

STATE OF VERMONT JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To:Joint Fiscal Committee membersFrom:Sorsha Anderson, Staff AssociateDate:March 11, 2021Subject:Grant Requests – JFO #3041

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

JFO #3041 - \$100,000 to the VT Dept. of Fish and Wildlife from Ducks Unlimited to fund a 25year stewardship of 136 acres in Addison County. The land was donated by Ducks Unlimited with the condition that the Department perform stewardship duties. The yearly projected cost in materials and staff time is \$4,000. [*JFO received 3/08/2021*]

Please review the enclosed materials and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Sorsha Anderson: 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 March 30, 2021, we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of this request.



Agency of Natural Resources

Fish & Wildlife Department 1 National Life Drive, Davis 2 Montpelier, Vermont 05620 www.vtfishandwildlife.com

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Michael Middleman, Budget Analyst	
FROM:	Elizabeth Stratton, Financial Manager	
SUBJECT:	Grant Acceptance Request	
DATE:	January 21, 2021	,

Enclosed is a Request for Grant Acceptance (Form AA-1) for \$100,000 from Ducks Unlimited, in the form of an endowment, that will fund long term stewardship on 136 acres of lands in Addison County. Ducks Unlimited donated the land to Fish and Wildlife with the condition that the Department become long term stewards of the site and carry out specific tasks outlined in Exhibit D, attached, of the purchase and sales agreement. The tasks, including but not limited to site visits, invasive species management and reporting, projected to cost \$4,000 in staff time annually, will be funded by Ducks Unlimited through a stewardship endowment of \$100,000 total over 25 years.

Upon receipt, the Department will deposit the principal in the Fish and Wildlife Fund, invest the principal, and use only interest accrued to meet the conditions of the agreement. At the end of the 25-year agreement the principal will remain with the Department and be used to fund wetland restoration and acquisition.

Please let me know if you need any further information,

Protecting and conserving our fish, wildlife plants, and their habitats for the people of Vermont.

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

1. Agency:	Agency of Natural Resources					
2. Department:	Fish and Wildlife Department					
3. Program:	Wildlife-Lands and Habitat					
4. Legal Title of Grant:	Land management end	lowment				
5. Federal Catalog #:	n/a		7. 			
6. Grant/Donor Name and A Ducks Unlimited No 159 Dwight Park Cir Syracuse NY 13209	rth Atlantic Office cle, Suite 205	× .				
7. Grant Period: Fro	om: 6/20/2020	To: 6	5/20/2045			
9. Impact on existing progr Long term stewardship of t on the donation in years 1-2 for wetland restoration and a stewardship cost.	his property is a condition 5 will be used to fund the	on of the land donation ne stewardship obligatio	on. After year 25, th	he principal will be us		
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STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

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PERSONAL SERVICE IN	FORMATION				
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:					
12. Limited Service					
Position Information:	# Positions	Title			
Total Positions		1			
12a. Equipment and space positions:	for these	presently available. 🗌 Can	be obtained with	available funds.	
13. AUTHORIZATION A	GENCY/DEPARTMEN	۲ĭ			
I/we certify that no funds	Signature:			Date: 1/22/2021	
beyond basic application	n			1/22/2021	
preparation and filing costs	Title:				
have been expended or	Commissioner	r, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife	,	×	
committed in anticipation of				Data	
Joint Fiscal Committee	Signature:	is slock		Date: 01/22/2021	
approval of this grant, unless	1 No. 2			01/22/2021	
previous notification was	Title				
made on Form AA-1PN (if	Secretary, Ag	ency of Natural Resource	s		
applicable):					
14. SECRETARY OF ADM	MINISTRATION				
	(Secretary or designee signatur	re)		Date:	
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Approved:		Date: 2021.01.29 13:20:41 -0	5'00'		
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Required GRANT Documentation					
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Request Memo		Notice of Donation (if any)			
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Notice of Award		Request for Extension (if a	oplicable)		
Grant Agreement		Form AA-1PN attached (if			
Grant Budget					
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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.					

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

department, commission, board, or other part of state government (see 32 V.S.A. §5).



