

Burlington Conservation Board
645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
<http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/dpi>
Telephone: (802) 865-7188

Zoe Richards, Chair
Rebecca Roman
Don Meals
Miles Waite
Ryan Crehan
Hannah Brislin
Caryn Connolly
Kyle Tansley
Leslie Spencer
Elizabeth Cunningham, Student



Open Space Subcommittee Meeting Public Notice

Monday, November 4, 2024, 4:30 PM

Remote-only via Zoom

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/97391523913?pwd=8JOoCLvd4NsefkC8wMGwEpNkTgqwFz.1>

Webinar ID: 973 9152 3913

Password: 306373

Telephone: 1 929 205 6099

1. Public Comment

2. Conservation Legacy Fund Application

2.1. Winooski Valley Park District

Consideration of funding request for boardwalk replacement at the Ethan Allen Homestead property

3. Adjournment

4. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

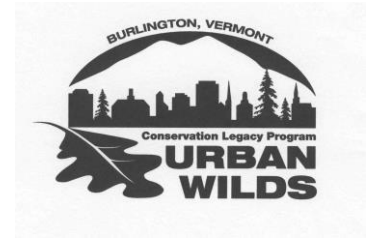
The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities and employment opportunities. The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who require special arrangements, auxiliary aid, service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the City of Burlington, should contact the office of the Title II Burlington ADA Coordinator at 802-865-7000 as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

5. Minutes

5.1. Minutes of November 4, 2024

Burlington Conservation Legacy Program

Department of Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
645 Pine St, Suite B
Burlington, VT 05401
www.enjoyburlington.com
Telephone: (802) 864-0123



Burlington Conservation Legacy Program Fund Application

Property Owner Name Winooski Valley Park District

Owner Address 1 Ethan Allen Homestead (permit address: 820 North Avenue)

Owner Phone 802-735-5892 day same evening

Contact Person Name Nick Warner

Contact Address same

Contact Phone same day same evening

CLP Grant Funds Requested \$173,375

Property Address & Acreage 1 Ethan Allen Homestead, 284 acres
(Please attach map of your property, include location map and major property features such as wooded areas, developed areas, wetlands, etc.)

Please describe the proposal (Attach extra sheet as needed.) _____

WVPD seeks funding to complete reconstruction of "Wetland Walk North", a highly popular boardwalk located in the heart of Ethan Allen Homestead Park. A detailed description of the project and its context is attached to this application. State permitting and regulatory clearances have been obtained, and a local building will be pulled before work commences.

General Property Characteristics:

Do you wish to sell the property outright or continue to own it and establish a conservation easement? N/A: the property is conserved via LWCF and TNC Easements

Who will own the property or conservation easement? N/A

What other funding sources and partners are committed to this project?

WVPD will contribute \$25,764 worth of labor – and leverage volunteer time mostly during the demolition phase (removal of old Boardwalk)

What's the fair market value as determined by a professional appraiser? N/A

Is the land contiguous with other conserved land? If yes, briefly describe that parcel.
The project is located on a 284-acre parcel that is contiguous with the Intervale Center's land, and the Winooski River.

What threats, if any, face the land? Flooding, invasive species, overuse, erosion

What is the current use of the property? Public park/natural area (use will not change)

What is the intended use of the property? Public Park/natural area (continued use)

Is the title to the property free of encumbrances that would defeat the conservation goals of the transaction or subject the City of Burlington to undue legal risk? Deed restrictions are in place via LWCF and the Nature Conservancy, ensuring that the entire 284-acre property remains accessible to the public for outdoor recreation, and protected as a natural area in perpetuity

Are there other legal issues surrounding the transaction that would subject the City of Burlington to undue financial costs or risks? N/A

Does the property contain any hazardous waste sites, significant trash dumps, fire hazards, polluted water courses or bodies that would present legal risk or burden to the City of Burlington or defeat the conservation purposes of protecting the property? No

Open Space Land Values:

(Check all that apply.)

