

Backcountry For Sale: Vermont Land Trust, skiers rally to buy land

Contributed by Tyler Cohen

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The property in question abuts the 39,837-acre Mount Mansfield State Forest, and includes the Catamount Trail, a 300-mile bc ski trail that runs from Massachusetts to Canada. “It’s a large majority of what we currently offer for backcountry skiing as well as what we offer for groomed Nordic terrain,” says Josh Arneson, director of marketing at Bolton Valley. Bolton/Catamount Land is the investment group responsible for the sale, and the LLC includes the owners of Bolton Valley Resort and several outside partners.

“In terms of conservation, the land is really an unparalleled recreational resource,” says Elise Annes, Vice President of Community Relations at VLT. And, according to Annes, the land has tremendous ecological value. “It’s been targeted as a critical block of wildlife habitat in the northeast by the Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife,” she says.

The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board has already kicked in a grant of \$800,000, and VLT has received gifts from more than 600 individual donors. “It’s been incredible,” Annes says of the public support.

“By having it in the Vermont Land Trust, it basically preserves the land forever from future development,” Arneson says. Annes adds, “There’s tremendous value, from a recreational aspect, in keeping it open and available into the future.”

Editor’s Note: When this story was first published in the January issue of Backcountry, the Vermont Land Trust had \$275,000 to go to meet their goal, and had just received an anonymous matching donation of \$100,000. By early March, VLT had fewer than \$32,000 (updated 3/7) to raise. To find out more, visit vlt.org and to make a donation, click [here](#).