

# VERMONT HOUSING & CONSERVATION BOARD

**House Committee on Corrections & Institutions**  
**February 20, 2024**

Presented by  
Gus Seelig  
Executive Director



Winooski River Apartments, Montpelier



Lily Pond Highlands, Athens



Prospect Mountain, Woodford



Putnam Block, Bennington



Morgan Street Wetlands, Bennington



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



Bellows Falls Garage  
Rockingham



A&M Rainville  
Franklin

# FY23/24 Impact



**\$69.6 million state investment**  
**\$373 million leveraged**



**1,361** permanently affordable homes  
(rental & homeownership)



**4,426 acres farmland conserved**  
across 25 farms



**3,451 acres conserved**  
natural areas, forestland & recreational lands



**4 historic preservation projects**



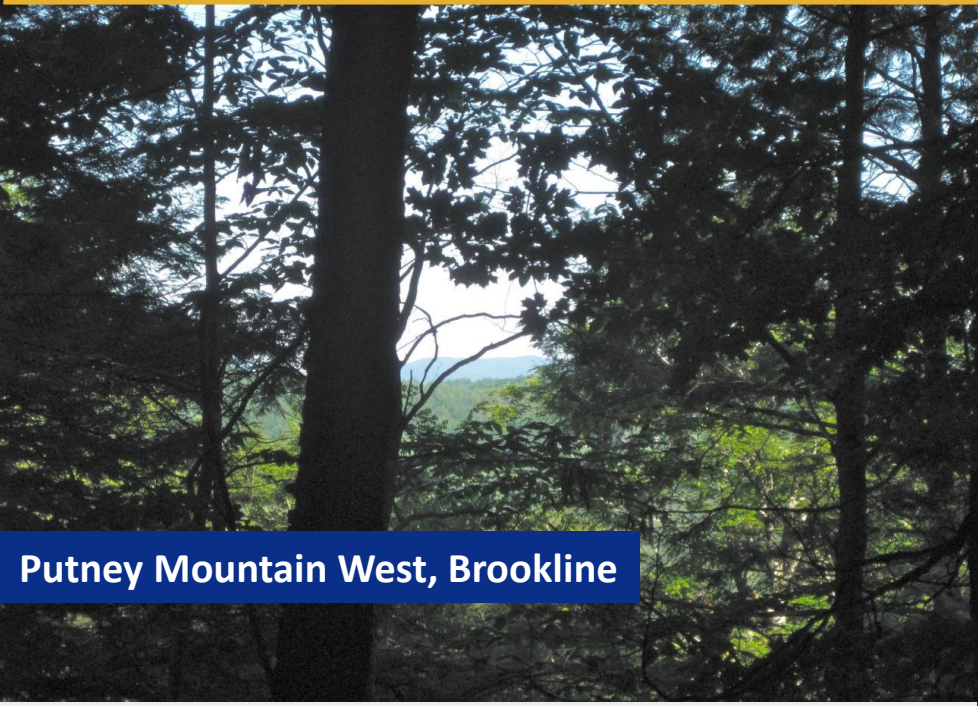
**95 working lands businesses served**

# Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

VHCB Sections FY25 Proposed



Farm on the River, Springfield



Putney Mountain West, Brookline

**Section 16 Vermont Housing & Conservation Board**  
Housing and Conservation Projects: \$1.8 M

**Clean Water Fund: \$2.8M**

Agricultural water quality projects: \$800,000

Land Conservation and WQ Projects \$2M

*(Traditionally included under Section 10 Clean Water)*



Woodland Station Housing, Bennington



Pearl Street, Montpelier

## Capital Bond Funding for Housing

- Supplements other state and federal funding for new and rehabilitated affordable housing serving low-income households.
- Provides critical funding for construction.

