



Five Rivers  
Conservation  
Trust

[www.5rct.org](http://www.5rct.org)

# Five Rivers Review

DECEMBER 2006

## Three Hopkinton Properties Conserved

Town-Owned Lands Permanently Protected through Five Rivers Conservation Easements

This year, thanks to the far-sighted vision of Hopkinton citizens, town officials, and landowners, three special town-owned properties were set aside for future generations. Conservation easements were placed on the Ransmeier, Carson, and Bermuda/Harris properties, protecting over 200 acres of open space. The properties had been purchased by the town under an open space protection bond approved by voters in 2003. As the nonprofit organization chosen to serve as the easement holder for each of these lands, Five Rivers Conservation Trust is honored to play a key role in their long-term stewardship and protection.

Placing conservation easements on land is a way to ensure that open space is preserved through legal provisions that preclude development, while also allowing for certain compatible uses. For the three town-owned properties, these uses include the creation of nature paths for the public to enjoy. Conservation easements remain in effect even when land ownership changes, thus assuring permanent protection.

### Ransmeier Woods Preserves Open Space, While also Protecting the Town Water Supply

Nestled within walking distance of the village of Hopkinton, with its historic churches and town common, the Ransmeier Woods property consists of a remarkable combination of field and forestland. Consisting of two parcels totaling 65 acres, its woods include stately red and white pine, as well as mature hardwoods of red oak and beech.

The larger of the two parcels also has two brooks, one of which meanders past an old, tumbledown breached dam through a steep-sloped ravine whose tall hemlocks filter sunlight with a dappled effect upon the flowing waters. It is an almost ethereal place, one whose silence is punctuated by the occasional call of a pileated woodpecker and other birds of the deep woods. It is a place that truly belies its proximity to the charming village center located just over the rise.



*A delightful field tucked behind Hopkinton Road graces a section of the Ransmeier Woods property.*

A further feature of the Ransmeier Woods property is its 9-acre field. An undulating landscape underlain by the outwash sediments left by retreating glaciers of millennia past, the open field today is blanketed by a sea of lush summer green, grasses that are hayed during each growing season. Tucked away beyond the sight of nearby Hopkinton Road, the field is a pleasure for those who take the time to visit. Deer, as well as wild turkeys and song birds, know it well.

One of the special attributes of Ransmeier Woods is that it overlays a major groundwater aquifer. In fact it is the aquifer that serves as the public water supply source for the Hopkinton Village Water Precinct, with town wells

*Continued on next page*



[www.5rct.org](http://www.5rct.org)

**Please visit  
our NEW  
WEBSITE!**

See back page  
for details

## Three Hopkinton Properties Conserved – Continued

just down-gradient of the property. Protecting water quality is certainly a major benefit of open space protection. Keeping this landscape free of development helps to ensure that the town's public water supply won't be jeopardized from potential runoff and pollutants.

Recognizing that preserving open space affords water supply protection benefits, the State this year provided the Town of Hopkinton with considerable grant money to help in purchasing the property. Under the N.H. Department of Environmental Services' Water Supply Land Grant Program, \$173,000 was provided to the Town of Hopkinton. Coupled with the town's open space bond money, the grant went a long way toward helping the town acquire this special land.

Five Rivers is pleased to have joined with town officials, the Ransmeier family, and others to protect this special landscape for future generations.

### Bermuda/Harris Property A Natural for Extensive Trail System

A large, 111-acre landscape that straddles the Hopkinton-Warner town line, the Bermuda/Harris Property is particularly well-suited for recreational trails that would

allow public access to some wonderful natural features. Mature stands of hemlock, pine, and hardwoods, as well as a large ancient black gum tree rare to this northern environment, are just a few of the property's attributes.

Also, in addition to a tumbling brook, once used in the 1700s to power a small, long-since-disappeared mill,



Deep within the Bermuda/Harris property, located along the Hopkinton-Warner border, a hidden beaver bog serves as habitat for a variety of wildlife.

the forested landscape is graced by a remote, hidden, beaver bog. Along with a number of surrounding vernal pools, this isolated wetland, as well as the rest of the forestland, is frequented by deer, turkeys, hawks, songbirds, and other wildlife. The Bermuda/Harris Property also exhibits some interesting glacial formations, as well as old cellar holes and other legacies from a bygone era.

