

Vermont Land Trust

YEAR IN REVIEW

2019–2020





Dear members and friends,

2020 has been a year of dramatic change. All of us have been affected by this year's events—either directly or indirectly—and like you, we have wrestled at times with how to move forward when the external forces feel so overpowering.

We feel immense gratitude for what we have here in Vermont—for the open spaces that ground us, food that nourishes us, and nature that inspires the child inside of us. We are equally grateful for the Vermont Land Trust community, including all of you who share in the belief that when we work for the common good of land and people, both thrive.

Last spring, as the severity of the global pandemic became known, we acted quickly. Distribution channels and markets for farm products were upended, resulting in financial losses for many farmers. In a matter of weeks, we raised \$138,000 to support 70+ conserved farms affected by the crisis—helping them adapt to changing conditions or diversify.

We also grew more food on the land we own. We joined with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps and ShiftMeals, a program that gives healthy food to people affected by COVID-19, to grow vegetables at Bluffside Farm, and we helped farmers at Brewster Uplands in Jeffersonville and Pine Island Farm in Colchester increase their food production for Vermonters in need.

At the other end of the spectrum, we found new and delightful ways to connect with more people online. Thousands (many new to us) attended our online events to learn about ecology, history, recreation, and more. It was one way we could connect people to the land and help them stay grounded in uncertain times.

2020 has tested us. It has also shown what we're capable of when the call to do more is clear. Conserving land with essential agricultural, ecological, and community value will always be central to our mission. But we aren't stopping there.

Vermont's future relies on the healthy interdependence between people and land, working together to strengthen our common good. Won't you join us in forging this future?

Sincerely,

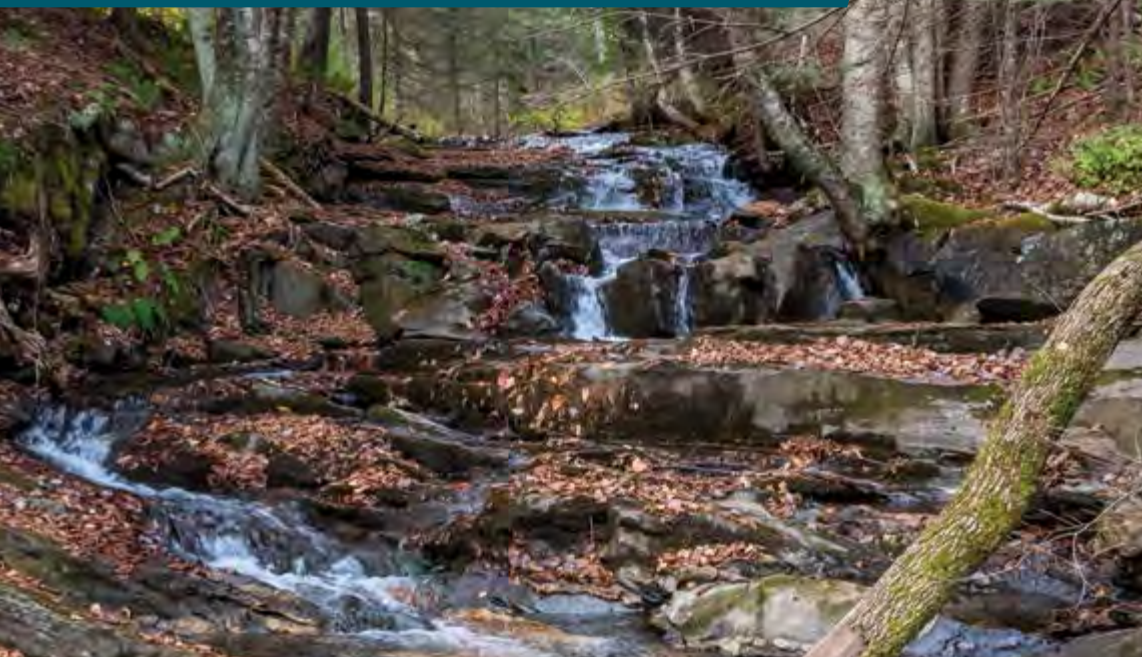
Nick Richardson
President & CEO

Marc Mihaly
Chair, Board of Trustees



OUR WORK THIS YEAR

7,300+ ACRES CONSERVED



CLIMATE & ECOLOGY

8,600+

ACRES ENROLLED
in new forest carbon program

CLEAN-WATER PROTECTION ALONG

41 miles

OF STREAMS AND RIVERS



2,800+

TREES PLANTED
along wetlands, rivers,
and streams

238

ACRES OF WETLANDS
CONSERVED

FARMS & FORESTS



2,500+
FARMLAND ACRES
PROTECTED

4,600+
ACRES OF
FORESTLAND
CONSERVED

20

FARM PARCELS
CONSERVED

2,268

FARM & FOREST
PARCELS
MONITORED
by stewardship
staff



COMMUNITY

\$138,000

WORTH OF COVID-19 GRANTS TO FARMS

160+

HOURS
VOLUNTEERED
at Pine Island
Community
Farm



55,000+
POUNDS OF FOOD
PACKED
for those in need

180+

FAMILIES BENEFITED
from community gardens



IMPACT BEYOND CONSERVATION

OUR PRIORITIES IN A TIME OF RAPID CHANGE

The Vermont Land Trust has spent much of our 43-year history on the leading edge of conservation.

We see opportunities to advance our mission and we take action. Being pioneers in the development of the conservation easement in the late '70s is one example; another is launching the Farmland Access Program over 10 years ago. Today we stand at a new point of inflection.

Vermonters want land conservation *and* land activation.

What does that mean? Conserving significant parcels of land will always be part of our mission. Now, so is creating a sense of wonder through our educational offerings; providing small grants to farmers on conserved land; opening up community gardens; and giving bow-hunters access to Bluffside Farm in Newport. In each instance, Vermonters (and Vermonters at heart) are joining us to derive meaning and value from conserved land. **Any person—whether they do or do not own land or support us financially—can have a place within VLT.**

In these pages, you will read about our efforts to deepen our impact beyond conservation.

You'll read about Bea and Jim Thomas who made a significant donation to our COVID-19 Farm Relief & Recovery Grants Program and one recipient, Full Plate Farm, that was able to purchase CSA management software to support their transition to online sales.

