

**SUMMARY OF THE TESTIMONY OF DAVID NEWELL- PRESIDENT OF THE PROSPECT MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION ON BEHALF OF VHCB  
VIA ZOOM- 02/13/26**

In 2018, the private owners of the Prospect Mountain Nordic Trail Center in Woodford, Vt. announced that they were interested in selling the facility and the business. They could have orchestrated a private sale to an individual or a snowmobile club, which potentially would have closed Prospect to public use.

Instead, they offered the sale to a small group of long time passholders who formed a 501C3- the Prospect Mountain Association. The price for 125 acres, five buildings and their contents, two snowmobiles, two ATVs, and a grooming machine was \$900,000.

We thought we could raise \$650,000 to \$700,000 with a capital campaign. Donald Campbell from the Vermont Land Trust suggested we consider submitting a grant application to the VHCB. With his help we submitted the application and were extremely pleased to learn that VHCB had awarded us \$265,000.

The main premise of the grant application was the conservation of our 125 acres for recreational uses. We also have a Vermont Land Trust preservation easement on the acreage.

The VHCB grant jump started our capital campaign and greatly assisted us in securing additional donations. Our campaign, including the VHCB grant, raised \$1,040,000 enabling us to purchase Prospect and fund some much needed capital improvements. We also found the VHCB employees to be very professional and supportive of our efforts.

This winter marks our 9<sup>th</sup> season of owning and operating Prospect. We are an important driver of the local economy in southwestern Vermont by virtue of our 380 seasons pass holders and 27,000 skier days during our 2025-26 season. We provide 30K of groomed Nordic trails for local high school teams and the Bill Koch Youth Ski League. This year we hosted the Massachusetts State Cross Country Ski Championships and the cross-country portion of the Williams College Winter Carnival. These two events alone bring hundreds of competitors and spectators to our area providing a significant boost to our hospitality industry at a normally slow time of year. Last season we hosted the New England Under 16 Championships- involving 250 skiers- and we have been selected to host the Bill Koch Youth Ski Festival in 2027 which will involve 600 skiers.

As you can see, the \$265,000 investment by the VHCB to Prospect has generated very positive returns.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the VHCB which enabled us to purchase Prospect and operate it successfully for the past 8 years. I am sure the other two presenters at this meeting can relate similar stories.

I would strongly encourage both the House and Senate to fully fund the VHCB budget request of \$37.6M.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Newell

