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Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Conservation projects in Athens, Marlboro receive
2 funding from The Nature Conservancy

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4 TEXT BODY:

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5 The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Vermont recently
6 announce that four organizations have received funding for
7 conservation projects through the Vermont Biodiversity
8 Protection Fund (VBPF).

9 In this third round of VBPF grants, TNC Vermont awarded
10 \$387,250, leveraging over \$3 million in funding from other
11 sources and protecting 2,163 acres in Athens, Marlboro, Fairfield,

12 Fletcher, Bakersfield, and Thetford. These projects were chosen
13 for their habitat connectivity, biodiversity value, freshwater
14 benefits, and community importance.

15 The grants build upon the first two rounds of VBPF,
16 bringing the total awarded to nearly \$1.4 million. All of the
17 conserved land will be open to the public.

18 VBPF funding will support expansion of the Athens
19 Community Forest. The Bull Creek Common Lands are a 15-acre
20 parcel in the critical southern Green Mountains to White
21 Mountains connectivity corridor.

22 Once protected, the land will be managed by Bull Creek
23 Common Lands to maintain and enhance ecological features and
24 processes such as forest health, water quality, and flood
25 resilience. Public access to a maintained trail and parking area
26 will be provided for locals, visitors, and school groups. The
27 Vermont Land Trust and Vermont Housing and Conservation
28 Board will co-steward a conservation easement on the property.

29 “Having support from TNC’s Vermont Biodiversity
30 Protection Fund is critical to acquiring this small but wildly
31 diverse addition to the Athens Community Forest,” said Bull
32 Creek Common Lands Board Chair Hannah Regier in a news
33 release. “The parcel will provide the public with a new, more
34 accessible, entry point to enjoy the Bull Creek and community
35 trails.”

36 Also on the funding list is the Winter Wren Nature
37 Preserve in Marlboro, which is on land long owned by the Ames
38 family. The Ames children wanted to conserve this 531-acre
39 parcel of land in memory of their father, Del Ames.

40 This land acts as the headwaters to the Green River and
41 its tributaries, with abundant wetlands that provide ecosystem
42 benefits such as local climate regulation, flood control, and water
43 purification. It hosts denning habitat for bear, bobcats, and
44 porcupines, evidence of moose and snowshoe hare, and provides
45 critical habitat for wood turtles.

46 This important linkage to the Green Mountain National
47 Forest will provide public access for outdoor education and
48 recreation, including snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, and
49 hunting. Green Mountain Conservancy will own and manage the
50 land, with the Vermont Land Trust and Vermont Housing and
51 Conservation Board co-holding an easement.

52 "Conservation is not just for the plants and animals that
53 depend on wild places, but also for all the benefits Vermont's
54 lands and waters provide to our human communities: clean air,
55 safe drinking water, lower flood risk, local jobs, and improved
56 health," said TNC Vermont State Director Eve Frankel. "Through
57 the Vermont Biodiversity Protection Fund we are able to support
58 projects that have the very highest value for both nature and
59 people."

60 The next round of VBPF funding will open to applicants
61 this fall. Land trusts, municipalities, and state agencies are
62 eligible to apply. For more information on the Vermont
63 Biodiversity Protection Fund, visit bit.ly/875-tnc.

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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