



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Joint Fiscal Committee members  
From: Scott Moore, Legislative Finance Manager  
Date: December 3, 2024  
Subject: Grant Request – JFO #3229

Enclosed please find one (1) item, which the Joint Fiscal Office has received from the Administration.

**JFO #3229:** Land donation sale in Plymouth, Vermont from the Conservation Fund to the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation. The land is valued at \$170,000.00 with a donation sale price of \$34,319.00 making the total donation \$135,681.00. Sale price, closing costs and ongoing management costs are available in the Department budget. This donation will incur a yearly expense of \$787.76 for the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes). The PILOT program is governed under 32 V.S.A § 3708. [Received by JFO on November 19, 2024]

Please review the enclosed materials and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Scott Moore: [smoore@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:smoore@leg.state.vt.us) or Sorsha Anderson: [sanderson@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:sanderson@leg.state.vt.us)) if you have questions or would like this item held for legislative review. Unless we hear from you to the contrary by December 12, 2024, we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of this request.



**State of Vermont**  
**Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation**  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier VT 05620-3801  
[tdd] 800-253-0191  
www.vtforest.org

*Agency of Natural Resources*

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Philip B. Scott, Governor

**Through:** Julia S. Moore, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources

**From:** Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

**Date:** September 9, 2024

**Subject:** Approval for the Acquisition of 92± acres as an addition to Coolidge State Forest, in the Town of Plymouth.

### Description of Property

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) plans to acquire 92± acres in Plymouth as an addition to Coolidge State Forest. This parcel, the so-called “Ryan” parcel, is located in the northwest corner of Plymouth, bordered to the east by VT Route 100 and to the west by Coolidge State Forest. The parcel is currently owned by The Conservation Fund (TCF), who is FPR’s partner in this conservation project. Working in partnership with FPR, TCF acquired the property in 2023 with the goal of transferring the parcel to FPR as an addition to Coolidge State Forest. TCF has held the property while FPR completed its due diligence process. TCF and FPR now plan to convey the Ryan parcel, with no additional easements or encumbrances, to FPR by the end of the calendar year.

The addition of the Ryan parcel to Coolidge State Forest will protect water quality, ecologically important forestland, and scenic resources, while expanding recreational opportunities, and public and management access to the State Forest. Conservation of this land will protect approximately 1,600 feet of frontage on Madden Brook, as well as an additional 600 feet of frontage on a separate, unnamed stream. Madden Brook is an important cold-water stream in the Ottauquechee watershed that provides important habitat for wild trout. Vermont Conservation Design identifies the Ryan parcel’s stream frontage as Highest Priority Surface Water and Riparian Areas, while the rest of the parcel is identified as part of a Highest Priority Interior Forest Block and a Highest Priority Connectivity Block. The parcel has approximately 2,000 feet of frontage along Vermont’s Scenic Route 100 Byway, which will be protected and continue to contribute to the natural beauty of the Byway. Further, this frontage, paired with a new parking area to be constructed on the property, will help to expand both recreational and management access to the parcel and the State Forest, in a section of the State Forest that currently lacks both. The parcel will be open to the public for dispersed recreation such as hiking, hunting, fishing, and cross-country skiing. The nearest VAST trails pass through Coolidge State Forest approximately 1.25 miles southwest of the Ryan parcel.

The estimated annual PILOT payment for the parcel is \$787.76. The Town of Plymouth expressed support for the project, through their Selectboard, on June 17, 2024.

#### Review of Project

The Ryan project was reviewed by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Rutland District Stewardship Team (District 2) on November 8, 2022, and was approved by Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) Commissioner, Danielle Fitzko, on December 14, 2023, and by ANR secretary, Julie Moore, on April 22, 2024.

#### Ownership and Management

If this project is approved, TCF will sell the Ryan parcel to FPR at a bargain sale value. The parcel will be managed by FPR as a part of Coolidge State Forest. Management of the land will be in accordance with the interim and long-range management plans for the parcel and the State Forest. Dispersed public access will be allowed on the parcel. Use of the parcel will be limited to those uses permitted by the laws, ordinances, statutes and regulations of the State of Vermont and the Town of Plymouth, the policies of ANR and FPR, and the interim and long-range management plans. Management of Coolidge State Forest is undertaken by FPR staff, and other staff within ANR as necessary. FPR uses a variety of state and federal funding sources, as well as revenue generated by management activity, to implement management objectives.

