



# House Committee on Corrections and Institutions

February 15, 2019



# 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

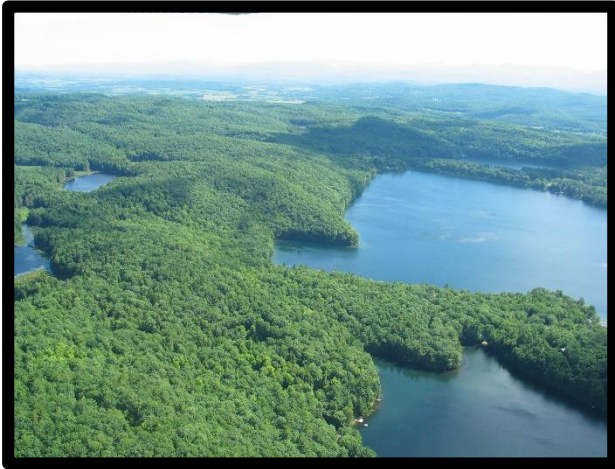


Photo by Paul Richardson

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

10 V.S.A.15 §303

# Vermont Housing & Conservation Board



Appointed by the Legislature and the Governor, the 11 member board holds meetings around the state to consider applications and recently visited the Brandon Falls Park, funded by VHCB in 1993.



## Housing & Conservation Since 1987

- 267,900 acres of working forests, natural areas and recreational lands
- 13,000 affordable homes – rental and homeownership
- 167,000 acres of farmland on 725 farms
- 70 historic buildings have been restored for community use
- 800 businesses have enrolled in our Farm & Forest Viability Program
- 480 AmeriCorps members have served through VHCB AmeriCorps
- 2,550 homes and apartments with reduced lead paint hazards



## **VHCB Results: FY 2018 and FY 2019**

State Investment: \$38M Leverage: \$160M

- 1,029 homes and apartments
- 42 farms; 6,063 acres conserved
- 2 historic preservation projects
- 22 projects conserved 3,220 acres of land for public recreation, natural areas, and forestland
- 167 farm, food, and forest enterprises were provided business planning and technical assistance
- 10 communities were assisted in securing \$1.78 million in grants

# Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

## Status of VHCB Funding

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### FY16

\$4.55 million for housing, conservation and water quality

Fully committed and disbursed

### FY17

\$4.0 million for housing, conservation and water quality

Fully committed. \$3.8 million disbursed.

### FY18

\$5.0 million for housing, conservation and water quality

Fully committed. \$3.9 million disbursed

### FY19

\$2.75 million for water quality and other conservation projects

Fully committed. \$730,000 disbursed

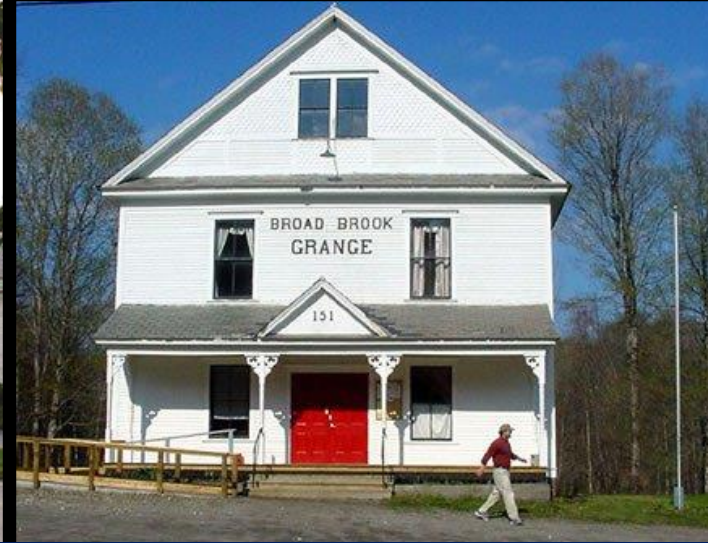
\$1.1 million for water quality farm improvement grants or fee purchase projects:

\$294,000 of \$544,000 for WQ grants committed. Balance to be committed in April.

Application for \$554,000 farm retirement is pending.

\$1.8 million for Housing

Fully committed and disbursed.



## Revitalizing a Rural Community through Housing, Conservation and Historic Preservation



Local leadership in Guilford has used VHCB funding to leverage many millions in other sources to bring the Country Store back to life and build much needed affordable homes. VHCB has awarded capital bill funds for the restoration and conservation of high priority floodplain and public access along the Green River. Discussions are underway for a grant to transform the historic Broad Brook Grange into a community center.



