

# Newfields-Exeter Community Forest

## Fort Rock Trails

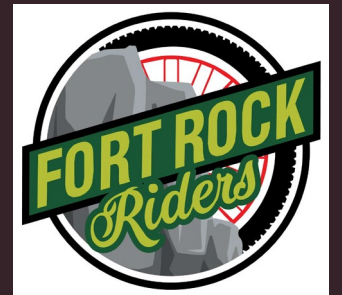
Bond Hearing  
January 16, 2024



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PUBLIC  
LAND™



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# Agenda

- **Warrant Article 1**
- **Project Overview, Goals, and Benefits**
- **Project Timeline**
- **Budget & Costs to Town**
- **Questions & Discussion**

# Project Team Roles / Contacts

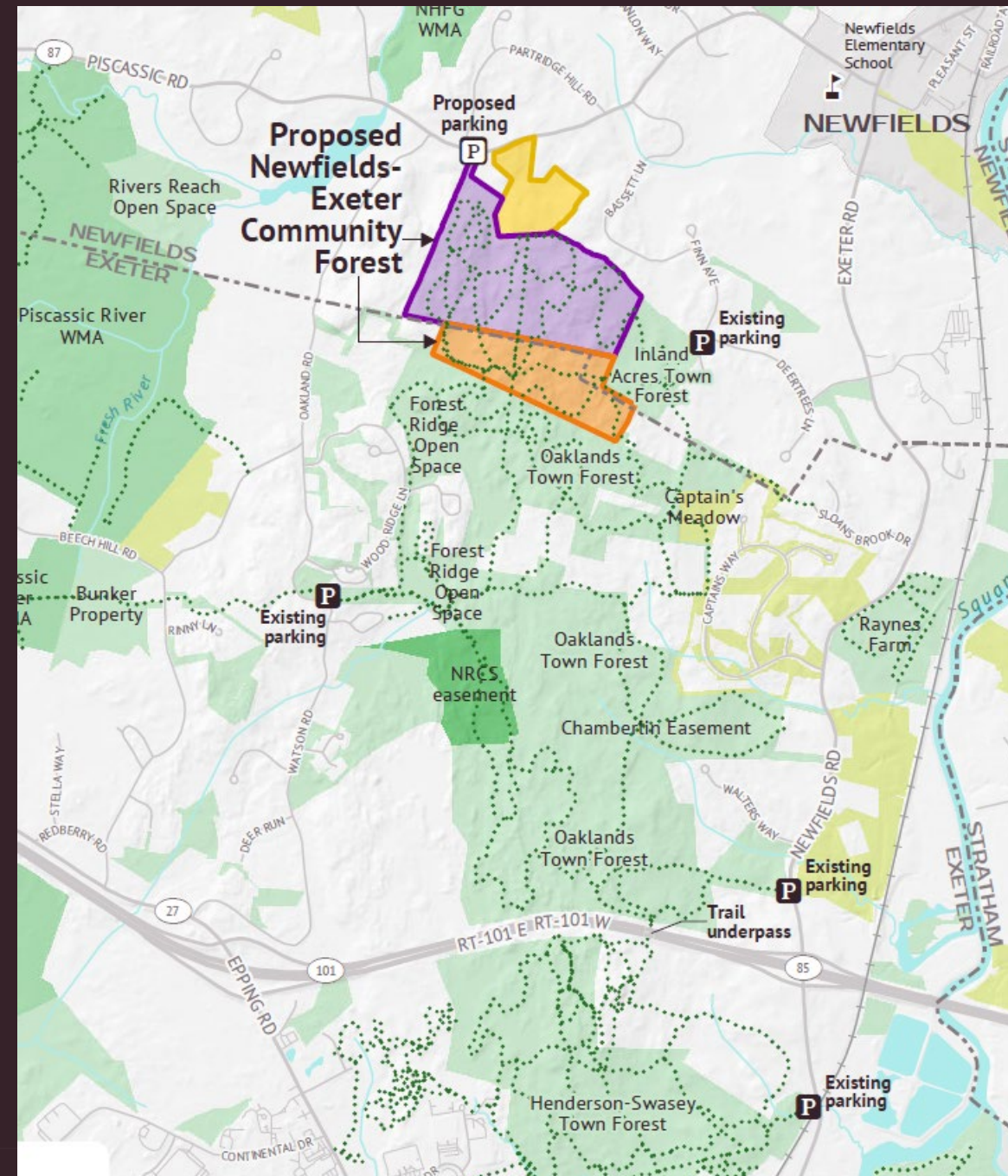
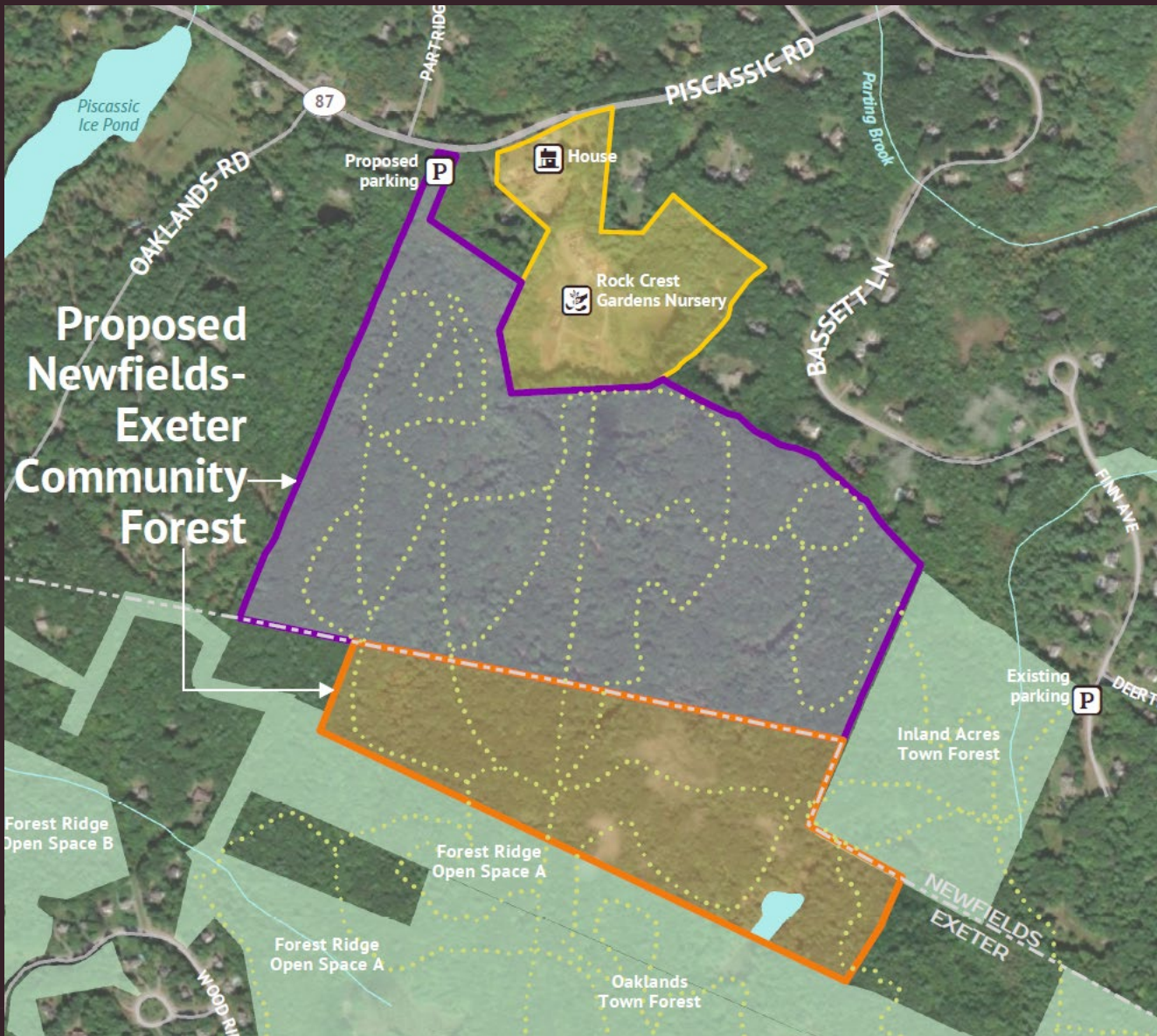
- **Trust for Public Land - Lynnette Batt, Project Manager**  
**Role: Project Lead**
- **Southeast Land Trust - Duane Hyde, Land Conservation Director**  
**Role: Project Support, Local Outreach, New Parking**
- **Newfields Conservation Commission - Jeff Couture, Co-Chair**  
**Role: Town Contact**
- **Exeter Conservation Commission – Kristen Murphy, Conservation and Sustainability Planner, and Andrew Koff, Chair**  
**Role: Town Contact**
- **Fort Rock Riders - Toby Ferdyn**  
**Role: Volunteer Trail Maintenance of Fort Rock Trails**

