



Forest Service

Northeastern Area State and
Private Forestry
271 Mast Rd.
Durham, NH 03824
www.na.fs.fed.us

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News Release



Media Contact: Bob (Fitz) Fitzhenry
(603) 953-3294
rfitzhenry@fs.fed.us

U.S. Forest Service gives \$581,650 to conserve Northeast woodland

Projects in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont to move toward completion

DURHAM, NH – Grants from the U.S. Forest Service Community Forestry Program will help protect local woodlands for towns in three states. The money will be used for conservation easements and land purchases that remove boundaries and consolidate fragmented forests.

In East Nassau, New York, the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance will use its \$150,000 award to help purchase and establish the 340-acre East Nassau Community Forest. The land is important to RPA, as “The majority of the property (94%) is undisturbed forest that is part of a State significant forest-interior habitat block of greater than 2000 acres.”

“People and nature thrive together with creation of the East Nassau Community Forest,” said Jim Barresi, director of the Forest Service Northeastern Area. “It’s part of the larger conservation effort for the Rensselaer Plateau, with its own special, local value. Public access will be improved for recreation and environmental education, and we’re helping New Yorkers who work in the woods gain a field site for job training.”

New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) will use its \$175,000 award to purchase woodland under development pressure in East Lyme, Connecticut for the Niantic River Headwaters Community Forest Project. The 33 acres will continue as working forest and as a local haven for recreation. It abuts 167 acres of woodland NEFF is working to purchase.

“We’ll see one subdivided woodland reunited,” said Barresi. “Neighbors will continue to have the land’s trails for recreation, and the woods roads will serve the working forest. There’s potential to conserve



1,500 contiguous acres one step at a time. We're excited to help here."

The town of Waitsfield, Vermont will use its \$256,650 award for the Waitsfield Scrag Forest Gateway Project, which expands the size of the town's 640-acre Scrag Forest. The town will purchase 110 abutting acres that offer road frontage for better public access. The town will improve parking for forest visitors, an important feature that supports local economic initiatives to offer year-round outdoor recreation in this area boasting two popular ski mountains.

"Too often we see forest land subdivided, especially near resorts," said Barresi. "In Waitsfield it's being reunited, purposely, for a larger town forest that offers better access for people to go out and enjoy. We love to see that and are thrilled to be part of it."

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