



Charlotte Land Trust

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TO OUR NEIGHBORS

Charlotte Land Trust (CLT) was busy in 2023. Along with the Vermont Land Trust, we partnered with the Lake Champlain Land Trust on their easement to conserve 87 acres off of Lake road owned by Jim Donovan and Patricia O'Donnell. In east Charlotte we conserved 92 acres owned by Gus Kiley and Claire Nivola. The success of both projects relied on the generosity of the landowners.

While conserved farmland is a more visible reminder of CLT's work, forests are an equally important focus, and both of our 2023 projects are primarily forest. Each contributes to the network of wildlife habitat in town and also has a stream—Holmes Creek and a tributary of Lewis Creek—so they impact our water resources as well.

Last fall we began work on a new strategic plan. CLT's organizational strength is essential so that we can ensure that we are able to responsibly manage easements for decades to come. To start the strategic planning process we surveyed townspeople and interviewed key stakeholders. Thank you to those who shared your thoughts to help guide our future.

None of our work is possible without the support of our donors. We received 175 donations from 157 donors in 2023. You have our sincere appreciation for your generosity. If you're not a donor yet, please consider giving this year to help protect the Charlotte landscape we all appreciate. To learn more about our work and to donate, visit charlottelandtrust.org.

— Katherine Lampton,
President, Charlotte Land Trust

Cover photo: Thorp Brook running through Williams Woods. (Photo: Steve Schubart)



2023 Board members of the Charlotte Land Trust, from left to right:
Mary Volk, Jay Strausser, Frances Foster, David Pill, Lindsay Longe, Dana Hanley,
Steven Schubart, Jane Lawlis, Katherine Lampton, Jessie Price.
(Not shown: Jessica Sanford)

*"The mission of the Charlotte Land Trust is to
conserve the natural and working lands of
Charlotte for the benefit of present and
future generations."*



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ABOUT CLT

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ANNUAL REPORT 2023





Charlotte's Conserved Land

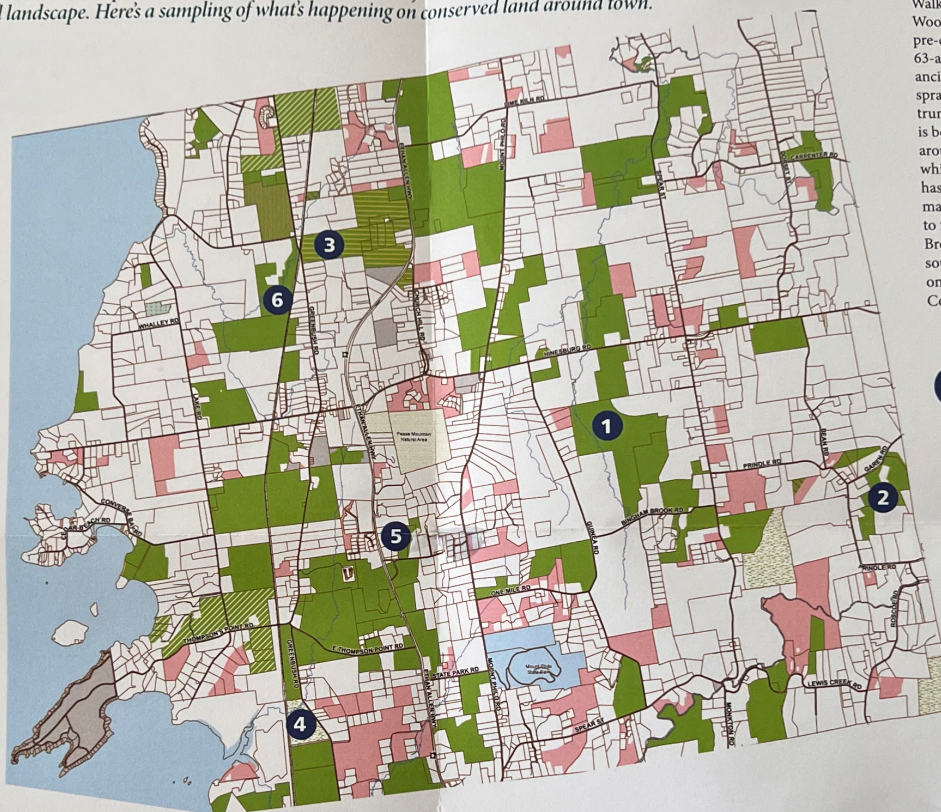
This map shows the impact Charlotte Land Trust (CLT) and your donations have made to our local landscape. Here's a sampling of what's happening on conserved land around town.

