

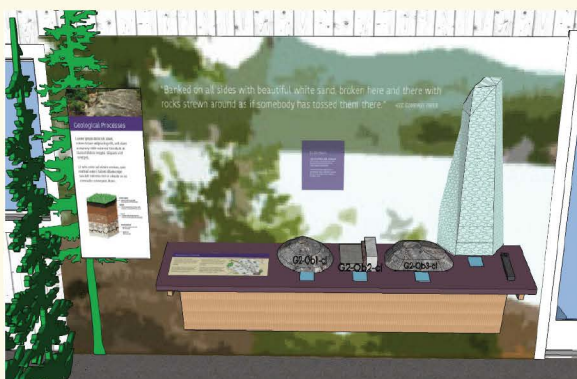
# NATURAL CONNECTIONS: GROTON NATURE CENTER



## CONNECTING PARK VISITORS WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

### Providing Access to State-of-the-Art Nature Education and Facilities

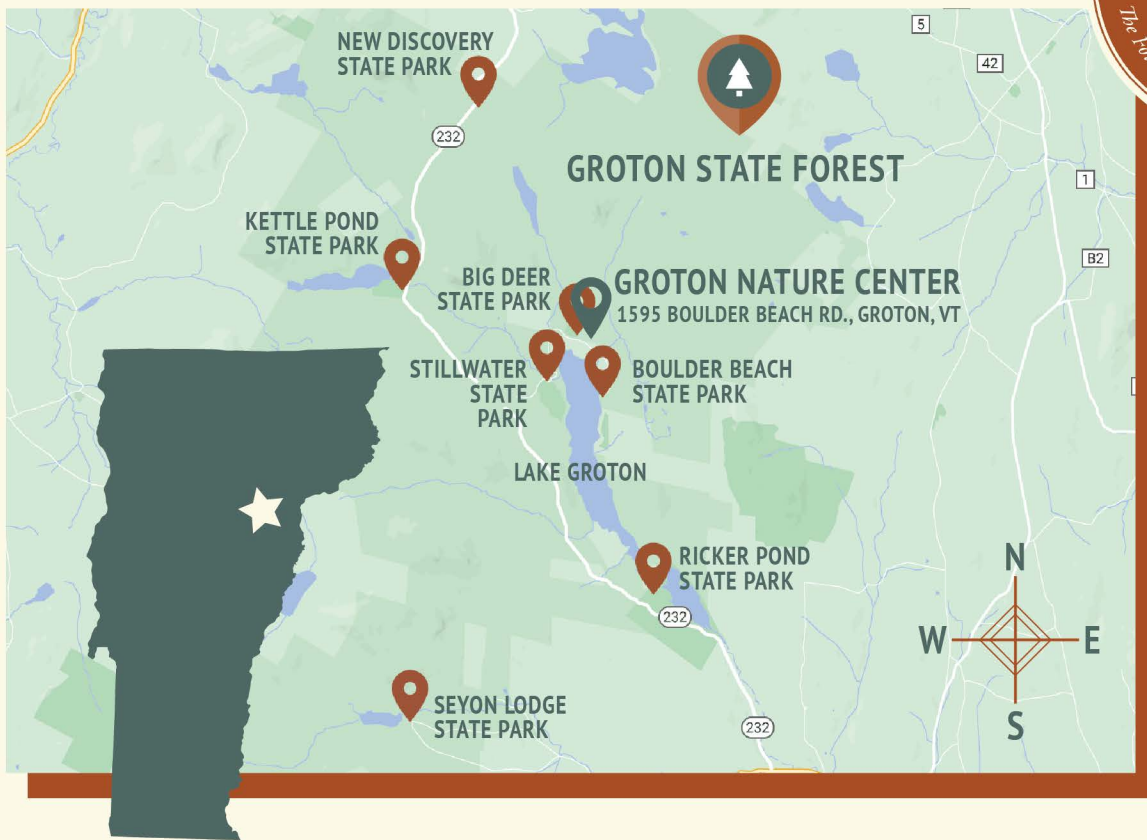
The Groton Nature Center is being restored to create the state's first museum-quality exhibit with free access to all. Budding conservationists and park visitors of all ages will have the opportunity to learn even more about the importance of wildlife, land use, and conservation. The reimagined nature center features inspiring, hands-on exhibits that highlight the diverse landscapes of Vermont.



