



For Immediate Release: February 25, 2021

Contact: J.T. Horn, Trust for Public Land, 603-236-9866 or jt.horn@tpl.org

Julia Griffin, Town of Hanover, 603-643-0701 or julia.griffin@hanovernh.org

Adair Mulligan, Hanover Conservancy, 603-643-3433 or amulligan@hanoverconservancy.org

New Community Forest Will Benefit Upper Valley Residents

Hanover, NH – Today, The Trust for Public Land, the Hanover Conservancy and the town of Hanover announced the creation and permanent protection of the Mink Brook Community Forest, a new 254-acre space that will be owned by the town and will serve Upper Valley residents.

“Mink Brook Community Forest will be a huge asset to the residents and visitors of Hanover, offering access to miles of recreational walking trails, as well as an area to gather as a community,” said Shelby Semmes, Northern New England Area Director for The Trust for Public Land. “The location of this property is ideal for downtown residents and staff, while also serving as a buffer to the Appalachian Trail and a significant migration corridor for area wildlife.”

Mink Brook Community Forest will provide new ways for the community to get outside with trails for hiking and snowshoeing, directly linking to adjacent conservation lands. The prominent meadow on Greensboro Road will be maintained for wildlife and possibly returned to an agricultural use, depending on community priorities. The forested acres will balance ecological protection and recreation with future sustainable timber harvesting. The area will also encourage ecological restoration with the removal of invasive species. The Hanover Conservation Commission is developing a management plan for the property with support from the Northern Forest Center and a variety of community stakeholders.

Almost 35,000 people live and work within three miles of this property including Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Dartmouth College and the cluster of businesses along Route 120 and Etna Road. A new Community Forest will offer welcome respite in nature for these residents and employees and provide connections for new trails and a wildlife corridor around downtown Hanover.

“Purchase of the Mink Brook Community Forest property is the culmination of a decade-long effort to pursue permanent conservation of this beautiful piece of property, with easy access for all Hanover residents and the Dartmouth community,” said Julia Griffin, Hanover Town Manager. “This property is probably the most important purchase in the Town’s effort to protect an “emerald necklace” stretching from Hanover’s southern border to the Connecticut River in a wide arc around our densely settled in-

town area. We are simply thrilled that The Trust for Public Land, the Hanover Conservancy, our state and federal funding partners and so many generous local donors made this purchase possible.”

The 254-acre area will provide a major link to existing conservation lands within the town’s Greenbelt and along the Appalachian Trail, providing habitat for resident otter, mink and grassland birds. The National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy both supported the project as an important way to buffer the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

“Protecting this land helps Hanover resist the effects of climate change – flooding and erosion in Mink Brook, wildlife habitat loss and isolation, and unnatural warming of air and water,” observed Adair Mulligan, Executive Director of the Hanover Conservancy. “We’re inspired by the enthusiasm of our partners on so many levels, from neighbors and Town leaders to state and federal agencies and the Trust for Public Land - all pulling together to protect this beautiful place.”

An additional outcome of this project is a five-acre parcel of the property will be set aside, with the community’s agreement, for a small cluster of cottage-style homes targeted for entry level homeowners to help address a critical housing shortage in the region.

Funding for the project came from a catalytic lead gift, a generous closing philanthropist, the U.S. Forest Service’s Community Forest Program, the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), Town of Hanover, The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation, The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation’s Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund and over 100 locally-based donors.

The Trust for Public Land is a national leader in creating new community forests. Sometimes referred to as “Town Halls in the woods”, community forests provide multiple benefits such as outdoor recreation, wetlands and wildlife habitat protection, clean drinking water and periodic timber revenue. The Town of Hanover sought The Trust for Public Land’s expertise to purchase the Greensboro Road property after over a decade of disagreement surrounding the potential plans for large-scale development of the site.

“Mink Brook is a community staple in the Upper Valley and underscores the ecological and economic importance of our public lands,” said Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), who advocated on behalf of the project to receive federal funding. “I’m thrilled that the town of Hanover, the Hanover Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land have successfully completed this deal that will strengthen our outdoor recreation economy, protect wildlife habitat and the iconic Appalachian Trail, provide new trails and ensure visitors can enjoy the Mink Brook Community Forest today and in the years to come. I’ll continue to work across the aisle in the Senate to ensure federal programs that support conservation efforts in New Hampshire receive the resources they need.”

“Mink Brook provides a valuable outdoor escape for the residents of Hanover, particularly now as the COVID-19 pandemic has placed greater emphasis on the importance of getting outdoors,” said Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH). “The purchase of Mink Brook Community Forest is a victory for New Hampshire’s conservation efforts and will help Hanover bolster its outdoor recreation, preserve the habitats of local wildlife, and build affordable housing to help address the region’s critical housing shortage. I will continue working to protect our environment and ensure that our treasured outdoor spaces can be enjoyed by all Granite Staters.”

“The creation and conservation of the Mink Brook Community Forest is a tremendous win for New Hampshire’s Upper Valley community,” said Representative Annie Kuster (NH-02). “I’ve been proud to champion the Community Forest Program (CFP) during my time in Congress and had urged the U.S. Forest Service to support the Mink Brook project with CFP funding. I also want to thank the Trust for Public Land, Hanover Conservancy, the Town of Hanover, and all who worked together to make this community forest a reality. This is another key milestone in New Hampshire’s long history of protecting our wild and scenic places.”

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Millions of people live within a 10-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. To support The Trust for Public Land and share why nature matters to you, visit www.tpl.org.

###