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## Driving Range Forest & Adaptive Trails

<b>Applying Organization</b>	Vermont Land Trust	<b>Application Date</b>	5/15/2026
<b>Applying Contact</b>	Bob Heiser	<b>Status</b>	Submitted
<b>Record Type</b>	Member Collective	<b>Created By</b>	Bob Heiser, 5/13/2026, 8:30 AM
		<b>Create Account</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Project Overview

<b>Project Name</b>	Driving Range Forest & Adaptive Trails	<b>Requested Amount</b>	\$50,000.00
<b>Project/Campaign Name</b>	Driving Range Forest & Adaptive Trails		
<b>Type of Project</b>	Easement	<b>Project Multiple Locations</b>	
<b>Project Location (State or Territory)</b>	VT	<b>Longitude</b>	-72.8509
<b>Latitude</b>	44.3658		

### Organization Details

<b>Organization Name</b>	Vermont Land Trust	<b>Primary address for organization</b>	8 Bailey Avenue Montpelier, Vermont 05602 United States
<b>Contact Name</b>	Bob Heiser	<b>Contact Title</b>	Project Director
<b>Contact Email Address</b>	bheiser@vlt.org		
<b>Annual Operating Budget</b>	\$7,986,393.00	<b>Tax Status/Organization Type</b>	501c3 Organization
<b>Staff Size</b>	50	<b>Main Phone</b>	802-861-6404
<b>Total Membership</b>	2,223	<b>Organization Website/Social Media Feed</b>	https://vlt.org/
<b>BIPOC-led</b>	No	<b>C-Suite Staff</b>	

### Grant Details

<b>Awarded Amount</b>		<b>Awarded Date</b>	
<b>Funding Program</b>			
<b>Primary Project Type</b>		<b>Secondary Project Type</b>	
<b>Term Start Date</b>		<b>Term End Date</b>	

### Proposal Questions

<b>Mission/History Of Organization</b>	The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) conserves land for the future of Vermont. We unite land and lives for the enduring benefit of people and the place we share. We protect land and foster	<b>Location Details</b>	The Driving Range Forest and Trails Project will permanently protect access to outdoor recreation in a first-of-its-kind adaptive trail network, while conserving critical connectivity in a regionally high-
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connections to the farms, forests, and community spaces that define us. Founded in 1977, VLT has protected more than 650,000 acres of forestland, farmland, and community lands, covering over 11% of the state. Much of this land is privately owned and contributes to our abundance of local food, maple and timber products, tourism and recreation, and the vitality of our towns and villages.

priority wildlife corridor in the face of climate change. It will also protect access to a mile-long segment of the Catamount Trail, a 300-mile Nordic ski trail stretching the length of Vermont.

The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) will acquire a conservation easement on 203 priority acres of forestland in Bolton, Vermont in the Reconnecting the Greens - Mt. Mansfield to Camels Hump Wildlife Corridor, a landscape-scale partnership involving over 14 organizations. This effort focuses on connecting the two largest blocks of intact forest and wildlife habitat along the spine of Vermont's Green Mountains, totaling 127,000 acres, and reducing barriers for wildlife across the Interstate 89 and Route 2 transportation corridor.

The Project includes a trail easement to Richmond Mountain Trails (RMT), permanently protecting access to five miles of trails in the Driving Range network, the first mountain bike trail network in the world intentionally designed to be fully adaptive-ready from the outset, expanding access to nature and outdoor recreation to disabled users. The innovative trail network is the subject of the short film, "Best Day Ever," ([bestdayever.mov](#)) a film by Oscar-nominated director Ben Knight and local director and producer Berne Broudy, that has won awards at numerous film festivals internationally, including two at the Banff Mountain Film Festival. The network is garnering international attention ([outsideonline.com/adventure-travel/destinations/north-america/2026-travel-awards-driving-range-bike-trail/](#)) and is already inspiring many others to design and retrofit their trail networks to be adaptive-friendly.

The project will protect access to a critical parking area developed by RMT, supporting a strong recreation economy in Vermont's most populous county. The construction of this parking area was supported by a wide diversity of organizations, including Climbing Resource Access Group of Vermont (CRAG-VT), inspired by the increased access to climbing resources.

