



**Lake Champlain Land Trust**  
**Interim Management Plan**  
**Eagle Mountain Natural Area**  
(VHCB 99-05) updated 12/22/1998

*This plan is written with the goals of the Town of Milton, the Lake Champlain Land Trust, John and Peggy Hoyt, and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board in mind. It defines ways that this exceptional natural resource will be open for public access while preserving the sensitive environmental assets found within.*

Definition of Terms:

**Protected Property:** The term "Protected Property" denotes the Eagle Mountain Natural Area. A 226 acre parcel in Milton, Vermont located on Henry Road.

**Conservation Easement:** the Property's Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions dated December 23 1998 and recorded in Volume 197, Page 18-77 of the Milton Town Land Records.

**Conservation Easement Holders:** the term "Conservation Easement Holders" denotes the two co-holders of the Property's Grant of Development Rights and Conservation Restrictions (Conservation Easement): the Lake Champlain Land Trust (LCLT) and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB).

**Ecological Zone:** the term "ecological zone" designates the portions of the property that are currently thought to contain the most ecologically sensitive areas of the natural area-- rare and endangered species and natural communities of statewide or local significance. The intention is to create a smaller mapped zone within the larger natural area to more carefully monitor management practices that may negatively impact the ecologically sensitive portions of the natural area.

**Town:** The term "Town" denotes the Town of Milton, Vermont.

**Agricultural Land:** The term "Agricultural Land" denotes the approximate 35 acres of the Property off of Henry Road that is currently hayed annually by local dairy farmers.

## **I. Purpose**

The goal of this plan is to conserve and enhance the extraordinary natural resources, public recreation, and agricultural opportunities to be found in the Eagle Mountain Natural Area in Milton, Vermont. This is an interim management plan, designed to establish an operations agreement between the Conservation Easement Holders and the Town as well as management provisions for parking, agriculture and recreation. This interim management plan will be supplemented by a Master Management Plan that will be adopted by the Conservation Easement Holders with significant Town and community input.

1) The primary purpose of this plan is to conserve and protect the public outdoor recreational, wildlife habitat, scenic, cultural, agricultural and open space resources of the Protected Property and to prevent the use or development of the Protected Property for any purpose or in any manner that would adversely affect these resources.

2) These purposes will be advanced by conserving the Protected Property because it possesses the following attributes:

(a) it contains outstanding examples of warm calcareous cliff and calcareous wooded talus natural communities; and

(b) has great potential for recreational and educational uses by the Town; and

(c) contains approximately 40 acres of prime agricultural soils; and

(d) includes an extensive open and wooded complex which supports a variety of flora and fauna; and is home to at least one state threatened plant species, golden corydalis, and possibly others.

The property shall be open to the general public and shall be maintained as a low-impact Natural Area.

## **II. DESCRIPTION**

### **A) Resource Inventory--**

The Goal of this interim management plan is to protect and enhance the Property's unique natural, scenic, and recreative assets. Specifically:

1. The Property's Statewide significance.

The State of Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program has designated Eagle Mountain as a site of "Statewide significance" because of its "outstanding examples of warm calcareous cliff and calcareous wooded talus natural communities" and rare plants. The property is also recognized as a State designated deer herd area.

2. The Property's scenic views.

The Property contains one of the highest points on Lake Champlain. For generations, its informal hiking trails have led hikers to the stunning views from its summit.

4. The Property's threatened flora.

The Property contains a threatened flora species (golden corydalis) and is host to rich and diverse wildlife.

5. The Property's potential as an outdoor classroom.  
Lake Champlain woodlands and shoreline are important parts of our local public school and university curricula. The Eagle Mountain Natural Area has great potential to serve as an outdoor classroom.
6. The Property's status as a State priority for preservation.  
The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Land Acquisition Review Committee (LARC) has recognized the crucial importance of preserving this parcel and supports the Lake Champlain Land Trust and the Town of Milton in their efforts to conserve the Property.
7. The Property's scenic beauty.  
The Town is under increased development pressure and land conservation is of the highest priority. Lake Champlain plays a singular role in the character and health of the town. The community realizes the importance of the lake and has adopted, in the Milton Town Plan of March 30, 1998, a primary goal to "Preserve scenic vistas of Eagle Mountain, Lake Champlain and surrounding areas".

