

New Hampton Conservation Commission
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For Immediate Release

4300 FEET OF SNAKE PROTECTED

New Hampton Project Protects More of the Lake Waukewan Watershed

The New Hampton Conservation Commission has announced the purchase of an 8.1 acre parcel of land on the west side of the Snake River, off Waukewan Road, with almost 1500 feet of river frontage. The river flows between Winona Lake and Lake Waukewan. The land is next to an 8.5 acre parcel with about 2800 feet of river frontage that was purchased by the commission in 2010. The Snake River Conservation Area now contains virtually all the land between the railroad tracks and the river, except for the far northern end.

The newly purchased property, formerly owned by Elizabeth Clingan Baird, contains wetlands and forested buffers that serve to filter the water entering Lake Waukewan. The lake is the water supply for Meredith, and drains into Meredith Bay on Lake Winnepesaukee.

The purchase was made possible by a \$100,000 grant from the Aquatic Resources Mitigation (ARM) Fund of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES), along with \$30,000 in matching funds and contributions. The ARM Fund receives fees from development that impacts wetlands, and DES awards competitive grants to compensate for it.

The money is paying not only for the purchase, but also for environmental studies, a stewardship plan, trail design and construction, and other costs.

Meredith holds a conservation easement on the 8.1 acres, as it does on the 2010 purchase. The Meredith Conservation Commission has set aside \$10,000 for a stewardship endowment as part of the grant match. The joint cooperation by the conservation commissions of both towns is serving as a model in the state in the use of a new section of state law, RSA 36-A:4-a. That law allows for conservation commission acquisition of property rights outside of town boundaries under certain conditions. Approval by the selectmen of both towns was also required, and their assistance was instrumental in meeting both the legal and the ARM grant requirements.

The Waukewan Shore Owners Association, now known as the Windy Waters Conservancy, provided most of the rest of the match in the form of significant amounts of attorneys' time to negotiate the deal, and a grant of \$10,000 from the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative Foundation to the Conservancy that is being used for the scientific documentation, planning, and public awareness elements of the project.

New Hampton, Center Harbor, and Meredith all have frontage on Lake Waukewan. Center Harbor designated the east side of the Snake River as prime wetlands, which gives the area extra protection under state law. Lake Waukewan, like other lakes in the state, has experienced excess phosphorus concentrations, which not only threaten water quality, but can also adversely affect property values, which reduces the tax base of the towns. By protecting the river, the towns are protecting not only the environment, but also their financial assets and those of their citizens.

A Snake River Conservation Area Advisory Committee (SNARC) is meeting to consider the next steps in the project. The committee consists of representatives from the conservation commissions, the Windy Waters Conservancy, the Waukegan and Winona Watershed Protective Association, and the public.