



Greensboro Land Trust Newsletter



No. 29

Visit our website at www.greensborolandtrust.org

May, 2024

GLT Annual Meeting, Monday, July 29

GLT's annual meeting on **Monday, July 29**, will feature Tracy Zschau, president of the **Vermont Land Trust** and St. Johnsbury selectperson. Meeting starts at **7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**.

Tracy was appointed VLT's president and CEO last October. She has spent 26 years with the VLT, after graduating from Sterling College in Craftsbury and getting an M.S. in forestry at the University of Maine.

The VLT has conserved 620,000 acres of forest, farm and community-owned land, or over 11 per cent of Vermont's total area. Tracy has managed most of the VLT's 13 conservation easements in Greensboro, in twelve of which GLT has participated.

Among topics that Tracy will address is our Legislature's target of conserving 30% of Vermont's land by 2030 and 50% by 2050. She will also discuss climate change and other challenges affecting Vermont forests and farm land, and the role of land trusts today.



Tracy Zschau, president, VLT

Easement Closes on Greensboro Bend Land

Starting in 1967, Carroll Shatney maintained a herd of Highland cattle on his Route 16 farm north of Greensboro Bend. Carroll and later his son Ray and Ray's wife, Janet Steward, took their animals to annual livestock shows and won many prizes.

In 2003 Ray and Janet moved the majority of the herd to a parcel in Plainfield. In 2022 they decided to sell their 178-acre Bend property, initially inviting the Greensboro Land Trust to purchase a conservation easement.



Ray Shatney on Rt 16 conserved parcel

This was beyond GLT's means, so we approached VLT, which has conserved about 2,500 acres of farm- and forestland in Greensboro. Already in 2004 VLT had conserved 29 acres of pasture on the Shatney farm. VLT's activity in Greensboro has been largely accomplished with support from the Freeman Foundation, established by the heirs of long-time Greensboro summer resident Mansfield Freeman.

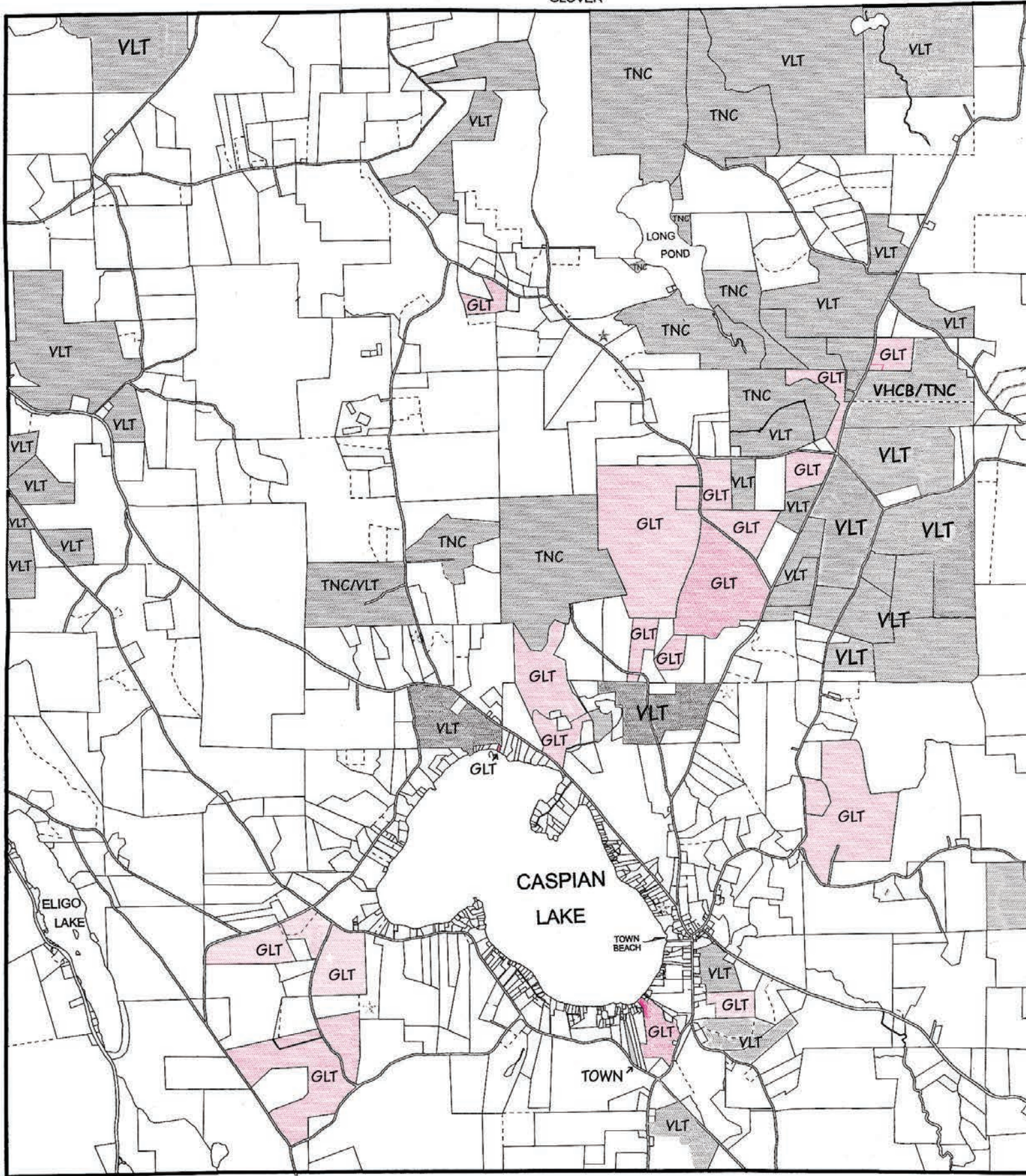
VLT approached Foundation executive Graeme Freeman, Mansfield's grandson, and Graeme agreed to finance the bulk of the easement cost. The GLT contributed \$40,000, and the easement closed in 2023.

