

MAD RIVER WATERSHED CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP
2009 Annual Report

The Mad River Conservation Partnership brings together the vision and expertise of the **Vermont Land Trust (VLT)**, the **Friends of the Mad River**, and the **Mad River Valley Planning District** to protect land important to the future of the Mad River Valley.

As a result of this unique partnership, more than 9,500 acres of farm and forestland in the Mad River Watershed are protected by perpetual conservation easements held by VLT. These properties include approximately 10 percent of the Valley's best agricultural soils, 10 working farms, hundreds of acres of additional leased farmland, 4 town forests, 6.2 miles of frontage on the Mad River, and thousands of acres of forestland owned and stewarded by private landowners, municipalities, and the State of Vermont.

The Conservation Partnership completed three conservation projects in 2009, which advanced local food production, community recreation, and the protection of wildlife habitat and the Mad River corridor. Generous community participation in VLT's Two Farm Campaign raised \$200,000 in donations from local businesses, churches, and individuals, providing the leverage needed to obtain more than \$280,000 in funding from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board for the protection and revitalization of two Valley farms.

The Conservation Partnership's 2009 land conservation projects are described below:

Scrag Municipal Forest- Waitsfield

In July 2009, the Town of Waitsfield expanded the previously conserved 360 acre Scrag Municipal Forest by conveying a conservation easement on an adjoining 200 acres of forestland recently acquired by the Town. These 560 acres of permanently protected, high elevation woodland include wildlife habitat, headwater streams, and more than one mile of ridgeline along the Northfield Mountains. The Scrag Municipal Forest will provide the town with a source of sustainably managed timber and offer the community significant recreational and educational opportunities.

The Kingsbury Farm- Warren and Waitsfield

In April 2009, the Vermont Land Trust sold the Kingsbury Farm to the Vermont Foodbank, a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting hunger in Vermont. The property was sold subject to a conservation easement, which will protect the agricultural, riparian and recreational values of the farm. A trail easement providing public access to a swimming hole and future trail was conveyed to the Town of Warren. The Kingsbury farm will be operated by a farmer appointed by the Vermont Foodbank to supply nutritious produce to local food shelves in the Mad River Valley.

This project was made possible by the participation of many local residents and community groups who joined the Conservation Partnership in planning for the future of this farm. Funding from many generous donors and the Town of Warren's Conservation Reserve Fund was critical to the success of this effort.

The Bruce Farm- Moretown

Also in April 2009, following more than 100 years of ownership by the Bruce family, 102 acres of scenic farm and forestland along Route 100B and the Mad River was conserved and sold by the Bruces to new farmers, Rae-Anne and Keith Lacroix. Following the passing of Clifford Bruce, Philip, Ron and Marty Bruce worked with the Vermont Land Trust to protect their historic family farm from development and ensure its affordability to the Lacroixes and future generations of farmers. The Lacroixes plan to establish a diversified agricultural operation producing vegetables, poultry, pork and beef for the community. The generous support from local donors and enthusiasm for a new source of locally-grown food was instrumental to the conservation and renewal of this historic farm.

Respectfully submitted by:

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