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LAND TRUST NEWS

Preserving Open Lands In Our Towns

Summer Newsletter 2023

Cultivating, Nourishing and Growing a Farm

Jericho's agricultural roots run deep. For many generations, the Hunt Farm, which stretches along Lee River Road, has been actively farmed. Over the years, the dairy farm has transformed to livestock, and hay. From either direction, the beauty of this landscape is enjoyed by all who travel this road. The Hunt Farm has been carefully stewarded over many years by Maitland (Bud) Hunt and his wife Marjorie Hunt. They acquired this farm from Maitland's father, Rolla Hunt. This was not easy for them to hold on to as no farm goes without its struggles. Many have wondered just how long this rural expanse would remain intact? Could this historic farm continue? Martha "Hunt" Prince and her daughter Melanie Rodjenski have been working diligently with the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and a group of young farmers called The Farm Upstream LLC. The hope is to conserve this treasured, agricultural land. JULT is also involved in ensuring that the farming heritage continues. The plan includes conserving 52 acres on the south side of the road, a mix of prime agricultural and statewide soils. There is 3,670ft of frontage on the Lee River and about 25 acres of forested terrain.



The Farm Upstream

Left to right Jacqueline Huettenmoser, Spencer Hardy, Corinne Froning, Jake Kornfeld, missing Tucker Andrews

The Farm Upstream LLC (TFU) is a collective made up of five member-owners: Spencer Hardy, Jacqueline Huettenmoser, Jake Kornfeld, Corrine Froning and Tucker Andrews. Although young, they have many years of hands-on experience with wholesale vegetable production, no-till market gardening, poultry and livestock production, cider and fresh fruit

production, CSA management, farmers' market sales, and crew management. They are eager to develop a diversified organic farm featuring berries, eggs, and a native plant nursery. The farmers have a strong desire to serve the immediate community and plan a farm stand, CSA, and for neighbors to engage with the farm. First-year crops will include strawberries, rhubarb, and garlic.

Help Protect our future landscape... TODAY

Please note: All JULT memberships now run on a calendar year from January 1st to December 31st.

Please sign me up for:

- Conservator** Membership \$500
 - Steward** Membership \$100
 - Sponsor** Membership \$50
 - Family** Membership \$35
 - Individual** Membership \$25
 - Student/Senior** Membership \$10
 - Lifetime** Membership \$1,000
- (Beat inflation and avoid renewal notices!)*

Other Considerations:

- My employer's matching gift is enclosed.
- Please **do not** send me a "Thank-you" gift.
- I wish to remain anonymous.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Please make **checks** payable to **JULT** and mail to the address below. Or you may **pay by credit card** via our website: www.jult.org. All contributions are tax-deductible.



We're on the web: www.jult.org

Remember to "Like" us on



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The conservation easement on the 52 acres has been appraised at \$635,000. This is the value of the development rights. With the assistance of the Vermont Land Trust, a grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) was awarded for \$550,000. This leaves \$85,000 which must be bridged. Both JULT and TFU have collaborated to request \$65,000 from the Jericho Conservation Reserve Fund. This amount was approved by the Jericho Selectboard on June 15, 2023.

JULT is currently fundraising for the remaining \$20,000. With the appraised value of the conservation easement fully funded, The Farm Upstream will purchase the farm and conserve the land simultaneously. This is the LAST step towards a farming future for the Hunt Farm. **Together, we can make this happen!** Please help us close the funding gap by sending your tax-deductible donation to JULT. Donations may be sent through our website or by check with TFU on the memo line. Thank you!

