



## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF NORWICH FARM:

### ***Situation***

The Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) is currently exploring strategic alternative uses and activities for Norwich Farm, a unique combination of buildings and land resources located on Turnpike Road in Norwich, Vermont about 5 miles from the town's center. Vermont Technical College (VTC) has recently informed UVLT that it intends to discontinue its agricultural education programs at this location. This notification has triggered an option for UVLT to purchase Norwich Farm (an extensive high-quality complex of farm buildings, residences and 6-acres of land), which expires March 26, 2018. UVLT owns 352-acres of adjacent farm and forestland at this location (the "Brookmead Conservation Area") and is very much invested in the future of Norwich Farm.

### ***Partnerships and program potential***

Although we are disappointed that VTC's educational programming will not continue, the coming transition offers a wide range of programmatic opportunities for UVLT and potential partners to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Upper Valley residents. Our primary goal will be to preserve and increase the positive impacts that can be provided by the 352 acres we own. Our 2020 Strategic Positioning Goals provide guidance as we advance our conservation mission:

- Identify community needs and where conservation can address gaps;
- Be a catalyst and active strategic partner in dialogue about the future of the Upper Valley;
- Develop alliances and programs with groups concerned about the Upper Valley's future;
- Use conserved land to teach and connect people to stewardship principles;
- Foster a sense of investment toward stewardship and sustainability; and
- Inspire an appreciation of land and encourage philanthropy through programs for families and younger people.

The Norwich Farm property, with its extensive farm building complex, existing classroom and additional suitable space for classroom and office conversion, and nearby agricultural meadows, proximity to town-maintained recreation land and upland forest with existing biological research sites, presents many opportunities to advance UVLT's goals. Therefore, we are seeking to collaborate, gather advice, and share ideas with our colleagues and partners involved in promoting the health, sustainability and vitality of the Upper Valley.

Could UVLT's acquisition of these resources and stewardship of the site serve to address core needs and problems that your organization has identified? Would your organization like an ongoing role at the site through tenancy, ownership or an economic joint venture? What programming and partnerships could benefit the people you serve and/or advance the issues that you care about? Some possibilities include:

- Strengthening food systems;
- Growing crops for food pantries or community facilities;
- Value-added processing of food products<sup>1</sup>;
- Enhancing early childhood education;
- Delivering programs with academic and agricultural institutions;
- Providing children's camps, housing, gardens, 4-H programs, wellness activities; or
- Supporting natural science education, stewardship training or recreational access.

This request for ideas and feedback from prospective non-profit or community partners is being shared widely, with interviews ongoing through November and December while a formal analysis of the site's carrying costs is being completed. Please contact **Jeanie McIntyre 603-643-6626** for more information.

#### **Background:**

VTC currently owns the 6-acre farm complex where they have been offering agricultural educational programs and leasing dairy processing facilities to cheesemaker, Chris Gray. VTC received the farm complex as a gift from The Andrew and Margaret Sigler Foundation in 2015 together with 352- acres of farm and forestland, which the school subsequently sold to UVLT. UVLT drew funds to purchase the land from its Fund for Conservation Action, local donors and an expenditure from Norwich's Town Conservation Fund. VTC used the sale proceeds to fund the startup of the dairy education program in Norwich. In addition, VTC renovated a portion of one building and installed grant-funded state of the art dairy processing equipment which meets the requirements for a licensed dairy processing plant. This equipment may be available for future use with permission from VTC or will be removed from the premises by VTC.

