

## Craftsbury citizens meet the NRLT

On Sunday, January 27, 40 people, mostly citizens of Craftsbury, gathered at the Craftsbury Public Library to meet trustees of the NRLT and discuss the implications of the new regional land trust for their town. Paul Cillo started the session with a PowerPoint presentation on his Bridgman Hill parcel, now conserved by the NRLT (see page 1).

Cillo and his partner Judith Levine expressed their satisfaction at knowing that Paul's 18-acre parcel on Bridgman Hill Road, with its spectacular view and cultivable land, would remain open and available to agriculture in perpetuity.

Attendees then debated the pros and cons of conservation easements. Views expressed ranged from a desire to bequeath to one's descendants a guaranteed rural environment with corridors for wildlife, to concern about preventing one's offspring from developing family landholdings. Farmers in the group noted that land constituted their equity, whose development they could not be expected to sacrifice without due compensation.

NRLT trustees noted the limited resources available to the trust at the end of its first year, and described their plans to mobilize support from citizens of the subregion as well as from foundations.

During 2008 the NRLT plans to sponsor similar functions in other participating towns.

## About the NRLT

The NRLT functions as a partnership of people working together to ensure that, as Vermont changes, rural land in our region is not lost to development. We will help farm families conserve productive agricultural land for future generations, preserving not only our heritage but also our economic future.

We will protect forestland that supports a healthy wood products industry and sustains habitat critical for black bear, songbirds, deer, and other wildlife. We will help to permanently protect irreplaceable fields, woods, and shoreline essential for recreation and scenic enjoyment. All this will be done while recognizing the need for town planning that allocates portions of the landscape to residential and commercial uses.

### Conserving your land

Using legal tools called "conservation easements" or "grants of development rights," the NRLT will help landowners to voluntarily limit development while keeping the land open for forestry, farming, and recreation. Conserved property re-

mains in private ownership with the peace of mind that it is protected now and forever. The landowner decides whether to allow public access.

### Tax deduction

Easement donations qualify as charitable contributions for federal income and estate tax purposes, but do not necessarily reduce property taxes.

### Financing the NRLT

We work with landowners who love their land and want to see it conserved. The NRLT will buy, or accept gifts of, development rights.

We may share projects with the Vermont Land Trust, which receives funding from The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Freeman Foundation, and private donors. But mainly we will rely on funds raised from residents and friends of the towns we serve. In 2007, 46 individuals donated a total of \$3,395 to the NRLT.

We will talk regularly with potential conservators, and incur expenses for appraisals, surveys, purchase of easements, and monitoring. You can help by sending a check to NRLT, Box 21, Craftsbury Common, VT 05827.

### NRLT Board of Trustees

Jad Daley, Hardwick, chair  
 Steve Young, Wolcott, vice-chair  
 Bob Hawk, Walden, secretary  
 Ann Ingerson, Craftsbury, treasurer  
 Clive Gray, Greensboro, co-treasurer  
 Paul Cillo, Hardwick; Susie Houston, Craftsbury;  
 Steve Meyer, Hardwick; Nancy Moran, Craftsbury.



VLT's Rick Peterson explains easement documents to the Meyer family on March 19, 2008, as Tracy Zschau, VLT Northeast Kingdom director, looks on



# The Northern Rivers Land Trust Newsletter

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## Paul Cillo gives NRLT its first conservation easement

In 2005, Paul Cillo of Hardwick bought an 18-acre former carrot field at the corner of Bridgman Hill and Renaud Roads from Robert Houriet. Wishing to conserve this beautiful piece of land, with a striking view of Stannard Mountain over Center Road, Cillo, former majority leader in the Vermont House of Representatives and director of the nonprofit Public Assets Institute, looked for an organization that could accept a conservation easement, protecting the land in perpetuity.

At the time the Greensboro Land Trust was the only such body active locally, so Cillo contacted it. Preferring not to take easements outside its territory, the GLT proposed formation of a regional body serving Hardwick and neighboring towns. Cillo responded and worked with a Craftsbury land discussion group and counterparts from other towns to establish the Northern Rivers Land Trust (NRLT).

Once the NRLT acquired its tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service in August 2007, preparations began for the new land trust to accept an easement on Cillo's land. He and the NRLT's chair, Jad Daley, also of Hardwick,

closed on the easement at year's end.

The easement will keep the land open, allowing only agricultural structures to be built. In the foreseeable future the land is likely to provide pasturage for livestock from the neighboring Meyer farm.

Complementing Cillo's donation, the Stony Point Foundation generously contributed the monitoring fee on his easement. Land trusts raise this fee, from landowners or other sources, and invest it in a stewardship endowment that ensures permanent supervision of their easements.

## The Bridgman Hill Project: A joint VLT/NRLT effort

The Cillo easement (see adjacent article) is part of a 364-acre project that will protect more than a mile along scenic Bridgman Hill Road. In March 2008 the Vermont Land Trust sealed a conservation easement with the Meyer family, operators of the North Hardwick Dairy Farmstead abutting Cillo's land to the north.

