

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Upper Saco Valley Land Trust**

**Receives \$100,000 grant from LCHIP for Foss Mountain Project**

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust recently received a \$100,000 grant from New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) to support its 99 acre Foss Mountain Project in Eaton, NH. LCHIP is a highly competitive grant program that makes matching grants to communities and nonprofit organizations throughout New Hampshire to conserve and protect the state's most important natural, cultural and historic resources.

The Land Trust initiated the Foss Mountain Project as the result of a direct request from the Town of Eaton's Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission to partner with them to preserve this important, community defining resource. Protection of the property provides public recreation as well as protects its scenic values, important wildlife habitat, productive blueberry fields and long term ability to produce forest products. In the words of Eaton's Selectmen: "When Madison split from Eaton in 1852, they left the real jewel behind and this town has enjoyed it ever since. Foss Mountain is a unique area with magnificent vistas in all directions. It is important that the mountain be kept undeveloped and open to the public for future generations to enjoy."

When a For Sale sign appeared in the middle of the blueberry fields on the southern slope of Foss Mountain, the property was marketed as "Build Your Dream Home Here". Anyone who has hiked to the summit of Foss Mountain and enjoyed the stunning 360 degree ridgeline views surely knows what a special place this is. Precisely because it is such a special place, the property was under significant and imminent threat from development.

In its most ambitious project to date, the Land Trust purchased the 99 acre Foss Mountain Project property in February 2010 for \$320,000 and immediately initiated a fundraising effort to raise \$350,000 for the purchase price and related transaction costs from grants and individual contributions.

"The Land Trust is extremely grateful to everyone who has contributed to our Foss Mountain Project" said Land Trust President Tom Earle. Demonstrating broad community support, in addition to the \$100,000 LCHIP grant, other sources of funding to date include: \$50,000 by warrant article from the Town of Eaton; \$60,000 from two anonymous foundations; \$20,000 from Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation; \$10,000 from Davis Conservation Foundation; \$5,000 from Ham Charitable Foundation; \$5,000 from Fields Pond Foundation; and nearly \$90,000 in individual contributions. The Land Trust is especially grateful to two anonymous donors who guaranteed our Northway Bank loan to purchase the property until the fundraising could be completed.



Eaton Conservation Commission member Marnie Cobbs and her husband Dennis Sullivan led a group, including NH State Senator Jeb Bradley, on a snowshoe tour of Foss Mountain to admire the stunning views now protected in part with LCHIP funding. Pictured left to right are Jeb Bradley, Marnie Cobbs, Dennis Sullivan, Tom Gross (USVLT Board member) and Jess Charpentier (USVLT staff).  
Photo by Linda Comeau.

With the \$100,000 LCHIP grant, the Land Trust has nearly reached its fundraising goals. As soon as the fundraising is complete, we plan to permanently protect the 99 acre Foss Mountain Project property's conservation values with a conservation easement and donate the property to the Town of Eaton.

The Upper Saco Valley Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working with local landowners to permanently protect the lands and waters that define our communities and enrich our quality of life. Founded as a grassroots initiative in September 2000, the Land Trust preserves land for community benefit in the watershed of the upper Saco River in New Hampshire & Maine.

The Land Trust's goal is to promote a healthy, sustainable balance between developed lands, natural lands and productive rural landscapes. To date, the organization has acquired 32 conservation easements and five properties in fee, permanently protecting over 4,500 acres of land in communities throughout its service area. For more information about the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust and its Foss Mountain Project call 356-9683 or visit our website [www.usvlt.org](http://www.usvlt.org).