

Fish and Wildlife Department
Barre District Natural Resources Office
5 Perry Street, Suite 40
Barre, VT 05641
www.vtfishandwildlife.com

[phone] 802-479-4405
[fax] 802-476-0129

Agency of Natural Resources

MEMORANDUM

To: Sarah London

From: Jane Lazorchak

Date: April 24, 2013

RE: Governor's Approval recommended and requested for the Purchase of property in the Town of Topsham.

Enclosed is a request for Governor Shumlin's approval and signature for the purchase of a 190.7-acre parcel by the State of Vermont. The addition of this 190.7-acre parcel owned by Green Acre Woodland Inc. and located in the Town of Topsham to the Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area 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 \$155,000.


Funding for this acquisition will come from federal funding through the Pittman-Robertson Program. Included with the Governor's approval memo are a map of the property, a copy of the review and approval by the Agency Land Acquisition Review Committee and a copy of a letter signed by the Topsham Select Board stating town support for the state acquisition of this parcel.


If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me directly at 479-4405 or at jane.lazorchak@state.vt.us, thank you.


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

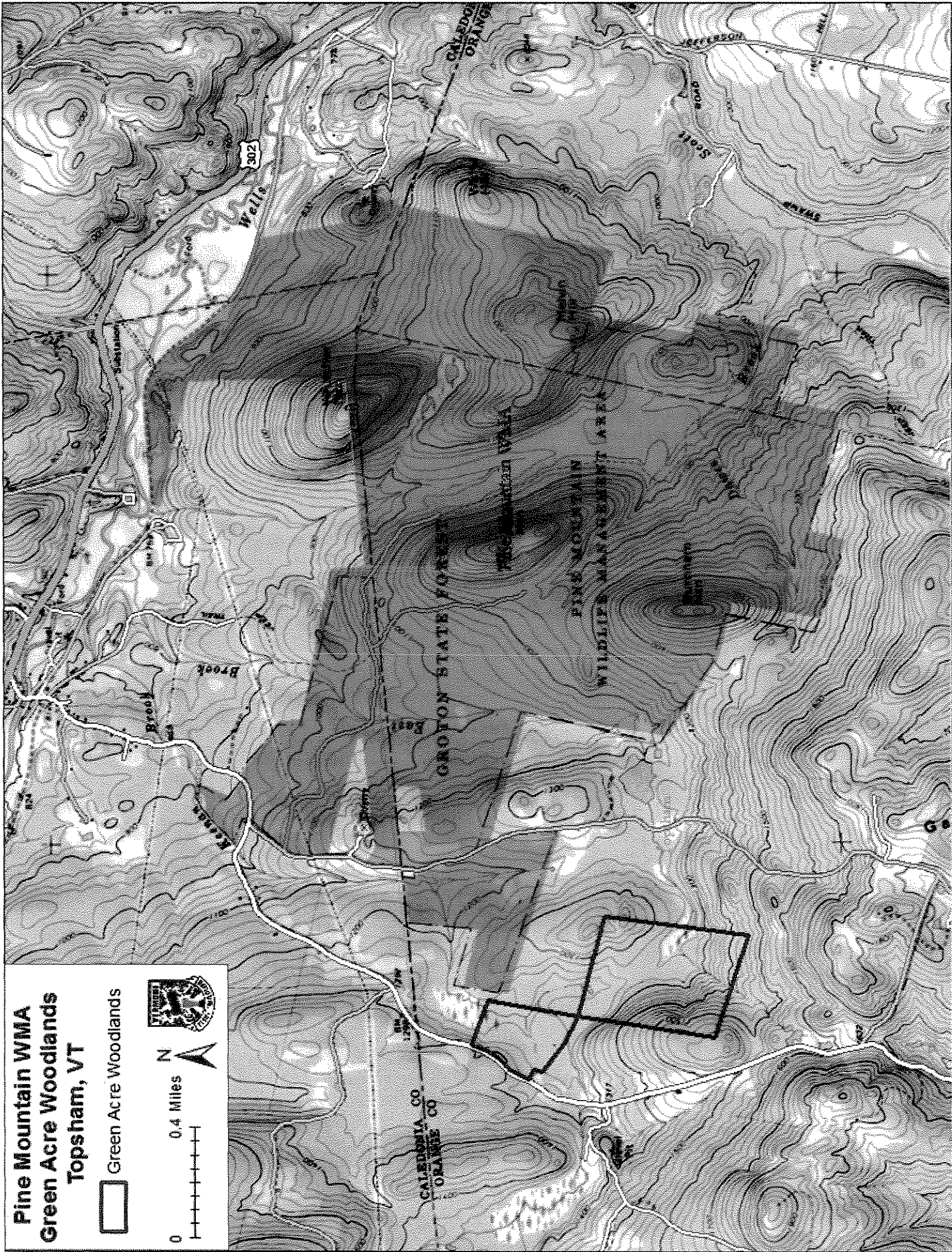


Pine Mountain WMA
Green Acre Woodlands
Topsham, VT

 Green Acre Woodlands


0 0.4 Miles





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: Fish and Wildlife Department, Fee Acquisition, Green Acre
Woodland Inc.'s Property, Topsham, VT

Recommendation Approval of the acquisition of the 190.7-acre Green Acre Woodland Inc. parcel by the Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD) to protect significant wildlife habitat and increase public access at the Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Description of Project

Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is located at the intersection of the east central Vermont towns of Groton, Ryegate, Newbury and Topsham. The total acreage of the WMA is 2,274 acres of which 1,495 acres are located in Topsham. Pine Mountain WMA was named after Pine Mountain, which is situated in the middle of the property. The WMA lies within the Wells River watershed. Elevations range from approximately 1,500 feet to 720 feet. The land is now 95% forested, with a mix of hardwood trees including red and sugar maple, yellow birch, beech, white ash, black cherry, red oak, hophornbeam and basswood. Softwood trees such as balsam fir, red spruce, hemlock, white pine and white cedar are also present. The coniferous areas west of Galusha Hill Road and northwest of Melvin Hill provide wintering habitat for white-tailed deer. About 40 acres of field along Powder Spring and Galusha Hill Roads are kept open, via lease agreements, by brush hogging and haying. Scattered apple trees occur within those fields, which are maintained by release cuttings.

