

# Notes from



## The Newsletter of the Francestown Land Trust, Inc. • Fall 2014

### The Chairman's Letter



Chris Rogers

### Much to Celebrate

The Francestown Land Trust celebrated two recent land acquisitions this summer. On July 20, we gathered to celebrate the acquisition of 37.4 acres on Old County Road North from the Miller family, which was formerly owned by Dorothy and Herman Miller. On August 17, we met near Bullard Hill Road to celebrate the FLT purchase of 149.5 acres of land from Diane and John Schott.

Thanks to the generosity of the Miller and Schott families, FLT was able to acquire both properties at reduced prices. Many, many individual donors provided funding. In addition, FLT secured funding and grants from a number of organizations, including the Francestown Conservation Commission and the Piscataquog Land Conservancy. We were especially fortunate that New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Program (LCHIP), with its many requests and limited funds, determined that both projects merited grants, ultimately making both purchases possible. The Schott purchase was also additionally funded by grants from the Davis Conservation Foundation, the Fields Pond Foundation, and the McNinch Foundation.



*Friends, neighbors and area residents joined the Miller and Leland families in celebrating the conservation of 37 acres on Old County Road North. Front row: Judi Miller, Sharon Strickland, Gerry Miller, Rachel Savoy, Bill Savoy. Back row: Deb and Jim Miller.*

### For the benefit of all future generations

The Miller family has owned the 37.4 acres located on Old County Road North, for over 129 years. The family sold the land to FLT at well below the fair market value to honor Dotty and Bing Miller and ensure that the town could

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*Celebrating FLT conservation Schott Brennan Falls land purchase. Betsy Hardwick, John Schott, Abigail Arnold, Diane Schott, Chris Wells, Chris Rogers.*

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enjoy this beautiful land forever.

The Miller land includes 1,320 feet of Collins Brook. It has vernal pools, floodplains, wetlands and approximately 34 acres of working forest. Of particular importance, it is almost entirely surrounded by some 1,300 acres of abutting land that is already protected by the Franconia Land Trust, the Town of Franconia, and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. As such, it is part of a 2,000+ acre biologically diverse, multi-town area of open space, which is designated on the NH Wildlife Action Plan maps as “Highest Ranked Habitat in New Hampshire.”

### **New Trail on Miller**

FLT, with help from FCC, is working on a new trail to connect the newly acquired Miller Family Memorial Forest on Old County Road North to the trail on the town’s Dinsmore Brook Conservation Area. The trail work is almost complete, but it won’t be officially open until a bridge over Collins Brook is installed later this year or next spring.



The Franconia Conservation Commission is working to provide convenient parking off of Old County Road North for access to the land, which will make it even easier to enjoy the 37.4 acres—as well as the hundreds and hundreds of abutting acres.

As was noted at the ceremony: “Dottie and Bing loved the Town of Franconia. They spent many, many years serving the citizens of the Town. Their family has chosen to honor them by transferring the land to the Town for the benefit of all future generations. We are all grateful.”

### **A recreational resource for townspeople since the 1800’s**

Like the Miller property, the Schott land was acquired at a bargain price below fair market value. The land is part of a 6,126 acre block of contiguous natural habitat. More than 2,600 acres have already been protected by,

among others, the Franconia Land Trust, the Town of Franconia, the Monadnock Conservancy, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and the State of New Hampshire.

Bullard Hill Road borders the land to the south and west. The elevation rises from approximately 900 feet to approximately 1,240 feet, with views to the west near the top of Bullard Hill Road. The land also contains the summit of Oak Hill, northwest of the Village, which was the earliest settlement (1767) in “Franconia proper” (i.e., outside of New Boston). Further up the road on Bullard Hill is a cellar hole from one of the residences of what is known as “Lost Village.” The land is primarily forested and includes approximately 2,250 feet of frontage along Brennan Brook—one of the most important headwaters to the South Branch of the Piscataquog River. Due to its high water quality, low summer temperatures, and low vulnerability to warming trends, Brennan Brook is able to support cold-water species such as brook trout. The land also has an old mill / beaver pond of 3.6 acres, which is part of a wetland area of approximately 4.8 acres.

As noted at the ceremony: “The land is extraordinary. It has been a recreational resource for townspeople since the 1800s. The 1895 Town History made note of the ‘remarkable fall of 20 feet oft visited by ramblers and romance lovers’. At the real estate closing, John Schott said “I cannot wait to see what the Franconia Land Trust and the Town of Franconia do with the land.” Now it is a place for all of us to explore, hike, picnic, and—with its falls, ponds, and history—to add to our sense of place. ■



## The Return on Investments in Land Conservation in New Hampshire

A study on the economic benefits of land conservation in New Hampshire has found that for every \$1 invested in land conservation, \$11 in natural goods and services is returned to the state's economy.

Return on land conservation includes: growing local economies and jobs in outdoor recreation, tourism, forestry, farming, and commercial fishing industries. Economic value also comes from maintaining the state's natural beauty and quality of life, which attracts visitors, new businesses, and high-quality workers.