Natural Values

- ☒ Forest Community
- ☒ Other Natural Communities
- ☒ Important Plant Habitat
- ☒ Important Wildlife Habitat
- ☒ Lake or River Shoreline
- ☒ Wetland
- ☒ River/Wetland Buffer Zone
 - ☐ Important Geological/Soil Features
- ☒ Wildlife Travel Corridors
 - ☐ Natural Heritage Program Sites
 - ☐ Unique Topography
- ☒ Floodwater/Stormwater Treatment
- ☒ Potential Restoration Area

Working Values

- ☐ Agricultural Potential
- ☒ Current Agricultural
- ☐ Working Forest

Open Space Types:

(Check all that apply.)

Is all or a portion of the property identified in the city's Open Space Inventory?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unknown

Does the property include one or more of the following features or locations?

- ☐ Lake Champlain Shoreline
- ☒ Winooski River Corridor/Intervale
 - ☐ Englesby Brook/Watershed
 - ☐ Centennial Woods/Brook
 - ☐ Vermont Natural Heritage Site
 - ☐ Neighborhood Green Space
 - ☐ Urban Waterfront
- ☒ Recreational Linkage
- ☒ Community Garden

Scenic Values

- ☐ Vista
- ☐ Viewshed
- ☒ Greenway

Recreational & Educational

- ☒ Public Park
- ☒ Trails
- ☒ Passive Recreational Activity
- ☒ Educational Resource

Historical, Cultural, Archaeological Values

- ☒ Archaeological Site
- ☒ Historic/Cultural Site
 - ☐ National Register

Other Urban Open Space Values

- ☒ Access/Connectors to Protected Areas
 - ☐ Greenbelts
- ☒ Community Open Space
 - ☐ Stormwater Retention
 - ☐ Community Garden

For assistance contact:

Dan Cahill, Land Steward
Burlington Conservation Legacy Program
Burlington Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
645 Pine Street, Suite B
Burlington, VT 05401
dcahill@burlingtonvt.gov

Budget Sheet

Project Budget

- CLP grant funds requested: **\$171,875**
- Values of other funding sources (optimally 60% of total): **\$22,264**

Winooski Valley Park District: Restoration of the Wetlands Walk North Boardwalk

Project Budget

Project Activity	Project Activity Description	Funding Proposal		Total Project Activity Cost
		WVPD	BTV Legacy Fund	
Permitting	City of Burlington Zoning Permit and Building Permit Fees	\$1,500		\$1,500
Materials	Helical Anchor Foundation System, Pressure Treated Framing, Black Locust or White Oak Decking, Curbing and Railing System, Vinyl Coated Wire Mesh Railing infill, Galvanized metal brackets and fasteners		\$122,375	\$122,375
Contracted Services	Contracted on-site labor including professional contractors/work crews, and services (mobilization, construction work, clean up and demobilization). (Labor cost of contracted services will be reduced by WVPD and volunteer labor, details will be worked out when a contractor is selected)		\$42,000	\$42,000
Construction Equipment Rental	Material Hauler, Helical Anchor Installation Equipment, Generators		\$7,500	\$7,500
WVPD Labor	WVPD staff time for construction (est. 4 weeks/40 hours: Tim Lamed, WVPD Parks Superintendent/Project Manager @ \$37.73/hour; Three WVPD seasonal parks staff @ \$21.50/hour)	\$16,357		\$16,357
Project Management	WVPD staff time for grant admin & associated reporting (est. 40 hours/staff: Tim Lamed, WVPD Parks Superintendent/Project Manager @ \$37.73/hour; Nick Warner, WVPD Executive Director @ \$38.62/hour; Lauren Chicote, WVPD Operations Manager @ \$33.80/hour)	\$4,407		\$4,407
TOTALS:		\$22,264	\$171,875	\$194,139

- **Total cost of project: \$194,139**



Winooski Valley Park District

Ethan Allen Homestead

Burlington, Vermont 05408

Tel: (802) 863-5744 Email: info@wvdp.org www.WVPD.org Fax: (802) 865-0647



Request for Funding Support: Restoration of the Wetlands Walk North Boardwalk Ethan Allen Homestead Park, Winooski Valley Park District

Project Team:

Tim Larned, Park Superintendent
(802) 373-0743

Timlarned@wvdp.org

Nick Warner, Executive Director
(802) 863-5744

nickwarner@wvdp.org

Lauren Chicote, Operations Manager
(802) 863-5744

laurencicote@wvdp.org

Project Description

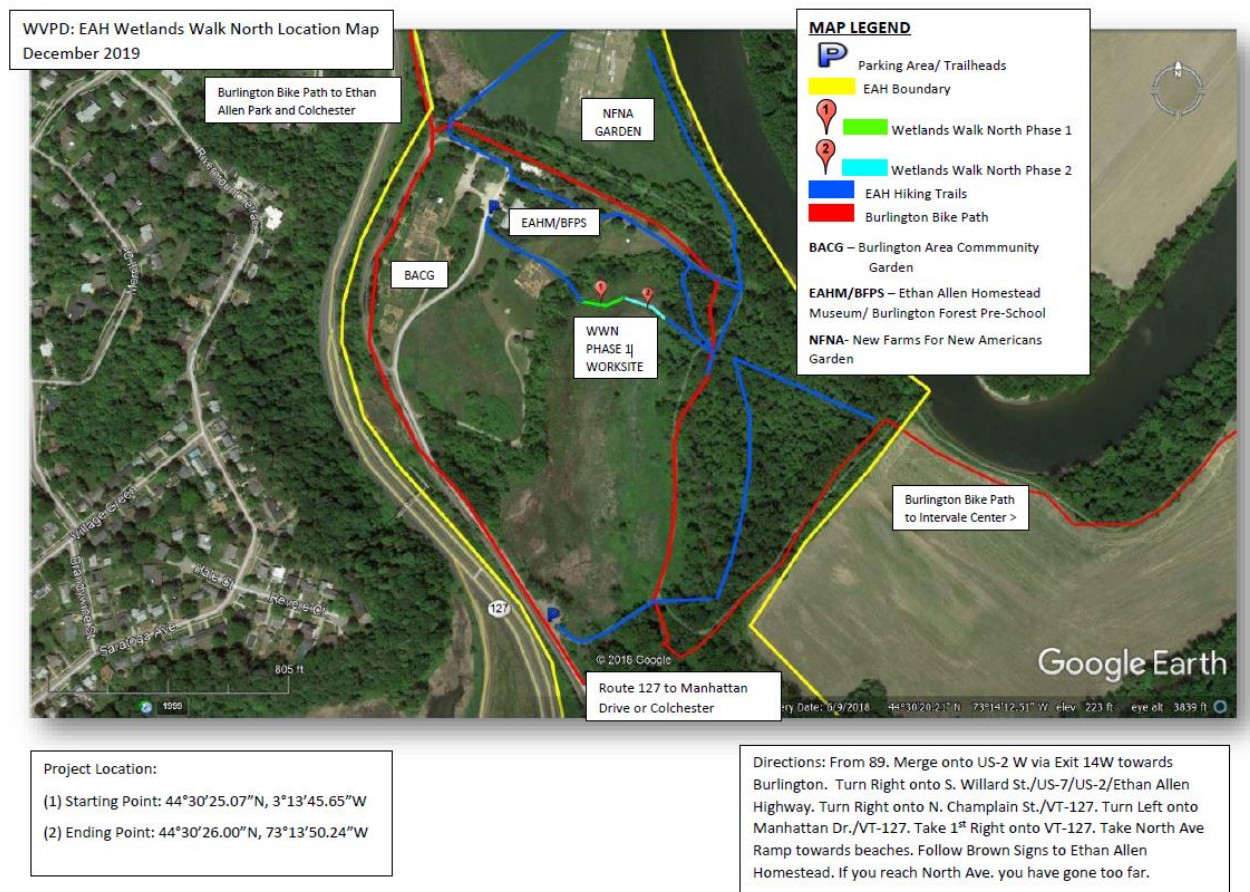
The Wetlands Walk North (WWN), a 370' elevated boardwalk, built in 1992, has served thousands of visitors as a place of refuge, scientific study, and connection to the natural world. Normal deterioration and a flooding/freeze event in the winter of 2018 severely compromised the structure prompting its closure. This project is for reconstruction of the WWN, ensuring accessibility and longevity for the next generation of outdoor recreationalists and naturalists to enjoy.



