

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Ricketson Farm?

One of the last remaining active farms in Stowe. It has been owned by the Ricketson family and operated as a commercial dairy for three generations. Ken Ricketson recently transitioned out of dairy farming but wants to conserve his family's farm and keep it in farming.

Where is it located?

The Ricketson Farm is located on Route 100 near the Morristown town line. It is the central farmstead that defines the northern scenic gateway to Stowe and is surrounded by conserved farmland owned by Stowe dairy farmer, Paul Percy. The Ricketson farmhouse and buildings are located right on Route 100 across from Moss Glen Brook.

Why this land?

The Ricketson Farm is Stowe's most prominent and productive remaining farm. It is unique; there is no other property like it in town. The farm is in transition and the land is at high risk for development if it is not conserved now. The property defines the northern scenic gateway to Stowe, has exceptionally productive agricultural soils, and includes part of a regionally-important wetland complex as well as a section of Moss Glen Brook in need of restoration. Conserving the Ricketson Farm means protecting Stowe's farming heritage and future, our land-based tourism economy, our local quality of life, and our community's wellbeing in the face of climate change.

Who is buying the development rights?

Stowe Land Trust's partner, Vermont Land Trust, has a contract to purchase a conservation easement by March 2022 subject to raising the funds needed to secure the easement purchase.

What will it cost?

\$2,535,000. This includes the cost of a bargain purchase of the conservation easement, project costs, and contributions to the land trusts' stewardship endowments.

How much money does Stowe Land Trust need to raise?

At least \$1,047,000 in local support. Ken Ricketson has generously committed to a significant donation toward the project through a bargain sale of the conservation easement, and Vermont Land Trust and Stowe Land Trust have been granted \$1,063,000 through the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.

How will donors be acknowledged?

Donors will be publicly acknowledged by Stowe Land Trust in print publications, online, and through local media unless they request to remain anonymous.

Who will own the property after it is conserved?

The current owner and farmer, Ken Ricketson, will continue to own the farm after it is conserved until he decides to sell it to another owner. Vermont Land Trust will maintain a permanent conservation easement and Stowe Land Trust will maintain a back-up conservation easement.

What is a conservation easement?

A legal interest in the land that permits and restricts uses to protect conservation values. Vermont Land Trust will retain permanent guardianship of the land and Stowe Land Trust will be a back-up guardian.

How will access for future farmers and farm businesses be ensured?

The conservation easement guarantees that the farmland will not be developed and will remain available for farming. It also gives the land trusts the option to purchase the farm at its agricultural value and sell it back to a farmer if the farm would otherwise be sold to a non-farmer outside the Ricketson family. The land trusts and their partners can also help connect Ken Ricketson with business and transition planning assistance now and with new farmers looking for land when he is ready to sell.

Can the farm be subdivided?

Yes, but only once. The farm can be subdivided into two farm parcels and a new farmstead could be constructed off Stagecoach Road. Both farm parcels would then be subject to the conservation easement and option to purchase at agricultural value. Additional subdivision will not be permitted.

Will the farmhouse and barn be included?

Yes. The existing dwelling and farm building on Route 100 will be included in an approximately 17-acre farmstead complex. The farm owner can renovate, replace, and rebuild any of these buildings and construct other structures that are in support of the farm within this area.

What will happen on the farm after it is conserved?

Ken Ricketson is working on a transition plan. In the near-term, he will likely continue to crop and hay his fields himself and lease all or a portion of them to other local farmers in need of additional land. Over the long-term, the land could support many different types of farming operations and enterprises, such as hay, grains, beef, goats, vegetables, berries or vineyard and more. There are many possibilities for what could occur on the property.

Will there be public access and trails?

No. This is a working farm, and the primary purpose is to allow the farmer to farm the land. Ken Ricketson currently gives permission for a VAST snowmobile trail to pass through the farm. He and any future owner will be able to continue to allow that use and any other public access at their discretion.

Will there be a farmstand?

Not right now. In the future, a farmer could open and operate a farm stand or other rural enterprise within the existing farmstead complex or in a new farmstead complex off of Stagecoach Road.

Will the land be taken off the property tax roll after being conserved?

No. It will continue to be privately owned and enrolled in Stowe's Farmers Contract program.



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