### Carson Property Serves as Protective Buffer for Nearby Nature Preserve

The Carson Property, a former pasture, has extensive forest stands, notably red oak, hemlock, and other species. A small brook courses its way across the 34-acre wooded terrain. The property is located next to New Hampshire Audubon's Brockway Nature Preserve on Farrington Corner Road, a sanctuary with some delightful walking trails. The newly protected Carson Property creates an additional forest buffer around that preserve. This town land, now protected under a Five Rivers conservation easement, is serving to expand the conserved acreage in this part of Hopkinton while enhancing the experience for those who enjoy the nearby Audubon preserve.



Town forester and Open Space Committee member Ron Klemarczyk explores the Carson Property next to NH Audubon's Brockway Nature Preserve.

### Vision and Commitment

Each of these three Hopkinton-owned properties, with their individual conservation easements now held by Five Rivers Conservation Trust, is protected thanks to the efforts of many people committed to land protection. They include property owners, town officials, state agency personnel, consultants, and of course the citizens of Hopkinton whose support laid the essential groundwork for these protection measures.

Five Rivers Conservation Trust enjoyed an essential role too, with Trustees Lori Sommer and Pete Helm working closely with the town officials and others over many months. Five Rivers now looks forward to carrying out its stewardship responsibilities set forth in the conservation easements for these three wonderful properties.

## Five Rivers Conservation Trust

*Serving the towns of...*

Boscawen, Bow, Canterbury, Chichester, Concord, Dunbarton, Henniker, Hopkinton, Loudon, Northfield, Pembroke, Salisbury, Warner, and Webster.

### Board of Trustees

David Howe, *Chair*

Mark Zankel, *Vice Chair*

William Chapin, *Treasurer*

Sarah Denoncourt, *Secretary*

Kristin Claire      Steve Lee

Lee Carbonneau      Jared Nylund

Peter Helm      Liza Poinier

Tom Irwin      Tabitha Riley

Chris Kane      Lori Sommer

*Funding for this newsletter was provided by a grant from the NH Dept. of Environmental Services under Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act.*



Newsletter Design by Crown Design  
www.crowndesign.com

## NEW TRUSTEE PROFILES



As the saying goes.....“It’s a small world.” Those were the thoughts of new board member **Steve Lee** when he first learned about Five Rivers Conservation Trust through board member Chris Kane. Steve and Chris knew each other through their kids’ involvement in DI – Destination

Imagination! Steve has worked as an environmental consultant for 17 years with Normandeau Associates conducting soil, groundwater, and surface water investigations. He also conducts environmental due diligence investigations for the Humane Society of the United States’ Wildlife Land Trust and is a volunteer Land Steward for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Steve has lived in Concord for 16 years with his wife Sally and his two children, Brian and Jessica. He enjoys skiing, hiking, and traveling. Steve serves as chair of Five Rivers’ Land Protection Committee and is looking forward to helping conserve open space in the capital region!



**Tom Irwin** joins the Five Rivers board with a strong background in environmental policy, having been an attorney in the NH office of the Conservation Law Foundation for more than 7 years. He has focused

much of his advocacy on protecting wetlands and water resources (particularly in the area of the Great Bay estuary) from sprawl development. Tom has also worked on solutions to promote more sustainable development, including directing growth into revitalized town centers.

Tom treasures the rural character of the Five Rivers region but is greatly troubled to see the suburbanization of so many places in Concord and the surrounding area. In addition to better community planning, he sees land conservation – and the role of Five Rivers Conservation Trust – as a critical element of preserving the natural character of the region. Tom lives in Concord with his wife Lauren and their two children.

### Director’s Corner

#### Land Conservation and Water Quality Protection – A Direct Link

Open space lands are protected for a variety of reasons. Many of us, for example, take pleasure in simply having green spaces nearby. Forests and fields provide an aesthetic, spiritual tonic. Wildlife habitat such as wetlands help sustain the rich diversity of life on our planet. And working farms allow for the continuity of a heritage that is all-too-quickly disappearing from our communities.