#### Budget and Funding

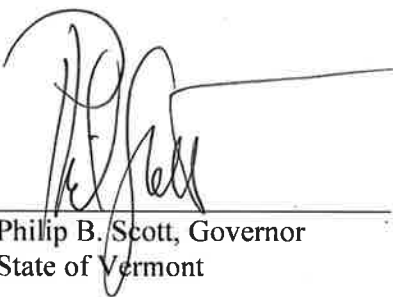
If this project is approved, TCF has agreed to sell the parcel to FPR for \$34,319. The Ryan parcel has an appraised value of \$170,000, so this equates to a bargain sale donation of \$135,681. FPR plans to acquire the property using internal funds. The Ryan parcel will also serve as a non-federal cost-share tract for the Chateauguay Forest Forest Legacy Program project, in which FPR is working with TCF to conserve 2,800 acres in this region of the State. Thus, the acquisition of the Ryan parcel will leverage federal funding and additional forestland conservation in the state.

[SIGNATURES REQUESTED ON THE FOLLOWING AA-1 FORM]

## APPROVAL FOR PURCHASE OF LANDS

We the undersigned, hereby approve the acquisition of the 92-acre Ryan parcel described above by the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in Plymouth, VT from The Conservation Fund. This approval is pursuant to Title 10, Chapter 155, Section 6303(a) and Chapter 83, Section 2606(a) VSA for acceptance of the land acquisition referenced above.


11/18/24  
Date

  
Philip B. Scott, Governor  
State of Vermont

10/28/24  
Date

  
Julie Moore, Secretary  
Agency of Natural Resources

10/28/2024  
Date

  
Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner  
Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation

**State of Vermont**

Department of Finance & Management  
109 State Street, Pavilion Building  
Montpelier, VT 05620-0401

[phone] 802-828-2376  
[fax] 802-828-2428

Agency of Administration

## STATE OF VERMONT FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REVIEW FORM

<b>Grant Summary:</b>		To accept a bargain sale of a 92-acre parcel located in Plymouth to expand the Coolidge State Forest and advance State conservation goals. The property's appraised value is \$170,000 and it will be sold to FPR for \$34,319.			
<b>Date:</b>		10/4/2024			
<b>Department:</b>		Forests, Parks & Recreation			
<b>Legal Title of Grant:</b>		N/A			
<b>Federal Catalog #:</b>		N/A			
<b>Grant/Donor Name and Address:</b>		The Conservation Fund 1655 N. Fort Myer Drive, Suite 1300 Arlington, VA 22209			
<b>Grant Period:</b>		<b>From:</b>		<b>To:</b>	
		10/4/2024		12/31/2099	
<b>Grant/Donation</b>		\$135,681			
	<b>SFY 1</b>	<b>SFY 2</b>	<b>SFY 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$135,681	\$	\$	\$135,681	
<b>Position Information:</b>		<b># Positions</b>	<b>Explanation/Comments</b>		
<b>Additional Comments:</b>		\$34,319 purchase price to be funded from the Land Acquisition Fund from proceeds of a 2019 land sale also in Plymouth which are dedicated to future conservation projects. Ongoing maint. covered by existing FPR budget. PILOT estimated at \$787.76 annually.			
<b>Department of Finance &amp; Management</b>			Adam Greshin <small>Digitally signed by Adam Greshin Date: 2024.10.10 047A8632CD55C438</small>		(Initial)
<b>Secretary of Administration</b>			Sarah Clark <small>Digitally signed by Sarah Clark Date: 2024.10.10 047A8632CD55C438</small>		(Initial)
<b>Sent To Joint Fiscal Office</b>					<b>Date</b>





**State of Vermont**

**Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation**

1 National Life Drive, Davis 2

Montpelier, VT 05620-3801

[www.fpr.vermont.gov](http://www.fpr.vermont.gov)

*Agency of Natural Resources*

[phone] 802-828-1531

[fax] 802-828-1250

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Nick Kramer, Budget Analyst  
**FROM:** Ansley Bloomer, Director of Finance and Administration, FPR  
**SUBJECT:** Grant Acceptance Request  
**DATE:** October 4, 2024

Enclosed is a Request for Grant Acceptance (Form AA-1) for a grant(s) in the amount of \$135,681. The grant comes in the form of a bargain sale donation of land. FPR plans to acquire the 92-acre "Ryan" parcel in Plymouth from The Conservation Fund (TCF), who currently owns the land. The land has an appraised value of \$170,000. TCF has agreed to sell the land to FPR for \$34,319, representing a bargain sale donation of \$135,681. Associated project costs and closing costs will be covered with funds from the federal Forest Legacy Program.