Rationale for Project

Located in Vermont's most populous City, and bookended by low-income neighborhoods, the Winooski River, and Burlington's 700-acre Intervale, WWN is located at the hub of multiple trails, bike paths, and outstanding natural features. Many who live in the area have had limited opportunities to experience outdoor recreation, and this boardwalk provides an entertaining and

engaging place to have that experience. Moreover, WVPD has long understood the connection between public access and support for conservation, ecological stewardship, and community connection. This project provides safe, low impact access to the natural world while accommodating public demand for recreation and environmental education. This is achieved by ensuring robust public access to the wetland with a physical structure that provides protection for the fragile wetland ecology. Local schools, universities, youth groups, and camps utilize and visit the site each year as a field trip and service-learning destination to use as an outdoor classroom.



WWN Trail and Path Connectivity

- Ethan Allen Homestead Park (EAH) hosts 6 miles of trails that follow the Winooski River used daily for running, walking, dog-walking, bird watching, access to the river for fishing, kayak/canoe access, and wildlife viewing. The Burlington Bike Path has two sections that run through EAH: the paved bike path that follows Rt. 127 to Ethan Allen Park; and the natural surfaced Cycle the City trail that connects from the Intervale Center. These bike routes are used daily by both commuters and recreationalists year-round.
- A section of the Burlington Wildways Trail meanders through the EAH. The Wildways trail connects the existing trails to provide a more welcoming user experience from WVPD's Salmon Hole Park in Burlington, though the Intervale Center trails to the City of Burlington's McKenzie Park, onto WVPD's EAH and Burlington's Ethan Allen Park

the trail then continues to and around the Rock Point trails currently ending on the Burlington Bike Path. This 9+ mile connected trail in the heart of Vermont's largest urban area is almost entirely through natural areas with only one road crossing.

- The Winooski River borders the eastern edge of the property, and WVPD manages a canoe/kayak launch that is directly off the main trail that runs through the park near the access for the WWN.

Site Control

WVPD owns and manages the Ethan Allen Homestead, the 288-acre property where the WWN is located. The park is open at no charge, year-round, from dawn to dusk. The site is deed restricted by LWCF and TNC, ensuring that it is conserved in perpetuity.

Permitting

WVPD has consulted with regulators and verified Act250 is not required & elevated boardwalks are permitted use of the wetland rules. It will require a local building permit only.

Project Management

Tim Larned, Parks Superintendent will serve as Project Manager overseeing all aspects of the project including removal of the old structure, construction of new boardwalk, supervising contractors, managing permits, and volunteer coordination. He will supervise WVPD seasonal maintenance staff who will assist in construction aspects of the project. Contractors will be hired for installation of helical piers, while WVPD staff and volunteers will work on deconstruction. Construction of the new boardwalk will be a collaboration between contractors, WVPD staff, and volunteers.



Nick Warner, Executive Director will oversee contractor selection, grant management, and project management as needed.

Lauren Chicote, Operations Manager will assist with grant and project management as needed. After construction, she will promote/advertise the WWN for inclusive use, and coordinate with local education institutions and groups to arrange visits to utilize the reconstructed WWN for educational purposes.

Project Scope

WVPD plans for the full replacement of the WWN boardwalk structure that will be more accessible for everyone to enjoy for the next 30+ years. The new structure will follow the existing path of the boardwalk through the wetland but will be updated for better access and using materials that will ensure a long life. The current 4' wide pressure treated boardwalk will be replaced with a 5' wide structure, making it more accessible to individuals with mobility assistance needs, and easier for educational programs to be conducted on it. Naturally rot resistant hardwoods such as white oak or black locust will replace the current pressure treated materials. Helical piers will be used in the new design allowing the structure to withstand the natural fluctuation of the wetlands water level along with larger flooding events and continuous freezing/thawing in the winter.

Project Partners

Partners will support the project by volunteering during construction, help to promote use and access, and utilize the WWN for programming after reconstruction.

The *Burlington Wildways* partnership connects and protects the wild places and paths of Burlington, VT. Their mission is to maintain a world-class shared trail network; conserve biodiversity; and provide equitable access to the city's natural areas. The Wildways trail connects through the Ethan Allen Homestead and Wildways has identified the restoration of the WWN as a high priority.

