

Land acquired in 1929 for preservation is “Protected” in 2020

Annie Bradley Brown, her husband, Wilfred Merrill Brown, and their family (son Henry, daughter Lois and Wilfred's brother and family) summered at Juniper Hill Farm, which Annie had bought in 1926. Annie also bought, in 1929, nearby land on Greenfield Road, just east of Spencer Road, to preserve and prevent its development. Annie sold Juniper Hill Farm in 1951 and transferred the “woodlot” to her son, Henry Brown.

From his youth Henry Brown summered in Frankestown and eventually married native June Clark, sister of Betty (Brown), Connie (Varnum), Roger Clark and Stuart Clark. Settling in Virginia (and later Michigan), Henry and June vacationed with their children most years in Frankestown, staying at the home of June's mother (Marion Prescott Clark Kahle) on Main Street. In the early 1970's, Henry and June built a cottage on Pleasant Pond, affording the extended family a splendid New England refuge in the village of their relatives and forebears. In 1981 Henry added to the woodlot parcel on Greenfield Road by acquiring 6 more acres of wetlands. Henry and June both died in 1998, and the Greenfield Road property passed on to their children, Bradley Brown, Rosemary Lalonde, and Judith Zivic. At that time Judy and her husband, Lou Zivic, also acquired the Pleasant Pond property, which they owned until 2018.

Speaking for the entire Brown family, Judy Zivic said: “The family always enjoyed walking in and exploring the ‘woodlot’ land. We all have memories of its quiet beauty. It is the wish of all of our family (including our children Andrew, Amy and Sarah Zivic; Matthew and Peter LaLonde; and Tyler and Lucas Brown) that the land be preserved as a woodland to be enjoyed by the community.”

In 2019 the family contacted Frankestown Land Trust (FLT) about protecting the land and in August 2020 they donated [this](#) special property to the community in care of FLT. FLT's project manager, Ben Haubrich, says he thinks this partial upland mostly wetland property is known by most everybody in town, as it is so visible on the commute between Frankestown and Greenfield. “This wetland area has always been important to me for many reasons. In the spring I look for, and find, one of the first returning migratory birds, a male redwing blackbird, perched on one of the shrubs, claiming his territory. There is also a view of Crotched Mountain looking over the marsh and upland evergreens. And of course, right around this time of year the early foliage change of the red maples is the harbinger of the season to come.”

The approximately 36-acre property, to be known as The Brown Forest Wetland Reserve, contains portions of both Taylor and Brennan Brooks as well as the foundation of Schoolhouse 11. Barry Wicklow and his Saint Anselm College students have studied both brooks and found each to contain species that are indicators of high quality water. Lou Zivic and Barry also spent quite a bit of time together doing aquatic research on the property. The protection of streams, wetlands and their surrounding lands are a priority for FLT.

Frankestown Land Trust relies on the generous donations of its membership to fund the transactional and stewardship costs of donated conservation properties.