State of Vermont

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

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

STATE OF VERMONT FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REVIEW FORM

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Grant Summary:			This is a donation of \$100,000 from Ducks Unlimited to fund the staff costs of maintaining land that was previously donated to the Fish and Wildlife department. Interest earned off of the principle of this donation will be used to cover these expenses, but the principle itself will not be spent until after the 25 year obligation period of the purchase and sale agreement.					
		<	1/07/	2021				
Date:			1/27/	2021				
Department:			Fish	and Wildlife	- Department			
Department.			Fish and Wildlife Department					
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Federal Catalog #			n/a					
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Grant/Donor Name and Address:		ress:	Ducks Unlimited Nortah Atlantic Office, 159 Dwight Park Circle, Suite 205, Syracuse, NY 13209					
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Grant Period:	From:		6/20/2	2020 To:	6/20/2045			
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Grant/Donation			\$100,000					
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Grant Amount:	\$100,0	000	\$		\$	\$100,000	After 25 years, these funds will be used for wetland restoration and acquisition.	
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Sent To Joint Fiscal Office					4	Ariel Digitally signed by Ariel Murphy Date: 2021.03.08 08:09:46-05'00'	Date	
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Department of Finance & Management Version 1.1 - 10/15/08

Agency of Administration

	STATE OF VERMONT		
	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REV	VIEW FORM	1
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Exhibit C

LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN

<u>for</u>

Three Mile Bridge Compensatory Mitigation Site

<u>US-VT-42</u>

DUCKS UNLIMITED, INC.

STATE OF VERMONT AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

DATE: ____

Geographic Information

Site Name: Three Mile Bridge Road Compensatory Mitigation Site

Township/County: Middlebury, Addison

Total Site Size: 137.95-acres

Type of Ownership: In fee

I. Introduction

Ducks Unlimited Inc. (DU) protected and restored a floodplain property at the Three Mile Bridge Road Compensatory Mitigation Site (Site) in Middlebury, Vermont. Mitigation work on this Site was funded by the Ducks Unlimited Vermont In Lieu Fee Program (DU-VT-ILF) as compensation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resource features permitted by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC), and under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act as administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). As the Sponsor of the DU-VT-ILF, DU is responsible for compensation for associated permitted impacts to aquatic resource features through improvements to the Site as described in the DU-VT-ILF Three Mile Bridge Road Compensatory Mitigation Plan (Mitigation Plan) which is on record at the offices of DU, the State of Vermont, and the Corps.

In August of 2018, construction to restore wetlands at the Site was performed. In June of 2019, shrub and tree plantings and seeding of wetland plants was completed as consistent with the Mitigation Plan. DU remains responsible for the implementation of mitigation activities as described in the Instrument, as amended, or any modifications thereof, during the active mitigation period until all Performance Standards have been achieved to the satisfaction of the Corps.

Purpose of Long-Term Management Plan

The purpose of this long-term management/stewardship plan, hereafter referred to as the "Management Plan", is to ensure that the Site has a baseline documentation report with written descriptions, maps and photographs, that documents the conservation values protected and the relevant conditions of the Site. In the event there are significant changes to the land, those changes shall be documented in an appropriate manner, such as through monitoring reports, a baseline supplement or current conditions report.

Long-Term Steward and Responsibilities

The Long-Term Steward of the Site is The State of Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife. Upon DU's written notification that all Performance Standards have been achieved to the satisfaction of the Corps, the Long-Term Steward shall implement this management plan, managing and monitoring the Site to preserve its habitat and conservation

values. The responsibilities of the Long-Term Steward shall run with the land and be binding on successor owners of the Site.

Management Plan Review

The management plan will be reviewed at a minimum once every 5 years by the Long-Term Steward for the first 25-years after Performance Standards have been achieved. The Long-Term Steward may revise or supplement the plan with additional information and management recommendations. Any revisions that change the management actions beyond standard maintenance activities shall be approved by the Corps and DU.

II. Site Description

Setting and Location

The Site is located at Latitude: 43.96940 and Longitude: -73.15128 south of the village of Middlebury in the Town of Middlebury, Addison County, Vermont in the Otter Creek Sub-basin (HUC 04150402). The Site is in a rural setting with surrounding agricultural activity. Many of the surrounding properties are under conservation easement prohibiting their conversion from natural areas or agricultural production to a developed condition (Figure 1). The site lies in the floodplain of the Middlebury River and Otter Creek and floods periodically in the spring. Topography of the Site is relatively flat. There are legacy oxbows in the field to the south of Three Mile Bridge Rd that were expanded upon by DU during construction activities in 2018, when ditch plugs were installed and excavation added to the flood-storage capacity present in this field. Areas to the north of Three Mile Bridge Road have been the focus of vegetative management activities to return the site from a crop-dominated system to a natural floodplain forest with greater flood storage capacity.

