

Department of Fish and Wildlife
Commissioner's Office
103 South Main Street
10 South
Waterbury, VT 05671-0501
802-241-3730

TO: Peter Shumlin, Governor

THROUGH: Deb Markowitz, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources

FROM: Patrick Berry, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Wildlife 

SUBJECT: Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fee Acquisition, LeBlanc Property,
Colchester, VT

Recommendation: Approve the acquisition of a 110-acre parcel in the Munson Flats Wetlands that will protect significant wildlife habitat and public access for all wildlife-based activities.

Description of Project

The LeBlanc Parcel consists of approximately 110 acres of Lake Champlain influenced wetlands which includes seasonally flooded grasslands and cattail, shrub wetlands, emergent marsh with a large stand of wild rice, and a red or silver maple-green ash natural community. About 8 acres of the parcel consist of uplands along Route 7 with which it shares approximately 2,500 feet of frontage. It provides habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife including waterfowl, wading birds, raptors (including several nesting pairs of ospreys), turkey, woodcock, songbirds, deer, moose, otter, beaver, muskrat, mink, and numerous reptiles and amphibians.

The wetlands and seasonally flooded grasslands are known to be important spawning areas for warm water fish (e.g., northern pike, largemouth bass, brown bullhead, longnose gar, bowfin, etc.) originating from Lake Champlain.

Need and Cost

This acquisition will permanently place this property in public ownership thus ensuring continued management for fish, wildlife and public recreation.

The appraised value of the property, with a U.S. Department of Agriculture/Wetland Reserve Easement in place, is \$20,000. Additional associated costs (appraisal, title work, recording fees and proration of taxes) are expected to add another \$6,000. Funding for this acquisition will come from the Vermont Duck Stamp Fund.

Your approval of this acquisition is required by 10 V.S.A. §4144, which states in part “the secretary, with approval of the governor, may exchange, sell or lease lands under the secretary’s jurisdiction when, in his or her judgment, it is advantageous to the state to do so ...” This project has already been reviewed and approved by the Agency’s Land Acquisition Review Committee on December 15, 2010. In addition, the Colchester Selectboard approved this acquisition at their November 8, 2011 meeting. Copies of the minutes and response to their requested letters are attached.

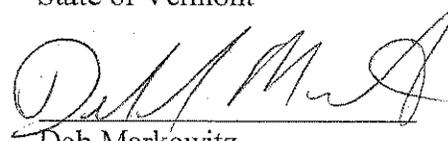
APPROVAL FOR PURCHASE OF LAND

We the undersigned, hereby approve the purchase of land by the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife to protect public access and the natural resources on 110 acres, located in the Town of Colchester, belonging to the Mary Ann Wichmann and Wandee LeBlanc.. This approval is required by 10 V.S.A. §4144 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.

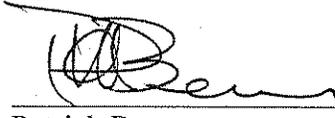
2/9/12
Date


Peter Shumlin
Governor
State of Vermont

2-2-12
Date


Deb Markowitz
Secretary
Agency of Natural Resources

2-2-12
Date


Patrick Berry
Commissioner
Fish and Wildlife Department

Department of Fish and Wildlife
111 West Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452
www.vtfishandwildlife.com

[phone] 802-878-1564
[fax] 802-879-5649
[tdd] 802-828-3345

Agency of Natural Resources

MEMORANDUM

To: Sarah London
From: Bill Crenshaw
Date: February 1, 2012
RE: Governor's Approval Needed for a Fee Acquisition in the Town of Colchester.

Enclosed is an approval to be signed by Governor Shumlin for the purchase of a 110-acre parcel by the State of Vermont. This 110-acre parcel, owned by Mary Ann Wichmann and Wandee LeBlanc, and located in the Town of Colchester, will provide permanent protection of public access for hunting, trapping, fishing and wildlife viewing, and the conservation of significant wildlife habitat. Total costs for this project are approximately \$26,000.

