



PHOTO: KYLE GRAY

Cold Hollow Carbon Project Overview

Cold Hollow Carbon (CHC) is a first-of-its-kind forest carbon project in the country—bringing together 11 private landowners across 12 parcels and 8,500 acres of forest in the Cold Hollow Mountains of Northern Vermont. This innovative project opens carbon market participation to small Vermont landowners, by aggregating forest parcels and selling Improved Forest Management (IFM) carbon credits registered under the American Carbon Registry (ACR).

The project is administered by Vermont Forest Carbon, a limited liability corporation of the Vermont Land Trust, and Spatial Informatics Group. It was developed by the Vermont Land Trust in 2020 in partnership with the University of Vermont, Spatial Informatics Group, Cold Hollow to Canada Regional Conservation Partnership, and The Nature Conservancy.

Climate and Biodiversity Benefits

The Cold Hollow Mountains sit at the heart of the largest intact broadleaf forest in the world, spanning from New York to Nova Scotia. That stretch of forestland is essential breeding habitat for bird species such as the Black-throated Blue Warbler, Canada Warbler, Wood Thrush, Bicknell's Thrush, and others. The Cold Hollow Mountains are also at a crucial nexus for far-ranging wildlife populations including black bear, moose, bobcat, and fisher. The forest serves as a major carbon sink, storing billions of tons of carbon.

On the 8,500 acres of forest enrolled in the CHC project, participating landowners practice sustainable stewardship and land management practices that increase carbon sequestration over a 40-year term. By avoiding development and more intensive forest management, these efforts help maintain landscape integrity, improve forest health, and safeguard vital wildlife habitat.



Courtesy of Cold Hollow to Canada. Map by Trombulak, S.C., M.G. Anderson, R.F. Baldwin, K. Beazley, J.C. Ray, C. Reining, G. Woolmer, C. Bettigole, G. Forbes, & L. Gratton. 2008. The Northern Appalachian/Acadian Ecoregion: Priority Locations For Conservation Action. Two Countries, One Forest Special Report No. 1.

Benefits for Vermont Landowners and Local Livelihoods

- **Enabling market entry for small landowners:** In Vermont, 80% of forestland is privately owned, mostly by families with relatively small parcels that have been passed down from generation to generation. The carbon market can offer critical supplemental income to keep land forested. But high transaction and development costs have typically excluded the participation of small landowners. **The CHC aggregation model eases key barriers to entry** by enabling landowners to combine resources and share costs. This approach empowers small-scale landowners to participate in the carbon market by limiting out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Supporting economic viability for forest landowners:** Vermont landowners rely heavily on the value of their timber to pay for property taxes, forester fees, and infrastructure maintenance and repair. For economic reasons, forests are often converted to non-forest uses, sub-divided into smaller plots, or logged. **The CHC project offers a different approach.** CHC landowners now receive carbon credit revenues to supplement other forest-based incomes, including maple sugaring; this provides an alternative to heavily harvesting the land. Participating landowners **receive 70% of carbon credit revenues**, substantially more than if they enrolled in most other voluntary forest carbon programs.

CHC credits are an investment in preserving the Vermont landscape and its ethic of responsible, multi-generational land management.

About the Cold Hollow Carbon (CHC) Credits

The CHC project is currently arranging sales for carbon credits from Vintage Years 2024 and 2025, to be issued in early 2026. All CHC credits are Improved Forest Management (IFM) credits issued on the American Carbon Registry (ACR). Early 2026 availability will include both reduction and removal credit types.

The CHC parcels are all certified with the **American Tree Farm System (ATFS)**, ensuring that landowners meet ATFS sustainability standards. Further, by leveraging relationships developed through the CHC project, one participating landowner permanently protected their forestland via a conservation easement. Several other landowners had preexisting Forest Legacy and Vermont Land Trust easements.

About the Vermont Land Trust

Rooted in Vermont since 1977, the Vermont Land Trust has protected more than 650,000 acres of farmland, forestland, and community lands, covering over 11% of the state. Much of this land is privately owned and contributes to our abundance of local food, maple and timber products, tourism and recreation, and the vitality of our towns and villages.



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For more information, contact carbon@vlt.org.