1 SUPPORTING FARM TRANSITIONS

Dave Nichols built a business growing hay and other fodder crops on over 300 acres that had been used for dairy farming. As part of his retirement plan, he has transferred his farm, which is largely conserved, to Nick Powden, a younger farmer. This reflects two trends in Charlotte's farm landscape. Farmers in town are younger than the national average. Conservation helps make farmland accessible to the next generation. And with the shift from dairy, new business models are keeping the land in production.

2 PROTECTING FORESTS

This 92 acre parcel of farm and forest on Garen and Prindle Roads was protected in 2023. The forest is part of a larger block including Raven Ridge that extends north and south, creating a corridor for wildlife species that move through the area. The property includes wetlands and a tributary of Lewis Creek which will be protected from disturbance to help ensure water quality.



"I started my grass-fed beef business on 30 acres of rented land in 2016. Conservation was instrumental in helping me acquire my farm on Hinesburg Road. I look forward to caring for this land using regenerative practices for years to come."

— Steven Schubart, owner, Grass Cattle Company & CLT board member

3 BOLSTERING BIRD HABITAT

Originally conserved in 1998, and donated to the town in 1999, the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge is recognized as a birding hotspot in the eBird app. Last year, with the support of CLT and the oversight committee, Vermont Land Trust was awarded a grant from Cornell University to help restore habitat in the park for golden and blue winged warblers. In addition, 18 new blue bird houses were installed in a meadow near the Byington bench. 55 acres of the refuge is currently being managed for shrubland and grassland birds.

4 PROVIDING ACCESS TO TRAILS

Walking through Williams Woods offers a glimpse into pre-colonial America. This 63-acre clayplain forest has ancient white oaks with sprawling branches and robust trunks. The oldest among them is believed to have taken root around 1640. The 1 mile trail which loops through the woods has raised boardwalks to cross marshy areas and small bridges to ford tributaries of Thorp Brook. Like Raven Ridge in the southeast corner of town, this is one of the properties, conserved in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, that provides publicly accessible walking trails.



5 STEWARDING LAND

Land owners who conserved a valuable parcel on Higbee Road have since sold the property. CLT has met with the current owners and visited their property, as we do each fall as part of our stewardship practice. For easements held by CLT, we collaborate with landowners to ensure that the terms of an easement are followed and the special features of their property are protected for years to come. Completing a new conservation project is always a milestone for CLT, but the stewardship that follows is equally important, if less noticed.



6 PRIORITIZING WATERSHEDS

After each downpour, the plume of muddy water that spreads from the mouth of Holmes Creek near the town beach is a reminder of how storm water affects the lake. Healthy wetlands and forests in floodplains help filter out some of the sediment in stormwater before it reaches the lake. That's part of why CLT supported conserving 87 acres along Holmes Creek in 2023. Much of this parcel is young forest and shrubland—it was previously pasture for dairy cows—and conservation ensures that it will continue to work to reduce, clean and slow runoff.

Credits - Photos clockwise from top left: Nick Powden on a rare sunny day this winter, Williams Woods trail, beaver work on Holmes Creek and bluebird house at the Charlotte Park & Wildlife Refuge. (Photos: Jessie Price & Steve Schubart) Design by: Marissa Green