



Bunnell Mountain

Forest Legacy Tract, New Hampshire

December 2001

An unusual forest habitat type known as high elevation spruce-fir forest has been protected with a Forest Legacy conservation easement. This forest type contains more rare and endangered species than any other habitat in New Hampshire.

The 18,430-acre Bunnell Mountain Forest Legacy tract shares an 8-mile border with the 40,000-acre Nash Stream State Forest, protecting a contiguous block of 7,600 acres this rare habitat, one of the largest blocks of high elevation spruce-fir forest in New England.

The State of New Hampshire acquired a conservation easement on the forested tract on December 21, 2001, with \$1,675,000 in USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy funds. The easement, valued at \$2,050,000, was sold as a bargain sale by the landowner, The Nature Conservancy.

The acquisition includes 10,330 acres designated as the Vickie Bunnell Preserve. The preserve, comprising lands above 2,700 feet in elevation, will allow public recreation but will not be managed for timber production.

The property is named after prominent Bunnell Mountain, the highest mountain north of the White Mountain National Forest at 3,723 feet. Originally known as Blue Mountain, it was renamed in 1998 in memory of former town of Colebrook selectman and part-time judge Vickie Bunnell, who was killed in August 1997. Vickie Bunnell often climbed the mountain in her spare time.

"Vickie understood the value of keeping wild lands wild. She also understood the economic importance of

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U.S. Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire

working forest. I know she would have been very pleased with this exciting conservation effort," said Vickie's father, Earl Bunnell.

The entire property will continue to be open for public recreation access such as hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing,



The large contiguous forests of the highly visible Bunnell Mountain are protected forever from development, protecting rare forest habitat types and the highest mountain in New Hampshire north of the White Mountain National Forest.

Photo by Jerry Monkman

and snowmobiling. The 8,070 acres that is not part of the preserve will be managed for sustainable timber harvests according to a management plan approved by the State.

"The Bunnell Tract will remain open to public recreation, generate local tax revenues, and provide continued opportunities for sustainable forest management," commented U.S. Senator Judd Gregg. "This project represents a major New Hampshire conservation achievement, a moving tribute to Judge Vickie Bunnell, and the permanent protection of 18,430 acres of precious forest land in northern New Hampshire for the benefit and enjoyment of our children and our children's children."

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. These forests provide essential wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, afford outstanding scenic views, are home to historic sites, and/or provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private while ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.