



# Chain of Ponds Community Forest Is Now Protected

A new nature preserve made possible by people like you



Joe Klementovich

**I**magine the haunting call of the loon or the distant hoot of a barred owl as you and your family quietly walk a wooded trail. The damp scent of hemlocks after a recent rain, and as you round a bend, a wide expanse of water shimmers in the soft morning light.

Now picture this place conserved for generations —because people came together to protect what truly matters.

## You are part of that story.

Thanks to a shared effort, we've reached a remarkable milestone for the [Chain of Ponds Community Forest](#).

**As of November 2025, this 626-acre landscape in Madison, NH, is officially conserved.** This achievement ensures long-term care, public access, and a strong foundation for future conservation in the area.



Witrestock



Anne Skidmore



Anne Skidmore

## Because of You, This Land Is Protected Forever

For more than two decades, residents of Madison and the surrounding area have dreamed of conserving the Chain of Ponds—a landscape of forests, wetlands, and winding trails and rich in quiet beauty and ecological significance.

### That long-held vision is now a reality.

With the generous support from local families and community members, businesses, conservation partners, and foundations, this spectacular land and water is now conserved, forever.

This land—home to rare plants, striking glacial features, and vital headwaters of Silver Lake—will remain undeveloped and carefully stewarded. It offers important habitat for wildlife



Juan Carlos Gonzalez

like loons, owls, amphibians, and pollinators, and provides a year-round sanctuary where people can reconnect with nature.

More than \$1.7 million was donated to make this project possible—an extraordinary community effort to conserve one of the region's most iconic areas.

The budget supports purchasing of the land, planning for long-term care, ecological and habitat assessments, and basic trail improvements, including a parking area and signage, slated to begin in 2026.

## A Treasure That Is Now Preserved

“I moved to Forest Pines Road in Madison in the late 1970s. When I needed a break from building my log cabin, I would step out the door and walk the woods now known as the Chain of Ponds.

“I recall one hot August day, two teenage neighbors led me to Blue Pond and dared me to swim. I jumped in and came up screaming. The spring-fed water was cold and the clearest I had ever seen, so bright you had to squint. I thank those who protected this place, with a special tribute to Tom Henderson who was instrumental in trying to conserve the Chain of Ponds twenty years ago. A treasure that is now preserved for future generations.”

— Doug Haver



# Looking Ahead

## Trails, Learning, Joy, and Care

With this land now conserved, a new chapter begins—one focused on caring for the forest and welcoming the public to explore and enjoy it.

The Town of Madison, through its Conservation Commission, will hold a permanent conservation easement on the property—ensuring lasting protection and a shared commitment to caring for this place.

The Town has been a champion of this vision for years, helping to shape a conservation effort that reflects local values and community priorities.

### Trails for all

Trail planning is already underway. Existing woods roads and footpaths will form the backbone of a future trail network designed for all ages and abilities.

Construction is expected to begin in 2026, pending project specific funding that still needs to be secured.

### A classroom in the woods

Located just 0.6 miles from Madison Elementary School, the Chain of Ponds is perfectly situated to become an outdoor learning space—close enough for regular visits, yet wild enough to spark wonder.



This setting provides real-world lessons in ecology, climate resilience, natural history, and how we care for the places we live.

Students will explore pond edges, search for animal tracks in fresh snow, and experience firsthand how forests support clean water and thriving ecosystems.

The [Chain of Ponds Community Forest](#) offers more than a place to hike or snowshoe.

It's a place to nurture curiosity, deepen connection, and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

What's been achieved here is not just the protection of land—it's the creation of lifelong possibilities for learning, exploration, and connections with nature.

## What Your Support Protects

### • Clean Water

Headwaters of Silver Lake and beyond

### • Wildlife Habitat

Loons, moose, owls, bobcat, amphibians, beavers, and pollinators

### • Unique Natural Features

Kettle bogs, eskers, and mature forest

### • Outdoor Learning

Accessible nature near Madison Elementary School

### • Community Recreation and Local Conservation

Local leadership in land protection as we work together to conserve what matters most

## Ways to Stay Involved

The protection of this land is just the beginning. Here are a few meaningful ways to continue supporting Chain of Ponds Community Forest:

### • [Donate to help create trails and more](#)

### • [Give a gift of stock](#)

A tax-savvy way to support conservation while reducing capital gains

### • [Recommend a gift from your Donor-Advised Fund](#)

Quick, secure, and impactful

### • [Volunteer your time](#)

Help build trails, care for native plants, improve habitat, or assist with benches, signage, and parking

**Have a skill or idea to share? We'd love to hear from you.**



PO Box 2233  
Conway, NH 03818

info@usvlt.org  
603-662-0008

[USVLT.org](http://USVLT.org)

@ USVLT

@ uppersacovalleylandtrust

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### OFFICERS

Doug Burnell, *President*  
Lindsay Kafka, *Vice President*  
Sean Wadsworth, *Secretary*  
Jim Hastings, *Treasurer*

### DIRECTORS

Alex Drummond  
Mike Laracy  
Chris Marshall  
Megan Mack Nicholson  
Ken Olson  
Jennifer Snell Rullman  
Meghan Moody Schwartz  
Sue Wiley

### STAFF TEAM

Linda Comeau  
*Conservation Easement Manager*

Erin Farrell  
*Program & Volunteer Coordinator*

Sam Hanson  
*Development & Outreach Coordinator*

Cindy Sellers  
*Land Steward*

Kate Shambaugh  
*Conservation Director*

Vicki Soletsky  
*Office Manager*

Eric White  
*Executive Director*

# Great News!



## Check It Out...

If you'd like to receive additional breaking news about land protection projects, free educational and recreational programs, and how to conserve your land, sign up for our eNewsletter and social media on our website. [USVLT.org](http://USVLT.org)



### Join Us If You're In the Area

#### Chain of Ponds Community Forum

**Monday, Jan. 12 • 4:30 PM**

Tin Mountain Conservation Center • Albany, NH

#### Chain of Ponds Community Forest Celebration

**Monday, Feb. 2 • 6:00 PM**

Tuckermans Brewing • Conway, NH

[Get details at USVLT.org](http://USVLT.org)

## A Special Note of Appreciation

*Thank you to all those who made the purchase and protection of the Chain of Ponds Community Forest possible.*

*This funding is in partnership with the financial assistance provided by hundreds of community members, two anonymous foundations, the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Drinking and Groundwater Trust Fund, Davis Conservation Foundation, the Town of Madison, NH, and the U.S. Forest Service through the Community Forest Program.*