Directions and Access

The site lies approximately three miles to the south of Middlebury Vermont. It is accessed from Three Mile Bridge Road from Route 7 South. The site is approximately 1.75 miles from the intersection with Route 7. Three Mile Bridge Road bisects the Site. There is a parking pull-off at the end of Three Mile Bridge Road near the confluence of Middlebury River and Otter Creek.

Acquisition History

Wetlands America Trust, Inc., (WAT) (a supporting organization of DU) acquired the Site in 2016. In 2019, WAT will transfer the Site to the Long-Term Steward.

Land Use

The site has a long history of agricultural use prior to WAT's acquisition. The Site went fallow in 2016 and was acquired by WAT that year. Beginning in 2018 the site has been managed to return it to a primarily wetland condition. Much of the site began reverting to wetlands as of 2019.

Existing Easements or Other Restrictions

There are no known title encumbrances that affect the viability of the Site.

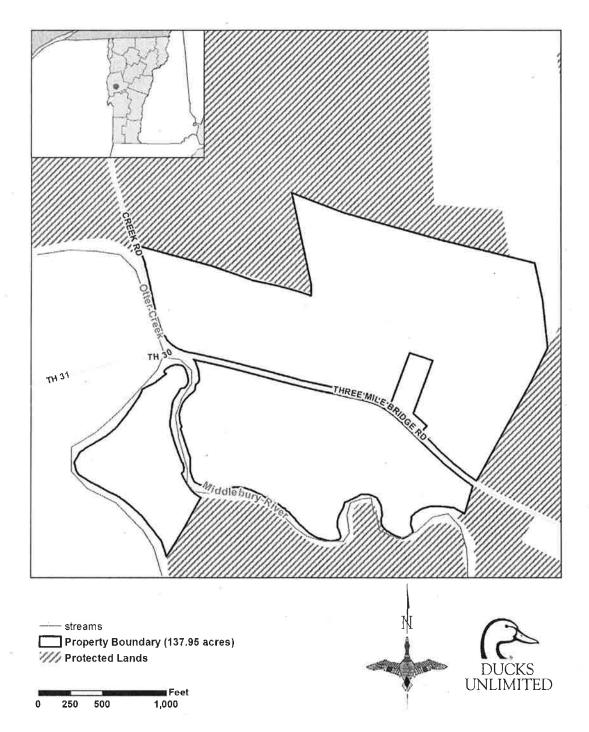


Figure 1. Site Location Map. Many of the lands surrounding the Three Mile Bridge Site are under conservation easement. Areas to the north and south of the site are Middlebury Land Trust-held easements.

Cultural Features

The site has a 1900s homestead site known as the Smalley Cabin in the eastern corner of the parcel to the south of Three Mile Bridge Road (Figure 2). Although the cabin and any associated structures no longer exist, there is a monument describing the historic homestead site in that location. The Vermont Division of Historic Preservation has recommended periodic mowing of the area west of the monument for a distance of 120 meters as depicted in Figure 2. Additionally, given the site's location at the confluence of two streams, an archeologic survey was conducted to reveal the extent of cultural resources in the area of mitigation-related earthwork. During this survey performed in 2017, isolated precontact flakes were found on site and were not considered significant enough to restrict project implementation (Hartgen, 2017).

III. Natural Resources

Aquatic Resources

The mitigation activities described in the mitigation plan were initiated in the summer of 2018 with major grading and contouring activities as well as installation of ditch plugs performed in August 2018. It is expected that most of the post-agricultural areas of the Site will revert to wetlands and floodplain forest following the construction activities performed in 2018 (Figure 3).

Construction to the south of Three Mile Bridge Road was completed in August of 2018. The asbuilt drawing below (Figure 3) documents how the swales in this field mimic oxbows. Additionally, two ditch plugs were constructed across the lower ends of these swales to support and maintain hydrology on the site. Undisturbed areas adjacent to the grading activities were disked and the site was seeded once construction was complete. This was done in an effort to return the plant community to a native wetland community following post-agricultural abandonment. The ditch plugs received a standard erosion control seed mix, while all other exposed areas were broadcast with a wetland seed mix. A 200-foot buffer along the Middlebury River and Otter Creek was left undisturbed. This area has been left fallow since the fall of 2015 and is already showing significant regeneration of silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) and other woody species. Trees and shrubs were planted in June of 2019.

