Wolcott Community Forest Plan

A municipal forest for the Town of Wolcott made possible with significant funding from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and US Forest Service Community Forest Program.

Wolcott
Lamoille County, Vermont
September 20, 2023

Submitted by: Wolcott Town Selectboard

Prepared by:
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Kate Wanner & Hayden Smith, Trust for Public Land

THIS COMMUNITY FOREST PLAN MUST BE UPDATED AND APPROVED BY SEPTEMBER 20, 2033

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Special Thanks to
Emily Potter, Lamoille County Forester
Jack Travelstead, Northern Rivers Land Trust Board Chair
and the previous members of Wolcott Community Forest Stewardship Committee: Matt Foster, Maria Stadtmueller

I. OWNERSHIP and CONTACT INFORMATION

Easement Names: **Wolcott Community Forest Conservation Easement**

Easement Location: Wolcott
Lamoille County, Vermont

Roads: Vermont State Route 15, East Elmore Road, Gates Farm Road

Landowner: Town of Wolcott
Address: Town of Wolcott Town Offices
28 Railroad Street
Wolcott, VT 05680
Contact: Linda Martin, Selectboard Chair
Phone: 802-888-2746
Email: linda.wolcott.selectboard@gmail.com

Easement Co-Holder: Northern Rivers Land Trust
Address:
Hardwick, VT 05843
Contact: Jack Travelstead, Chair
Phone: 802-472-3332
Email: jgtravel54@gmail.com

Easement Co-Holder: Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
Address: 58 East State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Contact: Isaac Bissell, Conservation Stewardship Director
Phone: 802-828-5068
Email: I.Bissell@vhcb.org

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Introduction

This Stewardship Plan for the Wolcott Community Forest is submitted on behalf of the Town of Wolcott, Vermont. Trust for Public Land (TPL) helped the Town of Wolcott obtain approximately 733 acres to become a new municipal forest (hereafter "the Property") in Wolcott, Vermont. This project was completed as part of Trust for Public Land's Community Forest Program and funding was provided by the Town of Wolcott, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), the United States Forest Service Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP), the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC), and many foundations and private individual donors. A conservation easement was conveyed to the Northern Rivers Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to protect the Property's conservation values and ensure public access in perpetuity.

The forestland protection, recreational opportunities, forest management, wildlife habitat and water quality that this Community Forest provides are important assets to the Town (Wolcott Town Plan, 2018.) Section 10 of the Wolcott Town Plan regarding Natural Resources states that "Wolcott does not currently have a town forest but should consider future acquisition and management of a town forest, which could provide recreation, wildlife, scenic, maintained core habitat, and forest management benefits to the Town." The pursuit of land acquisition for a Town Forest and establishing public access areas to rivers and streams for recreation were listed in Actions and Recommendations for Implementation within the Town Plan. Both actions have now been successfully addressed with the new Wolcott Community Forest.

The Town of Wolcott will manage the Property as a municipal forest in accordance with the purpose statement established by the Town Forest Stewardship Committee: **To ensure that the experience of being within a natural environment remains accessible to current and future residents, guests, and the greater community, while preserving and maintaining the natural character and attributes of the forest.** Implicit in this purpose are values such as wildlife habitat, natural resource stewardship, public recreation, education, carbon sequestration, and water and air quality protection. Protection of the land as a conserved Community Forest also ensures public access, safeguards drinking water resources, supports the local economy, community and aesthetics and sustains and protects landscape connectivity by assembling parcels with differing ownership groups and high risk of further parcelization and fragmentation. The Property's planned multi-use trail network can become a regional destination for recreation, providing unique economic and health-related values to the people of Wolcott and surrounding communities.

The purpose of this Community Forest Plan is to identify known information relative to the Property, present the goals of the Town of Wolcott, and put forth prescriptions for management and conservation activities for the next ten (10) years. Completion of a Community Forest Plan is a requirement of the Conservation Easement. This plan shall be updated at least every ten years.

Wolcott Community Forest Stewardship Committee Charter

Purpose:

The mission of the Wolcott Community Forest Stewardship Committee (WCFSC) is to plan for and steward the Wolcott Community Forest. This committee will work with community members and leaders, County Forester, Vermont Fish and Wildlife, Trust for Public Land, Northern Rivers

Land Trust and relevant experts in their fields, to develop a set of guiding principles, goals, and objectives to develop a Community Forest Stewardship Plan. The Wolcott Selectboard will have ultimate decision-making authority over the Property after receiving recommendations from the Committee.

Background:
In January 2024 the Town of Wolcott anticipates acquiring an approximately 335 acre parcel of land on either side of East Elmore Road, which connects to the Wolcott Elementary School, and an additional 399 acres that abuts the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail for the creation of a new Town Forest. A conservation easement will be placed on the property and co-held by the Northern Rivers Land Trust and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

The Property includes frontage on the Elmore Branch, extensive wetlands , forest land and open fields. Crisscrossing the parcel are old forest trails used for past resources management. These trails are in varying condition. A portion of an old town road, (now a Legal Trail) goes through the property.

The Property contains a portion of a Groundwater Source Protection Area near the Wolcott Elementary School.

Rare and uncommon species have been found on the Property. See Appendix E and F for more details.

Organization:
The Selectboard has formally recognized the Wolcott Community Forest Committee as a standing Town Committee. Meetings will follow the Open Meeting Laws and posted Agendas and Minutes are required.

There will be elected a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

There are 16 appointed members to the Committee who will have voting rights. Vacancies will be filled by the Wolcott Selectboard. (see Appendix A)

Terms of members will be two years with ability to be reappointed for staggering terms.

There will be a separate Trails Committee that will work with the Town Planning Commission on trail design and maintenance.

Activities:

- Solicit and/or conduct on-the-ground investigation of the current natural, historic, and land-use conditions of the property.

- Initiate a process for public meetings and outreach surveys to gather public input on potential uses, restrictions, projects, partnerships, maintenance and any other relevant topics.

- Make decisions on uses, activities, restrictions, etc. to be implemented in the Stewardship

Plan based on the input from townspeople.

- Share and integrate goals and plans with the community.

- Develop relationships with other municipal and local and regional boards, committees and organization including the Wolcott Planning Commission, Trails Committee, Wolcott Athletic Association, Wolcott Recreation Committee, Wolcott School Board, Vtrans - Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, Lamoille Regional Planning Commission, Lamoille County Conservation District, Women of Wolcott and include their assistance in public informational gatherings.

- Research options for land-based income generation in support of stewardship activities.

- Research Grants and other outside funding opportunities.

- Author a Stewardship Plan summarizing available information about the property and laying out the intended uses, rules, restrictions, and process for future decision making and Plan updates. (An interim plan will need to be approved by the Selectboard, Trust for Public Land, Northern Rivers Land Trust and project funders before the time of purchase.)

- Solicit and/or prepare cost estimates for projects, maintenance, and other potential/proposed activities.

- Revise and update the Stewardship Plan on schedule laid out in the Plan or as otherwise deemed necessary.

- Implement and oversee stewardship activities as laid out in the Stewardship Plan, and make recommendations to the Selectboard regarding activities, uses, and special circumstances raised, but not directly addressed in the Plan.

Product:
A Wolcott Community Forest Stewardship Plan endorsed by the Wolcott Community and approved by the Selectboard and Easement Holders.

An ongoing Committee to oversee Stewardship activities, decision making and Plan updates into the future.

Establish relationships and channels of communication between the Committee, key stakeholders and the community at large, generating a broad base of support for the Stewardship Plan and activities related hereto.

Public Input

On November 10th, 2021, at a warned Special Town Meeting, the Community voted overwhelmingly (74%) to move forward with the acquisition of the Community Forest, committing town funds towards the project. According to Selectboard member Kurt Klein, participation in this Special Town Meeting vastly surpassed anything they have seen for Special Town Meetings or Town Meetings in general in the past decade. During the fall of 2021, the Town released an initial

community survey that addressed potential uses for the future Wolcott Community Forest and had the public rank their interest in each activity. Respondents demonstrated a very strong focus on developed outdoor recreation, with 95% of respondents having "Great Interest" in Hiking Trails, 85% had "Great Interest" in Cross- Country Skiing, 79% in Snowshoeing, 78% in Wildlife Sanctuaries, 73% in Biking Trails, 64% in improved River Access.

The Town of Wolcott doesn't have a conservation commission and realized they needed to establish a new committee to spearhead this effort at a local level. On April 20, 2022, the Selectboard adopted the Wolcott Community Forest Committee Charter, formally recognizing the Wolcott Community Forest Stewardship Committee as a standing Town Committee with the mission to collaborate with community members and leaders, the county forester, TPL, NRLT, VHCB, and relevant experts in their fields to plan for the future management and stewardship of the town's Community Forest. The Committee is made up of volunteers from the Wolcott community, focused on building local awareness and public engagement and developing the Wolcott Community Forest Stewardship Plan.

