

Goulet Farm Conservation Project



Protecting a South Hero Farm and Lake Champlain

A Local Farm Family Continues a Multigenerational Story of Stewardship



On the rolling hillsides above Keeler Bay lies the Goulet Farm, where Guy and Lori Goulet have grown a vibrant hay business and market garden. Their busy farmstand on the main road through town provides high quality vegetables, berries, jams, pies, and more to local residents and visitors alike.

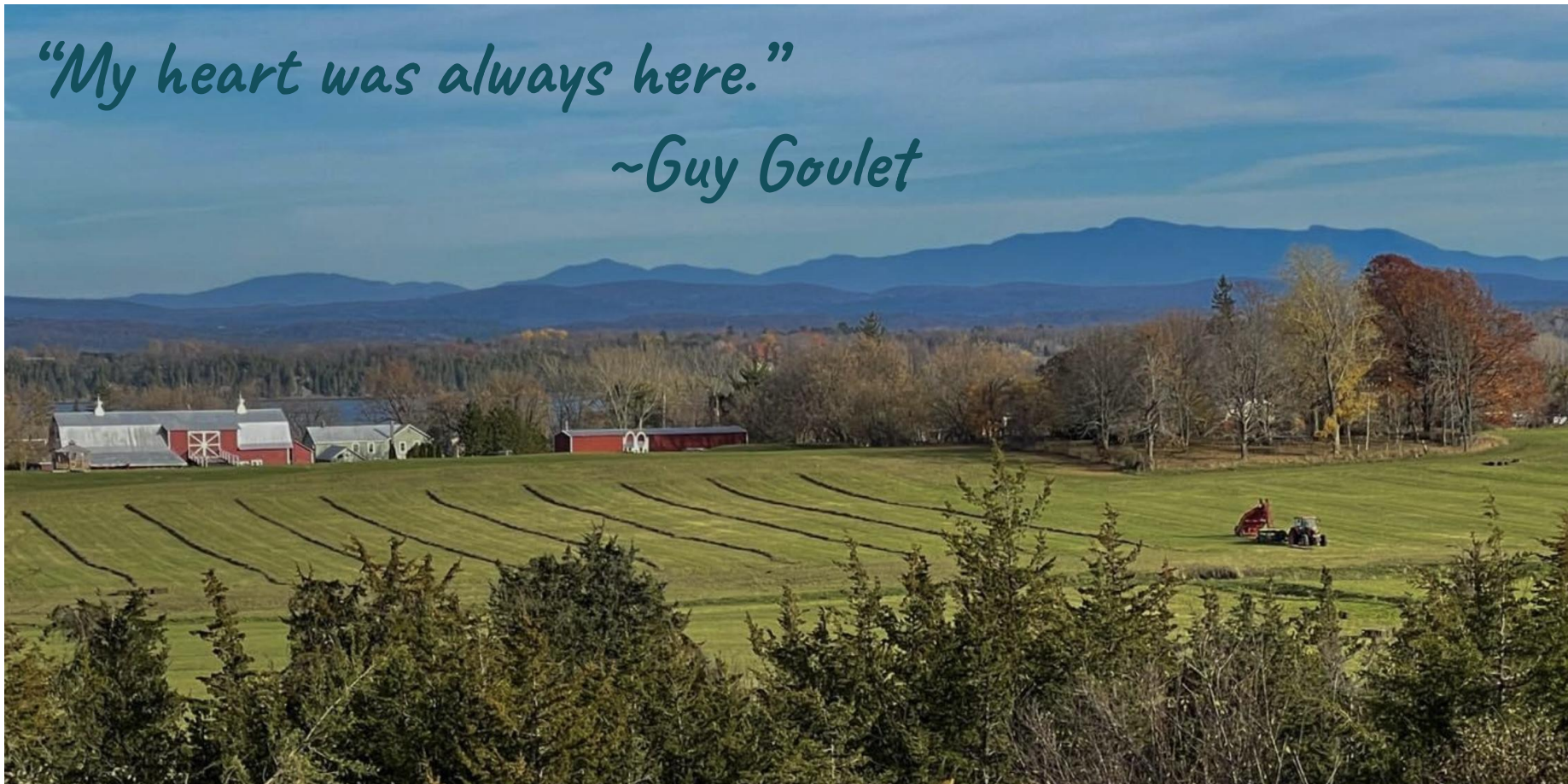
Adjacent to the Goulet Farm is the home of Rob and Kathleen Swanson, longtime community members who are committed to seeing the land around their home remain a thriving South Hero farm.

