

## Research Information Sheet for Focus Group Interviews

**Title of Study:** Perspectives on Payment for Ecosystem Services

**Principal Investigator (PI):** Alissa White, Postdoctoral Research Associate, UVM

Faculty Sponsor: Heather Darby

Funder: UVM Extension & Gund Institute for Environment

### Introduction

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you have experience with agriculture, and you may have experience related to new payment for ecosystem services programs. This study is being conducted by Alissa White at the University of Vermont.

### Purpose

New payment for ecosystem services programs are currently being considered by state, federal and non-governmental entities. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impacts these programs may have, and how they should be designed in Vermont. In particular, we are interested in learning about aspects of the program design that may help optimize their effectiveness in meeting social, environmental and economic goals, and how they compare to or interact with other existing programs.

### Study Procedures

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group interview and answer some questions about your perspective on payment for ecosystem services programs, and your experiences with them. The interview may take up to 90 minutes of your time, and you may choose not to answer any of the questions. You may decide to leave the interview at any time. We will record and transcribe the interview for our research, but will remove any identifiers so that your identity is confidential during our analysis, and any related publications.

### Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there may not be any direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

### Risks

We will do our best to protect the information we collect from you during this study. We will not intentionally collect any information that will identify you to further protect your confidentiality, and we will avoid any potential risk for an accidental breach of confidentiality.

### Costs

There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

### Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

**Confidentiality**

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Should your interview answers identify you, they will be managed to secure your confidentiality. Only primary researchers will have access to any identifiable information collected. Secure servers and password protection will keep the data from this study secure and will only be accessed by the research team. Your information will be kept secure and protected for 5 years. After the audio recording of the interview is transcribed, it will be deleted permanently. This will occur within 12 months of the interview date.

*In the focus groups, questions are directed to the group, not to individuals. You have the right to not answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time in the process. We will ask that everyone in the group not repeat what they have heard others say, but there is always the chance that someone will repeat what you have said. Everything you say will be kept confidential by the researchers.*

**Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to not answer any questions, and you may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. If you decide to withdraw from the study, any identifiable information will be destroyed. De-identified information collected in this study may be used for future research and analysis.

**Questions**

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Alissa White at the following phone number 802-524-6501, or email her at [Alissa.white@uvm.edu](mailto:Alissa.white@uvm.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact the Director of the Research Protections Office at (802) 656-5040.