



Hutchinson Forest Legacy Tract, Massachusetts

July 1996

Foresight was the quality that Ted and Beverly Hutchinson possessed when they started acquiring small tracts of forest land. When it appeared as if all their work could be lost, the Hutchinsons looked to the Forest Legacy Program to purchase a conservation easement on their property.

On July 12, 1996, approximately 490 acres of woodland in Athol and Petersham, Massachusetts were permanently protected from development with the purchase of a conservation easement by the USDA Forest Service from the Hutchinsons. The Forest Legacy Area in which the Hutchinson property lies has been identified by the Massachusetts Stewardship



Upland Forests serve as groundwater recharge areas.

Committee as important because keeping it undeveloped will protect public water supplies.

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Leigh Youngblood
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Sale of the development rights allows the Hutchinsons to continue managing their land for forest products as they have for the past 60 years. “I’ve put a lot of time and energy into this land: planting trees and harvesting timber,” said Ted Hutchinson. “I’d hate to see houses built all over the property.” The Hutchinsons will manage their land under the guidance of a Forest Stewardship Plan approved by the State Forester.

The Mount Grace Conservation Trust (MGCT) coordinated the work between the Forest Service and the Hutchinsons. Leigh Youngblood, Director of Land Protection at MGCT, said, “Forest Legacy cemented the consolidation of many woodland tracts by the Hutchinsons. This is in direct contrast to the current trend of large forested tracts getting cut into smaller tracts.”

The Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust in Cooperation with the Massachusetts Bureau of Forestry has agreed to visit the land each year to make sure the landowner is abiding by the easement.

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forest areas from any kind of development. The federal government purchases development restrictions from willing landowners. The landowner keeps all land rights not purchased by the federal government. Forests protected are important. They may provide key wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, provide outstanding scenic views, contain historical sites or provide opportunities to continue traditional forest uses, such as timber harvesting. Robin Jones, the Forest Service official who kept the case moving noted, “The Hutchinson Land is the definition of a working forest.”

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