



FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION  
**VERMONT**



AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# BATTENKILL VALLEY FOREST CONSERVATION PROJECT

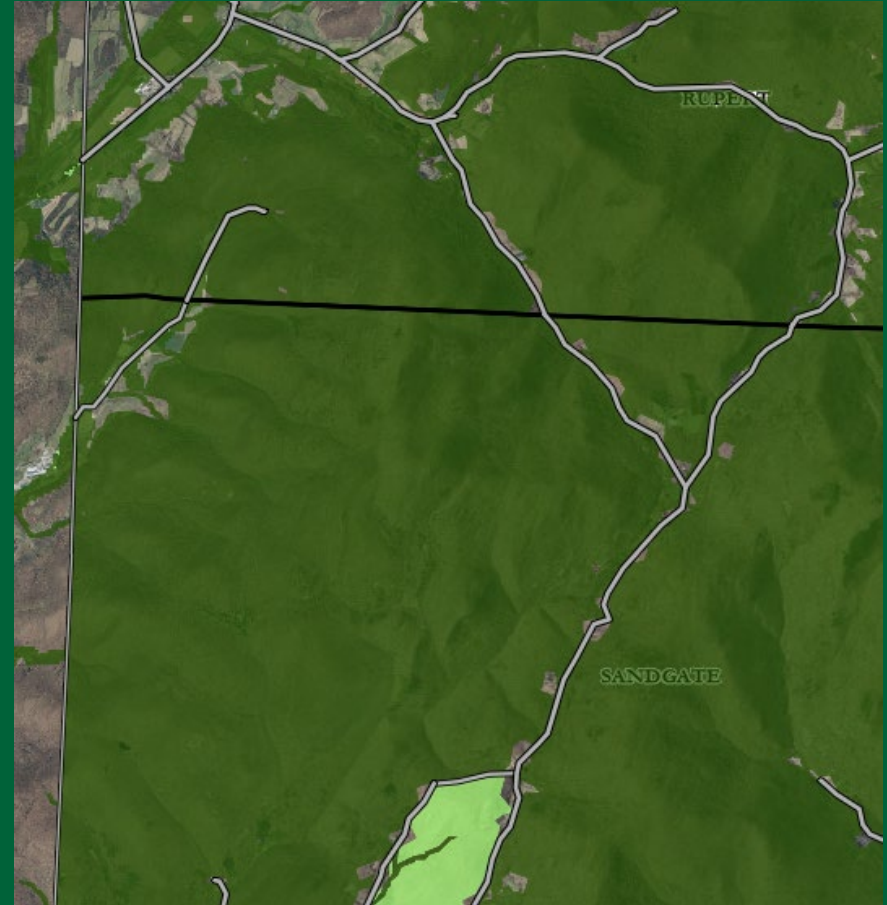
November 16, 2023

WELCOME



# ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

- Taconic Mountain biophysical region
  - Regional biodiversity hotspot
  - Important for climate resilience
  - Important for wildlife connectivity
- Hudson River watershed
  - Headwaters of the Battenkill and Black Creek subwatersheds
- Vermont Conservation Design:
  - Landscape Scale Conservation Priority
  - Highest Priority Interior Forest Block
  - Priority Connectivity Block
  - Highest Priority Surface Water and Riparian Areas



# ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

- 13 different natural communities, including a rare Dry Chestnut Oak Woodland
- Over ten acres of wetlands and vernal pools including many forested seeps
- 11.5 miles of headwater streams
- 23 very rare to uncommon plant species



# OTHER CONSERVATION VALUES

- Open to public access
- Opportunities for recreation
- System of roads and landings
- Historic resources
- Scenic values



