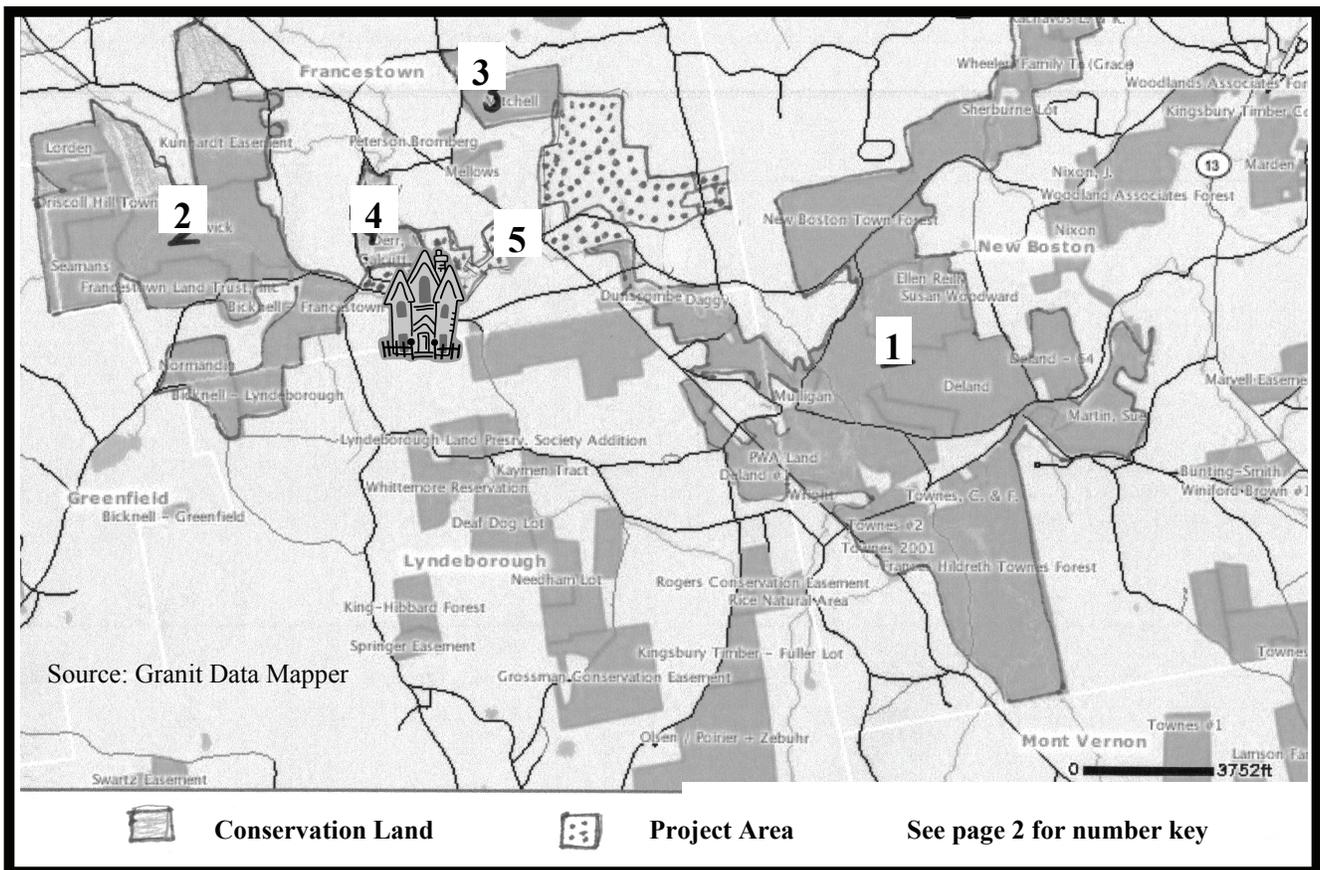


Notes from



The Newsletter of the Francestown Land Trust, Inc. Fall 2011

**RAND TO AVERY BROOK
HOUSE DONATION TO HELP CONNECT
3,700+ CONSERVATION ACRES**



Continued on page 2

(Continued from page 1) **Rand to Avery Brook**

With what has become characteristically breathtaking derring-do, the Francestown Land Trust, along with two long-time stalwart partners—the Francestown Conservation Commission and the Piscataquog Land Conservancy—is tackling one of its biggest, and environmentally significant, projects to date.

