



Lottery Road Wildlife Corridor FAQ

What is the history of the property?

In 1870, the Town purchased property at the end of Lottery Road for the purpose of creating a Town Farm to “house the poor.” The prior owner, Jeffrey A. Barney, had been the Town road surveyor in 1785, making this site one of the early farm settlements in Shrewsbury.

As part of the Town’s purchase, the farm came with 184 acres, a house, sugarhouse, barns, cattle and farm equipment. By 1903, the Town Poor Farm was not being used and was sold. Subsequent owners increased the parcel to 527 acres and have had various plans for development including a retirement complex for clergy, a home for single mothers, a private school, and a residential subdivision, none of which were realized. At this time, the property is much as it was 200 years ago, with the remnants of the Town Poor Farm preserved in impressive stone foundations and stone walls.

How did this conservation project come about?

This area has long been of interest to state agencies, conservationists and the Shrewsbury Planning Commission because of its location as a prime wildlife corridor. The Shrewsbury Conservation Commission (SCC) has been seeking to preserve this property for over eight years. In 2017, the Shrewsbury Selectboard appointed a committee of SCC members and concerned citizens to explore ways to conserve the property, ideally without requiring funding from the Town. In short, they succeeded!

What are the costs associated with acquiring the property?

The landowner agreed to a purchase price of \$430,000, down from a previous asking price exceeding \$1 million. Additional costs for appraisal review, surveys, closing costs, signage and maintenance total a little over \$20,000.

What funding commitments have been received?

The Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife will allocate \$340,000 in funds received under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, which authorizes sales tax revenue from the sale of firearms and ammunition products to be apportioned to state-level fish and game agencies. The Department is also contributing \$20,000 in previously collected donations for the Vermont Habitat Stamp. The Vermont Land Trust is committing up to \$44,000 from a bequest to support land conservation projects made by Shrewsbury resident Joan Sibley, leaving a balance of approximately \$46,000 to be raised as local support for the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife’s purchase of the property.

Why are checks payable to Vermont Habitat Stamp?

Donations to the Vermont Habitat Stamp on behalf of the Lottery Road Wildlife Corridor are tax-deductible and will be expressly used to purchase the property. The State has already committed \$20,000 in monies previously donated to purchase the Habitat Stamp and will add additional contributions designated for the land acquisition.

What happens if the purchase doesn't go through?

The Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife believes that the purchase is virtually certain because all the major hurdles have been met, including a detailed appraisal and survey of the property and foresees no further impediments to the purchase. However, if for some reason the purchase does not occur, all donations exceeding \$1,000 will be refunded in full to the donors and pledges, including any below that amount, will be released.

Will the property be open to recreation?

In addition to its role as a key wildlife corridor, the property will also be open to a variety of recreational uses, including hunting, hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and bird watching. The land has early succession woodland ideal for grouse hunting as well as mature forests with deer and bear. It features an extensive network of trails including a loop connecting Lottery Road with the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail and a trail leading up to the summit of Kinsman Peak. Motorized vehicles, including snowmobiles and ATVs, will not have access to the conserved property.

How will the property be accessed for recreation?

Primary access will be from Lottery Road, but the property can also be accessed by Gaynor Road and from the LT/AT.

Doesn't Shrewsbury already have a lot of State property?

The Coolidge-Aiken-Jeffords State Forests to the north and east provide a lot of wildlife and recreational benefits. The importance of the Lottery Road property is that it is an undeveloped forest corridor that will provide a vital wildlife connection from these protected northern lands to the Green Mountain National Forest and other conserved lands to the south. As land becomes more and more fragmented, studies have shown that habitats lose HALF of their animal and plant species within 20 years of being fragmented. Continuous corridors become more and more critical for long-ranging species such as bear, moose and bobcat, as well as providing habitat for many other game and non-game species such as deer, grouse, fisher and songbirds.

What about taxes?

Will the Town lose tax revenue and taxes will go up if this property is conserved? The surprising answer is: No!

Currently, the parcel is assessed at \$584,300. At last year's local tax rate of \$0.4287 per \$100, the local tax on this property amounted to \$2,505. Under State ownership, the State will make a 100% annual payment in lieu of local taxes. In addition, there would be no change to the education tax assessed to residents because the impact of conserving the land is spread across all Vermont taxpayers and thus is negligible.