

Return application with a \$75 check (made out to VHCB) to:
VT Farm & Forest Viability Program
VHCB
58 E. State St.
Montpelier, VT 05602



VHCB Vermont
Farm & Forest
Viability Program

Received:

Office use only

FORESTLAND TRANSFER PLANNING LANDOWNER APPLICATION

Since 2016, the Farm and Forest Viability Program has been working with community partners to provide in-depth forestland ownership transfer planning for forestland owners in Vermont. The focus of this program is to provide landowners with structure and guidance as they plan for the future of their Vermont forestland. Enrolled landowners receive technical support in the development of a transfer plan that can later be used in the development of a formal estate plan with a legal professional. This program aims to prevent forest fragmentation by guiding landowners through transfer planning that keeps forests intact and undeveloped.

ELIGIBILITY & SELECTION PROCESS

Guidelines for landowner eligibility are intended to support the program's goal of keeping forestland intact. To be eligible for the in-depth forestland succession planning advising services offered by the Viability Program, forest landowners must:

- ✓ Own forestland at least 50 acres in size *or* that demonstrates significant or unique community or ecological assets. Vermont residency is NOT a requirement for eligibility.*
- ✓ Be willing to commit significant time to the planning process, and must be committed to fully participating within the program model. Find more information in the [Transfer Planning Guidelines](#).
- ✓ Have goals for Forestland Transfer that align with the program's intention of keeping forestland intact.

*These guidelines are structured to provide an outline for program eligibility, but the program may be able to accommodate properties with different characteristics. Properties that are owned or supported by a non-profit organization or foundation may be eligible. Please contact VHCB Program staff to discuss eligibility.

The following criteria are not requirements but will be used to prioritize properties should space become limited. Demonstration of any one or combination of these characteristics will increase standing.

- ✓ Includes a significant acreage of forested land in any stage of succession and is in compliance with [Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont](#).
- ✓ Threatened with parcelization, fragmentation, and/or conversion to uses other than managed forest.
- ✓ Enrolled or eligible to be enrolled in [Vermont's Use Value Appraisal Program](#).
- ✓ Increases land ownership or public access opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations.
- ✓ Is part of a significant wildlife habitat block or corridor.
- ✓ Located in a flood hazard area, has forested riparian areas, or provides upland watershed protection.
- ✓ Abuts, is integral to, or connects protected land.
- ✓ Buffers or includes important recreational resources, including public trail systems.
- ✓ Open to public access to a significant natural feature, such as a swimming hole or scenic vista.
- ✓ Provides public or granted access for wildlife viewing, hunting, or fishing.
- ✓ Identified as significant according to Vermont Conservation Design.

Filling out the application is not a guarantee that you will be selected to receive services. Applicants are screened for eligibility (see above), along with interest and ability to commit time and effort to participation. Applications should demonstrate the need to develop a forestland transfer plan and the landowner's commitment to planning for long-term forest integrity.

ENROLLMENT

There is a \$75 fee to enroll in the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program. Please submit the check, made out to "VHCB", with your application. We will reimburse your enrollment fee if we are unable to enroll you.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Complete the attached application form,
- 2) Enclose the enrollment fee: check or money order made out to "VHCB", and
- 3) Mail to: Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program
VHCB, 58 E. State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Contact Mark Raishart, Program Specialist, at **(802)828-3526** or **m.raishart@vhcb.org** with any questions.

PROCESS

Once enrolled, landowners/families will work with a Forestland Transfer Advisor through one of our partner organizations. For those applying through our open enrollment, our staff will work with enrolled landowners to match them with an appropriate advisor for their land and ownership needs. Those entering the program with an existing Viability Program advisor may choose to retain that advisor. Landowners and planning advisors then meet and work together for one to two years to produce a written transfer plan*. Advisors are available for 20-100 hours per client. Landowners may be provided with additional technical assistance throughout the process.

**The final transfer plan is a tool to educate and prepare landowners for next steps with legal professionals. It is not a legally binding document.*

At the present time the cooperating organizations are:

***Environmental Mediation Center
Redstart Natural Resource Management
RJ Turner Co.***

***Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife
Vermont Natural Resources Council
Vermont Woodlands Association***

CONFIDENTIALITY

VHCB, as a public instrumentality, is subject to the Vermont Public Records Law, 1 VSA § 315. The information submitted by participants and service providers to VHCB will be held in confidential files at VHCB and will not be available for public inspection under the Public Records Law. VHCB considers the following information about participants to be subject to public record: names of participants that have applied to or are enrolled in the program; their town of residence; type of farm or forest; and the purpose and amount of any implementation grant or technical assistance award applied for or received. Planners and technical assistance providers must agree to keep transfer plans confidential to protect clients' interests, but must agree to furnish copies of completed plans to VHCB Staff. Staff or contractors who are approved for viewing transfer plans will not be allowed to make copies, or to share information from the plans with any other person.

Note: The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

A. APPLICANT INFO:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____ Email: _____

What is the best way to contact you? Phone Email

B. FORESTLAND INFO:

Location (i.e. E911 address; mailing address, or SPAN#); list separately if multiple parcels under one ownership): _____

Total Acres: _____ Forested Acres: _____

Ownership Structure: Individual Family (multiple owners) Partnership LLC Corporation
 Other (please describe): _____

How long have you owned the property?

Do you or another owner live on the property? Yes No

If yes, please specify? _____

Do you own more than one parcel that qualifies for this program? Yes No

If so, briefly describe your total ownership: _____

Does the property have a current Forest Management Plan? Yes No

If yes, who is your consulting forester? _____

Is the property enrolled in Use-Value Appraisal ("Current Use")? Yes No

If yes, how many acres? _____

Is any part of the forestland conserved? Yes No

If yes, how many acres? _____

What entity holds the conservation easement? _____

Does this parcel border conserved land? Yes No

Is there any public access on the property? Yes No

Are any of the following attributes present on the property?

- Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species Riparian Areas Vernal Pools
 Forested Wetlands Public Trails/Recreation Areas Community Access

Please identify current management/ownership objectives for the property:

- Timber harvesting Recreation/Educational Access Hunting Access Ecosystem Services
 Family Asset Residence Misc. forest products (maple, etc.) Long-term investment
 Other, please describe: _____

Are you willing to set aside significant time (at least several hours one-two times per month) to meet with a Viability Program Transfer advisor? Yes No

How did you hear about the program?

- Friend/neighbor VT Farm & Forest Viability Website Event/conference
 Publication Family member Program partner organization
 Other, please describe: _____

If you have been referred to this program through one of our program partners, please name the organization and indicate whether you would prefer to work with them for succession planning.

Organization: _____

Do you wish to keep them as a Viability Program Transfer advisor? Yes No

C. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – Please type responses below or attach separately with additional information.

1) *Please describe the forested property, including its ownership history, built structures and ecological features, (e.g. hunting camps, sugarhouses, wetlands, etc.).*

2) *Please list other individuals (e.g. co-owners, family members, potential successors) involved in the transfer planning process.*

3) *What level of support do you anticipate needing in the transfer planning process (high, medium, low)?*

4) *What are your goals for participating in transfer planning?*

I/we hereby authorize the Program to disclose information about our property, provided that Program restricts access to confidential information. The information given in this application is true to the best of my (our) knowledge.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Please attach \$75 application fee. See Application Instructions for details.

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For more information contact: Mark Raishart, Program Specialist
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