The WMA is home to several examples of local and State-significant natural communities such as: lowland spruce-fir forest; mesic northern hardwood forest; rich northern hardwood forest; white pine-northern hardwood forest; mesic red oak-hardwood forest; hemlock forest; hemlock-yellow birch forest; northern hardwoods talus woodland; dry oak-hickory-hophornbeam forest; poor fen; northern white cedar swamp; and various successional communities. Many rare, threatened and endangered plants are associated with these natural communities. An excellent variety of wetland habitats can be found throughout the WMA and are often associated with the stream drainages including beaver-influenced wetlands. The variety of terrain, wetlands, natural communities, field openings and stream drainages provides habitat for a variety of plants and animals,

making Pine Mountain WMA a unique place for the public to enjoy wildlife-related activities.

The Fish and Wildlife Department (FWD) is recommending the acquisition of a 190.7-acre parcel in Topsham from Green Acre Woodland Inc. The addition of this property to the Pine Mountain WMA would conserve the significant resource values on the property and allow the FWD to create a new access point on Powder Springs Road. The property would be a valuable addition to the Pine Mountain WMA because it contains the following wetland and habitat features. There is a large Class II wetland complex, known as Keenan Swamp, which includes a state-significant example of a Northern White Cedar Swamp, a rare moss *Calliergon richardsonii*, a species of Greatest Conservation Need, and a small Dwarf Shrub Bog. In addition to the wetland habitats on the property, the parcel also includes mapped deer wintering habitat and fall feeding sites for black bear in the form of American beech stands. Lastly, the parcel has frontage on Powder Springs Road and could provide a new point of access for the public to the WMA.

Need and Cost


The Fish and Wildlife Department is acquiring the 190.7-acre Green Acre Woodland Inc. property to provide permanent protection of public access for hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, other wildlife dependent activities. The estimate for the total project costs is \$155,000 which will cover the purchase of the property and the associated costs. This acquisition will be funded by the federal Pittman-Robertson program.

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 at their meeting in 3/8/12 and by the ANR Secretary on 6/6/12 (See Exhibit 3). In addition, Department staff met with the town of Topsham on April 22, 2013. As documented in Exhibit 4, the town of Topsham supports the purchase of this property.

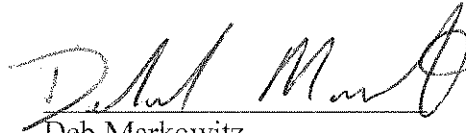
APPROVAL FOR PURCHASE OF LAND

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 the 190.7 acres belonging to the Green Acre Woodland Inc. in Topsham, VT. This approval is required by 10 V.S.A. §4144 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.