Reed canary grass control was performed north of Three Mile Bridge Road during June of 2018. This control involved the combination of herbicide (glyphosate) application and disking and seeding to native hydrophytes.

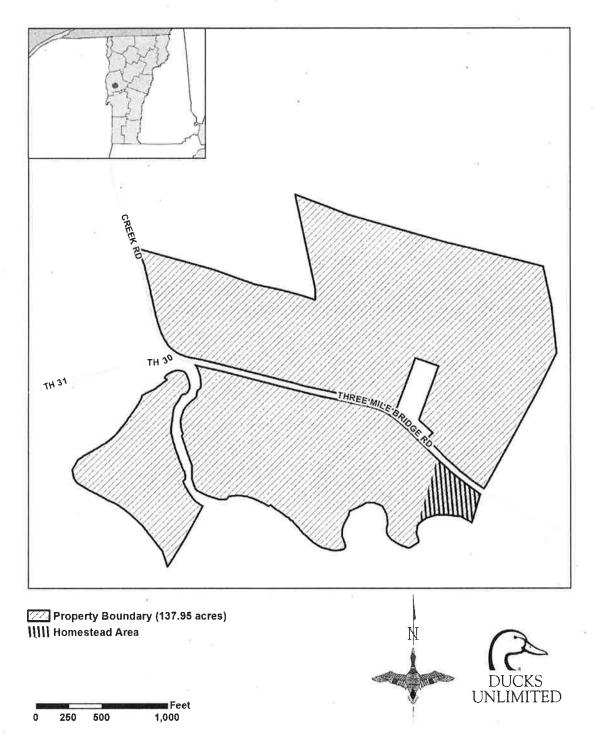


Figure 2. Archeological Resources Map. The yellow hashed area shows the location of the historic Smalley Cabin. This area is to remain undisturbed. During construction activities DU prohibited any disturbance in this area.

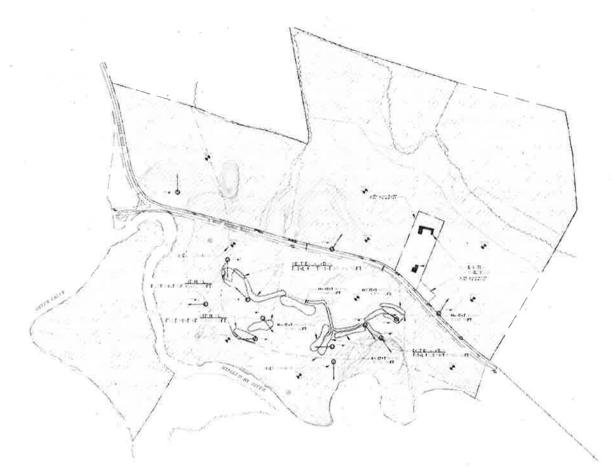


Figure 3. Existing and Anticipated Ecological Communities. Areas to the north of Three Mile Bridge Road were planted to return the site to floodplain forest. Much of the area south of the road has also been planted to floodplain forest. Swales are expected to remain in an open condition where hydrology inhibits tree-growth.

Purchase and Sales Agreement, Exhibit D Three Mile Bridge Compensatory Mitigation Site Long Term Management Plan 2019

OPP4 © PP3 OPP2 Photopoints \odot Property Boundary (137.95 acres) DUCKS UNLIMITED Feet 1,000 250 500

Site Photographs and Baseline Description of Biological Resources



Purchase and Sales Agreement, Exhibit D

Three Mile Bridge Compensatory Mitigation Site Long Term Management Plan 2019



Photo-point 1. Photograph of Smalley Cabin monument. To the extent practical, the area directly surrounding this monument should be mowed annually.

As of 2019 the site is in the very initial stages of succession to a floodplain forest.



Photo-point 2. View from south of Three Mile Bridge Road looking east in May 2019.



Photo-point 3. View looking West toward the existing tree-line in May of 2019.



Photo-point 4. View of a low-swale north of Three Mile Bridge Road with *Carex stricta* in the foreground looking North at the central part of the Site.

Endangered, Threatened and Rare Species, and Species of Special Concern The Site is within the observed summer range of the federally-listed endangered Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*). Efforts will be made within the restoration area to improve Indiana Bat habitat if possible. It is also within the summer and winter range of the Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). According to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, there has been a confirmed observation of the state-listed endangered Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) at the Site. The Sedge Wren is a high priority species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) associated with marshes and sedge meadows. According to the Vermont 2003 – 2007 Breeding Bird Atlas, the Site is in an area where the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) was observed. The American bittern is a high priority SGCN associated with marshes and sedge meadows.

