

For Immediate Release
February 19, 2020

Fracestown Land Trust Expands Conservation Corridor: St. Jean Easement Donation Completed

At the end of December 2019, the Fracestown Land Trust (FLT) completed the St. Jean Conservation Easement project which protects 33.5 acres of woodlands and over 3000 feet of scenic frontage along Bennington Road/Route 47. Jim and Cindy St. Jean purchased the land with the idea of conserving it from development and ensuring access for outdoor recreational use. Jim is an avid alpinist and mountain biker. Ensuring that the property remains open for recreational use, including for biking, was important to him and his wife. The easement ensures that this scenic and historic property will remain preserved and open for recreational use for future generations to come.

“The thought of seeing that historic and critical property developed would just break my heart,” says Jim St. Jean about his motivations for the easement. “That property is so visible to everyone in town, and so critical to the green corridor and trail network, we felt it was the perfect candidate to protect. We are very thankful to the sellers and FLT for their flexibility and efforts in making this all come together on a short timeline.”

The property serves to further connect the green corridor between the large blocks of forestland in the Crotched Mountain area and those to the north surrounding Shattuck Pond, which benefits both recreational users and wildlife. Trails on this parcel link to other recreational trails in the area and are important for maintaining a regional trail connection between Weare, Deering, Fracestown, and Greenfield. Jim St. Jean said that he first became aware of this property as a link between other area trails years ago when he rode in the Hampshire 100 bike race, which was for many years hosted out of Greenfield and passed through Fracestown on its 100 kilometer loop.

The St. Jean property lies towards the west from the village area and is on the southerly side of the state road in the vicinity of the junction with Fisher Hill Road. The property is adjacent to the recently re-named Fisher Hill Town Forest, a town forest managed by the Conservation Commission that has been identified as a potential candidate for recreational use, including mountain biking.

Cindy St. Jean points out that the conservation easement will protect this land’s scenic value as well as three historic cellar holes and an unused section of the Old 2nd New Hampshire Turnpike. The 2nd NH Turnpike, chartered in 1799 and completed in 1801, was a critical connecting route between Boston and Vermont and for decades after it was built, a large volume of traffic and trade passed over the road. Adjacent to one of the cellar holes is “Signature Rock,” a slab of granite where early settlers carved their names.

The St. Jeans have been looking at parcels in Fracestown for a long time, since they moved here in 1991, with the hope of some day conserving a unique parcel of recreational land in Fracestown; they point out that for the town, “conserved land costs less than the taxes it brings in” and increases the appeal of the town to future residents.

This project was made possible entirely by the generosity of the St. Jeans and the efforts of FLT’s dedicated team of volunteers. FLT is very grateful to the St. Jeans for the donation of this conservation easement.

For more information contact the Fracestown Land Trust at info@fracestownlandtrust.org or PO Box 132 Fracestown, NH 03043