Return on land conservation investment can also be calculated in the form of the monies saved on infrastructure and municipal services (e.g., schools, police, fire protection) compared to residential property. Open space, working farms, and forests in New Hampshire require on average only \$0.56 in services for every \$1 paid in taxes, while residential lands require an average of \$1.12 in services for every \$1 paid in taxes.

To learn more about the return on investments in land conservation in New Hampshire, refer to The Public Land Trust report: New Hampshire's Return on Investment In Land Conservation at [tpl.org/nh-roi-report](http://tpl.org/nh-roi-report) ■

### Did you know?

- Outdoor recreation generates \$4.2 billion in consumer spending, \$293 million in state and local tax revenue, 49,000 jobs, and \$1.2 billion in wages and salaries each year in New Hampshire.<sup>1</sup>
- Visitors to New Hampshire spend an estimated \$4.65 billion each year.<sup>2</sup>
- Forestry, agriculture, and commercial fishing and related processing activity are responsible for \$2.5 billion in output and 18,500 jobs in New Hampshire.<sup>3</sup>

- Source: New Hampshire's Return on Investment in Land Conservation.

1. Outdoor Industry Association, The Outdoor Recreation Economy: New Hampshire (accessed March 18, 2014, [http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/ore\\_reports/NH-newhamshire-outdoorrecreationconomy-oia.pdf](http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/ore_reports/NH-newhamshire-outdoorrecreationconomy-oia.pdf)).

2. Daniel Lee, New Hampshire Travel Barometer: Summary for Fiscal Year 2013 (Institute for New Hampshire Studies, November 10, 2012, accessed February 21, 2014, <http://www.plymouth.edu/institute-for-new-hampshire-studies/nh-tourism-data/travel-barometers/>); Daniel S. Lee, New Hampshire Tourism Return on Investment for FY 2012 DTTD Tourism Promotion Activities (Institute for New Hampshire Studies, Plymouth State University, February 20, 2013).

3. Rigoberto Lopez and Chris Laughton, The Overlooked Economic Engine: Northeast Agriculture (Farm Credit East, 2012).

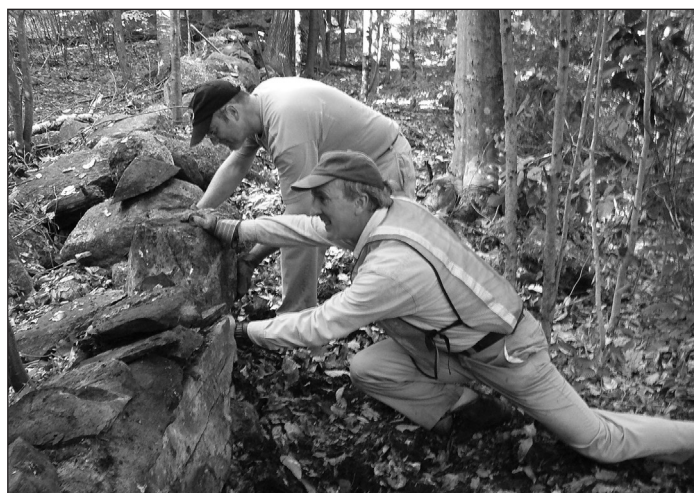
## Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Rand Brook Forest's "Forest Trail"

This fall marks the 10th anniversary of "Forest Trail" in Franconstown Land Trust's Rand Brook Forest. Trail signing and kiosk and gate repair were funded by a Recreational Trails Program grant, which also included repair of the severely eroded road leading to the remote field on Driscoll

Hill. Wildlife sign seen from the trail include: deer, moose, bear, porcupine and pileated woodpecker and yellow-bellied sapsucker. A map of the approximately ¾-mile trail in Rand Brook Forest can be found at [francetownlandtrust.org/Maps.html](http://francetownlandtrust.org/Maps.html) ■



2004: Greg Neilley, Mark Pitman and Barbara Gannon celebrate completion of the new trail, while Ben Haubrich cuts the ribbon on Nov. 20, 2004.



2004: Dennis Calcutt and Ben Haubrich rebuild a stonewall adjacent to the new trail.



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## Don't Miss These Upcoming Events!

- **Joan Hanchett Nature Series:**

Get up close and personal with the local black bear. Come hear Ben Kilham, a New Hampshire wildlife rehabilitator with decades of experience observing and interacting with these bears—including raising orphaned cubs. Enjoy this latest program in the popular series at the Francestown Elementary School (FES) on Friday, November 14, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Presented in collaboration with the George Holmes Bixby Memorial Library, Francestown Conservation Commission (FCC), and Francestown News.



- **“Green Friday”:** Looking for an alternative to shopping on Black Friday? Work off some of that

Thanksgiving turkey in the great outdoors! This year FLT will be assembling a “Green Friday” crew to do some light work on our Rand Brook property on the day after Thanksgiving. Grab your work gloves and pruners and join us at the parking area on Old County Road South at 11:00 AM on Friday, November 28. Estimating no more than 1-2 hours of work, depending

on the size of the crew.

FLT collaborates with other area organizations on a mix of educational, recreational, and work events. For more information about other upcoming events, check the local papers and FLT website.

**Do you have questions about or ideas for events?**

Call Paula Hunter at 547-6489 or send an email to [info@francestownlandtrust.org](mailto:info@francestownlandtrust.org)