

# Bradford Conservation Fund    Bradford, Vermont

Adopted: 8-28-03

Amended: 4/27/17

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## I. Authority

This fund is established under 24 V.S.A, 2 18804. and the Bradford Conservation Commission By-Laws adopted in October, 2002. It shall be known as the Bradford Conservation Fund. The Bradford Municipal Plan adopted by Bradford voters on February 18, 2003, states that “*Protection of Bradford’s natural resources is considered vital to the security of its economic future and cultural heritage.*” To that end, this fund was established by the Bradford Conservation Commission on July 30, 2003. Under the control of the Bradford Selectboard, whose decisions shall be based on recommendations of the Bradford Conservation Commission, the Fund shall be held as a separate account to be expended only for the purposes as set out below.

## II. Purposes of the Fund

This Fund has been established:

- To minimize conversion of Bradford’s best farm and forest land to non-agricultural and non-forestry uses.
- To maintain Bradford’s rural character, aesthetics and scenic values.
- To enhance wildlife habitat, water quality and recreational resources in Bradford.
- To preserve open spaces.
- To promote a working landscape by promoting local farm and forest products.
- To educate the public on the value of conserving our natural resources and rural heritage.
- To promote public access to woodlands, wetlands and open spaces,
- To stimulate the local economy through promotion and protection of our natural resources, and through providing improved and greater public access and information to managed and maintained non-motorized trails in the Wrights MT/Devil’s Den Town Forest.
- To enhance public access to non-motorized trails in the Wrights MT/Devil’s Den Town Forest by providing ample safe parking areas.

## III. Priorities for the Use of this Fund

The following principles should be used to prioritize the use of this Fund and to provide consistent rational and sound criteria for decision-making:

### A. Land Conservation

Property to be conserved must either be located in, or owned by the Town of Bradford and should meet at least two of the following criteria:

1. The property includes prime agricultural soils that are most ideal for development and therefore most in need of protection.
2. The project yields a clear benefit to the Town of Bradford in the form of preserving recreational, historic, cultural, scenic, water quality or environmental values, including the preservation of significant wildlife habitat.
3. The project helps the Town of Bradford to meet a strategic planning/land use goal identified in the Bradford Municipal Plan or other community forum.
4. The property/project would protect, enhance and provide public access to a natural resource, while helping to stimulate the local economy.
5. The property is contiguous with a working farm and would contribute to the protection of a significant mass of open agricultural land or provide an important buffer to protect and maintain an agricultural base for the Town of Bradford.
6. The project includes the transfer of development rights as part of a plan to transfer a farming operation to a beginning farmer or to revitalize or diversify an existing farming operation.
7. The project has the potential to bring inactive farmland back into production, or to bring unmanaged forestland under management, or to protect an identified wildlife habitat area, or to bring land under recreational use management.
8. The project will significantly reduce point or non-point source pollution to ground or surface water by protecting an area from development.
9. The property/project provides a buffer zone around or between significant wetlands, streams or rivers and other activities.
10. The project would preserve critical open space suitable for use as a Town green, park or nature center.

## **B. Other Uses**

The Bradford Conservation Fund should seek to support activities that are primarily of local interest, yield primarily a local benefit and are therefore of less interest to other funding sources. Funding should not duplicate the program areas of interests of existing state, federal or private foundation grantors, but may supplement the grants from these sources.

1. Funds may be used by the Bradford Conservation Commission for pending conservation projects to:
  - Leverage matching funds from other sources;
  - Pay for costs not covered by grant applications, ie surveys, appraisals, legal fees;
  - Deposits for Purchase and Sales Agreements.
2. Loans may be granted from the Bradford Conservation Fund to the Bradford Conservation Commission when a federal, state or private foundation grant for a specific conservation project has been officially approved, but the funds have not yet been received by the Town of Bradford for this project.
3. Funds may be used by the Bradford Conservation Commission for restoring a damaged natural resource on conserved or Town-owned land.

4.. Funds may be used to acquire or improve parking areas for visitors to have access to the recreational trails in the Wrights MT/Devil's Den Town Forest

5. Funds may be used by the Bradford Conservation Commission for recreational trail development and maintenance on conserved lands and Town-owned lands or right-of-ways.

6.. The Bradford Conservation Commission may make outright grants from this Fund of up to \$1,000 to Bradford educational, youth and civic organizations for conservation projects that meet the criteria specified in Section II of this document.

## **IV Structure and Decision-Making**

Prior to undertaking any of the activities listed in Article III, the Bradford Conservation Commission shall make a recommendation to the Bradford Selectboard members.

No outright purchases of land will be made without approval of the Selectboard and/or voters at Town Meeting, or at a specially called public meeting.

## **V. Funding**

The Bradford Conservation Fund may, through the Bradford Conservation Commission, apply for and accept:

- Funds from voluntary contributions or grants from public or private sources.
- Funds allocated by a vote at Town Meeting or a special tow-wide meeting.
- Gifts of cash and securities or pledges designated to benefit certain projects or parcels to be conserved.
- Gifts of cash and securities or pledges designated to benefit any of the priorities listed in Article III of this document.
- Gifts of land, development rights or conservation easement, when such gifts fall within the priorities listed in Article III of this document.

The Bradford Conservation Commission and its standing committees may conduct fund-raising activities for depositing into the Bradford Conservation Fund.

## **VI. Amendments to this Document**

Amendments to this document may be made by a majority vote of the Bradford Conservation Commission and a majority vote of the Bradford Selectboard. The frequency of amendments to this document is restricted to no more than one per twelve-month period.

## **VII. Termination of the Fund**

If a majority of the members of the Bradford Conservation Commission decide that the fund should terminate, they will recommend termination to the Bradford Selectboard, setting out their reasons. If a majority of the Selectboard decides to terminate the Fund, money in the Fund, except when designated for a specific project or projects, shall be committed to the General Fund of the Town and shall be used for public purposes.

This document is hereby amended and approved by the Bradford Conservation Commission and the

Bradford Selectboard on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Nancy Jones, Chair  
Bradford Conservation Commission

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Ted Unkles, Chair,  
Bradford Selectboard