The Committee has maintained a regular cadence of monthly meetings since it's formal inception in April 2022. Meetings often host a special guest speaker like the county forester, VT Fish & Wildlife biologists, and trail experts. The Committee has hosted multiple public hikes on weekend mornings, ranging in attendance from 20-30 individuals at each event. In the fall of 2022, with assistance from the Committee, students from the Wolcott Elementary School visited the Property and incorporated natural elements from the forest into their art works. The Committee also held a student contest to create the new Wolcott Community Forest logo. Members of the Committee have expressed interest in engaging the local Abenaki Tribe and have discussed plans for contact with members of that community to conduct a cultural assessment on the Property. They have participated in preliminary mapping expeditions to identify natural features of interest and significance, and site reviews and discussions with consulting foresters and state watershed/AMP foresters from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

The community has shown strong interest in the project; public attendance at Committee meetings has been robust. In fall of 2022, the Committee released a more detailed 3-page public survey accessible both online and in hard copy to help gain a better understanding of the community's interests in potential activities and uses for the future community forest. In addition to a focus on recreational opportunities, such as hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing, other areas of greatest interest included nature study for Wolcott's elementary

school, ecology tours, and informational sessions with the Abenaki Tribe. There was also majority support for the reservation of a portion of the forest for old-growth stands. The Committee has utilized the results from the public surveys to guide decision making and develop this stewardship plan that meets the needs of the Wolcott community.

The table below contains results from the 2022 survey, showing public interest levels in a variety of possible activities and features of the forest. A score of 5 represents the most favorable possible, 3 is neutral, and 1 is strongly unfavorable.

Table 1. Summary of 2022 Community Survey

		Answer distribution				
Proposed Feature/Activity	Overall score (1-5)	5	4	3	2	1
Marked Trails for Hiking	4.53	90	30	10	2	2
Hiking/Running on Rugged Footpaths	4.53	94	21	16	2	1
Snowshoeing	4.52	89	26	16	2	0
Ecology Tours (Birding, herb and wildflower ID, mushroom ID)	4.49	89	29	13	2	2
Educational Programs/Outdoor Classroom	4.46	84	30	17	0	2
Rustic Paths	4.38	71	42	18	1	0
Cross-Country Skiing	4.38	85	24	21	3	2
Portion reserved old-growth/wildlife sanctuary (no built trails, no harvesting)	4.37	87	24	18	3	4
Education and Events with the Nulhegan Abenaki	4.26	74	30	23	4	3
Activities Skills Camps and Clinics	4.23	71	35	19	4	5
Kids' Camps (summer, after school, etc)	4.15	66	34	21	8	3
Sledding	4.09	59	36	27	8	1
Composting Toilet	4.07	68	35	16	10	7
Walking/Hiking/Running on ADA Accessible Paths (gravel)	4.02	55	37	29	6	4
Wildplay/Natural Playground	3.95	56	35	30	6	7
Fishing	3.93	50	30	41	7	2
Health/Wellness Programs (yoga, meditation, fitness)	3.90	51	34	25	9	8
Backcountry/Glade Skiing	3.88	53	24	40	10	3
Constructed Trails for Multipurpose use	3.84	55	34	26	12	9
ADA-Accessible Gardens/Seating	3.84	43	47	30	8	6
Public Arts Events (Festivals) - 1 day or less duration	3.80	49	38	23	11	10
Dog Walking Leashed	3.75	43	33	42	10	5
Swimming Hole	3.71	45	29	36	14	7
Informational Kiosks, describing natural features/natural history	3.66	36	49	30	12	10
Fruit Orchard	3.60	34	35	45	12	6
Designated Swimming Area(s)	3.59	46	24	37	17	11
Pavilion(s) for private or community events	3.59	43	36	24	18	12
Permaculture Forest Garden/Edible Landscaping	3.58	32	38	41	14	6
Mountain Biking	3.56	51	21	33	12	19
Backcountry Hut*	3.53	35	42	27	18	12
Community Firewood Program	3.53	35	38	33	13	13
Informational Kiosks describing community history	3.45	25	40	41	15	9
Winter Fat Biking	3.43	40	24	40	15	16
Sports events - local scope, short duration	3.37	38	31	26	14	22
Treehouse	3.24	27	29	40	21	15
Private Events (Weddings, Reunions, Team Building, etc.)	3.12	21	37	29	21	22
Public Arts Events (Festivals) - weekend or longer duration	2.95	22	23	33	30	22
Tent Camping Sites	2.92	20	28	25	33	23
Snowmobiling on existing designated VAST trail*	2.90	15	24	46	23	23
Horseback Riding	2.88	9	26	50	32	15
Traditional Playground	2.88	16	19	45	31	19
Active Timber Management, Timber Harvesting	2.79	9	22	48	38	15
Sports events - larger scope, longer duration	2.78	21	19	33	25	32
Hunting	2.53	17	17	30	22	46
Dog Walking Unleashed	2.48	22	10	25	27	46
Trapping	1.88	8	9	16	24	75

History

Old barbed-wire fence surrounding and throughout the property suggests its past use as agricultural land. As with most of Vermont, portions of this land were likely cleared in the late 1800s. Steep, rocky, and poorly drained areas were abandoned first, whereas more moderate and accessible areas were most likely used as pasture and crop land for a longer period of time. There are seven openings on the property that equate to roughly 18 acres ranging from 0.5 acres to nearly 9 acres. The largest of these is an undulating high terrace field lately maintained by periodic brushhogging. The three openings along the east side of East Elmore Road have been maintained by regular mowing, while the remaining three openings do not appear to be maintained and are various mixtures of early succession growth. A half-acre artificial pond with a small earthen dam is located in the western arm of the property, constructed between 1960-1976. A small cabin once stood along the northern shores of the pond, removed from the property prior to acquisition by the town.

The former Lamoille Valley Railroad (now Lamoille Valley Rail Trail) runs through the northwestern portion of the property parallel to the property boundary along the Lamoille River. The railroad corridor was constructed between 1869 and 1877, providing a connection between Portland, Maine and Ogdensburg, New York, servicing passenger cars and industrial freight during operation. The railroad concluded operations in 1994 and in the early 2000's the State of Vermont began converting the rail line into the LVRT, a 93-mile four-season, multi-use recreation and transportation corridor.

According to past Forest Management Activity Reports filed with the Department of Forests Parks and Recreation, periodic but consistent management has taken place. This management includes, implementation of silvicultural prescriptions, invasive species eradication, brush hogging and forest tails maintenance. Many foresters both state and private have been involved in these efforts. The most recent harvesting east of East Elmore Road occurred in Stands 1, 2, and 3 in 1993. An improvement cut was completed on the western portion of the property in 2019.

Local and Regional Significance

Wolcott Community Forest is rich in recreational and tourism opportunities, important wildlife habitat, productive forestland, and water quality benefits. The most direct beneficiaries of the new Community Forest will be the roughly 1,744 citizens of Wolcott, more specifically the 179 residents within Wolcott Village who live less than a 10 minute walk away from the property, and the school children who attend Wolcott Elementary School. As a Community Forest, the property will contribute to the health of local residents by providing a close-to-home destination for outdoor recreation. While Green River Reservoir State Park is a gem, it does not offer any trails in Wolcott beyond the public roads that wind through it. Similarly, East Hill Wildlife Management Area offers remote experiences, with only unofficial primitive trails. The Catamount Trail and VAST trails are only available in winter, and are not permanently protected. The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and

the proposed network at Wolcott Community Forest will be the first public all-season trails in Wolcott. Residents of nearby towns and cities will also benefit from the expanded public access and recreational resources, helping relieve overcrowding on the existing trail systems in neighboring towns in Lamoille County.

Recreation and tourism are recognized statewide as the fastest growing and cleanest forms of economic development. Outdoor recreation is an important industry in Vermont, annually generating $5.5 billion in retail sales and services (accounting for 18% of gross state product), supporting 51,000 jobs, and creating $505 million in state tax revenue. Creation of a new trail network on the property will not only provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for a healthy community but will also support this recreation and tourism economy. The Wolcott Community Forest at the center of town can provide new opportunities for economic growth in the village center driving growth in local tourism, and attract new residents who are looking for high quality of life, strong outdoor education programs for their children, and close-to-home recreation opportunities.

Establishing a community forest in the heart of Wolcott with direct access to the village center and the adjacent Elementary School will have an immediate impact on residents of all ages. A significant portion of the Wolcott population, approximately 12%, is over the age of 65. Sinuosity will be designing the forest trail system as multi-use trails, ensuring that there will be significant portions that provide safe and easy navigation for the senior members within the Wolcott community.

The Wolcott Elementary School abuts the Wolcott Community Forest to the north, providing opportunities for educators to expand the school's outdoor education program. During the Covid-19 pandemic, outdoor classrooms have become an essential tool in maintaining safe and effective learning environments. In-person learning is pivotal for the long-term development of young students and maintaining it has become increasingly challenging. Community forests have become a life-line for teachers and staff, allowing them to structure their teaching and programs in an outdoor environment and provide a safe space for students to socialize and take part in in-person learning, guiding them in place-based learning which has proven to promote independence, interdependence, confidence, teamwork, civic mindedness, problem solving and respect for the natural environment in their hometown.

VOREC Trails Grant

The proposed trail network for the Community Forest, funded by the 2022 VOREC grant from Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, will bring 5 miles of professionally built multi-use trails to Wolcott.

