

JACKSON FARM & FOREST PROJECT

PLEASE VOTE !

November 8, 2016

Many of us in the Westford have long enjoyed the scenic stretch of farmland, forestland, and stone walls of the former Jackson Farm on Brookside Road. This iconic farm is located across from the Westford School, and it stretches north to the Village Center. We now have an opportunity to protect the values that this land contributes to our Town and increase its future role in making Westford a great place to live.

Background

Upon learning that the Jackson Farm would be sold, there was a joint meeting of the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Conservation Commission about the future of the property. A volunteer committee formed to explore ways of protecting the land's many public values.

We are close to success but we need the Town to support the project. Without our Town's Support, we lose this opportunity.

Although the project budget is \$630,000, with the help of the Vermont Land Trust, funding and Conservation Grants have been found that support 2/3rds of the total costs.

We are asking the Town to support the project in a ballot measure on November 8th for \$185,000, bonded over 5 years. The increase in property tax would be about \$42 per year for 5 years for a \$250,000 property value.

(Tax rate = \$0.0168/\$100 property value).

We will also need to raise about \$50,000 in private donations. The Westford Historical Society has already pledged \$5,000 toward that goal!

Project Vision and Outcomes

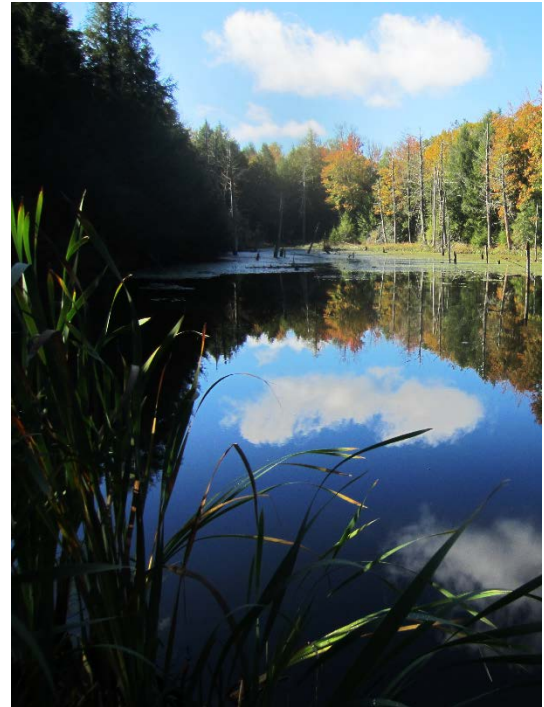
- **Westford Town Forest.** Create a 130+ acre Town Forest/Community Land on the edge of the Village to provide outdoor recreational opportunities, a place to connect with nature, an "outdoor classroom," and potentially much more. Many Towns in Vermont treasure their own Town Forests, and have made creative use of them for things like providing new floors for their Town Hall, or providing firewood for families in need.
- **Conserved Farmland.** Protect the 42 acres of open meadows of the Jackson Farm with a perpetual conservation easement and facilitate the purchase of the land by a local farm family, the Pouliots, at the land's affordable agricultural value. Keeping this farmland permanently available and affordable to farmers will help maintain agriculture as an integral part of our Town.
- **Public Trails.** A network of trails on the Town Forest parcel could connect over the farmland to trails on the School parcel. A trail along the farmland on Brookside Road, and

a trail along the Browns River on the Haller property, could help create a pedestrian way from the Village to the School.

Secure Town Leach Field Capacity. A portion of the northern meadow, which would be included in the Town Forest/Community Land property, has suitable soils for an in-ground leach field near the Village Center should the community decide to pursue in the future. Securing this substantial and proven area for potential future community use maintains our ability to increase economic activity.

Public Benefits

- **Scenic Viewshed.** The property provides popular pastoral views across meadows and woodland on the edge of the Village and across from the School.
- **Productive Farmland.** Protecting high-quality agricultural soils will help maintain farming in our community and help maintain the Town's working landscape.
- **Outdoor Recreation.** The Town Forest and associated trails could offer diverse opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, birdwatching, and many other community supported possibilities.
- **Education and "Outdoor Classroom."** The Town Forest property has a diverse forestland and portions of two beaver ponds that provide ample opportunities for outdoor education, located directly across the road from the School.
- **Pedestrian Connections between School and Village Center.** Trails along the farm, and a trail along the Browns River on the Haller property, could help to create a pedestrian connection between the Village and School.
- **Scenic and Historic Stone Wall.** The stone wall on the Jackson Farm has become a Westford institution, adding to the scenic views along Brookside Road.
- **Solving Current Village Leach Field Issues.** Municipal buildings, and some private homes, located in the Village Center are facing uncertain futures regarding wastewater systems. Securing this land on the Jackson Farm would help address those problems.
- **Capacity for Future Growth and Development.** Securing leach field capacity on the Jackson Farm would enable future growth of homes and businesses to create a more vibrant Village Center.



For more information, please check out Westford's website at:

<https://westfordvt.us/lets-save-the-jackson-farm-and-create-a-new-Westford-town-forest/>



PLEASE VOTE !
November 8, 2016