When a piece of land critical to the farm went up for sale, putting the entire operation at risk, these two families came together to buy the land and keep the Goulet Farm in business. Today, the neighbors are working with South Hero Land Trust and Vermont Land Trust to secure the future of this third generation Vermont farm and protect Keeler Bay.



"My heart was always here."

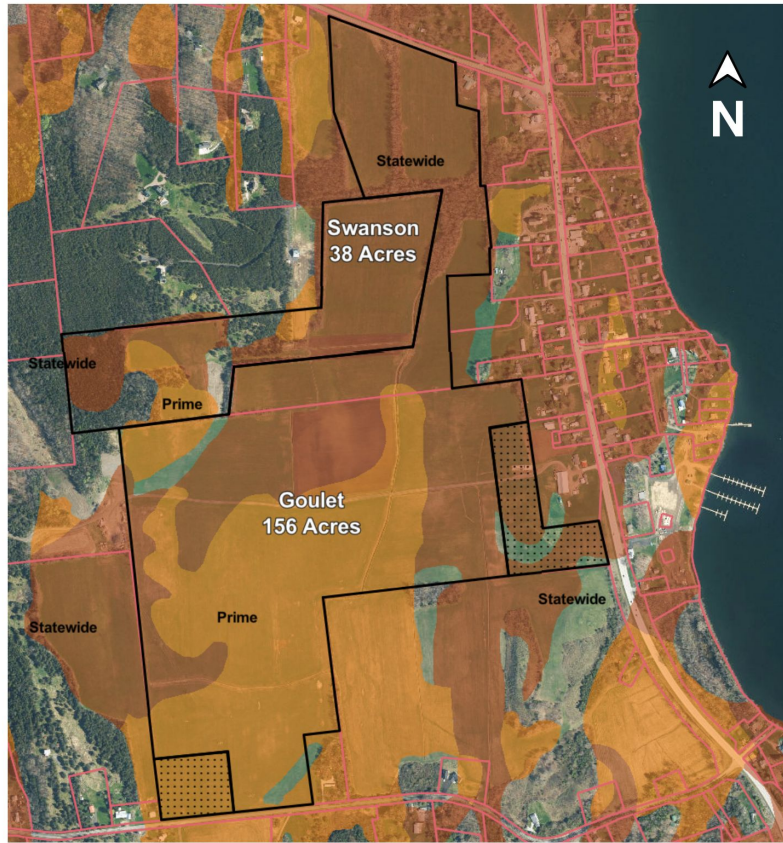
~Guy Goulet





A partnership project of:





This project ties together a working farm operation with water quality protection and the rolling views of farm fields and the lake that are part of South Hero's rural island character.

This project will permanently protect:

- **194 acres of land**, including **145 acres of prime and statewide** rated agricultural soil in perennial production.
- **13 acres of woodland**, including a **small wetland that serves to filter water** entering Keeler Bay.
- Rolling slopes with **scenic views** of Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains.
- A large contiguous area of **working farmland with active farm operation**, including a **vibrant market garden** and **farmstand**.
- A major undeveloped parcel that is critical to **protecting water quality in Keeler Bay**.
- The land will be conserved with an Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV), a tool that helps **keep farmland permanently affordable and available to farmers**.