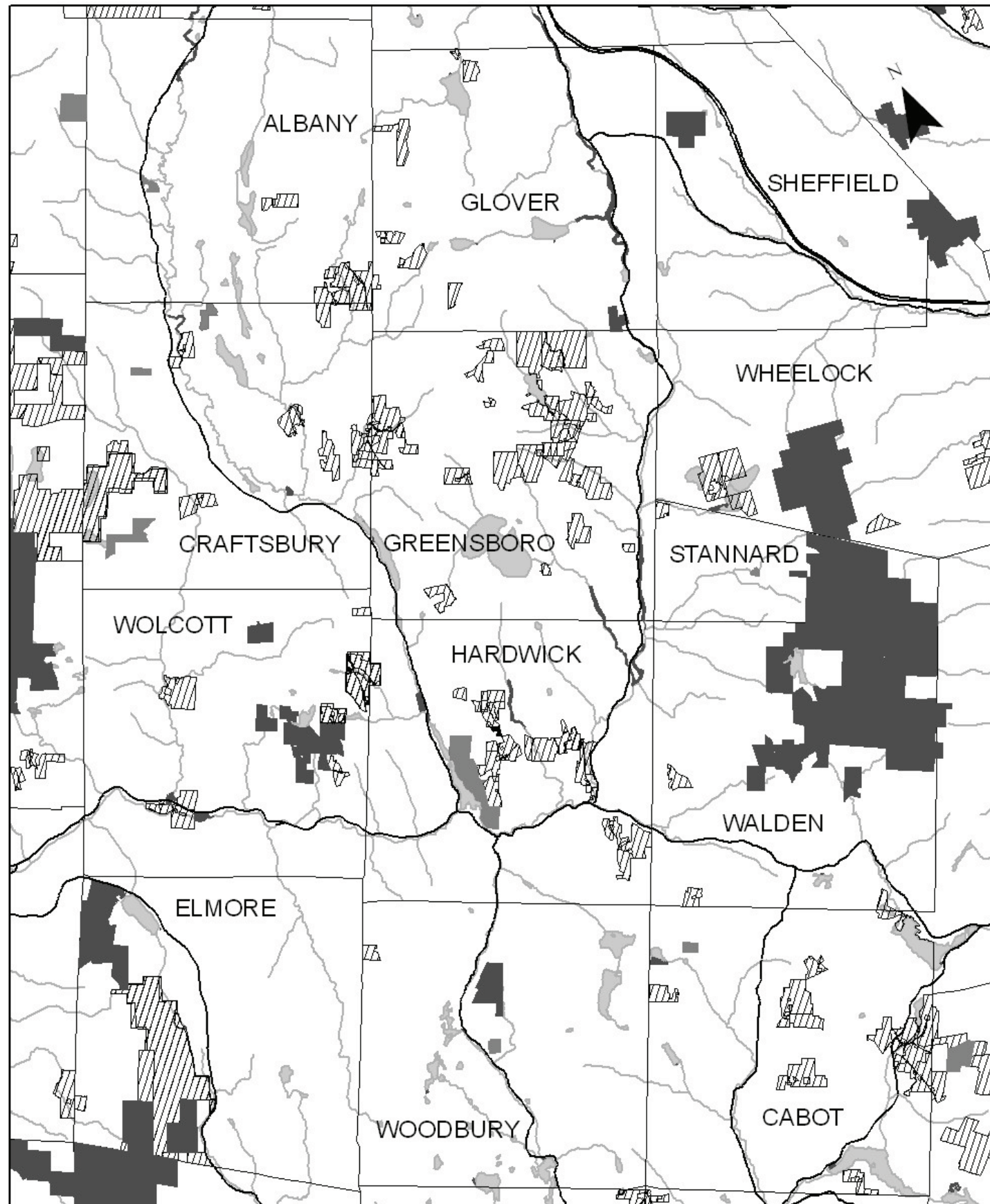
The easement, obtained through a bargain-sale financed largely by a Freeman Foundation grant, protects 218 acres of farmland and forest, including the 107-acre property formerly owned by Penelope Lewis and purchased by the Meyers in 2007. As part of local contributions to the project, the NRLT raised \$10,000 in memory of Ms. Lewis to help defray VLT costs.

In May 2008 Henry and Barrie Jordan donated an easement to the VLT on 128 acres across Bridgman Hill Road from the Meyers and Cillo. This gives the overall project its total of 364 acres (= 18 + 218 + 128).

The new easements add to 430 acres previously protected by the Vermont Land Trust in four separate holdings along southern stretches of the road. Moreover, the Greensboro Land Trust holds an easement on 150 acres owned by the Edsall family, and has just conveyed to the NRLT a 1997 easement on 22 acres owned by Andrew Meyer (see article on page 3.)