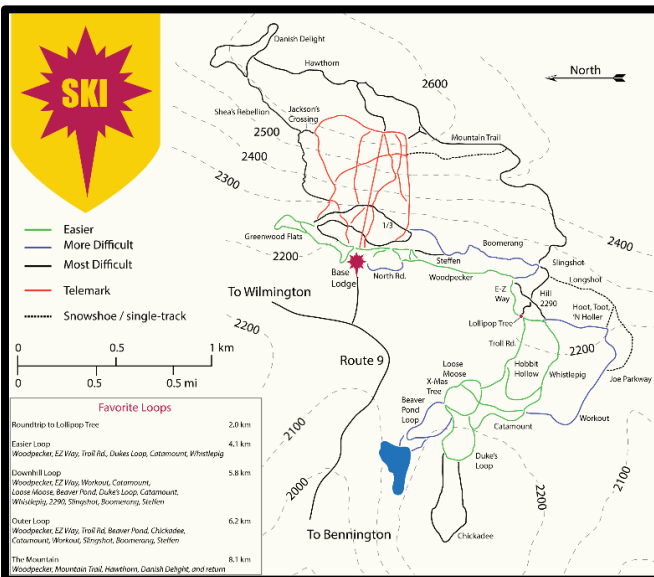
# Bluffside Bike Path Recreation Corridor in Newport

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



## Homeownership

At Fort Ethan Allen in Essex, the Champlain Housing Trust is using Capital Bill funds to enable lower income households to become owners of new affordable condominiums created from former student housing.

# Homeownership

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





## Appletree Lane - Fair Haven



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



Rehab will include new windows, new siding, accessibility improvements, new flooring, cabinets, counters, plumbing fixtures, interior lighting fixtures, new ceiling sheetrock, and repainting.



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.

# Rock Point - Burlington

VHCB awarded \$144,000 in Capital Bill funds for the conservation of this natural area – a high priority for the state’s most populated region.





## VHCB and Water Quality

- Adopted Water Quality and Flood Resilience Guidelines and revised Conservation of Agricultural Lands policy to incorporate water quality/flood resilience attributes
- Management (ALE) plans are now required to address soil health and water quality prior to closing on a farm easement
- Special easement language protects surface waters
- Pledged over \$5 million match to the state's \$16 million Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) award from NRCS: 20 farms funded in the Lake Champlain Basin.
- The VHCB Farm & Forest Viability Program has awarded \$881,099 in water quality grants to 29 farms, and \$492,302 in dairy improvement grants to 17 farms

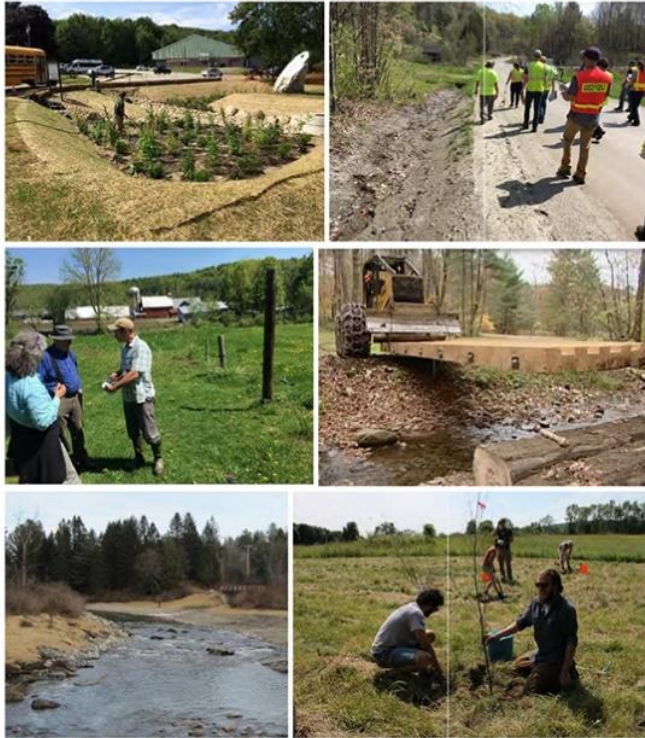




## **VHCB Farmland Conservation Investments Results: July 2017–December 2018**

- ✓ 45 farms (including 4 retroactive OPAVs)
- ✓ 6,063 acres of farmland conserved
- ✓ 36 include water quality easement protections
- ✓ Approximately 24 miles of buffers protected
- ✓ 24 transfers: 10 to new farmers











# VERMONT CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE 2018 INVESTMENT REPORT



AGENCY OF ADMINISTRATION  
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS  
AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION

VHCB is “all in” and collaborates with ANR and the Ag Agency to review and report on grants to projects helping meet water quality goals in the agricultural and natural resource sectors.

Figure 1. Clean water project objectives and additional benefits

Land Use	Clean Water Project Objectives and Example Project Images	Additional Benefits
 <b>AGRICULTURE</b>	Addresses runoff and soil erosion from farm production areas and farm fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports Clean Water Act compliance</li> <li>• More cost-effective</li> <li>• Leverages federal funds</li> <li>• Supports agricultural economy</li> </ul>
 <b>DEVELOPED LANDS</b>	Addresses stormwater runoff from developed lands, such as parking lots, sidewalks, and rooftops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports Clean Water Act compliance</li> <li>• Increases flood resilience</li> <li>• May enhance aesthetic appeal</li> </ul>
 <b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	Restores functions of “natural infrastructure”—river channels, floodplains, lakeshores, and wetlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports Clean Water Act compliance</li> <li>• More cost-effective</li> <li>• Increases flood resilience</li> <li>• Improves habitat</li> <li>• Enhances recreation</li> </ul>
 <b>ROADS</b>	Addresses stormwater runoff from roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports Clean Water Act compliance</li> <li>• More cost-effective</li> <li>• Increases flood resilience</li> <li>• Leverages federal funds</li> <li>• Reduces future road maintenance costs</li> </ul>
 <b>WASTEWATER</b>	Decreases nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) through enhanced wastewater treatment and addresses aging infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protects public health and safety</li> <li>• Supports Clean Water Act compliance</li> <li>• Leverages federal funds</li> </ul>



