



Sawyer Brook Headwaters Conservation Project

GRANTHAM TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE #2



WARRANT ARTICLE #2

“Article 2 – Land Purchase (Sawyer Brook Headwaters)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$515,000) for the purchase of an approximately 386 acre parcel of land located on Upper Dunbar Hill Road (Tax Map lots 220-027, 028, and 031),...”



WARRANT ARTICLE #2

“... said parcel being the same premises as were conveyed to Dillon Investments, LLC by William B. Ruger, Jr. by warranty deed dated March 28, 2018, and recorded in Book 2035, Page 044 of the Sullivan County Registry of Deeds...”



WARRANT ARTICLE #2

“... Two hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$215,000) to be raised from state, federal, and private funding sources. **The balance of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance.** Recommended by the Selectmen (Majority vote required)



WARRANT ARTICLE #2 - EXPLAINED

Q: Why does Article 2 appropriate \$515,000 if only \$300,000 of Town money is to be spent?

A: The Town is required to include all anticipated revenue from **all sources** – not just tax dollars – as offsetting revenues to amounts appropriated for a specific purpose.



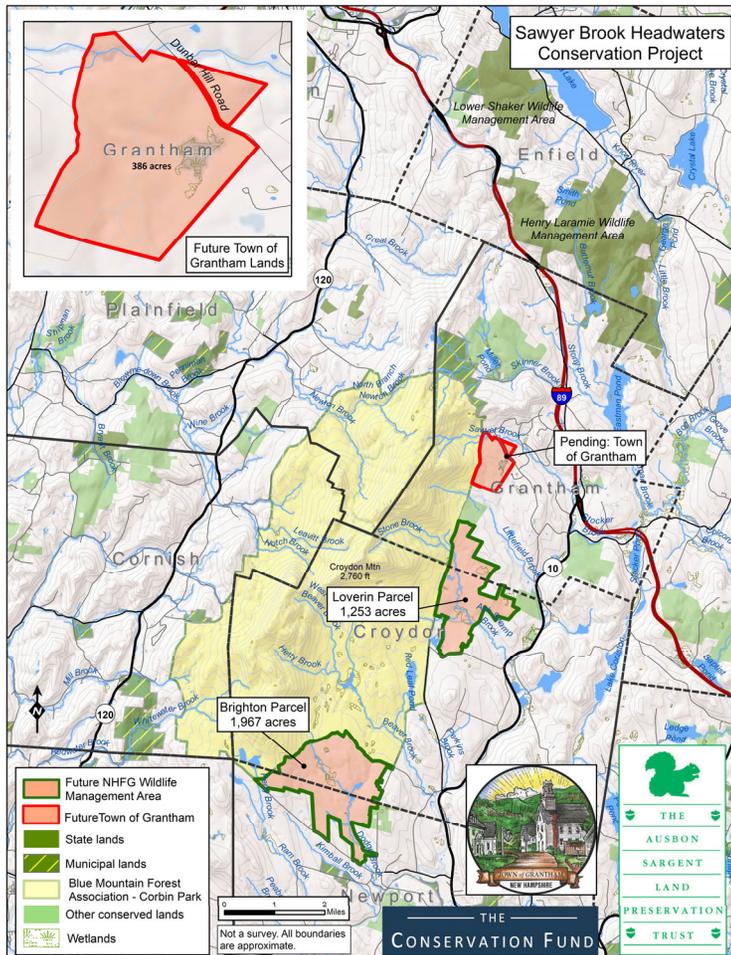
WARRANT ARTICLE #2 - EXPLAINED

This requirement is called Gross Basis Budgeting.

The Total Project Cost (further detailed in later slides) is \$515,000.

A maximum of \$300,000 would come from tax revenue, while \$215,000 will be raised from other sources (private funds, grants).