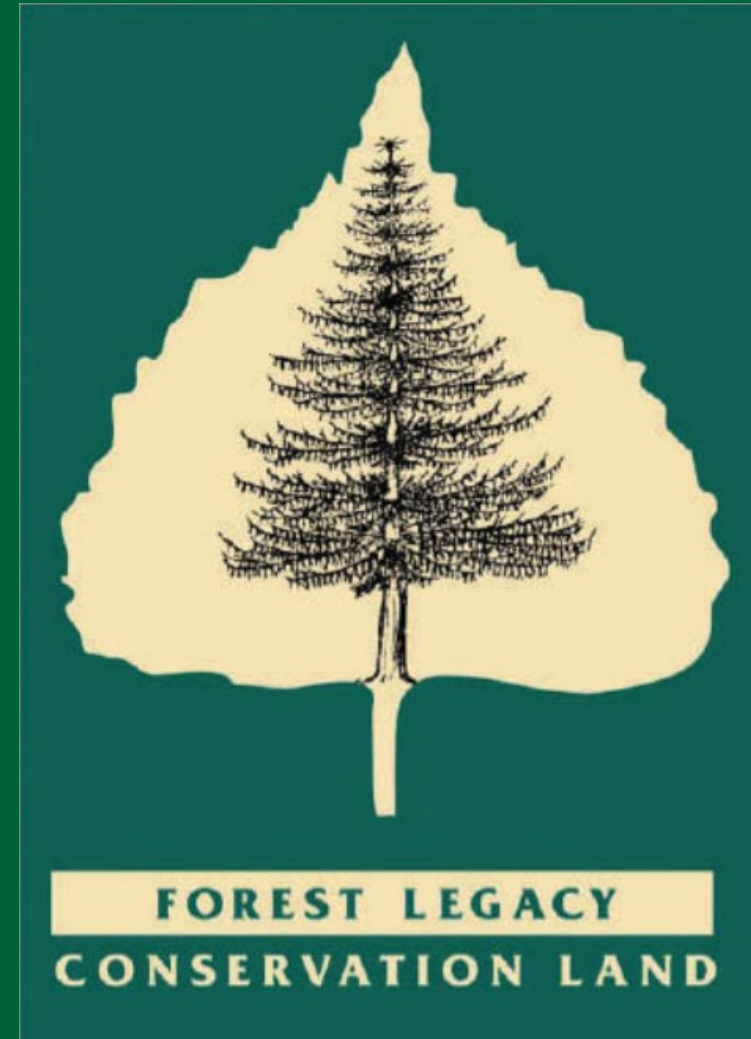


# STATE LAND ACQUISITION

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# PROCESS

- FPR and ANR review and approval
- Town review and support
- Apply for funding from the federal Forest Legacy Program
- Due diligence: title, legal, survey work, appraisal
- Draft legal and closing documents
- Purchase property
- 2-5 year process



# GOALS FOR LAND PROTECTION



## DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS PARKS AND RECREATION

- Natural and Geologic values
- Cultural and Historic values
- Recreational values
- Scenic Values

## FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM

- environmentally important forest areas
- important scenic, cultural, fish, wildlife, and recreational resources, riparian areas, and other ecological values





**PLANNING FOR STATE LAND  
MANAGEMENT**



# PLANNING GOALS

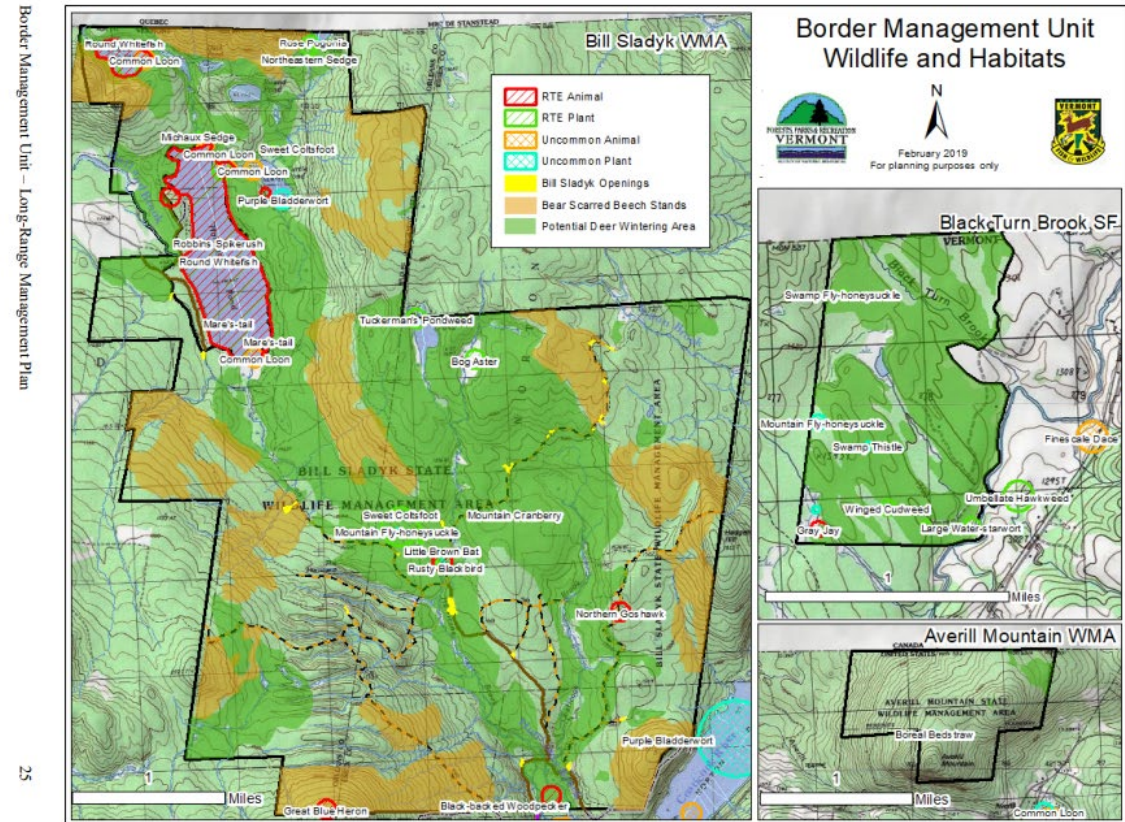


- Landscape-scale natural resource planning and management
- Understand public desires and opinion
- Balance multiple uses
- Provide transparency into state land management
- Provide management vision across administrations, staff
- Provide opportunities that the public seeks, and that advance ANR's mission

# MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

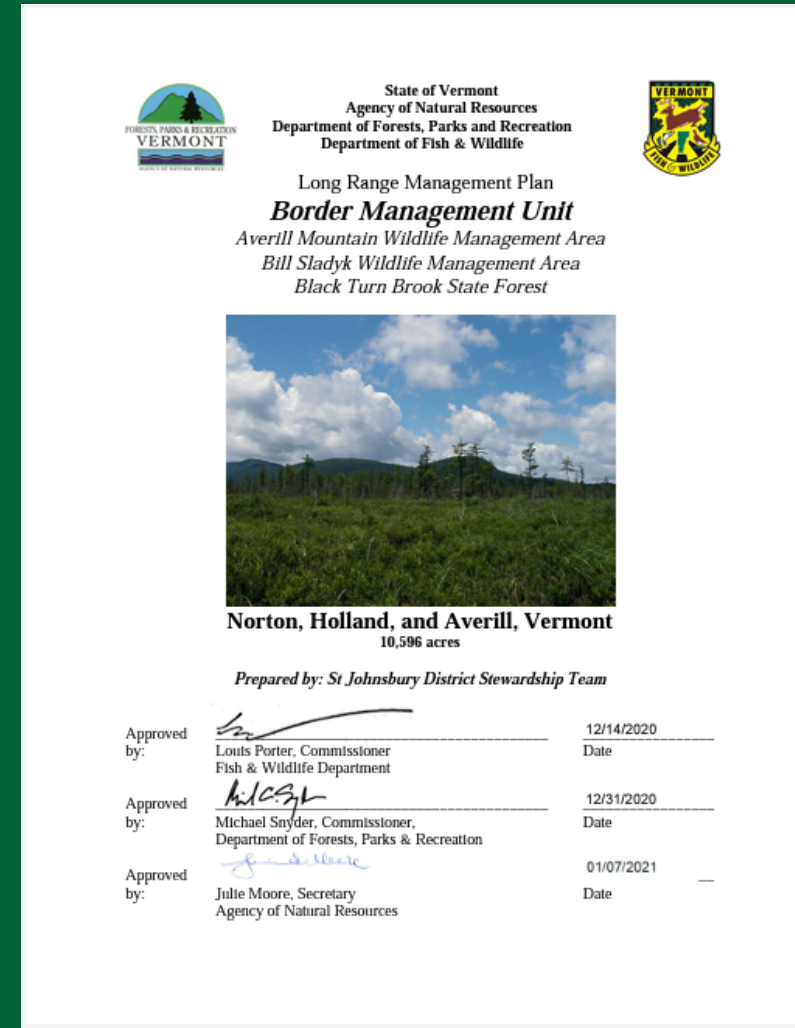
## Natural Resource Assessments:

1. Legal constraints
2. Wildlife and Natural Community
3. Forest Health
4. Timber Resource
5. Water Resource
6. Fisheries Resource
7. Historic Resource
8. Recreation Resource
9. Instructure and Public Access
10. Scenic Resource




# CURRENT PROCESS

1. Natural Resource Assessments
2. Public Scoping
3. Plan Drafted
  1. Assignment of Land Use Classifications
    1. General Management
    2. Special Management
    3. Highly Sensitive Management
    4. Intensive Management
  2. Identification of Management Strategies and Actions
4. Public Comment
5. Final Draft




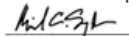

State of Vermont  
Agency of Natural Resources  
Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation  
Department of Fish & Wildlife

Long Range Management Plan  
**Border Management Unit**  
Averill Mountain Wildlife Management Area  
Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area  
Black Turn Brook State Forest



**Norton, Holland, and Averill, Vermont**  
10,596 acres

Prepared by: *St. Johnsbury District Stewardship Team*

Approved by:	 Louis Porter, Commissioner Fish & Wildlife Department	12/14/2020 Date
Approved by:	 Michael Snyder, Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation	12/31/2020 Date
Approved by:	 Julie Moore, Secretary Agency of Natural Resources	01/07/2021 Date



# MANAGEMENT OF STATE LANDS

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# WHO MANAGES STATE LAND?