# Housing Production since 2020

*Over 3,900 households served*



Village Center Apartments, Morrisville



North Pleasant Street, Bradford

- **Rental Housing:** 1,979 homes created and preserved
- **Homeownership:** 238 families became homeowners
- **Manufactured Home Communities:** Infill homes and improved infrastructure in 6 MHCs serving 839 homes.
- **Shelter:** 489 new and improved beds
- **Farmworker housing:** 110 farmworkers
- **Accessible housing:** Accessibility improvements for 224 disabled Vermonters
- **Recovery Housing:** 4 projects with 58 beds
- **Lead mitigation:** 60 homes with reduced lead levels

# Housing Programs

- Multi-Family Rental Housing
- Homeownership
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Shelter Improvement and Expansion
- Manufactured Home Communities
- Home Accessibility Improvements
- Community Planning & Technical Assistance
- Farmworker Housing
- Recovery Residences

**15,000 homes across Vermont**



**Taylor Street Apartments, Montpelier**



**TNC and Bennington Habitat Home, Pownal**



**McKnight Lane, Waltham**

# Permanent Affordability

Northgate Apartments in Burlington, 336 homes 100% owned and controlled by the Northgate Residents Ownership Corporation.



## Bove Brothers Plan to Evict Low-Income Refugee Families in Winooski – and Raise Rents

By [DEREK BROUWER](#) and [LIAM ELDER-CONNORS \(VPR\)](#)



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# Smart Growth & Revitalizing Downtowns



New Avenue, St. Johnsbury



Bennington High School, Bennington



Stimson & Graves, Waterbury

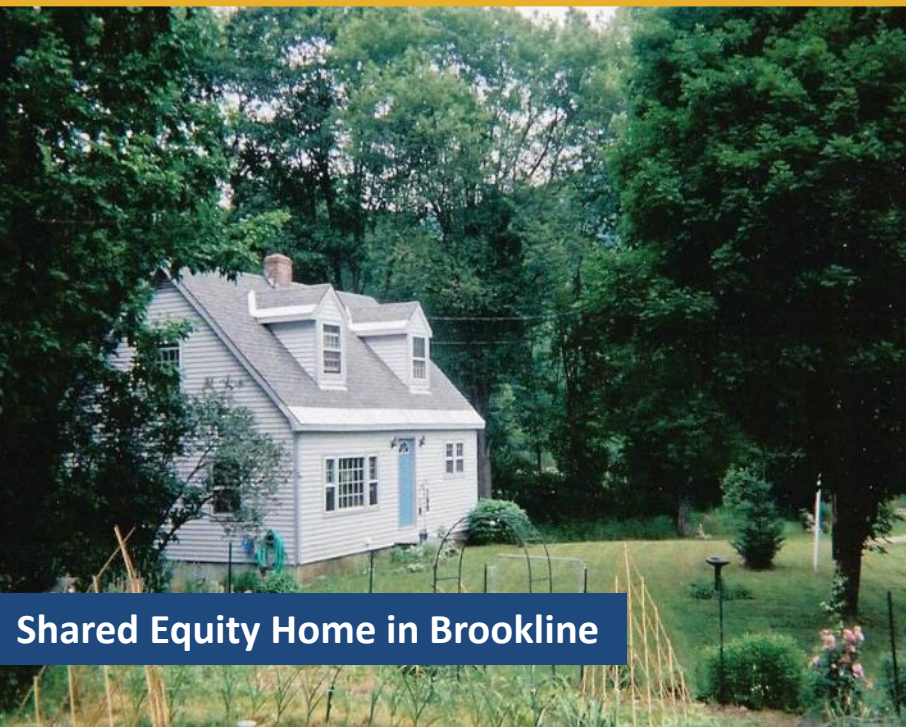


French Block, Montpelier

# Homeownership



Shared Equity Homeowner  
Kelly DeFelice, Barre City



Shared Equity Home in Brookline

- 238 new shared equity homeowners since 2020
- The Shared Equity model provides an affordable path to homeownership
- Homes created in partnership with Vermont's affordable housing developers and Habitat chapters
- The subsidy is recycled through generations
- From 2021 to 2023 the share of renters financially able to buy a median home dropped from 32% to 6%

