



The Harris Center for Conservation Education protects 470 acres in Peterborough

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hancock, N.H. — The Harris Center for Conservation Education recently accepted the largest conservation gift in the history of the Town of Peterborough, conserving 470 acres of easement land in the northeast corner of the town. The Harris Center now protects in excess of 17,000 acres in the Monadnock Region.

Ecologist Dr. Rick Van de Poll wrote, "The second phase of the conservation easement at Otter Brook Farm adds 470 acres of mixed wildlands and woodlands to the existing thousand-acre (Phase I) easement. Not only does this new easement protect the land for use during sustainable silviculture and agriculture activities, it permits on-site, locally applicable renewable energy production. It also adds 125 acres of *forever wild* land to the 665 acres of wildland in Phase I. Combined with the adjacent 140 acres of *forever wild* land owned by the Town of Peterborough, there is nearly 1,000 acres of pristine forest land and marshes that form the core of this remarkable unfragmented area of Peterborough". *Forever wild* acres remain off-limits to timber harvesting in order to let natural processes prevail. The Northeast Wilderness Trust has accepted an executory interest in the property in order to help protect the long-term ecological integrity of the *forever wild* area.

Annie Faulkner, board member of the Northeast Wilderness Trust, stated "This easement is a gift that recognizes the essential place of wildlands in our lives and our landscape. The wildlands conserved here complement the property's farming and forestry activity, and will enrich the educational, scientific and recreational opportunities on the land."

Francie Von Mertens, co-chair of the Peterborough Conservation Commission, added "This land is as close to wilderness as it gets in Peterborough. To know it's there, and protected, makes you smile, and will for years to come."

Otter Brook Farm's long-term goal is to become a trust whose mission is to "promote via practices, education and research responsible and environmentally sensitive wildlife preservation, agriculture and silviculture, and to share its resources and knowledge with the greater community." For three years, the Harris Center has been working with Dr. Van de Poll and science teachers at Great Brook and South Meadow School to help students explore the rich ecology of the Otter Brook landscape.

Transaction funding for the project was provided by the Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership (Q2C), a public-private effort to protect the Monadnock Highlands of western New Hampshire and north central Massachusetts. To learn more, visit www.q2cpartnership.org.

About The Harris Center for Conservation Education

The Harris Center for Conservation Education is dedicated to promoting understanding and respect for our natural environment through education of all ages, direct protection and exemplary stewardship of the region's natural resources and programs that encourage active participation in the great outdoors.

www.harriscenter.org

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