



Senate Committee on Institutions

February 19, 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

From top left, clockwise: Sunset Lake in Benson, kids at Tracy Woods, South Hero, O'Donnell Farm, Westfield, with a no-till tractor funded in part by the Viability Program



VHCB Results: FY 2019 and FY 2020

State Investment: \$31M

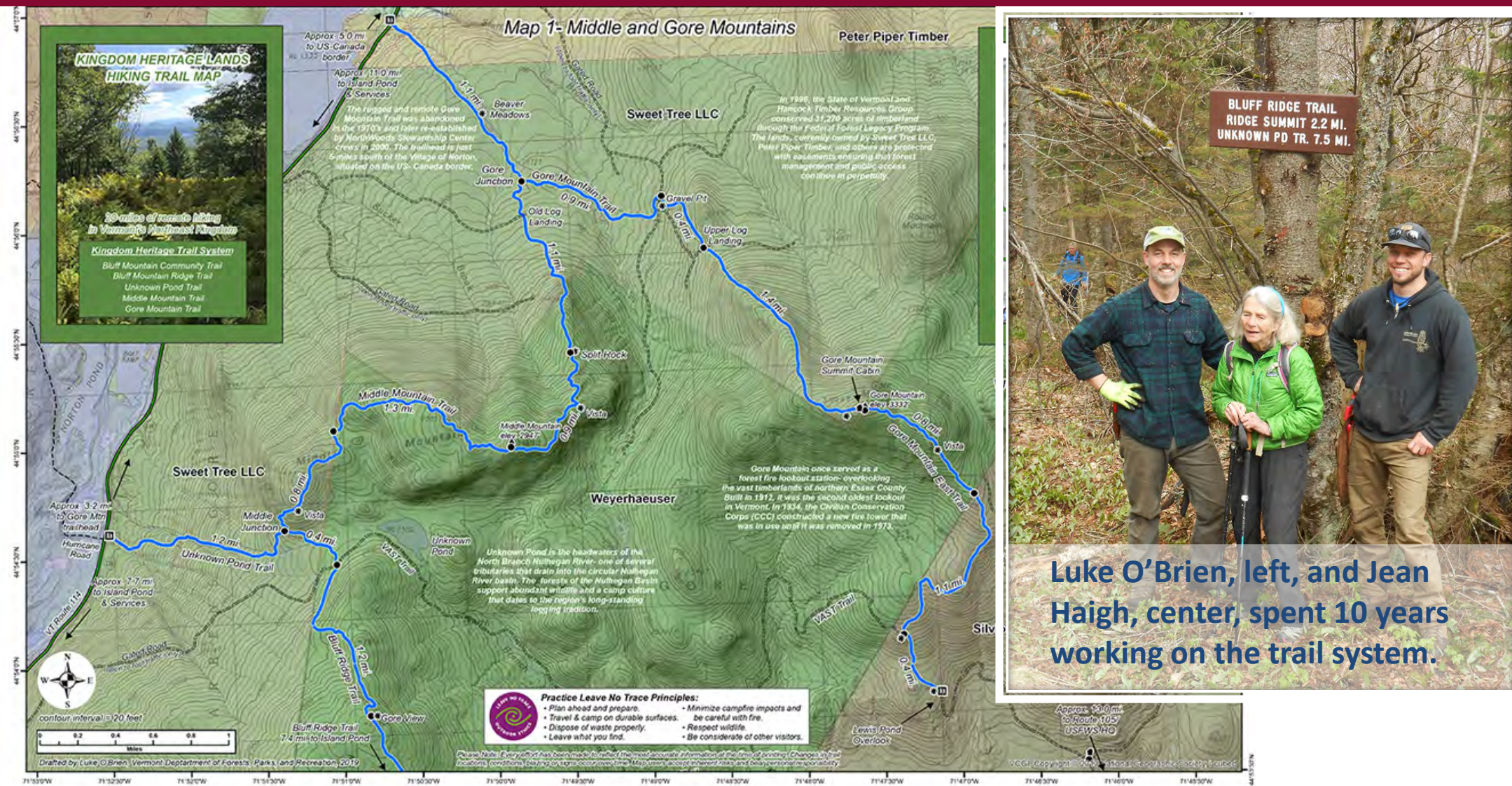
Leverage: \$162M

- 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

Investments that Last



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.