THE SAWYER BROOK HEADWATERS



386 +/- acres

Bordered by:

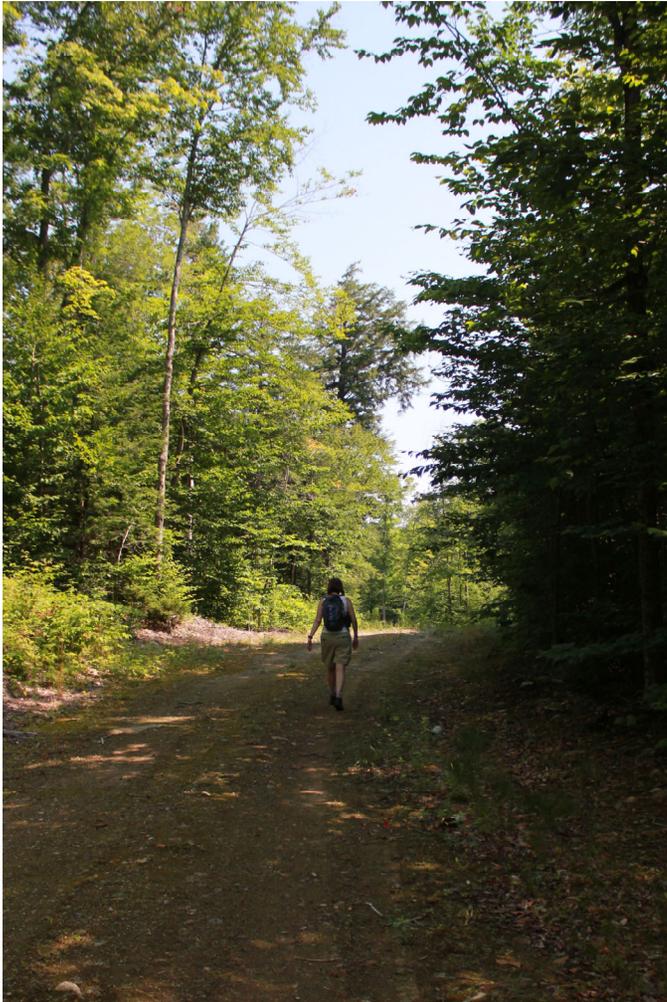
Walker Road

Croydon Turnpike

Old Dunbar Hill Road

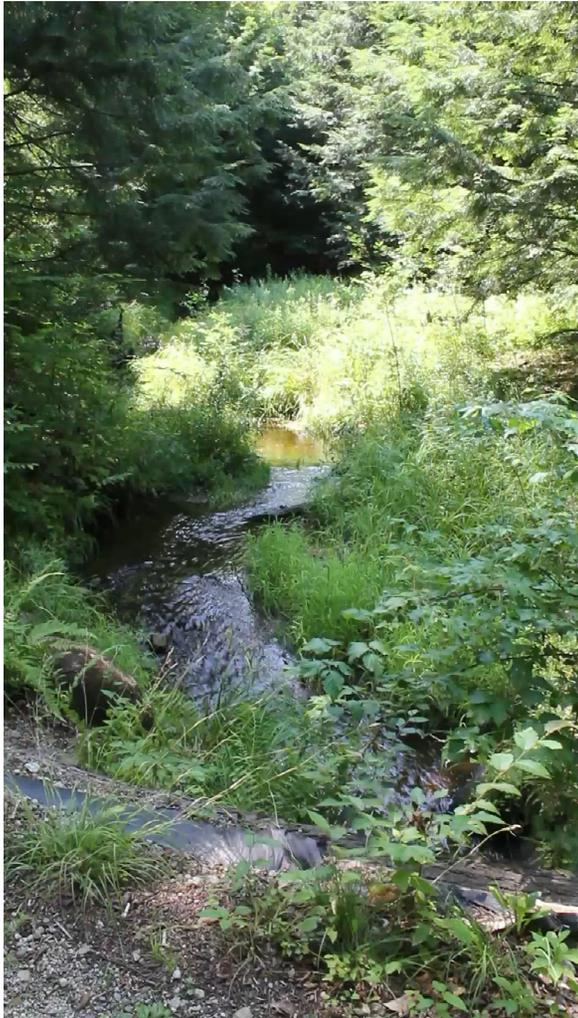
Hartshorn Road

PUBLIC USES TO BE PROTECTED



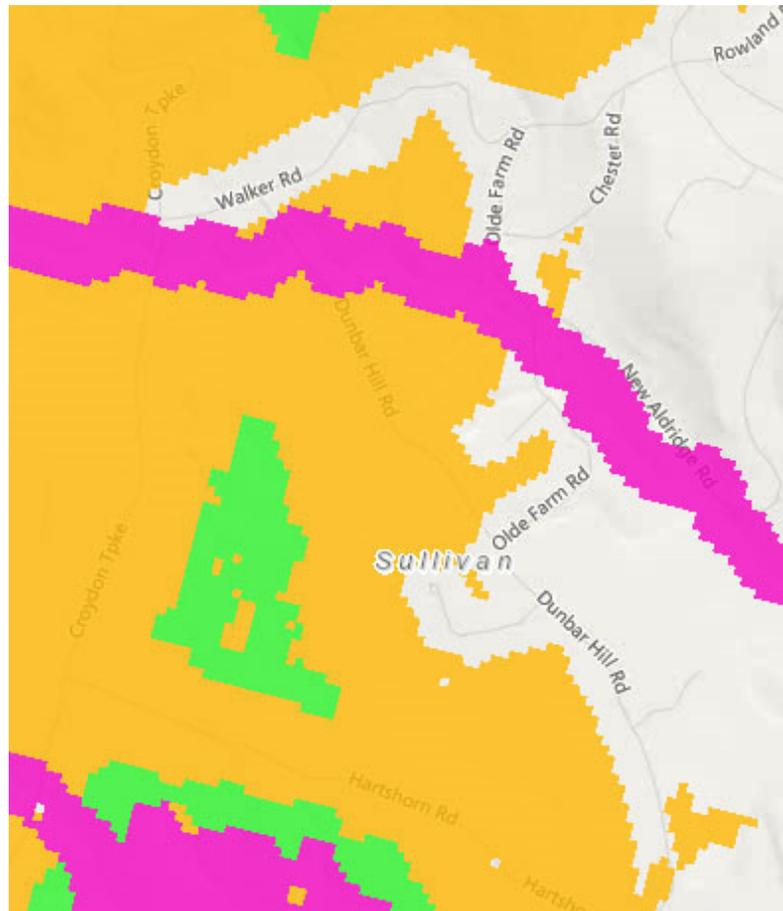
- Bird & wildlife watching,
- Hiking,
- Hunting,
- Mountain biking,
- Running,
- Snowshoeing,
- Cross-country skiing,
- Snowmobiling,
and more...

NATURAL RESOURCES - WATER



- Sawyer Brook
- Second-highest Ranked Wetlands Evaluation Unit out of Fifty-Four (54) units surveyed by the Town in 2012
(Upper Dunbar Hill Road Beaver Dam Wetland)