Beaver Exclusion Fencing at the Wolfrun Natural Area

written by Sabina Ernst

JULT's Wolfrun Natural Area is home to many animals, including beavers, North America's largest rodent. For many years beavers had used the pond, known as Moose Pond, in an eastern section of the property. Historically their dams were located at the top of a (human-made) stone dam. Around 2020 beavers returned to the area after being absent for a few years, but this time their construction impacted an important culvert. The culvert protects a land bridge which is the only access to the bulk of the northern property and the beavers completely covered the culvert entrance with mud and branches so no water could flow through. After having the culvert cleared out 3 times over the next two years the JULT board contacted Tyler Brown, a beaver biologist with Vermont Fish & Wildlife. After walking the land with Livy Strong and John Koier in the fall of 2021, Tyler suggested waiting until spring to see if the beavers would actually return. They did! And once again the culvert was plugged. Beaver populations in Vermont have been increasing, but at the same time favorable sites for dams are becoming less common, and young beavers who leave their family group to find new homes, often end up in less favorable sites. Upon reviewing best management practices for landowners with beaver conflicts, the board decided that construction of a beaver exclusion fence would be the best way to protect the culvert while providing a home for the beavers. In June 2022, we enlisted Tyler's help to construct the fence. After the first full year with the exclusion fence, we have a win-win. The beavers have habitat and the integrity of the culvert is maintained.

Green Conservation Signs

You may have noticed green conservation signs on a number of properties in June. We have placed them on land that JULT helped to conserve and protect. The list is long and accounts for over 2,000 acres. Signs were placed at the Old Mill Park, Mills Riverside Park, the Wolfrun Natural Area, Casey's Hill, Tomasi Meadow, Kikas Valley Farm, Mobbs Farm, and Riverside Meadow. Privately owned conserved land was not included. It is our hope that those passing by will recognize the importance of land conservation in our towns.



YOU ARE INVITED!

July 27th and October 5th – Farmers' Market at Mills Riverside Park.

JULT will be at the community booth to share information about our latest land conservation activities.

August 3 Following FERNS! – Ferns and Flowers of Mid-Summer, a Botanical Ramble at Mills Riverside Park, 10 a.m.

Join recently retired UVM botanists and long-time Jericho residents Cathy Paris and Dave Barrington for a casual, all-ages walk to discover what's blooming in the Park at the height of summer. Our leaders will share their knowledge of Vermont's fern flora, a group of special interest to them, and will teach us how to recognize some common species that grace our Vermont woodlands at this time of year. A splendid time is guaranteed for all!

September 3 Annual Fall Wildflower Walk at Mills Riverside Park

Come join Liz Thompson for a casual walk along the trails of the park. We will be exploring the many plants that brighten the landscape and provide fall color. Liz co-authored the book, *Wetland, Woodland, Wild-land: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont*. Liz also helped start Vermont's Natural Heritage program that protects fragile natural areas. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the natural world around us!

Your JULT Membership Helps!

Besides supporting our ongoing land conservation work, your membership helps us to carefully steward the land that we own. Both Kikas Valley Farm and the Wolfrun Natural Area offer public access. Some trail areas at Kikas Valley Farm can be cross-country skied and biked, along with walking. Our website at www.jult.org shows maps. JULT also pays taxes on the two properties. Your membership contribution is greatly appreciated!

What is Jericho's Conservation Reserve Fund?

Since JULT has asked for \$65,000 from this fund recently, we are including some more information about it taken from Jericho's Town website.

Jericho Conservation Reserve Fund FAQs (The CRF was approved by Jericho voters in March 2020) This information is from the Town website under Conservation Commission.



What is a Conservation Reserve Fund?

A local conservation fund is a dedicated fund set up by the municipality to be used to conserve land and waters for conservation purposes. Uses of a fund may be to conserve land for agricultural, forest, wildlife, scenic, recreational, or natural area use.

From: *LOCAL CONSERVATION FUNDS; Virginia J. Rasch, Executive Director THE ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS ; 2001*

How will a Conservation Reserve Fund benefit Jericho?

In a growing town like ours, conservation opportunities can arise at any time – and just as quickly disappear, often forever.

This makes it hard for a town to plan for or quickly find the significant amounts of money needed to conserve important, vulnerable resources.

Establishing a Conservation Fund enables the Conservation Commission, Selectboard and the public to carefully review potential projects and have funding to act on key conservation opportunities when necessary.