## 2018 Investment Report and Clean Water Projects Dashboard

[Website link](#)

Home **Listing** Map <<

### Interagency Clean Water Projects Dashboard

#### Project Search

What

Sector  Step

Agency  
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Town  County

Basin Plan

State Funding Fiscal Year

Project Status

Number of projects found: 73  
Number of map points found: 73

Project	
<a href="#">View</a>	<p><b>Bird's Eye Conservation Project with Riparian Protection</b> <b>Project Type:</b> Forest Conservation for Water Quality - Implementation <b>Program:</b> VHCB Conservation Grants - Vermont Housing &amp; Conservation Board <b>Partner:</b> The Conservation Fund <b>County:</b> Rutland <b>Basin:</b> South Champlain <b>Funded SFY:</b> 2013 <b>Completion SFY:</b> 2017 <b>State Funds:</b> \$600,000</p>
<a href="#">View</a>	<p><b>Ascutney Mountain - West Windsor Town Forest with Riparian Buffers</b> <b>Project Type:</b> Forest Conservation for Water Quality - Implementation <b>Program:</b> VHCB Conservation Grants - Vermont Housing &amp; Conservation Board <b>Partner:</b> Trust For Public Land <b>County:</b> Windsor <b>Basin:</b> Black and Ottauquechee <b>Funded SFY:</b> 2015 <b>Completion SFY:</b> 2016 <b>State Funds:</b> \$300,000</p>
<a href="#">View</a>	<p><b>Gale Meadows Conservation Project with Wetlands Protection</b> <b>Project Type:</b> Forest Conservation for Water Quality - Implementation <b>Program:</b> VHCB Conservation Grants - Vermont Housing &amp; Conservation Board <b>Partner:</b> Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department <b>County:</b> Windham <b>Basin:</b> West, Williams and Saxtons <b>Funded SFY:</b> 2016 <b>Completion SFY:</b> 2017 <b>State Funds:</b> \$175,000</p>

# Willoughby Peaks Forestland, Westmore



The Nature Conservancy and Vermont Land Trust protected 2,965 acres of private forestland in Westmore. The Willoughby Peaks project adds to a 12,000-acre block of conserved land and connects two sections of Willoughby State Forest and the Bald Mountain WMA. Protects undeveloped shoreline on ponds, headwater streams, and wetlands in the Lake Memphremagog watershed.

# Agricultural Conservation and Water Quality



“By using a concrete barnyard with runoff collection rather than old barnyards with old curbs or animal access to frozen and muddy fields, we will improve water quality in the Dead Creek watershed.”