# Partnerships with Services Permanent Supportive Housing



**Lincoln Place  
Rutland**



**COTS Family Housing  
Burlington**

# Investing in Shelter

SINCE 2020  
**+ \$25.6 million**  
committed to fund:

**489**   
shelter beds  
**190 new** 



**New Story Center  
Rutland**



**Moose River  
St. Johnsbury**



**The Welcome Center  
Berlin**

# Farmworker Housing & Accessibility

## Farmworker Housing



## Farmworker Housing Repair Loan Program

A Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) loan fund program to finance the repair, improvement, and replacement of farmworker housing. UVM Extension Service and RuralEdge are acting as partners with CHT in helping with outreach to farmers about the program.

- **Improved housing for 139 farmworkers on 37 farms**



## VCIL Accessible Housing

VHCB and AHS funds are awarded to Vermont Center for Independent Living for accessible modifications, including wheelchair ramps and bathroom modifications that allow individuals to live independently and stay in their homes.

- **224 households served since 2020**

# Recovery Housing

- 4 projects
- 58 beds
- Close partnerships between recovery service providers and housing providers



Squire House, Bennington

# Capital Bill Funding for Land Conservation



Berlin Pond



Quarry Hill, Pownal

Working with a statewide network of partners, VHCB funds the conservation of agricultural land, natural areas, forestland, recreational land, and the preservation and restoration of historic properties. These investments strengthen our rural economy, protect wildlife habitat, provide public access to forestland, trails and water, and restore our historic community buildings, creating jobs and bringing visitors to Vermont.

# Conservation Programs



Mount Ascutney



Camp Sunrise

- Recreational Lands, Forests, and Natural Areas Conservation
- Historic Preservation
- Water Quality
- Farmland Access
- Farm & Forest Viability Program
- Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
- VHCB AmeriCorps