You'll also read about our efforts to advance natural climate solutions, which include restoring land, protecting the ecological integrity of wetlands, and conserving connected forestland—as we are doing with partners, including The Nature Conservancy and the Stowe Land Trust, in the Shutesville Hill area of Waterbury and Stowe.

One theme that ties much of this work together is our belief that everyone should have access to land and share in all that it provides. The story on Krista Scruggs, owner of Zafa Wines, and our work to support her ownership of farmland in Isle La Motte is an example.

The world looks different today than it did twelve months ago. What Vermonters need from us looks different as well.

Farmer Angus Baldwin packs food for those in need at VLT's Brewster Uplands property in Jeffersonville.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

NEW FUND HELPS ENTERPRISING VINTNER BUY FIRST FARM

Growing up, Krista Scruggs was a reluctant assistant on her grandfather's homestead in California. But a passion for wine eventually led her to embrace those early farm experiences.

Inspired by a harvest she worked in France, Krista moved to Vermont and started making natural wines and cider blends using local fruit, under the ZAFA Wines label.

When she was named one of *Wine Enthusiast's* 40 Under 40 Tastemakers, demand for ZAFA's products spiked. To keep up, Krista spent untold hours driving between dispersed vineyard plots and foraging wild apples. This year, she embarked on the path to ownership of a 56-acre farm on Isle La Motte where ZAFA can grow.

"I moved to Vermont to own land and be a winemaker," said Krista. "This is exactly what I wanted."

VLT bought the farm and is leasing it to Krista. The purchase was made possible by the Michael Colbert Farmland Fund, created by Michael's family to honor his legacy of farm conservation and to help farmers to access farmland.

This work is part of VLT's strategy to buy and hold farms in transition for 3 to 5 years, giving farmers more runway to build their businesses so they're financially stronger

when they buy the land. VLT has raised \$15 million to put 200 new farmers on the land over the next decade.

"We're unique in providing a secure and low-cost pathway to ownership for farmers, many of whom are unable to secure traditional financing due to limited access to capital," explained VLT's Maggie Donin.

ZAFA is now among the handful of Vermont farms operated by African-Americans, and Krista can look forward to ownership in the near future. "We believe everyone should have secure access to land," Maggie said.

Working with her seven-person team, Krista's already planted 2,000 vines in Isle La Motte. She plans to grow food, tap maples, raise livestock, and convert the farmhouse into a winery and tasting room. Like her unfiltered, unfettered wines, everything will come from the land or the neighboring community.

"People on the island understand the need for change... for farming to continue to work," she said. "They're inviting the next generation in, which is so cool. With the community here, the sky's the limit."



Working with her seven-person team, Krista's already planted 2,000 vines in Isle La Motte.



SPACE FOR WILDLIFE

PROTECTING THE SHUTESVILLE HILL WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

The woods around Waterbury and Stowe are welcoming a relatively new, and secretive, resident. With a striking swath of salt and pepper hair and a penchant for climbing trees, gray foxes are increasingly spotted on game cameras.

More common in lower latitudes, they're likely expanding their range as the climate changes.

Gray foxes are finding refuge in the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor, a roughly 10,000-acre patchwork of woodlands along the Waterbury-Stowe town line. The corridor is the only viable connection for animals, including wide-ranging animals like bear and bobcat that need a lot of territory, to move between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range.

Yet, with Route 100 running through it and proximity to ski areas, the corridor faces enormous development pressure. Much of the land is privately owned and unprotected. A narrow area along Route 100 is the only point that connects the large forest blocks, giving this wildlife crossing an outsized importance.

VLT is partnering with local and statewide groups, as well as the international Staying Connected Initiative, to safeguard the corridor.

"We are employing conservation science, land protection, land use planning, outreach and education, as well

as transportation improvements at the Route 100 wildlife crossing," said Jens Hawkins-Hilke, Conservation Planner with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

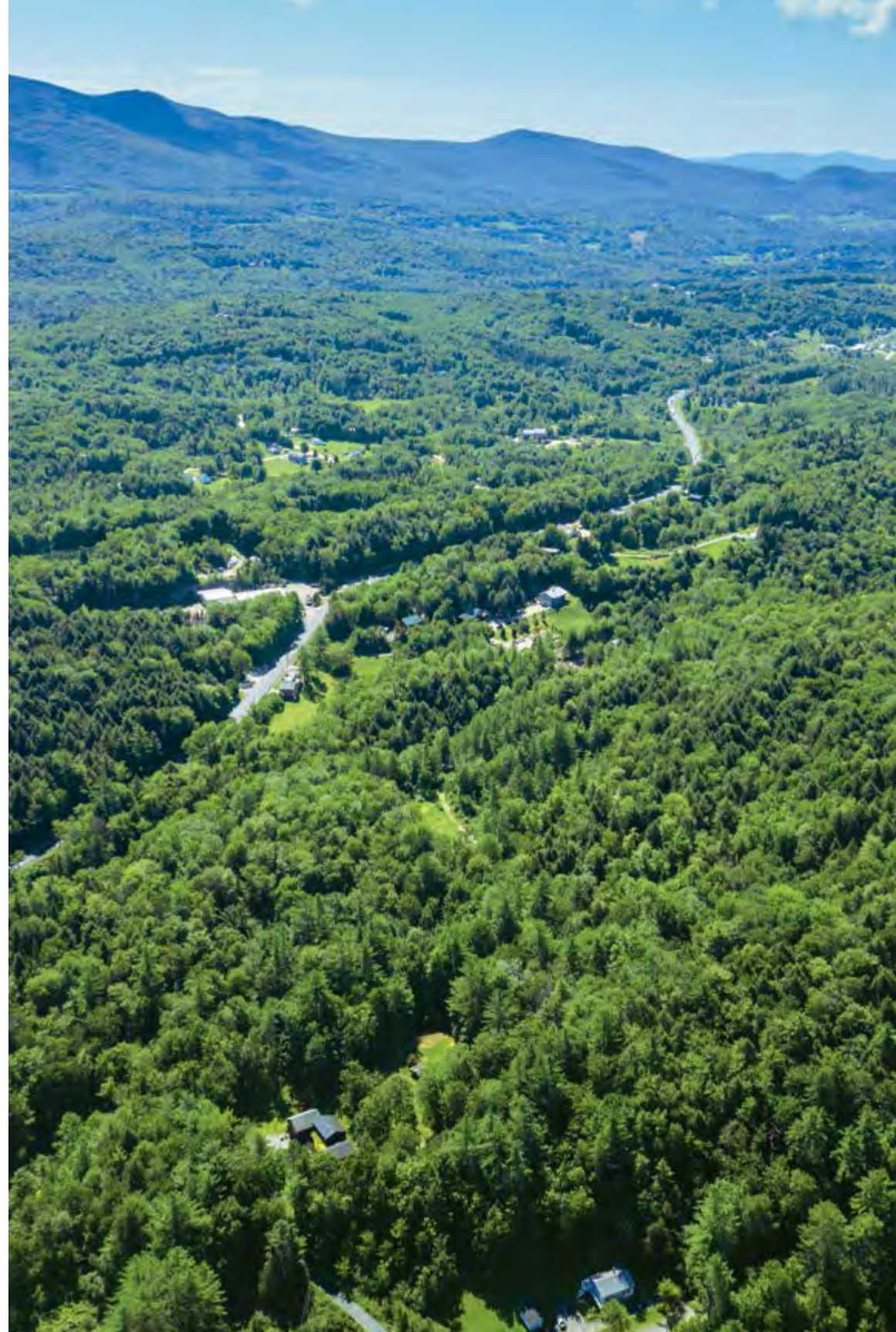
Landowners are crucial to success. "[They've] been really supportive of our efforts," said Allan Thompson, a forester, wildlife biologist, and chair of the Waterbury Conservation Commission. "They've hosted game cameras and field visits that are helping to educate the community and other landowners about the importance of this place."