The Ethan Allen Homestead (EAH) is home to several partner organizations that will benefit from and utilize the WWN. The *Ethan Allen Homestead Museum* interprets Ethan Allen's original 1787 farmhouse which overlooks the wetland where the WWN is located, welcoming thousands of visitors each year. *Alnôbaiwi*, a non-profit preserving Abenaki cultural, has a classroom/meeting space and holds cultural events in the Abenaki Village. The *Burlington Forest Preschool* operates two nature-based classrooms and will use the WWN daily for nature explorations. The site also hosts several community gardens managed by numerous partners including two BPRW gardens, the *Vermont Garden Network* and *Janet S. Munt Family Room* teaching gardens, and the *New Farms for New Americans* 60+ family farm.

Project Funding History

WVPD received \$50k in a 2022 VOREC Grant as part of the City of Burlington's "One Burlington: Committed to Accessible and Affordable Outdoor Recreation & Nature based activities for our City" project. Additional funds were sought by WVPD from VOREC in 2023 to cover the full cost and ensure completion of the WWN, however the application was not successful.

WVPD had also applied for VT Recreation Trail Program (RTP) funds with unsuccessful applications in 2017 and 2020. While the project scored high overall it was not funded due to the high cost for a short section of trail. WVPD also applied for funding from the Lake Champlain Basin Program in 2019 but was unsuccessful due to not having other funds secured to complete the project at the time of the application.

In partnership with Burlington Wildways, WVPD sought private donor support for a portion of the project in 2023. While the was very interested and supportive of the project, their focus for funding support has shifted to other recent global issues.

The combination of these unsuccessful applications, and a backlog of post-pandemic projects and continued repairs after three major flood events, WVPD found itself with an expiring VOREC grant and was preparing to mobilize a more limited scope this fall to get the project rolling before funds expired. However, in consultation with BPRW, it was decided that the most appropriate action was to reprogram the \$50k allocated to WVN to another project in the VOREC partnership, and to re-set the fundraising effort for this important project.



Project Issue and Urgency

People need safe and well-maintained access to the outdoors not just in the remote mountains and areas of the state, but in urban areas close to where people live and work – providing the steppingstone to outdoor recreation. WVPD has been providing free, high quality outdoor recreational access to the public for over 50 years through its 18 regional parks in eight member communities in Chittenden County, with WVN one of the most popular components in the system.

Public Benefit and Equitable Access

The WVN boardwalk provided the unique opportunity of direct access through a Class II wetland in the heart of the most densely populated and culturally diverse low- and moderate-income neighborhoods (as defined by HUD) in Burlington (Census Tracts 3 & 6), Colchester (Census Tract 22.04) and Winooski (Census Tract 24).

Burlington school children are bussed out of the city for wetland explorations and nature-based field trips. In a city that is almost 50% open space, with 40% of its land area in floodplain, children should have places to see and explore the wetlands and natural areas of their own backyard – that they can come back to time and time again. The repaired and modernized trail infrastructure of the WVN will allow area children, teachers, families, and the public, to have an extraordinary platform for understanding a rich, varied, and productive freshwater marsh close to many Burlington schools and neighborhoods. The WVN is a powerful way for the next generation to have a unique experience in their hometown wetland.

Recent flooding events put a sharp focus on the importance of conserving riparian and wetlands systems as we prepare to face more frequent flood events due to climate change. The new WVN will be designed to better withstand flood events with the use of helical piers and naturally rot resistant materials. The boardwalk with its observation platform will serve as a unique tool for education on how wetlands play a role in climate resiliency. Giving people direct access to a wetland will promote an increase in understanding for the pressing need to conserve and manage our natural resources.