A Peek into the Natural History of the Land



The Goulet Farm's **underlying limestone bedrock** formed millions of years ago as the bed of the ancient Iapetus Ocean. Around 13,500 years ago, at the beginning of the most recent postglacial period, it was entirely submerged by Lake Vermont and the Champlain Sea. Today, it has a range of soil types including **sandy loams, silt loams and silty clay loams** with some areas of bedrock exposure. Much of the farm's **broad rolling topography is open agricultural land**, taking advantage of these **fertile soils**, but its western margins hold a small **Northern White Cedar Swamp**. This **forested wetland** is the uppermost band of a large forested wetland complex that continues off the property and includes a state-significant Red or Silver Maple-Green Ash Swamp. (*map: NY State Museum, photo: VLT*)

A Thriving Farm Operation in Need of a Secure Land Base

GOULET FARM STAND

802.372.5642

467 ROUTE 2, SOUTH HERO, VT



We have fruits, veggies, and much more!

Guy Goulet is the **third generation** Goulet to farm this land. He, his wife Lori, and his stepson Brad have built a thriving farm business, growing **high quality hay** for the horse market and a **vibrant market garden** to provide fresh vegetables and fruits for a **busy farmstand** in Keeler Bay.

A Thriving Farm Operation in Need of a Secure Land Base

They **hay over 1,200 acres of land** (900+ rented) in South Hero and Grand Isle and raise about **25 acres of vegetables**. *They raise over 150 varieties of sweet corn, planting every 2 weeks beginning in April!*

Their hay is mostly sold out of state, while their vegetable sales are all local.

This project will **secure 182 acres of active farmland** for their operation.



Prioritizing the Health of Keeler Bay



The Goulet Farm overlooks Keeler Bay. Besides providing beautiful **scenic views** and a place to go **fishing, boating, and swimming**, the bay is important to the **local tourism and recreation economy**. Its sheltered waters are an important **habitat for aquatic animals and plants**. And it's a source of **drinking water** for many village residents. But Keeler Bay is critically impaired by **excess levels of phosphorus**.

Prioritizing the Health of Keeler Bay

Watershed Action Plan for Keeler Bay (completed in 2023)

- Grand Isle County Natural Resources Conservation District & South Hero Land Trust
- Local Residents & Water Quality Experts
- Identified 30 projects and completed 30% designs for 6
- Developed lands, including private gravel roads, driveways, and parking areas near the shoreline, are the primary sources of phosphorus in Keeler Bay
- Agricultural lands are a lesser source of excess phosphorus, but the Goulet Farm covers a large swath of land in the watershed



Prioritizing the Health of Keeler Bay

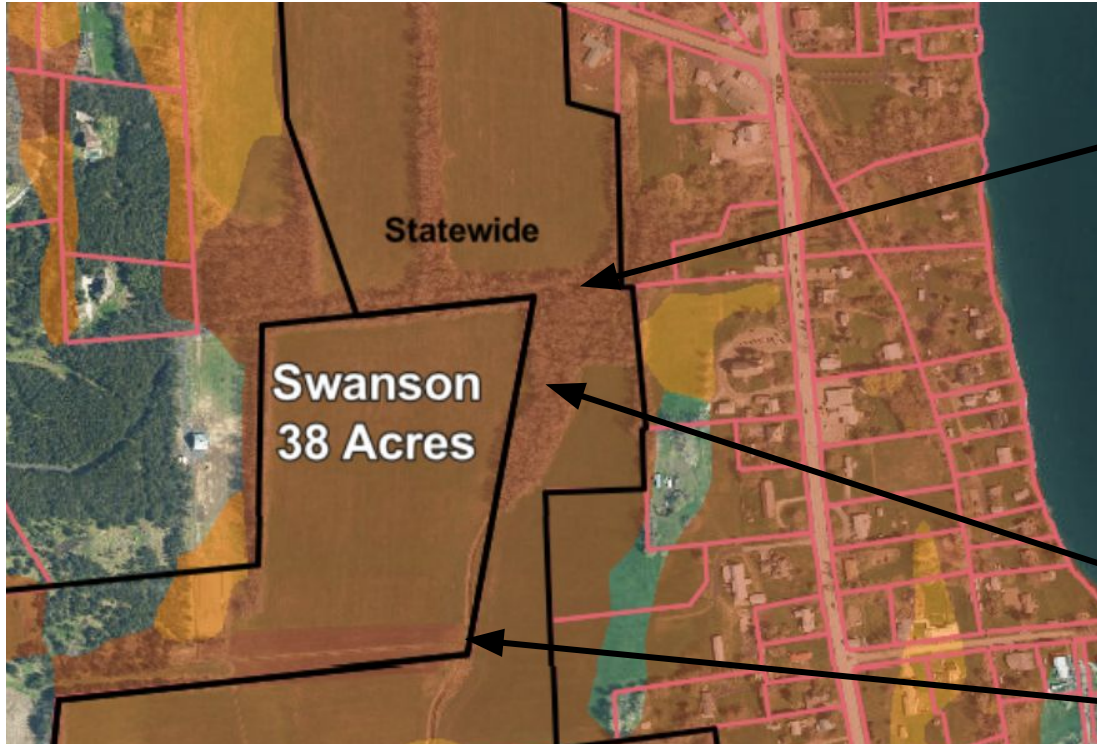
"I spent a lot of time on the lake as a kid, fishing, jumping off the docks into the water... but it feels like we Vermonters forgot the lake for a long time, we didn't take care of it. We need to take care of it now."

