

DRAFT (2/23/2017) – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

EAST MONTPELIER CONSERVATION FUND

APPLICATION PACKET

Dear Applicant:

Attached you will find documents related to the East Montpelier Conservation Fund (“the Fund”), including its purpose and goals, allowed uses, selection process, and the application form.

Please read these documents carefully and make sure to fill out the application form completely, referencing the guiding documents in this packet. Also, please provide a map of the property which locates the site within the town and its relation to surrounding properties. The Conservation Fund Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) will arrange to meet with you and/or other involved parties to discuss your application and answer questions you may have regarding this process. The Committee may also request a site visit.

Questions may be directed to the Chair of the Committee.

Applications may be submitted to:

Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator
Town of East Montpelier
40 Kelton Road
PO Box 157
East Montpelier, VT 05651

or: eastmontadmin@comcast.net

Thank you for your interest in protecting the rural character of East Montpelier.

Sincerely,

Conservation Fund Advisory Committee:

Art Chickering
Michael Dworkin
Bruce Howlett
Charles Johnson, Chair
Brian Lusignan

Revised: February 23, 2017

EAST MONTPELIER CONSERVATION FUND

Purpose of the Fund:

To work with willing landowners, non-profit organizations, land trusts, and government agencies to conserve East Montpelier land, wetlands, and waters for agricultural, forest, wildlife, scenic, and recreational use, and to protect important natural areas.

Goals:

- (1) Maintain the rural, working, land-based character of East Montpelier through:
 - (a) conserving important agricultural lands integral to sustainable farming, now and in the future.
 - (b) conserving important productive, and sustainably-managed forest lands.
 - (c) assisting development of a new farm or forestry business.
 - (d) facilitating intergeneration transfer of an ongoing farm or forestry business.
- (2) Enhance the network of multipurpose recreational trails and recreational access to lands and waters on conserved properties.
- (3) Preserve terrestrial, wetland, and aquatic habitats of high public value, including wildlife travel corridors, deer wintering areas, vernal pools, etc.
- (4) Maintain and improve wildlife habitat connectivity.
- (5) Preserve biological diversity, including sites of rare, threatened, or endangered species and natural communities.
- (6) Avoid excessive increases in public service costs for town residents.
- (7) Insure that conserved lands and their values are consistent with the Town Plan.

Eligibility for Application to the Fund:

Any East Montpelier landowner or official landowner representative is eligible to submit an application.

Allowed Uses of the Fund:

The Fund will be used primarily to augment (or “leverage”) other public and/or private funds on projects deemed important in achieving the Goals above.

The Fund may contribute to, but not be limited to: fee-simple purchase of property or interests in property, conservation easements (purchase of development rights, that is, removing development potential), rights of first refusal (first option to buy), options to purchase at agricultural or forestry value, long term leases, and bargain sales. Funds may also be used for site work, appraisals, and surveys with the understanding that such funds will be reimbursable to the Fund if conservation is not achieved.

Role of the Committee:

The Committee works only with willing landowners or their representatives. It reviews and evaluates each application, and makes a decision on whether to accept, reject, or modify the proposal. It makes its recommendation to the Selectboard. The Selectboard may accept, reject, or modify the recommendation of the Committee, based on other considerations.

The Committee may also engage with private non-profit land trusts, and local, state, and federal government agencies working with the landowners. Typically, it will recommend that the Fund be used to supplement funding provided by State and Federal agencies and administered by private non-profits or land trusts.

The Committee will consider soils data from USDA-NRCS, habitat and species distribution information for VT Agency of Natural Resources, the East Montpelier Town Plan, project evaluations by the Vermont Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, or other recognized authorities, or any other relevant information or interpretations. Both the Committee and applicants may seek assistance and support for their work from these and other organizations.

The Committee cannot own land or interests in land; such authority resides with the Select Board on behalf of the town.

The Committee gives consideration to the following issues in evaluating proposals:

- (1) Effectiveness of a proposed project in achieving the town’s conservation goals.
- (2) Relative importance of the proposal for agriculture, forest, wildlife, scenic, recreational or natural area use, according to available evaluation systems (see “Evaluation Resources” below).
- (3) Effect of project on adjacent land and other land in the area.
- (4) Cost effectiveness: how much money can be leveraged from other funding sources.

- (5) Preservation of the natural landscape and biological diversity in town.
- (6) Threat from conversion to other uses.
- (7) Cost of the proposal relative to the funds available in the Fund.
- (8) Compatibility with the Town Plan.

Evaluation & Selection Process:

- (1) An application must be on the **Request for Funds** form in this packet, available at the East Montpelier Town Office or online at the town's website (<http://eastmontpeliervt.org>). The completed application must be sent to the Town Administrator, for distribution to the Committee. The application must address the criteria in this document.
- (2) The Committee will meet as needed to review an application, following required public warning. Subsequent meetings with the landowner and/or representative may follow. A quorum is needed to vote for a decision on an application.
- (3) The Committee will make its recommendation and forward it to the Selectboard. The Selectboard may request a meeting with the Committee and/or applicant to answer questions or for follow-up discussion.
- (4) The Selectboard will make a decision on each proposal, to accept, deny, or modify the Committee's recommendation. It alone has the authority to expend money from the Fund.

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REQUEST FOR FUNDS

Owner's Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____

Applicant's Name (if different from owner): _____

Applicant's Address: _____ Phone: _____

Please answer the following as completely as possible. Attach additional sheets, if necessary.

Location of Land under consideration: _____

Zoning District: _____ Size of parcel: _____ Is it part of a larger parcel? _____

Please describe: _____

Outline your request, including dollar amounts and type of funding required, with reference to the criteria in the packet documents): _____

Benefit(s) of project to East Montpelier: _____

Current use(s) of the land: _____

Current restriction(s) on the land, if any: _____

What funding options have been explored? Indicate dollar amounts: _____

If agricultural land, has it been evaluated through available standard criteria: _____

Is this land mentioned in any other land study? Please describe: _____

What will insure that the property will remain in the use proposed? _____

Signature of owner/official representative: _____

Date: _____

East Montpelier Conservation Fund Advisory Committee Actions:

Date received: _____

Action taken: _____ Date: _____

Comments: _____

East Montpelier Selectboard Actions:

Date received: _____

Action taken: _____ Date: _____

Comments: _____