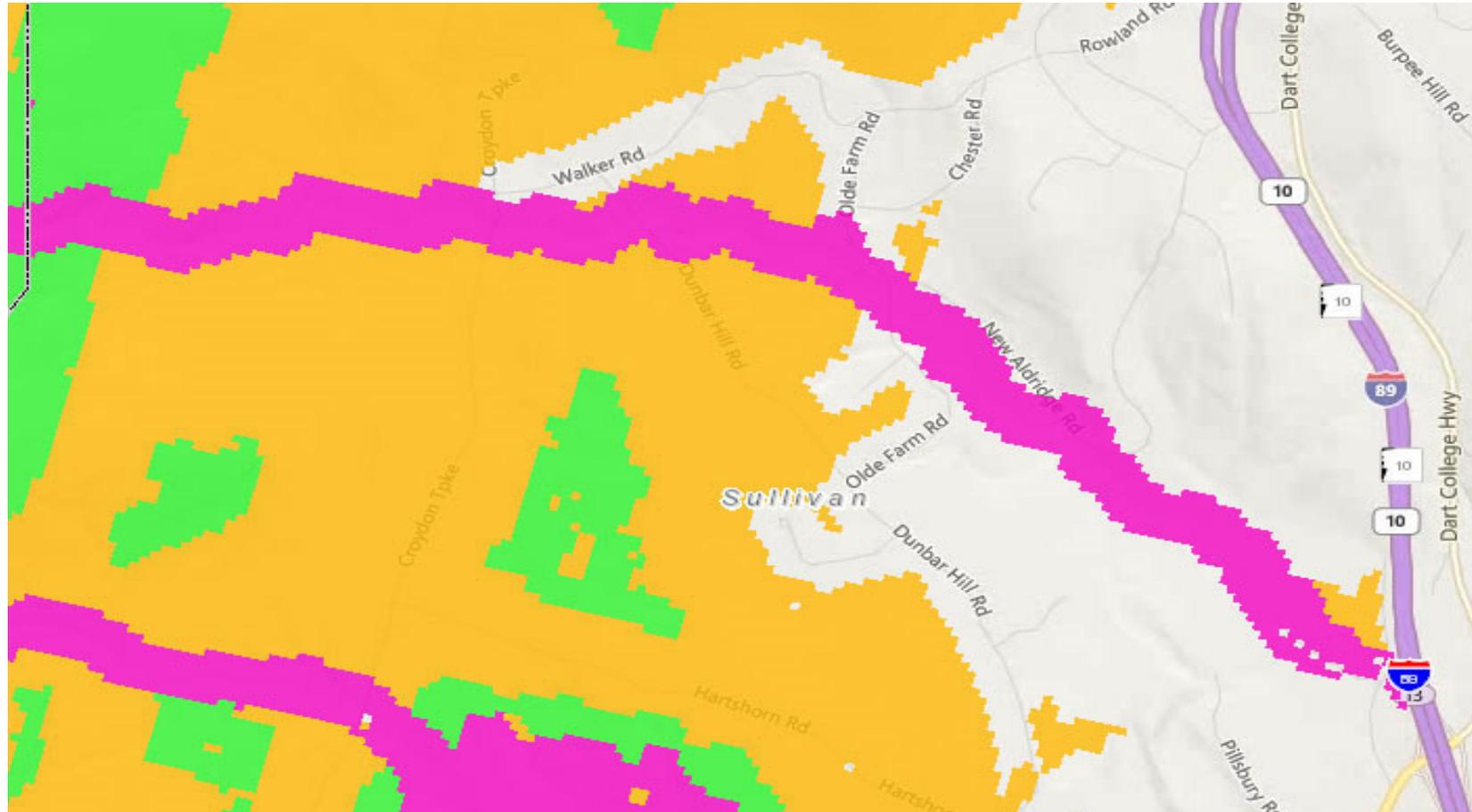
NATURAL RESOURCES - WILDLIFE



-  Highest Ranked Habitat in NH
-  Highest Ranked Habitat in Region
-  Supporting Landscape

Source: NH Granit Statewide GIS
<https://granitview.unh.edu>

NATURAL RESOURCES – WILDLIFE



NATURAL RESOURCES – WILDLIFE





IMMEDIATE THREATS

- In May 2018, the current owner (Dillon Investments) announced its plans to conduct an extensive timber harvest, leaving much of the Parcel open.
- A large amount of timber was already harvested from the Parcel in 2013 and 2014 by the prior owner.



THE TOWN'S RESPONSE – PUBLIC INPUT

- **Many Grantham residents expressed concern** about the impact further timber harvesting might have upon wildlife, aesthetics, the character of the Town, and recreational use of the property.



THE TOWN'S RESPONSE – OPPORTUNITY

- In July 2018, the Selectmen learned that Dillon had offered the Parcel to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (“NHF&G”) for four hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000) through its agent LandVest.



THE TOWN'S RESPONSE – OPPORTUNITY

- The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (“NHF&G”) declined to purchase the parcel, as it had already used its available funds for nearby parcels in Newport and Croydon.



THE TOWN'S RESPONSE - GOALS

“a) **acquire, conserve, protect, and manage** important open space area and natural resources, and

b) **work cooperatively** with... the Ausbon Sargent Land Trust and similar groups to conserve additional conservation and open space lands where appropriate.”

TOWN OF GRANTHAM, Master Plan, 2016, p. 33.



