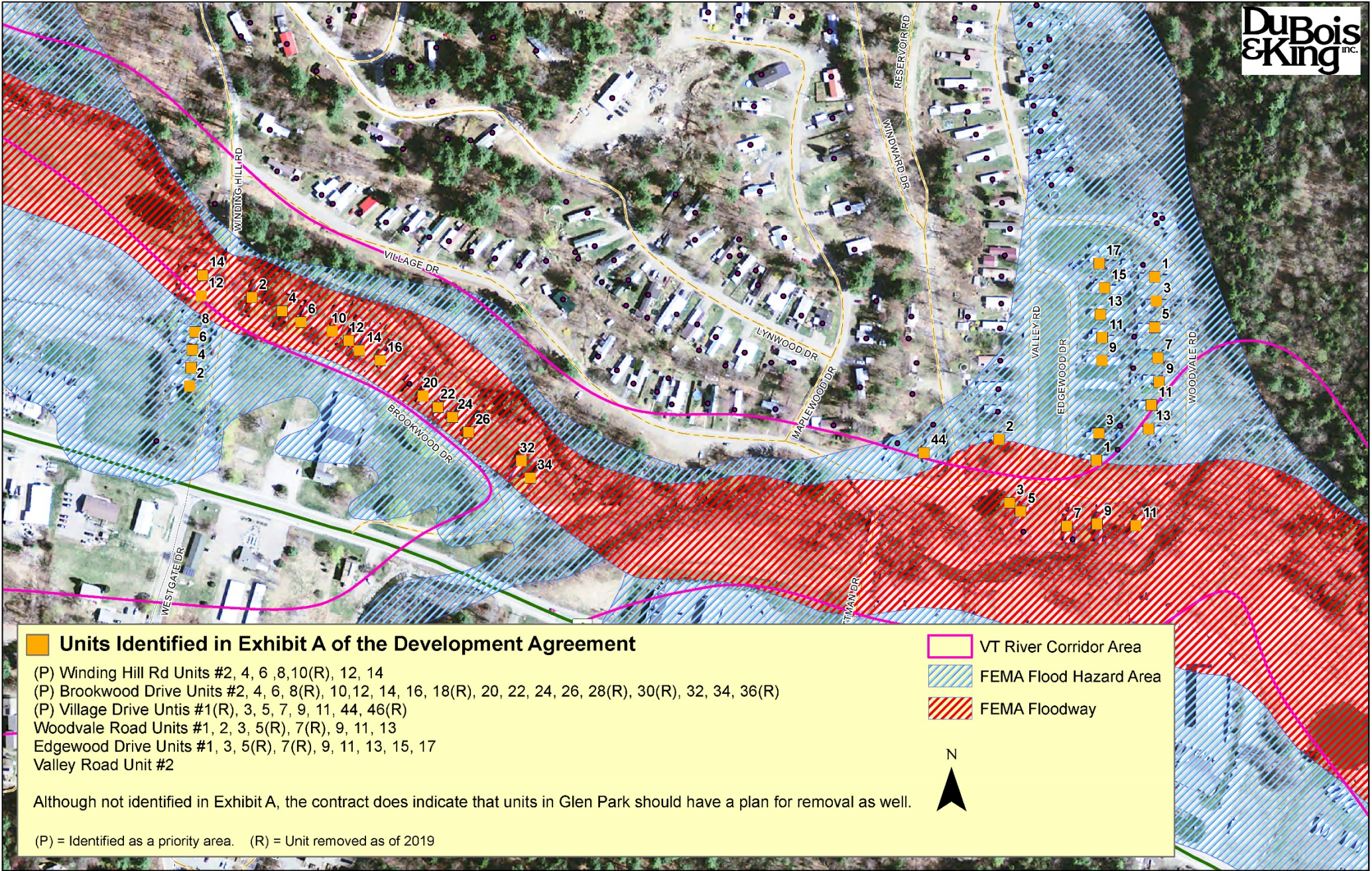
Rural Economic Development Initiative

- FY18 & FY19 to date - \$150,000 in special appropriations for grant writing has helped 16 rural enterprises and small towns win \$2.3M in federal, state, and philanthropic funding.
- FY19 REDI funding appropriation of \$75,000 helped 13 rural enterprises and small communities with fundraising strategy and grant applications. \$566,000 awarded to date with \$2.5 million in requests pending.
- FY19 grants awarded to date for projects in Bridgewater, Newport, Poultney, Kirby, Northeast Kingdom, and Readsboro



More to be Done

- Vermont Futures Project of the Vermont Chamber of Commerce has set a growth target of 5,000 new and improved housing units annually.
- Impaired waters in every Vermont Watershed
Department of Environmental Conservation, 2018
- Roadmap to End Homelessness called for 369 units of permanent supportive housing and 1,251 new homes affordable to the lowest income Vermonters.
- Rural towns with outdoor recreation assets gaining, not losing, population.
Vermont Center for Geographic Information and the U.S. Census
- Challenges facing Vermont agriculture “threaten VT’s economy, community and culture.” [*A 2018 Exploration of the Future of Vermont Agriculture*](#), UVM, VHCB



Tri-Park in Brattleboro needs reinvestment and homes removed from floodway.