Funding for this acquisition will come from State Duck Stamp funds. Included with the Governor's approval memo is a description of the property, a copy of the review and approval by the Agency Land Acquisition Review Committee, a copy of minutes of the November 8, Colchester Selectboard stating town support for the state acquisition of this parcel, a summary letter in response to letters requested by the Selectboard regarding the impact of this project on other land development projects, and requested letters from Jeannine McCrumb (Agency of Natural Resources), and Peter Keibel (District 4 Environmental Commission).

If you have any questions regarding this easement project, please contact me directly at 879-5699 or at bill.crenshaw@state.vt.us, thank you.

cc: Patrick Berry, Commissioner
John M. Austin, Lands and Habitat Program Director



Project Name: LeBlanc Parcel, Munson Flats Wetlands

Landowners: Mary Ann Whitman and Wandee LeBlanc

Location: Colchester, Chittenden County, Vermont

Acreage: 110.33 acres

Type of Acquisition: Fee acquisition

Funding: Vermont Duck Stamp Fund

Description of Project: The LeBlanc Parcel consists of approximately 102 acres of Lake Champlain influenced wetlands which include seasonally flooded grasslands and cattail, shrub wetlands, emergent marsh with a large stand of wild rice, and a red or silver maple-green ash natural community. About 8 acres of the parcel consist of uplands along Route 7 with which it shares approximately 2,500 feet of frontage. It provides habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife including waterfowl, wading birds, raptors (including several nesting pairs of ospreys), turkey, woodcock, songbirds, deer, moose, otter, beaver, muskrat, mink, and numerous reptiles and amphibians.

The Munson Flats Wetlands are the known location of several state listed plant and animal species including the endangered northern brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon fossor*), harsh sunflower (*Helianthus strumosus*) and threatened lake cress (*Armoracia aquatica*). Other rare species include silver lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon unicuspis*), eastern silvery minnow (*Hybognathus regius*), and black-nosed shiner (*Notropis heterolepis*).

The wetlands and seasonally flooded grasslands are believed to be important spawning areas for warm water fish (e.g., northern pike, largemouth bass, longnose gar, bowfin, etc.) originating from Lake Champlain.

The Munson Flats Wetlands were listed as a high priority for acquisition in a 1992 Lake Champlain Wetland Acquisition Study.

The LeBlanc Parcel abuts the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) owned Minister Lot (27 acres), which was acquired by the Department in 1985, as well as lands owned by the Lake Champlain Echo Center to the northwest (Figure 1).

Most of the LeBlanc Parcel was the subject of a U.S. Department of Agriculture/Wetland Restoration Program (USDA/WRP) easement and restoration project which closed in October of 2011. The VFWD is providing input into the restoration management plan being developed for the parcel. The restoration costs will be paid by the USDA/WRP. In addition, the entire parcel was surveyed and marked during the summer of 2011.

A small 0.11 acre parcel, adjacent to US Route 7 across from Coon Hill Road, was kept out of the USDA/WRP easement to provide for future public parking and access into the area.

The remaining value of the LeBlanc Parcel, with the USDA/WR easement in place, was determined to be \$20,000.

The Munson Flats Wetlands have long been known to be an area rich in fish, wildlife and natural communities. The LeBlanc Parcel is located in the core of this area. It would also make a significant contribution to the overall conservation of this area and a chance to partner with other conservation-minded organizations and individuals in future projects.

Ownership: This parcel will be owned by the State of Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife. It will be managed as a wildlife management area.

Budget (Estimated):

COSTS

Land Appraised Value	\$20,000.00
Appraisal	2,500.00
Attorney Fees	2,000.00
Closing Costs (title, taxes, recording)	1,500.00
Total Costs	\$26,000.00

FUNDING SOURCES

Vermont Duck Stamp Fund	\$26,000.00
Total Funding	\$26,000.00