Investments that Last

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 a 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.





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



- VHCB has invested in 90 affordable homes in Hardwick and Lamoille County, creating new apartments, rebuilding following fires on Main Street, and rehabilitating dilapidated housing stock, improving energy efficiency and preserving affordability.
- VHCB funding for farmland conservation and Farm and Forest Viability business planning and grants has helped 35 farms and 4 conservation projects, creating jobs and leveraging millions from other sources

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.





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.



Homeownership

Capital Bill funds have helped Habitat for Humanity create affordable first homes like these in Rutland and East Montpelier.



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.

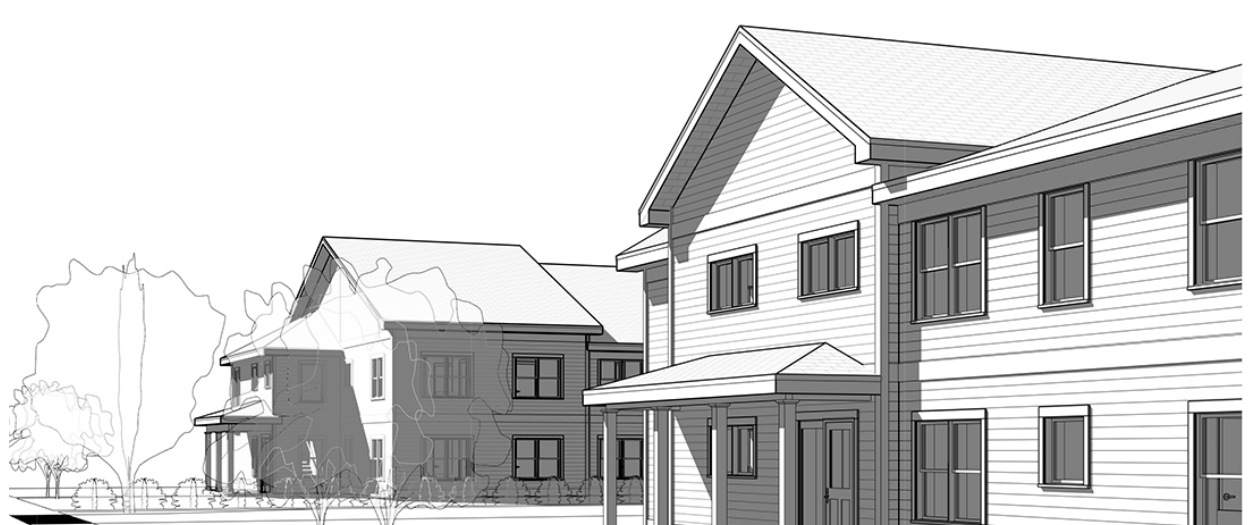
Rehab included thermal shell insulation, new windows, siding, flooring, cabinets, counters, plumbing fixtures, interior lighting fixtures, accessibility improvements, and advanced cold climate heat pumps for heating and hot water, resulting in a **65% energy savings**.





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.



More Homes on the Way

- On Cambrian Way in Burlington, Cathedral Square is building 70 new homes for seniors to be completed in 2020 - \$2.3M in HRB funding; \$1.18M NHTF
- Rural Edge and Housing Vermont will develop 20 apartments in Lyndon. Two new, reconfigured, energy efficient buildings will replace substandard buildings and six apartments will be added, along with a community room and an outdoor common area with playground - \$420K HRB; \$495K HOME
- In Colchester's new town center, the Champlain Housing Trust will develop 36 new apartments serving households with incomes from 50-120% of median income. - \$1.7M HRB; \$500,000 HOME

Downtowns Revitalized



New and rehabilitated housing in St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, Bennington, and Brattleboro, 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 former motel now serving homeless households.
- In Brattleboro, Groundworks Collaborative will use HRB funds to develop a combined drop-in center and warming shelter with up to 34 seasonal beds for homeless persons with on-site support services and case management.
- 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.



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.