- Patrick & Melanie Harrison

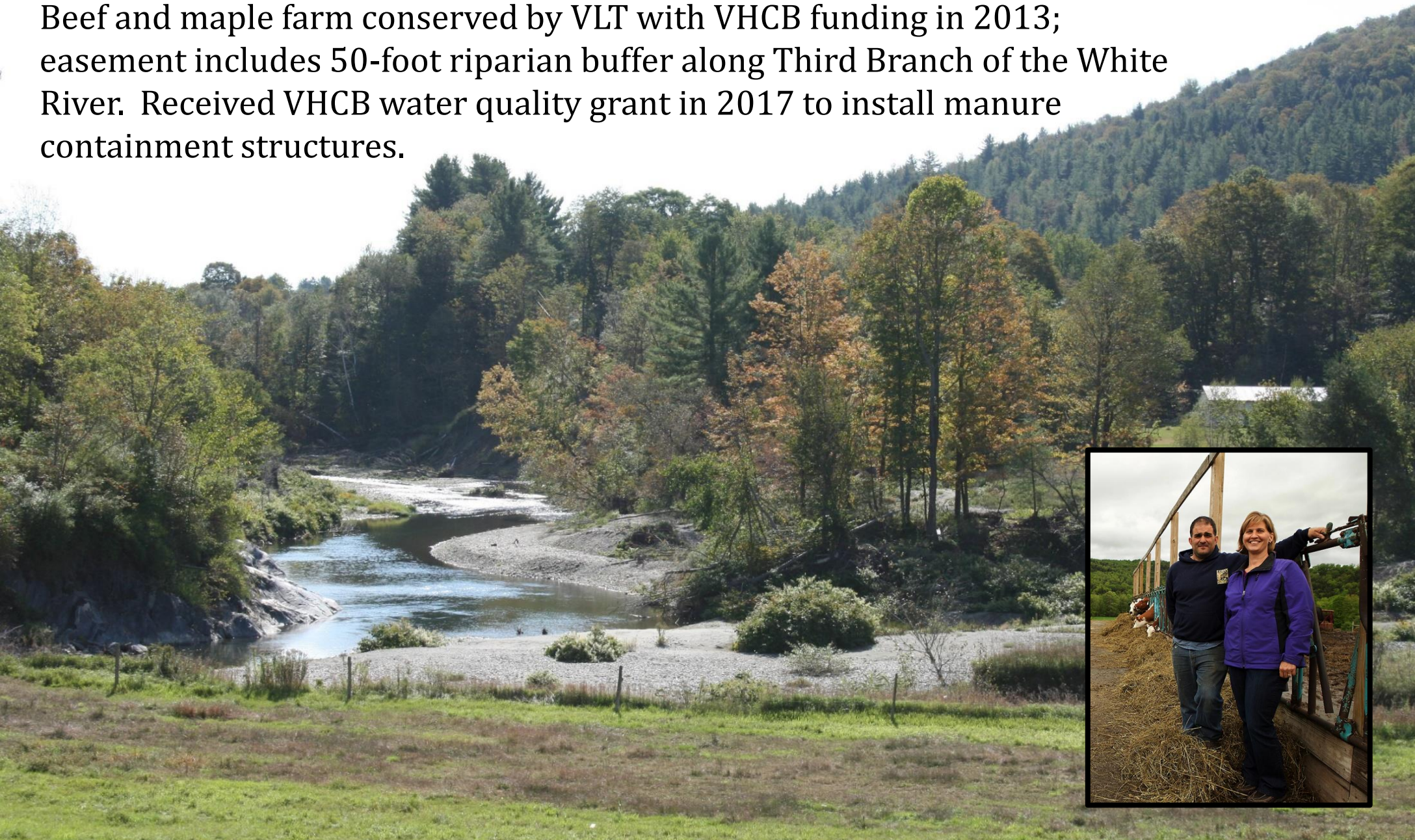
## Harrison's Homegrown - Addison

- 432 acres of pasture and hayland for 200-head organic dairy conserved in 2016
- Conservation funds reinvested in barn expansion and improved manure management system; working with NRCS on EQIP-funded projects
- Tributaries flowing to Dead Creek WMA have riparian buffers and are enrolled in CREP. All waterways are fenced to exclude livestock

# Agricultural Conservation and Water Quality

## **Poulin and Daughters Family Farm, Randolph**

Beef and maple farm conserved by VLT with VHCB funding in 2013; easement includes 50-foot riparian buffer along Third Branch of the White River. Received VHCB water quality grant in 2017 to install manure containment structures.





## Conserving Forests & Supporting the Economy

- Backdrop for Vermont's world-class tourism industry and boost for rural economies as demonstrated by Prospect Mountain, Dorset Town Forest, Mount Ascutney, and Kingdom Trails, all conserved with VHCB funding.
- The Vermont forest products industry contributes 10,555 jobs and \$1.5 billion in economic output, including value-added manufacturing and tourism.
- VHCB has protected 6 town forests totaling 1,865 acres over the past two years.

