

I'd like to begin by giving you a bit of my background. I have been on the board of both the Nature Conservancy and the Stowe Land Trust for over 20 years. Currently I am not on either board but give support to the Stowe Land Trust when needed. I am also owner of Coldwell Banker Carlson Real Estate in Stowe. You might think the environmental boards and real estate don't mix. However, it has been my experience they are very suited for each other. In my 44 years of real estate I have helped in many transactions that are a win-win situation for preservation of our natural habitats and resources and planned development.

Today we are here to talk about the extraordinary preservation of one of the most significant properties in Stowe and I would venture to say in Vermont. I arrived in Vermont in 1969 and moved from Middlesex to Stowe in 1973. Within two years, I heard about "the Story land." Several years later I moved onto Taber Hill Rd, which had direct access through the woods to the Story land now known as Brownsville Forest. This became my winter playground. With cross country skis or snowshoes I would roam the various trails made by logging. Later friends of mine discovered Mt. biking and they would follow the same trails. These 750 acres of paradise with fields, woods, views, trails, beaver ponds, ducks, deer, bear, birds, coyotes in pristine glory sat right in Stowe, untouched by development or even a Class 3 road.

As early as the 1980's the Nature Conservancy had their eye on this property. No one knew what Mrs. Story would do and

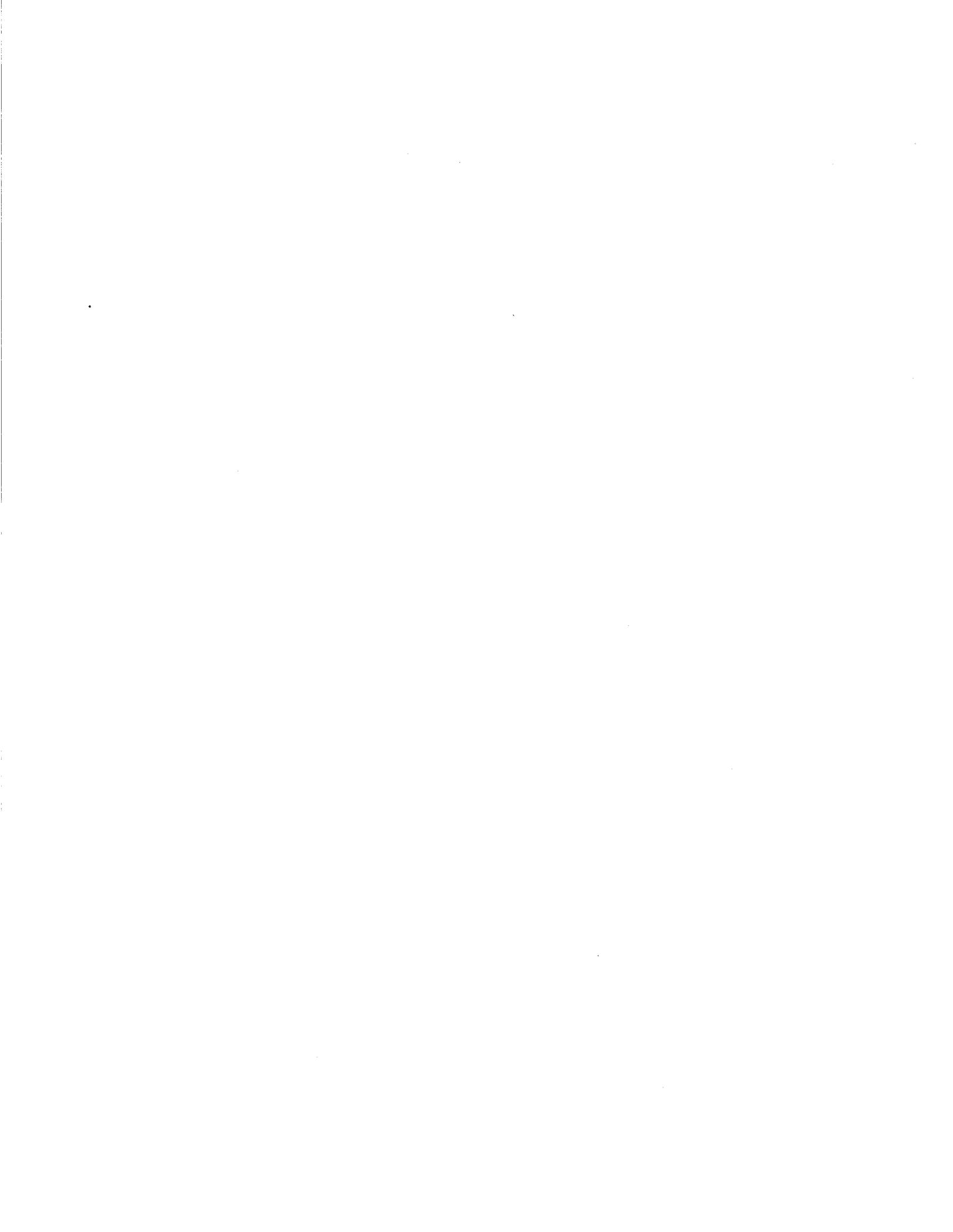


everyone was worried it would be developed. There were many rumors of who was to inherit the property. In the end it went to the nieces and nephews who put it on the market at an outrageous price. I was interviewed by them after they had a year of trying to market it at \$30 million dollars. It was clear that they did not have an understanding of the real estate market in Vermont or Stowe. My pricing, which ended up being the selling price of the land, was too low and they went with a broker that knew nothing of the beauty of this parcel or had ever set foot on it. This was a concern for those of us that wished to see it preserved.

But with a commitment from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Group, the hard work of the Stowe Land Trust, and a significant donation from an anonymous donor, Stowe Land Trust was able to reach a contract to acquire the most important land preservation which equaled or surpassed the preservation of the Mayo Farm and Cady Hill in Stowe.

Why is it significant that Vermont Housing and Conservation donates to these projects? Why shouldn't they spend all their money instead on affordable housing? The answer is in the Brownsville project. The land was prime development land, already serviced by two old town roads. The terrain is gradual making roads easy to build. Why not allow housing to happen?

Because it is important to have a corridor for our habitat to live and be able to have access to the Worcester mountain range. Because it is important for humans to have access to nature



and to the solitude, contemplation and health. What better place for generations of humans and wildlife to come to enjoy this playground. What better way of providing green space to help save our environment. Vermont Housing and Conservation could have used that money to build yet another apartment complex or affordable housing project. But where people on limited income have the ability to wander over 750 acres of beautiful forest, if we do not give money to save significant projects in Vermont?

I will be the first to tell you that it is our landscape and our rural nature which attracts people to live in Vermont. We may be a small state, but we are a state of people that care about not only our neighbors but our land too. I urge you to continue to fund Vermont Housing and Conservation because this is a future that we as Vermonters can be proud of ourselves. We understand our very survival is about our forest and parks as much as it is about shelter. Without habitat for wildlife, plant and tree species our planet does not survive. By preserving Brownsville Forest and projects throughout the state, we provided shelter for all of us. Without your funding we all lose our most valuable resources, our commitment to do our part in for global warming, and most of all we endanger the economy of Vermont by taking away one of the major factors in why people move or stay in Vermont. Brownsville Forest is now preserved and will provide a place of shelter for all species. Thinking of the over used quote of Robert Frost's poem "Two Roads Converged" I cannot think of a better way of leaving you

today with the last verse. Think on this as you decide what is really important to Vermont and to us as individuals.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

That is what we are able to do at the Brownsville Forest, take the road less traveled and it has made all the difference.

Thank you.

