



Northern Rivers Land Trust

Newsletter

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www.NorthernRiversLandTrust.org

May 2011

Bryan Pfeiffer to speak at June 12 annual meeting

The NRLT's 2011 annual meeting will take place at **7:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 12, at St. John's Episcopal church in Hardwick.** All are invited. After a short business meeting, Bryan Pfeiffer will give a PowerPoint presentation on Vermont birds. The founder of Vermont Bird Tours, Pfeiffer is an author, nature photographer and conservationist. Having guided folks to birds for nearly 30 years, he co-hosts the weekly WDEV radio show "For the Birds" and is host of the VPT special *Birding in Vermont*.

NRLT acquiring its first easement in Woodbury

Pat deGogorza Gahagan is donating a conservation easement to the NRLT on her 104-acre, largely wooded property on Dog Pond Road in Woodbury. Arrangements were underway at press time.

Special features of the property include a 12-acre pond rich in wildlife, two vernal pools, and a 2-acre fen in a mixed soft-hardwood forest on variegated terrain (see adjacent photos.)

The pond was created in 1929 for a fish & game club by damming the Dog Pond outlet brook, and is significant in Woodbury's history. A smaller pond in the southern corner, now silted in, was once the site of a saw mill.

Beavers are active in the dam area, and deer, moose, otter, muskrat, fisher, mink, bobcat, black bear, barred owl, great blue heron, osprey, hooded mergansers, American mergansers, ring-necked duck, mallard, Canada geese, wood duck, and black duck have all been observed on the property.

In 2009 the Woodbury Conservation Commission surveyed the pond's plant and aquatic life, which is dominated by yellow pond lilies. The 2-acre fen features the sedge *Carex lasiocarpa*, with a large population of lesser purple-fringed orchids, and several specimens of a State-endangered native swamp thistle.

