

Stories From the Field...

FRPP Protects 80 Acres from Development in Hillsborough County

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After three years in the making, 80 acres in Weare, New Hampshire have been permanently placed into a conservation easement through a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), and the Weare Conservation Commission. This easement was funded through a collaboration of conservation organizations, several grants, and local support.

Dale and Barbara Purington will continue to own the land and operate a small beef farm. Since the Purington land abuts the Forest Society's 52-acre Breed Forest, conserving it enlarges the protected lands within the area. The easement will protect important agricultural soil, secure significant wildlife habitat along Breed Brook – a tributary of the Piscataquog River, and offer public access to recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting, and fishing.

"This property incorporates a lot of conservation value into a relatively small parcel of conserved land," said Brian Hotz, senior director of strategic projects for the Forest Society. "It's difficult to raise funds nowadays, but for this project we were able to piece the funding together to achieve a wonderful outcome."

NRCS contributed \$132,000 of the \$329,000 needed to protect the property. Other funding sources included \$15,000 from the Forest Society, \$65,000 from the Russell Foundation, \$70,000 from Mildred Hall Trust, \$15,000 from the Weare Conservation Commission and \$32,000 from the Emma Sawyer Trust.

A former dairy farm, about two-thirds of the property contains important agricultural soils. This heritage was one of the reasons the project was awarded a Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program grant. Since the start of the program in 1996, the NRCS has funded more than 120 agricultural easements in New Hampshire, protecting more than 7,500 acres.

"Partnerships like this are critical to ensure protection of prime agricultural land, particularly in Hillsborough County where developmental pressure is high," said Rick Ellsmore, NRCS State Conservationist.

To find out more about the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program [click here](#).