Part of the project funding associated with the construction of a new professionally built trail network included a new trail on the Elementary School property linking the Village of Wolcott, the Wolcott Recreational Fields, and the future Lamoille Valley Rail Trail to the Wolcott Elementary School and the Community Forest. This section of trail will create a safe walking path for students and staff to access the Wolcott Recreation Fields from the school, removing the need for students to walk along Flat Iron Road or travel by car to reach after-school sports events, the library, or the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. The linkage trail will create a safe commute for students to get to school and support after-school recreation and sports programs.

Wolcott Town Plan (2018-2026)

One of the primary concerns addressed in the Wolcott Town Plan and a resident forum in 2015 was pedestrian safety, specifically in village areas on Route 15 and School Street. The Town Plan states that "many parents also expressed reluctance to allow their children to walk to school due to these concerns. The recent formal Designation of Wolcott Village as a Village Center creates a new opportunity to improve pedestrian safety. Noted areas of concern for pedestrian and bicycle safety include but not limited to: School Street between the Elementary School and the Village on VT15; along the Village on VT15; North Wolcott Road from VT15 to the Craftsbury town line." The creation of the new trail system will provide new and improved access between the school and the village center, avoiding dangerous public roads without safe pedestrian walkways.

Lamoille County Regional Plan (2015-2023)

The Lamoille County Regional Plan (2015) also recognizes the importance of conserving scenic areas, ecological systems, wildlife habitats, recreational opportunities, and Source Water Protection Areas. The Wolcott Community Forest will support the county wide goals in preserving the scenic natural landscape that's unique to rural Vermont.

Vermont Town Forest Project

In 2004, the Northern Forest Alliance and a wide-ranging team of twenty public and private partners, including the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Trust for Public Land, and the University of Vermont, launched the Vermont Town Forest Project designed to create new town forests and improve stewardship of existing town forests. The Wolcott Community Forest will be another successful example of land conservation through local control and ownership.

Trust for Public Land's Community Forest Program

The Wolcott Community Forest project is part of TPL's Community Forest Program, which helps reconnect community residents to the woods around them. This model of conservation speaks to TPL's mission in both its process and its outcomes, enabling communities to invest in a new public asset that will secure their values and community vision for the future.

This project also fits into three of TPL's national initiatives: Lands, Schoolyards, and Trails. The property's location, immediately adjacent to the elementary school, provides significant opportunities for teachers to expand their outdoor learning program and is an investment in the education of Wolcott's youth. The property itself has significant ecological benefits, preserving water quality functions for the Lamoille River and conserving a climate resilient landscape. The new trail system will be built by a local trail building company and provide a recreational resource in close proximity to the populated town center.

Northern Rivers Land Trust

The Northern Rivers Land Trust (NRLT) seeks to protect and enhance the natural and human resources in the headwater areas of the Winooski, Lamoille, and Black Rivers in order to promote the well-being of present and future generations of Vermonters. Its objectives include the preservation and protection of wild nature, including wetlands and wildlife habitat, the acquisition and protection of lands suitable for public recreation and educational use, and the preservation of sites in order to maintain the rural character and cultural heritage of the area.

The Wolcott Community Forest project meets the NRLT mission and its land protection criteria through the property's significant ecological features including, but not limited to, a variety of rare and threatened species, vernal pools, and significant stream frontage along the Elmore Branch. The property's 733 acres will also provide for a variety of recreational opportunities through a new trail system and important opportunities for public education, given its location adjacent to the elementary school, all while maintaining the rural character of Wolcott. The Northern Rivers Land Trust's intention to collaborate with community conservation efforts is met by the high level of support for this project from the host community of Wolcott.

Summary of the Conservation Easement

Please see appendix A for the full recorded copy of the Conservation Easement

The Wolcott Community Forest is protected by a Conservation Easement co-held by the Northern Rivers Land Trust and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (Grantees). The Easement seeks to conserve managed forest, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty, protect water quality, encourage sustainable management of soil resources, and provide recreational opportunities to the public. This protection will serve the natural communities of the forest, the local economy, wildlife, downstream communities, and the people of Vermont.

The following is a summary of the terms of the Conservation Easement.

Purposes of this Grant and Management Plan

Statement of Purposes

1. Grantor [Town of Wolcott] and Grantees acknowledge the objective of ensuring the availability of the Protected Property for public use and enjoyment, including, but not limited to, educational, recreational and other appropriate community activities and, to that end, the purposes of this Grant (hereinafter referred to as "the Purposes of this Grant") are as follows:
    a. To conserve productive forestland, wildlife habitats, biological diversity, natural communities, riparian buffers, wetlands, soil productivity, water quality and native flora and fauna on the Protected Property and the ecological processes that sustain these natural resource values as they exist on the date of this instrument and as they may evolve in the future;
    b. To provide for non-motorized, non-commercial recreational, educational and other appropriate community uses on the Protected Property;
    c. To conserve open space values, and scenic resources associated with the Protected Property for present and future generations and
    d. To require that management of the Protected Property be guided by a public management planning process.

2. Recognizing that conservation of productive forestland is included in the Purposes of this Grant, and that both the resource values of the Protected Property and responsible forest management standards will evolve over time, the forest management objectives of this Grant are to:

a. Manage forest stands for long rotations which maximize the opportunity for the production of maple sap and/or for harvesting, sustained over time, high quality sawlogs while maintaining a healthy and biologically diverse forest. Grantor and Grantees acknowledge that site limitations, biological factors and public uses may preclude the production of high quality sawlogs, and further that the production of a variety of forest products can be consistent with the goal of producing high quality sawlogs and/or maple sap.
b. Conduct all sugaring and/or forest management and harvesting activities (including the establishment, maintenance, and reclamation of log landings and skid roads) using the best available management practices in order to prevent soil erosion and to protect water quality.

3. To ensure that the Protected Property will be owned in perpetuity by the State of Vermont, a municipality, or other nonprofit corporation qualifying under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; or such other entity approved by the Grantees.

4. These purposes will be advanced by conserving the Protected Property because it possesses the following attributes:
   a. includes 733 acres of forest and wetland that support a wide diversity of wildlife and plants including rare communities and threatened terrestrial and aquatic species contributing significantly to landscape scale wildlife connectivity, ecologic function, carbon sequestration, climate resilience, and water quality;
   b. It protects 31 acres of wetlands, 93 acres of riparian areas and 5.5 miles of headwater streams and frontage on the Elmore Branch and Lamoille River that provide flood resilience, water quality, and supports diverse and ecologically productive native communities;
   c. It is well suited as a community forest and will provide public access and can be used for numerous recreational, cultural, and educational purposes, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and hiking; and,
   d. Vermont Conservation Design (2015) identifies the Protected Property as located within two expansive Priority Habitat Blocks, a Priority Interior Forest Block, and is within a Highest Priority Connectivity Block; is considered a Highest Priority for Physical Landscape Diversity and for Rare and Uncommon Species; and, contains Highest Priority Surface Water and Riparian Areas.

Restricted Uses of the Protected Property

1. The Protected Property shall be used for educational, forestry, agricultural, non-motorized, non-commercial recreation, habitat conservation, natural area, and open space purposes only, except as otherwise specifically permitted under this Grant. No residential, commercial, industrial or mining activities shall be permitted. No buildings, structures, or appurtenant facility or improvements shall be constructed, created, erected or moved onto the Protected Property, except as specifically permitted in both Section III (Permitted Uses of the Property) and the Management Plans.

2. No rights-of-way, easements of ingress or egress, driveways, roads, or utility lines,

easements, or other use restrictions shall be constructed, developed, granted, or maintained into, on, over, under, or across the Protected Property without the prior written permission of Grantees, except as otherwise specifically permitted under this Grant, and as appear of record prior to the date of this Grant. Grantees may grant such permission (with or without conditions) if in their sole discretion they determine that any such rights of way, easements of ingress or egress, driveways, roads, utility lines, other easements or other use restrictions are consistent with the Purposes of this Grant.

3. There shall be no signs, billboards, or outdoor advertising of any kind erected or displayed on the Protected Property; provided, however, that Grantor may erect and maintain reasonable signs including but not limited to signs indicating the name of the Protected Property and its ownership by Grantor, boundary markers, directional signs, memorial plaques, informational and interpretive signs, and signs limiting access or use subject to the limitations of Section IV (Public Access)**.** Grantees may erect and maintain signs designating the Protected Property as land under the protection of Grantees, with the prior written permission of Grantor.

4. The placement, collection or storage of trash, human, hazardous or toxic waste, or any other unsightly, harmful or offensive material on the Protected Property shall not be permitted except at such locations, if any, and in such a manner as shall be approved in advance in writing by Grantees and shall be consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and the Management Plans. The temporary storage of trash generated on the Protected Property in receptacles for periodic off-site disposal, shall be permitted without such prior written approval.

5. There shall be no disturbance of the surface, including but not limited to filling, excavation, removal of topsoil, sand, gravel, rocks or minerals, or change of the topography of the land in any manner, except as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the uses permitted on the Protected Property under the terms of this Grant. In no case shall surface mining of subsurface oil, gas, or other minerals be permitted.

6. Grantor shall not give, grant, sell, convey, subdivide, partition, convey in separate parcels, transfer, mortgage, pledge, lease or otherwise encumber the Protected Property without the prior written approval of Grantees which approval may be granted, denied or conditioned - including the condition that the Protected Property be sold for only nominal consideration **-** in the Grantees' sole discretion.