The grant will support a high-priority land conservation project by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) in Plymouth, Vermont. The bargain sale donation will enable FPR to project 92± acres of forestland as an addition to Coolidge State Forest. The addition of these 92± acres to the State Forest will protect water quality and forest connectivity while expanding public and management access.

Management of Coolidge State Forest is undertaken by FPR staff, and other staff within ANR as necessary. FPR uses a variety of state and federal funding sources, as well as revenue generated by management activity, to implement management objectives. This addition to Coolidge State Forest will not result in the need for any additional staff because the work will be absorbed by existing staff.

The annual PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) payments for the parcel will total \$787.76 annually.

Cost	Source	Notes
\$135,681	Bargain sale donation from TCF	This item triggers the need for JFO review

The Department is requesting review of this grant in order to seek Joint Fiscal Committee review as soon as reasonably possible.

Please let me know if you need any further information.



**STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)****Acceptance of Real Property as a Grant, Pursuant to 10 V.S.A. §2606**

<b>BASIC GRANT INFORMATION</b>				
<b>1. Agency:</b>	Agency of Natural Resources			
<b>2. Department:</b>	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation			
<b>3. Program:</b>	Division of Lands Administration and Recreation, Land Conservation			
<b>4. Legal Title of Grant:</b>	n/a			
<b>5. Federal Catalog #:</b>	n/a			
<b>6. Grant/Donor Name and Address:</b> The Conservation Fund 1655 N. Fort Myer Drive Suite 1300 Arlington, VA 22209				
<b>7. Grant Period:</b>	<b>From:</b>	n/a	<b>To:</b>	n/a
<b>8. Purpose of Grant:</b> The purpose of this grant is for the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) to accept a bargain sale donation of \$135,681 in acquiring the 92-acre Ryan parcel, Vermont. The parcel will be added to Coolidge State Forest.				
<b>9. Impact on existing program if grant is not Accepted:</b> If FPR does not accept this donation, the opportunity to protect 92 acres of forestland in a priority connectivity block, as well as to expand access to Coolidge State Forest, will be lost.				
<b>10. BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
	<b>SFY 1</b>	<b>SFY 2</b>	<b>SFY 3</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>	<b>FY 24</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>FY</b>	
Personal Services	\$	\$	\$	
Operating Expenses	\$135,681	\$	\$	
Grants	\$	\$	\$	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$135,681</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	
<b>Revenues:</b>				
State Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
Cash	\$	\$	\$	
In-Kind	\$	\$	\$	
Federal Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
(Direct Costs)	\$	\$	\$	
(Statewide Indirect)	\$	\$	\$	
(Departmental Indirect)	\$	\$	\$	
Other Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
Other Funds:	\$			
Grant (source: donation from The Conservation Fund)	\$135,681	\$	\$	Value of bargain sale donation
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$135,681</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	
<b>Appropriation No:</b>			<b>Amount:</b>	\$
				\$

## STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

[illegible]

## PERSONAL SERVICE INFORMATION

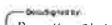

**11. Will monies from this grant be used to fund one or more Personal Service Contracts?** ☐ Yes ☒ No  
If "Yes", appointing authority must initial here to indicate intent to follow current competitive bidding process/policy.

Appointing Authority Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed by: \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

12. Limited Service Position Information:	# Positions	Title
<b>Total Positions</b>		

<b>12a. Equipment and space for these positions:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Is presently available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Can be obtained with available funds.
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### 13. AUTHORIZATION AGENCY/DEPARTMENT

I/we certify that no funds beyond basic application preparation and filing costs have been expended or committed in anticipation of Joint Fiscal Committee approval of this grant, unless previous notification was made on Form AA-IPN (if applicable):	Signature: 		Date: 9/9/2024
	Title: Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation		
	Signature: 		Date: 9/10/2024
	Title: Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources		