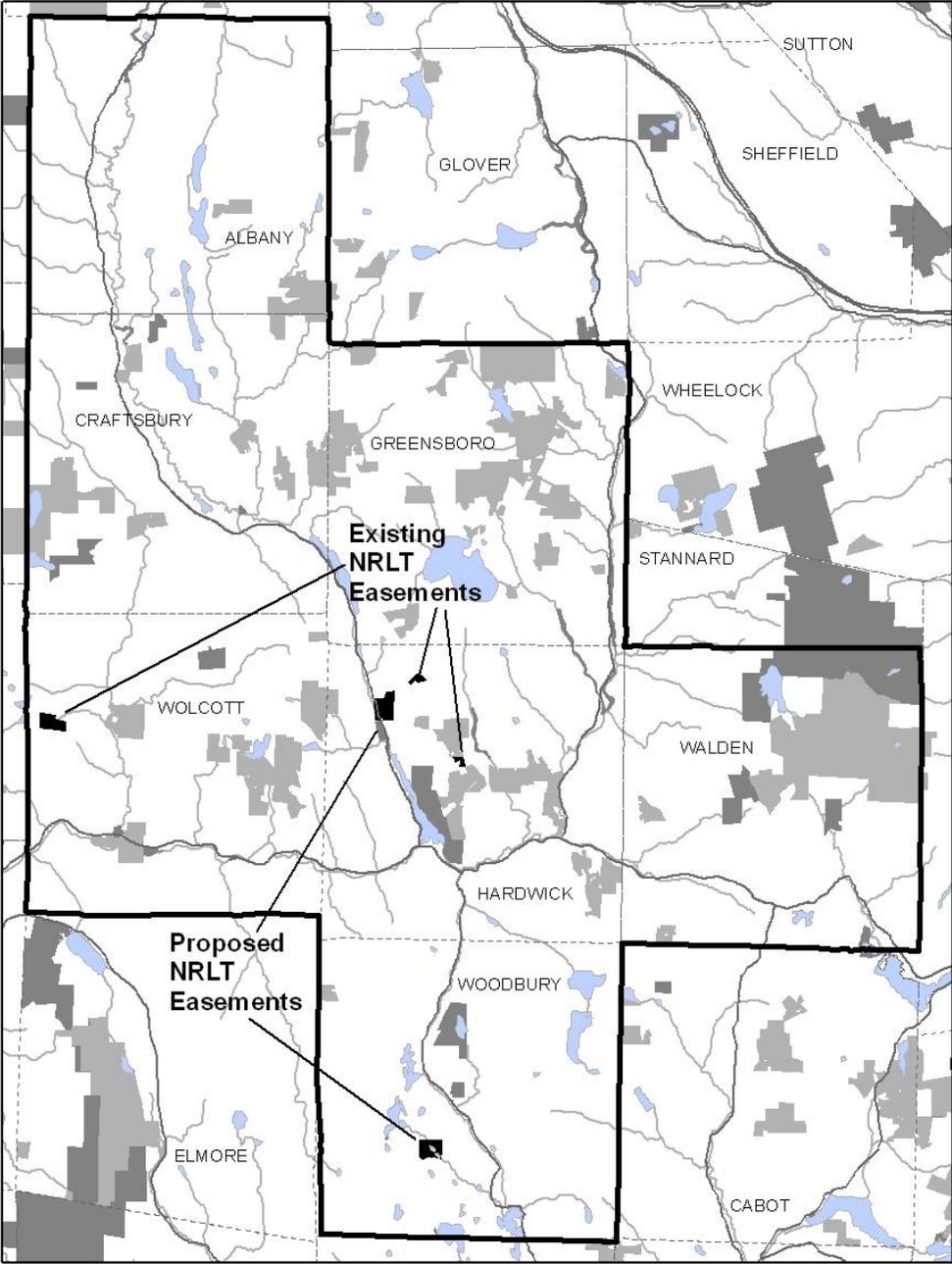


The property's northeastern part features rich hardwoods, while the northwestern woodland is steeply ledged and comprises mixed hard and softwoods of medium age. The northern corner contains a remote swamp, with spectacular boulder formations jutting up from it. Ms. Gahagan and NRLT are planning to protect 94 acres of the property, reserving two homesteads of five acres each, one of which is the landowner's current home.



Pat Gahagan (3rd from right) shows her land to Woodbury neighbors and NRLT board (photo courtesy of Nancy Moran)

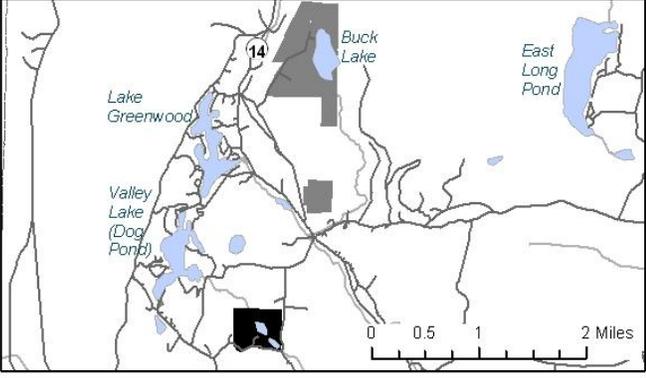
Conserved Lands in the Northern Rivers Land Trust Region



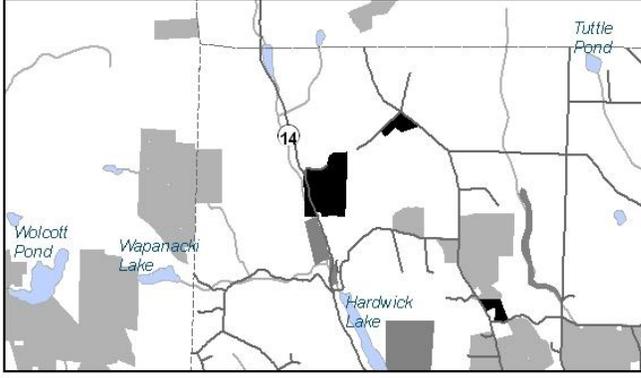
- NRLT Easements
- State and Town Lands
- Other Private Conserved Lands
- Town Boundaries
- NRLT Towns
- Selected Roads
- Water



Area of Proposed Gahagan Easement



Area of Proposed Heartbeat Easement



Hardwick's Heartbeet Lifesharing offers NRLT 75-acre easement

Heartbeet Lifesharing occupies around 150 acres of the former Town Farm near Hardwick's northern border (off Route 14). Heartbeet is one of 13 Lifesharing communities in America under the umbrella of the Camphill movement that nurture individuals with developmental disabilities. Heartbeet currently has three extended family homes which include ten "Friends," and plans to expand to six houses.

