



# Northern Rivers Land Trust

Volume 3

May 2010

## Mary Jane Dexter grants NRLT conservation easement on 88 acres of field and forest in North Wolcott

*In June 2009 NRLT Board members Chris Jacobs and Bob Hawk look over Mary Jane Dexter's land with her.*



In 1952 and 1954 William G. purchased two parcels, totaling 94 acres, comprising an old farm on West Hill Road in North Wolcott. The property passed to Bill's wife, Mary Jane, on his death in 1991. On Feb. 3, 2010, Mary Jane Dexter donated a conservation easement on the property to the Northern Rivers Land Trust. She has also funded the stewardship endowment for her land.

The Dexter property abuts the Zack Woods area, straddling the Hyde Park-Wolcott border, which is in the process of being conserved by the Trust for Public Land with federal Forest Legacy funds. The Dexter easement will thus extend southeastwards a protected area beginning with the Green River Reservoir State Park in Hyde Park.

According to NRLT chair Susan Houston, "The Dexter property is our young land trust's third, and by far its largest, easement. About 80 percent of the land comprises soft- and hardwood forest, while the rest consists of upland and roadside fields. The upland field offers broad views of hills eastwards as far as Greensboro. The NRLT and residents of our area can be eternally grateful to Mary Jane for her foresight and generosity in preserving this beautiful piece of land."

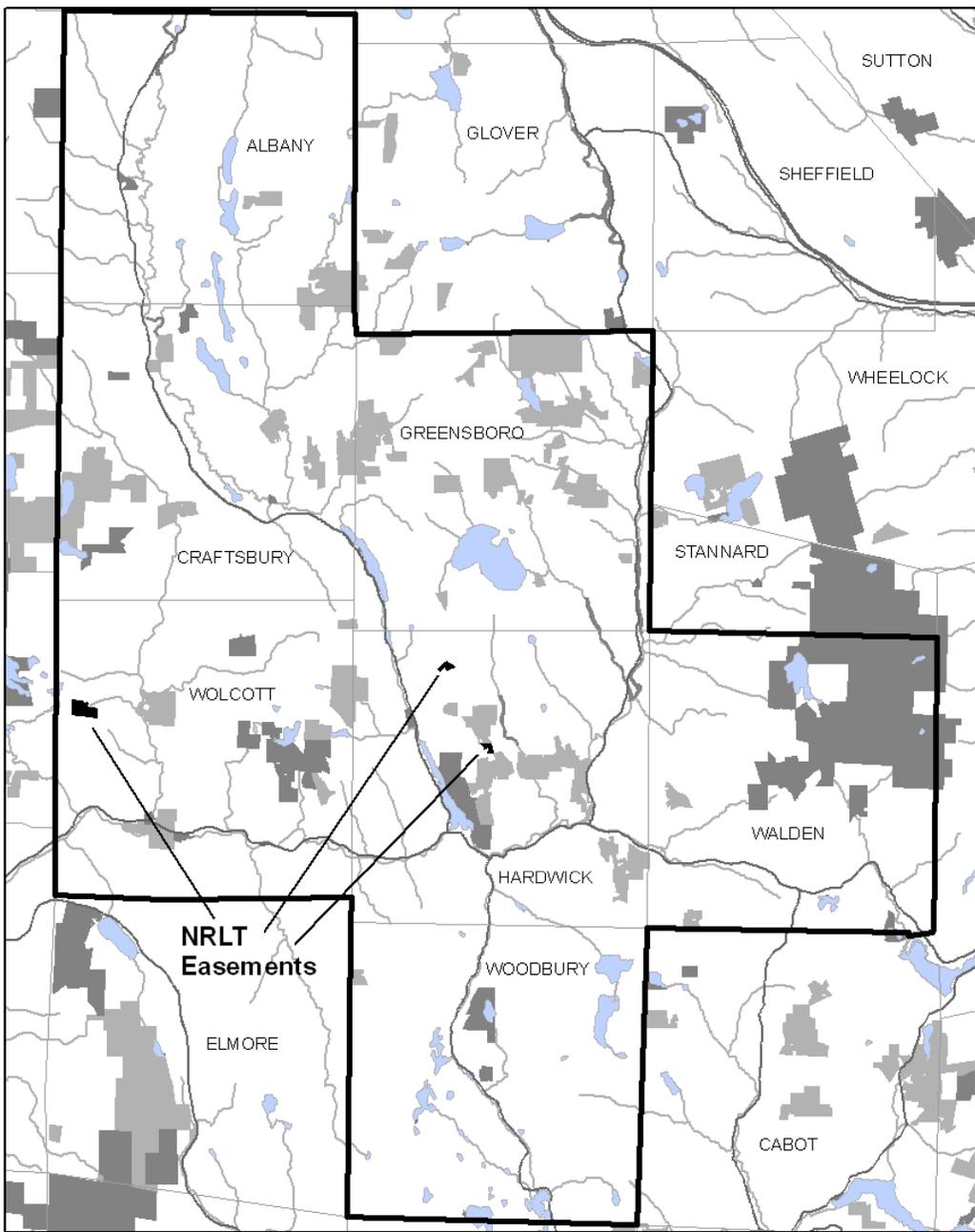
Mary Jane has allowed public access to her property via a perpetual easement granted to the Catamount Trail Association. Annually she has allowed VAST members to operate snowmobiles on a trail partially overlapping with the Catamount trail.