5/7/13
Date


Peter Shumlin
Governor
State of Vermont

5-6-13
Date


Deb Markowitz
Secretary
Agency of Natural Resources

5/6/13
Date


Patrick Berry
Commissioner
Fish and Wildlife Department

Agency of Natural Resources Land Acquisition Review Committee Case Report

Project Information

LARC Case #	1778	Project Name	Green Acres Woodland	Priority	HIGH
Previous LARC Case #					
Description	These parcels would be an addition to Pine Mountain WMA. These parcels contain a large Class II wetland complex and a rare moss. Portions of both parcels are deer wintering habitat. The southern parcel may contain a feeding site for black bear. Keenan Brook Swamp includes headwaters of Keenan Brook and East Brook.				
Transaction Type	PURCHASE	Price		Interest to be Acq.	FEE-SIMPLE
				Fund(s)	Pittman Robertson Funds
Location:	Town	Topsham	County	Orange	
Owner	FORECO, Inc				
# of Parcels	2	Total Acres	183		
Dept to Manage	F&W	Contact	Jane Lazorchak/John Buck		

LARC Review

Date 3/8/2012
Recommendation Acquire
Comments LARC is supportive of acquisition because of this areas vulnerability to development, protection of ecological values, and addition to Pine Mountain WMA.

Secretary Review

Date 6/6/12
Disposition Approved
Comments



Notes

MEMORANDUM

~~TO: LARC~~

FROM: Jane Lazorchak, Land Acquisition Coordinator

SUBJECT: The purchase of Green Acres Woodland's 183-acre property at the Fish and Wildlife Department's (FWD) Pine Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Topsham, Vermont.

Recommendation: Approve the purchase of the 183-acre Green Acres property to add to the Pine Mountain WMA.

<u>Landowner:</u>	FORECO, Inc.
<u>Location:</u>	Topsham, Vermont
<u>Acreage:</u>	183 acres
<u>Type of Acquisition:</u>	Fee Acquisition
<u>Recommended Funding:</u>	Pittman Robertson Funds

Background and Ecological Significance:

During the proceedings for a Ryegate Chip Harvest Notification, Jon Martin, a forester with FORECO, Inc., offered to sell 183 +/- acres of FORECO, Inc. land to the Fish and Wildlife Department. The 183 +/- acres are found in two contiguous parcels that are also contiguous to the Pine Mountain WMA. The northern parcel shares approximately 250 +/- feet with the Pine Mountain WMA and has approximately 1300 +/- feet of frontage on the Powder Spring Road. Both parcels would be a valuable addition to the Pine Mountain WMA for the following reasons:

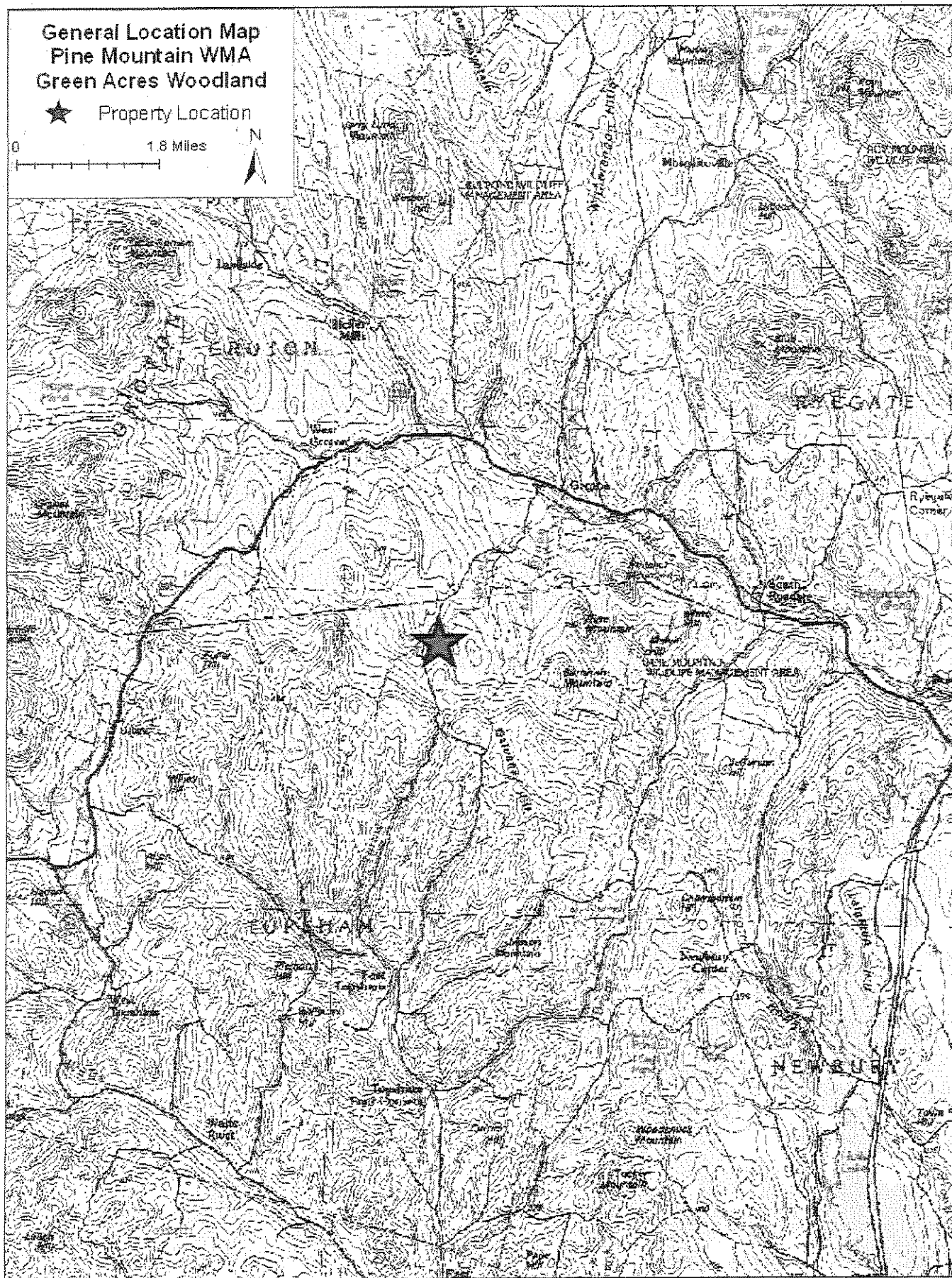
- Both parcels contain a large Class II wetland complex that also contains a significant natural community and a state rare moss. The significant natural community is an "A" ranked example of a northern white cedar swamp known as "Keenan Swamp." Associated with the swamp is the rare moss *Calliergon richardsonii*, which is a species of Greatest Conservation Need, and a small dwarf shrub bog.
- Keenan Brook Swamp occupies a basin on the parcels which includes the headwaters of Keenan Brook and East Brook.
- The northern parcel is entirely comprised of mapped deer wintering habitat, and a portion of the southern parcel includes it as well.
- The southern parcel may contain fall feeding sites for black bear in the form of American beech stands. Such a stand was documented in 1993 at 1300 feet elevation south of the west corner of Pine Mountain WMA.
- Provide additional public access at the Pine Mountain WMA.

The Department recommends moving forward with the acquisition of these parcels with the use of Pittman-Robertson funds.

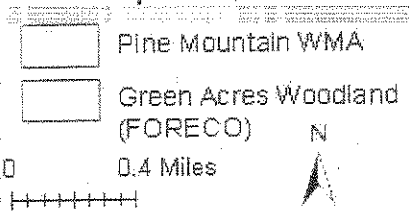
General Location Map
Pine Mountain WMA
Green Acres Woodland

★ Property Location

0 1.8 Miles



Pine Mountain WMA
Green Acres Project
Topsham, VT



from the office of

Tel 439-5505

Selectmen ☐
Town Clerk ☐
Treasurer ☐
Tax Collector ☐

Town of Topsham

V E R M O N T

in answering, address reply to . . .

PO-Box 69 6 Harts Road

Topsham, VT 05076

802-439-5505

topsham@tops-tele.com

Town of Topsham
Select Board

April 22, 2013

Dear Ms. Lazorchak,

After reading your letter that summarized the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (DFW) involvement and discussing the project further at our Select Board meeting on April 22, 2013, we are writing to offer our full support for the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (DFW) involvement in the purchase of the Green Acre Woodland's property in the town of Topsham. More specifically, the town supports the DFW purchasing the property to conserve the significant natural resource values on the property as well as public access. Thank you for meeting with us.

Sincerely,

Steven Latel

Chair of the Topsham Select Board