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

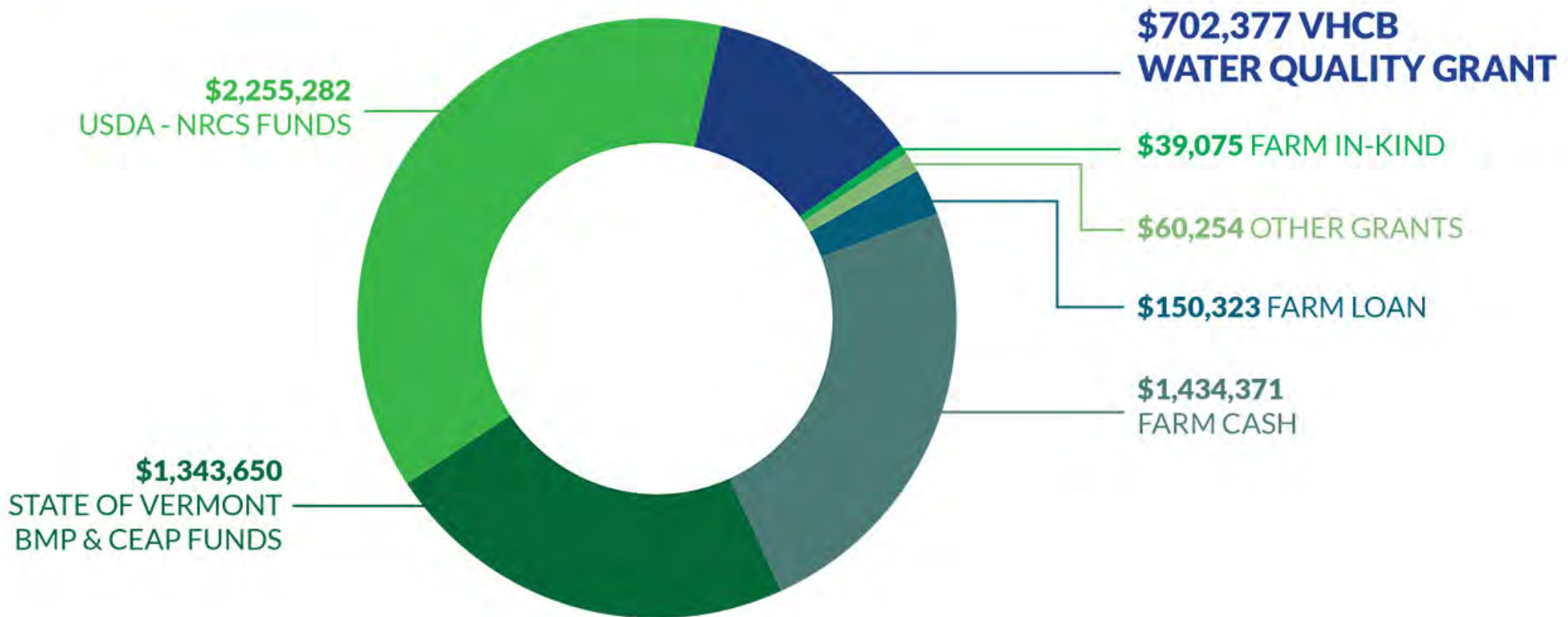
VHCB funding assisted with protection of 2,875 acres for addition to the Bird Mountain State WMA, a remote and rugged area in Ira and Poultney that comprises one of the largest unbroken forestland tracts in the northern Taconic Mountains.

There are many more opportunities to protect important 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



Water Quality Grants to Farmers



James Jones and his daughter Nicole operate this 4th generation dairy farm in Craftsbury. A \$39,500 Water Quality Grant from VHCB helped them upgrade the manure storage for their heifer barn. Now they can store manure until conditions are optimal for spreading, reducing runoff and improving soil health, animal management, and farm efficiency.

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.