2) Recognition/definition of importance of rare, threatened, and endangered species and natural communities ("significant species and natural communities") with specific delineation of separate management areas or "Ecological Zones" around significant species including a buffer area if appropriate. Include narrative text to complement the features mapped delineated in "Eagle Mountain Natural Area Conservation Map." Recognition that significant species and natural communities are dynamic and ecological zone boundaries may need to be redrawn in the future.

Attachment A, the "Eagle Mountain Natural Area Conservation Map" clearly delineates the "ecological zone" and other portions of the property; as well as other key features such as :natural features such as streams, watercourses, ridges, wetlands, and current/past land use; man-made features: existing trails, buildings, driveways, parking lots, power lines, and other structures on property; and anticipated future plans and uses and their approximate locations (e.g. parking, new trail corridor).

### **III. General Management Plan concepts for Protected Property**

A) The cutting/removal/harvesting of native plant & animal species is prohibited within ecological zone, except where needed to restore natural processes or communities, or within defined hiking trail corridor, as covered in hiking trail sections.

B) Potential impacts to the natural area should be reduced or removed through the including installation of gates or barriers to prevent degradation through illegal vehicular trespassing, etc.

C) The introduction of non-native invasive species will be prohibited. Research efforts on the part of University and State experts will be encouraged to track, monitor, and control non-native invasive species in order to protect significant species and natural communities. Research efforts will also be encouraged to further inventory and study the natural area as potential control area in regional scientific studies.

D) Intensive public uses with associated impacts are prohibited. Permitted uses include passive recreational uses such as hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, nature study, etc...

E) Vehicular traffic is prohibited- no motorized vehicles within ecological zone; no motorized vehicles (except snowmobiles on designated snowmobile trail corridors in winter) within non-designated portions of the parcel. Horseback riding is prohibited.

F) No new buildings, structures, or other man-made improvements shall be permitted except as outlined in permitted uses section of the Conservation Easement.

H) Outdoor recreational and educational efforts will be encouraged in locations where the education efforts do not degrade the significant resources of the property. Perhaps creating model management plan for sustainable, low impact natural area with documented lack of significant degradation of resources over long periods of time.

I) Encourage use of property as a model of low impact recreational activities.

#### **IV. Plan for New inventories and Management Recommendations**

The ecological inventory will be completed and further studies to complete baseline inventory of natural features. This will be especially important in areas with potential populations of rare species and natural communities or areas designated for uses that may impact natural resources. The Natural Heritage Program has volunteered to do further inventory work as well as working with Master Management Plan committee to suggest management guidelines to best protect resources while continuing to encourage passive recreational activities and access.

#### **V. Mark and Post boundaries**

A) Boundary signs will be installed to protect property and minimize property boundary confusion and potential encroachment problems.

B) Signs that draw attention to rare and sensitive species and natural communities should extremely limited. The protection of sensitive species will always supercede their potential educational values.

#### **VI. Plans for Physical changes to property--**

The following physical changes are permitted to enhance the property's value as a Natural Area.

A) The right to construct, maintain, repair and use two (2) parking lots on the Protected Property, including associated access drives and utilities, together with the right to construct improvements normally associated with a parking lot. The first parking lot shall be within the easterly portion of the Protected Property accessible from Henry Road. The second parking lot shall be within the southerly portion of the Protected Property adjacent to Cold Spring Camp Road. Road Improvements should be minimal and the parking lots should be unpaved lots constructed of loose gravel. The location of these parking lots is outlined in Attachment A.

