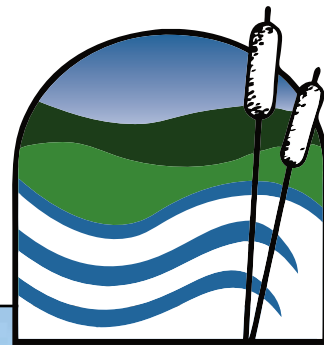


FIVE RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST

Local Land Trust for the Greater Capital Region of New Hampshire

Fall 2019 Newsletter



Houston Fields

By Sarah M. Crow

If you've driven through Contoocook Village, you've passed right by Five Rivers' newest conservation project: the Houston fields, just behind Dmitri's Pizza and Colonial Plaza. Five Rivers, working with the Hopkinton Conservation Commission, has conserved these 55 acres of prime farmland, which run along the Contoocook and Warner rivers. The land is farmed by the nearby Pine Lane Farm, a dairy farm owned by the Houston family: Edie Houston and her children Rich Houston and Caroline Holden, and Caroline's husband Kelly Holden.

Blanche and Everett Houston, Edie Houston's parents-in-law, bought Pine Lane Farm in 1931, raising dairy cattle, pigs, and vegetables, and delivering milk to nearby customers. In the late Sixties, Edie and Rob Houston moved the farm about a mile to its current location, adding land and an open barn, and expanding the cattle herd. Now the third generation of Houstons runs the farm, and the cattle herd numbers 450, with 230 cows cur-

rently being milked. And key to keeping this herd fed, and the farm viable, is fertile land for corn silage and hay. "A dairy farm's crop acreage is crucial, because it's much less expensive to grow one's own feed than to purchase it," Rich Houston says. "Also, without land, there's nowhere for the manure to go. We essentially run a nutrient cycling operation where our crops feed the cows, we ship off the milk for people to drink, and then we recycle the manure back into the soil. The cows and the land and the people are all connected. Without one, you can't have the other."

The Houston family has felt increasing pressure to develop this land over the years, and they're thankful that these fields will be protected for raising crops. "In my lifetime I've seen multiple apple orchards, chicken farms, and dairy farms go out of business, as well as many acres of land for grazing and hay developed," Rich says. "If we can preserve this land here, hopefully this will help the people in our community continue to raise some of their food." Transporting so much of our food from far corners of the globe isn't sustainable, he says.

Edie Houston adds that she, like her husband and father-in-law before her, hopes that the farm will continue into the next generation. "My husband's father felt

Houston Farm Facts

Generously funded by the Town of Hopkinton, the Thomas W Hass Fund, the NH State Conservation Committee's Moose Plate Grant Program, and 44 local donors.

- 55 acres in Contoocook Village conserved in July 2019
- Conservation easement donated by Rich and Edie Houston
- Nearly a mile of frontage on the Contoocook and Warner Rivers
- Across the Warner River from Bohanan Farm
- Prime agricultural soils, supporting Pine Lane Farm
- Important wildlife habitat
- Volunteer Project Manager: Rob Knight

that dairy farming would be a good life," she says, and she agrees. "Our farm is well placed in a good spot in Contoocook, and I think people in town have gotten a kick out of having a farm right in the village."

The Houstons are looking to the future in other ways, too, such as embracing solar power on the farm. "We hope to add more solar power, because we can make electricity cheaper than we can get it off the grid," Rich says. And they hope to conserve the rest of Pine Lane Farm's 180 acres, little by little, to ensure that farming continues in central New Hampshire. ■



Little Acorn to Mighty Oak: Linking Conserved Land

By Rob Knight

From a little acorn, a mighty oak grows! Five Rivers and the Concord Conservation Commission have grown a mighty conservation area by adding two acorn-sized parcels in the backwoods of Concord. As Beth McGuinn observed, this is the wonder of conservation work – one conservation area often inspires the protection of abutting parcels of land, growing into a much larger block of conserved land.

In August, Five Rivers and the Concord Conservation Commission collaborated to conserve 26 acres of land recently acquired by the City. While 16 acres of protected forest is always nice, these parcels were the missing pieces that link Winant Park and Walker State Forest. By acquiring and conserving these properties, the city has created a 192-acre contiguous conserved woodland just one-and-a-half miles from Concord's Main Street.

In 2003, Five Rivers and the city conserved two parcels, 28 acres. The land was so remote it was called "Backwoods." Six years later, working with Five Rivers, the city and St. Paul's School, the Winant family donated and conserved 85 acres to create Winant Park, a popular destination for hikers, runners and mountain

Backwoods 2 Facts

- 26-acre addition to Backwoods 1 in Concord conserved in August 2019
- Conservation easement donated by City of Concord
- Connects Winant Park and Walker State Forest
- Includes a network of trails used by walkers, hikers, runners and bikers.
- Important wildlife habitat
- Volunteer Project Manager: Ken Stern

bikers. And now, by adding this missing piece, the city has linked all these properties with the 510-acre Walker State Forest. St. Paul's woodland and open space also abut, creating over 250 acres of undeveloped green space near the heart of the city.