**14<sup>ps</sup> SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION**

<div> <div> <div>SC</div> <div> <div></div> <div>Approved:</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>(Secretary or designee signature)</div> <div> <div>Sarah Clark</div> <div>04AR832CD55C438</div> </div> </div> </div>		<div>DocuSigned by:</div> <div>Date: 10/16/2024   7:4</div>
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## 15. ACTION BY GOVERNOR

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Check One Box: Accepted	 (Governor's signature)	Date: Nov 18, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rejected		

## 16. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Required GRANT Documentation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request Memo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dept. project approval (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Award <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Donation (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> Grant (Project) Timeline (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Extension (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Form AA-1PN attached (if applicable)

**End Form AA-1**

(\*) The term “grant” refers to any grant, gift, loan, or any sum of money or thing of value to be accepted by any agency, department, commission, board, or other part of state government (see 32 V.S.A. §5). (See also 10 V.S.A. § 2606)



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner

**FROM:** Gannon Osborn, Land Conservation Program Manager

**SUBJECT:** Acquisition of 92± acres as addition Coolidge State Forest

**DATE:** May 18, 2023

**LAP #:** 1952

**Recommendation:** **Approve the acquisition of 92± acres in Plymouth as an addition to Coolidge State Forest.**

**Landowner:** Estate of Thomas C. Ryan

**Location:** Route 100, Plymouth

**Acreage:** 92 acres

**Type of Acquisition:** Fee Acquisition

**Partners:** The Conservation Fund

**Proposed Funding:** Funds from the Markowski Sale, the Chateaugay Forest Forest Legacy Program grant, and from TCF.

### **Background and Significance:**

The Agency first reviewed this conservation opportunity in 2010 (LAP #1743). At the time, the opportunity was made up of two contiguous parcels, the Brown parcel to the north and the Ryan parcel to the south. The parcels were owned by two different families, but the families were friends, and both interested in selling their land to the State as additions to Coolidge State Forest. The Agency Land Acquisition Review Committee recommended to acquire both properties, subject to the resolution of legal issues on the Brown parcel (review form attached). LARC noted that the Ryan parcel was the "most important because of access and Madden Brook." Because of the legal issue on the Brown parcel, the conservation project was not advanced at the time.

The parcels were again brought before the Agency in 2018, following the resolution of the legal issue on the Brown parcel (LAP #1952). The District Stewardship Team again recommended to acquire the properties (review form attached). The project received Commissioner and Secretary approval as well, but funding was never identified for the opportunity. Under pressure from the probate court, the Browns sold their parcel to a private buyer. The Ryans however, retained their parcel, and are still interested in a sale to the State. FPR has now identified a potential pathway forward for the acquisition and on November 8, 2022 the District Stewardship Team recommended to acquire the Ryan parcel (review form attached).

FPR, in partnership with The Conservation Fund (TCF), is working to protect approximately 2,800 acres in this region of the state through the Chateaugay Forest Forest Legacy Program conservation project. The Ryan parcel will serve as a non-federal cost-share tract to this Forest Legacy grant. Thereby, advancing additional forestland conservation in the area. As a non-federal cost-share tract, The Conservation Fund has committed to assist FPR with the acquisition. FPR can use Forest Legacy grant funds to cover project costs and then use the value of the parcel to match the Chateaugay Forest grant.

There is a small, dilapidated camp structure on the property (see attached pictures). TCF will have the camp removed and the site remediated, and then purchase the property from the Ryan family. TCF will hold the parcel while FPR performs its due diligence. If satisfied with the investigation, FPR will

purchase the property from TCF, using funds from the 2019 "Markowski Sale," where FPR sold 38 acres, directly across Route 100 from the Ryan parcel, to Markowski Excavating. These funds were then designated for future land conservation efforts in the area. TCF will sell the property for the total amount of its project costs, which will be well below the fair market appraised value of the property.

The Ryan parcel has approximately 2,000 feet of frontage on Route 100 and approximately 1,600 feet of frontage on Madden Brook. Vermont Conservation Design identifies the land as part of a Highest Priority Interior Forest Block and a Highest Priority Connectivity Block, while the parcel's Madden Brook frontage is identified as a Highest Priority Surface Water and Riparian Area. The parcel will improve management and public access to this section of Coolidge State Forest, which are currently limited. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has committed \$15,000 to FPR from its Motorboat Registration Funds to develop a parking area and associated public access infrastructure on the property upon acquisition. These funds will help facilitate public access to the property and the broader State Forest for fishing on Madden and Reservoir Brook and other dispersed recreational activities, such as hunting and hiking.