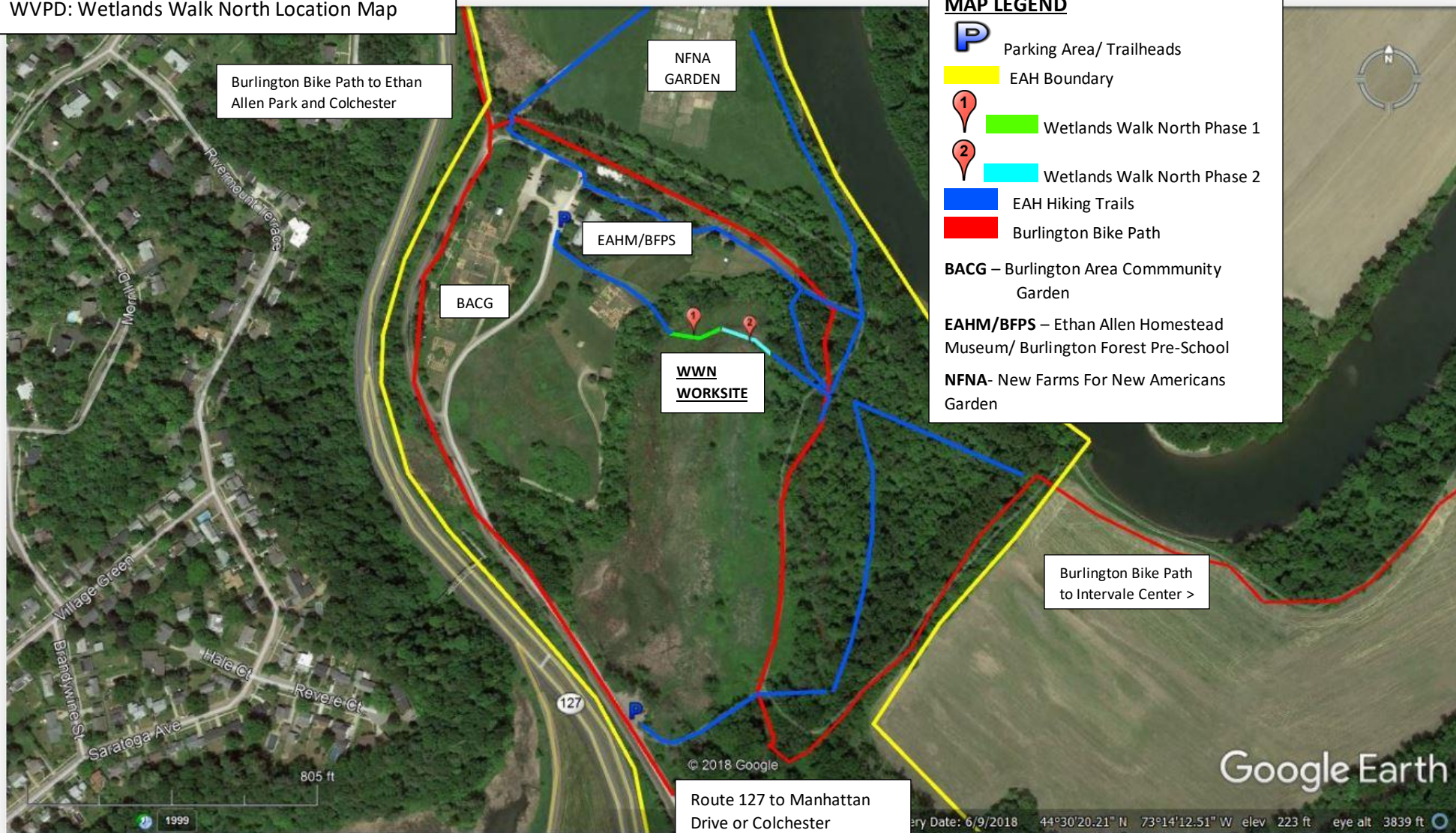
Project Budget

Winooski Valley Park District: Restoration of the Wetlands Walk North Boardwalk

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TOTALS:		\$22,264	\$171,875	\$194,139

WVPD: Wetlands Walk North Location Map



Project Location:

(1) Starting Point: 44°30'25.07"N, 3°13'45.65"W

(2) Ending Point: 44°30'26.00"N, 73°13'50.24"W

Directions: From 89. Merge onto US-2 W via Exit 14W towards Burlington. Turn Right onto S. Willard St./US-7/US-2/Ethan Allen Highway. Turn Right onto N. Champlain St./VT-127. Turn Left onto Manhattan Dr./VT-127. Take 1st Right onto VT-127. Take North Ave Ramp towards beaches. Follow Brown Signs to Ethan Allen Homestead. If you reach North Ave. you have gone too far.

