

The Woodstock Foundation, Inc.
Billings Farm & Museum

🐾 2021 REPORT 🐾



Better Together





Woodstock Foundation

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MISSION AND PURPOSE

The Woodstock Foundation, Inc. promotes conservation, sustainable land use, and heritage as values that are essential to culture, community, and the human spirit.

The Woodstock Foundation explores the integration of conservation, heritage, and human values, while advancing programs, projects, and collaborations for the benefit of the general public within the State of Vermont and nationally. Recognizing that an appreciation of nature, beauty, and heritage are essential to our sense of culture and community and to lift and inspire the human spirit, the Foundation reflects the broad-based philosophy and vision of its founders, Laurance S. and Mary F. Rockefeller.

Message from the Chair

After the extraordinary demands in 2020 on the creativity and resilience of the Billings Farm & Museum staff, this past year proved to be extraordinary in an entirely different way. Guests returned – and in record numbers. The pandemic continued to ebb and flow, but the public clearly was ready to get out and find experiences to enjoy. In 2020, in response to Covid restrictions, the BF&M staff had developed a varied collection of on-line programs. A number of these programs continued last year, but the staff also had to pivot and quickly develop new and expanded outdoor and well-spaced indoor events. In doing so, they coordinated with partner institutions and with members of the community. And it was that process of collaboration that led to the **“Better Together”** theme of this Annual Report.

As you page through the Report, you will see reflected the simple idea that we do better and accomplish more when we work together. Whether it was by forming collaborations with the Woodstock Inn & Resort to create the now-iconic Sunflower House or by joining with the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park to provide programming to summer campers, the BF&M was able to offer more experiences to its guests. The power of community, particularly the community of our volunteers and program participants, enriches everything we do at the BF&M. They come from all walks of life and bring with them their varied expertise, experience, curiosity, and dedication. They greet, they teach, they work with our collections, they act as guides and cooks, and generally make it possible for the BF&M to do what it does so well: bring us back to the land, to the history of this site, to the beauty of gardens, to the importance of sustainable agriculture, to the simple pleasure of watching the farm animals out in the fields against the backdrop of our barns.

I hope you join us this year and become part of our community. Your interest, participation, and financial support will ensure that the BF&M continues to develop innovative programming that underscores how we are, truly, better together.

Ellen R. C. Pomeroy
Chair, Woodstock Foundation

Message from the President & Executive Director

A month before we opened for the season, in March of 2021, a vibrant rainbow arced across the landscape of Billings Farm. Following the organization's most challenging year ever – stormy by all measures – this shimmer of light, aglow in the afternoon sky, offered hope, inspiration, promise, and a re-set for the season ahead. Billings Farm & Museum staff had worked diligently to create new and expanded open-air activities and innovative programs that would resonate with a public seeking safe, largely outdoor experiences ... and resonate they did when, as our doors opened, we welcomed a record-setting 72,000+ members and guests.

The year's success was made possible with collective effort and strengthened connections – through a timely partnership with **Woodstock Elementary School** and creative collaborations with the **Woodstock Inn & Resort** and **Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park**. Doing better together was exemplified by the people who make

it happen: our talented staff all working in concert, and the can-do spirit from a significantly expanded cadre of volunteers.

Meet Jim Coogan, of Hanover, New Hampshire who, on December 28th, joined us as our 100th volunteer of 2021! A seasoned systems engineer who moved to Hanover in early 2020, Jim has a flexible schedule in his telework job and was looking for a way to give back around the holidays. Responding to a post in the *Hanover listserv*, he found himself part of the Billings team in less than 24 hours!

"Today I volunteered at the Billings Farm in Woodstock, VT and spent a few hours outside in the newly fallen snow," Jim wrote. "My job was to greet guests (most with very young children), check tickets, give a short safety brief and then send them merrily on a genuine sleigh ride (pulled by "Luke" and "Lonnie"). My whole shift was filled with nothing but joy, excitement, and wonder – a perfect combination for this time of year!"



When I finished “working,” I learned that I was the 100th person to volunteer at the Farm. This milestone was so important that some of the leadership came to talk to me and later gave me a tour of the grounds and outbuildings (I learned a lot about Jersey cows!) ... I’ve always loved the kind of job where you get to be around positive, happy people – the families and the staff.”