In addition, landowners in Waterbury have protected more than 460 high-priority acres with VLT this year. "Conserving property in this wildlife corridor makes us feel more connected to our forestland—as if we're now managing it with more purpose for the future," said Waterbury resident Dale Smeltzer.

These protected lands will benefit the gray fox, which needs cover to travel and especially to cross roads, and all the other creatures that depend on these woods.

Visit vlt.org/shutesville to learn more and see a full list of partners.

Many animals, such as the gray fox, need to be able to move safely between the Green and Worcester mountains.



SERVING FARMERS IN A TIME OF CRISIS

DONORS RESPOND TO THE PANDEMIC

Jim Thomas grew up playing in his uncle's hay barn in Orwell. Decades later, rural Vermont is still a central part of his identity. He and his wife, Bea, come to Vermont each summer to reconnect with its natural beauty and way of life.

The schoolteachers have been supporting VLT for decades to help protect the working lands they hold dear. They were aghast when, earlier this year, the news showed a Vermont farmer pouring out 8,000 pounds of milk because of COVID-19's effect on dairy supply chains.

"It was just so horrifying to see farmers dealing with this situation," said Jim. "We knew we had to do something as big as we could."

Bea and Jim reached out to VLT. "Along with other donors, including the Lookout Foundation, Bea and Jim helped create our COVID-19 Farm Relief & Recovery Grants Program," said VLT's Maggie Donin.

The grants are for farmers in crisis who are adapting their operations, like the conserved Full Plate Farm in East Dummerston. Owners Laura Hecht and Matt Crowley say this year has been challenging.

"We had to adapt to this new way of living quickly," said Laura. "With so much uncertainty in the

world, we took control of what we could and made the choice to make our CSA program contact-free."

They pivoted from a "free choice" system to pre-ordered shares, but felt strongly that customers continue to choose their veggies. The grant helped them buy CSA management software to track individual orders and needs. Aided by the software, Laura and Matt saw 60 percent growth in their CSA membership this year.

"Our efforts to support Vermont's farmers and food systems depend on donors like Jim and Bea," added Maggie.

Looking ahead, farmers and donors alike share a hope that the heightened interest in local food will continue after the pandemic is over, and that these grants will help farmers make changes that have a positive lasting effect on their businesses.

"I was looking for an opportunity to have an impact," said Bea. "I'm grateful this program was able to give it to me."

Long-time members Bea and Jim Thomas gave generously so farmers could adapt their businesses during the pandemic.



HELPING NATIVE PLANTS THRIVE

TACKLING INVASIVES THE COMMUNITY WAY

If you spend time in Vermont, you've probably seen knotweed. This broad-leaved plant is ubiquitous, producing white blooms that made it popular at nurseries for years.

Unfortunately, it can also grow up to three inches a day and has taken over many riverbanks and roadsides.

Knotweed is one of the world's worst invasive species. Like all invasives, it outcompetes native plants for sun, water, and food. In Vermont, invasives threaten the state's sugaring, forestry, and recreation industries—and even our health.

"Invasives like barberry and honeysuckle can cover a forest floor, preventing native trees from regenerating, and providing cover and conditions that favor mice and the ticks they carry—ticks that carry Lyme and other tick-borne diseases," said Jennifer Garrett of VLT.

Outreach is critical, so that community members can learn about invasives and coordinate their efforts to control them.

"Invasive plants don't know the difference between boundary lines," said Sam Schneski, Windham County's Forester. "Involving and educating the community is the only way to truly have a positive impact."

Association (CISMA) in southeast Vermont, using land it owns in Brattleboro to demonstrate management approaches.

The team is experimenting with controlling knotweed using wire mesh that will (ideally) starve the plant's root system. Results won't be in for three to five years, but members are in this for the long haul.

"The biggest thing I have learned is how pervasive the challenge of invasive species can be when a site is allowed to develop naturally," said Cory Ross, of the Windham Conservation District. "The fields and the woods on this site all have robust populations of invasive plant species. It demonstrates how important it is that landowners be aware of invasives, how to identify them, and what to do to remove them safely."

Both Sam and Cory are members of the newly formed CISMA, which is holding online workshops this fall. The webinars will cover identification, mechanical removal, chemical removal, backyard and woodland invaders, and—yes—the dreaded knotweed.

By involving the community, VLT is increasing the odds that the state's native species will thrive for the benefit of all.

VLT is helping to establish a Cooperative Invasive Species Management

Members of a community group in the Brattleboro area are taking action to help native species thrive.



A FOREST FOR US ALL

A PASSIONATE BIRDER LEAVES A LEGACY

On a mid-summer morning Fred Pratt sat on his cabin's front porch, high on a Duxbury hillside, listening to birdsong from the surrounding forest. "There's a yellowthroat down there," he said. "And there's a catbird, and robins of course, and another warbler, maybe a chestnut-sided."