# Farmland Conservation



North Hardwick Farm

# Farm Transfers



The Farm Upstream, Jericho



North Hero



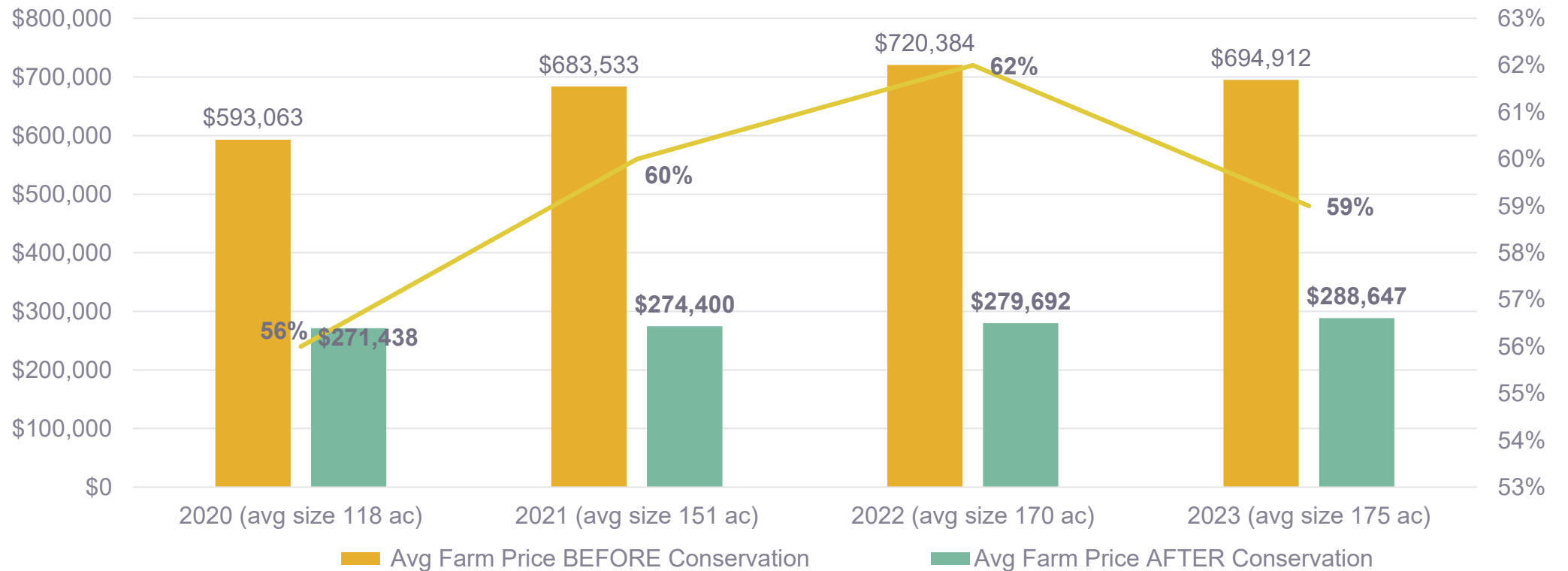
Wild Earth Farm, Randolph



Head over Fields Farm, Charlotte

# Price of Conserved Land

VHCB Funded Farms - 2020 to 2023





# NRCS ACEP ALE & Future Funds

ACEP-ALE is a critical source of match funds to State dollars: ~\$3 - \$4M annually

Inflation Reduction Act will bring more opportunities (on top of ACEP-ALE):  
~\$6M in 2025  
~7M in 2026