# 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.







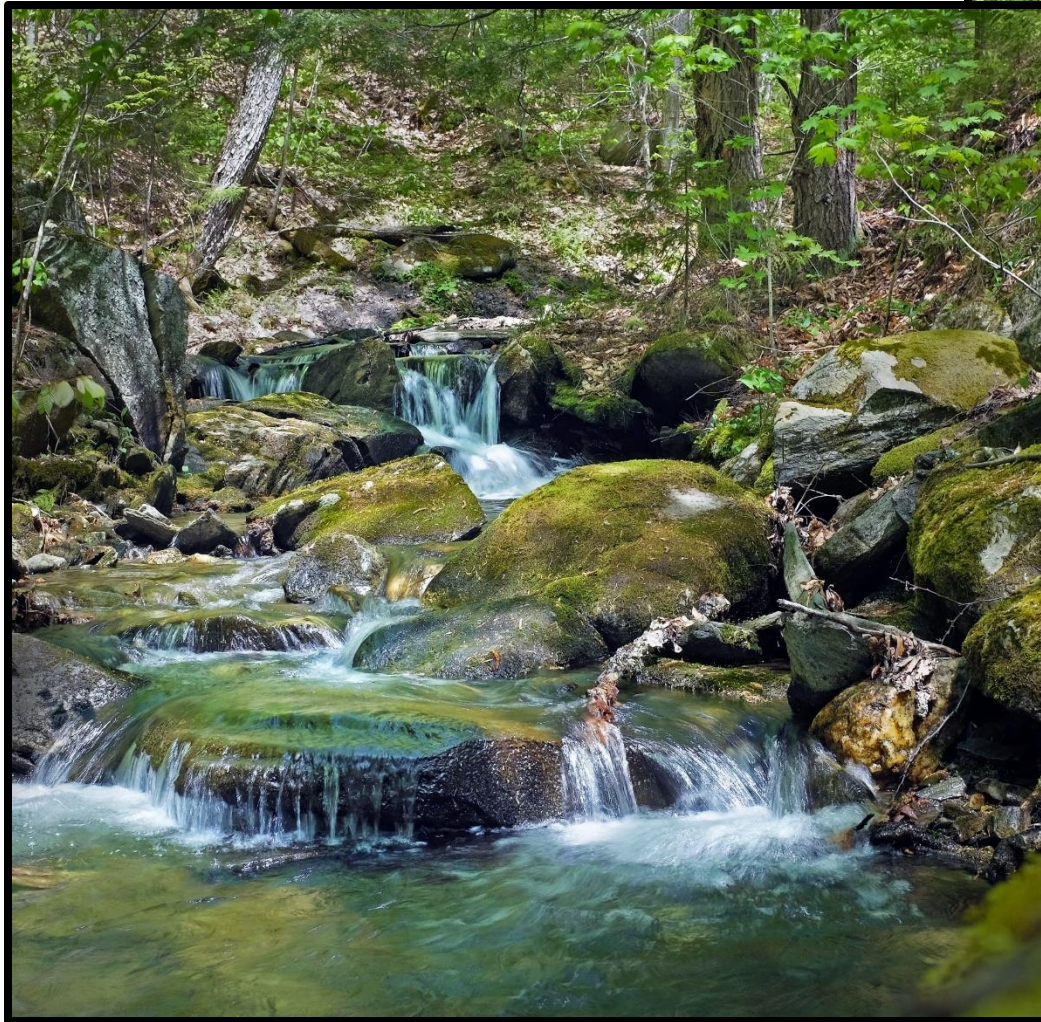
Shawn Cunningham photo

## **Rainbow Rock Swimming Hole - Chester**

The Vermont River Conservancy acquired a popular swimming hole, conserved it, and transferred it to the town. With over 700 feet of river frontage on the Williams River, Rainbow Rock is popular on hot days for swimming and fishing. Permanent public access is protected through a combination of local fundraising, foundation funds, and a VHCB grant.

## 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 61 natural resources and recreational areas projects seeking \$9 million.

# 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

# Ascutney Mountain, West Windsor



Acquisition and conservation of 469 acres that were added to the town forest creating a 4,730-acre block of protected land. Added 11 miles of trails to an existing network following the loss of the local ski area. Values of the land include water quality protection, recreation, wildlife habitat, and sustainable forest management.

Jim Lyall photo



## **Housing Revenue Bond Initiative Well Underway**

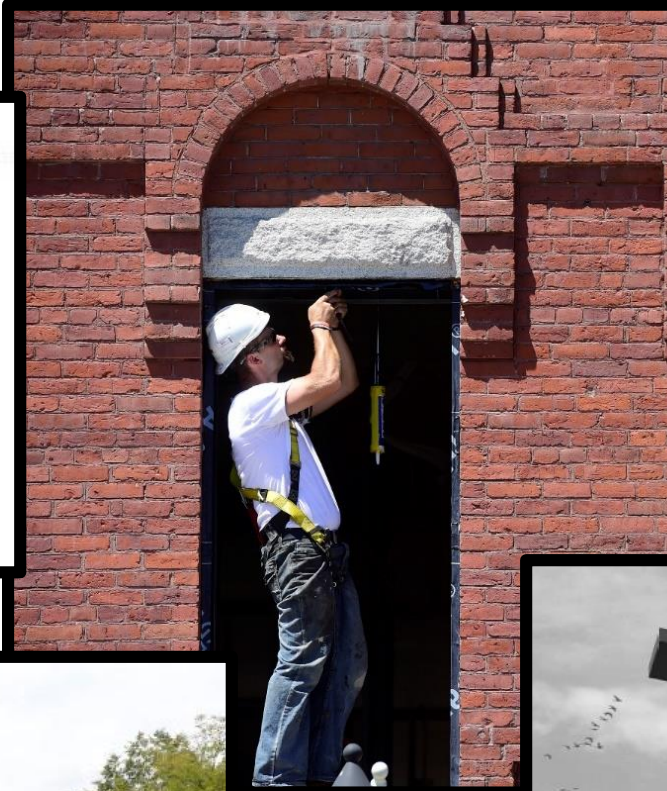
Signed into law on June 28, 2017.

VHFA shaped and issued the bonds. Sale exceeded expectations and raised \$37 million. VHCB's record of investments in permanently affordable, energy-efficient housing in smart growth areas allowed marketing as a sustainability bond.

\$24.8 million committed. Nearly \$140 million leveraged. Remaining bond proceeds to be awarded by the end of 2019.

# Downtowns Revitalized

Brattleboro, Springfield, Montpelier, Bennington and St. Albans funded by the Housing Revenue Bond. St. Johnsbury to be considered soon.





# Vermonters Moving into New Homes

HRB has funded 21 developments with 550 homes in 16 different communities across 9 counties plus accessibility improvements and Habitat for Humanity homes statewide.

First 86 homes are completed and occupied – Brattleboro, South Burlington and Putney.

Another 240 under construction with 200 more set to get underway by the end of the year.

# Putney Landing

The first new neighborhood to be completed with HRB funding and the 18 mixed-income apartments were filled immediately. The new residents work in retail, manufacturing, services, finance and health care. Sixteen children now call this home.







