

# Conservation Matters

*A monthly column focused on conservation education, as the result of collaboration among several area conservation commissions and organizations. If your town's commission or conservation organization would like to contribute articles, please contact Jessica Tabolt Halm [jess\\_tabolt@hotmail.com](mailto:jess_tabolt@hotmail.com)*

"Conserving Land, Connecting People with Nature"

Written by: Betty Jo Taffe, President, Rumney Ecological Systems / Pemi-Baker Land Trust / Quincy Bog Natural Area

When Al and Bertha Fauver wanted to protect "in perpetuity" 401 acres of forest, field and wetlands off Texas Hill Road in the town of Plymouth, they turned to the Pemi-Baker Land Trust (PBLT) for help. Likewise, June and the late Roger Winsor of Rumney asked the PBLT to conserve 128 acres of agricultural fields and productive forest abutting the White Mountain National Forest by accepting a conservation easement on the property.

What is a "conservation easement" and what is a "land trust"? And what is meant by protecting land "in perpetuity"?

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust (or government agency such as a town conservation commission) by which the landowner voluntarily and permanently limits the use of the land in order to protect its conservation values. The landowner continues to own and use the land and may sell the land or pass it on to heirs, but the easement "runs with the title" insuring that the protections remain in place regardless of who owns the land.

A land trust is a private, nonprofit organization that actively works to protect land for its "natural, recreational, scenic, historical, productive value" (Land Trust Alliance definition). It does this by acquiring conservation easements or land over which the land trust exercises stewardship to ensure that the protections placed on this land are followed forever ("in perpetuity") through successive generations of land owners. This is managed through annual monitoring visits of the property and ongoing communication with present and future landowners.

The Pemi-Baker Land Trust was created to conserve lands that offer significant public benefit and enhance quality of life by protecting water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat and plant communities, and productive forest and agricultural resources. PBLT protects valuable properties that larger land trusts sometimes overlook.

PBLT currently holds four conservation easements and is actively working with additional landowners in Plymouth, Rumney and Warren.

- The Fauver easement conserves productive forest, the Clay Brook wetlands and agricultural fields. It protects a portion of the Cardigan to Squam Lake trail network and links the Walter Newton Natural Area with the Sutherland Trail to the top of Plymouth Mountain.
- An easement on the landmark 27-acre Paly property protects 2400 feet of frontage on the Baker River and a beautiful field that is the gateway to Rumney Village.

- Spectacular views, open fields and working forest are protected by an easement on the Winsor property on Stinson Lake Road in Rumney.
- The Bloomfield easement conserves 135 acres of forest in Dorchester.

PBLT is a member of the NH Coalition of Land Trusts and the national Land Trust Alliance, committed to following the principles outlined in LTA's "Statement of Land Trust Standards and Practices."

PBLT is the "Conserving Land" arm of Rumney Ecological Systems (RES), a small, all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to conserving land and connecting people with nature in the Baker River watershed. RES was founded in 1974 to protect the Quincy Bog, threatened by a developer's plans to turn the beaver pond and meadow into a housing development. Quincy Bog Natural Area is the "Connecting People with Nature" arm of RES, drawing people into the natural world with opportunities for observation, walks, school visits, summer programs, interpretive literature, and research activities.

Next year RES will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and PBLT its 10<sup>th</sup>. If you have property in the Baker River Watershed or adjacent portions of the Pemigewasset Watershed that you would like protected from development by a conservation easement or other means, please contact us. PBLT is able to accept both conservation easements and direct donations of land. We would be pleased to discuss a range of land protection possibilities with you. You may contact us by phone at 603-786-2553 (Betty Jo Taffe) or by email at [Pemi-BakerLandTrust@quincybog.org](mailto:Pemi-BakerLandTrust@quincybog.org).