Later, Fred made notes, adding the birds he'd identified to records he's kept for a half-century. He and his late wife, Chris, bought these woods in 1970, added adjacent land over the years, and built the cabin as a summer retreat. They worked to improve habitat for birds and embraced sound forestry practices.

Today, his land backs up against the 20,000+ acre Camel's Hump State Park, and the peak of that iconic mountain can be seen, rising impressively to the north. Most of that land is conserved. Fred and Chris conserved their property with VLT in 2000.

But Fred's vision for the land goes beyond simply conserving it. He wants the land used for education, research, and careful recreation, including birding. "I don't want it to just sit here," he said. So last year, Fred donated the property outright—more than 450 acres—to VLT.

One immediate plan is to hold an annual memorial bird walk on his late wife's birthday, August 29. It is hoped the walk can be open to the public starting next year, once we're able to gather again.

Plans include forestry workshops, research on the invasive insect, emerald ash borer, a study on adapting the forest for climate change, work with other woodland owners and, of course, birding events.

"We see the property as a learning opportunity—a classroom and a laboratory," said VLT forester Caitlin Cusack. "I feel humbled to work with Fred on this land and a deep sense of responsibility to honor the intention that he and Chris brought to the property."

In coming years, the public will be able to share in that vision and intention at events on the land, including the extensive birding records that'll be on display at Fred's cabin.



The common yellowthroat is one of many birds visitors will learn about when they visit Duxbury land donated by Fred Pratt (left).



DEEP ROOTS

A FAMILY PROTECTS A FARM FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Driving north on Route 133 through Pawlet, you come around a bend and there it is: a beautiful white barn surrounded by fields that climb steadily west. The land has been in Diane Butler's family for generations.

Until recently, Diane and her husband, Seth, were raising four children on a small farm nearby. The three oldest children helped to raise the animals. "We could see that their interest in farming was real; it wasn't just a whim," says Diane. "They wanted to... do more, but our property would only allow for so much."

When Diane's grandmother passed away, the future of the larger family farm came into question. The land was left to five siblings; none were interested in farming. Motivated by their children's love of farming, Diane and Seth bought the farm and conserved it, thanks to funding from the Lookout Foundation and other private foundations.

"We hope we're going to be here a long time," explains Seth. "We hope that the farm will continue with our children, but even if it doesn't, it will continue as a farm and that's really important to us."

The significance of conserving the farm is not lost on the children.

"I spent a considerable amount of time here on the farm when I was younger," says their 15-year-old daughter, Lily. "The idea of living and working here was just a dream. I appreciate the beauty of the land, often running to get the camera to take pictures of scenes that you'd usually only see on postcards; that beauty will remain and not be disturbed by development."

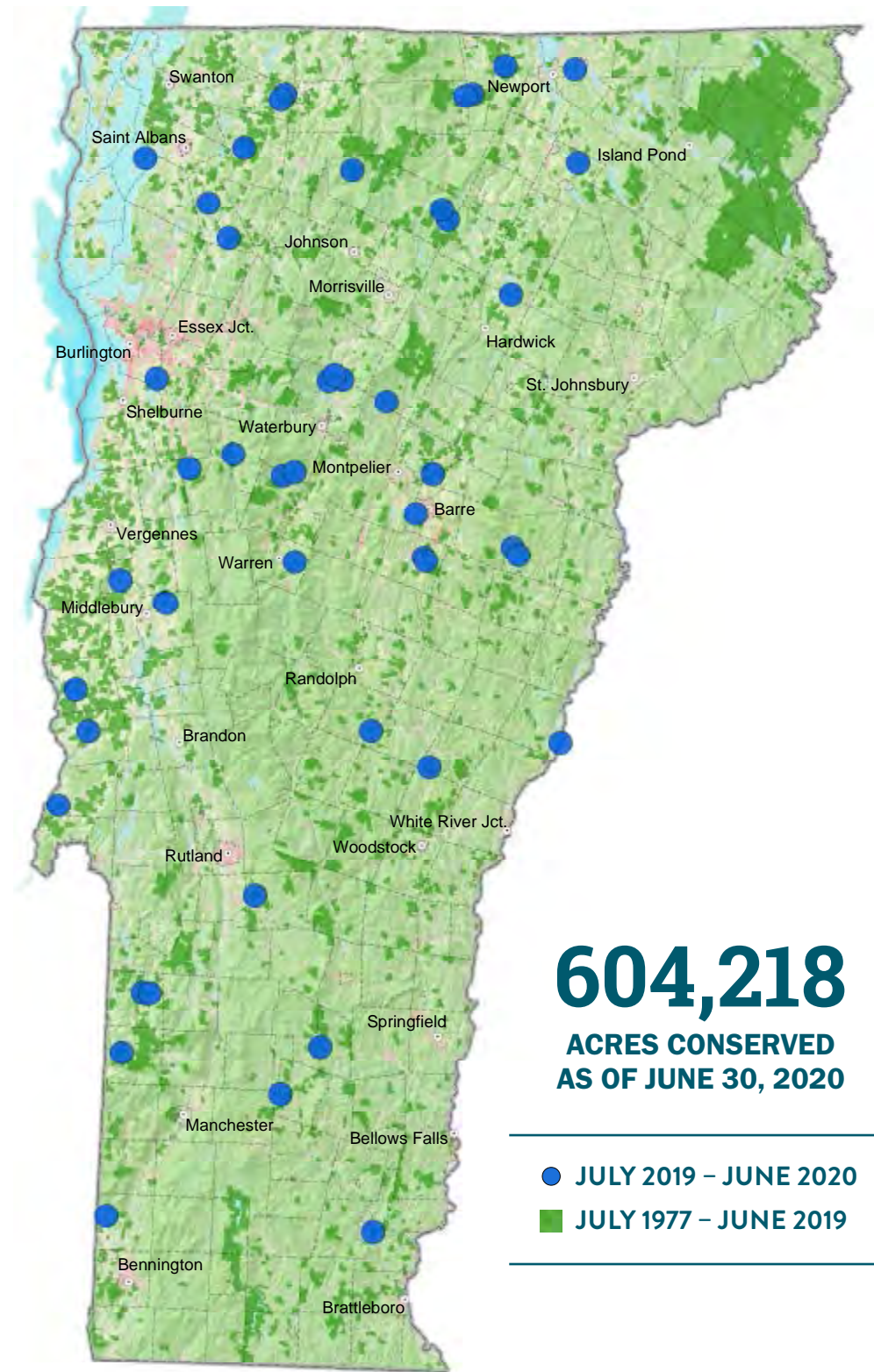
The Butlers have aptly named their business Deep Roots Farm. They are expanding and letting the children further explore farming. In addition to learning to raise and sell pastured pork, meat chickens, grass-fed beef, and eggs, they research and experiment with techniques, such as rotational grazing.