Photographs of the Wetlands Walk North Board Walk

Winooski Valley Park District: Restoration of the Wetlands Walk North Boardwalk



Students from CP Smith Elementary in Burlington explore the wetlands at the Ethan Allen Homestead from the Wetlands Walk North Boardwalk, Spring 2012. A wider structure (from 4' to 5') will provide a more accessible and safer boardwalk to be used for educational opportunities.



A child explores the wetlands from the now dilapidated Wetlands Walk North at the Ethan Allen Homestead, Summer 2019.



Dislodged sections of board looking west (above). Broked steel anchor support (below). Photos taken December 10, 2019.





From the eastern approach off the Cycle the City bike path heading west on the boardwalk. Photo taken December 13, 2023.



View of boardwalk looking west leading towards observation platform. Several sections of the boardwalk are now permanently submerged in the waters of the wetland. Photo taken December 13, 2023.



Western approach off the staircase leading from the main grounds of the Ethan Allen Homestead. Photo taken December 13, 2023.



View of Wetlands Walk North Boardwalk looking east showing uneven/warped decking sections from damage to steel anchor supports. Photo taken December 13, 2023.



View of Wetlands Walk North Boardwalk from the stairs on the western approach showing expanse of boardwalk through the wetlands. Photo taken December 13, 2023.



Campers enjoy the Boardwalk in 2016

To Scott and the Open Space Subcommittee,

Good morning, I was looking at this sizable request and it sparked some questions. In the application it is noted that this is part of the Open Space inventory yet it is owned by the Winooski Valley Park District which has multiple community members having access to these lands.

Question #1.. Did any Open Space funds go into the acquisition of these lands?

Question #2... Have any other communities who are members been asked to contribute funds?

Question #3...The way I understand the use of these funds is that they are MAINLY for acquisition and limited use of these funds to maintain them. My concern is are you establishing a precedent by approving the use of these dollars if no legacy fund dollars were used to purchase this?

With the adoption of a new Zoning Ordinance called the Neighborhood Code more areas may look to this fund to preserve desired open space to balance intense development. Plus larger developments like Cottage Courts and Planned Unit Developments may look to this fund as a means of offsetting the cost of preserving undeveloped acreage.

I am aware that the fund is growing but without significant dollars available , the City would never have been able to purchase the 12 acres from Eric Farrell or contribute funds to preserve lands at Rock Point.

I continue to not fully understand the use of one penny for Parks dollars and the maintenance dollars in Park's budget versus the Legacy Fund dollars which I believe has greater restrictions on its authorized use. Thank you for your time.

Sharon Bushor
Ward 1 Resident

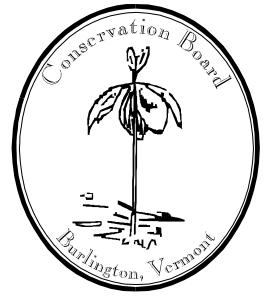
**Burlington Conservation Board
Open Space Subcommittee**

645 Pine Street

Burlington, VT 05401

www.burlingtonvt.gov/dpi

Telephone: (802) 865-7188



Open Space Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2024 at 4:30 PM

Remote Meeting

Present: Garret King, Zoe Richards, Rebecca Roman, Kyle Tansley, Dan Cahill, Sharon Bushor
Nick Warner, Lauren Chicote.

I. Public Comment

Sharon Bushor public comment about the use of funds and what communities have been asked to contribute.

II. Project Updates

- **Winooski Valley Park District**

Consideration of funding request for boardwalk replacement at the Ethan Allen Homestead property.

The Legacy Fund application review included Rebecca Roman, Dan Cahill, and Zoe Richards from the Conservation Board as well as Nick Warner and Lauren Chicote from the Winooski Valley Park District. Those present discussed the way the grant fund applies to this application and what steps may be needed to create the policy to allow for this project and other similar projects in the future. The members decided to continue the conversation into the next meeting to focus on what recommendation are needed to be made to the Legacy Fund to expand the scope of projects that can be included.

III. Adjournment

5:34 PM.

The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities, and employment opportunities. For accessibility information or alternative formats, please contact Human Resources Department at 865-7145.