An un-named stream flows southeast through the parcel's forested portion, entering the Lamoille River just beyond the property boundary. The wooded hillside helps protect the stream's water quality.

GLOVER

CRAFTSBURY

WOLCOTT



HARDWICK

About GLT

The GLT is a partnership of Greensboro-area people working together to ensure that, as Vermont steadily changes, important land in Greensboro is not lost to development. We help farm families conserve productive agricultural land for future generations, preserving not only our heritage but also our economic future. We protect forestland that supports a healthy wood products industry and sustains important habitat for wildlife. We help to permanently protect irreplaceable fields, woods and shoreline in Greensboro essential for recreation and scenic enjoyment. Preserving tracts of forest land that connect other forest lands to create large, unfragmented blocks, can provide refuge and corridors for wildlife and vegetation increasingly impacted by climate change.

All this while recognizing the need for town planning that accommodates residential and commercial uses.

GLT Trustees

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Meghan Wayland • Mary White

Conserving Your Land

Using legal tools called “conservation easements” or “grants of development rights,” we help landowners to voluntarily limit development while keeping the land open for forestry, farming, and recreation. The property remains in private ownership, ensuring that it is protected in perpetuity. The landowner decides whether to allow public access. Easement donations qualify as charitable contributions for federal income and estate tax purposes, but ordinarily do not affect liability for real estate taxes.

The GLT buys development rights or accepts them as gifts. We have shared twelve projects with the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), which receives funding from The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Freeman Foundation, and private donors. But mainly we rely on funds raised from residents and friends of Greensboro.

We incur expenses for appraisals, surveys, purchase of easements, monitoring, and administrative costs including insurance, public outreach and membership in the Land Trust Alliance. In 2023, 81 households donated to the GLT, \$18,130 to our general fund and \$22,410 to the Mary Downing Witherbee account. Total revenues were \$53,596 and total expenditures \$47,409. You can help by sending your tax-deductible contribution to **GLT, PO Box 135, Greensboro, VT 05841**. Call any trustee or advisory committee member with questions. Our website, www.greensborolandtrust.org, provides a financial summary and details and photos of conserved land.

Town of Greensboro, Vermont

Our map of Greensboro illustrates the lands conserved by the Greensboro Land Trust (GLT), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and the Town of Greensboro.

Map key

Conserved areas, shaded, comprise the 49 parcels listed below. Total conserved area amounts to 8.4 square miles (= 5,500 acres), or 23% of total town area of 36.7 mi².

