



# Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee

January 25, 2019



# Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

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“.....matters relating to the conservation, development and planning of the state's natural resources, including water quality, geology, forestry, parks and recreation and fish and wildlife; community and regional planning and development; and the conservation and planning of sources of energy.”

Permanent Rules of the Vermont Senate

# Vermont Housing & Conservation Board



“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 ..... in order to improve the quality of life for Vermonters and to maintain for the benefit of future generations the essential characteristics of the Vermont countryside.

10 V.S.A.15 §302

# Water Quality Improved and Protected



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





# 30 Years of Housing & Conservation

**Since 1987, VHCB funding has helped protect, conserve and create:**

- 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

# Conservation of Natural & Recreational Areas

## 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 wildlife habitat, natural resource protection, sustainable forest management, water quality protection.

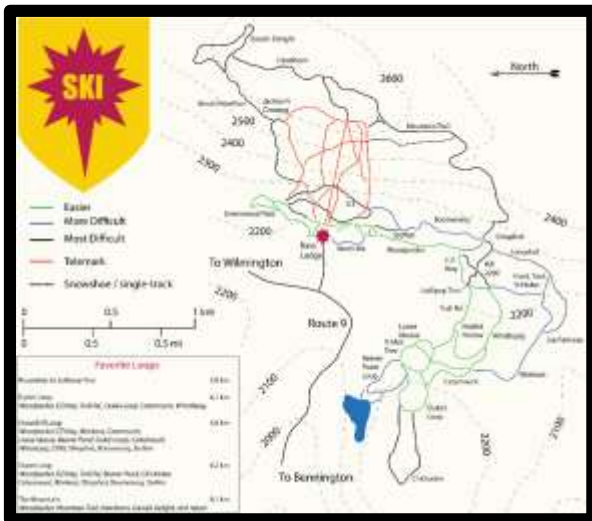


# Brookside Timber Harvesting Westminster



**“It was great to have the program tailored around my schedule and what my business needs. Being able to read financial statements is just as important as looking at a timber lot.”**

# Recreation Landscape to be Protected and Enhanced



Prospect Mountain Nordic  
Ski Area in Woodford



# Bluffside Bike Path Recreation Corridor in Newport

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

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



# Downtowns Revitalized

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





# Biomass in Affordable Housing

Converted school and convent in West Rutland  
One of 39 biomass heating systems installed in housing  
developments statewide providing heat and hot water to  
940 homes and using 1540 tons of wood pellets annually.



# Energy-Efficient Housing McKnight Lane, Waltham

Net-zero modular duplex buildings in a new affordable neighborhood of 14 homes on the site of an abandoned mobile home park.







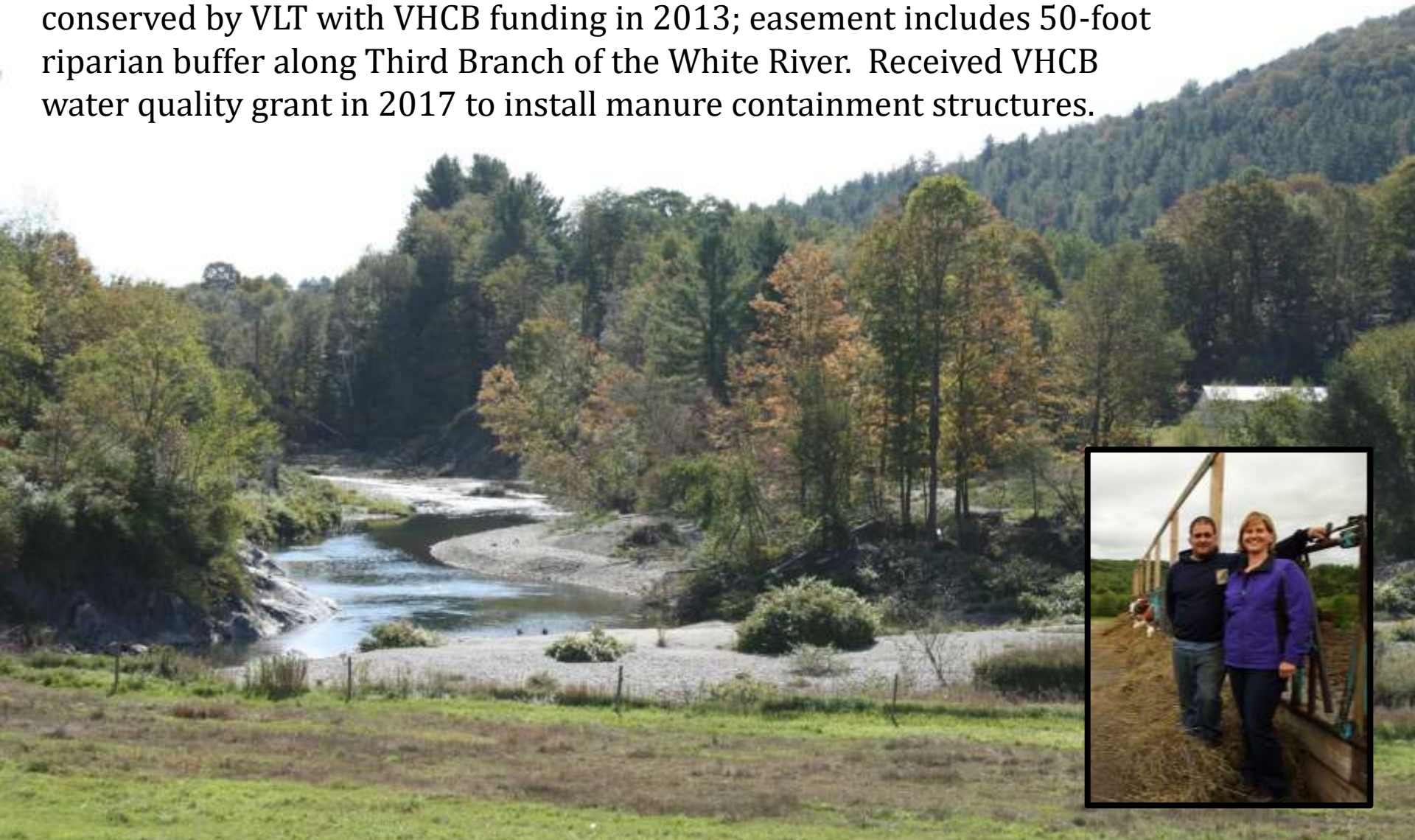
## **Choiniere Family Farm, Highgate Mississquoi Bay Watershed**

The Choinieres implemented numerous conservation practices, installing buffers along the river, cattle lanes and fencing, and keeping manure under cover using bedded pack barns. The farm now produces milk without feeding grain. The Choinieres are in the process of purchasing a neighboring conserved farm.



# Poulin & Daughters Family Farm, Randolph

**Justin and Angie Poulin 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.





## 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 will help them construct a new manure storage facility.

# REDI



Act 194 of 2017 directed VHCB to create a Rural Economic Development Initiative. Using \$75,000 for grant-writing services, the Viability Program helped 10 rural enterprises and small towns secure \$1.78 million in grants from federal, philanthropic and state sources.



Albany General Store



# Housing Revenue Bond Initiative

HRB has funded 20 projects with 459 homes in 15 different communities across 8 counties plus accessibility improvements and Habitat for Humanity homes statewide.



First 86 homes are completed and occupied, including these in Putney. Another 240 underway or to be under construction by the end of the year.

**Gus Seelig**  
Executive Director  
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Policy Director

