

Trust for Public Land

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Vermont Conservation Director



Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

We are
**CONNECTING
EVERYONE TO
THE OUTDOORS.**

Our mission **is to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.**

Access to the outdoors is **a fundamental human need and essential to our health and well-being.**

Communities that place a high value on outdoor access for all are **healthier, more resilient and more equitable.**



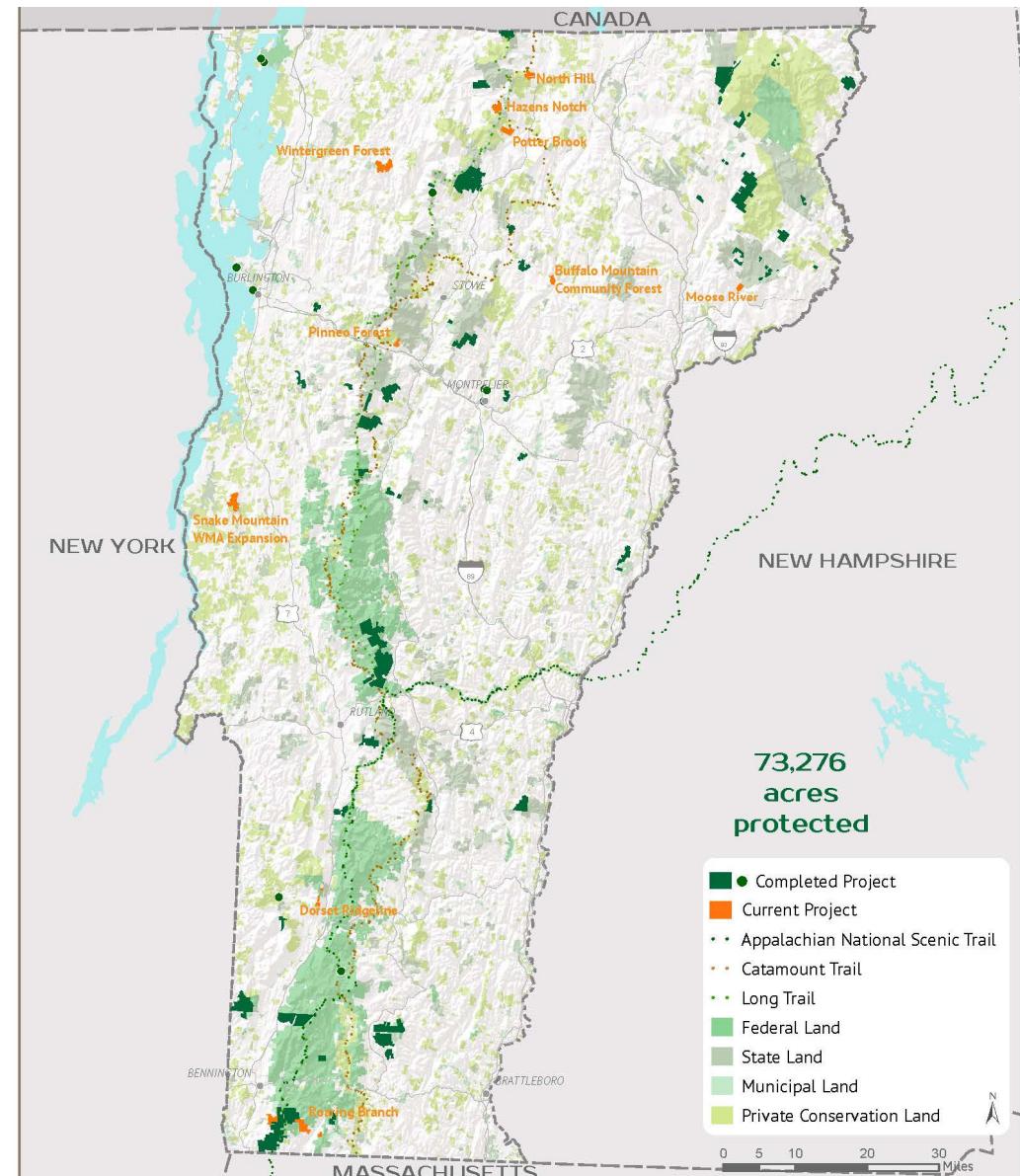
In Vermont, we have

Protected or made possible 220 miles of trails and more than 73,000 acres of publicly accessible lands

- ✓ 10 miles - Long Trail
- ✓ 9 miles – Catamount Trail
- ✓ 80 miles – VAST trails
- ✓ 142 miles – Community trails
- ✓ 3 miles of Velomont Trail and forthcoming South Pond Backcountry Hut

Force behind some iconic protected lands:

- ✓ Burlington Waterfront
- ✓ Barre Town Forest @ Millstone Trails
- ✓ Blueberry Lake addition to GMNF
- ✓ Ascutney Mountain
- ✓ Catamount Community Forest
- ✓ Rolston Rest addition to GMNF