***Approval for Development of a Conservation Project***

I hereby approve the development of a land acquisition project for the Ryan property located in Plymouth, Vermont. This approval authorizes Department staff to pursue the development of this project and does not supersede other requirements, statutory, regulatory, procedural or policy, for the State of Vermont to accept interest in real property (e.g., Governor Approval).

12/14/2023

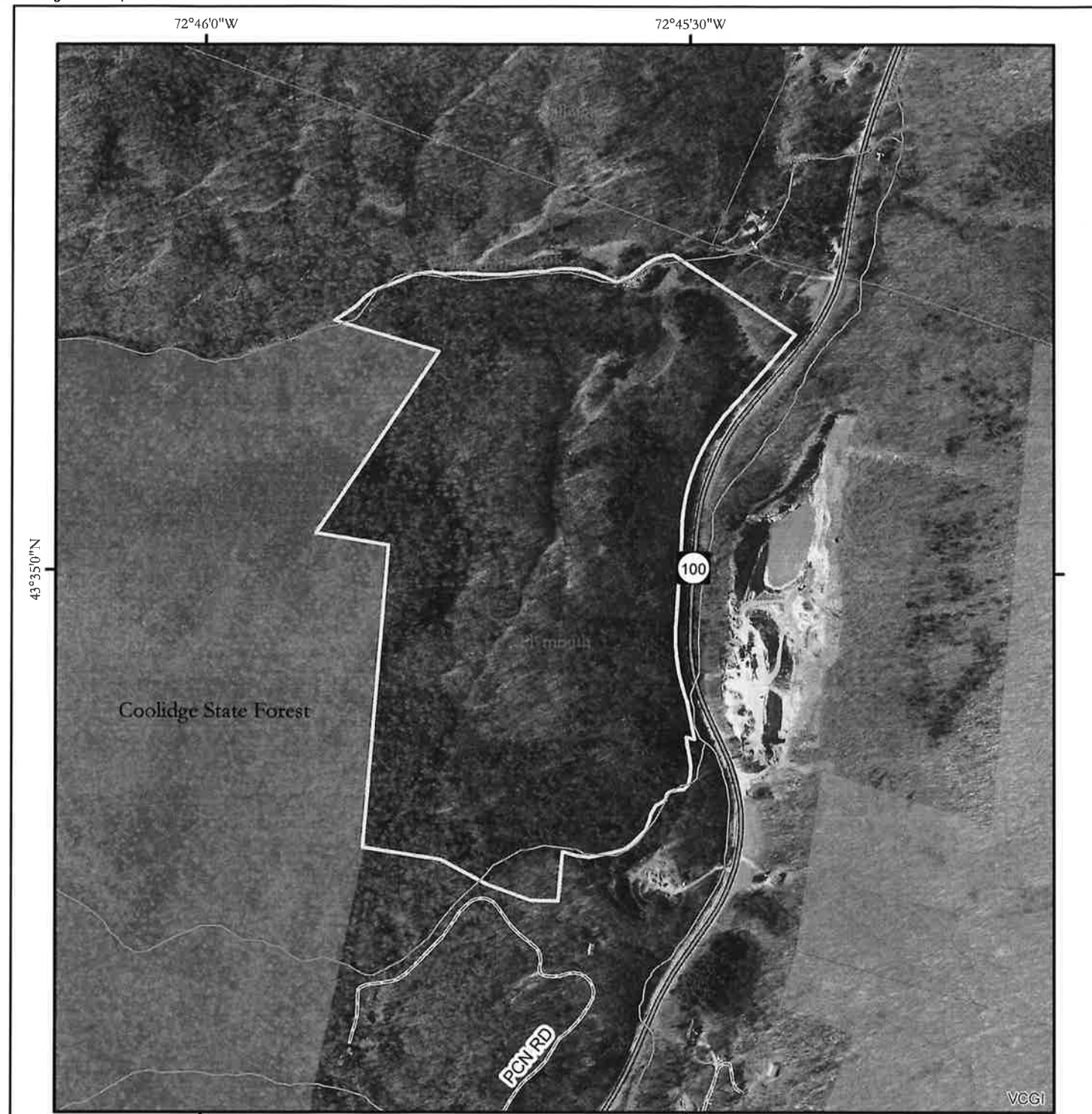
Date

DocuSigned by:  
  
5BE1AA84753540F  
Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner  
Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation


I hereby decline to approve the development of a land acquisition project for the Ryan property located in Plymouth, Vermont.