A further benefit that frequently comes from protecting open space, one perhaps less recognized but nonetheless valuable, is that of water quality protection. The Ransmeier Woods project for example, a Hopkinton property featured in this issue, pointedly brings this home. In that instance, the link between land conservation and water quality protection was truly direct, with its landscape now serving as a permanent buffer for nearby town water supply wells.

Though we’re all aware of the threats posed to water quality by point pollution - piped discharges that can come from industrial sources, non-point pollution from runoff can pose a substantial threat to our waters as well. Both groundwater and surface waters alike can be impacted by nearby residential development and poorly managed landscapes. When acreage is converted from natural open space to a developed state, there is an increased possibility of pollutant runoff and water quality degradation. Impermeable barriers such as driveways, houses, and other structures, as well as manicured lawns and extensive landscaping, can alter

rainwater runoff, adding oil, gasoline, silt, fertilizer, and herbicides to nearby waters. And of course every little bit hurts, with cumulative effects that can cause problems both for public waters and private wells. In a state where 60 percent of the population relies on groundwater sources for drinking water, this becomes even more of a concern.

Land conservation can of course serve to counter this threat. Indeed, the twenty three parcels of land that Five Rivers Conservation Trust has now protected each serve to help ensure the quality of both surface and groundwaters in their communities. For example, in addition to the Hopkinton property noted in this issue, others include a 15-acre forest alongside the Contoocook River in northwest Concord, a 79-acre woodland next to the Soucook River in Loudon, an expansive field of lush vegetation in Canterbury, and a special wetland in Dunbarton. None of these landscapes will ever have developments that could cause adverse runoff to nearby waters. Furthermore, farms protected under Five Rivers’ conservation easements are also less likely to create erosion and other problems because they must meet special farm management provisions set forth under their conservation easements.



In short, conserving land truly does hold the additional benefit of protecting precious water resources, and Five Rivers Conservation Trust is pleased to continue playing an active role in meeting the critical conservation needs of our central New Hampshire region.

Chuck Knox – Executive Director

# New Tax Incentives for Easement Donors

You may have heard about HR 4, the new federal law affecting tax deductions for charitable donations of conservation easements. The legislation -- in effect only in 2006 and 2007 -- increases the tax benefit for private landowners who donate conservation easements and other partial interests in real estate that protect natural resources and historic properties. These new tax incentives also make it easier for working farmers and ranchers to protect their family lands. The new tax law:

- Raises the maximum deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income to 50%;
- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct 100% of their income if the majority of their income comes from farming, ranching or forestry; and
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation easement donation from 5 to 15 years

All projects seeking tax deductions must meet the “conservation purposes” under section 170 (h) of the federal tax code. As currently enacted, the incentives apply only to donations of conservation easements created during 2006 and 2007. **Therefore, if you’re thinking about an easement, now’s the time to get the best tax advantage.**

## Sample income tax advantages

As an example, the new tax rules allow a landowner who donates a conservation easement that is worth \$1 million dollars and whose income is \$50,000 a year to take a charitable deduction of \$25,000 from their income in calculating their tax for the year of the donation and take charitable deductions of the unused amount of the gift for an additional 15 years. In this example, the total amount of deductions would be equal to \$400,000. (The previous tax law would allow a current deduction of only \$15,000 and a deduction for only five more years, or a total of \$90,000.)

If the landowner in the example qualifies as a farmer or rancher, receiving more than 50% of their income from “trade or business farming” under the IRS definition, they could take a maximum of \$800,000 in deductions for their million-dollar gift.

## How does it work?

The expanded incentive applies to the donation of conservation easements, or partial interest in land, and does not typically apply to fee gifts (which remain deductible as charitable donations). Conservation easement donations are subject to the same restrictions as they were

before, and must meet the conservation purposes test as defined in IRC 170 (h) 4. They must also be held by a qualified organization that has a “commitment to protect the conservation purposes of the donation.” Easements donated as part of a “quid pro quo” agreement are not eligible for tax deductions. Also, an appraisal of the donated value is required by the IRS when seeking a charitable deduction of property interest.