## Nature Conservancy donates easement on Keeler Pond parcel to NRLT

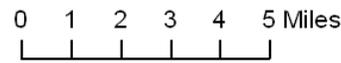
In 1999, Robert and Marjorie Reid of Greenfield, Mass. donated their camp and 32 acres on Keeler Pond in Wolcott to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), subject to a term life estate of 10 years. After the term expired, TNC executed a conservation easement on the property, donating the easement to the NRLT, and put the property on the market. This is a standard procedure with properties that TNC terms "trade-lands."

The 4-acre pond drains into Keeler Brook, which then drains successively into Tucker Brook, Alder Brook, Hardwick Lake and finally the Lamoille River. The NRLT is pleased to hold its fourth easement on this beautiful property.

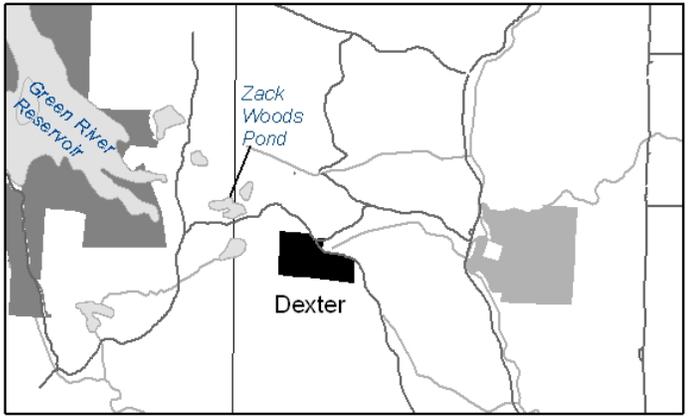
# Conserved Lands in the Northern Rivers Land Trust Region



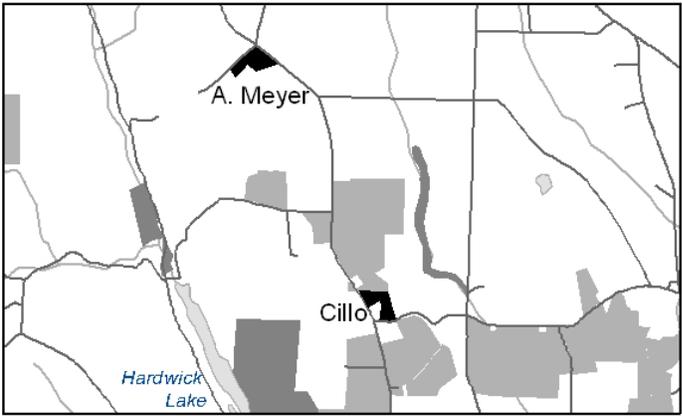
- NRTL Easements
- State and Town Lands
- Other Private Conserved Lands
- NRTL Towns
- Selected Roads
- Water



## Zack Woods Pond Area



## Bridgman Hill Area



## Woodbury Open House

Despite the threat of bad weather, several dozen members and guests of NRLT gathered for an open house on May 8 at Pat Gahagan's property in Woodbury. After an introduction by our Chairperson, a presentation on "Connectivity" by Chip Knight, and outstanding refreshments, many of those present went on exploratory walks of Pat's 100 acres.



*While one group went off on a short walk to explore a vernal pool, most joined a longer walk around her 7 acre pond, to Dog Pond Brook, other vernal pools and a fen. The pond is fed by this brook and was originally created by a dam put in by Woodbury Fishing Club and now maintained by Pat's beavers.*

## The Zack Woods Forest Legacy Project

In 2009, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), on behalf of itself, Friends of Zack Woods, and Friends of Green River Reservoir, applied for federal Forest Legacy funds to conserve 399 acres of Zack Woods land in Hyde Park and Wolcott. The land abuts the Green River Reservoir State Park to the northwest and, to the southeast, the property on which Mary Jane Dexter has donated an easement to the NRLT. The legislation underlying the Forest Legacy program was initiated by Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy in 1990.