In September 2007 NRLT trustees view fields on which Henry & Barrie Jordan have donated an easement to the VLT. Meyer family farm is seen in background.



## ***NRLT Bridgman Hill celebration Monday, June 2***

All NRLT members and friends are invited to a “land conservation party” on Monday, June 2, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. to celebrate completion of the 2007/08 NRLT/VLT Bridgman Hill Project. The site: in front of the barn at 2018 Bridgman Hill Road (ex-Penelope Lewis farm, forming part of the project.) Tracy Zschau, the Vermont Land Trust’s Northeast Kingdom director, and Jad Daley, NRLT chair, will describe their organizations’ participation. The Meyer family, Henry and Barrie Jordan, and Paul Cillo will talk about their land, and the Meyers will guide visitors around the farm. Refreshments will be served.

## ***July 28: PowerPoint Show of Northern Rivers Digital Maps***

On **Monday, July 28**, Jens Hilke, Conservation Planning Biologist of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, will give a PowerPoint presentation of digital maps of the Northern Rivers area, covering bedrock and surficial geology, core forests, land use and wildlife habitat. Time: 7:30 p.m., place: Fellowship Hall, Greensboro United Church. Come and see the natural characteristics of our sub-region, and view the wildlife corridors NRLT is striving to protect.

## ***NRLT membership meeting Sunday, June 29 in Hardwick***

The Northern Rivers Land Trust will hold its second annual membership meeting on Sunday, June 29 at 7:00 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Episcopal church in Hardwick. The meeting will discuss the organization’s recent activities and program for 2008/09, and fill vacancies in the Board of Trustees. Residents of our seven towns —Albany, Craftsbury, Greensboro, Hardwick, Walden, Wolcott and Woodbury—are cordially invited, as are residents of other towns interested in extending the NRLT’s reach.

## ***NRLT attracts foundation support***

In its first year the NRLT won two foundation grants. In November 2007 the Montpelier-based New England Grassroots Environment Fund awarded us \$2,000 for organizational development, stressing efforts to expand community support and develop core “storytelling” materials.

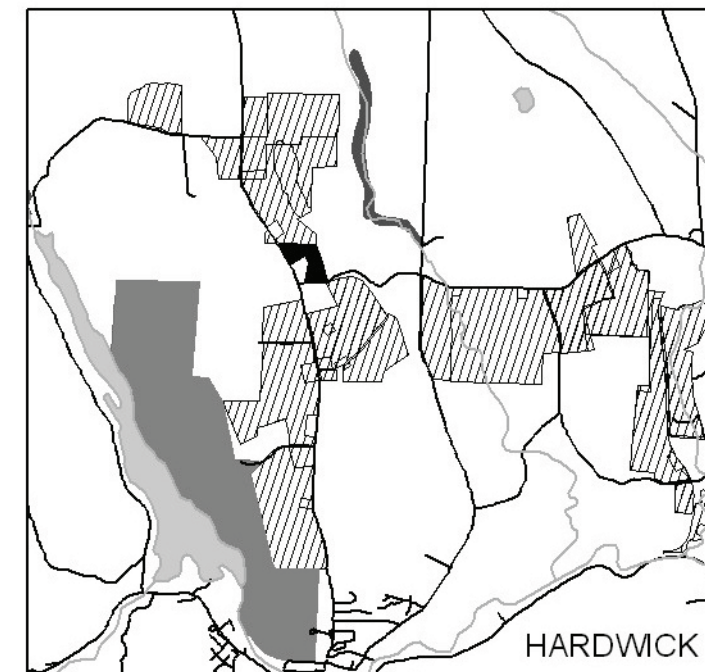
In March 2008 the Stony Point Foundation, a family agency led by John and Francie Downing of Morristown, New Jersey and Greensboro, granted us \$3,000 for the monitoring fee on Paul Cillo’s easement.

The NRLT expresses its gratitude to the two foundations for this support and for their expression of confidence in the role of a regional land trust in our 7-town area.

## ***NRLT’s easement # 2***

On January 17, 2008, the Greensboro Land Trust transferred to the NRLT a conservation easement on Andrew Meyer’s 21.5-acre hayfield on the Hardwick section of Bridgman Hill Road that it had held since 1997. At that time Andrew wished to conserve his land, but Hardwick had no land trust and the parcel’s size fell below the Vermont Land Trust’s minimum. Accordingly the GLT agreed to hold the easement until a body was established to serve Hardwick. This has now happened with the advent of the NRLT.

**Bridgeman Hill Area**



## **Conserved Lands in Northern Rivers Land Trust Region**

-  Town Lands
-  State Lands
-  Other Private Conserved Land
-  NRLT Easements
-  Major State Roads and Interstate
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  Rivers and Streams
- Shaded areas are streambank lands or easements held by the state of VT