Date

Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner  
Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation



**Ryan Property  
Plymouth, VT  
Project Map**

 **Vermont Department of  
Forests, Parks & Recreation**


Cartographer: Gannon Osborn    Date: 11/7/2022









This map is for illustrative purposes only. The accuracy of the data layers shown on this map are limited by the accuracy of the source materials. No warranty as to the accuracy or the usefulness of the data is expressed or implied.

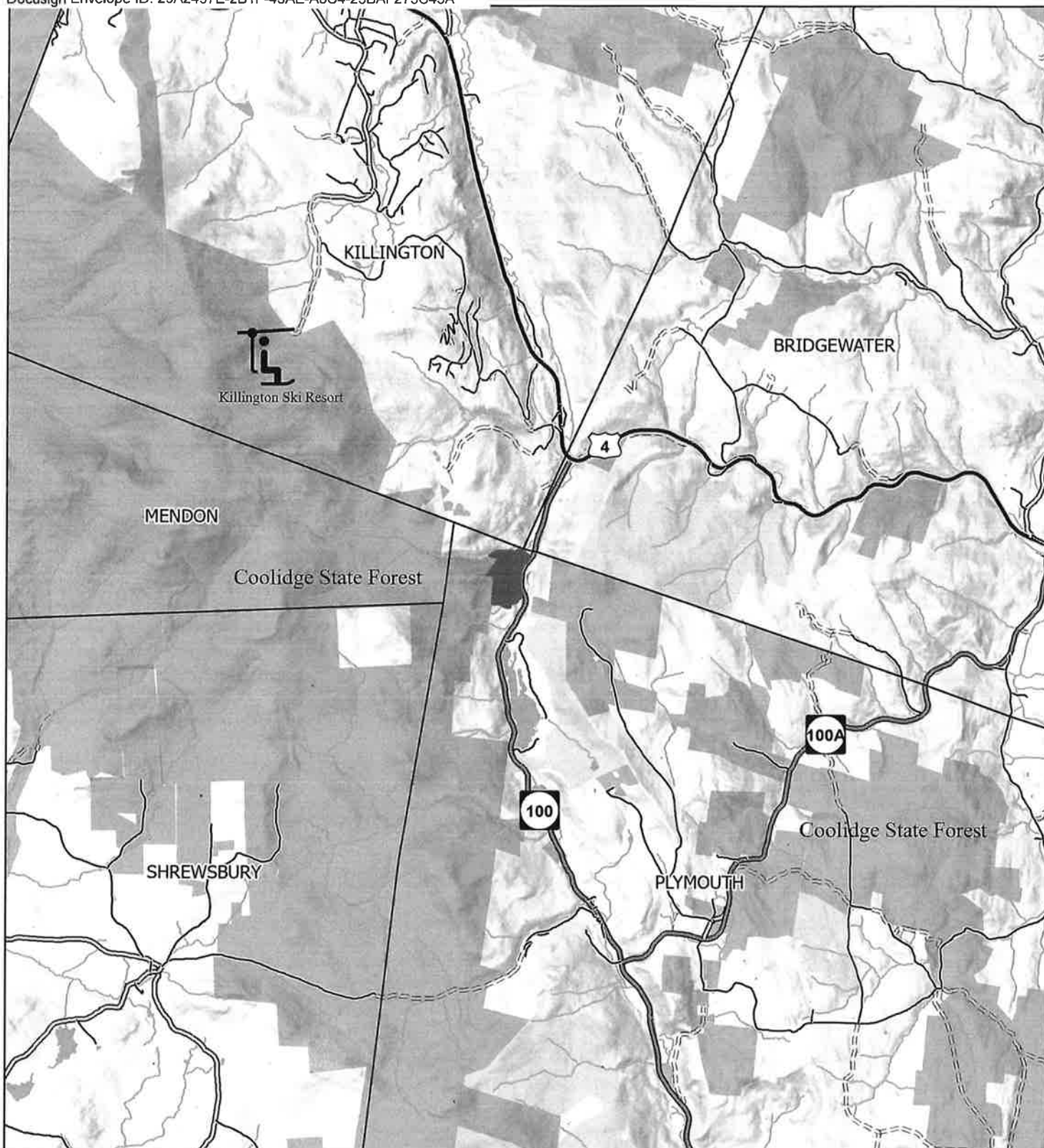
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0      400      800      1,600 feet



