



THE WESTFORD CONSERVATION FUND

***Maintaining Westford's
Natural Beauty***

Westford Conservation Commission

Westford Town Office

1713 VT Rt. 128

Westford VT 05494

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WESTFORD, VT

What is the Conservation Fund?

The Westford Conservation Fund was established by the voters of the town at the 2004 Town Meeting. The Fund will be used to help conserve land in Westford and to promote farms and farm products.

How will the Conservation Fund work?

The Westford Conservation Fund will provide a small portion of the money needed to purchase development rights to agricultural and forestry land in Westford. The Conservation Fund will also help pay for stewardship costs for that property. Willing landowners would donate or sell the right to build residential or commercial buildings on their land to a private land trust or other conservation organization. The landowner would also agree to limit the use of the land to agriculture, forestry, or low impact recreation. These agreements are permanent and apply to any successive owners of the property. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, land trust or another conservation organization will ensure that these restrictions are adhered to in the future.

How will the Conservation Fund benefit Westford?

Preserving family farms is a vital issue for Westford, and Vermont, in general. Land conservation helps a farm pass from generation to generation. The proceeds from the sale of development rights help to:

- fund the exiting farmer's retirement;
- provide cash to the next owner for the purchase of equipment or livestock; or
- bring the price of the farm down to a level a beginning farmer can afford.

As Chittenden county continues to grow, so does development pressure in Westford. Traditional family dairy farms are quickly disappearing in Vermont, and existing farmers are growing older. Agricultural land is being kept open by non-traditional farms, which are gradually increasing in number as younger farmers look for ways to keep the land productive while still making a living. How and whether farms and other open space in Westford is transferred to the next generation will have a profound effect on the aesthetics and community of Westford for years to come.

Money for land conservation often comes from multiple sources: state or federal funds, private funds, donations and local funds. Frequently, the inclusion of local funds is important in leveraging other money from outside sources.

How you can help

Almost thirty towns in Vermont have established conservation funds. Some are supported by an annual town appropriation of either a specific amount or a portion of the tax rate. Others are funded solely from donations, while the rest are a combination of the two methods.

The Westford Conservation Commission recognizes the importance of the town's rural landscape to the residents. The majority of monies in the Fund will come from voluntary contributions. The Fund may accept gifts of land, development rights, or money to be

used for the purposes of the Fund.

Contributions to the Conservation Fund are considered tax deductible by the IRS.

Applying for Funding

Applications can be picked up at the Westford Town Office. The Conservation Commission will review all applications, then provide the Selectboard with a recommendation. The applicant will be notified in writing as to the Selectboard's decision. If further information, or a site visit, is needed by the Commission, the applicant will be contacted.

The Westford Conservation Commission

The Westford Conservation Commission was established in 1996 by a vote of the town residents. As with other Conservation Commissions, our mission is to look out for the town's natural resources.

The Westford Conservation Commission will be responsible for maintaining the Westford Conservation Fund and recommending the fund of projects. The Westford Select Board must approve any expenditure from the Fund.

Westford Conservation Fund Donation Form

Title: _____ First Name: _____

Middle initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Email: _____

Would you like to receive email updates on conservation issues? Y N

Would you like to receive email updates on trail issues? Y N

Can we publicly acknowledge donations? Y N

Contribution: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$_____

Please clip and mail with your check to:

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