Defreest Farm  
Waitsfield

# Floodplain restoration: Whetstone Brook Brattleboro



# Flood Resilience



Northfield

# Flood Resilience



Melrose Terrace



Red Clover Commons



Barre

# Clean Water Initiative

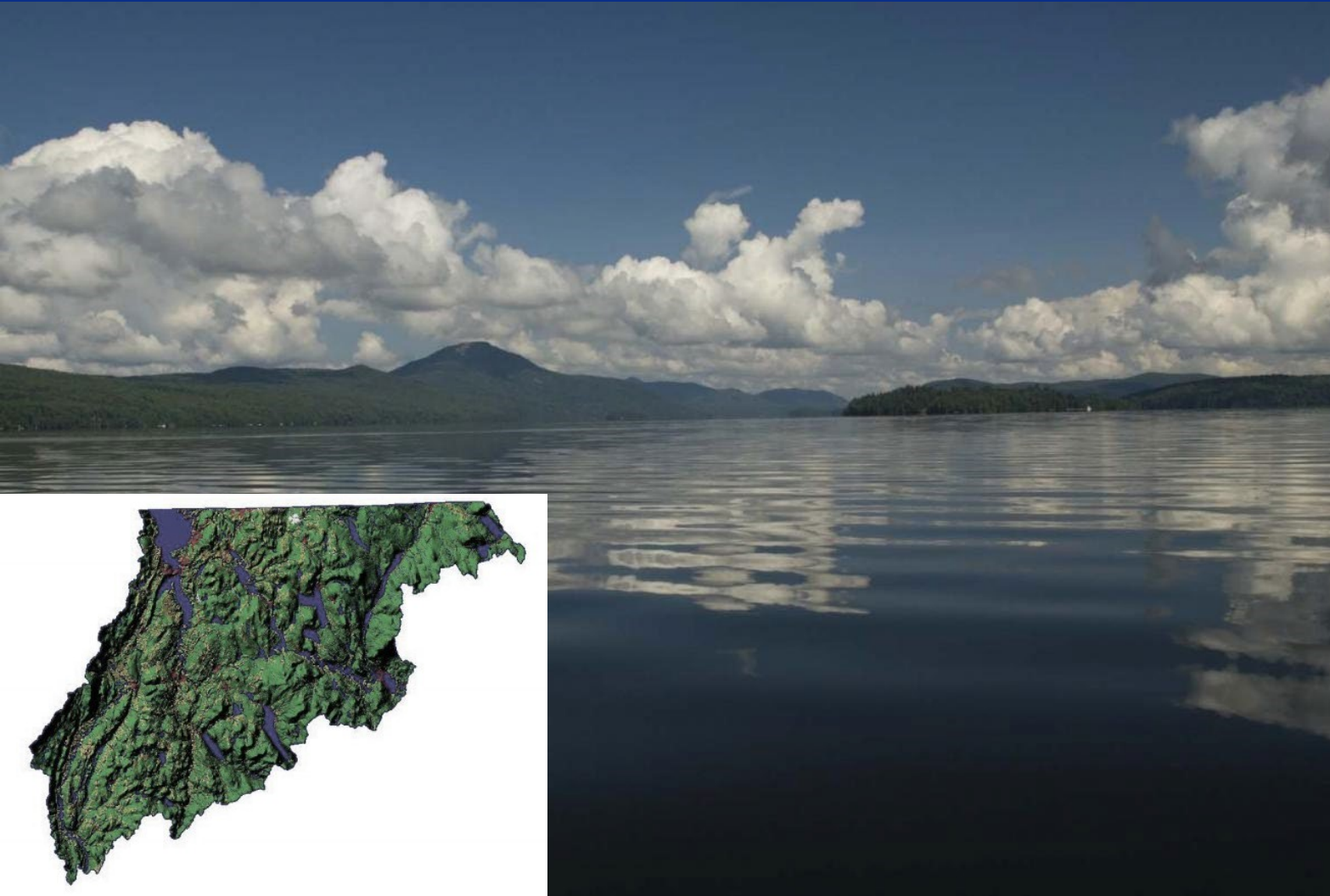
## Land Conservation and Water Quality



### Farmland Retirement Tanguay, Brunswick

- Former dairy by the Maidstone Bends of the upper Connecticut River
- 183 acres of floodplain
- 15 acres of wetlands
- The Nature Conservancy will restore floodplain forest habitat and wetlands along the river, and some of the upland fields will remain in agricultural production.

# Clean Water Service Provider for the Lake Memphremagog District



VHCB is serving as CWSP for the district, collaborating with partners to protect and improve water quality in the 687-square mile basin which straddles the Canadian border



# Farm & Forest Business Planning



Hannah Pearce, Hillside Farm, East Albany

## 2023 Numbers:

- 220 total working lands businesses supported
- 95 enrolled for in-depth, long-term planning
- These 95 businesses sustain over 300 jobs and generate over \$36 million in sales
- 100% improved ability to understand financials

**“It’s been so reassuring. It’s easy to feel isolated, but they’ve helped me find a path forward and motivated me to keep going.”**

**~Hannah Pearce**

# Improvements to financial vitality in 2023



# Frost, Flood, and Climate Resilience

- We continue to see the impacts of 2023's frost, flooding, and wet weather
- Profitable farms have more ability to invest in proactive solutions
- Farmers want support integrating climate resilience into their business planning
- Business planning supports adaptation and innovation



