



# Chain of Ponds Community Forest Project

## Madison, NH



Have you heard of the Chain of Ponds Community Forest property in Madison, NH? The Chain of Ponds consists of 7 contiguous parcels totaling 625 acres of forestland and inland waters being conserved by Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT) and the Town of Madison. Its name is inspired by a string of ponds, wetlands, and bogs that thread through the land and which contain headwaters of Pequawket Brook and Silver Lake's North Inlet.

**USVLT has a critical window of opportunity to protect this land forever  
from the threat of development and  
we need your support**

The Chain of Ponds Community Forest is important to conserving the Silver Lake watershed, providing many benefits for residents and visitors including:

- Protection of public and private drinking water supplies in Silver Lake, Madison, and further downstream in Ossipee.
- High priority protection of biodiversity and wildlife habitat, including threatened plants, fish, and birds, as well as unique geologic features including kettle hole bogs, and eskers.
- Public recreational opportunities for all ages such as hiking, biking, paddling, birding, fishing, and snowshoeing on an existing network of trails.
- Experiential learning opportunities for area students (Madison Elementary School sits 0.6 miles from the southern access point to the property).
- Sustainable forestry operations that emphasize forest health, with restrictions prohibiting commercial harvesting within 200 feet of wetlands, streams, and ponds.
- Substantial carbon sequestration values.



For over 20 years, USVLT and the Town of Madison have pursued the preservation of Chain of Ponds COP because of its high conservation value and the risk of it becoming the site of extractive gravel mining due to the presence of large gravel deposits on the property. The Conservation Fund – a national land and water protection conservation organization – is providing negotiation and technical assistance on this project, while USVLT is the primary fundraiser and will be the ultimate landowner. After acquiring the property, USVLT plans to grant the Town of Madison a conservation easement on the property to ensure local input and shared decision-making about long-term management and stewardship of the property.

The total project costs for protecting Chain of Ponds are \$1.7 million, which include the land acquisition plus related costs such as survey work, establishment of a long-term stewardship & management fund, and reimbursement of USVLT and The Conservation Fund staff time. The majority of the funding is coming from private and public grantmaking organizations, but we need community support. The deadline for raising the funds for this project is early 2025. As of July, USVLT has secured commitments for \$1,163,000.00 in grant funding, and about \$60,000 from individuals and businesses. The land trust is actively pursuing a plan for additional grant requests and community fundraising.

This summer USVLT will be offering two guided walks on the Chain of Ponds Community Forest Project – Thursday, July 18 and Thursday, August 15 at 5pm. Both walks will be led by USVLT Board President, Doug Burnell or Board member Dan Stepanauskas and will focus on the unique natural characteristics that make the property such a vital conservation project. Please email [info@usvlt.org](mailto:info@usvlt.org) to RSVP.

To learn more about this special place and/or how you can help, please contact Eric White, USVLT Executive Director at [ewhite@usvlt.org](mailto:ewhite@usvlt.org) or 603.662.0008, or visit our website at [www.usvlt.org/chainofponds](http://www.usvlt.org/chainofponds).

*Upper Saco Valley Land Trust is an equal opportunity provider.*



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