

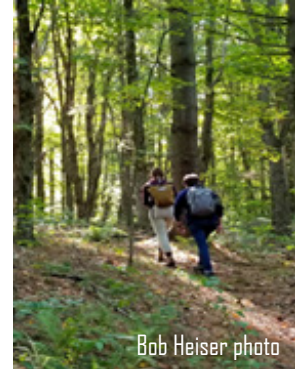
VHCB FY21 Community Development & Climate Conservation Opportunities



Bob Heiser photo



Kate Wagner photo



Bob Heiser photo

Huntington Community Forest, Huntington, Chittenden County

With a lack of public trails near the village, few options for mountain biking, little access to the Huntington River and poor access to the existing town forest, the community has identified the acquisition of 245 acres for a new town forest as one of their top priorities. Located next door to the elementary school, the property provides a trail network with exceptional accessibility for town residents and visitors, an important statewide VAST snowmobile trail corridor, diverse wildlife habitat and opportunities for hunting and fishing. Protecting the property's river corridor, wetlands

and headwater streams will enhance flood resiliency and protect the drinking water source for the school. Located in the Winooski River Watershed, conservation will prevent forest fragmentation, an extreme stressor in a watershed with high development pressure. Preserving this recreational and ecological treasure hits the community's identified needs on multiple counts. \$160,000 request to VHCB. \$800,000 leverage.

Lake Willoughby State Forest Addition Orleans County

The VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation has the opportunity to acquire a critical inholding surrounded by Willoughby State Forest located at the southern end of the lake. The 35 acres will improve public access, help address parking issues and provide sites for camping along the lake. The land connects to public land available for hunting

and fishing and the more than 20 miles of recreational trails within and around the forest. The level of use is overwhelming capacity at one of the state's



most treasured and iconic parks. Adding this acreage with frontage along Route 5 will enable the state to make needed improvements and sustainably buffer the lake. \$350,000 request to VHCB. \$450,000 leverage.

Elmore Store, Elmore, Lamoille County

Five miles from the largest town in Lamoille County on the shores of Lake Elmore is the Elmore Store. In continuous operation since the early 19th century, the store is the hub of the town. Like so many general stores in the state, the Elmore Store has struggled to stay in business. A community group is working to buy the property and raise funds to make needed upgrades. A partnership with a local bread and pizza business and a new deck overlooking the lake will help keep the business vibrant and customers coming back. Elmore joins the growing list of Vermont towns where

local groups are breathing new life into village stores that remain the heart of their communities. \$80,000 request to VHCB. \$300,000 leverage.





Kingdom Trails, Lyndon, Essex County

Kingdom Trails is a 100-mile system of four-season, multi-use recreation trails spanning the Northeast Kingdom towns of Lyndon, Burke, Kirby and East Haven. The network has become a leading destination for recreation in Vermont, and the Northeast. With more than 140,000 trail visits a year, this economic engine



has an estimated annual impact of 10 million dollars. The expansive network, managed by the Kingdom Trails Association, is hosted almost entirely and voluntarily by 80 private landowners. While this model has been a cornerstone of the system, fee ownership of key parcels which see the greatest intensity of use has become more imperative to the success of the Kingdom Trails. This 300-acre linchpin property is centrally located in the KTA network on Darling Hill and has 2+ miles of multi-use, four season recreation trails and ¾ mile of VAST trail co-located with the trails. Conserving the 1,500 feet of frontage on the East Branch of the Passumpsic River will provide buffers for enhancing water quality and flood resiliency. \$250,000 request to VHCB. \$750,000 leverage.



Sabin's Pasture, Montpelier, Washington County

The City of Montpelier has been interested in Sabin's Pasture for more than a decade. The community's vision for the 100-acre property is to preserve more than half of the property as a new city park along with developing at least 200 homes in a smart growth neighborhood. Sabin's Pasture is a prime location for housing and conservation, within walking and biking distance to downtown and adjacent to a new 2-mile section of the city's shared-use recreation path. Located on Barre Street, this site is the largest undeveloped parcel in Montpelier and had access to existing infrastructure. The land is situated across from the Caledonia Spirits new 26,000-square-foot distillery and



visitors center and rises up above the Winooski River. The property offers the potential to help alleviate the significant pressure on housing availability in Montpelier at all income levels while also protecting valuable natural and recreational resources.

FEMA Buyouts

After Tropical Storm Irene, VHCB committed \$2 million as the 25% local match for municipalities to use with FEMA funding to buy out damaged properties. This commitment was instrumental in more than 150 buyouts since then. The need continues as more homes are impacted by flooding and FEMA offers only 75% of the property value. The primary purpose of the buyouts is to prevent future losses and help owners recover from disaster, but buy outs also restore floodplains, protect water quality, and provide public access.