# Warrant Article 1

Article 1. By Citizens Petition: Shall the Town of Newfields vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire +/-101 acres of property located off Piscassic Road near Bassett Lane in the Town of Newfields (a portion of Newfields Tax Map 205 Lot 2) for the purposes of expanding the town-owned Inland Acres Town Forest, and preserving open space, trails, public outdoor recreation, drinking water supplies, and wildlife habitat; to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$3,700,000 for the acquisition (not to exceed fair market value); to be funded by up to **\$2.5 million from a Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan to the Town (with up to 20% or \$500,000 in principal forgiveness and up to 80% or \$2,000,000 to be repaid by the Town)** and \$1.2 million or more in other grants or gifts; to authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain, accept, and pass through a CWSRF loan and any federal or state grants or private gifts which may be available for said project; and all in collaboration with and facilitated by conservation organizations. This approval will not lapse until the property is acquired or by the end of 2025, whichever is sooner.

(Requires 3/5 ballot vote)

# Project Overview

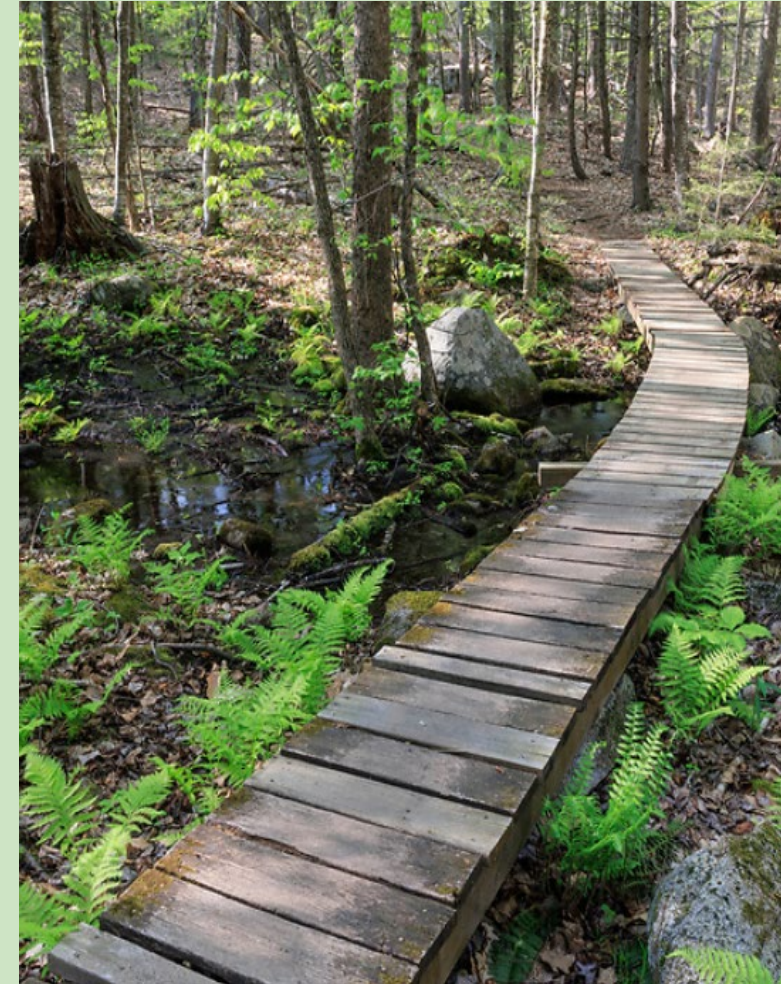


# Goals & Benefits

1. **Create new public land, expanding and connecting two town forests**
2. **Protect 30% of the Fort Rock Trails** (12 miles out ~40 miles)
3. **Protect water supply of two drinking water wells** in Exeter (property in “wellhead protection area”) and **water quality of two nearby impaired rivers**
4. **Preserve wildlife habitat**, including potential habitat for 7 listed species
5. **Preserve open space, rural scenic character, and quality of life** of the towns
6. **Improve public access** to the trail network through a new trailhead and parking
7. **Establish a Community Forest** where the community has ongoing input into use and management