**Kylie & Sam Rossier, Sunday Bell Farm,  
Danville**

# Water Quality Grants

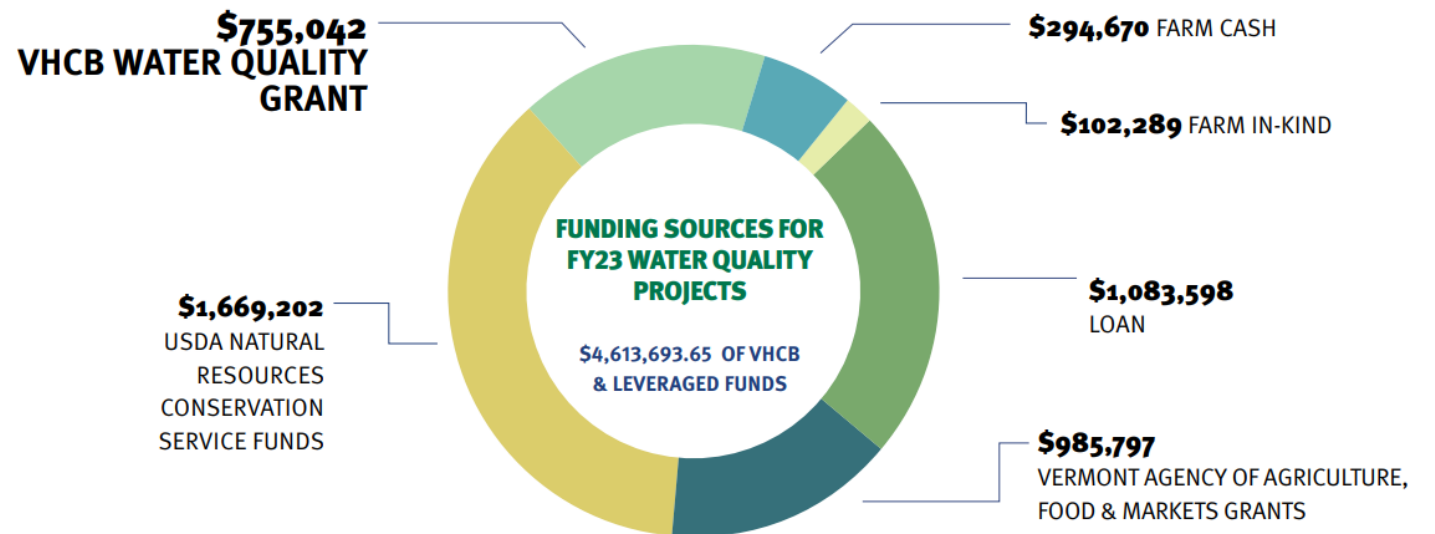


**Nate & Kerianne Severy, Severy Farm, Cornwall**

- 2023 grants to 22 farmers will boost soil health, reduce runoff, improve manure management, and reduce reliance on off-farm nutrients
- \$755K in Capital Bond funds through VHCB leveraged over \$4 million in 2023
- Over \$4 million awarded since 2017



**Peter Rainville, Four Girls Dairy, Fairfield**



# VHCB Water Quality Grants

*“I’m certainly glad we [enrolled in Farm Viability]. It took us from the unknown of our numbers to knowing exactly what our numbers are—what it costs us to make a pound of pork or grow a pound of beef. All the production costs, we were kind of shooting in the dark on before, and now we have hard numbers to back up our thoughts. We’d still be floundering around—guessing—if we hadn’t done the Farm Viability Program.”*

*– Ben Notterman*



*Ben, Nancy & Helm Notterman, Snug Valley Farm, Hardwick  
(\$40,000 Water Quality Grant for winter bedded pack  
hog housing)*

# VHCB Water Quality Grants

*“We’re so happy we did this project. The new enclosure captures any runoff we would have had, and the cows are so fragile when they are little, so it helps them stay warm and dry. It’s just worked out on so many levels – water quality, cow health, and engaging with the community. These assistance programs are a huge help for farmers trying to stay viable.”*

*—Chelsea*

*Sprague*



**Chelsea & Keith Sprague, Sprague Ranch, Brookfield  
(\$40,000 for calf housing roofing)**

# VHCB Water Quality Grants



*Michael & Denna Benjamin, Riverview Dairy, Franklin*

# Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

**\$800,000** ➔ **\$18,822,078**

REDI FUNDS SINCE 2017

GRANTS TO COMMUNITIES

(LEVERAGED 22:1; \$276,795 AWARD AVG.)