## Downtown Renewal Springfield

HRB funds will soon create 15 new affordable apartments above main street commercial space in the Woolson Block.

Previously, VHCB funded the redevelopment of the local theater and affordable housing in the Ellis block and has just awarded feasibility funding for housing at the proposed Black River Innovation Campus.





Great River Terrace

## Homes Created for the Most Vulnerable

W&WHT renovated a former Brattleboro motel, creating 22 new rentals affordable at 30% of median and serving the homeless with on-site services.

Homes are completed and filled. Eleven of the new residents were previously living outside or in tents.

Majority of HRB projects have units designated for the homeless.

# Meeting HRB Goals

- Bond proceeds committed to projects within 3 years.
- Targeting 25% of the homes to households between 80 and 120% of median and 25% to households at or below 50% of median.
- On track to exceed production goal of 550 to 650 homes.
- Primarily new units or bringing substandard units back into service.
- HRB funding is also making possible the private development of a projected 296 additional homes affordable at 80 to 120% of the area median income.



# Economic Impact

“Construction as an industry has one of the highest economic multipliers, both in overall terms and for employment multipliers.” (*State Auditor Report: Making Economic Development Policy – July 2018.*)

The 21 projects funded thus far with \$25 million in HRB funds will result in an estimated \$124 million in construction activity.

The National Association of Homebuilders indicates each new apartment built creates 1.13 jobs and generates \$14,000 in state and local tax revenue. Single-family homes each create 2.97 jobs.

Grand list value of first three completed HRB projects increased by an estimated \$2.89 million.

# VHCB's Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

- 16 years of in-depth advising
- Served over 800 businesses
- 30% of enrollees are on conserved farms

## 2018 Viability Program Participants:

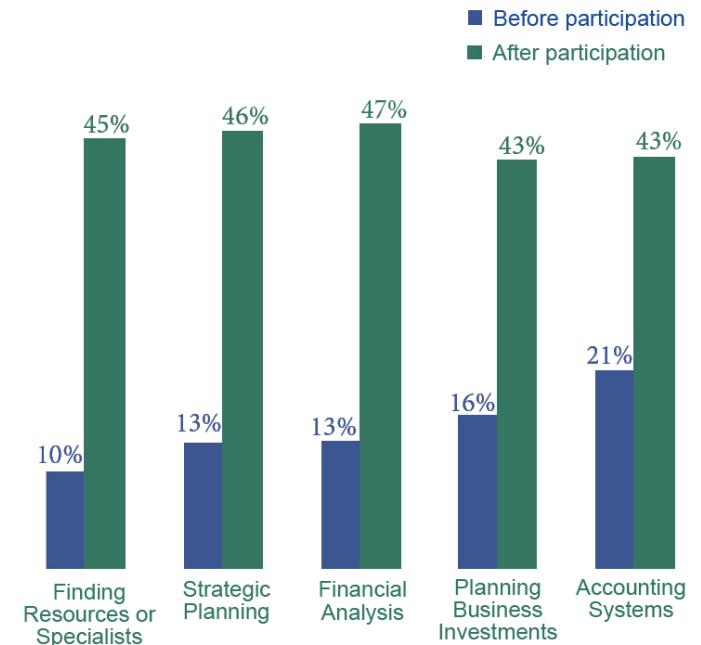


Gross sales by **21%**



Profits by **\$32,500**  
per business

*Percent of farmers who report  
high skills in:*





## **VT Farm & Forest Viability Program in 2018**

- 144 farms received business or transfer planning services
- 5 food hubs received strategic planning assistance
- 12 forest products businesses received business assistance
- 6 forestland-owning families received one-on-one succession planning assistance

**Total enrolled Viability clients: 167**

- 68 loggers attended 3 business management workshops
- 43 family forestland owners and consulting foresters attended 4 succession planning workshops

# Good Earth Farm



The owner of this small, diversified vegetable & fruit operation in Brandon worked with a Viability program advisor for several years on a business plan and land access.



## Towhead LCC - Danville

Isaac Pearl benefited from business planning, working with an advisor through the VHCB's Farm & Forest Viability Program. His advisor helped him refine his book keeping systems and analyze his business strategy and equipment needs. He can now easily track income and expenses, and is keeping information up to date, speeding up his tax preparation and informing decision making.