The new tax bill sets higher standards for appraisers and imposes higher penalties for appraisers who fail to follow those standards, in an effort to prevent tax abuse. Land Trusts supported these reforms to ensure the integrity of the charitable donation process. Contact your attorney for information on appraisal requirements. Contact Five Rivers Conservation Trust for a list of qualified appraisers experienced with conservation easements and information on appraisal requirements. As with any real estate transaction, you should seek professional financial planning and legal advice before making a charitable donation of any interest in real estate.



After December 1, 2007, the law is scheduled to revert back to previous provisions, unless Congress extends the provisions prior to the deadline. The Land Trust Alliance and others in the land conservation community are working hard to make these changes permanent.

Please contact Five Rivers if you would like more information or resources to help you take advantage of this temporary incentive for land protection.

*Thanks to the Center for Land Conservation Assistance for information in this article.*

## Welcome to Our New and Renewing Members

One of the special rewards in serving in the nonprofit sector is receiving support from members. Those of us at Five Rivers Conservation Trust – staff, trustees, and volunteers alike – truly appreciate the contributions that are conveyed to this organization through new memberships, membership renewals, and donations. This assistance well serves our important land protection mission. It is heartening to know that there are many who care deeply about Five Rivers' efforts to preserve the natural heritage of our wonderful central New Hampshire landscape. The following people and businesses became new and renewing members from August through November 2006:

### New Members:

Steve and Kim Arndt  
Russ Aubertin  
Nancy Bean  
Paul and Liz Carey  
Jack and Jean Chwasciak  
Stuart and Lucy Comstock-Gay  
Shannon and Larry Donahue  
Pam and Jerry Drypolcher  
Bill and Lyn Fenollosa  
Geoff and Danielle Fitzgerald  
Brian and Jennifer Hotz  
Douglas and Martha Johnson  
Amanda Grappone and Tom Osmer  
Joseph and Catherine Keaton  
Benjamin Kimball  
Ronald and Corrine Lajoie  
Donald Lane  
George and Jennifer Lombardo  
Sandra Martin  
Bill and Pam Mueller  
Pilar Olivo and Geordie Wilson  
Stephen Perron  
Craig and Lauren Savage  
Peter and Susan Saviteer  
Nat and Mary Witschonke  
Laurie Wiltshire  
Jeffrey Zellers

### Renewing Members:

Julie and John Bassi  
Galen Beale  
Lisa Biklen  
Tom and Emilie Burack  
Matthew Cahillane  
Bill and Julie Chapin

Bill and Lissa Chapin  
Larry and Brigitte Cook  
George and Sally Chase  
Edward Damon  
Jane Difley  
B.J. Entwisle  
Bob Estabrook  
Mark Feigl and Mary Brunette  
Robert and Shauna Ferguson  
Fred and Ann Graf  
Kelly Haza  
Kitty and Roland Hok  
Tom and Lauren Irwin  
Scott and Lisa Metzger  
Sheri Leigh Myers  
Stephanie Parkinson  
Mary Platt  
Nick and Rita Perencivich  
Brian Pierce  
Liza Poinier and Bruce Clendenning  
Denise Rico  
Joe and Rita Quinn  
Tabitha and Rob Riley  
Michael Strack and Mary Leadbeater  
Marjory Swope  
Jeff and Dijit Taylor  
Rob Woodward  
Lawrence Yerke

### Business Members

Associated Grocers of New England  
Bow Mills Bank and Trust  
naturesource communications  
Northeast Delta Dental  
PIP Printing  
Terra Design

## T-shirts and Hats For Sale

Show your support for Five Rivers by wearing a T-shirt or hat! T-shirts display the four-color Five Rivers logo, small on front and large on back, and the shirt colors come in light gray and light blue. Hats also display the color logo with the Five Rivers name sewn on the front. They come in gray with a red visor, or beige with a blue or green visor. Shirts and hats cost \$15 each. Contact the Five Rivers office at 225-7225 to get yours today!



## Opportunities for Volunteers

FIVE RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST WOULD LOVE TO RECEIVE HELP FROM VOLUNTEERS.

There are opportunities for involvement with the Land Protection Committee, the Communications and Outreach Committee, and with the Membership and Development Committee.

