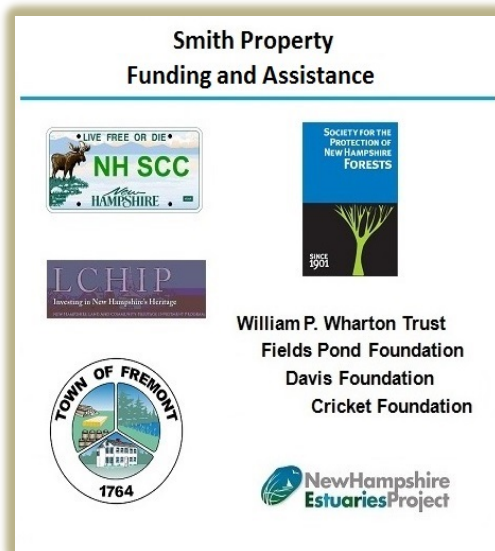


Fremont Acquires Land to Protect Spruce Swamp

The Town of Fremont recently purchased 76 acres of land from Richard and Robert Smith. The Smiths turned down offers from developers in order that the property could be conserved and enjoyed by residents of Fremont and of the surrounding communities. The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests assisted with the acquisition and will hold the Conservation Easement that insures the property will be held permanently in conservation. Protecting Spruce Swamp is a high priority of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and of the Fremont Conservation Commission.

The purchase and protection of this property has been made possible with funding from the State Conservation Committee grant program through the sale of Conservation License Plates (Moose Plates), the state's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, and several private foundations including: the Cricket Foundation, the Davis Conservation Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation and the William P. Wharton Trust. The Fremont Conservation Commission would like to thank each of these funders for their assistance with this project. The Commission would also like to thank the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests for their assistance.



The property abuts Spruce Swamp and the Glen Oakes Town Forest. It is primarily upland forest that provides shelter, food for animals such as nuts, cones and fruit, and seeds for new trees. There are wetlands on the property and good views of Spruce Swamp. The property sits between Route 125 and Spruce Swamp and insulates the Swamp from runoff and pollution that would otherwise flow into it. Without the forested landscape to provide and protect a reliable flow of clean, acidified ground water, the Swamp will die, or at least become a much more common meadow. The property drains into tributaries of the Exeter River. Since the Exeter River flows into Great Bay, protecting the property helps to maintain the water quality of the River and the Bay. There will be no increase in the nitrogen levels, pollutants, and sediments that would have occurred had this property been developed.

Spruce Swamp is one of the few wilderness areas left in southern New Hampshire. This 824 acre wetland is nestled within a large 1706 acre forest that is not segmented by roads and

buildings. This forest and wetland combination is one of the highest quality wildlife habitats in the state. At the Bioblitz in May 2011, biologists identified 104 animal and 152 plant species in the Glen Oakes Town Forest. Of those, at least thirteen species of plants and animals are endangered or threatened in New Hampshire. There are vernal pools located throughout providing habitat for amphibians and food for turtles.

Along the northern border of the Smith forest are many dense shrub thickets that provide shelter for birds. The berries provide food for a wide variety of animals. Away from the edges and into the center of the Smith property are trees that have not been harvested for 100 years or more. The property has large oak trees that probably date from the very early 1900s. An unusual large red pine was found. Red pines are extremely rare in southern NH. There is a 120-year-old white pine. There are indications that a small amount of wood has been taken out, probably for firewood. The 1938 hurricane blew down many trees in NH forests. There is no evidence that the Smith property was hard hit by this hurricane. It is known that Glen Oakes and the Smith property were both open pasture in the past. The terrain is too rocky for farmland. The stone walls were likely animal pens, pasture fences, and garden walls.



The expanded Town forest will help to protect the water quality and quantity of the aquifers underlying Spruce Swamp that recharge more than 676 wells of surrounding residences.

The abutting Glen Oakes Town Forest has about 2.5 miles of newly constructed or improved trails with maps and signs. The current trails will link walkers to the Smith property and old cellar holes, diverse natural communities, animal pens that were built from rocks and stones, and stone walls that tell us that this forested area was once dotted with farms. The new property will be added to Glen Oakes in the spring, pending voter approval.

For more information, see the Conservation Commission page on the Town website (http://fremontnh.vt-s.net/Pages/FremontNH_Bcomm/Conservation/Index) and *FremontTownForests* on Facebook.



<http://www.facebook.com/FremontTownForests>

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