

VERMONT CONSERVATION PLAN TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #10

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 9:30am to 1:00pm EST

MEETING PACKET



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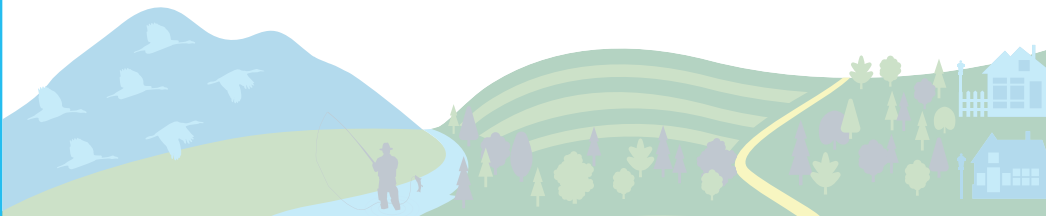
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FOR MORE INFORMATION



**Vermont Conservation Plan
Technical Advisory Committee**
Thursday, March 19, 2026 | 9:30 AM – 1:00 PM (EST)
Hybrid Meeting with in-person location and remote access available

In Person: Unitarian Church, 130 Main St, Montpelier, VT 05602
Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82378820968> (more Zoom info below)

Meeting Agenda

- I. Intros/Welcome (9:30 – 9:35)**
- II. Update from VHCB: Where we are; what’s next (9:35 – 9:45)**
- III. Reflecting on Input and Overarching Themes (9:45 – 10:15)**
- IV. Public comment (10:15 – 10:25)**
- V. Stretch break (10:25 – 10:35)**
- VI. Reflecting on themes and moving towards implementation (10:35 – 11:40)**
- VII. Public comment (11:40 – 11:50)**
- VIII. Break for Lunch (11:50 – 12:10)**
- IX. Lunch Discussion: From Listening Sessions to Long-Term Partnerships (12:10 – 1:00)**

Zoom Login Info:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82378820968>
Meeting ID: 823 7882 0968
One tap mobile
+13092053325,,82378820968# US

If you have questions, please contact VHCB Staff

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Context and Considerations for the Vermont Conservation Plan

As we begin the final months of work to recommend a conservation plan to the Legislature, the VHCB and ANR have been thinking a lot about the current context for our work, the expectations surrounding this work, and some of the systemic issues that we hope to address in our recommendations. The considerations described below represent current thinking about the current authorizing and funding environment and how that impacts the work ahead of us.

- We are implementing this plan with fewer resources than anticipated to support new programs and investments.
- Increasing the quality and inclusiveness of our work, and the sustainability of our conservation system, is just as important, if not more important right now, than hurrying to increase our acre count.
- Thoughtful conservation of the roughly 190,000 acres needed to achieve permanent protection for 30% of Vermont's lands will likely take until at least 2035.
- Our work to conserve lands in perpetuity is intertwined with opportunities for long-term, durable land protection, and we have the opportunity to implement a plan that includes the full spectrum of options.
- Finally, we must acknowledge that the acquisition of conserved lands or interests in lands only represents a fraction of the work. We must also prioritize planning for conservation, the long term management, stewardship and restoration of protected lands. Finally, we must support the viability and sustainability of the enterprises that depend on healthy, accessible lands.

Emerging Themes and Questions

Prioritize Quality over Quantity

Instead of simply increasing acreage totals through “random acts of conservation,” how can we incentivize and increase the success of projects that represent the highest value opportunities that most advance the Act 59 vision? Also, we need to acknowledge that some of the highest priority actions, and those with the highest long-term return on investment, are also more costly on a per-acre basis. How do we uplift the higher-value and higher-cost investments needed if Vermont is to meet the goals and vision of Act 59?

Streamline Processes and Maximize Efficiency

To meet Act 59's goals and vision, Vermont will need to deliver conservation and stewardship faster and with lower transaction costs. This means simplifying and standardizing program processes, aligning requirements where possible, and improving shared tools and guidance so conservation can scale without sacrificing quality.

Close Gaps in Funding, Representation, and Capacity

This process has identified gaps in who benefits from conservation, where access exists, and where implementation capacity is missing. Vermont must prioritize closing these gaps if we are to equitably increase the pace and effectiveness of conservation.

Solve the “mid-sized” parcel challenge

Vermont faces a growing conservation gap around mid-sized, privately owned parcels that matter locally for habitat, access, resilience, and community use, but often fall between systems because they are not large enough for major conservation efforts and not easy enough for smaller organizations to take on without added capacity and stewardship support.

Enhance Land Access and Affordability

Land access and the price of land have emerged as a defining challenge. Vermont must build on the foundation of work we've already done with additional tools and supports to make farmland and family forests truly affordable and accessible to undercapitalized land stewards, including new and beginning farmers. The plan must also address equitable access to the benefits of conserved land, including outdoor recreation, through complementary priorities focused on public access and community benefit.

Working Lands Viability and Access for Outdoor Recreation

Vermonters care deeply about our working forests and farms and the lands we access for outdoor recreation and renewal in nature, and we understand the critical ecological values of these lands and the lives and livelihoods they support. A healthy working landscape sustains ecosystems, provides access for outdoor recreation and supports the livelihoods of those who make their living on the land. Strengthening the viability of Vermont's working lands is foundational to achieving the vision and goals of Act 59, which require us to chart a path that increases access while protecting ecological function and connection.