Appropriately, oak trees dominate the expanded Backwoods conservation area, with white pine and mixed hardwoods throughout. There are small wetlands with many highbush blueberries, and ledge outcrops enjoyed by mountain bikers using the network of trails throughout this area. As Jim Owers, Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission explained, protecting these recreational trails and linking Winant Park and Walker State Forest was the main purpose of acquiring and conserving the new land.

The Conservation Commission is working with the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands to delineate the main trails from Winant Park through the newly conserved land to Walker State Forest. Meanwhile, you can explore miles of existing trails at Winant Park. A Winant Park trail map and background information are available at tinyurl.com/5RCT-Winant. The city's "Hiking Trails" web page includes maps for all 81 miles of Concord hiking trails, many protected by Five Rivers conservation easements. ■



FIVE RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST
Local Land Trust for the Greater Capital Region of New Hampshire

Five Rivers is a member-supported nonprofit land trust with a mission to preserve and protect important open space lands for present and future generations. We work in seventeen towns at the confluence of five New Hampshire rivers.

Five Rivers's Service Area: Belmont, Boscaawen, Bow, Canterbury, Chichester, Concord, Dunbarton, Gilmanston, Henniker, Hillsboro, Hopkinton, Loudon, Northfield, Pembroke, Salisbury, Warner and Webster.

The Five Rivers are the Blackwater, Contoocook, Merrimack, Soucook and Warner Rivers.

Maura Adams, Deerfield, Chair
Richard Cook, Warner, Vice Chair
Michael Shearin, Dunbarton, Treasurer
Bob Cotton, Concord, Secretary

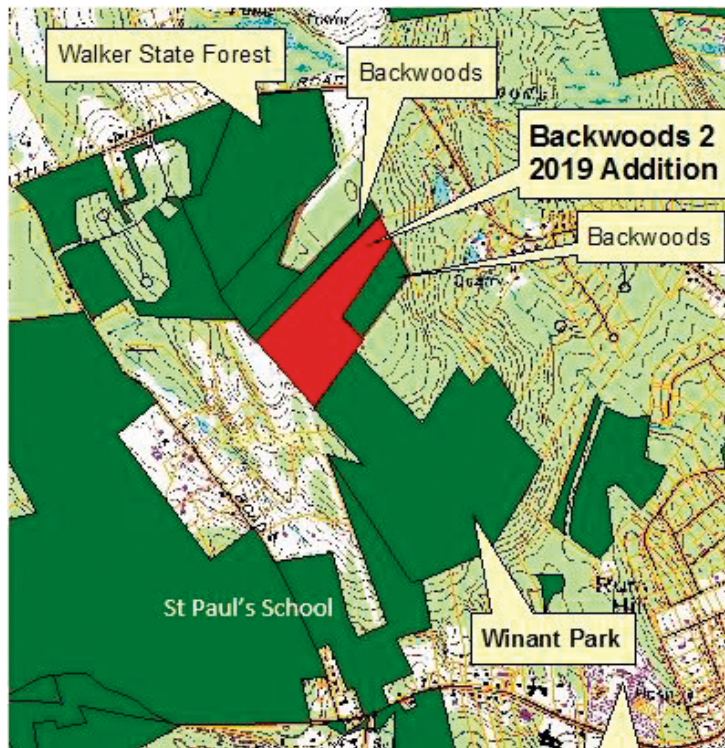
Kathy Barnes, Hopkinton	Carolyn Koegler Miller, Hopkinton
Steve Blackmer, Canterbury	Liz Short, Concord
Bonnie Christie, Hopkinton	Sarah Thorne, Gilmanston
Jeanne Herrick, Concord	Katy Ward, Henniker
Michael Hvizda, Concord	

Staff

Beth McGuinn, Executive Director
Alison Scheiderer, Land Conservation Specialist
Andrea Galliher, Membership and Office Assistant

Five Rivers Conservation Trust

10 Ferry St, #311-A, Concord, NH 03301
(603) 225-7225 | www.5rct.org | info@5rct.org



Five Rivers and the City of Concord recently created a 192-acre block of conserved land by protecting the Backwoods 2 parcels that link Winant Park with Walker State Forest.

Executive Director's Message

By Beth McGuinn, Executive Director



Photo by Kathy Healy.

Over 31 years, Five Rivers has conserved 4900+ acres of land – farms, forests, trails, habitats, wetlands, streams, rivers, and much more. Volunteer project managers have been the driving force behind all of this conservation.

The Houston Farm and “Backwoods 2” projects, highlighted in this newsletter, are the final projects completed by dedicated

volunteers Rob Knight and Ken Stern, respectively.