Looking to the future, the Butlers envision the farm as a welcoming place. "We want to share the beauty of the property and eventually allow people to come onto the farm safely and responsibly to see where their food comes from," says Diane. "It's a very peaceful place."

Farming is a family affair for the Butlers. "The idea of living and working here was just a dream," says 15-year-old Lily.



PLACES PROTECTED





NORTHEAST KINGDOM

NORTHEAST KINGDOM

NEWPORT TOWN

Chaput Family Farms, a large dairy operated as a partnership between brothers Mike and Reg Chaput, conserved 126 acres. As part of the project, VLT staff and volunteers planted 230 trees and shrubs along the banks of two streams that flow into Dunn Brook. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS).* 10/19

WESTFIELD & TROY

Beef farmer Tony Brault protected land for water quality and flood resilience along 3.4 miles of the Missisquoi River and its tributaries and wetlands. The river will be allowed to change course naturally within a 79-acre area. Land near the banks will have trees and shrubs to reduce future erosion. Vermont Youth Conservation Corps planted 925 trees there. Thirty-five acres of wetlands were also protected. *Funding from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and The Nature Conservancy under a grant from Keurig Green Mountain, Inc.* 7/19 & 12/19

Farmland in Newport Town conserved by Chaput Family Farms.

BARTON

Rupert and Muriel Chamberlin conserved their 105-acre farm, which is leased to a nearby dairy. There are two headwater streams of the Willoughby River that are now protected by wooded areas within which farming is restricted. *Funding from the Freeman Foundation.* 10/19

DERBY

Allen and Kathleen Yale conserved 89 acres of mostly wooded land. Since buying the land in 1973, the Yales have transformed the property with outstanding stewardship—Allen was named the Vermont Tree Farmer of the Year in 2012. The property provides a place for animals to cross under I-91 and has nearly half a mile of frontage on the Clyde River. 11/19

GREENSBORO

Brenden and Lindsay Beer conserved a 41-acre farm. Formerly the site of Hazendale Farm, a popular farm that served the community for over three decades, the land now hosts the Wilson Herb Farm and the Wilson Farm Market. The Beers grow organic medicinal and culinary herbs such as calendula and sage. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS), the Greensboro Land Trust, and its Mary Witherbee Fund established at the Stoney Point Foundation.* 3/20

Woodland in Derby protected by Kathleen and Allen Yale.



NORTH CENTRAL

NORTH CENTRAL

EAST MONTPELIER

Fairmont Farm conserved 201 acres between Route 14 and the Winooski River. There are farm fields, forested and open wetlands, as well as riverbank areas and several tributaries. The land lies between two sections of the popular Cross Vermont Trail—Fairmont Farm also granted a separate easement to the Cross Vermont Trail Association that will enable the Association to build a trail corridor through this critical linkage. *Funding for farm conservation from VHCBC (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS) and The Nature Conservancy under a grant from Keurig Green Mountain, Inc. Funding for trail easement from VHCBC and the Town of East Montpelier. 6/20*

EDEN

The Atlas Timberlands Partnership (jointly held by VLT and The Nature Conservancy) sold 601 acres to Eric Thomas. A conservation easement was placed on the land when it was sold. The easement requires sustainable forest management and public recreational access. Over 100 acres of an uncommon wetland now have special ecological protections. The partnership also sold 972 conserved acres in a significant wildlife corridor to David Schurman, who will use the land for maple sap production. Proceeds from the sales will be used to support additional forest conservation. Thomas property 12/19; Schurman property 5/20

The Booth family conserved farm fields in Barre Town.

BARRE TOWN

Mark Booth and his three siblings protected around 100 acres of prime farm fields on Airport Road, to fulfill their late father Gordon Booth's dream. Conserving this land honors the area's farming heritage and makes sure that it will always be available to future farmers. *Funding from VHCBC (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS). 3/20*

BELVIDERE

Barred Woods, LLC conserved 858 acres of forest near an internationally significant wildlife corridor. In addition to protecting forest and wildlife habitat, the project secures public access for pedestrian recreation, such as hiking, hunting, and back-country skiing. *Funding from Cold Hollow to Canada. 9/19*

DUXBURY

Fred Pratt donated 471 acres of forestland to VLT; the property has a rustic cabin, with views of Camel's Hump. Fred and his late wife, Chris, conserved the land with VLT in 2000. Both avid birders, Fred and Chris managed the woods carefully for decades. VLT will use the land for education, research, and recreation. Fred also donated an endowment to help VLT maintain the property. (See story on page 14.) 11/19

Zeb Swick and Samantha Duchaine of Alpenglow Farm in Warren.



NORTH CENTRAL

FAYSTON

Christina Castegren donated 93 acres of mostly open land to the Town of Fayston, which conserved it with VLT. The new town forest is open for hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, and skiing. 12/19

THETFORD

Jack and Terry Lyons donated a conservation easement on 18 acres of rich farmland along the Connecticut River that they then sold to Cedar Circle Farm. For many years, they operated Sunny Fields Berry Farm, growing raspberries and blueberries. In recent years, they leased the farmland to Cedar Circle and to Willing Hands, a nonprofit that provides healthy food to those in need; both will continue to grow food there. 7/19

TOPSHAM

Nancy and Jim Clark donated a conservation easement on 94 wooded acres that have been in Nancy's family for over 100 years. The property has the surviving trees of 45 species planted by her father who was a horticulturist, and includes a rich fen wetland, a long stretch of Perry Stream, and an apple orchard. 11/19

TOPSHAM

Arthur and Sherie Schmauder donated 159 acres of woodland, open pasture, wetland, and meadows. Streams on the property flow into the Waits River. The diversity of habitats, including a rare fen wetland, makes the land valuable for wildlife. VLT will conserve most of the land before selling it; proceeds will be used to advance the land trust's mission. 5/20

Dale and Eric Smeltzer protected Waterbury woodland for wildlife.