We are so thankful to Jim and the 102 other volunteers who helped make the experience for our guests this year stronger than ever. And we are profoundly grateful for the remarkable generosity of our members, friends, and business partners whose support undergirds our mission-based experiences. As we look to the future, guided by robust and exciting plans, we invite you to join us through sustained and expanded giving, as we continue to be **better together**.

*David M. Simmons
President, Woodstock Foundation
Executive Director, Billings Farm & Museum*



BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

The centerpiece of the Woodstock Foundation is Billings Farm & Museum, an operating dairy farm that continues a 150-year tradition of agricultural excellence. As the premier gateway for interpreting Vermont’s rural culture and agrarian heritage, Billings Farm offers diverse, interactive programs that focus on rural life, work, and land stewardship as reflected in the traditions and values of 19th-century farm families. We also showcase the progressive improvements advanced by Frederick Billings during the late 19th century. The Farm & Museum features the farm of the historic Billings estate and serves as the agricultural counterpart to Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park.



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

MISSION

Inspiring and engaging generations through shared stories of Vermont’s rural culture and our continued practice of responsible agriculture.

Stronger Together ... Solid Foundations

In Billings Farm's 150th year, dairy took the spotlight. Billings Farm cheeses reached a larger market, and the herd again placed in the very top tier of Jersey farms nationwide. The historic farm was at the heart of the year's successes, thanks to the many people behind the scenes who demonstrated how they are **stronger together**.



A Farm Apprentice instructed a Farm Discovery camper on calf care.

PEOPLE POWER

On a daily basis, the people of Billings Farm & Museum – the staff, volunteers, and interns – created meaningful connections with guests and each other. By fostering a positive and safe environment, Billings Farm welcomed a record **103 volunteers** in 2021. Ranging in age from 12 to 80+ years old, volunteers improved the guest experience, leading crafts, greeting guests, cataloging photographs in the museum collection, making recipes in the Learning Kitchen, and tending the Education Gardens.

With guidance from staff, the next generation of farmers and museum educators contributed new insights on the farm's history. Over the course of ten weeks, two **Curatorial** and **Education Interns** worked together to shed light on the innovative technology used at the farm. The exhibit they created, **Water Works: Water Technology in the Home**, is now on display in the 1890 Farm Manager's House. Two **Farm Apprentices** spent the summer working in the dairy operation and learning to communicate farm practices to the public.



Thank you for an incredible summer volunteer experience for our teenager. Working in the barn with the calves and their moms was transformational. She started with just a few hours per week, but her commitment grew as the staff, the other volunteers, the animals, and everyone welcomed her. She became a greeter and had the chance to share that welcome with others from the community.

– Sarah G., Parent of a Volunteer

FOCUS ON THE FARM

Throughout the farm's history, employing best practices has always been the standard. The care, consideration, and well-being of the animals is of the utmost importance. That focus resulted in continued high scores for the **Jersey cow herd** in the twice-annual evaluation by the American Jersey Cattle Association. All of the farm's cows scored in the top two tiers, with 30 cows scoring Excellent and 25 cows scoring Very Good. These classifications measure the quality of bovine genetics and are used by the farm staff to continuously improve the genetic lines of the herd, resulting in healthy animals and high quality milk.

Billings Farm welcomed a new team of **Percheron horses** in October. Danny and Larry joined the other Percheron team of Luke and Lonnie who pull sleighs and wagons in winter and summer. The two teams provide additional opportunities for guests to enjoy these classic and fun farm experiences.

FARM-TO-TABLE CONNECTIONS

Billings Farm expanded the market for its cheeses and increased connections with guests through food programming. From a booth at the **Woodstock Market on the Green** to signage developed across the museum campus, Billings Farm cheeses helped share the Farm's story with a wider audience, highlighting the level of care for the Jersey herd and how the cheese's rich flavors are achieved.

Food programming introduced guests to recipes using farm-produced ingredients from the dairy and the garden. Recipes aligned with themes – from spanakopita during Sheep Week to mincemeat hand pies during the December holidays. Throughout the season, guests sampled delicious offerings featuring Billings Farm cheeses and garden-grown herbs and vegetables in popular recipes such as cheddar chive biscuits and cheese straws.



The Jersey herd remains in the top tier of classification nationwide.



Percherons Danny and Larry expanded opportunities for guest engagement.



Cheddar chive biscuits were a guest favorite.