The Site is also part of the Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 13 Cornwall Swamp Sub-Focus Area, which provides important breeding and migration habitat for waterfowl species such as American Black Duck, Wood Duck, and Common Goldeneye. These three waterfowl species are high priority species in emergent and forested wetlands in this BCR (Hartley 2007).

Soils & Geology

The following soil series are present at the Site according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Database (Figure 5).

Limerick series consists of very deep, poorly drained soils on flood plains. Limerick silt loam (Le) and Limerick silt loam, very wet (Lf) are both classified as hydric soils with hydric ratings of 95% and 100% respectively. Le and Lf both have a depth to water table of 9 inches. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high in Le and Lf.

Winooski series consists of very deep, moderately-well drained soils. Winooski very fine sandy loam (Wo) is classified as a hydric soil with a hydric rating of 5%. Wo has a depth to water table of 27 inches. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is moderately high in Wo.

Muck and Peat (Mv) is classified as a hydric soil with a hydric rating of 100%. Mv has a water table at the soil surface. Saturated hydraulic conductivity is high in Mv.

The soil map unit where most of the wetland re-establishment/rehabilitation activities occurred was Le.

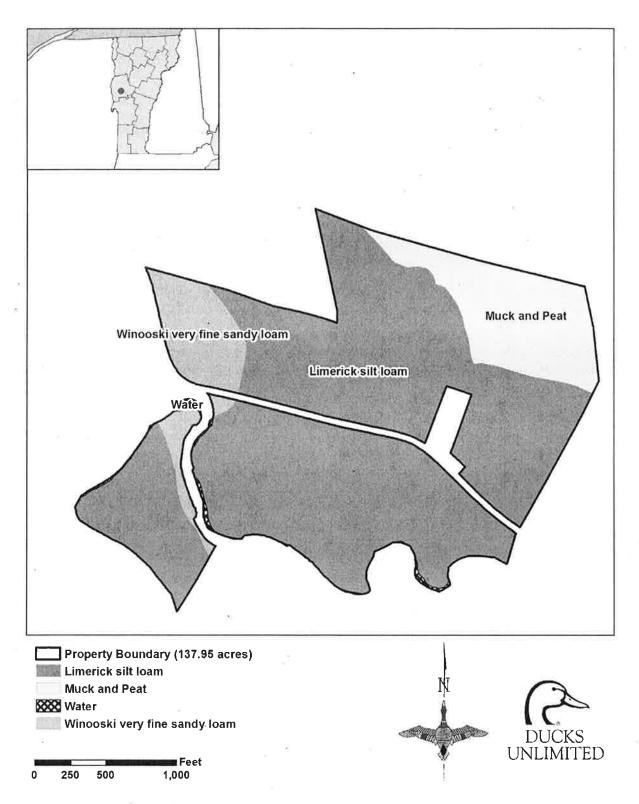


Figure 5. Soils Map. Soils are from the SSURGO database. Construction occurred primarily in Limerick Silt Loams.

Hydrology and Topography

The site has a generally flat topography and lies in the Middlebury River Floodplain. It is not uncommon for the Site to flood in the spring. The Middlebury River forms the southern border of the Site, and the Site is bordered to the west by Otter Creek. These features can be seen in Figure 1.

Summary of Restored or Enhanced Resources

The site has legacy oxbows and swales in areas to the north and south of Three Mile Bridge Road. Swales were expanded to the south of Three Mile Bridge Road during construction, and two ditch plugs installed to increase flood storage. These features can be seen in the post-construction As-Built Figure 3.

IV. Identification of threats and management actions

Management Vision & Goals

The overall goal of long-term management is to foster the long-term viability of the resources and any listed species/habitat. Routine monitoring and minor maintenance tasks are intended to assure the viability of the Site. Individuals chosen by the Long-Term Steward to accomplish monitoring responsibilities will have the knowledge, training, and experience to accomplish monitoring responsibilities. An objective of this long-term management plan is to conduct regular monitoring to identify any issues that arise and use adaptive management to determine what actions might be appropriate. Adaptive management means an approach to natural resource management which incorporates changes to management practices, including corrective actions as determined to be appropriate. Adaptive management includes those activities necessary to address the effects of climate change, fire, flood, or other natural events. Before considering any adaptive management changes to the long-term management plan, the Long-Term Steward will consider whether such actions will help ensure the continued viability of the site's biological resources and conservation values.

