



NEWS



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Appalachian Trail Land is Now Protected in Stamford and Pownal

Stamford, VT – A key section of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Long Trail in Stamford and Pownal, Vermont has been protected by adding 378 acres of land to the Green Mountain National Forest, The Trust for Public Land and U.S. Forest Service announced today.

The property contains almost a mile of the iconic Appalachian Trail and the Long Trail, the nation's oldest long-distance hiking trail that runs the length of Vermont. The property also provides access to the Broad Brook Trail, and includes the Seth Warner Shelter, used by hundreds of hikers each year.

“It’s a common misconception that the land surrounding the Appalachian Trail has been permanently protected from development, however, there are still plenty of private landholdings within the viewshed of the trail experience,” said Rodger Krussman, Vermont state director of The Trust for Public Land. “When this property went up for auction, we moved quickly, with help from Park Forestry, a private corporation who acted as a conservation buyer, to secure the property. We couldn’t have done this without generous donors and strong public funding. The two go hand-in-hand.”

David Rubin, of Park Forestry, explained, “As a member of the Green Mountain Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club, I was happy to help protect the Appalachian Trail in a State where I have forestry holdings.”

“This stretch of the Appalachian Trail was poorly protected with a limited conservation easement that covered only 100 feet on either side of the trail,” said John Sinclair, Forest Supervisor for the Green Mountain National Forest. “This was a critical piece for us to acquire. Had the property been bought for development, it could have threatened not only the trail experience, but the water source for the Seth Warner Shelter, which houses hundreds of hikers each year.”

The addition of the property to the Green Mountain National Forest will enhance protection of the Appalachian Trail and Long Trail while forever protecting significant wildlife habitat, streams, and wetlands. The property, in the center of a 51,000-acre habitat block, also contains significant bear habitat, 1.3 miles of streams, 16.5 acres of wetlands, and habitat for the state-endangered American Marten, recently rediscovered in southern Vermont a few miles from the property. Protecting this land will also sustain recreational opportunities for thousands of hikers, hunters, fishermen, snowmobilers, and other visitors.

Mike Debonis, executive director of the Green Mountain Club, stated that “Protection of this essential property is a great example of the success of the *Partnership for the Green Mountains*, a landscape-scale

collaboration by The Trust for Public Land, Green Mountain Club and Catamount Trail Association to identify and protect the most strategic and important properties in the Green Mountains. This was a crucial acquisition for the Long Trail and Appalachian National Scenic Trail. This success in Stamford and Pownal is one step towards our vision for connected and healthy wildlife habitat, accessible and well managed trail networks, and economic and social benefits for local communities.”

The \$295,000 needed for the Green Mountain National Forest to acquire the property came from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the federal government’s main source of money for protecting land. This and other conservation projects in the Green Mountain Partnership were supported by private donations and grants from the Canaday Family Charitable Trust, Sarah K. deCoizart Charitable Trust, Fields Pond Foundation and Conservation Alliance, a coalition of outdoor businesses.

LWCF, which was created by Congress in 1965, is funded through royalties paid by energy companies for offshore gas and oil drilling. U.S. Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt.; Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., supported this project and support reauthorization of LWCF, which expired for the first time on September 30th, 2015 and was recently given a three year extension as part of the Fiscal Year 2016 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. Leahy, the senior-most member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has led the charge to permanently reauthorize and fund the program.

In a joint statement, Leahy, Sanders and Welch said: “The Appalachian Trail is an iconic national treasure, and the panoramic views of the Green Mountains have long been its gem. We are glad that the LWCF was able to preserve this section of the AT and Long Trail for future generations. The LWCF is one of the most successful conservation programs in America’s history, and at no cost to taxpayers. It is shameful that it was allowed to expire, and we will continue to lead the charge for its full reauthorization.”

"The Appalachian Trail Conservancy extends many thanks to The Trust for Public Land and the Green Mountain National Forest for conserving the lands around this section of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) in southern Vermont. We are working with The Trust for Public Land throughout the length of the A.T. to add protection where the Trail remains vulnerable. Stamford is just one of dozens of places we have identified where additional corridor protection is needed," said Hawk Metheny, New England Regional Director with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. “Oftentimes protection of A.T. lands is important to more than hikers—communities value the Trail as a way to preserve local recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, cultural resources and scenic views—all things that improve the quality of life in small towns.”

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Nearly ten million people live within a ten-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. To share your story or learn more, visit www.tpl.org.

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