

Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) this week introduced legislation in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives allowing the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park to acquire Woodstock's King Farm.

At the request of the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and the Woodstock community, the Vermont delegation is seeking to expand the boundaries of the existing park to include the 154-acre King Farm. Doing so will allow VLT to transfer the property and ensure that its mission of promoting agriculture, forestry, conservation and education is met.

Since it was bequeathed to VLT by Francisca King Thomas in 1986, the 19th century hill farm has partnered with its neighbor, Marsh-Billings, in supporting service and conservation programs. Facing difficulties in managing the King Farm property from its new headquarters in Montpelier, VLT sought to transfer it to the park. The transfer proposal has received overwhelming support from the Woodstock community.

Leahy said, "This is a unique opportunity to enhance the mission of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park and its service to the American people. The park, the Conservation Studies Institute and their Vermont home are a great fit and a valuable setting in which to offer prototypes for conservation and sustainable practices on so many fronts."

Sanders said, "The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is a treasure for Vermont and our nation. Vermont's forests and working farms have always been vital to our economy and critical to our character as a state. In order to continue Vermont's conservation legacy, our legislation will expand the park, help to conserve land for agriculture, forestry, and educational purposes, and benefit Vermonters for generations."

Welch said, "These two Woodstock institutions, the King Farm and the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park, have long served as mutually-supportive neighbors devoted to preserving Vermont's most important traditions. The inclusion of the King Farm land and buildings into the park is a natural evolution and will certainly bolster the missions of both, enhancing a true Vermont landmark."