The primary management goal is to preserve the ecological integrity of the various wetlands located on the Site while simultaneously providing passive recreational access to this Site. The Site shall be forever used, operated and maintained in its current undeveloped and open space condition for the long-term protection of wetlands, conservation of wildlife and other natural resources. Low-impact recreation including hunting, fishing, trapping and nature observation will be allowed.

To reach these goals, the Long-Term Steward will:

- 1. Prevent unauthorized vehicular use and take steps to prevent continued access if it is identified.
- 2. Maintain the Site in its undeveloped state.
- 3. Maintain, repair, and replace signs and Site boundary markers as necessary and as funding allows to protect the site in a natural, undeveloped state.

- 4. On an annual basis, collect and remove as much trash as possible and repair and rectify vandalism and trespass impacts.
- 5. Maintain the quality of the existing natural resources.
- 6. Take appropriate action to address issues of vandalism or trespass including but not limited to:
 - a. Outreach to violators
 - b. Placement of boulders, gates, fencing, or other obstructions to prevent access
 - c. Contact local law enforcement
- 7. Maintain and expand Best Management Practices that limit soil erosion and protect local water quality.
- 8. Not cut or remove native vegetation within riparian or wetland areas with the exception of trees posing a public health hazard, trees impacted by invasive pests or pathogens, maintenance of existing or approved trails, or wildlife habitat enhancement projects.
- 9. Provide recreational and educational opportunities where appropriate.
- 10. At least once per year, conduct a walk-through survey to qualitatively monitor the general condition of the habitats. General topographic conditions, hydrology, general vegetation cover and composition, invasive species, and erosion will also be evaluated during the site examination.
- 11. Establish reference sites for photographs and prepare a site map showing the reference sites for the file. Reference photographs will be taken of the overall site at least every five years, with selected reference photos taken on the ground more frequently. These monitoring reports shall be performed every five years for the first 25-years after Performance Standards have been achieved and shall be submitted to DU and the Corps.
- 12. Develop an annual qualitative assessment (e.g., visual estimate of cover) of invasive species and evaluate, prioritize, and implement actions to control invasive species as approved by the Corps.
- 13. Consult with the Corps for approval of new trails.

DU shall enter monitoring reports provided by the Long-Term Steward into the Corp's Regulatory In-Lieu Fee Bank Information Tracking System (RIBITS).

Permitted Uses:

- 1. Passive nonmotorized nonmechanized recreation (e.g., hiking/walking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, birdwatching)
- 2. Hunting, trapping, & fishing

Public Use Guidelines

1. Carry in, carry out

2. *Day-use only*

3. Avoid disturbing plants and wildlife

V. Funding and Task Prioritization

The Long-Term Steward will oversee implementation of the management plan, monitoring activities, and long-term stewardship of the Site. Table 1 summarizes the anticipated maintenance costs for the site. Annual costs associated with the long-term management and maintenance of the Site are estimated to be \$4,000. \$100,000 will be placed into a stewardship endowment to be maintained by The State of Vermont, and distributions from the endowment will cover costs associated with stewardship of the Site, if applicable. With the current annual estimated capitalization rate of 4%, the total endowment amount required will be \$100,000.

Expense Category	Quantity (staff days)	Cost		
Staff expense				
Site visit	1	\$400		
Mowing	0.25	* \$100		
Trash removal	0.75	\$300		
Reporting and stewardship coordination	2.5	\$1,000		
*assumes \$50/hour	Staffing Subtotal	\$1,800		
Exp	enses			
Invasive species management		\$1,200		
Contingency		\$1,000		
	Expenses Subtotal	\$4,000		
		* (20)		
<u>Total Annual</u> <u>Expense</u>				
Stewardship Endowment = Total Annu Rate	al Expense / Interest			

Table 1: Annual Monitoring and Stewardship Management Costs

Rate	······
Annual Interest Accrual Rate	4%
Endowment	\$100,000.00

References

Hartgen, 2017. Phase1B Archeological Reconnaissance Survey: Three Mile Bridge Road Project, DU-VT ILF Program. Middlebury Vermont, Addison Co. HAA #4958-21.

Hartley, M. (2007). Bird conservation plan for the Lower Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Plain Bird Conservation Region (BCR 13). Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. Retrieved from: http://acjv.org/BCR_13/BCR13_Final_Plan_July07.pdf