Inspired Together ... Innovations

Challenge drives innovation. The Billings Farm & Museum team absorbed the lessons of 2020, engaging guests with a broader range of interpretive and educational offerings in 2021. The inventive, COVID-safe programming drew in youth and adults to connect with the site's history, farm, and gardens, and to be *inspired together*.

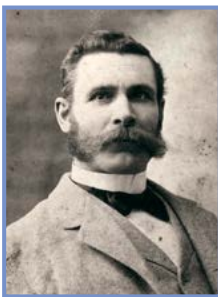
THEN AND NOW TOUR

In each room, you will see an object from long ago. Consider how it is different from what you see today.

1890 SMART HOME TOUR

FACES OF THE FARM TOUR

Many people lived on, worked, and cared for this land over the years. In this tour, you will read the stories of a few of those people.



OFFICE:

George Aitken, affectionately called "Boss" by his farm employees, was said to have a booming voice that could be heard six miles away in Pomfret, Vermont. He believed in selective breeding and only kept cows whose milk could produce 14 pounds of butter per week at age four. Following Frederick Billings' death, Aitken worked closely with Billings' eldest daughter Laura, describing his day-to-day activities in detailed letters to her.



KITCHEN:

Margaret Smith Anderson Aitken met her husband in Sterling, Scotland, when he worked for her father. She was described as "intellectual, energetic, genial, generous, and warm-hearted with a never-failing fund of humor." Often called upon to entertain business guests, Mrs. Aitken was known for her fine cooking. As her daughters left home to pursue careers, Mrs. Aitken hired Lizzie Hoar, a live-in maid, to assist with housework.

OPENING DOORS

Reopening the **1890 Farm Manager's House** safely for the 2021 season was a priority after it had been closed the previous year due to COVID-19 precautions. The Interpretation and Education team reinvented the interpreter-led house tour, designing a self-guided experience for guests to explore fascinating historical aspects of the home. The printed guides feature themes including the *1890 "Smart" Home*, *Faces of the Farm*, *Important Objects*, and a *Then and Now* tour geared towards younger visitors.



"Billings Farm did an outstanding interpretation of its 'high tech' 1890s farm manager's house. This was such a well-done example of finding a balance between self-led learning and scripted info."

— Lindsay G., Guest



Outdoor fun at Winter Wonders Camp



Farm Discovery campers learn about beekeeping

CONNECTING WITH YOUTH

Billings Farm & Museum's popular camps expanded into new seasons and age groups, serving more than 100 campers. At **Billings Bookworms Club** and **Winter Wonders Camp**, young guests aged 6–8 experienced the farm in new ways. For Bookworms, pages from the weekly book selection came alive with farm and garden activities and animal interactions. Winter Wonders campers saw firsthand how animals are cared for in the colder months. Campers cooked over a fire, made snow shelters, and learned about wildlife in winter.

Teens and tweens took a deeper dive into the world of farming and the interconnection of food systems and ecosystems during two sessions of **Farm Discovery Camp**. In addition to milking cows and caring for the farm animals during the week, participants met with farming professionals including a large animal veterinarian, a local beekeeper, and Billings' own Farm Manager, Chuck Deome.

ADULT PROGRAMMING

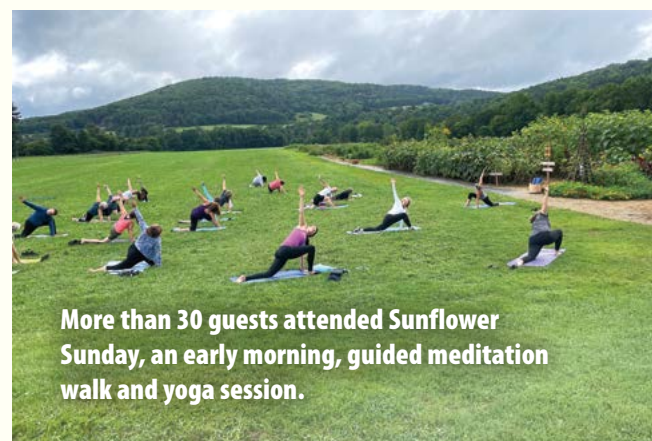
Billings Farm organized a variety of events and workshops that brought together adults curious about sustainability and self-sufficiency at home, as well as those seeking safe, outdoor experiences that the farm and museum could uniquely provide.