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.
- Recent grants awarded for projects in Bridgewater, Newport, Poultney, Kirby, Northeast Kingdom, and Readsboro

More to be Done

- Governor Scott's Vermont Climate Action Commission called for increased investment in land conservation through VHCB.
- 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 to Vermont agriculture “threaten VT’s economy, community and culture.” [*A 2018 Exploration of the Future of Vermont Agriculture*](#), UVM, VHCB

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

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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

FY20 Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

VHCB Sections – Governor’s Proposal

Section 10 Clean Water

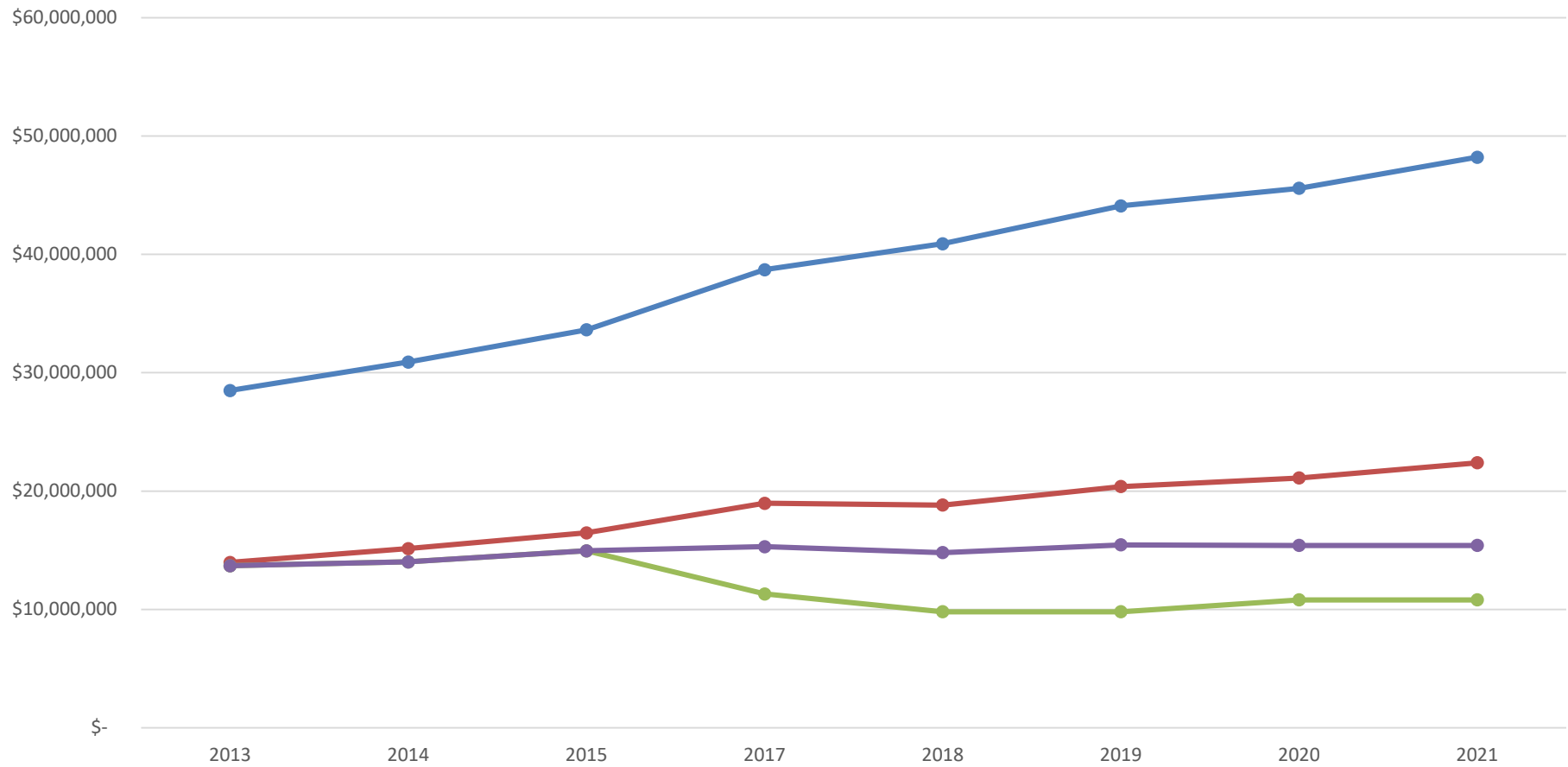
Agricultural Water Quality Projects: Water quality farm improvement grants and farm retirement projects – \$1.1 million

Land Conservation and Water Quality Projects – \$1.7 million

Section 18 Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Housing – \$1.8 million

VHCB Appropriations 2013-2021



NOTES

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

FY18-20 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



Gus Seelig
Executive Director