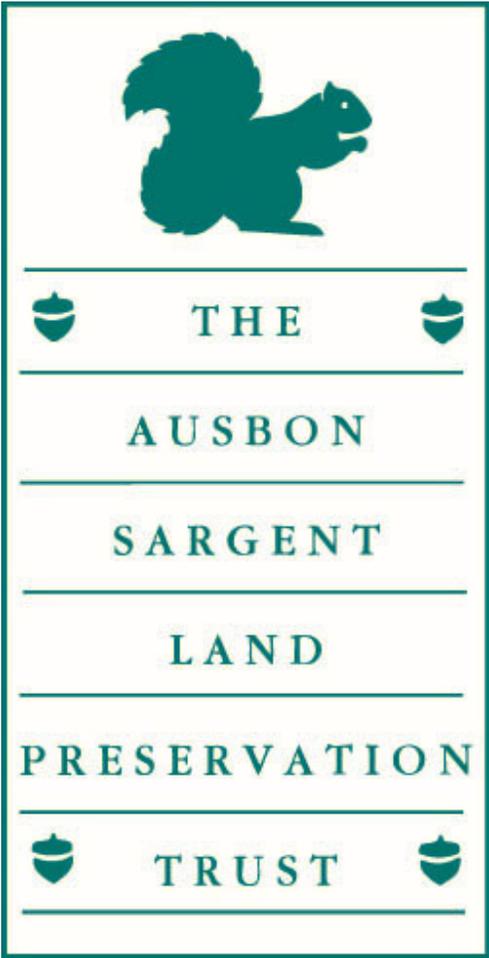
THE TOWN'S RESPONSE – OUTREACH

With the encouragement of the Board of Selectmen, members of the Conservation Commission and representatives of Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust began **developing a collaborative plan to acquire and permanently protect the parcel.**

THE PARTNERSHIP



THE
CONSERVATION FUND





— THE —
CONSERVATION FUND

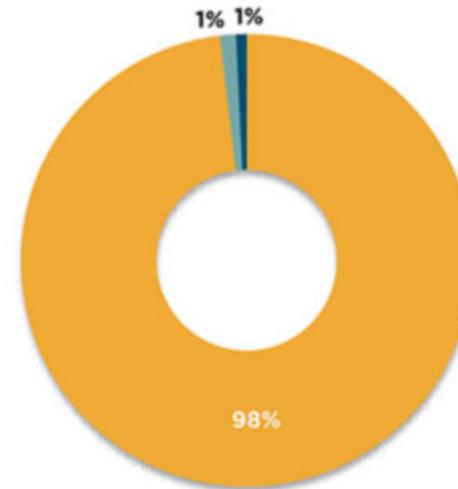
- **4-star rating from Charity Navigator.** Charity Navigator is America's largest independent charity evaluator, grading fiscal management and transparency.
- **A+ grade from Charity Watch for over 10 years,** ranking as their top environmental charity.
- **Learn More at www.conservationfund.org.**

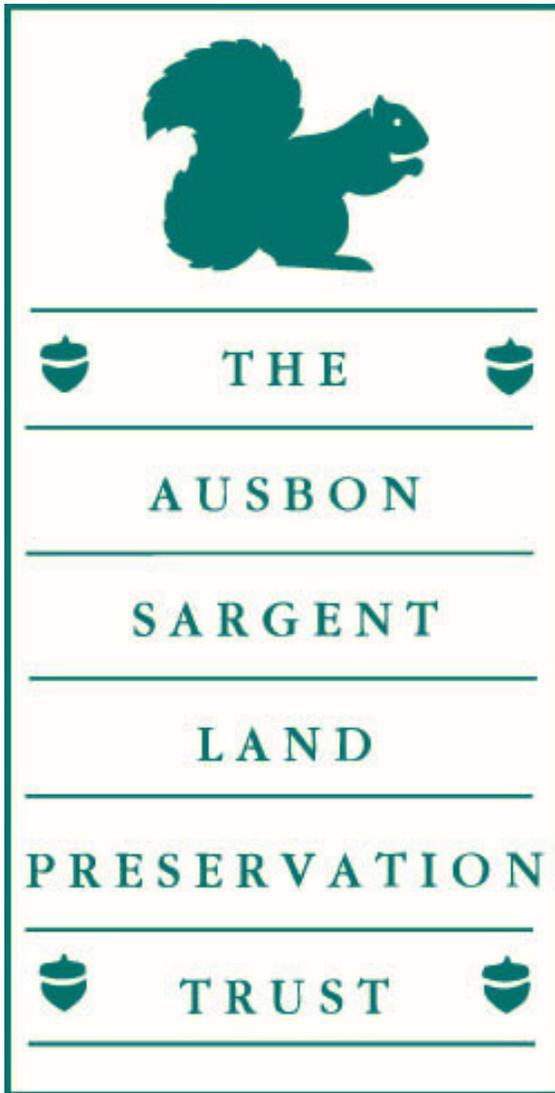
THE CONSERVATION FUND

TCF puts an **average of 96% of its budget directly into conservation programs** and just **1% into fundraising**.