The project will protect 13 acres of Silver Maple-Ostrich Fern Floodplain Forest, an uncommon natural community in Vermont, a half mile of Winooski River frontage as it flows to Lake Champlain, and over two miles of frontage on Pinneo Brook and other headwater streams.

**Final Success**    The Driving Range Forest and Adaptive Trails Project in Bolton, Vermont will permanently protect access to five miles of a first-of-its-kind adaptive trail network and a mile of the Catamount Trail,    **Impact on Climate and Biodiversity**

The Driving Range Forest is located at a critical linkage in the Reconnecting the Greens - Mt. Mansfield to Camels Hump Wildlife Corridor, the focus of a partnership of 14 local and statewide

Vermont's state-traversing backcountry ski trail, while conserving 203 acres that connect over 127,000 acres of intact forestland in the regionally significant Mt. Mansfield to Camels Hump Wildlife Corridor.

organizations. Protecting and improving this connectivity will help ensure wildlife populations are healthier and more resilient by allowing genetic exchange between otherwise isolated groups. In 2025, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources published, "Implementing Vermont Conservation Design: Priorities for Using Permanent Land Protection to Maintain an Ecologically Functional Landscape." The report identified this area as one of the ten most important "priority landscape-scale corridors within Vermont," and stated that, "A relatively small loss of natural habitat in the stepping stone blocks can have a disproportionately large impact on the overall functioning of the statewide and region-wide connectivity network."

The Driving Range property directly connects two massive, intact, blocks of forestland and wildlife habitat totaling 127,000 acres. The property includes a half mile of Pinneo Brook, identified by the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife as one of three drainages where improved transportation infrastructure would best enable wildlife to cross more easily through the I-89 and Route 2 corridor. Conserving lands adjacent to these locations will be vital to ensuring investments in wildlife passage improvements happen in the future. The Driving Range property directly connects 63,000 acres of conserved and public lands to the north with an additional 31,000 acres of protected lands across the Winooski River to the south. Securing this connectivity will be critical for species movement and landscape resilience in the face of climate change in Vermont.

This project will protect 13 acres of Silver Maple-Ostrich Fern Floodplain Forest, an uncommon natural community in Vermont, a half mile of Winooski River frontage, over two miles of frontage on Pinneo Brook and other headwater streams, and approximately 11 acres of wetlands. Protecting the forested surroundings of these surface waters will help absorb the heavier rains due to climate change, thereby limiting increased flood events experienced by communities downstream on the Winooski River as it flows to Lake Champlain.

By protecting forestland connectivity, uncommon natural communities, and diverse water features, this project makes outsized contributions to resiliency and biodiversity.

**Expected Economic & Recreational Impact**

The Driving Range is the first, and still the only, fully adaptive-bike-friendly mountain bike trail network in the world, and it provides a rare, inclusive

**Strategy & Timeline For Final Success**

We have a completed appraisal and a signed Purchase and Sale Agreement with the landowner for Vermont Land Trust's purchase of a conservation

recreation opportunity for those with disabilities. The trails aren't just fun for adaptive bikers. They are fun for all, with 3,900 users tracked in a single month in 2025. Conserving 203 acres and five miles of adaptive trails will protect equitable access to outdoor recreation for disabled residents and visitors to Vermont and strengthen the state's capacity as a leader in inclusive outdoor recreation.

The parcel supports multiple outdoor recreation activities that foster strong connections to land and nature, including backcountry skiing on the Catamount Trail, hiking, bouldering, and access to rock climbing. Future plans for the property include the potential hosting of a segment of the Velomont Trail, a statewide cross-Vermont mountain bike trail project, and likely two ADA-accessible huts.

Economically, the project will create meaningful, long-term impacts for a community with a limited commercial tax base and few large-scale economic drivers. Outdoor recreation visitors contribute to local businesses through lodging, dining, retail purchases, equipment rentals, and event participation. The Driving Range trails are a teaching and learning center for adaptive trail building. Preserving access to this asset will attract tourism – both riders and trail builders from around the United States are visiting the Driving Range to experience adaptive trails that are fun for everyone, and to learn how to build them.