# Key Points

- Significant information gathering, assessment, due diligence and planning has been done, ready to vote on funding.
- Maximum cost to town is established in Warrant Article 1 as \$2.5M loan, of which \$2M is repayable. This will not go up regardless of final appraisal/ purchase price/ budget updates. It may go down pending grant/funding success.
- The \$2.5M loan requires a town vote in March to proceed.
- If Exeter does not proceed, no cost/ risk to Newfields.
- Warrant Article 1 supports the project and aligns with funding and closing deadlines.
- Warrant Article 4 does NOT support the project and is not supported by the landowners or the project team. If passed the landowners would not proceed with the project and would sell for development.
- Full/ approved subdivision plans are not needed for an accurate appraisal and not recommended for conservation projects.



# Project Timeline: Past 15 months (2022 to 2023)

## Planning and Due Diligence

- Coordination and agreements with landowner
- Appraisal, title report, boundary survey
- Budgeting, financial plan

## Public grants and loans (Newfields only)

- \$2.5M CWSRF – awarded 2023
- \$500K LCHIP – not awarded, reapplying
- \$500K LWCF – applied, under review (unlikely)
- \$600K CFP – applied, under review

## Town and agency meetings

- Select Board, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, site visits with agencies,

## Public meetings/ engagement

- 2 Public Hearings (80+ and 60+ estimated)
- 1 open public meeting (130+ estimated)
- 1200+ sigs on open letter (319 Newfields/Exeter)

## Petitioned Warrant Article #1 (125 signatures)





# Project Timeline: Looking Ahead (2024)

## January to March

- Bond Hearing – current
- Address questions
- Deliberative Session – February
- Town Vote – March