B) The right to clear, construct, maintain, repair, improve and replace recreational trails. Provided, however, that the location, use and construction of such new trails are consistent with the terms of the Conservation Easement.

New trail construction will not be permitted in the ecological zone. The following steps will be taken with regard to trail work:

1) Map existing hiking trails.

2) Prohibit new trail cutting or trail widening or other potential changes that may harm significant species and natural communities **within ecological zone** unless approved by the Vermont Natural Heritage Program or similar programs or done with guidelines from VT Natural Heritage Program.

3) During interim period before ecological inventory is completed, specify consent and approval process for potential new trail cutting in non-designated portions of the natural area. For example, have town submit plan for trail cutting to LCLT. LCLT has limited period to respond.

4) Consider and plan for possibility that existing trails would need be moved in order to better protect significant species and natural communities.

5) Consider and plan for possibility that existing trails might be evaluated as excessive in future and should be closed to best protect natural area.

6) Map existing snowmobile trails.

7) Prohibit new trail cutting or trail widening or other potential changes that may harm significant species and natural communities **within ecological zone** unless approved by the Natural Heritage Program or similar programs or done with guidelines from VT Natural Heritage Program

8) Encourage snowmobile trails rerouting to locations that have less impact.

9) Prohibit non-motorized, mechanized recreation for entire natural area because of threat potential within ecological zones and lack of controls to limit to only one area.

C) The right to construct, maintain, repair, and replace picnic facilities and sanitary facilities for members of the public using the Protected Property. "Pack it in & pack it out" picnic facilities will be encouraged.

D) The right to install and maintain fencing to manage pedestrian and vehicular access to the Protected Property.

E) The right to establish, reestablish, maintain, and use cultivated fields and pastures in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices and sound husbandry principles within the approximate 35 acres of agricultural meadows located off of Henry Road.

F) Disabled Access. All attempts will be made to make the Eagle Mountain Natural Area welcoming to those with disabilities. This area provides a wonderful recreational opportunity for this constituency, as it is accessible by car. It provides enough open trail space off the Henry Road entrance, so that those using wheelchairs can enjoy parts of the trail network. As stated above, no specific physical improvements will be permitted within the ecological zone.

All issues of accessibility will be explored and covered in detail in the final management plan. Alex Chirelstein, the Executive Director of Very Special Arts Vermont has agreed to volunteer on the management team to study access for those with disabilities. Alex is a leading advocate for the "disabled" and is a good friend of the Land Trust. We will also seek the input of the ADA Implementation Project and the Center for Independent Living.

J) Utility Right of Way. Conversations should be initiated with the Vermont Electric Coop to reduce the level of vegetation removal, or at least encourage the use of mechanical vegetation removal along existing utility right-of-ways.

#### **VII. Management Plan Process and relevance to property**

A Master Management Plan related to vegetative and wildlife management, and recreational improvement will be adopted within two years of Milton's acquisition of the Property. The Master Management Plan and any future amendments or updates to the Management Plan shall be made with appropriate public input. Such input shall be consistent with applicable grant agreements, laws, regulations, policies or procedures governing ownership and management of the Protected Property. The Master Management Plan shall be completed and copies provided to the Lake Champlain Land Trust, the Milton Selectboard, and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board for their written approval prior to adoption. Copies of any amendments or

updates to the management Plan shall be provided to LCLT and VHCB for approval, and must be approved in writing by these organizations prior to adoption.

The Master Management Plan will be adopted with significant public input and this process will be lead by Milton Conservation Commission, the Lake Champlain Land Trust, and the Milton Land Trust. The Conservation Commission has already solicited preliminary input from the community and has developed a list of individuals willing to serve on the Master Management Plan Team. This management plan team will begin bi-monthly meetings in January of 1999. A minimum of two well advertised public forums will also be held to solicit community input. The Management Plan will be updated periodically if new information arises on evaluation of potential threats to the site. It is important that this initial process have a terminus date--the Management Plan Team will disassemble no later than January 1, 2002.