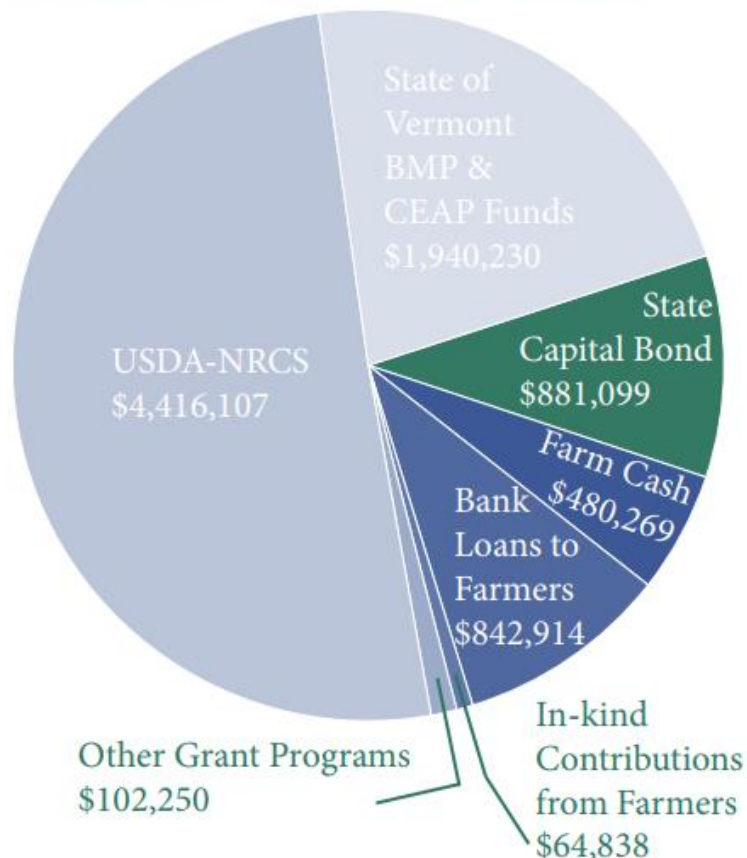


# Water Quality Grants to Farmers

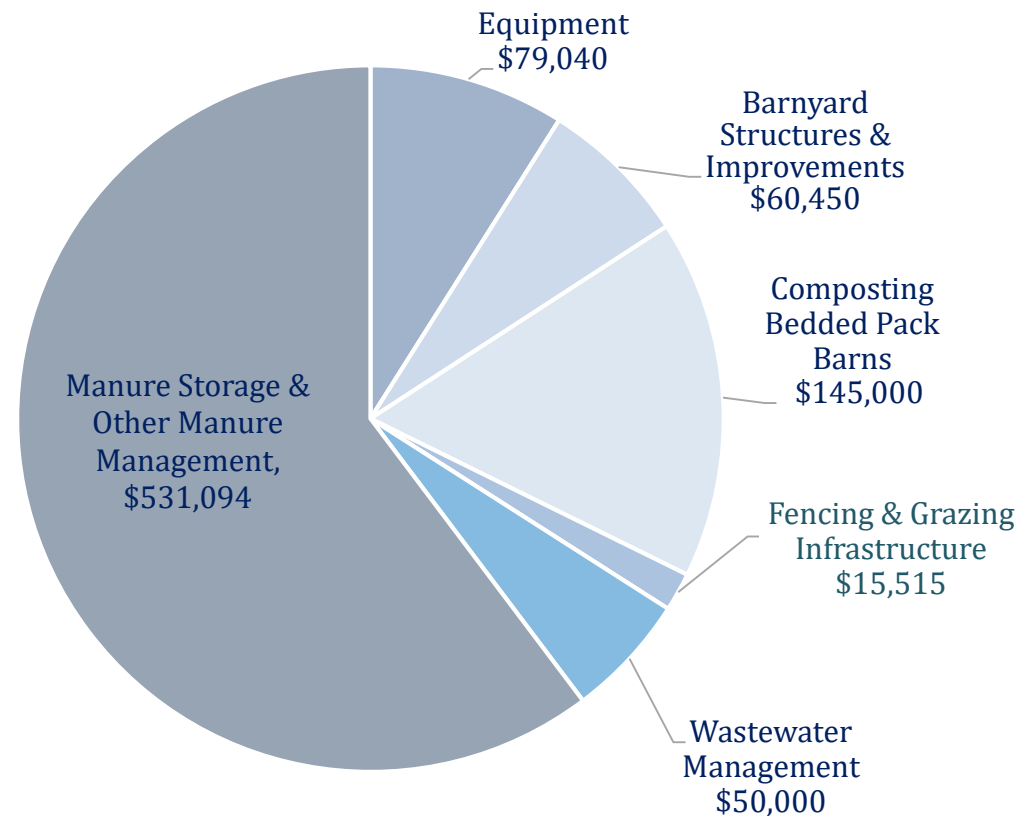
From July 2017 to December 2018, the Viability Program made awards to 29 farms totaling \$881,099. These grants leveraged an additional \$7,846,609 investments, nearly 9:1.

## Total funding of all projects

\$8,727,708 of VHCB & leveraged funds



## Uses of Water Quality Grant Funds



## Water Quality and Dairy Improvement Grants



The O'Donnells milk Holsteins on their farm in Westfield along the headwaters of the Mississquoi River. With a VHCB Water Quality Grant, they purchased a manure injection system to help them manage phosphorus and nitrogen levels in the soil, reduce nutrient runoff, and increase crop yields. A dairy improvement grant awarded in 2017 helped the farm construct a new manure storage facility.

# Dorset Peak Jerseys

## Danby

Jessie and Caleb Smith received a \$40,000 WQ grant. The project will result in capture and storage of all manure and wastewater runoff from the farmstead area as well as improved conditions for the cows.