**Agricola Meats, Panton**



**Vermont Livestock & Slaughter, Ferrisburgh**





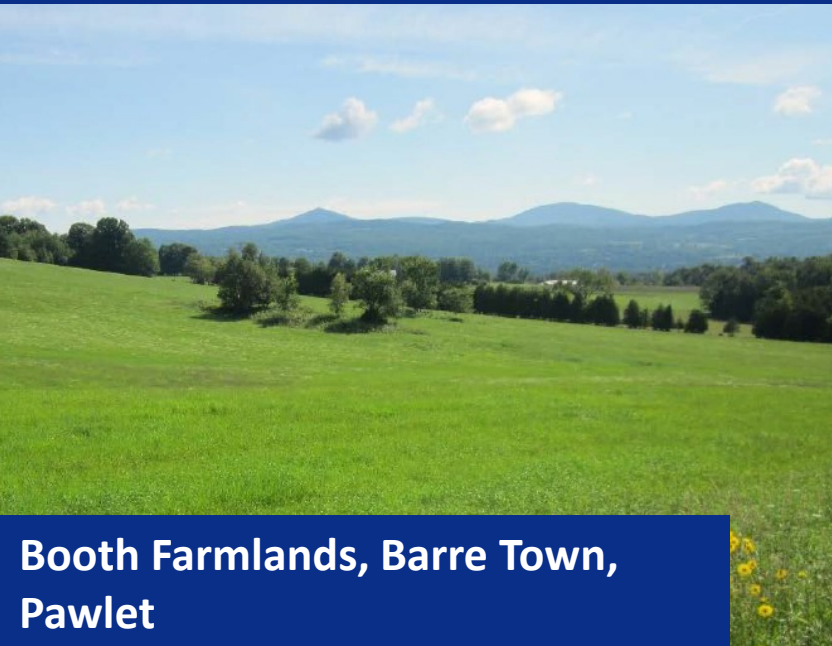
# East Calais General Store



# 18-month Pipeline

## Housing, Conservation & Historic Preservation

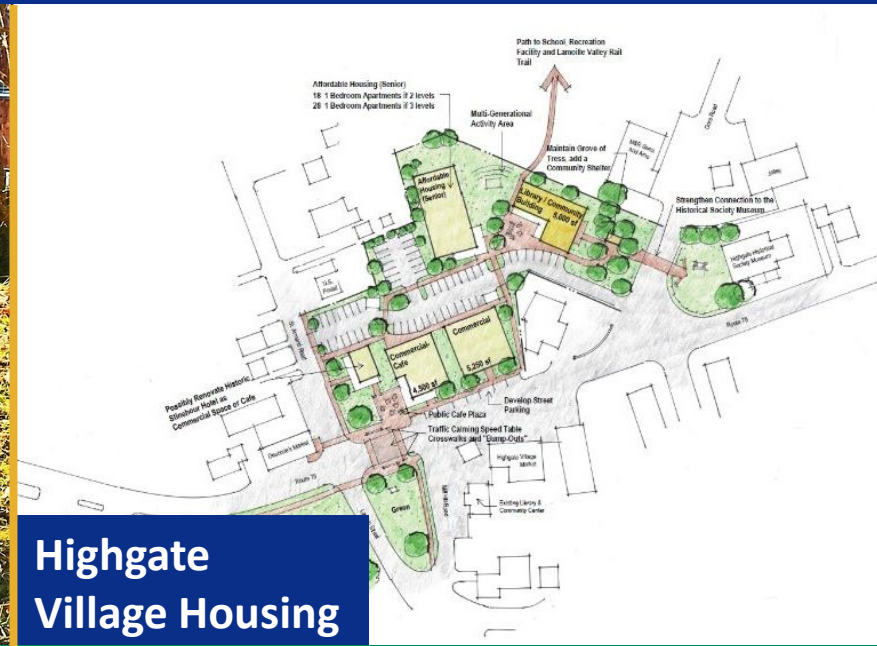
- Over 200 million to house over 940 households through rental units, shared equity homes, shelter beds and farmworker housing improvements
- Agricultural and natural resources projects in the near term exceeds \$50 million in requests to conserve approximately:
  - 85 farms
  - 43,204 acres of natural areas and outdoor recreation sites
  - 24 historic buildings.



**Booth Farmlands, Barre Town, Pawlet**



**Clemmons Family Farm  
Charlotte**



**Highgate  
Village Housing**

# THANK YOU

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