~Guy Goulet

Farmers Steps Up to Protect Water Quality

- Conserving the farm is a critical step in realizing our shared goals of water quality protection
- Guy, Lori, and Brad are working closely with the Conservation District and Land Trust to develop a set of projects and best practices to reduce phosphorus pollution in the Bay
- The first project identified by the team is replacing dying ash trees along the stream banks and near the forested wetland with other native tree and shrub species that will protect the stream from erosion

Prioritizing the Health of Keeler Bay



Wetland Protection Zone

Stream Restoration Project

Ditch Upgrade Design
Project Proposed

“A friendly, vibrant, and beautiful small Lake Champlain Island town”

Making Connections to South Hero's Town Plan

South Hero's “abundant recreational, agricultural and cultural amenities support healthy lifestyles, a sense of community, and a thriving local island economy.”

- Allow South Hero to grow in a responsible way, with respect for its unique characteristics, **natural beauty and rural environment** in a manner which encourages and nurtures South Hero's sense of community and civic pride.
- **Support agriculture** that follows best environmental management practices.
- Ensure the **compatible coexistence of development with major ecologically sensitive areas, such as wetlands**, natural areas, Lake Champlain, **scenic views** and historic sites.
- Enable mixed use of residential, **agricultural**, light-industrial and/or commercial developments to flourish in the Town.
- **Support efforts to reduce pollution and cleanup Lake Champlain**, groundwater and air quality.
- **Support purchase and/or donation of development rights to maintain agriculture** and important natural areas outside of the village areas.
- The Town shall support **donations, leases, and other private, voluntary ways to protect natural areas, wetlands, scenic areas**, recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.
- **Support farming and maintain agricultural land** to keep the **rural landscape** of the Town and help the **local economy**.

Goulet Farm Conservation Project Budget

	Expenses	Income
Purchase Price of Goulet Easement	\$1,271,500	
Purchase Price of Swanson Easement	\$161,000	
Appraisals	\$9,500	
Project Costs	\$16,000	
VLT Stewardship Endowment	\$19,000	
SHLT Sustainability Fund	\$60,000	
Water Quality Planning	\$2,500	
		Local Fundraising
		\$350,000
		Landowner Bargain Sale
		\$271,500
		VHCB State Funds
		\$161,750
		NRCS Federal Funds
		\$756,250
Total	\$1,593,500	\$1,593,500

The Goulet Farm is a critical part of South Hero's agricultural economy, vital for community food sovereignty, and a key piece of protecting water quality in Keeler Bay. This is an essential conservation project for South Hero, celebrating our connection to the working landscape and planning for our community's future.



“Great land and great people, that’s what it will take to conserve a tract of land that will benefit all of us for generations. The comfort we feel as a family that owns a conserved farm cannot be measured. Knowing that our land will always be open, farmed and enjoyed is what we hold onto.”

*~Steve Robinson, Islandacres Farm
on the value of this conservation project*