The **Billings Backyard Series** reached over 200 participants on site and on Zoom. Seven Billings Backyard programs, led by local experts and Billings Farm educators, covered topics including beekeeping, home gardening, jam-making, grilling, and crafting with felted wool.

Guests took advantage of new opportunities to explore the gardens, fields, and trails. In August the **Sunflower House** was the backdrop for both an after-hours **Garden Party** for members and for **Mindful Mondays**, a series of instructor-led mindfulness activities in collaboration with the Woodstock Inn & Resort. New interpretive signage was designed for the **Billings Farm Walking Trail** to deepen guest engagement with the history of the landscape. The signs will debut in 2022.



Expert gardener Ben Pauly led two Billings Backyard workshops.



More than 30 guests attended Sunflower Sunday, an early morning, guided meditation walk and yoga session.

Better Together ... Collaborations

In a year that started in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, Billings Farm & Museum rose to new heights, actively seeking out exciting collaborations with our closest partners, underscoring how working **better together** could benefit students, guests, and our larger community well beyond the farm and museum.



Sixth graders arrived for their first day of school at Billings Farm.



Sixth grade graduation at Billings Farm capped a unique school year.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

After months of virtual and hybrid education, students were starved for interaction, companionship, and connection. Billings Farm stepped up to meet this challenge, as 40 sixth graders moved into “classrooms” in the Billings Farm Theater and Activity Barn from February to June. This creative partnership between **Windsor Central Supervisory Union, Woodstock Elementary School**, and Billings Farm & Museum was critical to allowing the return of in-person learning four days a week during the COVID-19 era, when students had previously been learning from home three days a week.



“The close cooperation with Billings made an enormous difference for the teachers and the students.”

*Maggie Mills, Principal,
Woodstock Elementary School*

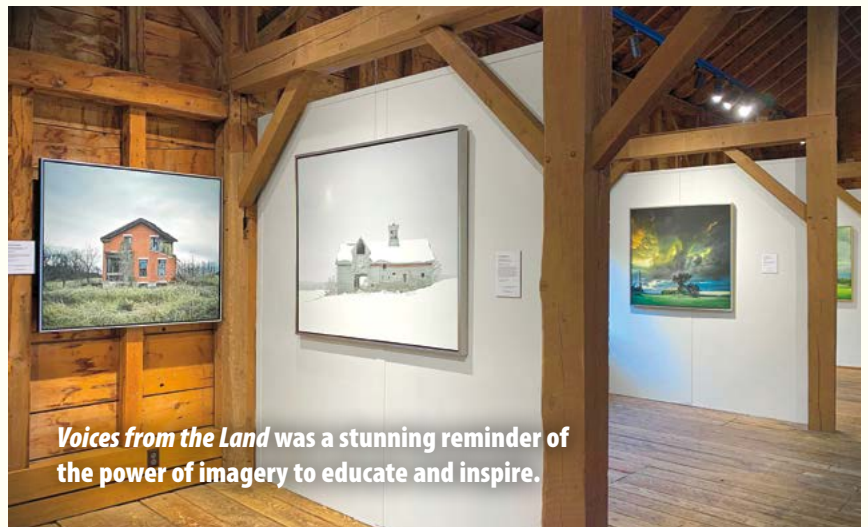
EXPERIENCES THAT INSPIRE

Collaboration with the **Woodstock Inn & Resort** reached new heights as Ben Pauly was named Creative Director of Landscape and Design for both the Resort and Billings Farm & Museum. Tapping into a well of shared energy, creativity, and passion, this partnership elevated educational and experiential opportunities for guests, including the winding paths of the **Sunflower House** and the spectacular natural decorations for **Christmas at the Farm**.

An exhibition by Vermont photographer Jim Westphalen, entitled ***Voices from the Land***, showcased the vanishing rural landscapes and structures that are central to Vermont's identity. Hosted through a partnership with the Woodstock Inn & Resort and presented in Billings Farm's historic barn, the large-scale images mesmerized guests with sweeping visuals while telling the unique story of each place.



Festive décor handmade by Ben Pauly and Billings Farm staff.



Voices from the Land was a stunning reminder of the power of imagery to educate and inspire.



A Park Ranger points out native plants to campers.