Fayston's new town forest (left), conserved farmland in Thetford (right).

WARREN

Anne Burling strengthened conservation protections on land she originally conserved with VLT in 2000. Provisions that protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and the affordability of the land for future farmers were added to the conservation easement, along with four additional acres of land. Anne then sold the 52-acre property to Zeb Swick and Samantha Duchaine, who have leased the land for several years for their business, Alpenglow Farm. *Supported by the Town of Warren.* 9/19

WATERBURY

The Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor is one of the most important wildlife regions in Vermont. Located in Waterbury and Stowe, it connects the Green and Worcester Mountain ranges. A broad partnership of groups, including VLT, has joined to protect land in the corridor. This past year, VLT worked with landowners in Waterbury to conserve three wooded parcels. Eric and Dale Smeltzer conserved 287 acres located near the Waterbury Reservoir and Mt. Mansfield State Forest. There are rolling hills, small wetlands, cliffs, and headwaters streams that feed the Little River. Chris Curtis and Tari Swenson protected 63 acres with ledges, rocky outcrops, and a section of woods, unusual in this part of Vermont, that has oak, hickory, and hophornbeam trees. And Whitney Blauvelt conserved 111 acres abutting busy Route 100 within a crucial crossing area for wildlife. (See story on page 8.) *Funding from community members.* Smeltzer property 7/19; Curtis-Swenson property 8/19; Blauvelt property 6/20

NORTH CENTRAL

WILLIAMSTOWN

David Pullman conserved two farm parcels: 58 acres with a popular section of the VAST trail and views of the Green Mountains, and 60 acres that contain a headwater tributary of the Winooski River's Stevens Branch. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS). 9/19 & 2/20*

WORCESTER

John Russell donated a conservation easement on 91 acres of forestland on the side of Hunger Mountain. There are streams and wetlands that drain into the North Branch of the Winooski River. Streamside land will be kept wooded to promote aquatic habitat and clean water. This project supports the Hunger Mountain Headwaters effort led by Trust for Public Land and Stowe Land Trust to protect land near CC Putnam State Forest. *Conservation of this land was made possible with support from the Trust for Public Land. 11/19*

Belvidere forestland protected by Barred Woods, LLC is open for hunting, back-country skiing, and more.



CHAMPLAIN VALLEY



Ben and Dylan Palmer have started an elk meat business in Fairfax.

FAIRFAX

Newt Garland donated a conservation easement on 63 acres of mostly wooded land. There is a hemlock forest along the banks of Stones Brook and open overlooks. Areas around the brook, which joins the Lamoille River, will be managed for clean water and aquatic habitat. 7/19

FAIRFAX

Ben and Dylan Palmer bought 92 acres from their late grandmother, Wanda Palmer, in 2017. They worked with VHCB's Farm and Forest Viability Program to develop a new business plan for a specialty product: elk meat. The Palmers are the largest producers of elk meat in Vermont and sell to local restaurants and families. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS). 9/19*

FAIRFIELD

Dan and Shelley Howrigan conserved 141 acres of farmland, which they bought to add to their organic dairy operation. The property has hayland, pasture, and a sugarbush that the Howrigans are rejuvenating with a pipeline system and 2,000 new taps. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS). 5/20*

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

HUNTINGTON

Justin Rich and Lindsay Lyman-Clarke conserved 18 acres that they recently bought to expand their organic vegetable business, Burnt Rock Farm. The property lies along a third of a mile of the Huntington River; land 50 feet from the riverbank will be kept wooded to reduce erosion, slow floodwaters, improve habitat, and promote clean water. VLT planted over 130 trees to support this effort. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS) and the Town of Huntington. 12/19*

MIDDLEBURY

Hank Dimuzio and Rhonda Roberts conserved 132 acres that are home to LedgEnd Farm, the largest deer farm in the state. They raise Fallow deer, a European breed, and sell directly off the farm and to local stores and restaurants. Nearly 30 acres of rare clayplain forest were protected; these forests are important for wildlife and biodiversity, especially with our changing climate. *Funding from the Town of Middlebury and VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS). 5/20*

ORWELL

William and Elizabeth Orr conserved a 279-acre farm. There is a sugarbush with a unique diversity of tree and plant species where ecological protections will limit logging. In addition, a stretch of Royce Brook, a tributary to East Creek, is now protected for clean water. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS). 12/19*



Fallow deer on LedgEnd Farm in Middlebury.

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

SHELDON

Tom and Liza Harrness added an 'option to purchase at agricultural value' to their conservation easement to help make sure that the property remains affordable and in the hands of farmers. Their 301-acre farm was originally conserved in 2003. They are transitioning the farm to their son, Ryan, who is now a co-owner. Ryan is raising beef cattle and sugaring on the land. *Funding from VHCB. 7/19*

SHELDON

Terry and Joanne Magnan's 215-acre farm runs along the Missisquoi River for nearly a mile. They had originally conserved it in 2000. This past December, they added a 48-acre river corridor easement. The river will be allowed to meander naturally within the corridor; a 50-foot-wide area along the riverbank will be kept naturally vegetated and will not be farmed. VLT restored a marginal field back into a wetland and protected other wetlands and floodplain forests located on the farm. *Funding from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, and Bari and Peter Dreissigacker. 12/19*



Bob and Scott Douglas at Douglas Orchards in Shoreham.

SHOREHAM

Scott and Bob Douglas protected 181 acres of Douglas Orchard, a popular destination for community members and visitors for decades. When they realized there wouldn't be a next generation of Douglasses to run the business, they decided to conserve the land and sell it to Bill Suhr of Champlain Orchards, making sure the community would enjoy the fruits of their labors for years to come. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS). 3/20*

SOUTH BURLINGTON

VLT worked with VHCB and Bread & Butter Farm to conserve 191 acres. VLT bought the property using its new Farmland Futures Fund and is leasing it to Bread & Butter. In addition to the farmland, wetlands and land along Muddy Brook will also be protected. This project is part of a wider effort to conserve a large farm tract in an otherwise suburban area. Bread & Butter produces vegetables and beef, and is home to community events and a bakery and café at their home farm. *Funding from VHCB. 6/20*

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

ST. ALBANS

Josh Boissoneault conserved 264 acres of pasture and tilled land used for the feed business that he runs with his brother Jeff. The property has over 100 acres of wetlands. Nearly 20 acres of former pasture are being restored to wetland, with assistance from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS).* 11/19

STARKSBORO

Peter Briggs worked with VLT and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to conserve land along 1.5 miles of Lewis Creek, establishing a 40-acre 'river corridor' area. Conservation restrictions will help keep the water cleaner and reduce damage from future floods as healthy floodplains hold water and help to slow it down. *Funding from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.* 11/19

WEYBRIDGE & NEW HAVEN

Armond Brisson conserved 73 acres and then sold the farmland to Four Hills, a large dairy based in Bristol. Neighbors had rallied to keep the land open when a development was proposed. By working with Armond, the town, and VLT, they were able to see it conserved. *Funding from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS), Town of Weybridge, and local donors.* 4/20

Newt Garland protected a lovely stretch of Stones Brook in Fairfax.



