



# RAVEN RIDGE PRESERVE

*Help Make it Possible!*

## A Rare Opportunity

The Monkton, Charlotte, and Hinesburg communities have a rare opportunity to protect 365 acres of exceptional natural beauty and ecological value.

Landowners John Paluska, Cynthia Brown, Ed Everts, and Raven Davis, along with The Nature Conservancy, the Vermont Land Trust, and the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife, are working to conserve this unique property and are seeking your help to make this possible.

The proposed nature preserve will be owned by The Nature Conservancy and will stretch from Lewis Creek south along a scenic ridge on the boundary of Charlotte and Hinesburg to a large wetland complex south of Rotax Road in Monkton.

The land is home to a great variety of wildlife, including the federally endangered Indiana bat. Lewis Creek, a tributary, and other wetlands provide a diverse ecosystem for aquatic species. Also, the property's exposed ridge offers spectacular views of farmland, mountain ranges, and Lake Champlain.

Wildlife Habitat

Natural Communities

Water Resources

Geologic Features

Scenic Views

Trails



# Neighbors working together to protect extraordinary wildlife habitat...

## Raven Ridge: History of the Project

In the late 1990s, nine landowners, who together owned 657 acres in Monkton, Charlotte, and Hinesburg, began working together to learn about the plants, trees, and wildlife living on their land. They considered how best to collectively manage their forest resources. The high quality of the habitat and the forest on their properties is a reflection of the hard work and thoughtful stewardship of these landowners.

Neighborhood interest in conservation had begun several years earlier when Raven Davis and Ed Everts decided to donate a conservation easement on their land as part of their estate planning. Then in 2004, neighbors John Paluska and Cynthia Brown continued that legacy with their decision to conserve 71 acres.

Ed, Raven, John, and Cynthia, along with their other neighbors, knew that such beautiful land located only 20 minutes from Burlington would always be of great interest to developers.

## Creating the Raven Ridge Preserve

Today, the next big event is taking shape —the creation of the 365-acre Raven Ridge natural area, supplemented by yet another conservation easement donation by John and Cynthia on 35 acres.

To make the Raven Ridge Preserve possible, John and Cynthia will sell their remaining 201 acres in Monkton, while their neighbors to the north, Ed and Raven, will donate approximately 165 acres to establish the new conservation area. The natural area, to be owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy, will be open to the public for pedestrian recreation. Access will be from Rotax Road, where a small parking area and kiosk will be installed.

With these landowners who are dedicated to conservation, and willing to give us time to raise the necessary funds, we are presented with a rare opportunity

## Protecting a Special Natural Area and the Wildlife that Rely on it

One of the most compelling aspects of this land is its ecological diversity. The land is a rarity in this part of the Champlain lowlands: a remarkably unfragmented stretch with expanses of three forest types: valley clayplain, mesic maple-ash-hickory-oak, and dry oak-hickory-hophornbeam.

The Monkton town plan identifies this property as a bobcat migration corridor that connects Lewis Creek and Raven Ridge to a large wetland area south of Rotax Road (see map on page 4).

Bobcats thrive on the ridge's rock outcroppings. Ravens nest in the cliff ledges, otters den along Lewis Creek and travel along the tributary (pictured below) that loops around and through the preserve.







Two vernal pools provide breeding habitat for amphibians such as wood frogs and spotted salamanders. The south-facing forested slopes of the ridge and the

property's wetlands are used as summer habitat by the federally endangered Indiana bat—a fact that has resulted in the award of a \$500,000 Endangered Species Act grant.

The ridge, with its outstanding views, contains two remarkable geologic features, a large cave and exposed, folded layers of rock geologists call an exposed anticline (pictured above), and known locally as The Oven.

*We were first captivated by the grey and pink rocks. And then the stream that bubbles down a rock ledge. And then the beaver, otter and ducks that use the stream. The woodlands host some of the 137 bird species I've counted on the land. Ed and I feel incredibly privileged to have been stewards of this property for over 35 years. Now we hope to ensure it is conserved and cared for far into the future.*

— Raven Davis





# Join our efforts now to establish a new nature preserve!

**With 93% raised as of November 4, we need only \$62,700 in contributions to get us to the finish line!**

A total cost of creating the preserve is \$850,000, which includes land acquisition and project costs.

Money already secured or requested:

- ◆ \$500,000 from the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- ◆ \$217,200 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
- ◆ \$40,000 from the Charlotte Land Trust
- ◆ \$15,000 from the Town of Monkton
- ◆ \$15,000 from the Town of Charlotte
- ◆ \$20,000 from the Town of Hinesburg

Contributions of all sizes are needed and appreciated! Please make a donation today.

**Tax-deductible gifts or pledges can be mailed by November 30, 2009 to:**

**The Nature Conservancy of Vermont  
27 State Street, Suite 4  
Montpelier, VT 05602**

Checks can be made payable to The Nature Conservancy with "Raven Ridge Preserve" written in the memo line.



**For more information, please contact:**

**Vermont Land Trust  
Bob Linck: (802) 434-3079**

**The Nature Conservancy  
Emily Boedecker: (802) 229-4425, ext. 112**

