

Natural Connections



GROTON NATURE CENTER



Over 75,000 people visit the state parks in Groton State Forest every summer. A restored Nature Center can play a critical role in teaching visitors about the outdoors and inspiring a love of nature in all those visitors.”

— Craig Whipple, Director of Vermont State Parks



Natural Connections

New Educational Opportunities in Our State Parks

We invite you to be a part of Natural Connections, an innovative public/private partnership to benefit Vermont State Parks. Working together, Vermont Parks Forever, Vermont State Parks, and ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, will redesign and restore nature centers to enhance educational opportunities in select Vermont parks.

This dynamic program – the first of its kind in the nation – will tell the story of human relationships with Vermont’s natural resources, celebrate the complexity and beauty of our state’s landscape, foster responsible stewardship of land, water, and other natural resources, and help park visitors make beneficial life-long connections to the natural world.

Park Portrait: Groton State Forest

Groton Nature Center is located in the 27,000-acre Groton State Forest, which is home to seven Vermont State Parks. Groton State Forest offers recreational opportunities ranging from swimming, fishing, and kayaking to tenting and RV camping. Notable features include 423-acre Lake Groton, 95-acre Ricker Pond, secluded Osmore and Kettle ponds, and nearly 40 miles of trails and gravel roads suitable for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

Challenge: Static, Outdated Displays

Built in 1981, The Groton Nature Center suffers from aging, static displays that cannot provide the kind of interactive learning experiences parks visitors want. Its mounted bird and mammal specimens are well past their prime and in need of disposal.

Opportunity: Interactive Learning with Updated Technology

Working together with Vermont Parks Forever, park staff and ECHO are designing a restored nature center that features interactive learning opportunities highlighting Groton's geology and its natural and cultural history.



A Closer Look

- Groton is home to Peacham Bog, which at 748 acres is one of the largest bogs in Vermont.
- Over the centuries, Native American trails, Colonial footpaths, logging roads, and the Montpelier and Wells River Railroad have all passed through Groton.
- In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps reforested parts of Groton, which had lost timber to intensive logging and a devastating 1903 forest fire.

Ways to Give for Natural Connections

Budgeted at \$1.5 million, the Natural Connections program will facilitate the restoration of six nature centers. In support of these and other projects, Vermont Parks Forever welcomes donations, pledges and bequests of cash, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds, including multiple-year gifts. Naming opportunities may be available. To find out how your contribution can provide the most impact, contact VPF today.

Budget

Natural Connections Total..... \$1.5 million

Nature Center Restoration for Six Parks:
Button Bay, Lake St. Catherine, Lake Carmi,
Burton Island, Grand Isle, and Groton

Groton Nature Center Restoration

Phase 1:

Research, Planning and Creative Design.....\$42,000

Phase 2:

Exhibit and Graphics Design.....\$46,000

Phase 3:

Exhibit Fabrication and Installation.....\$200,000

Misc. Project Expenses:\$12,000

Campaign Expenses:\$30,000

Groton Nature Center Total.....\$330,000



Get In Touch

If you are interested in supporting our mission, contact VPF's Executive Director, **Sarah Alberghini Winters** at Sarah@vermontparksforever.org or 802.917.1719

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About Natural Connections

Natural Connections brings together the educational design experience of ECHO, the natural history expertise of Vermont State Parks personnel, and the fundraising efforts of Vermont Parks Forever to create dynamic new educational experiences for visitors to Vermont's State Parks. Our goal is to inspire a new generation of environmental stewards by building deep, life-long connections to nature.

