

## **Hinesburg Natural Resources/Land Conservation Trust Fund**

### **Introduction**

The Hinesburg Land Trust requests funding to conserve the 307 acre Lafreniere Farm located 8472 Route 116 in Hinesburg. The property will be purchased in partnership with Vermont Land Trust and conservation and development easements will ensure the land remains open space and is farmed. The current farmers, who have rented the land for almost 10 years, have agreed to purchase the land they have been renting and continue dairy farming on the land.

This property, near the town's northern border with St. George, creates an attractive open space gateway to the town and includes expansive views of the valley and the Adirondack Mountains. It has been farmed for dairy for about 100 years and is still desirable as cropland for the farms.

Larry Garvey, the abutting farmer to the north, has agreed to purchase 99 acres and Bernie Guillemette, who farms in St. George and Shelburne, will purchase the other 208 acres including the barn and house. The house will be subdivided to have its own parcel separate from the conserved lands.

### **Application Checklist**

#### **Completed and signed application form**

Please accept this completed checklist in lieu of an application form.

#### **Project Schedule**

VHCB funding	Completed
Purchase and sale	Completed
Farmers identified	Completed
Local funding	August - December 2015
Closing	December 2015

### **History**

Hinesburg Land Trust was formed in 1990 to conserve open space and agricultural lands within the Town of Hinesburg.

Notable projects include the preservation of the 600 acre Bissonette farm, preservation of the Baldwin farm and conservation of a portion of the Carse lands including a beaver pond and surrounding wetlands. Beginning with the conservation of riparian land in the Lewis Creek Watershed, HLT has facilitated the conservation of almost 1500 acres in Hinesburg, much of which is publically owned or has trails for public use.

## **Responses to Project Review Criteria Questions**

### **Significance of the proposed protected area to the community at large**

This protected area ensures that traditional dairy farming continues to be part of the Hinesburg community. Almost all of the dairy farms that formed a significant portion of the open land in Hinesburg have closed. This project ensures that a next generation of family farmers is able to own viably sized parcels of land.

The community at large benefits from the preservation of a significantly sized parcel of open land, the preservation of an attractive gateway feature to the town and appealing views of the valley and mountains.

### **Will the subject property be accessible to public use or enjoyment?**

The farm lands will remain private, but the views can be enjoyed by all.

### **Do the natural resources to be preserved have town, regional or statewide importance?**

The farm contains statewide quality soils that will be preserved in agriculture. It includes Valley Clayplain Forest, an uncommon natural community in Vermont, and will have a Surface Water Protection Zone on the western edge of the property that will protect a stream and wetlands.

### **Will the funds be used for actual land/easement acquisition, natural resource inventory or other purpose?**

Yes, they will be used for land/easement acquisition.

### **How will this expense be related to any larger ongoing or proposed conservation projects?**

Hinesburg Land Trust has a pipeline of prospective projects that will continue to support preservation of open space and agriculture in Hinesburg. This project is part of an overall goal of ensuring that farmland is preserved for future generations food supply.

This parcel is near the center of a complex of large parcels including the already protected Garvey farm and, at the back, not far from Geprag Park. There is a possibility of further protection that connects this area, both as habitat and potentially as a trail corridor, to the north and south.

**What efforts has the applicant made to obtain grants, low/no interest loans or in-kind support from other sources?**

The funding for the project comes from funds provided by the purchasing farmers, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, local donors and a bargain sale from the seller. We continue to seek local donors to close our final \$65,000 funding gap.

**What additional funding and other sources are or may be available, to what extent and under what conditions?**

The funding for the project is as follows:

VHCB grant Garvey	\$244,000
VHCB grant Guillemette	\$499,000
Local fund raising	\$ 65,000
Bargain sale	\$ 40,000

Raised to date: \$783,000

The only conditions on the funding are that we go ahead with the project as planned.

**Will the property require improvements or long term care or management? If so: Will there be a permanent legal entity established responsible for such improvements, care and/or management?**

The farmers will be responsible for maintaining their farms within the restrictions established by Vermont Land Trust under the easement. This will include development restrictions

**Have written guidelines been established setting forth the purpose, nature and extent of the proposed improvements to and maintenance of the property?**

Yes. The easement text is available on request.

**Have the necessary permits been obtained for the proposed use and/or improvements?**

A subdivision permit will be obtained to divide the land parcel. The 99 acres to be purchased by Garvey will be done as a transfer to an adjoiner and the Guillemettes will purchase 208 acres as two separate lots; a house lot of between 4 and 10 acres and the remaining agriculture land.

**Who or what entity shall take title to the property or easement?**

Vermont Land Trust

**Project Budget**

Sources

VHCB grants \$743,000

Sale of farms	\$275,000
Local fund raising	\$ 65,000
Bargain sale	\$ 40,000
TOTAL	\$1,123,000

Uses

Easements	\$805,000
After value	\$305,000
Transaction costs for VLT	\$ 13,000
TOTAL	\$1,123,000

**Status or local, state or federal permits**

Only a subdivision permit is required to divide the parcel. It will be obtained this fall.

**Status of landowner agreements**

There is a signed purchase and sale agreement.

**Maps, design drawings etc.**

See attached.

**Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Survey**

Does the project involve rehabilitation, demolition, removal of or using a building or structure that is more than 50 years old?

Yes, there is a barn and a house on this property that are both over 50 years old. Another outbuilding is present, but is not believed to be over 50 years old.



**Barn**

The barn is in poor condition and has severe damage to the foundation and structure.



**House**

The house is in fair condition and needs extensive renovations.

**Does the project include excavation (to any depth) within a flood plain or within 200 feet of a river or stream?**

No

**Does the project include a stream crossing?**

There is a seasonal stream at the south east corner of the property and an unnamed stream at the back of the property. The back of the property will be designated as a surface water protection area and be left untouched.

**Are there any foundations, mill ruins, historic roads, or other historic features or sites within the project area?**

No.

Signed:

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Hinesburg Land Trust