1. GLT's 19 conservation easements, totaling 1,320 acres: Circus Smirkus, Cleveland, Dean, Downing, Edsall (2 easements), Gray Eyrie Trust, Shaun & Darren Hill, Warren Hill, Kehler, Knox, Mann, McGrath (2 easements), Paterson-Brown, Perham, Peters-Gribetz, St. Louis, and Porter Brook Nature Trail. Subsequent to the original easements, Cleveland, Dean, Mann, Kehlers, Warren Hill, Paterson-Brown, Peters-Gribetz, and Perhams have acquired parcels conserved by previous owners (Sullivan, Clive Gray family, Buckley, Lewis & Nancy Hill, Pinkney and von Hessert.)

2. Long Pond (767 acres) & Barr Hill (256 acres) Natural Areas, owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC); Green Mountain Monastery (133 acres), easement co-held by TNC and VHCB.


3. 30-acre “Greensboro Green,” 362-acre ex-Murdock property on Glover town line, and 30-acre ex-Brassknocker parcel on Craftsbury Road, owned by Vermont Land Trust (VLT).

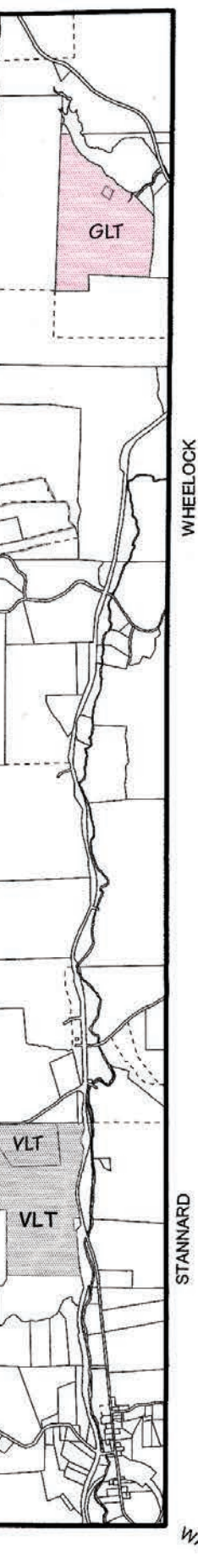
4. Twelve VLT easements to which GLT has contributed: two Todd Hardie farms (ex-York & ex-Fontaine--260 & 157 acres); two Shaun & Darren Hill farms (73 & 207 acres); Kehler farm (51 acres); Murdock homestead (150 acres); Lowell Urie farm (of which 145 acres in Greensboro); Black Hills tract (of which 189 acres in Greensboro); Highland Lodge (76 acres); Michaud (ex-Lumsden—81 acres); Wilson Farm (ex-Hazendale) co-held with VHCB—41 acres; and Shatney-Steward farm, 178 acres.

5. Nine other VLT easements: Shatney farm (313 acres); Circosta homestead (85 acres); Kehler lot on Garvin Hill Rd.(37 acres); and five parcels on Craftsbury town line, totaling 323 acres.

6. Former Barton Tree Farm on Gebbie Road (now owned by John Downing--121 acres).

7. Two 3.5-acre strips owned by the Town of Greensboro, one on Lake Shore Road donated by Currier & Dill, the other, the former Willey property next to the town beach, purchased by the town with federal assistance.