7. There shall be no operation of motor vehicles on the Protected Property for recreational purposes except as approved in Grantees' sole discretion. However, Grantor may permit motorized personal assistive mobility devices for use by persons with mobility disabilities on the Protected Property if consistent with the Purposes of this Grant, and as may be required by 42 U.S.C. §35.137. Other non-recreational uses of motor vehicles, including ATVs, for uses consistent with the Purposes of this Grant, such as agriculture, wildlife and forest management, education, trail grooming, maintenance, and for safety or emergency purposes, is permitted. Notwithstanding the foregoing, snowmobiling may be permitted at the discretion of the Grantor.

8. No use shall be made of the Protected Property, and no activity thereon shall be permitted which, is or is likely to become inconsistent with the Purposes of this Grant. Grantor and Grantees acknowledge that, in view of the perpetual nature of this Grant, they are unable to foresee all potential future land uses, future technologies, and future evolution of the land and other natural resources, and other future occurrences affecting the Purposes of this Grant. Grantees, therefore, in their sole discretion, may determine whether (a) proposed uses or proposed improvements not contemplated by or addressed in this Grant, or (b) alterations in existing uses or structures, are consistent with the Purposes of this Grant.

Permitted Uses of the Protected Property

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Grantor shall have the right to make the following uses of the Protected Property:

1. The right to use the Protected Property for all types of non-commercial, non-motorized recreational purposes including, but not limited to, bird-watching, boating, cross-country skiing, fishing, hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, swimming, trapping, walking and wildlife observation consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and the Management Plan(s). Use of the Protected Property for snowmobiling, and for non-motorized, mechanized recreation such as mountain biking and by animals capable of transporting humans (including, but not limited to, horses) may be permitted in the discretion of Grantor if such uses are regulated in the Management Plans and are consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and are consistent with Section V**.**

2. The right to establish, maintain and use fields, orchards and pastures for existing agricultural uses, recreational, scenic or open space purposes and/or for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing wildlife habitat, plant habitat or scenic vistas or values on the Protected Property, provided that the initial forest clearing activity required to establish such fields, orchards, pastures, wildlife habitats, plant habitats, and/or scenic vistas occurs only upon the prior written approval of Grantees. Grantees' approval shall not be unreasonably withheld if such clearcutting is consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and is a component of the Management Plans**.**

3. The right to perform forest management activities, including maple-sugaring, the harvest of timber, other wood products and commercial non-timber forest products, provided that:

   a) all such activities are conducted in accordance with an approved Forest Management Plan meeting the requirements of Section I above;
   b) all such activities are conducted under the supervision of a professional forester holding a current Vermont forester license, or a forester or other land manager whose education, experience and qualifications are otherwise approved in advance by Grantees (hereinafter "Professional Forester"); and
   c) any maple sugaring operations shall meet or exceed the standards outlined in Sugarbush Management Standards and Tapping Guidelines for Forestland in Use Value Appraisal (adopted in 2014) or successor guidelines as determined by the Grantees.

During any road construction, maintenance or harvesting and skidding of forest products, or activities associated with sugarbush management, Grantor shall employ the applicable practices recommended in the publication "Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont," a Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation publication dated August 15, 1987, revised effective August 11, 2018, and as may be amended from time to time (hereafter "AMPs"), or such successor standard approved by Grantees.

Nothing in this clause shall be interpreted to require Grantor to harvest a treatment unit (as defined in Section I.C.), but only to require that any such harvest be conducted in accordance with the Forest Management Plan should Grantor elect to harvest.

4. The right to construct and maintain barns, sugar houses, or similar structures or facilities, together with necessary access drives and utilities, on the Protected Property, provided that they are used exclusively for agricultural or forestry purposes, and provided further that such construction has been approved in writing in advance by Grantees. Grantees' approval may include designation of a "complex" (meaning an area or areas of the Protected Property within which certain structures are or shall be grouped together) surrounding the structures and shall not otherwise be unreasonably withheld or conditioned, provided that the structure or facility is located in a manner which is consistent with the Purposes of this Grant. Grantor shall not deem unreasonable a condition by Grantees that certain structures must be located within a complex which may be designated in the future as provided in this Section III.

5. The right to use, maintain, establish, construct, and improve water sources, courses, and bodies within the Protected Property for uses permitted in this Grant; provided, however, that Grantor does not unnecessarily disturb the natural course of the surface water drainage and runoff flowing over the Protected Property. Grantor may disturb the natural water flow over the Protected Property to improve drainage of agricultural soils, reduce soil erosion or improve the agricultural potential of areas used for agricultural purposes, but shall do so in a manner that has minimum impact on the natural water flow and is otherwise consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and complies with all applicable laws and regulations. Prior to undertaking a streambank stabilization project or placing any structure otherwise permitted under this Grant or approved by Grantees in accordance with this Grant within rivers or streams or on the banks thereof, Grantor shall provide written notice to Grantees of their intent to do so. The construction of ponds or reservoirs shall be permitted only upon the prior written approval of Grantees, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or conditioned; provided, however, that such pond or reservoir is located in a manner which is consistent with the Purposes of this Grant.

   In addition, the following shall be designated as water protection areas: 1) all those areas within the forested or naturally vegetated portions of the Protected Property (a.) lying within one hundred (100') landward of the tops of the banks of any "stream" as defined by the AMPs and (b.) all 'significant wetlands' and their buffer zones as defined by the Vermont Wetland Rules adopted February 7, 1990 and all amendments presently

adopted or to be adopted in the future, including those adopted February 10, 2023 , or successor document approved by the Grantees**.** These areas shall move with the movement of the streams and the following goals and restrictions shall apply thereto:

The principal goal for management within the water protection areas is to maintain or enhance their ecological benefits, including but not limited to water quality, soil integrity, and natural hydrology; providing important terrestrial, wetland, and aquatic habitat; and providing organic matter, nutrients, shade, and large diameter coarse woody material for the benefit of wetland, riparian, and aquatic systems.

Any management or use of the water protection areas shall incorporate up-to-date ecological knowledge and management practices, and shall be consistent with the principal goal above.

6. The right to maintain, repair, improve and replace existing recreational trails, together with the right to clear, construct, repair, improve, maintain and replace new trails, provided that the location, use and construction of such new trails are consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and Sections III(V) and V , and are provided for in the Management Plans.

7. The right to conduct periodic, temporary community and public entertainment events on the Protected Property, including concerts, fairs and celebrations, together with the right to erect tents and other temporary structures for such events; provided that such events shall not result in the clearing of any forested areas and provided further that such events are consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and the Management Plan.

8. The right to construct, maintain, repair and use two unpaved parking lot(s) on the Protected Property, including associated access drives and utilities, together with the right to construct improvements normally associated with a parking lot. Grantor shall first obtain the prior written approval of Grantees for the location and size of such unpaved parking lots on the Protected Property, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld nor conditioned, provided that such location and use shall be consistent with the Management Plans and the Purposes of this Grant.

9. The right to maintain, repair, improve, relocate and replace existing roads and recreational trails, together with the right to clear, construct, repair, improve, maintain and replace new forest management and public access roads, recreational trails, culverts, bridges and water crossing structures, including the right to install and maintain wildlife crossing structures for terrestrial and riparian wildlife, provided that the location, use and construction of such new roads, structures and trails are consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and Section V below, and the Management Plan.

10. The right to charge members of the public reasonable fees for admission to and use of the Protected Property, provided that such fees are collected only for community and public recreation, education or entertainment events on the Protected Property (including, but not limited to, children's activities, concerts, fairs and celebrations) or such fees are reasonably necessary to support Grantor's management of the Protected

Property. The right to charge organizations reasonable fees for recreational use of a portion of the Protected Property provided that such use does not unreasonably interfere with the access of the general public to the Protected Property. All fees charged for admission to or use of the Protected Property shall be consistent with the Purposes of this Grant, especially that of public access, and shall be provided for in the Management Plan. Notwithstanding the foregoing, members of the public may not be charged a fee to walk on the Protected Property.

11. The right to conduct and authorize temporary commercial and non-commercial uses of the Protected Property, provided that such uses (i) do not unreasonably interfere with the access of the general public to the Protected Property, (ii) do not materially detract from the Purposes of this Grant, and (iii) are detailed in an approved Management Plan described in Section IB of this Grant.

12. The right to construct, maintain, repair and replace permanent or temporary structures, drives and utilities reasonably necessary to support the community wastewater system (not located on the Protected Property), including, but not limited to, a force main and a pump station (collectively known herein as the "Wastewater Structures"); provided that such Wastewater Structures comply with the requirements of this Section III(12) and the number and location of such Wastewater Structures are consistent with the Purposes of this Grant, Section III(5) above, Section V below, and the Management Plan. Grantor shall first obtain the written approval of Grantees for the location, relocation, replacement or improvement of such Wastewater Structures on the Protected Property, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld nor conditioned, provided that:
    a. The Wastewater Structures cannot be located on a more suitable location that is not part of the Protected Property under the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules or the then applicable law or regulations governing Systems (collectively "the Rules"); and
    b. Such Wastewater Structures are designed by a person authorized to do so under the Rules retained at Grantor's sole cost and expense, certified by such person as complying with the Rules, installed in compliance with the Rules, certified by person authorized to do so under the Rules as being installed in accordance with the certified design and approved in accordance with all the then applicable Rules.

