

Town of St. Johnsbury Observatory Knob Committee

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Diane Chadderdon, Committee Chair
Email: chadderdon4@me.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Johnsbury Secures Grant for Observatory Knob Master Planning Process, Public Info Kickoff Session Scheduled for April 24

The Town of St. Johnsbury has just been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Northern Forest Center on behalf of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service for the Town's recently acquired, 119-acre, Observatory Knob parcel. Located off of Mt Pleasant St. near the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, the parcel has long been used by local residents and visitors for multiple forms of active and passive recreation and nature observation. The Town will contribute a \$5,000 match to the grant to hire a consultant for an in-depth planning process. The Town already has the funds in hand from robust fundraising efforts leading up to the purchase of the parcel, thanks in large part to leadership by the Vermont Land Trust. A public input session is being hosted by the town's Observatory Knob Advisory Committee on **Wednesday, April 24 from 5:30 to 6:30** at the St. Johnsbury Welcome Center.

Once grant documents are finalized, the Town will seek bids for a consultant to help guide planning for the parcel's long-term management. "It's important for our committee, and eventually our consultant, to hear from a broad spectrum of residents and users," said committee chair and St. Johnsbury resident Diane Chadderdon. "We know this parcel is a special place and we want to ensure that we are extremely intentional in our planning so that we can responsibly conserve this important natural resource while also providing recreational and educational opportunities for the community. We want to take our time to get this right, and we want a lot of voices at the table. We know this land has been enjoyed by the community for over 100 years, and we'd like to see it enjoyed for hundreds more."

Grant funds will help to support a cultural and natural resources inventory of the parcel, to formalize and facilitate public input gathering, and to help create a formal long-term management plan.

The Town of St. Johnsbury joins fourteen other organizations in Vermont that have received subgrant awards so far from this Northern Forest Center grant program. Roughly \$180,000 of the multi-year program was awarded in round one, with a total of \$370,000 to be granted by the program's completion. "We're thrilled to support the great work of trail and community organizations in Vermont and assist them in planning for and making trails that are more durable, sustainable, and accessible," said Joe Fox, the Center's Outdoor Recreation Manager.

For more information about the Observatory Knob planning process, please contact committee chair Diane Chadderdon at **chadderdon4@me.com**.