- District Stewardship Teams
  - 10-12 natural resource experts representing the three departments
    - Wildlife biologists, foresters, recreation specialists, ecologists, watershed planner, fisheries biologist
  - Responsibilities:
    - Develop management plans
    - Manage ANR-owned land
    - Respond to proposals for use of state lands
    - Evaluate proposed acquisitions



# ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP PLANS

- What, where and how of the upcoming year of work on State Lands
- Reviewed and approved by:
  - District Stewardship Teams
  - ANR Lands Team
  - Permitting and resource experts



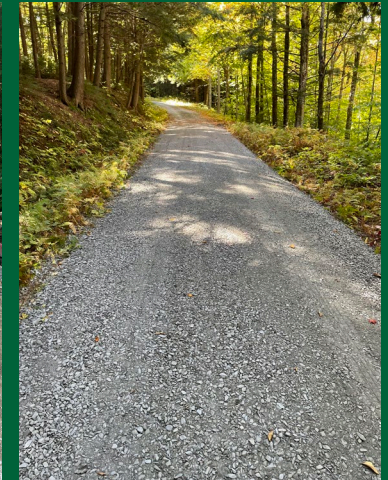
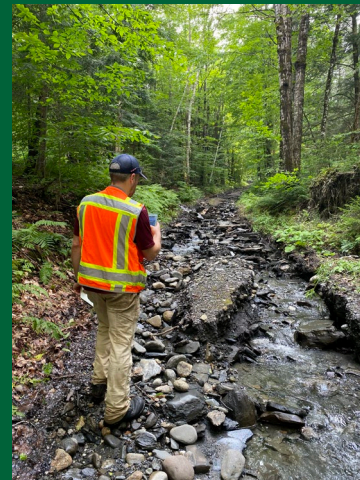
# FOREST MANAGEMENT

- Promoting healthy forests
- Addressing climate change
- Managing invasive plants, pests and diseases



# ROADS AND PARKING AREAS

- Maintaining access for the public and land managers
- Upgrading roads to reduce water pollution
- Providing parking for people accessing state lands





# RECREATION AND HISTORIC FEATURES

- All types of recreation in all seasons
- Maintaining existing resources and responding to requests
- Securing and documenting history



# WATER QUALITY AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

- Creating and maintaining wildlife habitat
- Restoring stream corridors





# ADMINISTRATION OF STATE LANDS

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## PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES

- What is PILOT?
- How is the payment determined at acquisition?
- How does the payment change over time?

# WHAT IS PILOT?



- 32 V.S.A. § 3708
- ANR does not pay taxes on land it owns
- PILOT is payment-based versus value-based
- ANR's PILOT is for land. BGS pays PILOT for structures

# HOW IS THE PAYMENT DETERMINED?



- **Base Payment = Assessed Value/100  
(Municipal Tax Rate)**
- **PILOT Base Payment = Amount listed in Tax  
Bill in year of acquisition**

# BATTENKILL VALLEY FOREST PILOT



- Rupert

<b>PILOT Calculation</b>				
<i>SPAN</i>	<i>Assessed Value</i>	<i>Municipal Tax Rate</i>	<i>Equation</i>	<i>PILOT Due</i>
537-169-10121	\$497,900 for 366 acres	0.4813	$\$497,900/100(0.4813)$	\$2,396.39

- Sandgate

<b>PILOT Calculation</b>				
<i>SPAN</i>	<i>Assessed Value</i>	<i>Municipal Tax Rate</i>	<i>Equation</i>	<i>PILOT Due</i>
564-178-10059	\$1,092,200 for 2,540 acres	0.8892	$\$1,092,200/100(0.8892)$	\$9,711.84

# SCHOOL TAXES



- The Equal Educational Opportunity Act (1997)
- All Vermont taxpayers will absorb the loss to the State Education Fund
  - Egg Mountain property contributes \$17,000 to the statewide education budget
  - Total education budget = \$2.34 billion
  - **Individual impact = less than 1/10th of a cent**



# ADJUSTMENTS TO PILOT




- Every 3 to 5 years, the ANR Secretary may recommend an adjustment to the Legislature
- ANR works with PVR to come up with adjustment
  - Adjustment is the 5-year Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of the Effective Municipal Tax Rate
    - The rate at which the Effective Municipal Tax Rate grew over 5 years
  - The Effective Municipal Tax Rate = total municipal tax revenue divided by the total equalized municipal grand list.
- 2022 – adjustment of 1.29% for FY2023 – so the base payment for each parcel went up by 1.29%
- Next adjustment scheduled for 2025 to 2027

# BENEFITS OF STATE LAND

- Public Access and Recreation
- Habitat and Biodiversity
- Sustainable Management
- Resilience
- Supports Local Economy





THANK YOU!

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QUESTIONS?