

Vermont Land Trust Farmland Access Program

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Our purpose

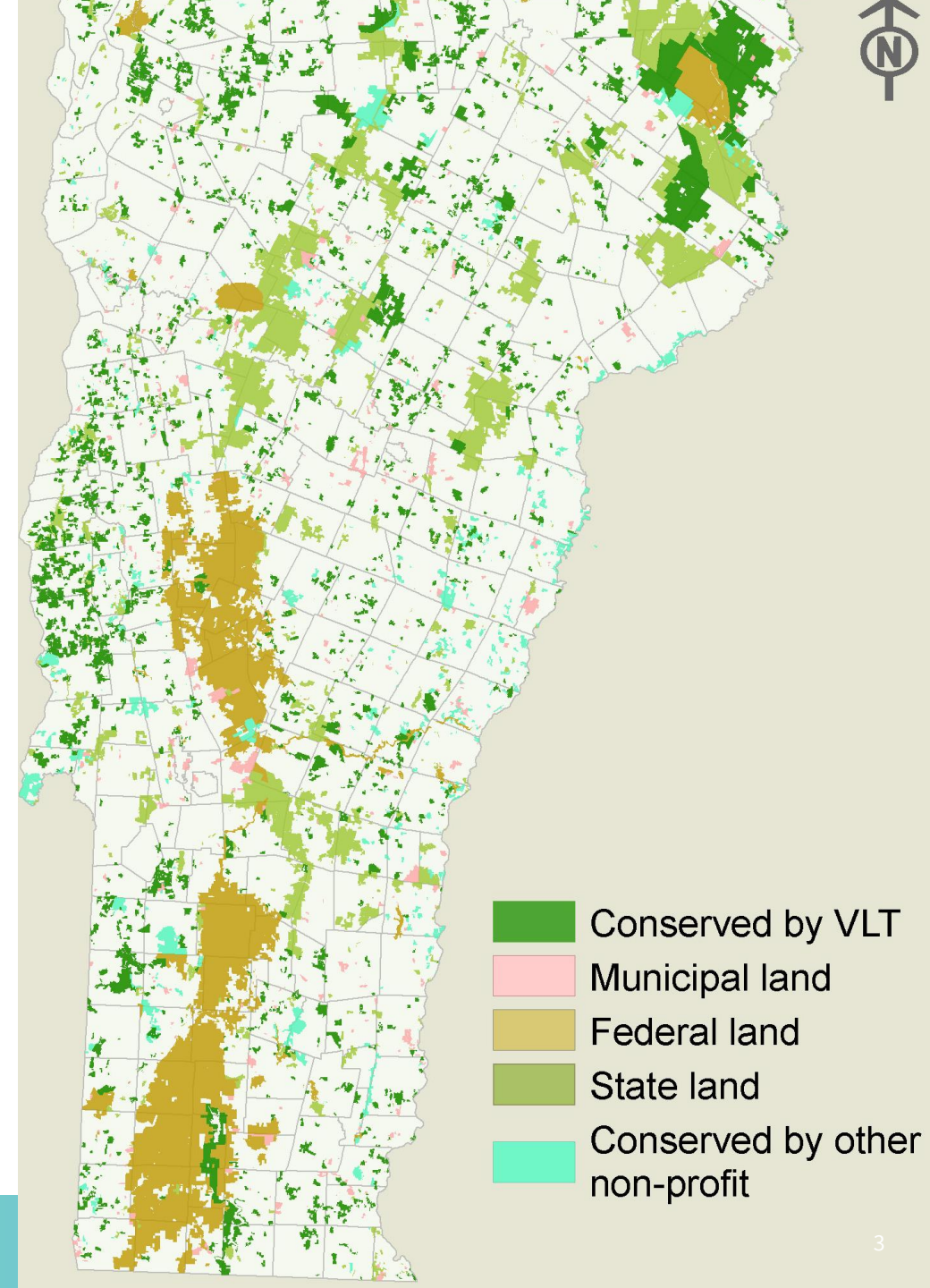
Rooted in Vermont since 1977, the Vermont Land Trust helps people protect, care for, and connect to the home we share.



Mad River Valley

2024 Agricultural Highlights

- 2,400 acres of farmland out of 8,773 total acres conserved
- Helped 7 farm families buy land
- Protected 38 miles along rivers and 248 acres of wetlands, majority on farms



The Vermont Farm Landscape

- Increasing farmland values
- Declining dairy sector
- Farms getting bigger and smaller
- Aging farmers
- Need for improved farmworker housing
- Increasing development pressure
- Growing climate change impacts



Blue Ledge Farm, Leicester



Heartwood Farm, Albany

Farmland Access Program

- Support the transfer of farmland in Vermont to keep land in production and owned by farmers
- Provide additional assistance to new and beginning farmers and historically disadvantaged producers
- Use conservation easements and fee ownership
- Hold options to purchase at agricultural value on the majority of our farm conservation easements
- Develop and test new tools to accomplish our goals



Old Road Farm, Granville

100 Successful Transfers

Strong demand

- 80 conserved farms sold in last 5 years
- 842 farm seekers (as of January 2024)

Pipeline

- 48 farmland conservation projects (12 farmland access)
- 4 Retroactive OPAVs (all farm transfers)

Revolving loan fund

- \$15M in debt capital to buy farms
- Since 2019, 12 farms purchased for lease to own arrangements

The Farm Upstream

- 52 acres along Lee River in Jericho
- Purchased for ~30% of the full value after conservation
- New and beginning farmers with a collaborative mode
- Vegetable production, minimal flood damage in past two seasons
- 50 foot buffer secured along Lee River
- Conservation easements supported by VHCB and NRCS and local conservation fund



Defreest Farms

Waitsfield

- Conventional dairy (herd based in Warren)
- 70 acres
- Includes riparian protections, land retirement, buffers, and public access along Mad River
- Funded by USDA, VHCB, DEC



H386 Reflections

- Appreciation and support for the intent of the bill
- Strong existing service provider network in place
- More resources and professional development needed
- Support a study to look at tax incentives for farmland transfer
- Continues to be a need for legal tools and funding to continue to impact the cost of land



Farmland Transfer and Succession Strengths

- Strong network of service providers in the state who are well connected
- Effective collaboration with conservation
- Vermont Land Link
- LAOB
- Interest rate buydown programs





Lucas Dairy Farm, 390 acres, Orwell

Farmland Transfer and Succession Needs

- Transfer planning expertise and capacity
- Legal and tax accounting assistance
- Consistent funding for Vermont Land Link
- Financial incentives for sellers
- Funding for deferred maintenance
- Other support to continue to make farming more viable
- Support for the high cost of housing post COVID

Vermont Land Trust



UNITING LAND AND LIVES

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