# **Dalstead 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.

# More to be Done

## 18-Month Pipeline

- ✓ \$16 million for 54 farmland conservation projects
- ✓ \$9 million for 61 natural resources and recreational areas projects
- ✓ \$1.5 million for 15 historic community buildings
- ✓ \$32 million for 45 rental housing projects, homeownership and accessibility



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

# 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.*

# FY20 Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

## VHCB Sections – Governor’s Proposal

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### Section 10 Clean Water

Agricultural Water Quality Projects: Water quality farm improvement grants and farm retirement projects – Line 103

\$1.1 million (Level with FY19)

Land Conservation and Water Quality Projects – Line 104

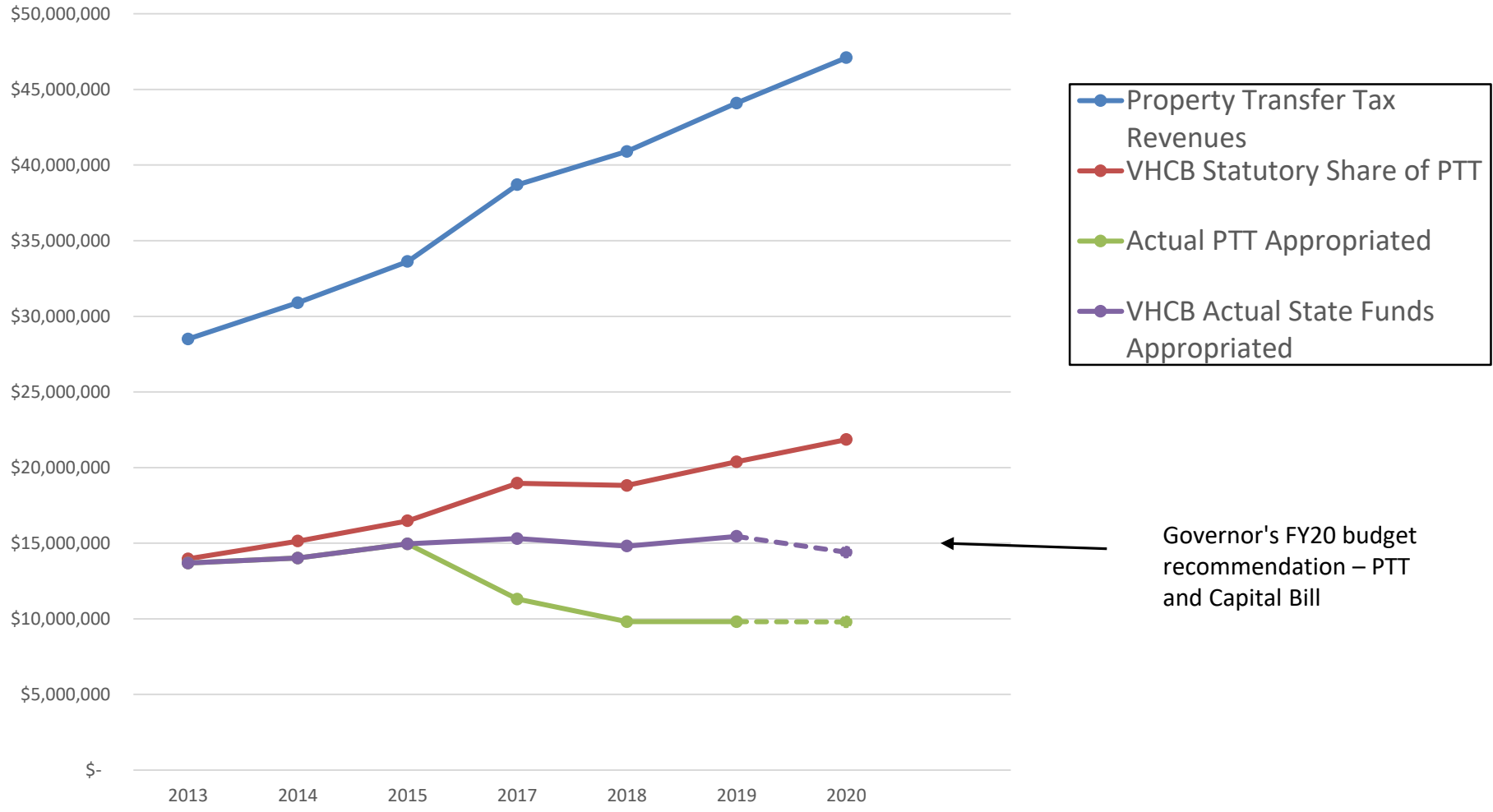
\$1.7 million (Reduction of \$1.05 million from FY19)

### Section 18 Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Housing

\$1.8 million (Level with FY19)

### VHCB Appropriations 2013-2020



Governor's FY20 budget recommendation - PTT and Capital Bill



# VHCB Programs

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- **Multi-Family Housing Development and Preservation**
- **Farmland Conservation**
- **Farmland Access**
- **Forestland, Recreational land and Natural Area Conservation**
- **Water Quality Grants to Farmers**
- **Home Ownership**
- **Historic Preservation**
- Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program Business Assistance
- Vermont Lead Paint Hazard Abatement & Healthy Homes
- AmeriCorps
- Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
- Home Access
- Housing Opportunities for Persons living with HIV/AIDS

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