5 + 1 = 3,700

The goals of the Rand to Avery Project are to protect 350 acres of land along Rand Brook, Avery Brook and the Piscataquog River and to interconnect 2 large blocks and 3 smaller islands of conservation land into one contiguous 3,700 acre sanctuary—a clear case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts:

- **Area 1** (see map on page 1). Over 2,100 acres of contiguous protected land in New Boston (including Hildreth and New Boston as well as parts of Townes and Deland Forests) and Lyndeborough
- **Area 2**. Over 1,100 acres of contiguous protected open space along Rand and Brennan brooks
- **Area 3**: 101 acres at the intersection of Journey’s End and Red House roads
- **Area 4**: 85 acres on the Piscataquog River south of Clarkville Road
- **Area 5**: 20 acre Swenson easement on the Piscataquog in Francestown

The number of organizations involved over the years in protecting these lands is also indicative of the environmental significance of the area: Francestown Land Trust, Town of Francestown, Piscataquog Land Conservancy, Town of New Boston, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, New England Forestry Foundation.

The major components of the 350 acres of the project itself include:

53 acres on both sides of the Piscataquog



Purchased in 2010 by a coalition that included FLT, PLC, Town of Francestown and the Russell Foundation and classified by the State’s Wildlife Action Plan as “Highest Ranked Habitat in the Biological Region”, this parcel protects 5,300 feet along Rand Brook and the Piscataquog.

44 Acre Donation by Nicholas Davidson

Most of this donation is also classified as “Highest Ranked Habitat in the Biological Region”. But besides protecting over 1,050 feet of frontage on Rand Brook and more than 1,000 feet along the Piscataquog, Mr. Davidson also donated a house to be sold to provide additional funding for the Rand to Avery Brook Project as well as for stewardship. To raise even more money, FLT will place easements on the land. The easements will be used as a non-cash ‘match’ to enhance the value of the project when seeking the grants needed to complete the project.

70+ Acres of Easement Donations

One land owner has pledged to donate a conservation easement to be used as a match to help raise funds for the rest of the project and other property owners are considering following suit.

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(Continued from page 2) Rand to Avery Brook

180+/- Acre Easement to be Purchased

Many, of you will be familiar with this gateway piece that, from Avery Road looks across open fields towards Rose Mountain in Lyndeborough. The land has been in the Miller family for over 140 years and the sale of an easement will help keep it a working farm with hay fields, sap run, wood lot, etc.—and scenery for all of us to enjoy.



What you may not know is that the land includes 4,500 feet of Avery Brook—a cold, headwater stream that has been demonstrated to be an important spawning stream and thermal refuge for the eastern brook trout and other cold-water species. The piece has habitats supporting a diversity—including threatened and endangered - species. In addition, it has several exemplary wetland communities and over 1,700 feet of frontage on the Piscataquog. Classified as “Highest Ranked Habitat in the Biological Region” in the NH Wildlife Action Plan, it also has been documented as a Wildlife Connectivity Zone as defined by the NH Wildlife Connectivity Model developed by NH Fish and Game and NH Audubon.

Of the estimated total project cost of \$675,000, over \$350,000 in cash has already been raised or pledged. Neither figure includes approximately \$400,000 of non-cash donations and pledges.

Note on Avery Brook

Don't look on a map for Avery Brook. You won't find the name. You won't even find the brook. This, until now, undocumented reportedly perennial stream, has two forks both of which enter the wetlands where the Piscataquog crosses Avery Road. The East Branch of the brook runs north to south into the wetlands while the West Branch runs south west

into the same area. The stream is part of the brook trout research being led by Barry Wicklow (see our spring newsletter). For easy reference Barry named the brook “Avery” after the family from whom the Road takes its name. According to the 1895 Town History Avery lived in the colonial house on Avery Road that burned a few years ago.

Health of Rand Brook Improved by New Bridge

The new bridge on Russell Station Road will improve both habitat and water quality by restoring the natural stream bed under the bridge: research shows that corrugated metal culvert bottoms discourage transit by stream critters. Increased flowage capacity under the bridge will also ease problems with flooding, bank erosion and sedimentation.



Taken by Lisa Stewart, the top picture shows the dry river bed at the start of construction. Sheet piling in the background diverted the brook towards the right. Lower photo shows high water during “Irene” when water was flowing through both channels. Arrow points to tops of barely visible sheet pilings.



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OPEN HOUSE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29TH 1—4 PM



Come share our 25th birthday present—the gift of property with the address of 646 Woodward Hill Road, Francestown. The donation was made as part of the Rand to Avery Brook project to protect 350 acres along Rand Brook and the Piscataquog River (see article on page 1). Proceeds from the sale of the

11 room house will be used to fund the purchase of conservation easements further downstream.

On the 29th, area residents are invited to tour the house, the original part of which was built around 1780 and moved back from the road in the 1990's. It has an addition built around an 1810 barn structure moved to the site in 1999.

Barry Wicklow and Ben Haubrich will also be giving tours of the land that runs down to the water past a blacksmith foundation cellar to the old Rand Brook crossing. This is also a great opportunity to inspect the new Rand Brook bridge which will be completed in October.

Light refreshments will be served

Directions. From the center of town, take the 2nd NH Turnpike South towards Mont Vernon. Take the second right on Woodward Hill Road. Number 646 is the last house on the right.

HAPPY 25TH BIRTHDAY

FLT