

Press release:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 18, 2022

Contact: Rebecca Bullis, rebecca.bullis@tpl.org, 908-329-0321

Trust for Public Land, Partners Protect Lincoln Peak, Expand Green Mountain National Forest

Over 600 acres of the south side of Lincoln Peak will protect important headwater streams, rare wildlife habitat, and create new recreation opportunities

WARREN, Vt. - Trust for Public Land and Park Forestry NY announce today the protection of over 600 acres which will be permanently conserved as additions to the Green Mountain National Forest.

Adjacent to the Sugarbush Resort and under threat of sale and fragmentation, the Lincoln Peak properties – 516 acres in Warren and 103 acres in Lincoln – boast ample recreation opportunities, important headwater streams, and rare wildlife habitat.

Lincoln Peak will buffer nearly a half-mile of the Long Trail, a National Recreation Trail and the nation's oldest long-distance hiking trail. It will also protect more than a mile of the Catamount Trail, a 300-mile ski trail that, like the Long Trail, runs the length of Vermont.

"Lincoln Peak has been a conservation priority for over three decades and I'm thrilled to be able to officially announce it is now protected," said Kate Wanner, Senior Project Manager for Trust for Public Land. "Within a day's drive of over 80 million people, this forestland offers increased opportunities to enjoy the Green Mountain National Forest and also includes old growth hemlock stands, rare plants and rare natural communities. I am particularly grateful to my hometown of Warren, who generously supported the project with \$84,000 from the Warren Conservation Fund, and who consistently demonstrate their dedication to protection of our town's natural heritage."

In addition to recreational opportunities, the property lies within the largest north-south wildlife linkage in Vermont, allowing species to take refuge across elevations as climate change brings changing temperatures. Protecting these flagship trail corridors not only benefits the recreation experience but also complements Vermont's ability to combat and adapt to climate change.

"We are extremely thankful for the energy and effort that our partners have put in to the Lincoln Peak acquisition project in the towns of Lincoln and Warren," said Chris Mattrick, Rochester District Ranger for the Green Mountain National Forest. "Their efforts will provide public benefits for generations to come including increased recreation access for Vermonters and visitors, the protection of clean water, and enhanced habitat connectivity for wildlife and plants."

When the timber rights for these parcels went on the market, Trust for Public Land and Park Forestry NY acted quickly to secure these rights while working to obtain federal funding through the Land & Water Conservation Fund and separately purchase the fee rights from other owners.

“It was a long standing objective to unify ownership of the timber rights and the underlying land to allow their entry into the Green Mountain National Forest,” explained David Rubin of Park Forestry. “We were happy to acquire and hold these multiple interests as a steward for the USFS during the lengthy process. Park Forestry and the local community appreciate the foresight and hard work of the Trust for Public Land in helping the Forest Service protect these lands.”

Protection of the property will benefit anglers, hunters, and wildlife-viewers visiting the Mad River Valley who’ll be able to enjoy the popular Lincoln Brook. Acquisition of the headwaters and recent removal of barriers along the brook also improve water quality and decrease sedimentation in this important native brook trout fishery.

The appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund was secured with support from Senator Patrick Leahy, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Representative Peter Welch. “The acquisition of the Lincoln Peak acreage will benefit Vermonters and visitors by conserving land along key recreation trails, providing access for hunting and fishing, and protecting land occupied by vulnerable species including the Northern long-eared bat and Bicknell’s thrush,” said Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. “Vermonters value our outdoor spaces, and many of us will use this land to hike, fish, hunt and ski, as will visitors to our state. Lincoln Peak is a welcome and valuable addition to the Green Mountain National Forest. I thank the Trust for Public Land for their leadership on this important conservation achievement.”

“Conserving Lincoln Peak will allow the Trust for Public Land to protect a beloved area for future generations to enjoy,” said Representative Welch. “By purchasing Lincoln Peak’s 619 acres, the Green Mountain National Forest can preserve access for skiers, hikers, and bikers, while also contributing to the region’s water quality and protecting the wildlife that pass through the project area. This project will help keep the Green Mountain state beautiful and safeguard our environment for years to come.”

In addition to funding from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the project was generously supported by the Warren Conservation Fund, the Fieldstone Foundation, Lawson’s Finest Sunshine Fund, the Oakland Foundation and many private donors.

The public can get informed and involved in future planning and management by the Green Mountain National Forest by subscribing to the quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions by emailing Jay Strand at jay.strand@usda.gov.

About Trust for Public Land

Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. As a leader in equitable access to the outdoors, TPL works with communities to create parks and protect public land where they are needed most. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 3 million acres of public land, created more than 5,000 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places, raised \$84 billion in public funding for parks and public lands, and connected more than 9 million people to the outdoors. To learn more, visit tpl.org.