USES OF FUNDS—2016

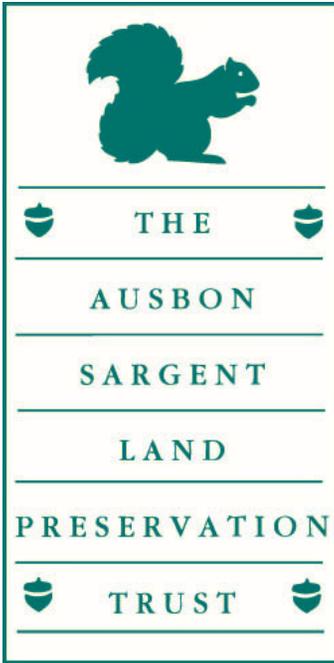
Total Conservation Programs	\$223,343,900
Management and General	\$2,588,200
Fundraising	\$1,722,100





New London, NH

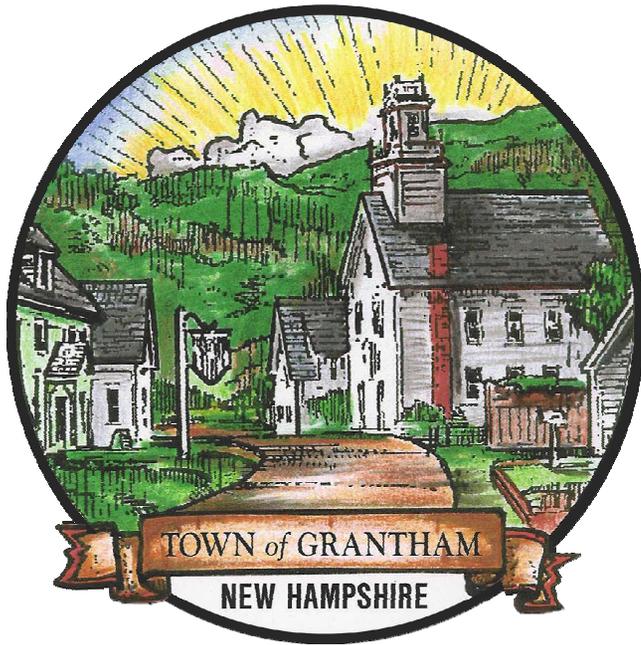
www.ausbonsargent.org



- **Accredited by Land Trust Accreditation Commission.**
- Serves Grantham and 11 other towns in Mount Kearsarge & Sunapee Area.

ASLPT has protected 11,481 acres, 147 properties, and over 8.50 miles of shore frontage including over 4,700 feet frontage on Lake Sunapee.

THE ROLES OF THE PARTNERS - TOWN



- Provides \$300K appropriation toward purchase price.
- Holds eventual title to Parcel.
- Grants conservation easement to Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust.



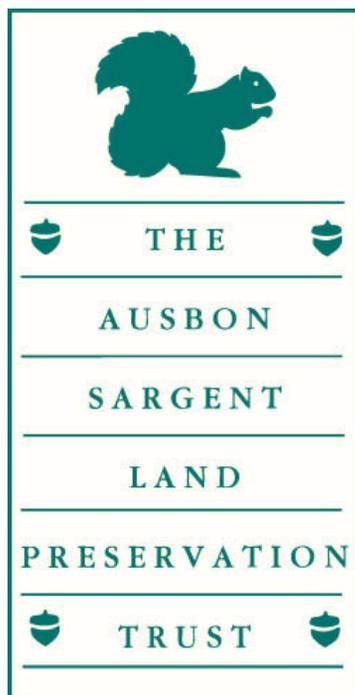
THE ROLES OF THE PARTNERS - TCF

- Executes P & S Agreement with Dillon to secure property and until July 2019 (Done).
- Performs appraisal, legal and title work for initial closing with Dillon.
- Holds title to Parcel until full funding for Town acquisition is secured.
- Provides technical assistance w/ grant writing.