Public Access

Grantor covenants and agrees that the Protected Property shall be available to the general public for all types of non-commercial, non-motorized, non-mechanized dispersed recreational and educational purposes (including, but not limited to, bird-watching, boating, cross-country skiing, fishing, hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, swimming, trapping, walking and wildlife observation) consistent with the Purposes of this Grant. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Grantor may limit or restrict public access to the Protected Property to assure compliance with the requirements of this Grant, to protect natural habitats, or to protect the public health or safety (including, but not limited to, the right to permit, regulate or prohibit fishing, hunting and trapping). If Grantees approve a conveyance of the Protected Property, then Grantees may also require that a separate Grant of

Public Access Easement also be conveyed to Grantees in a form approved by Grantees.

Ecological Protection Zone.

The Ecological Protection Zone comprises a state-significant Temperate Acidic Cliff, as well as, the areas surrounding the Temperate Acidic Cliff, including, but not limited to, the rare plants associated with the aforementioned Cliff that are located at the base of said Cliff. The Ecological Protection Zone consists of approximately 2 acres, more or less, and is generally depicted as "EPZ" on the Wolcott Community Forest Conservation Plan (hereafter the "EPZ").

Within the EPZ the following shall apply:

1. Protection of the Temperate Acidic Cliff, as well as the natural communities that naturally develop in the future in the EPZ, and the ecological processes that sustain them, shall be Grantor's and Grantees' highest priority in approving and conducting all activities.
2. All management activities, including without limitation forest management, recreational management and ecological management, shall focus on the goals of a) maintaining soil integrity, natural hydrology, and water quality values, and b) maintaining the natural structure and species composition of the natural communities present or communities that may develop naturally over time, informed by the best current ecological science.
3. All forest management activities shall be conducted pursuant to a forest management plan that is consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and this Section. Any such activities shall employ all applicable recommended practices described in the regulations entitled "Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont" promulgated by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, dated August 15, 1987, subsequently revised effective August 11, 2018 and as may be amended from time to time (the "AMPs"). Management of the EPZ shall be informed by the best current ecological understanding of the unique characteristics at this site and the natural communities it supports. Silvicultural methods shall strive to mimic the natural, low-intensity disturbance regime specific to the Temperate Acidic Cliff, as well as, natural communities that naturally develop in the future in this physical setting.
4. Grantees' approval of a forest management plan submitted shall not be unreasonably withheld or conditioned; provided that such plan: (i) is consistent with the Purposes of this Grant and with the provisions of this Section; and (ii) such plan has been approved by a professional forester.

A small foot or mountain bike trail and small clifftop viewpoint is located along the top of the ridge within the EPZ area, wearing into the soil. The consulting ecologist in the Ecological Assessment has recommended the closure and discontinued maintenance of this trail and viewpoint to limit disturbance to this fragile natural community and prevent further erosion to the unstable soil.

III. TOWN OBJECTIVES

The creation of the Wolcott Community Forest is an effort by the Town to **ensure that the experience of being within a natural environment remains accessible to current and future**

residents, guests, and the greater community, while preserving and maintaining the natural character and attributes of the forest. The Town seeks to fulfill this purpose by acquiring the land, with assistance from Trust for Public Land, and various other entities, putting it into open public ownership, protecting it from development, and managing it for forest resources, wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, public recreation and education. The Town of Wolcott values the complex suite of both monetary and non-monetary benefits that forests provide including timber revenues, non-timber forest product revenues, tourism and recreation, water supply and water quality protection, carbon sequestration, open space protection, education, wildlife habitat protection, and a sense of community and increased civic pride.

Administration of the Wolcott Community Forest

The Wolcott Community Forest Stewardship Committee will take the lead role in managing the Property and the implementation of the goals established by this Community Forest Plan. The Wolcott Selectboard will have ultimate decision-making authority over the Property after receiving recommendations from the Stewardship Committee. Further details are discussed below in section XI (Proposed Governance Structure). Lamoille County Forester Emily Potter (or successor Lamoille County Forester), who will prepare the Timber Management section of this document, will provide assistance and advice pertaining to forest treatments. Overall management will be done in accordance with the Easement and this Community Forest Plan approved by the Northern Rivers Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

General Purposes

- Ensure that the experience of being within a natural environment remains accessible to current and future residents, guests, and the greater community, while preserving and maintaining the natural character and attributes of the forest.
- Preserve and conserve 733 acres of wetland, woodland, surface waters and open meadow, in perpetuity under Town ownership, for the enjoyment and education of the general public.
- Maximize opportunities for people to experience and appreciate a healthy, and minimally disrupted natural environment.
- Contribute to the sustainability of the regional environment, supporting biodiversity and the resilience of the natural habitat.
- Support outdoor education opportunities for Wolcott Elementary School
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitats, rare and exemplary plants and natural communities, and the ecological processes that sustain the natural heritage of the Property.
- Provide opportunities for distributed recreation for town Residents, Guests and the community at large.
- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty and character of our town, especially the area around the town center..

Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resource Goals:

- Maintain and protect native biodiversity and ecological integrity, and contribute to the overall regional environment resiliency, particularly with respect to wildlife mobility.
- Conserve rare and exemplary natural communities.
- Preserve and conserve the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water.
- Protect or enhance water quality, forested and non-forested wetlands, vernal pools, and

aquatic habitats.
- Protect and enhance a variety of habitats for native species.
- Maintain and protect a diverse mix of natural communities throughout the Property.
- To the extent possible, prevent the introduction or spread of invasive plant and animal species.
- Manage each of the wildlife habitat and natural resources goals by following established current best practices as defined by pertinent State, Federal, and private entities.

Educational Goals
- Educate the residents of Wolcott and surrounding areas, as well as visitors to the region, about natural communities, biodiversity, the forest in its natural state and, potentially, as a working forest, and overall good stewardship practices.
- Provide a resource and location for education programs, including research and study of the environment by all manner of interested parties (and especially members of Wolcott Elementary School community).
- Increase awareness of the importance and value of the natural environment
- Raise awareness about humanity's place within the overall natural environment, and the role we play in shaping its evolution.

Recreational and Cultural Goals:
- Support and encourage a diverse array of compatible usages that encourage exchange among different elements of society.
- Provide public pedestrian access on the Property which will allow the general public to hike, hunt, snowshoe, observe wildlife and participate in other low impact outdoor recreational activities.
- Allow for other forms of recreation, such as mountain biking, horse-back riding and/or snowmobiling on designated trails of the property, as may be requested by community members or organizations, and approved by the Stewardship committee, within the guidelines of the overall purpose.
- Develop and maintain a network of access points, including trailhead parking facilities and other amenities for access to the Wolcott Community Forest.
- Foster a sense of community stewardship of the Town Forest, and environment overall.
- Foster a sense of pride in the environmental stewardship work the town is supporting and participating in.
- Provide a resource for the community which fosters community engagement, both within and among the town residents, and also between the town and other communities and organizations in the surrounding area and throughout the state and region.
- Maintain the forest as a community asset that the town is proud to support.

Forest Stewardship Goals
- Maintain a diverse canopy structure, consistent with a climax succession ecosystem.
- Minimize natural topography manipulation which alters surface hydrology.
- Sequester carbon and promote climate resiliency.
- Protect and limit disturbance to state-significant forest types.
- Maintain overall ecosystem functional redundancy within the forest, wetlands and open areas.
- Create Ecological Significant Treatment Areas (ESTA) where no-touch management is

employed.

- Enhance the property's richness of wildlife and general biological diversity, as benefits the overall local and regional ecosystem.
- Maintain existing water yields.
- Protect water resources, wetlands, and riparian zones.
- Promote a variety of forest types as dictated by site conditions rather than human use .
- Promote native ecosystem elements.
- Discourage or eliminate exotic plants.
- Maintain the existing trail network during forest management operations.
- Maintain a healthy forested landscape around the town center, enhancing the aesthetics of our town.
- Support the overall purpose of the town forest, and seek synergy with the Wildlife, Education, Recreation and Cultural goals noted above.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE

(see also Baseline Documentation Report)

General Topographic Description

The Wolcott Community Forest has a north facing slope, naturally draining into the Lamoille River or Elmore Branch, a tributary to the Lamoille. Elevations span from about 670 feet along the banks of the Lamoille River up to about 1,225 feet along the western edge of the ridge north of Whitcomb Brook. The topography is dominated by moderate to moderately steep lower slopes along the Elmore Branch and Lamoille River valleys with a broad, flat floodplain area adjacent the Elmore Branch and a flattish, undulating high terrace above. There is also a broad hilltop in the eastern parcel.

Scenic Values

The Wolcott Community Forest has numerous lookouts from the open meadows which provide terrific views of the Green Mountain Range, Wolcott Village, and the forested hills to the east and north.

Roads

There are remnants of past forest roads and abandoned logging trails that now provide opportunities for passive recreation on the property (see Map D: Access and Recreation Map and Appendix C: Surveys).

