



# Mt. Tom Trail

## Forest Legacy Tract, Rhode Island

December 1999

A significant forested property abutting the Arcadia Management Area in Exeter, Rhode Island, was protected from development on December 28, 1999. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management purchased a conservation easement over 145 acres of the 177-acre parcel. The easement was purchased to prevent future development of the property, to enhance the public recreational values and opportunities of the public using the management area, particularly the Mt. Tom Trail, and to preserve the aesthetic view for people traveling along Route 165. Several historic sites are located on the property, including a historic home (the *Rathbun House*, 1804), cemetery, road, and cattle pound. Protecting the forest around those sites preserves their historic character and nature.

*“We’re pleased to have been able to provide future generations the continued forest values enjoyed not only by ourselves, but by the many who have been a part of this land’s historic past.”*

Landowners Robert and Barbara Bates

A small stream that contains native brook trout and lies within the watershed of a public drinking water aquifer will also be protected. The conservation easement will promote stewardship of the property’s significant forest products.

The owners, Robert and Barbara Bates of Exeter, were paid \$270,000 for the interests acquired. The Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment will serve as the managing entity. The Nature Conservancy was involved in the transaction, paying for the property survey and title insurance.

Owned by the Bates since 1960, the property features timber quality oak, white ash, American beech, and black birch, as well as white pine. The Bates have been

managing the forest primarily for hardwood timber products following a written forest resource management plan and satisfying their personal fuelwood needs by removing the dead and undesirable species through a selective harvesting process. Under the terms of their conservation easement they will continue to do so, improving the future timber resource should they or subsequent owners decide to harvest commercially. “We’re pleased to have been able to provide future generations the continued forest values enjoyed not only by ourselves, but by the many who have been a part of this land’s historic past,” Robert and Barbara Bates remarked.

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 at the same time ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.



*The historic “Ten-Rod Road” was used in colonial times to drive sheep and cattle from inland farms to the port city of Wickford, RI*

*Photo by Paul Ricard*

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