### **VIII. Lead Organization/Stakeholders**

Town of Milton. As fee owner, the town of Milton will be responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan and the most important line of defense against activities that may harm the property. The town can provide additional protection to the natural area, including the protection of areas surrounding the natural area, in many different ways. Their involvement in the management plan process is critical. The Chair of the Milton Conservation Commission shall also play a leadership role.

LCLT-- The Lake Champlain Land Trust's mission includes provisions to both protect bio-diversity and recreation /access, suggesting a good organization to lead in the creation of a master management plan and in monitoring the implementation of the management plan. As co-holders, they offer safety net and regional perspective on the best mix of natural area protection and passive recreational activities.

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB). As a funding source to the LCLT project, VHCB will also co-hold the conservation easement in perpetuity. VHCB intends to leave the implementation of the management plan to the town and LCLT. VHCB provides a safety net and statewide perspective on possible uses of land which could degrade the significant natural features over a long timeframe.

### **IX. Potential Conflicts**

The Conservation Easement Holders will make reasonable efforts from time to time to assure compliance by The Town with all of the covenants and restrictions herein. In the event that The Conservation Easement Holders become aware of an event or circumstance of non-compliance with the terms and conditions herein set forth, The Conservation Easement Holders shall give notice to The Town of such event or circumstance of non-compliance via certified mail, return receipt requested, and request corrective action sufficient to abate such event or circumstance of non-compliance and restore the Protected Property to its previous condition. In the event there has been an event or circumstance of non-compliance which is corrected through negotiation and voluntary compliance, The Town shall reimburse The Conservation Easement Holders all

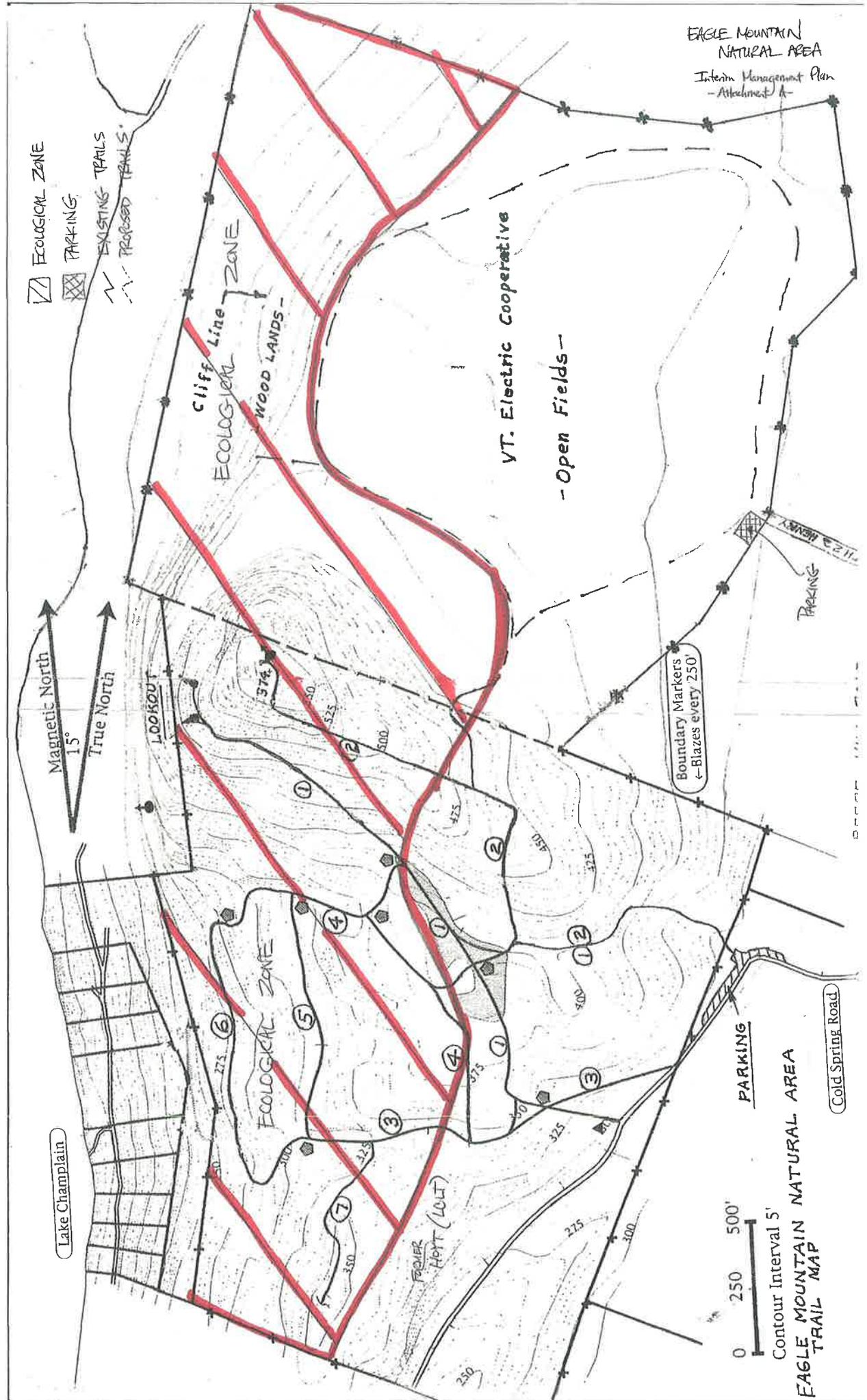
reasonable costs, including staff-time, incurred in investigating the non-compliance and in securing its correction.