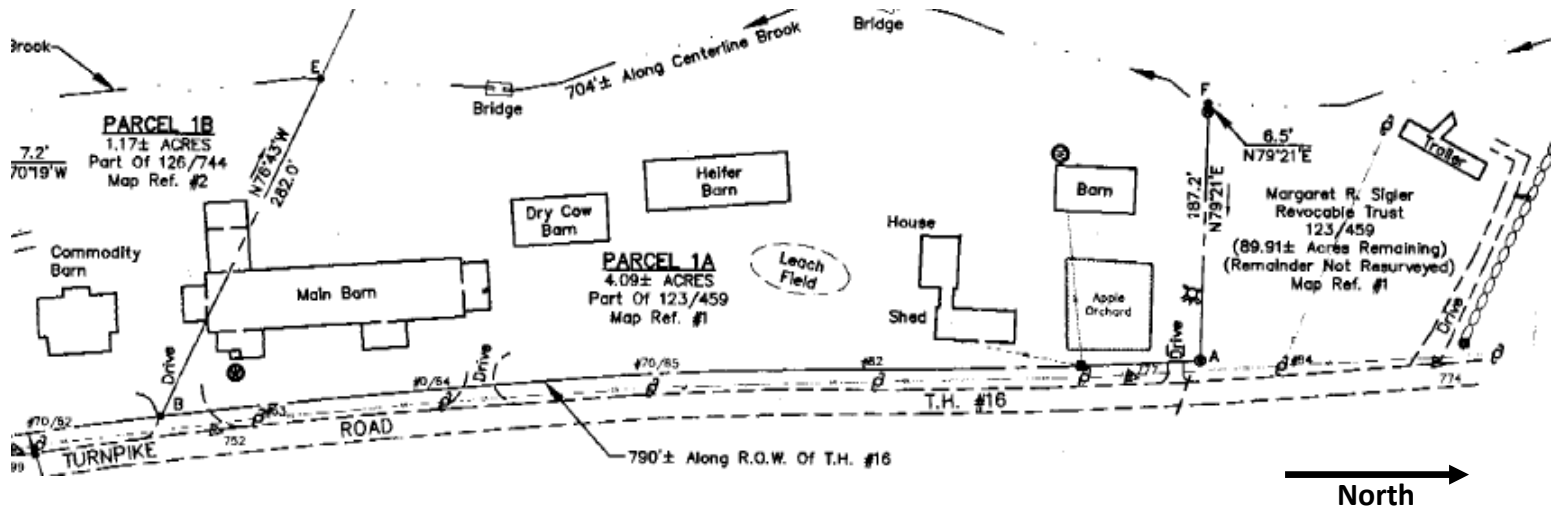
UVLT's purchase of the adjacent land included an irrevocable option to buy the farm complex if the school ever stopped using it for agricultural education to ensure the buildings and land could remain together should VTC's priorities change. UVLT had made the agricultural land available for use by VTC to support the dairy education program, and could arrange a lease for another agricultural-related use going forward. VTC stopped milk production on the property in the summer of 2017, shared their intentions to cease agricultural education in late September 2017, and further actions to be taken on their behalf are pending our decision to exercise the option.

VTC also owns a dormitory located on a separate parcel which may be available for purchase, but is not subject to UVLT's option.

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<sup>1</sup> Dairy processing equipment installed on site could be available with permission from VTC, pending funder approval of leasing and uses. If equipment is removed, other processing options would be available in the improved space.

Site layout and location of key assets below. See following page for an aerial view of the farm complex (denoted in bright green) and the adjacent UVLT-owned farm and forestland as.



### Location Assets:

#### **Farmstead Building Complex:** (From left to right per site map above)

- “Commodity” barn with dairy processing room, small retail space & sawdust/hay storage (2,040 sq. ft.)
- “Main” dairy barn, sized for 50 Holstein milkers, including birthing and calf pens and also with attached classroom and office (4,142 sq. ft.)
- “Dry Cow” barn (2,703 sq. ft.)
- “Heifer” barn (2,653 sq. ft.)
- Fire pond and hydrant (west of Heifer barn)
- Two-story ± 3,854 sq. ft. House with 3 bedrooms / 3 bath, propane heated, and a three-bay shed
- “Old” barn, w/concrete floor and finished second floor (1,272 sq. ft.)
- Small apple orchard
- Older mobile trailer home (980 sq. ft.)

#### **UVLT Owned Land:** (Located to the west and east of the site map above)

- Forest land (288 acres)
- Primitive log cabin in the forest
- Pasture, hay land/potential cropland (64 acres):
  - 21± acres of prime agricultural soils
  - 18± acres of soils of statewide importance
  - 25 ± acres of open land used for pasture.