Vermont Parks Forever, in partnership with ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain and Vermont State Parks, is excited to create an experience where visitors can directly apply what they learn in the center at any number of the state parks in and around the Groton State Forest. The Groton Nature Center will be an enormous asset to Vermont by educating visitors and residents about the ecological, cultural, and historic significance of the Vermont ecosystem.

**Open to the Public in June 2023**

# NATURAL CONNECTIONS: GROTON NATURE CENTER



## NATURE CENTER CONSTRUCTION

Summer 2022

## EXHIBIT INSTALLATION

Spring 2023

## GRAND OPENING

June 11, 2023



## Reimagining the Groton Nature Center

Nearly 40-years-old, the Groton Nature Center is being completely modernized and reimagined. Its location in the 27,000-acre Groton State Forest is home to seven state parks with over 70,000 visitors each year. The new and improved center will be accessible to these thousands of park visitors and the general public with no entry fee.

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 1930's, the Civilian Conservation Corps reforested parts of Groton, which had lost timber to intensive logging and a devastating 1903 forest fire.

Through the Natural Connections project of modernizing the nature center, Vermont Parks Forever furthers its mission to provide innovative education in Vermont's state parks for today's visitors and future generations.

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## Vermont Parks Forever: The Foundation for Vermont State Parks



Vermont Parks Forever (VPF) is the nonprofit foundation for Vermont's 55 state parks. VPF was founded in 2013 to enhance and protect Vermont's state parks by inspiring stewardship of natural places, providing educational experiences, and improving access for those who would otherwise be unable to experience all the benefits the state parks have to offer.

Vermont State Parks welcomed 1.1 million visitors in 2022. The nature centers will draw visitors of all ages to learn more about Vermont State Parks, and have fun doing it!



### ACCESS

#### 20,000+ Free Visits

Providing free access each park season since 2016 to communities underrepresented in the outdoors.



### EDUCATION

#### Fund Nature Programming

Ongoing investment in nature center renovations and innovative education supplies to build lasting relationships between park visitors and the natural world.



### STEWARDSHIP

#### Annual Youth Internships

Supporting employment opportunities for young people to learn environmental stewardship, work on equity in the outdoors, and practice public service in the parks.

# NATURAL CONNECTIONS: GROTON NATURE CENTER



## FAQs

### WHAT IS THE GOAL FOR THE NATURAL CONNECTIONS PROJECT?


The Groton Nature Center is part of a multi-year, multi-park project, called Natural Connections, for tomorrow's nature lovers and budding conservationists, engaging visitors of all ages about the importance of wildlife, land use, and conservation. The goal is to enhance nature centers and provide educational supplies to help visitors explore the natural world through education, engagement, and access.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PROJECT?

Vermont Parks Forever, Vermont State Parks, and ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain have formed a dynamic partnership to collaborate on the renovation of the Groton Nature Center. All interpretive design and displays were funded by Vermont Parks Forever thanks to the support of many generous donors. Reconstruction of the nature center was funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

### IN WHAT WAYS WILL THE GROTON NATURE CENTER BE ACCESSIBLE?

Accessibility is a top priority – the nature center will be a place to learn that is welcome to all. Free entrance and mobile accessibility are integral parts of the effort towards full accessibility. A new restroom has also been added on the grounds of the Groton Nature Center.

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### WHEN IS THE NEW GROTON NATURE CENTER SCHEDULED TO OPEN?

Located at 1595 Boulder Beach Rd. in Groton, VT, the grand opening event will be June 11, 2023.

### WHAT IS THE CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE FOR THE NEW GROTON NATURE CENTER?

Construction and initial installation took place Summer 2022 and will be fully finished in Spring 2023. The grand opening will occur on June 11, 2023.

### WHAT WILL THE EXPERIENCE BE LIKE?

The Groton Nature Center will be a portal to Vermont's natural world with themed, tactile, and interactive exhibits that will enhance the visitor experience. Visitors can then see firsthand everything they learned just steps from the nature center's front door.


Inside, the center will feature interactive displays and communication tools that allow visitors to explore clear, thematically organized information on topics including park resources, geography, plant and animal life, and human history.

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR NATURAL CONNECTIONS?

Natural Connections will continue to provide education opportunities throughout the park system. The next nature center restoration is in the process of being determined. The list has been narrowed down to the following state parks: Button Bay, Lake St. Catherine, Lake Carmi, Burton Island, and Grand Isle.

 VermontParksForever

 [vermontparksforever](https://www.instagram.com/vermontparksforever)

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