

Residents are caring stewards of natural resources

Vermont's natural beauty and abundance is not lost on its residents. Despite cultural and economic divisions, Vermonters are united in their love of their state's rolling, rugged landscape known for its deep winters and rich flora and fauna.

Recognizing the value of the ecosystems in their charge, Vermonters are generally inclined toward conservation, restoration and enjoyment of their natural surroundings.

In 2004, the National Geographic Society listed Vermont as the most desirable destination in the United States, tied for sixth place among the world's 115 most desirable destinations.¹¹⁷

the FACTS

Enjoyment and conservation

- More than 200,000 Vermonters regularly watch, photograph or feed wildlife.¹¹⁸
- Since 1990, The Vermont Land Trust has conserved more than 425,000 acres. The areas conserved include over 600 working farms and large forested parcels.¹¹⁹
- In a 2006 survey by the Vermont Land Trust, Vermonters indicated that land conservation was their fourth most important issue, following public education, affordable healthcare, and affordable housing. Forty-seven percent of those surveyed felt that if land conservation were to stop today it would have a "very negative" impact on Vermont tourism.
- In the same 2006 survey, 63.8% of Vermonters said that it was "extremely important" to have working farms in the state. In descending order, additional priorities included: have locally grown food (54%), have recreation areas for non-motorized activities (50.8%), have farmer's markets (47%), have natural or wildlife areas set aside for human use (45%), have scenic vistas (44%) and have working forests (37.7%).¹²⁰

Wilderness and forest-based industry

- More than 78% of Vermont is blanketed by forests. Of forested land, 81% is privately owned.¹²¹ Research indicates that Vermonters prefer to fund land conservation through special property tax on "luxury homes."
- In a 2006 survey by the Vermont Land Trust, 47% of those surveyed reported that if land conservation were to stop today it would have a "very negative" impact on the state's working forests.¹²²
- When combined, forest-based manufacturing and forest-related tourism and recreation contribute more than \$1.4 billion to Vermont's economy each year. Forest-based manufacturing provides jobs for more than 7,800 people. An additional 6,000 are employed through forest-related recreation and tourism.¹²³
- Vermonters favor wilderness on public lands. A U.S. Forest Service report found that more than 90% of Vermont residents preferred to retain Green Mountain National Forest as a wilderness rather than use it for timber harvesting.¹²⁴