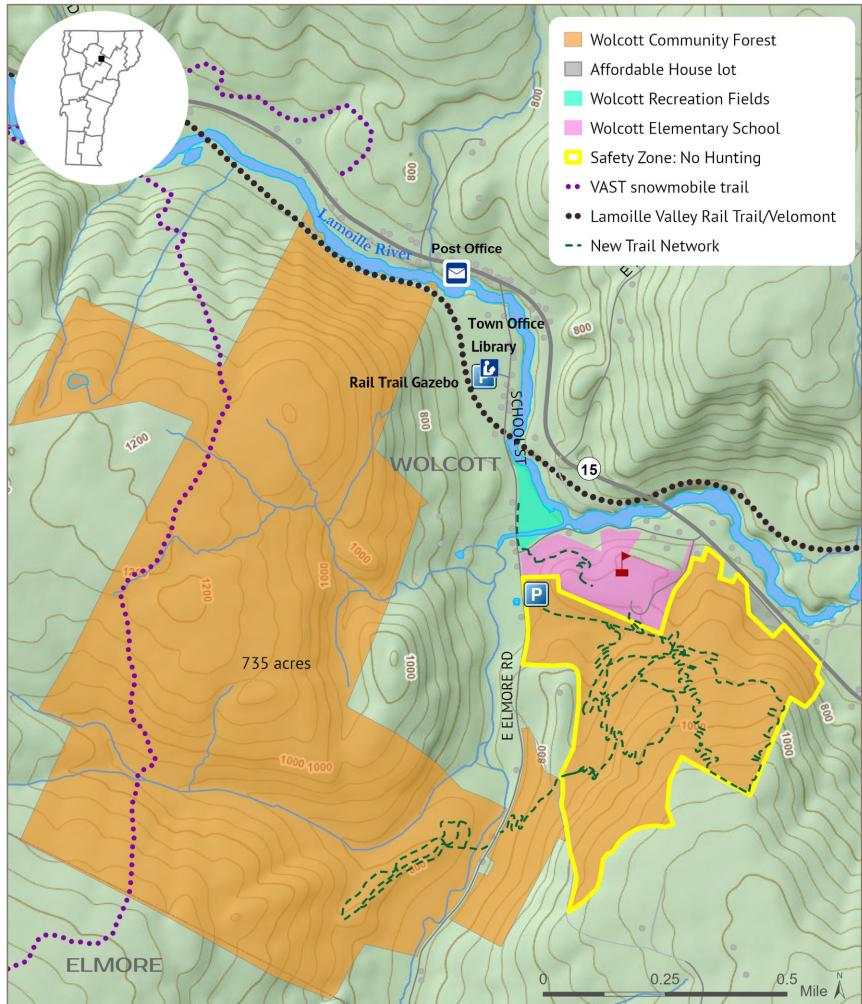




In Vermont:

- Vermont **loses 10-12,000 acres** of intact forestland a year – the basis of both ecological health, climate resiliency and canvas of outdoor recreation.
- **63%** of Vermont's conserved land provides public access, compared with 87% in NH and Maine.
- **More than 1 out of every 5** Vermonters, including 31,000 kids, lack close to home access to the outdoors*
- **43%** of Vermont's K-12 schools lack walkable off campus park or open space
 - *But if you are low income or live in a community that suffers from poor mental health, you are roughly 1.5x less likely to have walkable park and open space access near local schools.*

* further than a 10-minute drive to permanently protected park or open space of 1 acre or more



Wolcott Community Forest

Wolcott, VT

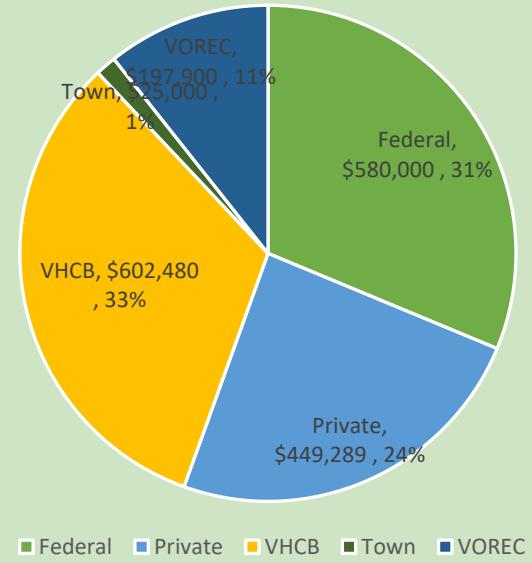
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Wolcott Community Forest

- Desire for new close-to-home recreation opportunities was one of the drivers for the creation of Wolcott Community Forest
- Conservation, Recreation, Affordable Housing and Workforce Development all in one project





- Secured \$198k in State recreation funding (FY22 VOREC)
- Public trail planning process in 2022/2023
 - ✓ 5 miles of trail
 - ✓ 8-10 car parking lot
 - ✓ Trailhead kiosks, wayfinding signs
 - ✓ Trail connection to Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, Elementary School, Village Center
- Construction of the trail network in 2024/2025 – built by local trail builder Sinuosity
- Ribbon cutting and grand opening celebration Sept. 2025

Community building through Community Forests

- Guided snowshoe outings
- New programming at Wolcott Elementary School: Wednesdays in the Woods: Art, Music & Science!
- Rescue training on trail network by Elmore, Hardwick and Wolcott Fire Departments
- Force main and pumpstation for new community wastewater system
- Pending donation of affordable house lot to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity



Takeaways....

- Conservation and outdoor recreation are deeply intertwined
- Outdoor rec assets – trails, hunting and wildlife areas, waterfronts - frequently drive conservation priorities, and can help us achieve Act 59's conservation goals
- Our landscape is rapidly transforming, with impacts to the availability and dependability of outdoor recreation opportunities
- Stable consistent funding for conservation (VHCB) **AND** recreation (VOREC) are needed to support the pillars of Vermont's economy and quality of life

Invest in Conservation, Recreation & Accessibility