In addition to permanently securing access to five miles of adaptive trails and a mile of the Catamount Trail on 203 acres of newly conserved land, this project protects an access point and parking area that connects people through the Driving Range property to over 50,000 acres of public land and land conserved with public access.

easement and simultaneous conveyances of trail easements to Richmond Mountain Trails and the Vermont Mountain Bike Association for the Driving Range Trail Network and a trail easement to the Catamount Trail Association for the Catamount Trail. The Purchase and Sale Agreement has a deadline for closing on or before February 28, 2027. VLT, Richmond Mountain Trails, and the Catamount Trail Association will be seeking grants and donations through the end of 2026 and simultaneously working to finalize the necessary field work and legal work to enable acquisition of the conservation easement and trail and parking easements.

**Key Decision Makers** N/A

**Working With Business Community**

Sustainability guides our long-term vision for this project. The trails have been constructed, and once conserved, ongoing stewardship through maintenance, modification and repair will be vital. Sustaining trail access requires engagement from the business community. Local businesses have already supported this project with financial and in-kind donations, demonstrating a commitment to outdoor recreation access. TCA members that supported the construction of the trail and parking area include Oboz, Nemo, Press Forward PR, and Broudy Donohue Photography, and other supporting brands include Athletic Brewing, Santa Cruz, Velocio, Thule, IMBA, Mascoma

Bank, Ben and Jerry's, OnX, Toyota, AllTrails, Lawson's Finest Liquids, Fox Factory, Golub Foundation, State of Vermont Building and Facilities, Bivo, Yeti Cycles. Working in partnership with local businesses is mutually beneficial, as the outdoor recreation economy is supported by expanded access to the outdoors.

**Elevate Voices**

The Driving Range trail build has been shaped by local collaboration and community participation from the beginning. The trail network was developed through nearly 6,000 hours of volunteer labor by community members, demonstrating deep investment in both the land and the recreation it provides. In addition, multiple local businesses contributed funding and in-kind support, reflecting the project's importance to the broader community and local economy.

The project has also brought together a collective of outdoor recreation partners to serve a wide range of users and interests. Partnerships with the Catamount Trail Association, Velomont Trail, Vermont Mountain Bike Association, Crag Vermont, and the Kelly Brush Foundation helped construct a shared parking area designed to accommodate mountain bikers, adaptive users, backcountry skiers, rock climbers, and other recreational visitors.

A central goal of the project is to expand access to outdoor recreation for communities that have historically faced barriers to participation. The fully adaptive-ready trail network, the only one in the country, is unique and creates meaningful opportunities for adaptive athletes to enjoy epic outdoor recreation and a sense of belonging. Funding and guidance from the Kelly Brush Foundation highlights the impact of building accessible recreation and the elevation of voices from an underserved community through this project. By prioritizing accessibility and inclusive trail design, the project highlights the importance of equitable access to public lands and outdoor experiences.

Through ongoing collaboration, volunteer engagement, and partnerships with other recreation organizations, this conservation project stands as an inclusive community-focused model for outdoor recreation access.

**TCA Funding Plan**

A grant from TCA will be critical to support easement acquisition and conservation costs. We have received very positive feedback on our VHCB application, which requires significant financial leverage. Over five years, RMT raised \$400,000 to construct this first-of-its-kind trail network and associated

**Measurable On-Ground Outcomes**

To accomplish our goal of protecting the Driving Range Forest and Adaptive Trails, we will work to achieve the following outcomes in the coming year:

1. Acquire a permanent forestland conservation easement on +/- 203 acres to be co-held by the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB).
2. Acquire a permanent trail and parking easement on approximately five miles of the Driving Range Adaptive Trails network, to be co-held by the Richmond Mountain Trails and the Vermont Mountain Bike Association.
3. Acquire a permanent trail and parking easement on approximately a mile of the Catamount Trail, to be held by the Catamount Trail Association.

**Confidential Items**

There is nothing in this proposal that must be kept confidential.

parking. Supporters were asked to dig deep for trail creation, and they responded. We are now protecting these trails and the surrounding forestland forever, and we are appealing to conservation funders to leverage those previous investments. A grant of \$50,000 from TCA will be leveraged 4.7 times over from other sources, or 12.7 times including trail creation costs, or 16.7 times including 6,000 hours of volunteer time. These trails open the door for disabled users and others to access nature and recreate outdoors, all in forestland that connects immense tracts of land in a regionally important wildlife corridor. Thank you so much for considering this proposal.

**Other Relevant  
Application Details**

Thank you for considering this proposal.