Pedestrian access to the property can be gained through frontage along the following town roads and public trails:

- **VT Route 15**, +/-1,415 feet of frontage, State Highway
- **East Elmore Road**, +/-3,045 feet of eastern frontage and +/-1,837 feet of western frontage, gravel, Town Highway #3, Class 2, maintained road. Primary access across the bridge over the

Elmore Branch river channel
- **Gates Farm Road,** +/-1,352 feet of southern frontage, dirt, Town Highway #35, Class 4, unmaintained and currently impassable road
- **Lamoille Valley Rail Trail**, +/-1,100 feet of frontage on the Rail Trail, west of the Wolcott trailhead and gazebo

Two access points/parking areas are planned. See the Proposed Action Schedule section and Map D: Access and Recreation Map for potential parking and access areas.

Road maintenance objectives for interior forest roads include:
- ensuring safe conditions for a variety of uses, including logging and passive recreation;
- minimizing erosion and runoff;
- preventing illegal trespass by unauthorized motor vehicles;
- preventing the spread of invasive plants along trails and roads;
- minimizing increased avian predation and nest parasitism by minimizing the width, number, and extent of new access and skid roads; and
- minimizing disruption of wildlife habitat and recreation trails.

For information pertaining to trails, please see the Recreation Section of this Community Forest Plan.

Artificial Pond and Earthen Dam

A small man-made pond (0.557 acres) and earthen dam can be found within the western arm of the property, with a northerly outflow through adjacent undeveloped forestland, under the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and into the Lamoille River. According to the Dam Safety Engineer at the State of Vermont, the earthen dam can be considered “minimal hazard” that likely impounds less than 500,000 cf, meeting the low hazard potential definition. Minimal hazard dams do not have a periodic inspection requirement though it is recommended to keep the dam maintained to prevent any potential safety risks downhill. Occasional maintenance should include removing existing trees on the dam and preventing new growth from establishing root systems.

Boundary Lines

Town roads bound a significant portion of the Wolcott Community Forest. Portions of the Property are bounded to the north by Route 15, and on either side of East Elmore Road and Gates Farm Road. The northern boundary also abuts the Wolcott Elementary School, providing additional public access opportunities and expanded educational benefits on the property. The northwestern boundary is bisected by the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail prior to reaching the banks of the Lamoille River. The Community Forest boundary will be marked appropriately and monitored by committee members and representatives of the Northern Rivers Land Trust as part of the stewardship responsibilities as the holder of the conservation easement.

V. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Bedrock Geology

The Property lies in the Northern Green Mountains biophysical region, which is often characterized by generally acid bedrock that support natural communities such as Northern Hardwood Forest formations. The property is entirely underlain by Moretown Formation bedrock consisting of metamorphic granofels and quartzite of Lower Ordovician to Cambrian age (480-500MYA). This is typically a fairly acidic bedrock type, but does sometimes have areas of locally more enriched conditions. It is exposed in abundant small outcrops and ledges scattered across the western parcel, as well as in the Elmore Branch channel north of the access bridge, and on a few rocky ridges and roadcuts just above Route 15.

The soils vary across these landforms but are predominantly fine sandy loams of numerous series. Upper slopes generally have soils derived from unsorted glacial till and are rocky or very rocky, while many of the lower slopes have soils derived from water-sorted glacial outwash deposited as deltaic sediments into Glacial Lake Vermont. The floodplain of the Elmore Branch has geologically recent alluvial deposits of fine sandy and silt loam, often with a thin organic muck layer at the surface (but mapped as Rumney fine sandy loam). With the exception of the latter area, most of the soils are classed as highly erodible or potentially so, and will warrant appropriate trail management and siting to avoid erosion concerns.

Soils

Site quality for growing commercial tree species is generally good and may be classified as Site 2 in most areas. The best woodland soils are located in Stand 1. These soils are generally deep and well drained, supporting northern hardwood stands dominated by good-quality sugar maple stems. The poorest soils are found in Stand 2, where soils are shallow to bedrock and drainage is poor. Topography is somewhat rugged, with ledge outcrops and short, steep-sided slopes found throughout most of the wooded acres. Elevation ranges from 750 feet above sea level (ASL) where Elmore Branch Brook exits the property, to 1150 feet ASL on a height of land in the southwest corner. A perennial brook bisects the property as it flows through a 150-foot drop in elevation to its intersection with Elmore Branch Brook. Several small waterfalls and slides are found along its course. Intermittent drains and small wooded wetlands are found throughout the property.

Soils are an important resource that deserves consideration in management decisions. Soils are often described as the combination of five factors: climate, organisms, topographic relief, geologic parent material and the passage of time (Jenny 2014). Each soil type has its own set of characteristics based on these factors. Understanding the productivity and management limitations of a property's soils will help guide decisions. On this ownership, dominant soil types include those of the Lyman-Tunbridge fine sandy loam, Berkshire Tunbridge fine sandy loam and Colton-Duxbury complex. In general these soil types are slightly acidic and well suited to forest management. These soil types are somewhat shallow and prone to erosion. With this in mind, harvest activity should be conducted to minimize erosion potential. This can be done by harvesting under frozen or very dry conditions and through the use of low-impact equipment.

Lyman-Tunbridge complex (which accounts for a majority of the soils on this parcel) is formed in loamy glacial till on uplands. Tunbridge soils are moderately deep to bedrock and well drained. This soil type is dominant in convex valleys found between ledge runs. This soil type is typically considered more productive for management of northern hardwoods. Lyman soils are shallow to bedrock and somewhat excessively drained. A less rich site, this soil type is often associated with topographic features, such as ledge outcropping, which limit tree growth.

Table 2. Soil Types of the Wolcott Community Forest

Soil Type	Soil Symbol	Acres of Property	Percentage of Property
Adams loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	AdB	9.1	1.2%
Adams loamy sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes	AdC	16.4	2.2%
Adams loamy sand, 25 to 60 percent slopes	AdE	5.4	0.7%
Allagash very fine sandy loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	AgB	0.6	0.1%
Berkshire fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	BeC	26.5	3.6%
Berkshire fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	BkC	16.6	2.2%
Berkshire-Tunbridge complex, 3 to 8 percent slopes, rocky	BrB	5.5	0.8%
Berkshire-Tunbridge complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes, rocky	BrC	22.5	3.0%
Berkshire-Tunbridge complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes, rocky	BrD	87.6	11.9%
Berkshire and Marlow soils, 20 to 50 percent slopes, very stony	BtE	44.2	6.0%
Colton-Duxbury complex, 2 to 8 percent slopes	CoB	9.3	1.3%
Colton-Duxbury complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes	CoC	15.7	2.1%
Colton-Duxbury complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes	CoD	28.8	3.9%
Colton-Duxbury complex, 25 to 50 percent slopes	CoE	29.3	4.0%
Cabot silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	FrB	35.2	4.8%
Londonderry-Stratton complex, 25 to 60 percent slopes	LoE	0.6	0.1%
Tunbridge-Lyman complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very rocky	LyC	28.5	3.9%
Lyman-Tunbridge-Rock outcrop complex, 25 to 60 percent slopes	LyE	257.2	34.9%
Ondawa fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, occasionally flooded	On	4.8	0.6%
Rumney fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, frequently flooded	Ru	9.7	1.3%
Salmon very fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, eroded	SaC2	0.0	0.0%
Salmon variant-Salmon very fine sandy loams, rocky, 25 to 50 percent slopes	SdE	0.1	0.0%
Scantic variant bouldery silt loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	SeD	0.0	0.0%
Tunbridge-Lyman complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes, very rocky	TuD	83.0	11.3%
Tunbridge-Lyman complex, 25 to 60 percent slopes, very rocky	TuE	0.8	0.1%
Total Area of Interest		**737.4**	**100.0%**

VI. FOREST MANAGEMENT

The Town of Wolcott intends to manage the community forest primarily for the ecological health and resilience of the forest ecosystem and the larger ecosystem of which it is a part. A secondary goal is the enjoyment of the community, through the aesthetic and recreational opportunities. Extraction of timber and other forest products are not excluded by these goals; however the Town intends that such activities shall be conducted in the support of the ecologic goals, with the intent of fostering a healthy, resilient and appropriately diverse ecosystem on the property, and throughout the region, rather than as ends in themselves. Emily Potter, Lamoille County Forester will be preparing a detailed Forest Management Plan in accordance with these objectives and the Forestry Goals listed under above Section III.

VII. WILDLIFE

Protection of the Wolcott Community Forest will support contiguous forest habitat that many native plants and animals depend upon, including species like bobcats and black bears that require large forest blocks for species survival. Such habitat, together with other important habitats such as wetlands and vernal pools, also supports natural ecological processes such as predator/prey interactions and natural disturbance. Conservation of this property helps protect landscape connectivity and wildlife movement for this part of Lamoille County. The property spans two adjacent habitat blocks considered Highest Priority Connectivity and Priority Interior Forest blocks in the Vermont Conservation Design, supporting broad scale north/south connectivity across the Lamoille River valley and along the Green Mountains. Over 80% of the property also falls within The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Lands Network. Movement of animals from one habitat patch to another is the most common function associated with connecting habitat. This function is particularly important for wide- ranging animals, such as bobcats and black bears, or for animals that require a great deal of space to meet their daily life needs, such as barred owls or northern river otters. Although connecting habitat is often associated with wide-ranging mammals, it is equally important for animals with relatively small ranges. Spotted salamanders, for example, use connecting habitat in spring to move from their hibernation sites to breeding pools.