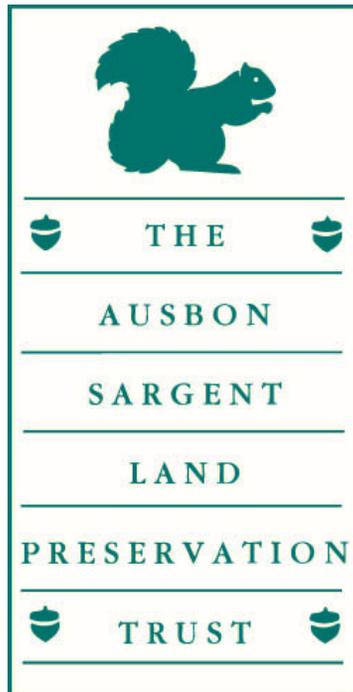
THE
CONSERVATION FUND

THE ROLES OF THE PARTNERS - ASLPT



- Coordinates private fundraising efforts.
- Writes & submits grant application to NH's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP).
- Performs legal work required for permanent conservation easement required by LCHIP.

THE ROLES OF THE PARTNERS - ASLPT



- Holds conservation easement after Town takes title from TCF.
- Monitors the Parcel as part of its stewardship program.

PROJECT BUDGET - COSTS

Purchase Price	\$415,000
TCF Costs	\$50,000
ASLPT Costs	\$25,000
Establish Stewardship Fund	\$25,000
Total Project Cost	<u>\$515,000</u>

PROJECT BUDGET - SOURCE OF FUNDS

Total Project Cost	\$515,000
<u>Town Appropriation</u>	<u>-\$300,000</u>
Balance to be raised from LCHIP and Private Sources	\$215,000

There is a possibility that the Town's cost share can be reduced. NH's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) may fund up to \$250,000 (50% of eligible costs). The project is expected to be highly competitive because of its resource value.



PROJECT SCHEDULE

P&S Agreement between TCF and Dillon (Done).	Sept. 2018
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Town Appropriation	Mar. 2019
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Private Fundraising	Mar. 2019 - Mar. 2020
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LCHIP Application	May 2019
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PROJECT SCHEDULE, CONT'D.

TCF Closing w/ Dillon

July 2019

TCF Holds title, Town holds equitable interest securing its funds.

LCHIP Awards

Nov. 2019

Town Closing w/ TCF & ASLPT

Spring 2020

Town transfers Conservation Easement to ASLPT ensuring permanent protection as required by LCHIP.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What is LCHIP Funding?

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) is “an independent state authority that makes matching grants to NH communities and non-profits to conserve and preserve New Hampshire's most important natural, cultural and historic resources.” www.lchip.org



What is LCHIP Funding?, cont'd.

- Total Funds Invested: \$37 Million
- Total Investment (Grants Made) Since 2000: 315
- Total NH Communities Impacted Since 2000: 151
- Total Acres Conserved: Over 268,000
- Total Historic Structures Preserved/Revitalized: 180
- Every \$1 Invested by LCHIP Leverages Another: \$7.91



What is LCHIP Funding?, cont'd.

- Grants funded by \$25 Surcharge on recording of Discharge of Mortgage, Deeds, Mortgages and Plans/Plan Sets at Registry of Deeds.
- Administrative costs funded by \$6 from the sale of each NH conservation license plate (Moose Plate).



Do public uses of the Sawyer Brook Headwaters Parcel enjoy protection currently?

- **No...** with the exception of a very narrow (20' wide) recreational easement allowing public passage across 10 out of 400 acres. This recreational easement also does not safeguard any portion of the Parcel from development. Access is currently at the discretion of the Parcel's owner.



Would current recreational uses be restricted by a conservation easement?

- **No.** The conservation easement that would be placed on the property as a condition of Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) funding prevents only development of the property. It does not limit current recreational or agricultural/forestry uses.



Would current recreational uses be restricted by a conservation easement?, cont'd.

- In fact, an LCHIP easement **REQUIRES** ...”continued public pedestrian access to, on and across the Premises for hunting, fishing, nature observation, hiking, cross-country skiing and similar transitory low-impact, non-commercial, recreational purposes...”



How much conserved land do we currently have in Grantham?

- The Town of Grantham is 17,408 acres. Of that area, the Town owns roughly 500 acres of open space, or **2.9%**.
- Land conservation organizations and NH Fish and Game own title or conservation easement to a total of roughly 2350 acres, bringing the total to 16% of the Town's land that is protected as public open space.



What about the rest of Grantham's undeveloped areas?

- The vast majority of land in Grantham enjoys **no permanent protection** from being developed or closed to public use.
- Recreational use is often permitted as a condition of current use taxation, but that does not provide any sort of long-term protection for Grantham's natural and recreational resources.