In January 2010 TPL was informed that its application was ranked No. 12 in the country, out of approximately 70 applications nation-wide.

Final approval of the grant awaits adoption of the federal government budget in the fall of 2010. However it appears likely that funds will be forthcoming, adding a significant piece of conserved land in the forest and wetlands of North Wolcott and Hyde Park.

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## NRLT Annual Meeting Sunday, June 13 in Hardwick

The Northern Rivers Land Trust will hold its fourth annual membership meeting on **Sunday, June 13** at 7:00 p.m. at the Center for Agricultural Economy on Main Street in Hardwick. We are pleased to have Judy Geer from the Craftsbury Outdoor Center and Chelsea Little from the Center's Green Team Racing Project as our featured speakers. As the new owner of Craftsbury Outdoor Center, Judy will speak about her vision for the Center and the role conservation plays. Chelsea will explain the Green team of elite athletes and their commitment to community and conservation. The meeting will also discuss the organization's recent activities, and fill vacancies in the Board of Trustees. Residents of our seven towns—Albany, Craftsbury, Greensboro, Hardwick, Walden, Wolcott and Woodbury—are cordially invited, as are residents of other towns interested in extending the NRLT's reach. This should be an interesting evening, mark your calendars.

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## All invited to Dexter easement celebration on Sat., June 27

Here's a fun event you won't want to miss! All NRLT members, Friends of Zack Woods and community members are invited to a party on Sat, June 26 from 2 – 4pm to celebrate the conservation easement donated by Mary Jane Dexter of North Wolcott. The site: Mary Jane's house at 2385 West Hill Road. Refreshments, a few short speeches, and – best of all – Mary Jane is inviting us to walk around her beautiful 94 acre property. Bring walking shoes, your kids & your whole family!



*Looking westwards along trail easement on Mary Jane Dexter property, held by Catamount Trail Association*

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## **GLT Presentation by Keeping Track Founder Sue Morse**

On **Monday, July 26**, Sue Morse, founder and director of Keeping Track, Inc., will give a PowerPoint presentation on wild felines in North America and also talk about the status of wildlife habitat in Northern Vermont, at the **Greensboro Land Trust's** annual meeting. Sue is a nationally known naturalist and wildlife photographer. She trained and monitored the Greensboro-Craftsbury Keeping Track team. All NRLT members and friends are invited to the meeting, to take place in the Greensboro Church's Fellowship Hall, starting at 7:30 p.m.

Our new website is now up and running. We invite you all to come have a look around.

[www.northernriverslandtrust.org](http://www.northernriverslandtrust.org)

## **Hardwick Parade and Sustainability Fair**

Watch for our entry in the Hardwick Parade on **May 29<sup>th</sup>**, and we will have a booth at the Sustainability Fair thereafter.

## **Financing the NRLT**

We work with landowners who love their land and want to see it conserved. The NRLT will buy, or accept gifts of, development rights.

### **PROTECTING LAND COSTS MONEY.**

When NRLT accepts a conservation easement, it takes on a legal responsibility to make certain that the terms of the easement are carried out, essentially, forever. If, in the distant future, a new landowner misunderstands or refuses to comply with the restrictions of the easement, we are responsible to ensure that the terms of the easement are protected, by legal means if necessary. This means that we need to create an endowment for each easement, to provide for stewardship activities and legal protection. The figure that most land trusts have agreed is appropriate is \$6,000 per easement. Many important easements are donated by people who cannot afford to contribute to this endowment. So NRLT's efforts at fundraising and toward building membership are largely concerned with ensuring that we can cooperate with public-spirited landowners of great generosity but limited financial resources, so that their land can be added to the protected network of farm and forest land that we all treasure and enjoy.

We may share projects with the Vermont Land Trust, which receives funding from The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Freeman Foundation, and private donors. But mainly we will rely on funds raised from residents and friends of the towns we serve. In 2009 113 individuals donated a total of \$5,375 to the NRLT.

We will talk regularly with potential conservators, and incur expenses for appraisals, surveys, purchase of easements, and monitoring. You can help by sending a check to NRLT, Box 112, Hardwick, VT 05843.

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### ***NRLT Board of Trustees***

- Susan Houston, Craftsbury, chair
  - Steve Young, Wolcott, vice-chair
  - Bob Hawk, Walden, secretary
  - Ann Ingerson, Craftsbury, treasurer
  - Clive Gray, Greensboro, co-treasurer
  - Paul Cillo, Hardwick
  - Pat Gahagan, Woodbury
  - George Hemmens, Hardwick
  - Chris Jacobs, Albany
  - Steve Meyer, Hardwick
  - Nancy Moran, Craftsbury.
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