STRENGTHENING TIES

Working in common purpose, Billings Farm and the **Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park** combined forces to bring to life the shared natural and historical legacy of the two sites. When Billings Farm held its first **Torchlight Snowshoe** events, National Park Rangers led educational talks along the illuminated walking path. Billings Farm campers were treated to Ranger-guided explorations at the National Park, where they learned about the local landscape and wildlife. The two organizations also collaborated virtually to co-host **Working Woodlands Workshops**, online educational programs led by National Park staff throughout the year.

GUESTS, MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS IN RECORD NUMBERS



72,513
GUESTS

A Visitation Record!



1,400+

**Volunteer Hours
Donated**



37%

**Increase in
Membership**

STUDENTS REACHED



230 Adults
100 Campers
40 Sixth Graders

FARM TO TABLE

24,986

**Scoops of
Ice Cream
Served**

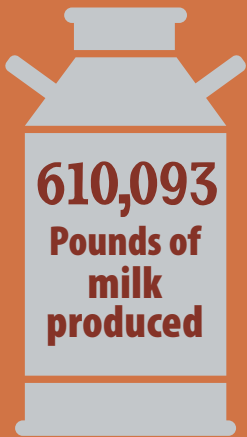


1,600
**Mini Pies Made by
Guests & Staff**

HISTORIC DAIRY



166,400 UNITS
of Cheese Sold on Site



25
Heifer Calves Born

EVENTS



- 13** Special Events
- 7** After Hours Events For Members & Guests
- 7** Billings Backyard Workshops
- 1** Farm To Ballet Performance

COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITS



- 550** Textiles Evaluated
- 243** Archival Images Preserved Digitally
- 128** Awards Prepared & Reinstalled in the Upgraded Trophy Room
- 36** Researchers Served

Staff

Michelle Adams Somerville, *Executive Vice President*

Anna Berez, *Guest Experience Manager*

Gabrielle Bourassa, *Lead Educator & Camp Coordinator*

Paul Brock, *Farm Assistant*

Amy Deome, *Farm Teamster*

Brian Deome, *Farm Assistant*

Chuck Deome, *Farm Manager*

Emily Deome, *Farm Lead Milker*

Matt Deome, *Farm Assistant Manager*

David Donath, *President Emeritus*

Alec Fannin, *Schedule & Volunteer Coordinator*

Jen Flaster, *Manager of Advancement*

Emery Gray, *Farm to Table Manager*

Alec Houran, *Facilities Assistant*

Marian Koetsier, *Administrative Officer*

Emily Koetsier, *Collections Manager*

Brooke Krancer, *Communications & Membership Asst.*

Ben McLean, *Facilities Manager*

Grant Meisenhelder, *Facilities & Grounds Associate*

Tina Morgan, *Business Assistant*

Nori Pepe, *Marketing & Outreach Manager*

Jacquelyn Riel, *Marketing & Administrative Assistant*

Christine Scales, *Interpretation & Education Manager*

David Simmons, *President & Executive Director*

Kristina Thomas, *Business Assistant*

Marge Wakefield, *PR & Community Relations Coordinator*

Marianne Zephir, *Archives & Curatorial Manager*



Interpreters

Phoebe Anderson
Grace Ashton
Laura Audsley
Thomas Ayres
Anne Barrett
Marta Bartholomew
Adele Bassett
Susan Carpenter
Margaret Chafouleas
Jeffrey Clement
Jude Corrado
Eamonn Daniels
Lynn DeCuollo
Kaitlin Doherty
Margaret Doherty
Susan Feinberg
Janice Fleetwood-Bean
Adrienne Flower
MaryAnne Flynn
William Flynn
Alexa Grout
Christa Hammarstrom
Marsha Hammond-Brummel
Julianne Harden
Brook Heston
Kaelan Heston
Sue Heston
William Heston
Norine Hopewell
Eileen Horner
Emerson Jenisch
Brian Jerome
Nancy Katz
Peter Katz
Cynthia Kozara
Elliot Kraut
Christiana Kuetting
Fran Lancaster
Ralph Lancaster
Christine Lesinski
Susan Leventoff
Leland Mahood