By conveying to NRLT a conservation easement on half its area, Heartbeet will be able, under Hardwick zoning regulations, to cluster its buildings, build a structure for community activities and protect its forest and farm land. Heartbeet will also have the ability to meet the needs of many new "Friends".

As we went to press, arrangements for the easement were underway.



NRLT team tours Heartbeet forest

State conservation agency's funding restored

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) is the agency to which the legislature votes money for land conservation and affordable housing. Thus far, 18 projects in the NRLT region covering 3,100 acres, mainly farms, have received VHCB funding, 16 of them through the Vermont Land Trust.

Half of the revenue from the property transfer tax is earmarked for VHCB, but the Douglas administration budgeted zero funding for conservation in 2009-10. In those years the Democratically controlled legislature restored part of the statutory funding. The budget of Governor Shumlin, elected in Nov. 2010, provided for funding VHCB at its statutory level of \$12.6 million. In the end, the legislature came very close to that figure with an appropriation of \$12 million.

New VLT & GLT easements in NRLT area

This year Mimi Grosser has donated a conservation easement on her 9.4-acre property on Little Hosmer Pond to the Vermont Land Trust (VLT). The easement will ensure that 1,700 feet of frontage on the pond remains forever wooded and undeveloped.

The VLT is working with the Greensboro Land Trust (GLT) to conserve 1,900 acres in Glover's Black Hills and the ex-Stegner woodlot in Greensboro.

In December 2010 the GLT conserved 39 acres of Gray family land on Baker Hill along Craftsbury Road.

Mid-summer Barn Party in Mill Village

NRLT members are invited to a summer barn party at Nancy Moran's, 468 Mill Village Rd., on Wednesday, July 27, 5-7 p.m. The event will celebrate Mimi Grosser's easement with the Vermont Land Trust on Little Hosmer Pond. Come and mingle with members of the Green Racing Project, Small Boat Training Center, VLT, Craftsbury Conservation Commission and Craftsbury Forestry Committee.

Other summer events

- **Birding Hike – Sat., May 28, 7 a.m.** Start at Stardust Café, Craftsbury Common. 3-4 mile hike with Eric Hanson. Call Eric at 586-8065
- **Bald Eagles Return to Vermont – Thurs., June 23, 7 p.m.** Craftsbury Public Library. John Buck, wildlife biologist, VT Fish & Wildlife.
- **GLT annual meeting Mon., July 18, 7:30 p.m.** – Tom Stearns, founder of High Mowing Seeds and president of the Center for an Agricultural Economy, will give a PowerPoint presentation on our region's food economy at the Greensboro Land Trust's annual meeting. Greensboro church, Fellowship Hall. All are welcome.
- **Paddle, Hike & Bike – August (look for posters).** Craftsbury Outdoor Center. Paddle on Big Hosmer. Call Outdoor Center, 586-7767.

About the NRLT

The NRLT is a partnership of people working together to ensure that, as Vermont changes, rural land in our region is not lost to development. We help farm families conserve productive agricultural land for future generations, preserving not only our heritage but also our economic future.

We protect forestland that supports a healthy wood products industry and sustains habitat critical for black bear, songbirds, deer, and other wildlife. We help to permanently protect irreplaceable fields, woods, and shoreline essential for recreation and scenic enjoyment. All this is done while recognizing the need for town planning that allocates portions of the landscape to residential and commercial uses.

Conserving your land

Using legal tools called "conservation easements" or "grants of development rights," the NRLT helps landowners to voluntarily limit development while keeping the land open for forestry, farming, and recreation.

Conserved property remains in private ownership with the peace of mind that it is protected now and forever. The landowner decides whether to allow public access.

Tax deduction

Easement donations qualify as charitable contributions for federal and state income and estate taxes, but do not necessarily reduce property taxes.

Financing the NRLT

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

We 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 rely on funds raised from residents and friends of the towns we serve. In 2010, 111 individuals donated a total of \$6,764.

We 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.

Visit our website to see the latest news and more details about our projects.

NRLT Board of Trustees

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Hardwick; Chris Jacobs, Albany; Steve Meyer,
Hardwick; Nancy Moran, Craftsbury.



M.J. Dexter points out her land to Wolcott neighbors and NRLT board at June 2010 celebration of her easement (photo courtesy of Nancy Moran)