

BROWNSVILLE FOREST

STOWE LAND TRUST

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Brownsville Forest?

750 acres of threatened woodland in Stowe, VT currently owned by the Story family. Brownsville Forest is part of the Worcester Range; one of VT's most wild and least protected mountain ranges.

Where is it located?

Brownsville Forest is right off of Route 100 on the northeast side of Stowe. It is located at either end of Brownsville Road accessed from Brush Hill Road or Moss Glen Falls Road. The land is part of Stowe's eastern views looking toward the Worcester Range.

Why this land?

Brownsville Forest is the last, undeveloped, large-scale section of forestland to protect in the Town of Stowe. The land is on the market for \$9.95 million and currently at risk for development. It includes critical forest, wetland and open habitat for local wildlife and animal migration, and is a gateway to 14,000 acres of surrounding State Forest along the Worcester Range. Protecting Brownsville Forest also means protecting 750 acres of public access forest for hiking, hunting, cross country skiing, and just plain enjoying the outdoors.

Who is buying the property?

Stowe Land Trust. Stowe Land Trust has a contract to buy the property at the end of July 2019 subject to raising the remaining funds needed to secure the purchase.

What will protecting Brownsville Forest cost?

\$5.75 million. This includes the cost of acquiring the land, project costs, and a contribution to Stowe Land Trust's stewardship endowment.

How much money does Stowe Land Trust still need to raise?

Only \$750,000. Stowe Land Trust received a \$5 million anonymous donation through the Vermont Community Foundation earlier this year toward the protection of Brownsville Forest.

Who will own the property after it is purchased?

The State of VT Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. When purchased, the plan is for Brownsville Forest to transfer immediately to the State of VT and for the land to be added to the surrounding C. C. Putnam State Forest. Stowe Land Trust will maintain a permanent conservation easement governing use of the property.

What does becoming a State Forest mean for municipal tax revenues?

The State of VT will make payments in lieu of taxes on the property to the Town of Stowe that will likely be roughly equivalent to current municipal property tax revenues as paid by the landowner and through the Current Use Program.

What is a conservation easement?

A legal interest in the land that permits and restricts uses in order to protect conservation values such as forest health and productivity, wildlife habitat, and public access. SLT will retain permanent, local, guardianship of the land.

Why a State Forest instead of something else?

Stowe Land Trust has identified the State of VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation as the best and most appropriate steward for Brownsville Forest. Adding Brownsville Forest to C.C. Putnam State Forest will allow Brownsville Forest to remain undeveloped and protected, while simultaneously permitting public access for non-motorized recreation. This project will build on an existing successful partnership between Stowe Land Trust and the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to care for SLT-conserved state lands in Stowe that include Pinnacle Meadow and Bingham Falls.

Will there be a management plan for the property?

Yes. An interim management plan will be created before closing by the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation with support from Stowe Land Trust. The land will then be included in the long range management planning process for C.C. Putnam State Forest.

Will there be parking?

Limited parking is currently available at the ends of and along Brownsville Road, which is a Town of Stowe public right-of-way. The conservation easement will allow for the construction of at least one unpaved parking lot to augment existing parking. The location and size of future parking areas will be determined through the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's management planning process, informed by the conservation easement and public input, and approved by Stowe Land Trust.

Which recreational uses will be allowed on the land?

Which uses will be allowed on the property will be determined through the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's management planning process with support from Stowe Land Trust and an opportunity for public input. The easement will permit non-commercial, non-motorized recreational uses including but not limited to hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

What about trails?

The Class IV sections of Brownsville and McCall Pasture Roads will continue to be open to hikers, skiers, mountain bikers, and other recreational users. Existing trails on the property will be assessed to determine their suitability and sustainability. Trails may be reopened, improved, rerouted, or closed as determined in the management plan. In order to maintain the property's quiet and remote character, as well as its importance for wildlife and forest health, extensive new trail development is not planned.

Do you need my help?

Yes! Stowe Land Trust needs to raise \$750,000 by July 2019 in order to purchase and protect Brownsville Forest. Please donate today online at stowelandtrust.org or by mailing a check with "Brownsville" in the memo line to Stowe Land Trust, P.O. Box 284, Stowe, VT 05672.