 [shaded] Conserved land

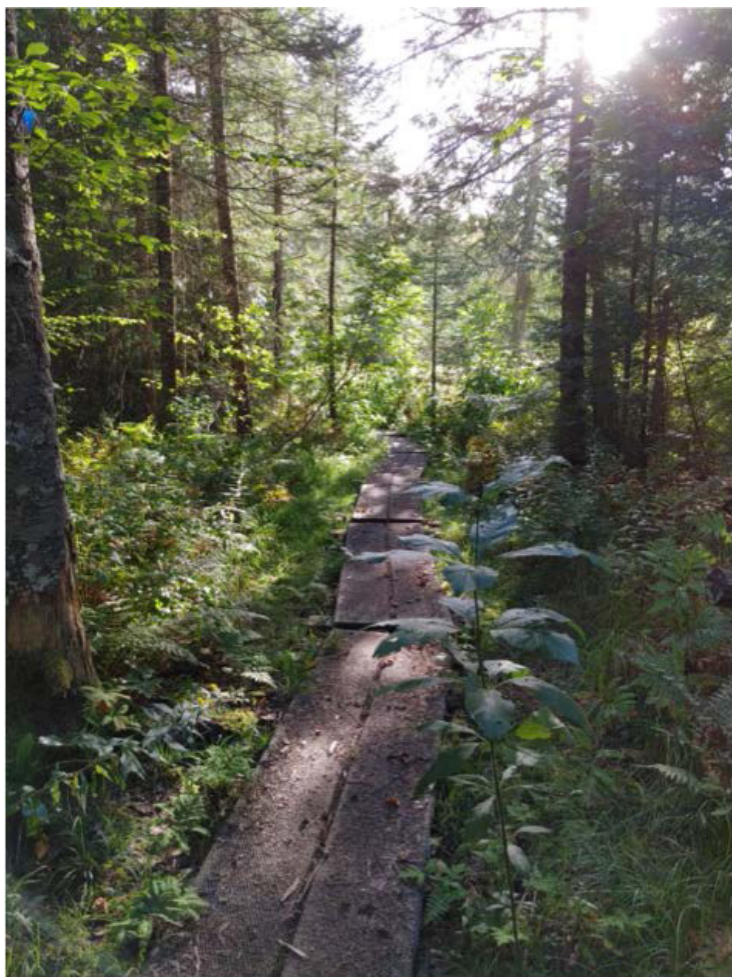


Porter Brook Nature Trail

In 2019 GLT purchased an easement on the PBNT to ensure public access in perpetuity. The property on which the trail is located is protected from future development by an easement held by The Vermont Land Trust.

The trail was designed in 1996 by naturalist Cheryl Eklund, and maintained for several years by Highland Lodge's former owners, David and Willie Smith. It was reconstructed in 2021 by the Northwoods Stewardship Center in Charleston, VT.

The diverse forest types traversed by the trail, combined with views of Porter Brook, which supports spawning populations of brook and rainbow trout as well as riparian wetland, offers walkers a mosaic of natural landscapes. The trail, which is included on the Town of Greensboro website list of hiking trails, has been signed to help children and adults alike better understand the wild places in our town.



Porter Brook Nature Trail

Unfortunately, the trail was significantly impacted by the July 2023 flood event. Since then, GLT has restored the boardwalks with the help of local volunteer teams. However, a number of bridges have been moved or washed out completely. Funds are being raised to restore these bridges in a way that will minimize the risk of damage from future flood events. GLT is applying for a grant from The Green Mountain Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation. In addition to a contribution from GLT reserves, contributors to date include the Greensboro Association, the Town of Greensboro through the Greensboro Conservation Commission, the owners of Highland Lodge, and some additional private donors

In the meantime, notices have been posted at either end of the trail advising hikers that a number of the stream crossings have been washed out and to plan accordingly.



Volunteer Crew at Porter Brook Nature Trail

Northern Rivers Land Trust

GLT's sister organization, the Northern Rivers Land Trust (NRLT), was founded in 2007 with active GLT encouragement. Its objective was to promote land conservation in towns neighboring Greensboro and Hardwick where community interest did not support individual town land trusts. NRLT's board initially comprised citizens from Albany, Craftsbury, Hardwick, Walden, Wolcott and Woodbury in addition to Greensboro.

NRLT obtained its first easement in 2008, comprising an 18-acre parcel on Bridgman Hill Road. By 2023, NRLT had acquired 15 conservation easements in Albany, Craftsbury, Glover, Hardwick, Lowell, Stannard, Wolcott and Woodbury, covering 928 acres. As of mid-2024 an additional eight projects were in various stages of development.

NRLT's most ambitious project to date is a community forest in Wolcott, covering 730 acres along the south side of Route 15, and involving investment of \$1.8 million. A substantial contribution is forthcoming from the VT Housing & Conservation Board, which will co-hold the easement with NRLT.

The protected area contains a mile stretch of the Lamoille Valley rail trail and a network of hiking trails.



Wolcott Community Forest – photo by Matt Peters