

PETERBOROUGH

Easement expands land for conservation

By DAVE ANDERSON

Monadnock Ledger Transcript

PETERBOROUGH — The Temple-to-Crotched Conservation Corridor, which consists of thousands of acres along the Wapack Trail between Temple Mountain and Crotched Mountain, became larger last week when Alexandra Marshall of Belmont, Mass., donated a conservation easement on 168.9 acres in Peterborough to the Monadnock Conservancy.

The land will still be owned by Marshall; the easement restricts future development on the property and will be monitored by the Monadnock Conservancy.

Marshall is the daughter-in-law of Laurence and Lorna Marshall, who donated one of the first protected areas within the corridor, the 1,672-acre Wapack National Wildlife Refuge, to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 1972.

"The Marshall property fills perfectly a gap in conservation land on the western slope of the Wapack Range," said Ryan Owens, executive director of the Monadnock Conservancy, in a press release about the easement. "Its protection for multiple uses complements the diverse values of the surrounding landscape, from scenic views and managed forests and fields to deep-woods habitats and rugged trails."

Forestry, agriculture, trail use and related activities will still be permitted on the land, according to the conservancy.

Marshall's decision honors her late husband John Marshall, described in the press release as "a renowned visual anthropologist and documentary filmmaker," who inherited the property from his father.

The John Kennedy Marshall Memorial Conservation Easement is directly adjacent to the Wapack National Wildlife Refuge and other conservation easements, and is part of a 7,465-acre contiguous block of previously protected lands, including Miller State Park and the

Temple Mountain State Reservation.

The newly protected property includes approximately 164 acres of forest, a 5-acre scrub-shrub wetland and frontage along Varnum's Brook. The easement will protect scenic views along nearly one mile of undeveloped frontage on Sand Hill Road and views of the property from the Wapack Trail along the Wapack Range. Signs of moose, deer, porcupine, beaver, woodpecker and broad-winged hawk have been recently observed on the land.

"The whole corridor is really important for wildlife protection," said Katrina Farmer, communications manager for the Monadnock Conservancy, on Wednesday. "This easement will make it a more healthy and vibrant place for wildlife. There's still more to be done, and we hope others will get excited."

"This piece means just about all of the land originally owned by the Marshall family is now preserved," said Ed Henault, chair of the town of Peterborough's Open Space Committee, on Wednesday. "It really tops off a wonderful year. We've conserved about 700 acres in Peterborough this year, at just about no cost to the town."

Henault said the town was not involved with the acquisition of the recent Marshall easement, but the Open Space Committee has identified properties that are high priority for conservation.

"We send out a yearly letter to land owners of parcels that are appropriate," he said. "We like to think we've nudged people's awareness."

According to the Monadnock Conservancy, the Russell Piscataquog River Watershed Foundation awarded a grant toward land surveying and legal costs of the project and additional transaction funding was provided by the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership, a public-private effort to protect the Monadnock highlands of western New Hampshire and north central Massachusetts.