



## News Release

### For Immediate Release

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[Green Hills Preserve brochure & map showing five tracts.](#)

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## Conway Land Sale Advances Conservation for Three Organizations

**CONWAY, N.H.** — A gift of land to The Nature Conservancy in 1998 is now a gain for two Conway conservation organizations, the Conway community, and the Conservancy's efforts to protect the Ossipee Pine Barrens.

The Nature Conservancy announced that it has donated a conservation easement on five tracts in Conway (totaling 1,181 acres) to the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT), assuring the permanent protection of the lands from development, and simultaneously sold the parcels to the Tin Mountain Conservation Center. Proceeds of the sale are supporting the Conservancy's land-protection work in the Ossipee Pine Barrens.

The five parcels were part of a gift of more than 8,000 acres in New Hampshire and Maine by the family-owned Bear Paw Timber Corp. to the Conservancy. At the time, it was the largest private gift of land for conservation in both states. In New Hampshire, the gift consisted of 2,825 acres on 23 parcels scattered around three counties, including several tracts in Conway. Some of those lands (1,410 acres) created a significant expansion of the Conservancy's Green Hills Preserve. The remaining five Conway tracts don't directly adjoin the preserve, but provide important forest buffer and recreational access.

"This transaction is a win in so many ways," said Daryl Burtnett, state director of The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire. "We are advancing the conservation goals of three organizations, and ensuring that these lands will forever provide scenic, recreational, and open

space benefits to the town of Conway and its citizens. From the outset, our interests have been to stay true to the donor's wishes that these lands be protected from development and managed with sound forest stewardship principles. We're proud to be working with such great partner organizations in fulfillment of those wishes, and grateful that their stewardship will enhance the long-term health of these forests near the Green Hills preserve."

Tracts covered in this project are located in Conway, NH, and include:

- 499 acres south of Route 302 near the Conway/Fryeburg, Maine, line;
- 239 and 223 acres along White Lot Brook west of Route 113;
- 153 acres between a power line and East Conway Road; and
- 67 acres between Weeks Brook and Green Hill Road.

In the first step of the transaction yesterday, The Nature Conservancy donated a conservation easement on the five tracts to the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust. The easement allows for sustainable forest management, educational programs, and low-impact public recreation, but prohibits clearcutting, subdivision and development. The easement also ensures that, into the future, the lands may only be owned by a qualified conservation organization or a public agency authorized to hold land for conservation purposes.

The donation nearly triples the land trust's easement holdings from 670 acres to 1,851 acres. As part of the transaction, The Nature Conservancy and Tin Mountain Conservation Center are making a significant contribution to the USVLT's endowment fund for long-term stewardship of the conservation easements.

"The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust is very fortunate to have this opportunity to work collaboratively with The Nature Conservancy and the Tin Mountain Conservation Center in the protection of nearly 1,200 acres of working forest land in Conway," said USVLT President Thomas Earle. "The Nature Conservancy is to be commended for its role in seeing that these lands that have been traditionally used for forestry and recreation are to be managed by local non-profit organizations that serve the people that use them. Our mission to protect land for forestry, recreation, scientific study, and education, is exemplified in this project. With our conservation easement on this forest land and Tin Mountain's ownership, we see our mission serving the residents of the upper Saco River valley now and for many years to come."

In the second part of the transaction, The Nature Conservancy sold the five tracts to Tin Mountain Conservation Center in a bargain (below market value) sale. An anonymous donor stipulated that funds only be used to purchase the lands from the Conservancy. Tin Mountain Conservation Center will use the lands to demonstrate sustainable forestry as part of its mission to provide education about good forest management, wildlife management, ecology, and conservation practices, and to maintain properties dedicated to good conservation practices for the welfare and enjoyment of the general public.

"The acquisition of working forest lands by Tin Mountain provides a fantastic opportunity to lead by example in practicing sustainable forest management that directly benefits our local economy and also protects the integrity of the forest resource underpinning that economy," according to Tin Mountain Executive Director Michael Cline. "We hope to use the lands in a larger effort to re-establish the necessary wood processing capacity in the greater Mount Washington Valley to support the production of local wood products and craftsmanship."

The project provides clear benefits to the public and the town of Conway. As stipulated in the easement to the USVLT, the lands will remain open to the public for traditional recreational

purposes. The continued conservation of a 499-acre block, located south of Route 302, helps to safeguard a productive aquifer that serves Conway and Fryeburg, Maine. Sustainable forestry can contribute to the local and regional economy, and scenic values on the east side of the Green Hills will be maintained.

Proceeds from the sale will immediately be used to advance The Nature Conservancy's ambitious campaign to protect some of the last remaining habitat of pitch pine/scrub oak barrens in Freedom, Madison, Ossipee and Tamworth. The Conservancy currently owns 2,285 acres in the area, almost 1,000 acres of which are pine barrens habitat. The Conservancy's goal has been to protect as much of the remaining well-connected pine barrens habitat as possible, buffered and linked by natural forest and wetland habitats.

Many of the remaining undeveloped pine barrens parcels are under extreme development pressures, placing further at risk several declining song birds and rare insects. As a result of years of outreach and negotiations, however, there is a window of opportunity to protect several outstanding properties. In July, the Conservancy announced that it has secured options to purchase two tracts in Madison (374 acres in all), including pine barrens habitat between Cook's Pond and Silver Lake in Madison. The Conservancy recently purchased 170 acres in Freedom and 65 acres in Ossipee.

The Nature Conservancy continues to own its 4,222-acre Green Hills Preserve in Conway with help from the local Green Hills Advisory Committee. Forming a scenic backdrop for the town, the preserve continues to be managed to conserve its rare species and natural communities, to provide excellent recreation opportunities on Peaked and Black Cap mountains, and to serve as a core natural area for wildlife.

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**The Nature Conservancy** is a leading international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 14 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 83 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. Since 1961 The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire has helped protect more than 265,000 acres of ecologically significant land and currently owns and manages 28 preserves across the state. For more information, visit [www.nature.org/newhampshire](http://www.nature.org/newhampshire).

**Tin Mountain Conservation Center** is a non-profit conservation organization serving the greater Mount Washington Valley for over 26 years, and whose mission is to promote an appreciation of the environment in children, families, and adults through hands-on programs in school, at summer camp, and in the community. For more information, call 603-447-6991, or visit [www.tinmt.org](http://www.tinmt.org).

**The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust** is a private, nonprofit organization working in partnership with local landowners in the watershed of the upper Saco River in New Hampshire and Maine to permanently protect the lands and waters that define our communities and enrich our quality of life. Its mission is to preserve the ecological systems and cultural values of the Upper Saco River Valley, providing for the continued well-being and availability of land for farming, forestry, recreation, and education, as well as for land remaining in its natural state, benefiting natural and human communities. For more information call 603-356-9683, or visit [www.usvlt.org](http://www.usvlt.org).