Should this Project be a priority? – Master Plan Goals

- **Yes.** When surveyed for the Master Plan, residents have ranked protection of the rural character and natural resources of the Town as a high priority.



Should this Project be a priority? – Master Plan Goals, cont'd.

This project achieves key goals of the Master Plan, which are to:

- “Consider the natural resources of Grantham as irreplaceable assets, providing innumerable benefits (including the town’s rural sense of place) and calling for responsible stewardship.”



Should this Project be a priority? – Master Plan Goals, cont'd.

- “Protect and conserve Grantham’s natural and scenic resources, both privately and publicly owned, to uphold the health and function of these interconnected systems.”
- “Protect fragile environmental areas such as wetlands, aquifers, areas subject to flooding, and steep slopes.”
- “Prevent air and water pollution.”



Should this Project be a priority? – Master Plan Goals, cont'd.

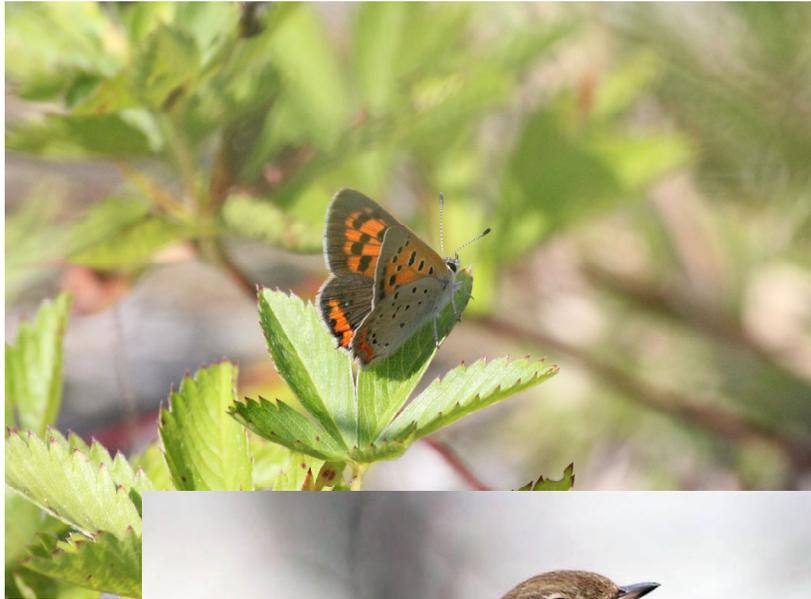
- “Support the Grantham Conservation Commission to a) **acquire, conserve, protect, and manage important open space areas** and natural resources, and b) **work cooperatively** with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust (ASLPT), and similar groups to conserve additional conservation and open space lands where appropriate.”



Would this project prevent the scheduled clear cut of the Parcel?

- **Yes, but this is our last chance.** Dillon Investments has postponed its scheduled timber harvest and executed a purchase and sale agreement CONTINGENT UPON PASSAGE OF ARTICLE 2 at Town Meeting.
- Per the terms of that agreement, The Conservation Fund (a national conservation organization) will close on the property and hold title while the Town raises the remaining state and private funds to acquire the property.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE



Unique natural and recreational resources are at stake.



Photo: Hermit Thrush. Macaulay Library, Yves Gauthier



TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE



Protecting the property is consistent with the Town's Master Plan, and doing so enhances quality of life for Grantham residents.



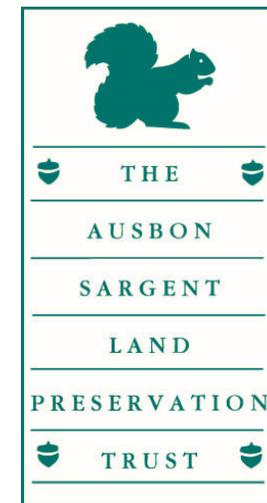
TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE



- **ONLY time the Parcel has been available to the Town at less than \$700K (once listed as high as \$1.2M).**
- **ONLY time that the Town has had a seller who will accept appraised value (\$415K) for the Parcel.**

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

- The Sawyer Brook Headwaters Conservation Project **cannot succeed without the Town's appropriation of \$300K.**
- **Current landowner will move forward with his timber harvest plans if closing does not happen in July 2019.**



WANT TO HELP? QUESTIONS?

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