## **Funding Vote Deadline: March 2024**

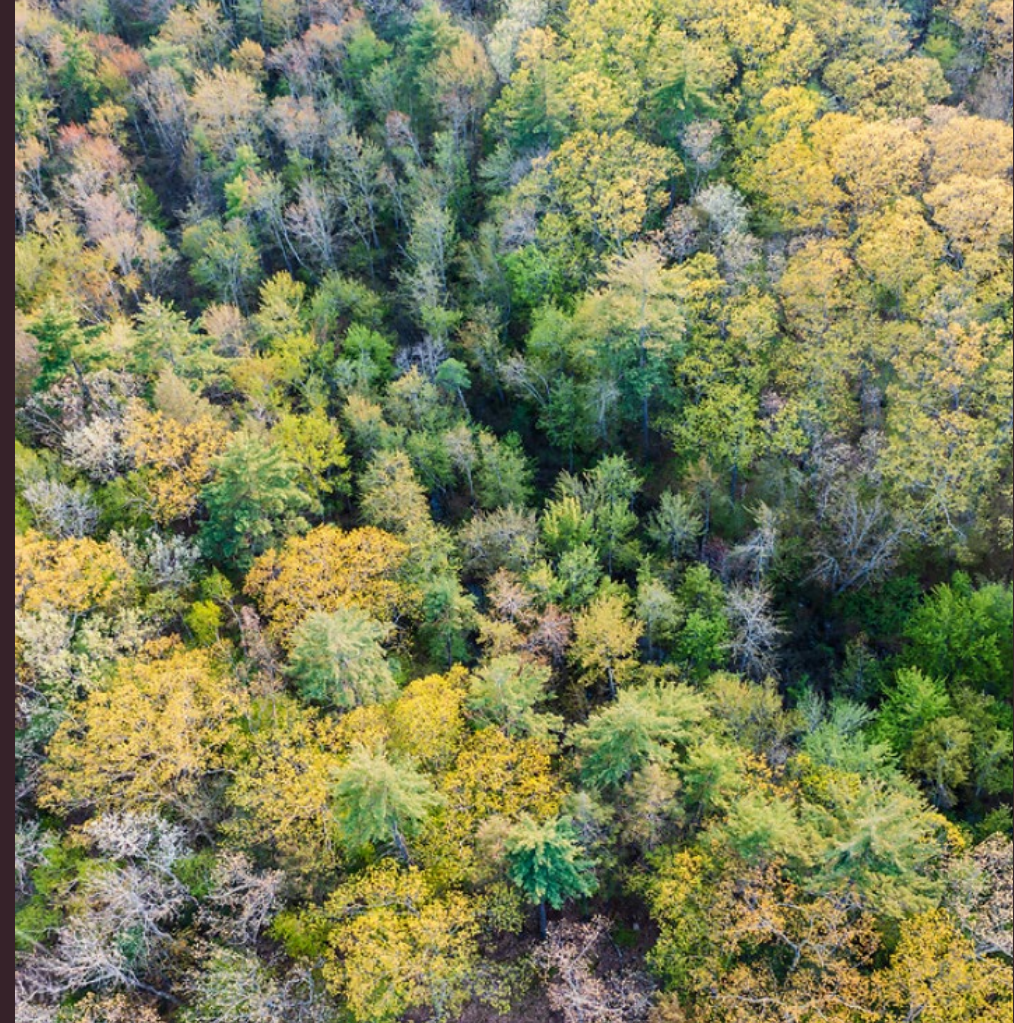
## Spring/ summer

- LCHIP grant application
- Clean Water SRF Loan full application

## Throughout 2024

- Private fundraising campaign
- Final due diligence (title, survey, environmental assessment, appraisal)

## **Closing Deadline: June 2025**



# Cost and Funding Summary

**Newfields Land**: Total maximum: \$3,700,000 (includes 5% contingency)

Town Loan: Up to \$2,500,000 from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), selected for award in 2023. Anticipated loan terms: 20 to 30 years, 2.8% interest (final terms determined when the final loan application is submitted if the town votes to approve).

- **80% of the loan, up to \$2,000,000, would be repaid by the town. This is the maximum cost to Newfields.**
- 20% of the loan, up to \$500,000, would be forgiven/ grant (note: Additional \$100,000 CWSRF grant awarded for planning)

Anticipated grants/gifts/donations: \$1,200,000 or more

**Exeter Land**: Total maximum: \$1,724,000 (includes 5% contingency)

Town Loan or Bond: Up to \$1,150,000

Anticipated grants/gifts/ donations: \$574,000 or more

# Working Budget

<b><u>NEWFIELDS - 101 acres</u></b>			
Land Cost - June 2023 appraisal*	\$	<b>3,525,000</b>	
<b><u>Funding</u></b>			
CFP (federal grant)	\$	600,000	
LCHIP (state grant)	\$	350,000	
LWCF (federal grant)		(\$500K applied but not likely)	
Other grants/ gifts	\$	75,000	
Town Loan (Clean Water SRF), maximum	\$	2,500,000	
<i>Loan forgiveness (20%), maximum</i>	\$	500,000	
<i>Loan repayment (80%), maximum</i>	\$	2,000,000	
	Total \$	<b>3,525,000</b>	
	Grants/ Loan Forgiveness \$	<b>1,525,000</b>	<b>43%</b>
	Cost to Town of Newfields \$	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>57%</b>

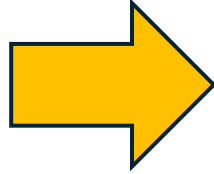
# Continuing the Town's Investment in Conservation

	2024- 2025 annual cost	2026 cost (overlap year)	2027 onward annual cost
Piscassic Greenway Bond <u>\$1,500,000 in 2006</u> 20 year investment	\$64,000	\$64,000 (payment ends)	
Rugg Project Loan <u>\$2,000,000 in 2026</u> 30 year investment		\$100,000 (payment starts)	\$100,000
Total Conservation Cost & Tax Impact (per \$1,000 assessed value)	\$64,000 14 cents/ \$1000	\$170,000 (overlap year)	\$100,000 22 cents/ \$1000
<b><u>Incremental</u> Conservation Cost &amp; Tax Increase</b>			<b>\$36,000 8 cents/\$1000 0.5% increase in tax rate</b>