The value of connecting habitat is a function of both seasonal and spatial patterns of wildlife behavior. For example, connecting habitat may allow black bears to access important food resources during a specific time of year (seasonal), or it may prevent isolation of bear populations by allowing free exchange of breeding adults (spatial). Ultimately, connecting habitat can ensure that the habitat, movement, migration, and behavior requirements of most native plants and animals are conserved across a broad landscape. The broader ecological value of connecting habitat is to join fragmented pieces of habitat, thereby reducing the deleterious effects of habitat fragmentation and population isolation. Linking small or otherwise isolated habitat patches may reduce the risk of local population extinctions by ensuring immigration, recolonization, reproduction, and exchange of genes for some plant and animal species.

Important habitat features at this property include wetlands, river channel, and woodland seeps, which can serve as important spring foraging sites, breeding sites for amphibians and birds, and water catchment. The vernal pools and seeps provide breeding habitat for amphibians, with spotted salamander eggmass identified during the late May site visit by Peters with other spring and seepage associated salamanders such as the Northern dusky, Spring and Two-lined Salamander likely present as well. The Elmore Branch river channel, the associated wetlands and adjacent upland forest provide suitable habitat for a Globally Vulnerable (G3) and State Uncommon (S3) species which is threatened by illegal collection and habitat loss/habitat degradation. Preservation of this river corridor is critical for species that depend on undisturbed waterways and riparian areas.

The upland forests on the property, primarily Northern Hardwood Forest, provide habitat for a range of species. Deer frequently find food resources in the herbs, shrubs, and new growth of trees in these forests, with evidence of browsing by deer evident in seedling regeneration. Bear, deer, moose, and coyotes are known to use the site for foraging and winter habitat. The mixture of hemlock-northern hardwoods, small exposed ledge systems and outcrops provides ample habitat for bobcat and porcupine.

Over 18 acres of open meadow provides high quality nesting habitat for various grassland birds. Additionally, open land provides a niche habitat for arthropods and small mammals. Both are critical food web elements for the apex species occupying these parcels.

VIII. RARE SPECIES AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The following information is from ecological assessments conducted by Matt Peters in the summer of 2021 (Bedell property) and fall of 2022 (Bourne property). For more information, please see the entire document in Appendix E and F.

The most significant fine-scale biodiversity feature documented on the Bedell property was a robust and widespread meta-population of the Rare (S2) Trailing Stitchwort (*Stellaria alsine*), a delicate plant of woodland seeps and other wetlands with cold groundwater seepage hydrology. Overall, thirty-six individual seeps, spanning 8 acres, were mapped during the Bedell assessment, and an additional 7 acres of woodland seeps on the Bourne property makes this natural community the most extensive wetland cover type on the Property. This habitat was studied extensively due to the frequent presence of the rare Trailing Stitchwort and to assist in the future planning process for future recreation activities and trail construction. More intact examples, typically fully shaded or with small canopy gaps overhead, have saturated organic muck soils and sparse to lush herbaceous vegetation that includes many of the following: common jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), water carpet (*Chrysosplenium americanum*), rough sedge (*Carex scabrata*), blue skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*), fowl manna grass (*Glyceria striata*), hooked crowfoot (*Ranunculus recurvatus*), foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), large-leaved avens (*Geum macrophyllum*), dwarf raspberry (*Rubus pubescens*), common bitter cress (*Cardamine pensylvanica*), silvery glade fern (*Deparia acrostichoides*), turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), cinnamon fern (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*), marsh blue violet (*Viola cucullata*), and the rare trailing stitchwort. The total population of trailing stitchwort is estimated to be thousands of stems, and it may use many of the potentially suitable habitat patches over time.

Peters' assessment of the Bourne property identified 17 previously unknown rare and uncommon plant species, including 3 vascular, and 14 bryophyte (moss and liverwort) species, 4 of which are considered Very Rare (S1) over the span of three field days. Nine of these species are listed as

Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan and two are considered regionally rare in Flora Conservanda (an analysis that only applies to vascular plants). Almost all the rare plants are associated with the Lamoille River shoreline or an open cliff exposure and outcrops scattered throughout the upland forest. Just one species, the moss *Trematodon ambiguus*, was found elsewhere, occurring on disturbed soil patches in recently harvested areas of upland forest. Rare and Uncommon vascular plants include Weft Fern (*Crepidomanes intricatum*), Matted Spike-rush (*Eleocharis intermedia*), and Ovate Spike-rush (*Eleocharis ovata*). The latter two are small, uncommon, annual sedges of seasonally exposed shorelines that persist in the seed bank and appear when and where conditions are right. The four Very Rare nonvascular plants include three mosses, *Anomobryum concinnatum*, *Didymodon rigidulus*, and *Hyophila involuta*, and a liverwort, the *Lophocolea minor*. The moss, *Anomobryum concinnatum*, was found along a localized zone of enriched seepage at the base of the Temperate Acidic Cliff while the other three were documented along the shoreline outcrops of the Lamoille River.

The majority of the Wolcott Community Forest property consists of mainly forested upland habitats. The bulk of this is composed of three common matrix forest types, Northern Hardwood Forest, which covers over 60% of the Property, Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest, and Red Spruce-Northern Hardwood Forest, in declining order of extent, and with varying ecological conditions. Additionally, there is a modest-sized hilltop patch of the Uncommon (S3) Lowland Spruce-Fir Forest, small patches of Rich Northern Hardwood Forest and Sugar Maple-White Ash-Jack-in-the-Pulpit Forest variant. and the Hemlock-Red Spruce Forest variant of Hemlock Forest. There are also small areas of more disturbed forest, a pine plantation, and several openings. The Northern Hardwood and Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forests on the upper slopes of the western Bedell parcel are the most mature, except for a small area of recent harvesting in the northwestern corner. Overall, the forests are typical for acidic till and glacial outwash derived soils, with only small pockets of localized enrichment.

There are 25 distinct natural community and land cover types present on the Property, including seven Uncommon (S3) types outlined in Table 2 below. Overall, the property is dominated by common matrix forest types with a history of past agricultural and forestry uses. While many areas are in good condition, none of the natural communities constitute State-Significant occurrences. Over thirty acres of wetlands are present, including woodland seeps and seepage swamps, riparian wetland meadows, and open surface waters. Significant among these is the 9-acre stream and wetland complex encompassing nearly half a mile of the Elmore Branch with its floodplain wet meadows and shrub swamps. This area provides important flood mitigation for the Pottersville settlement downstream and merits restoration work to reforest parts of the streambank. Both the Elmore Branch and its tributary, Whitcomb Brook, are beautiful, scenic streams with extensive sections of bedrock-lined channel and numerous cascades and mini-gorges, as well as a small potential swimming hole, making them excellent recreational assets.

Table 3: Natural Communities of the Wolcott Community Forest

Natural Community/Land Cover Type	S Rank	Area (acres)	# of Occurrences	State-Significant Occurrence Present?
Wetlands				
Alder Swamp	S4 - Common	2.0	3	No
Alluvial Shrub Swamp	S3 - Uncommon	1	1	No
Artificial Pond	n/a	0.6	1	n/a
Hemlock-Balsam Fir-Black Ash Seepage Swamp	S4 - Common	1.8	6	No
Northern Hardwood Seepage Forest	S3 - Uncommon	0.9	1	No
Red Maple-Black Ash Seepage Swamp	S4 - Common	2.4	9	No
Silver Maple-Ostrich Fern Seepage Swamp	S3 - Uncommon	1.1	1	No
Woodland Seep	S4 - Common	12.4	64	No
Vernal Pool	S3 - Uncommon	0.3	8	No
Riparian Wet Meadows/Shrub Swamps	n/a	6.8	1	n/a
River Channel	n/a	1.4	1	n/a
Uplands				
Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest	S5 - Common	112.2	1	No
Hemlock-Red Spruce Forest (Hemlock Forest Variant	S4 - Common	3.5	1	No
Lowland Spruce-Fir Forest	S3 - Uncommon	26.8	1	No
Northern Hardwood Forest (not including variant below)	S5 - Common	482.8	1	No
Sugar Maple-White Ash-Jack in the Pulpit Forest (NHF variant)	S5 - Common	0.6	1	No
Railroad Ballast	n/a	0.1	1	n/a
Red Spruce-Heath Rocky Ridge	S3 - Uncommon	1.4	1	No
Red Spruce-Northern Hardwood Forest	S5 - Common	70.1	1	No
Rich Northern Hardwood Forest	S4 - Common	1.4	1	No
Riverside Outcrop	S3 - Uncommon	0.2	1	No
Temperate Acidic Cliff	S4 - Common	0.3	1	Yes
Disturbed Upland Forest	n/a	1.8	1	n/a
Openings	n/a	18.7	7	n/a
Pine Plantation	n/a	2.5	1	n/a
Total		753.1		

IX. WATER RESOURCES

Rivers and Streams

The Wolcott Community Forest is situated in the Lamoille River watershed, with ⅓ mile of direct frontage on the Lamoille River, 0.4 miles of frontage on Elmore Branch and 5.5 miles of headwater

streams including Whitcomb Brook.