Ken has volunteered for Five Rivers since 2000, completing 26 conservation projects and assisting with 19 others. He has also monitored easements annually, served four terms on the Board, and led the Land and Easement Stewardship Committee as Chair for many years.

Rob joined the board in 2008, serving as Treasurer and book-keeper. He has served as project manager on complicated conservation projects, including those with a significant fundraising component. In addition, Rob upgraded and coordinated our easement monitoring program.

Ken and Rob are both retired now and spending more time traveling. They remain involved in the Lands Committee and

continue to monitor easements, but the Houston and Backwoods projects are their last as project managers. On behalf of Five Rivers, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Ken and Rob for their dedication to Five Rivers, for their work with landowners and communities, for the miles of land traversed, and for all the work they have done to make Five Rivers a successful local land trust.

We couldn't have done it without them! ■



Rob Knight and Ken Stern have conserved many hundreds of acres for Five Rivers as volunteer Project Managers.

Naming Five Rivers in Your Will

Recently, several Five Rivers members have asked about naming Five Rivers in their will. If you are interested in doing the same, please reach out to us. We can provide sample language for you to consider with your family and attorney. Your gift will help Five Rivers conserve land into the future.

We're Moving

For nearly three years, Resilient Building Group has hosted Five Rivers' office. RBG's business has grown tremendously and they need the space we have occupied. As a result, we have moved to the Concord Center at **10 Ferry Street, Suite 311-A** in Concord. Our other contact information remains the same.

Welcome New Trustees

This spring, Five Rivers welcomed three new, dynamic trustees. We are already tapping their energy and enthusiasm on the board.

Mike Hvizda, of Concord, is co-founder and owner of the Hvizda Team, Keller Williams Realty. Mike brings experience as an organic farmer and as a realtor, marketing properties with larger acreages and conservation easements, too.

Katy Ward, of Henniker, is President and Principal Engineer at Aries Engineering. Katy and her family enjoy all manner of outdoor activities, and have a special fondness for Five Rivers-conserved Chase Brook.

Liz Short, of Concord, is the Business Finance Program Director at the NH Community Loan Fund. She brings a background in natural resources and experience working for the Nature Conservancy and Stonyfield Yogurt. ■



New trustees Mike Hvizda, Katy Ward and Liz Short.

Support Five Rivers Today!

To conserve local land, Five Rivers needs your support!

- ☐ I want to become a new member
- ☐ I want to make an additional donation
- ☐ \$50 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$250
- ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$2,500
- ☐ Other (every gift counts): \$ _____

Name: _____

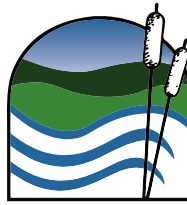
Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please clip this form and mail it with your check:

Five Rivers Conservation Trust
10 Ferry St, #311-A, Concord, NH 03301
Or join online at 5rct.org.



FIVE RIVERS CONSERVATION TRUST
10 FERRY ST, #311-A
CONCORD, NH 03301

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
CONCORD, NH
PERMIT 1694



Printed on recycled paper with soy inks

Newsletter Sponsor



Conservation Plan Update

Five Rivers' conservation planning process is under way, thanks to a grant from the Land Trust Alliance, support from those who attended our breakfast fundraiser, and supporters who donated to our summer special appeal.

We are reviewing local master plans and engaging with conservation commissions to identify special places for local land conservation. Dan Sundquist, of Greenfire GIS Consulting, is assisting with a mapping process that will identify places where the most important farms and farm soils, wildlife habitat, and water resources are concentrated—focus areas for conservation.

In recognition of the fact that our climate is changing, we will work with The Nature Conservancy's New Hampshire Chapter to adapt their Northeastern Climate Resiliency data to inform our conservation plan. The resulting maps will help Five Rivers conserve land that protects the widest diversity of plants and animals in the face of climate change.

Two additional grants are pending and if awarded, Five Rivers' first conservation planning initiative will be nearly fully funded by the end of the year. If you would like to help fund this initiative, please clip the "support" corner above, and mark "Conservation Plan" on your check. ■

Hike Bohanan Farm, Hopkinton



**Sunday
November 3**

Join us for a 2.5-mile hike to the convergence of the Blackwater and Contoocook Rivers. Meet some of the now-famous Robertson Family, who were featured in the History Channel series *The American Farm*.

About Bohanan Farm:

- Five Rivers' largest conserved property – 400+ acres
- Producer of Contoocook Creamery milk and cheese
- Active forest management program
- Located at the confluence of three of our Five Rivers:

- ◇ Contoocook River
- ◇ Blackwater River
- ◇ Warner River

► **Register at 5rct.org/Events**
► **Space is limited. Register by November 1**
► **Suggested donation: \$5-10**