# What will it cost the town and taxpayer?

## Piscassic Greenway

2006-2026  
\$1.5M bond  
20 year investment



\$64,000/ year  
14 cents/ \$1000

For a \$500K home  
\$70/ year  
\$5.83/month  
2 cups of coffee



## Rugg Project

2026-2055  
\$2M loan  
30 year investment

\$100,000/ year  
22 cents/ \$1000

For a \$500K home  
\$110/ year  
\$9.16/month  
3 cups of coffee



## Incremental Increase

2027 & beyond

*"Feels Like"*



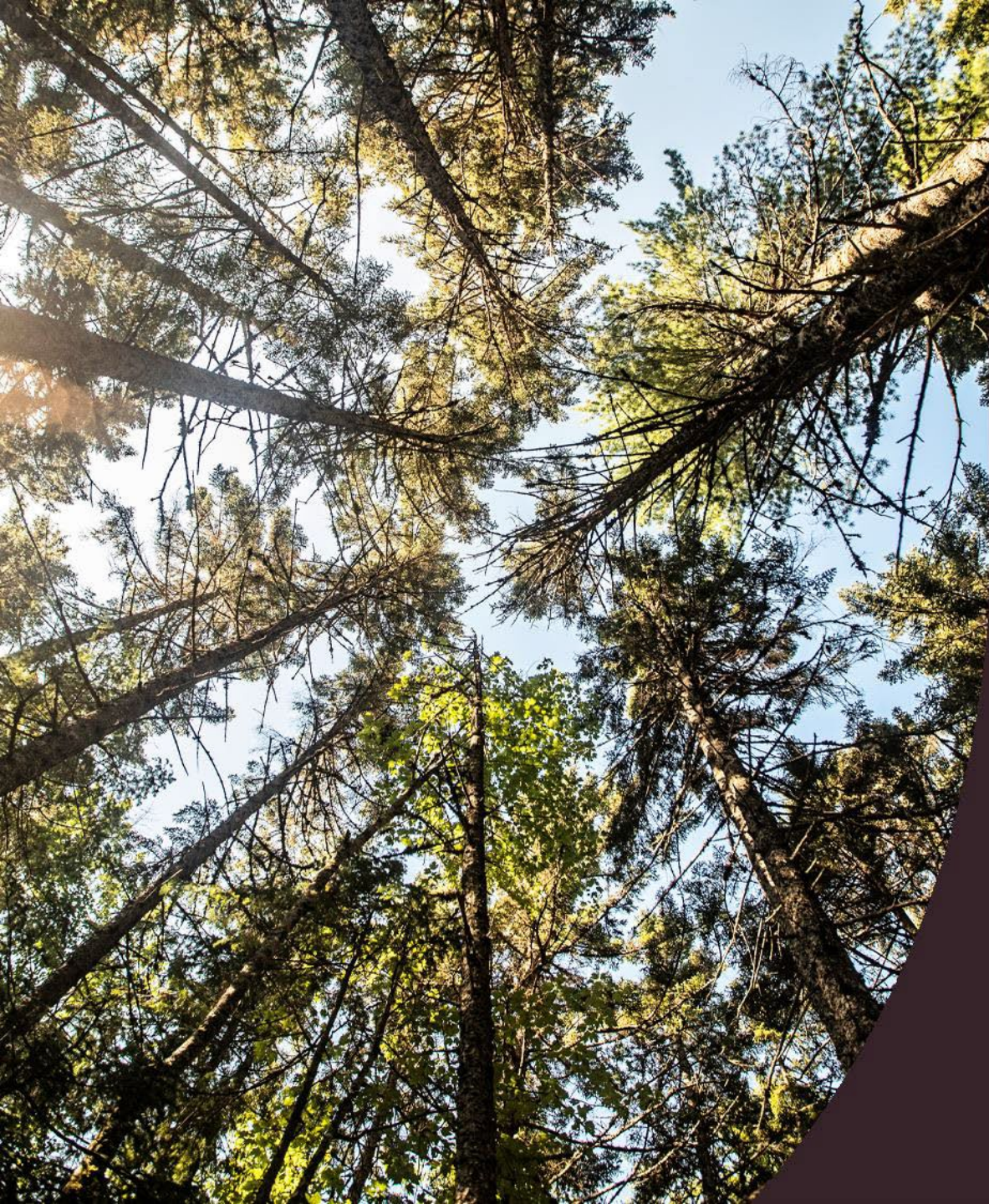
\$36,000/ year  
8 cents/ \$1000

For a \$500K home  
\$40/ year  
\$3.33/month  
1 cup of coffee



# Open Space, Recreation, Conservation Values





# Questions & Input

