

# CONSERVATION PROJECT SUCCESS STORIES

## Pohl Conservation Area - Upper Valley Land Trust

This project has multiple benefits for the environment and the community as the property contains all season trails for various recreational opportunities, a dedicated portion for housing development, farm fields for local farmers to utilize, and a mix of habitats for local species.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

**75 acres of mixed hardwood forests and meadows**, located close to the Hartland's village center (short walk from village store, post office, etc.)

Secures land at the **core of a popular Nordic ski trail system**, protects working farmland, and provides new all season trail access, along with the opportunity for affordable housing development.

**Farm fields are leased to a local farmer** for hay and trail routes will protect farmland from recreational impacts during crop seasons.

7 acres can be used for **affordable housing development**

The Hartland Winter Trails, an all-volunteer Nordic ski and snowshoe group, manages **25+ kilometers of trails**, thanks to the generosity of 30+ landowners. The Pohl property is the hub of the trail system and has 3.5k of trails on its 75 acres. The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers maintains a short segment of snowmobile trail.

With its location close to the village, a small portion of the property is **possibly suitable for community housing**, a longstanding goal of the Hartland community. UVLT and its partners look forward to exploring the feasibility of development.



## Camp Sunrise

A partnership between Vermont Land Trust, Outright Vermont, and VHCB to acquire and conserve the historic Camp Sunrise property, creating a permanent, safe, and inclusive summer camp and community space for LGBTQ+ youth through the nationally recognized Camp Outright program.

- **115 acres permanently conserved** in fee through a conservation easement co-held by VLT and VHCB, within a 146.5-acre property that includes forests, wetlands, historic campgrounds, and extensive lake frontage. **21 acres of wetlands and over 7,400 feet of surface water frontage**, including along Sunrise Lake, Sunset Lake, and a tributary to Otter Creek, support critical wetland ecosystems, water quality, and climate resilience.
- Creates a **rare, year-round safe space for LGBTQ+ youth and allied families**, only 1 of 36 LGBTQ+ friendly camps in the U.S. This allows for expanded camp programming, leadership summits, family retreats, and outdoor education for youth who often face higher risks of isolation and mental health challenges.
- Recreational opportunities include: swimming, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, fishing, and nature-based learning on trails, with a vision for **carefully managed community access** that aligns with youth safety.
- Cultural and historic significance preserved through **retention and restoration of the 1920s Main Lodge** - listed on the Vermont State Historic Register - along with other traditional rustic camp buildings, maintaining the authentic Vermont camp experience.
- Ecological value: The forested conservation zone is identified in Vermont Conservation Design (VCD) as both a Highest Priority Interior Forest Block and a Highest Priority Connectivity Block. It supports at least **nine rare and uncommon species** and includes significant natural communities, contributing to biodiversity, wildlife corridors, carbon sequestration, and flood resilience.
- This project **exemplifies environmental justice in conservation**, protecting an ecologically important landscape while providing lifesaving, inclusive outdoor spaces for LGBTQ+ youth: a transformative project that will have lasting social and environmental impact in Vermont and beyond.