Amy Martsolf
Brighton Martsolf-Tan
Jackson Martsolf-Tan
Zachary Martsolf-Tan
James McCarthy
Bruce McClelland
Hatsy McGraw
Cynthia Metzler
Tina Morgan
Scott Morrow
Stephanie Petrarca
Zoe Potter
Kerry Rosenthal
Nathan Satterfield
Morgan Sawyer
Caroline Shepard
Robin Simpson
Caden Smith
Caitlin St. Germain
Emily St. Germain
Tiana St. James
Hailey Swett
Edward Taylor
Kathy Terwelp
Bethany Thompson
Benjamin Weatherill
Lynne Weatherill
Karen Weinstein
Carter Willis
Kathleen Willis
Georgia Winn
Mary Zimmerman

Farm Staff, Part Time

Cody Bartlett
Eric Blanchard
Samuel Blanchard
Charlie Cloud
Alexander Gray
Mackenzie Hewitt
Gordon Huntington
Andrew Palazzo
Reese Palmer
Emily Surrell

Paige Surrell
Jeffrey Thibeault
Lillie Tuckerman

Casual Staff

Patty Davis
Grettie Howe
Craig Marcotte
Philo Marcotte
James McRae
Janet Noskey
Janet Richards

Interns & Apprentices

Amelia Boerner,
*Farm Apprentice,
University of Delaware*
Meg McGee,
*Interpretation &
Education Intern,
Cooperstown Graduate
Program*
Leo Rachman,
*Archives & Curatorial
Intern, Simmons
University*
Kate Watkins,
*Farm Apprentice,
Purdue University*



Volunteers

Ray Altenburber
Alexis Audsley
Sequoia Barbour
John Bartholomew
Michael Bourassa
Joseph Bourque
Adrianne Burklund
Patricia Campbell
Hannah Clavelle
James Coogan
Caitlyn Cooney
Merideth Corban
Caitlin Crane
Hannah Deome
Joe Deome
Susan Devick
Rai D'Honore
Carolyn Dittmar
Nelson Dittmar
Nayantara Eashwar
Jo-Ann Ecker

Caitlin Edney
Yasmin Evans-Totoe
Michelle Farrington
Libby Galton
Carole Gaudet
Cory Gaudette
Eva Grant
Gabe Grout
Cynthia Guertin
Adrienne Guss
Charlie Hammond
Dustin Harrington
Bill Heston
Eric Hobbie
Diane Holme
Kaitlin Horan
Seema Ibrahim
Norma Ippolito
Sandy Joslin
Mimi Kanda-Olmstead
MaKensi Kastl

Aiden Katz
Jean Kelly
David Kigunda
Nancy Kobert
Sarah A.F. Lamb
Maggie Lane
Michaela Lavelle
Susan Linsey
Laurie Marshall
Bruce McClelland
Krystle McLeod
Nick Meloan
Gema Meloan
Coseet Meloan
William Moody
Susan Moody
Sarah Newell
Jacob Ochroch
Andy Palazzo
Mitchell Palazzo
Caleb Palazzo

Dominic Palazzo
Joey Palazzo
Oliver Palazzo
Marshal Palazzo
Georgia Perkins
Rory Perkins
Phyll Perry
Rachel Puopolo
Celia Quinones
Linda Ramrath
Kathy Reynolds
Elliot Rubin
Joan Rubin
Amanda Rumsey
Marlene Sachs
Seoka Salstrom
Hannah Saltman
John Scherer
Natalie Selden
Barbara Trippel Simmons
Maya Sluka
Andi Smith
Greg Somerville
Marshall Somerville
Amy Spencer
Benjamin Spencer
Farren Stainton
Ella Stainton
Amy Stewart
Teresa Tan
Jayne Trailer
Eric Walters
Jane Warren
Cindy Wells
Nathalia Whitecar
Sharon Willard
David Woods



Volunteers made an enormous difference by engaging guests and supporting staff.

Our Partners



Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

The Woodstock Foundation operates in partnership with the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, which was created by a gift to the American people from Laurance S. and Mary F. Rockefeller. Billings Farm & Museum provides an information desk, as well as parking and other facilities. The Foundation also holds and manages a fund for preserving the Park's historic resources.



The Woodstock Inn & Resort

In a major bequest from the estate of Laurance S. Rockefeller, ownership of the Woodstock Inn & Resort was gifted to the Woodstock Foundation in 2008 to support the Foundation's charitable purposes. The Inn will continue to serve as an anchor for the preservation and economic vitality of Woodstock village and its significance as a cultural heritage tourism destination.



BILLINGS
FARM & MUSEUM

69 Old River Road
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Woodstock, VT 05091