Failure by The Town to cause discontinuance, abatement, or such other corrective action as may be requested by The Conservation Easement Holders within a reasonable time after receipt of notice and reasonable opportunity to take corrective action shall entitle The Conservation Easement Holders to bring an action in a court of competent jurisdiction to enforce the terms of this Grant. If such Court determines that The Town has failed to comply with this Grant, The Town shall reimburse The Conservation Easement Holders for any reasonable costs of enforcement, including The Conservation Easement Holder's staff time, court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees, in addition to any other payments ordered by such Court. The parties to this Grant specifically acknowledge that events and circumstances of non-compliance constitute immediate and irreparable injury, loss, and damage to the Protected Property and accordingly entitle The Conservation Easement Holders to such equitable relief, including but not limited to injunctive relief, as the court deems just. The remedies described herein are in addition to, and not in limitation of, any other remedies available to The Conservation Easement Holders at law, in equity, or through administrative proceedings.

No delay or omission by The Conservation Easement Holders in the exercise of any right or remedy upon any breach by The Town shall impair The Conservation Easement Holder's rights or remedies or be construed as a waiver. Nothing in this enforcement section shall be construed as imposing a liability upon a prior owner of the Protected Property, where the event or circumstance of non-compliance shall have occurred after said prior owner's ownership or control of the Protected Property has terminated.

The Conservation Easement Holders herein reserve the right to assign all or part of their reserved enforcement functions herein described to any other publicly supported non-profit corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Vermont, and qualified under Section 501(c)(3) and 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Code, whose purpose is to preserve undeveloped and open space land.

- ECOLOGICAL ZONE
- PARKING
- EXISTING TRAILS
- PROPOSED TRAILS



0 250 500'  
Contour Interval 5'

EAGLE MOUNTAIN NATURAL AREA  
TRAIL MAP

Cold Spring Road

PARKING

Boundary Markers  
← Blazes every 250'

PARKING

- Open Fields -

VT. Electric Cooperative

WOOD LANDS

Cliff Line ZONE

Magnetic North  
15°  
True North

Lake Champlain

LOOKOUT

POWER  
HOYT (LOUT)