N



	Ryan Parcel
	Stream
	Class 2 Wetland
	State Highway
	Private Road
	Trail
	State Forest, Fee ownership
	Non-fee interest




**Ryan Parcel, Plymouth**  
**Conserved Lands/Local Roads Map**  
 Cartographer: Gunnar Nurme  
 August, 2024

Scale: 1:80,000

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ryan Parcel</li> <li>State Fee-Owned Lands</li> <li>State Easement Lands</li> <li>GMNF</li> <li>Other Protected Lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Highway</li> <li>Class 2 Town Road</li> <li>Class 3 Town Road</li> <li>Class 4 Town Road</li> <li>Private Road</li> <li>Legal Trail</li> </ul>
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**Roads**

- US Highway



Town of Plymouth Selectboard  
68 Town Office Road  
Plymouth, VT, 05056

June 17, 2024


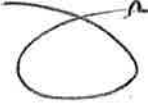
Gunnar Nurme  
Land Acquisition Coordinator  
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05602

RE: Land Conservation Project in the Town of Plymouth

Dear Mr. Nurme,

The Town of Plymouth Selectboard reviewed the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's (FPR) proposed acquisition of the Ryan parcel as an addition to Coolidge State Forest at our meeting on June 17, 2024. We sign this letter to offer our support for FPR's acquisition of the Ryan parcel in the Town of Plymouth.

Sincerely,

  
 Rich Nurme Selectboard 6-17-24

Print Name and Title:  
Plymouth Selectboard





**State of Vermont**  
**Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation**  
One National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3801  
www.vtfpr.org

*Agency of Natural Resources*

[tdd] 800-253-0191

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Jaye Pershing Johnson

**Through:** Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

**From:** Gunnar Nurme, Land Acquisition Coordinator

**Date:** September 9, 2024

**RE:** Governor's approval for the acquisition of 92± acres as an addition to Coolidge State Forest in the Town of Plymouth.

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Enclosed is a land acquisition memo for Governor Scott's review, to approve the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation' (FPR) fee acquisition of 92± acres in Plymouth. The acquisition involves the 92±-acre "Ryan" parcel, which is adjacent to Coolidge State Forest, accessed from VT Route 100, and has frontage on Madden Brook. FPR is purchasing the land at a bargain sale value, and will add the land to Coolidge State Forest. FPR uses a variety of state and federal funding sources, as well as revenue generated by management activity, to implement management objectives.

The Town of Plymouth is supportive of this acquisition. Funding for acquisition and closing costs associated with this acquisition will come from FPR funds allotted for land conservation, as well as from the federal Forest Legacy Program. As with previous ANR land transactions involving a bargain sale or donation, the AA-1 Grants Acceptance form follows the memo to Governor Scott and will serve as the signature page for the required administrative approvals.

The following documents and information have been included in this package for Governor's approval:

- ☒ Property description
- ☒ Maps of the property and surrounding parcels
- ☒ Legal authority for the transactions
- ☒ Nature of the legal property interest to be acquired
- ☒ Description and role of partner organizations
- ☒ Clear statement of purpose of the acquisition
- ☒ Description of current uses, anticipated uses and limits on use
- ☒ Description of existing motorized and/or mechanized uses, including VAST trails on the property and surrounding areas
- ☒ Source of funds for the acquisition
- ☒ Long term plan for funding management expenses
- ☒ Evidence of local approval
- ☒ Assessed value and property taxes for the year of acquisition
- ☒ Other input received from interested parties
- ☒ Other relevant information

We plan to close on this acquisition by December 31, 2024. We are seeking approval by November 1, 2024 to facilitate closing on the anticipated timeline.

If you have any questions regarding this acquisition, please contact me at 802-261-7140 or at [gunnar.nurme@vermont.gov](mailto:gunnar.nurme@vermont.gov). Thank you.