The Park Street School in Springfield and the former Wilmington High School: two community projects with space available for housing.



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CHAMPLAIN ISLANDS SENIOR HOUSING

Carter Lane, South Hero, VT

CSC Entrance



1/15/20

Architectural rendering of proposed senior housing in South Hero to be developed by Cathedral Square

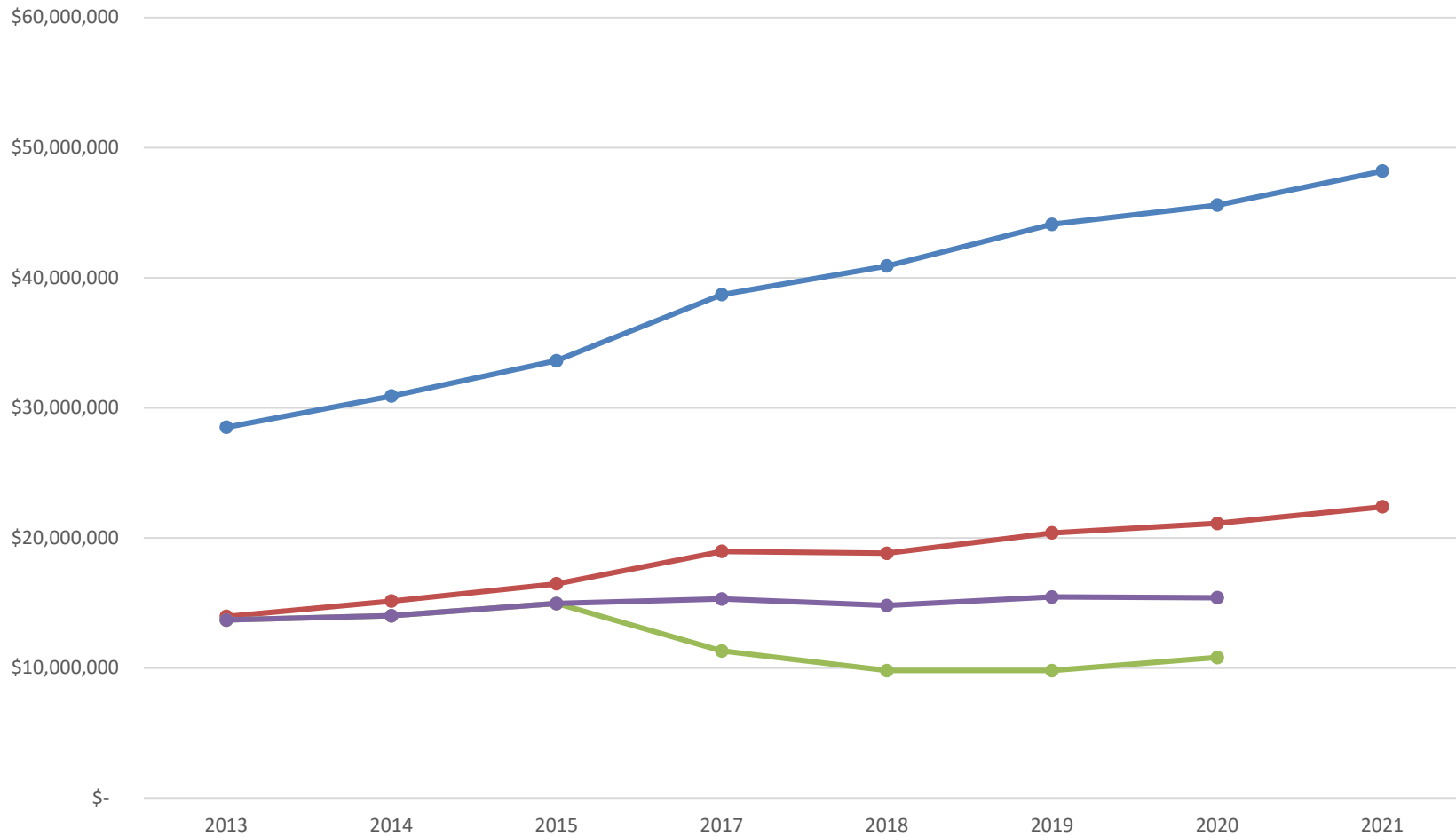
18-Month Pipeline

- \$37 million for 54 rental housing developments, homeownership and accessibility
- \$9.2 million for 32 farmland conservation projects
- \$8 million for 73 natural resources and recreational areas projects
- \$1.5 million for 24 historic community buildings



Rebuilding of the wood-fired oven in the historic Rise Up Bakery adjacent to the Old Labor Hall in Barre

VHCB Appropriations 2013-2021



NOTES

\$58 million in PTT revenue to General Fund from FY13-21

FY19-20 VHCB appropriations reduced by \$1.5 million for Housing Revenue Bond payments

FY2021 Based on Revenue Forecasts and Governor's Budget Recommendation

- PTT Revenues, 2013-21
- VHCB Statutory Share PTT
- VHCB Actual State Funds Appropriated
- Actual PTT Appropriated



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