SOUTHERN VERMONT

Deer Run Nature Preserve in Brookline and Dummerston.

ANDOVER

Siblings Victoria, Gillian, and Robert Kohler generously donated 473 wooded acres to VLT. The land includes two tributaries of Lyman Brook and beaver wetlands. The Kohler family has a long history of supporting VLT's work. VLT plans to conserve and sell the property. 12/19

BENSON

Caleb and Gina Parker conserved 120 acres that are a mix of productive farmland and ecologically significant areas. Conserving the land helped them buy it from Pat MacLaren, the farm's longtime owner. The land is in a region known for its reptile and amphibian diversity, the result of a relatively warm climate and soil qualities which provide habitat for species that are rare or uncommon elsewhere in the state. *Funding from VHCB.* 12/19

BETHEL

Jeffrey Townsend protected 89 acres of farmland, including more than a mile of frontage on the White River; 57 acres along the river have special water-quality protections in the conservation easement. VLT will be working with the nonprofit White River Partnership and US Fish & Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program to plant trees on five acres of farmland along the river. *Funding for farm conservation from VHCB (with matching funds from USDA-NRCS).* *Funding for river conservation from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.* 6/20

SOUTHERN VERMONT

BROOKLINE & DUMMERSTON

VLT conserved 287 acres on the southern end of the Putney Mountain ridgeline now owned by the Green Mountain Conservancy. The new Deer Run Nature Preserve is open for hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, birdwatching, and more. *Funding from VHCB, the Davis Conservation Fund, Fields Pond Trust, the Lintilhac Foundation, the Windham Foundation, and individual donors.* 12/19

LONDONDERRY

Brothers Jim and Bob Twitchell donated a conservation easement on 186 acres that have been in their family for 160 years. They manage the land for sugaring, timber, firewood, and wildlife habitat. They also graze beef cattle on some of the open land. *Supported by the Town of Londonderry Conservation Commission.* 11/19

PAWLET

Nancy Pierson donated a conservation easement on 111 acres of forest and farmland at the foot of Haystack Mountain. Cattle from an adjacent farm graze the pastures, while the woods are bisected by a tributary of the Mettowee River and have valuable wetland habitat and other delicate natural communities. 7/19

PAWLET

Diane and Seth Butler conserved a 267-acre farm in the Mettowee Valley. The Butlers produce pastured pork, meat chickens, grass-fed beef, and eggs. (See story on page 16.) *Funding from the Lookout Foundation and other private foundations.* 3/20

The Butler family is revitalizing a Pawlet farm.



SOUTHERN VERMONT

RUPERT

Andrew “Kirk” Marckwald and Christina Desser donated 216 acres of woodland and sugarbush to VLT. VLT will conserve and sell the productive and well-managed forest so that it can continue to contribute to the local forest economy and support important habitat in the Taconic Mountain range. Proceeds from the sale will benefit VLT’s future work. 12/19

SHAFTSBURY

Solon and Hira Rhode conserved 408 acres of forest and farmland on the side of West Mountain. The mountain is part of the Taconic formation, which runs from the Hudson Highlands to Lake Champlain. Solon spent decades improving the forest for wildlife, encouraging vernal pools, and keeping the fields open yet wildlife friendly. 6/20

SHARON

Arthur Berndt conserved 564 acres of woodland and sugarbush. Arthur and his late wife, Anne, bought their 575-acre property in 1988 and named it Maverick Farm. They built up the sugaring business to 23,000 taps and received organic certification in the early 1990s. The property also has valuable wildlife habitat—including a large vernal pool and streams that flow into the White River. *Funding from VHCB.* 12/19

SHRESWBURY

VLT supported the Shrewsbury Conservation Commission and the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department in protecting 527 acres of forestland for wildlife, forest health, and public access. The land is thickly forested with sugar maples, birch, and oak, and is critical wildlife habitat. It is now the state’s 100th Wildlife Management Area.



Arthur Berndt conserved woodland and sugarbush in Sharon.

YOU MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

OUR MEMBERS ARE SPECIAL

We've always known that, but this year feels different. Despite the uncertainties of a pandemic and the resulting economic challenges, members like you are staying with us, **keeping VLT strong and grounded.**

Together, we are taking meaningful action to:

- secure the future of farms, forests, and Vermont's rural communities
- improve the climate resilience of our land, including our forests, water, and wildlife habitat
- protect open spaces for all—for work, recreation, health, and renewal
- strengthen connections between communities and land

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

3,000+
CONTRIBUTED
\$4,504,102

CAME FROM ALL
50 states
plus DC & Puerto Rico!

DONATED
1,300+
ACRES OF LAND
and conservation
easements on nearly
1,500 ACRES

THANK YOU!

**YOUR SUPPORT IS BUILDING A
STRONGER, HEALTHIER VERMONT.**

WHY JOIN US?

SUSTAINING MEMBERS SHARE WHY THEY SUPPORT VLT



Alicia DiCocco

RICHMOND, VT

“With two small children and a personal investment in Vermont’s landscape, donating to the Vermont Land Trust is important to me. I was first **inspired to give** after seeing VLT’s commitment to community involvement with the conservation of the Andrews Town Forest in our town of Richmond. Now when my donation goes through every month, I know that we are supporting the **efforts to conserve our forests and farms in Vermont communities.**”

Andrew Bolduc

SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT

“The **many success stories at VLT** are inspirational both in the present—through the opportunities they provide for all people to enjoy the beauty of this state, helping farmers achieve their goals and dreams, and **keeping our food systems secure during uncertain times**—and for the future, by ensuring these priceless resources continue to be enjoyed for generations to come. I am thrilled to be able to support VLT however I can.”



INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SUSTAINING MEMBER?

Visit vlt.org/donate to simplify your giving.

STAY CONNECTED, GET INVOLVED

Last year, **476 new members** joined the VLT **community** and, because we pivoted to online events to stay connected with you during the pandemic, **over 1,300 attended educational events.**

Thanks to everyone for participating and to all who stayed on as members. **Welcome!**

WANT TO JOIN US ONLINE THIS FALL AND WINTER?

Visit vlt.org/events.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Summary of Financial Position June 30, 2020

ASSETS

Cash and money market funds	3,499,363.00
Contributions receivable	1,544,065.00
Notes and grants receivable, net	545,147.00
Investments, at fair value	20,423,362.00
Conservation property, net	18,107,896.00
Other assets	3,541,555.00

TOTAL ASSETS 47,661,388.00

LIABILITIES

Notes payable, including line of credit	10,495,812.00
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	301,362.00
Charitable annuities payable	1,747,203.00

TOTAL LIABILITIES 12,544,377.00

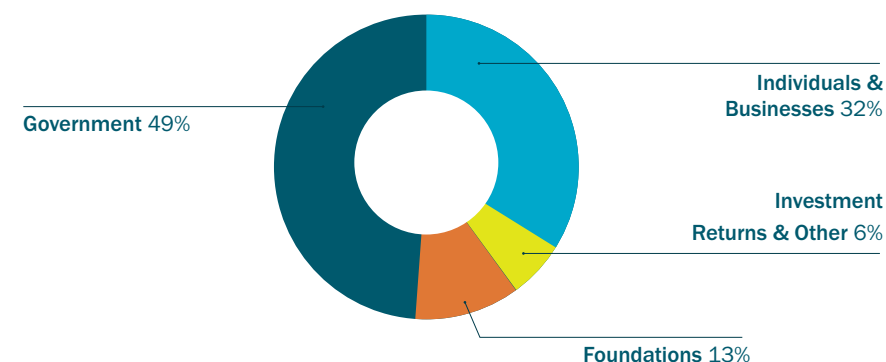
NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	10,646,370.00
With donor restrictions	24,470,641.00

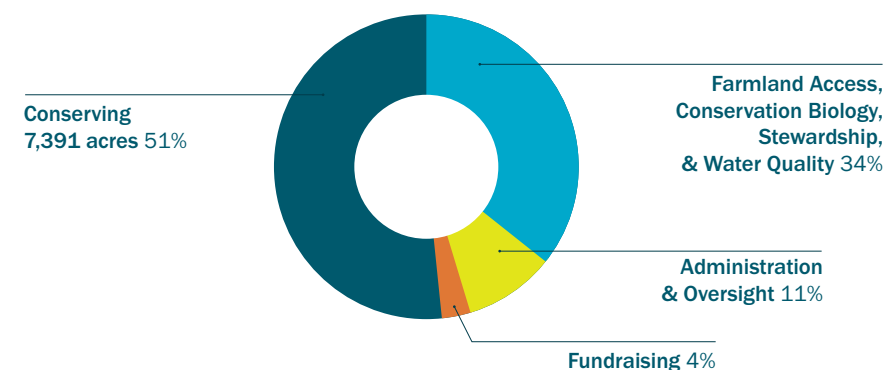
TOTAL NET ASSETS 35,117,011.00

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS 47,661,388.00

Sources of Funds \$16,087,596



Uses of Funds \$14,248,516



The Vermont Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) organization. These financial statements do not conform to the format prescribed by generally acceptable accounting principles. Complete final financial statements and accompanying auditor's report are available on request from our Montpelier office at (802) 223-5234.

OUR STAFF & BOARD OF TRUSTEES



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Nick Richardson, President & CEO
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Allen Karnatz, Farm Project Director
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Rebecca Roman, Regional Stewardship Manager
Sumana Serchan, Regional Stewardship Manager
Liz Thompson, Director of Conservation Science
Ben Waterman, Lands Director

BRATTLEBORO OFFICE

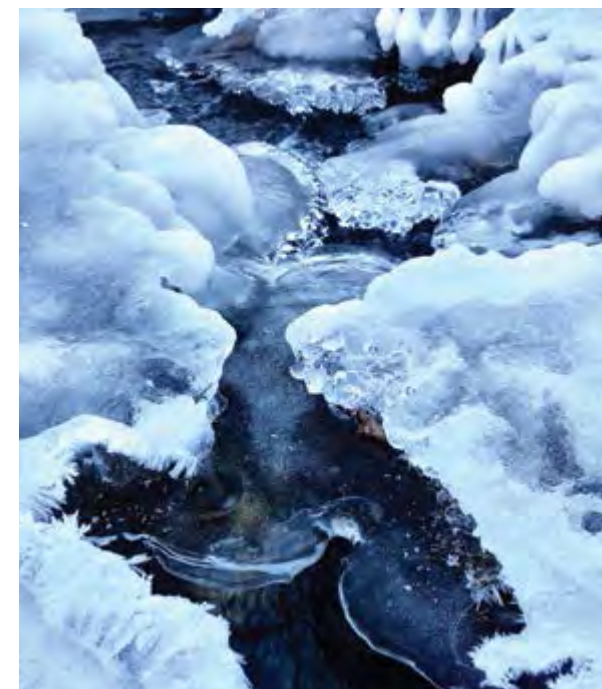
Jennifer Garrett, Regional Stewardship Manager
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Tracy Zschau, Vice President for Conservation

STAFF AT OTHER LOCATIONS

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Donald Campbell, Regional Director, Southern Vermont (Bennington)
Carl Powden, Regional Director, Northeast (Johnson)
Eliza Walker, Regional Director, Mad River Valley (Waitsfield)



CREDITS

Photos: Ben Kimball: pp. 12, 13. Bob Heiser: p. 15. Caleb Kenna: inside cover, pp. 4, 6, 7, 18, 20, 37, 38-39. David Middleton: pp. 1, 3, 9, 11, 16, 17, 32, inside back cover. Kyle Gray: p. 3. LedgEnd Farm: p. 28. Paul E. Richardson: pp. 2, 34-35. Front cover: Community gathering at conserved farm in Barnard, by Caleb Kenna.

Feature stories: Joe Pasteris: p. 16. Rachel Mullis: pp. 6, 8, 10, 12. Tom Slayton: p. 14.

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