

# THE JACOB-KRANTZ PARCEL

## BACKGROUND ON THE PROPOSED TRANSFER TO THE WINOOSKI VALLEY PARK DISTRICT

The Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) is a partnership of seven member communities: Burlington, Colchester, Essex, Jericho, South Burlington, Williston, and Winooski. WVPD's mission is to plan, acquire, and manage lands and waters within the boundaries of its member municipalities in the Winooski River Valley for purposes of conservation, preservation of natural areas, establishment of parks, and resource-based education and recreation. WVPD is a hybrid non-profit and municipal corporation formed in 1972 with a Board of Trustees that meets monthly (visit [wvpd.org](http://wvpd.org) for agendas and meeting dates).



Since the 1980's, the Town of Williston has taken a highly proactive approach to land conservation, utilizing a comprehensive Open Space Plan and acquisition fund to carry out conservation priorities. As a result, the town has assembled a large and growing portfolio of conserved lands and path easements.

WVPD has been a partner with Williston over the years – playing a significant role in the acquisition and development of Five Tree Hill, assisting with work crews and trail planning, training Williston's Conservation intern each year, and more recently as a contractor for trail maintenance and construction. WVPD has proposed bringing additional value to the Town – through the acquisition, protection, development, and management of the Jacob-Krantz parcel as a conservation park accessible to the public.

**PROJECT HISTORY** Peter Jacob and Lloyd Krantz donated a 29-acre parcel of land to the Town of Williston, closing the transaction on January 3, 2018. The parcel has high conservation and recreational values, and the Town of Williston and the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) are exploring a transaction that would deed the park to WVPD. If this occurs, WVPD would develop it into a natural area, preserved in perpetuity, with a trail system and public access.

## RECREATIONAL VALUE

The potential of the Jacob-Krantz parcel as a recreational asset is high:

- The parcel is located in an area that is rapidly developing and in need of accessible green space;
- The park offers a diverse landscape with ridgeline, floodplain forest, wetlands, shoreline, and a tributary stream;
- The dense forested habitat abuts a river corridor featuring a broad variety of wildlife species;
- The public has already been using the site for informal trails and has done some maintenance over time to keep trails open;
- The park is already a 4-season destination for local walkers and birders;
- The trail system will offer enough variety and distance to accommodate multiple uses and accommodate differing abilities;
- The park will serve three adjacent neighborhoods;
- There is the potential of creating a parking lot and formal trailhead to expand public access.

## CONSERVATION VALUE

The Jacob-Krantz parcel has been rated as a “top priority” by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources BioFinder system. This means that based on a wide range of data, the conservation value of the Jacob parcel is rated at the highest level.

BioFinder is a comprehensive “mapping tool for identifying Vermont's lands and waters that support important ecosystems, natural communities, habitats, and species...highlights networks of forests, streams and other features that together create the heart and backbone of Vermont's landscape.” BioFinder takes a holistic approach to identifying the most crucial lands used by these components as they work together to create a functional system. It is available online: <http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/BioFinder2016/>

## PARK DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that it will take three years and approximately \$50,000 to develop the Jacob-Krantz Parcel. WVPD will seek grant funding for park development and invest some of its capital reserves. A generalized schedule follows:

### **Year 1:**

- Conduct comprehensive outreach with Williston Conservation Commission, adjacent neighborhoods, abutting landowners;
- Conduct comprehensive Natural Resource Inventory (complete);
- Contact permitting/regulatory agencies to get preliminary assessment on wetland, shoreline, zoning, cultural resource and any other requirements;
- Contact Trinity Baptist regarding potential access/parking lot on their property;
- Contact Global Foundries regarding potential access/parking lot near solar array;
- Work with Green Mountain Power on ensuring access to utility corridor is established; getting permission for shoreline access along edge of park; sharing use of their Right of Way; and potential for sharing resources during park development and future maintenance;
- Complete first draft park design and submit permitting requests to regulatory agencies;
- Establish first access, make basic trail improvements, post project signage to allow public use and build awareness of the new park and development process.

### **Year 2:**

- Install main park entrance sign(s);
- Finalize project budget, submit application for Trails Funding and/or other sources;
- Begin fabrication of major elements (bridges, puncheons, steps) for initial access;
- Mobilize volunteers for trail projects, invasives removal;
- Initiate negotiation on potential Conservation Easement with town and land trust.

### Year 3:

- Utilize Trails grant funding and/or capital funding to complete construction of parking lot(s) if easements are secured;
- Complete remaining structures and trails;
- Recruit Park Attendant from neighborhood to open and close the park gate (if needed);
- Complete Management Plan for Park;
- If Conservation Easement obtained, record as Warranty Deed in Town records.

### TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

WVPD will design and build a trail system that will allow for easy public access, accommodate four-season recreation, provide access to the Riverbank, and allow users to complete a loop.



A first step will be to identify and map areas and setbacks within which access should be denied or limited. WVPD will work with regulators to obtain compliance and clearances for wetlands, rare and endangered species, riparian buffers, cultural resources and other potential issues.

Once a draft park design is completed, WVPD will present the plan to the Williston Conservation Commission and Selectboard for

comment before submitting to the Zoning administrator for a permit.

It is anticipated that at least two bridges will need to be constructed to cross the tributary brook. They will be similar to structures shown here that was constructed by WVPD at Wolcott Family Natural area in Colchester.



There are also several locations where puncheons (boardwalks) might be required, as well as possible stairs, erosion control structures, and culverts. These will be designed to prevent park users from creating erosion going off-trail, or damaging habitat and/or endangered species.



### MAPPING AND SIGNAGE

The new park will be included in WVPD's Master Map, and a trail map will be created and placed online for easy download/access. This map will be in PDF format to allow for easy production of paper maps. A signage plan will be devised and installed to provide a trail map for park users and information on park policies and rules.

FIGURE 1

**FROM VERMONT BIOFINDER: CONSERVATION VALUATION SYSTEM**

Dark green area shows "highest priority" for *landscape conservation*, light green shows "priority" areas for *landscape conservation*, and dark grey areas show highest priority areas for *species conservation*.

Red line shows approximate course of unnamed tributary that runs into the Winooski River.