Some of the activities we can offer to volunteers include:

- Plan and coordinate an event
- Monitor or document protected properties
- Photograph easement properties for publicity
- Serve as a committee member
- Write for the newsletter
- Assist with fundraising
- Assemble member mailings
- Contribute to the website

If you are interested in learning more about these and other volunteer opportunities, please contact the office at 603-225-7225 or by email to [director@5rct.org](mailto:director@5rct.org)

## NEWS UPDATE

Five Rivers Conservation Easement Protects Scenic Farm and Forest in Gilmanton.

Look for details in our next issue!

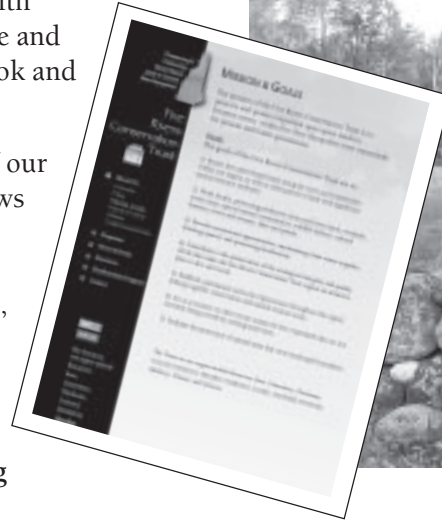
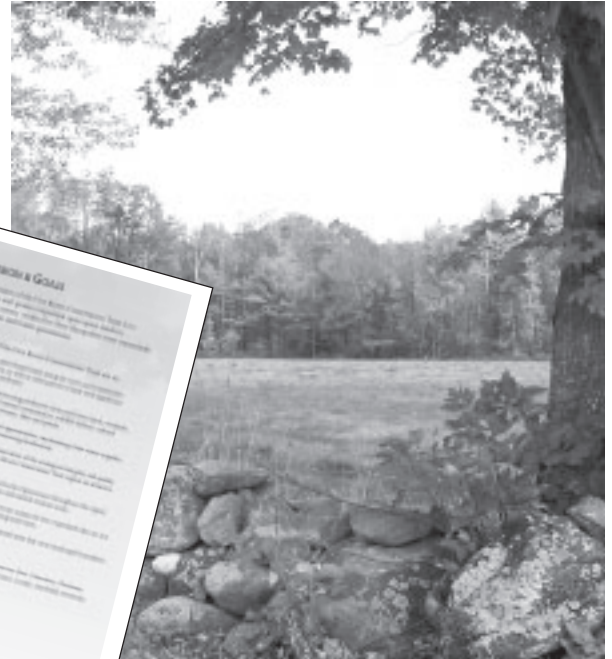


Baldwin property photo by Ken Stern

With the recent launch of the new website, Five Rivers Conservation Trust now has a presence on the World Wide Web. Thanks to a generous grant from the Samuel P. Hunt Foundation, Crown Design and Mars Media Design were hired to develop the appearance and working design of the site. In particular, designer and illustrator Michal Smigowski of Crown Design worked closely with Five Rivers' Communications and Outreach Committee and Director Chuck Knox to help create the appropriate look and feel of the site.

The website features an interactive map and profiles of our protected lands, fact sheets on how to protect land, news and events, and contact information. There is also information on how to become a member and support Five Rivers, as well as sections with Five Rivers bylaws, mission, and policies. Past newsletters and our brochure are also accessible in printable pdf format on the website.

But don't just take our word for it. Visit [www.5rct.org](http://www.5rct.org) and explore for yourself!



Please mail to: Five Rivers Conservation Trust  
54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301  
If you have questions, please contact us at  
603-225-7225 or by email to [director@5rct.org](mailto:director@5rct.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

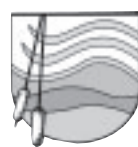
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Friend \$100
  - Family \$50
  - Individual \$25
  - Benefactor \$500
  - Student \$15
  - Protector \$250
- Your membership in Five Rivers Conservation Trust will help us respond to the increasing number of worthwhile land protection projects in the region. Join us on our quest to preserve more of the places that make our area such a great place to live.

**Join Us!**

Five Rivers  
Conservation  
Trust



54 Portsmouth Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
[www.5rct.org](http://www.5rct.org)

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Concord, NH 03301  
Permit No. 1694