Whitcomb Brook is the collection of 3 drainages which come together just west of the property. It runs through the property for 3000 feet, dropping over 130 feet in elevation. Several slide and drop waterfalls are present along its course. The length is entirely wooded and sits in deeply carved valleys in many areas. Several seeps and small (<l/10th acre) wooded wetlands are found along the banks of the brook and at the base of the slopes.

Elmore Branch runs northerly adjacent to East Elmore Road for 2100 feet. In contrast to Whitcomb Brook, this brook meanders through a wet meadow for over half its length (on the property). Soil in this area is highly erodible and the stream changes course routinely. Given the road restricts natural movement to some extent, protecting the area between the road and the brook as well as an undisturbed buffer on the west side of the brook will allow the brook to remain dynamic. The northern half of the brook drains into a steep sided ravine before exiting the property.

Both the Elmore Branch and Whitcomb Brook are beautiful, scenic, small streams with extensive bedrock-lined channel sections and numerous small cascades, chutes, and mini-gorges, as well as a small potential swimming hole near the East Elmore Road. These brooks join just north of the property and drain into the Lamoille River less than 1 mile to the north.

Wetlands

There are eleven (11) different wetland natural communities totaling 30.5 acres located on the Property, only 7.2 acres of which were previously mapped, making up roughly 4% of the property. The most important section of wetland land cover is 9.4 acres of stream and surrounding riparian wetland habitat along Elmore Branch. Wetlands are protected by the State of Vermont and all management activities will be designed to preserve their integrity.

Vernal Pools

Seven natural vernal pools are found on the property, some of which provide amphibian breeding habitat.

X. RECREATION AND EDUCATION

In general, the Community Forest purpose, as stated throughout this document, is to **ensure that the experience of being within a natural environment is accessible to the greater community.** Therefore, the Town of Wolcott intends to support all forms of compatible uses that respect the

terms of the easements and the overall community and ecological intentions of the purpose statement. Recognizing that there is a variety of conserved public and private lands in the area, the committee will seek to ensure that recreational and educational activities are generally accommodated and encouraged in the town forest, as and when interested members of the community come forward with a feasible proposals for utilizing the property in ways that align with the purpose, that work well with other ongoing uses and activities in the forest and the surrounding community, and that are neutral or positive in their impact on the evolving rural community character of the town.

The Wolcott Community Forest not only offers close-to-home recreation, but also a place for people to engage with their community and connect with nature. The property is within walking distance of the town center, including the Town Office, Library, Recreation Fields, Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, and Wolcott Elementary School. Visitors may park at the Wolcott access to the LVRT, the Wolcott Recreation Field or at parking areas on East Elmore road, to be constructed with funding from Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) via a grant which TPL and the Town have secured for development of trails and associated amenities at the Town Forest.

Currently, there are a few miles of interior forest roads on the property that can be used for walking, skiing, snowshoeing, wildlife watching, and exploration. Plans are under way to construct a 5-mile network of multi-use trails on the property, by highly respected professional trail builders Sinuosity, from Morrisville, funded by the VOREC grant. These trails will be maintained and managed by the new Wolcott Community Trails Committee.

The town will maintain a standing Forest Stewardship Committee which will regularly review and evaluate the usage patterns, and recommend updates to policies in situations where supported activities are coming into conflict with each other or with overarching purpose.

Listed below are some examples of recreational and educational activities that in the future may be either supported, supported with limitations, or proscribed by the Town of Wolcott, as circumstance warrant. This list is illustrative only, and does not limit the consideration of any

activity not mentioned.

- Primitive Camping in the Forest
- Private or Public gatherings of any type.
- Campfires and bonfires at gatherings
- Domestic dog's access to different areas of the forest.
- Bike access in different areas of the forest (existing trails, ad-hoc trail construction)
- Establishment of trails and facilities for horse-back riding
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Trapping
- Ongoing use of snowmobiles.
- Other vehicles powered by internal combustion engines
- Electric bikes
- Back-country Ski/snowboard access.

At the beginning of Town Stewardship, as of time of purchase, the Town of Wolcott establishes the following baseline guidance:

Hunting:
Hunting is a long-standing traditional use for Vermont Forest land, and many community members have a history of hunting on the properties that have become the Town Forest property. However, as public property, the Town Forest is no longer exempt from the Federal Gun Free Schools Zone Act of 1990 (as amended in 1996) which prohibits carrying firearms within 1000 feet of School Property. Therefore, at this time, hunting in accordance with State regulations is allowed in the Town Forest EXCEPT within a Safety Zone around the School property established by the Forest Stewardship Committee. At this time, the Safety Zone is defined as the portion of the Town Forest that is north and east of Gates Farm Road.

Fishing:
Fishing in accordance with State regulations is allowed in the Forest.

Trapping:
Unattended traps represent a risk factor for other recreational uses of the forest. Trapping is allowed for the management of nuisance populations, when deemed necessary by the Forest Stewardship Committee or Select Board or their appointed delegates, in order to properly manage the forest in accordance with the Stewardship plan and the principles therein.

Dogs:
Domestic dogs are allowed on the property on leash, in accordance with Town Ordinance. Owner/caretakers must collect and dispose of dog waste.

Horses:
Horse traffic requires special consideration with respect to erosion control and trail maintenance,

invasive species control, compatibility with other uses, and parking accommodations. Horses are NOT allowed on the property at this time.

Bicycles (including Mountain Bikes and E-Bikes):
Bicycles are allowed in the town forest on designated trails only. Bicycle users must adhere to any and all posted trail restrictions, and yield to other trail users. Electric Bikes are NOT permitted at this time. The Select Board or Forest Stewardship Committee may allow exceptions in cases where they are serving as assistive technology for a person with a physical disability.

Snowmobiles:
Snowmobiles are permitted on the existing VAST trail, as conditions allow. Snowmobilers must adhere to VAST guidelines with respect to trail closures due to conditions.

All-terrain Vehicles and other motorized recreation:
ATVs, dirt bikes and other motorized recreational vehicles require special consideration with respect to compatibility with other uses due to noise and exhaust, erosion control and trail maintenance, and parking accommodations. In accordance with the terms of the conservation easement, motorized vehicles are NOT permitted for recreational usage, except as noted above (snowmobiles, e-bikes at discretion of Select Board or Stewardship Committee).

Public Events and Gatherings:
Public events sponsored by the town or other entities may occur with prior approval from the Forest Stewardship Committee, Town Select Board or other appointed subcommittee, provided they are freely available to the public in a non-discriminatory manner, and align with the principles and conditions of the overall Stewardship Plan. Approval will be conditional on commitment from the Event Organizers to ensure proper site care and post-event cleanup, as well as any other conditions the Committee or Select Board may choose to establish in the future.

Camping:
Pending further study, overnight camping is NOT permitted in the town forest.

Bonfires and cookouts:
Fires shall be allowed in sites to be designated by the Forest Stewardship Committee. Fires are NOT allowed outside of those sites, except as part of planned forest management or facilities maintenance activities.

Swimming
Swimming in streams and rivers shall be allowed in areas designated by the Forest Stewardship Committee.

XI. PROPOSED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

As the Conservation Easement identifies that one of its key purposes is "To require that management of the Protected Property be guided by a public management planning process", the Town Select Board retains the final decision-making authority for matters pertaining to the Town Forest. The Select Board shall appoint and empower a standing Forest Stewardship Committee who shall be responsible to provide a point of contact and forum for considering proposed activities and actions and to provide well-informed and well-considered advice to the Select Board with respect to management decisions pertaining to the Town Forest and the Stewardship Plan. In particular, the Stewardship Committee will perform the function described in section X (*...regularly review and evaluate the usage patterns, and recommend updates to policies in situations where supported activities are coming into conflict with each other or with overarching purpose.*…)

Subsequent to the closing of the property, Stewardship Committee shall consist of 7 voting members, to be appointed by the Selectboard on rotating terms.

The Stewardship Committee shall continue to be guided by the existing charter as outlined above in section II. The Select Board, in consultation with the Stewardship Committee itself and the Grantees of the Conservation Easement, may amend the Charter, the structure of the Stewardship Committee, or both, if the parties agree that such amendments are necessary or beneficial for the function of the Stewardship Committee in fulfilling the goals of this Plan and the Conservation Easement.

XII. SIGNATURE PAGE

Stewardship is an ethic recognizing that the land and its natural inhabitants have an inherent worth and that we have a responsibility to manage our actions as part of that. It guides us to manage our activities to the utmost of our abilities, to ensure the future health, productivity, and well-being of the land and its natural communities and species, and to allow our successors opportunities at least equal to ours to use the land and its resources. This Community Forest Plan will help to guide the Town of Wolcott in actively protecting and managing their forestland and related resources.

The signatures below indicate the approval and certification of this Community Forest Plan by the following parties.

FEE OWNER
Town of Wolcott Selectboard

By: _____

By: _____

By: _____

By: _____

By: _____

EASEMENT CO-HOLDER
Northern Rivers Land Trust

_____
Jack Travelsted
Board Chair