

Belmont Conservation Commission celebrates \$57,270 grant award

BELMONT — Belmont Conservation Commission, created in 1967 and organized under RSA 36-A for the proper protection and utilization of natural and watershed resources of the town, has received a \$57,270 grant award from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) to support its efforts to preserve and protect an additional 78 Ac of the Tioga River Marsh and contributing uplands along the Winnepesaukee and Tioga Rivers known as the Currier-Sanborn Conservation Area.

The 42 projects receiving awards are spread all across the state, from Littleton to Nashua and Westmoreland to Star Island. Thirty-five very different communities are benefiting from the grants, from tiny Langdon (population 689) to Nashua (population 87,551). LCHIP's \$3.6 million in grants will be matched by more than \$11 million in funds from other sources. Grant amounts range from under \$4,000 to \$390,000.

This year's grant recipients include 29 historic resource projects for buildings representing nearly two centuries of New Hampshire history, from 1769 to 1967. Historic buildings include two rare remaining railroad buildings and the first monument in the country dedicated to women's service in both military and civilian roles. The thirteen natural resource projects selected for grants will ensure permanent protection of 2,100 acres. Seven farms will be protected and available for current and future food production. Other parcels increase the protected acreage on the sides of popular Mount Kearsarge and Crotched Mountain.

The Currier-Sanborn Conservation Area comprises 78 acres of wetland and upland ranked as the highest value wildlife habitat of its kind in the state. There is about a half mile of unspoiled frontage along the Winnepesaukee River, a half mile of the Tioga River and 250 feet of Silver Lake frontage. Long a duck hunter's paradise, it's evidenced by the six blinds along the Winnepesaukee River waterfront. When combined with the abutting Tioga River Wildlife and Conservation Area, there will be almost 300 acres of protected conservation land west of NH Route 140 in Belmont.

The Town of Belmont is grateful for LCHIP's award. "This investment will assist us to protect land that the Conservation Commission has identified as 'high ranking importance' for the preservation of water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation for residents, now and for generations to come," Said Denise Naiva, Chairman of the Conservation Commission.

Grant decisions are made by the 18-member LCHIP Board of Directors, following a rigorous application and review process. "The LCHIP Board of Directors and staff have the responsibility and privilege of helping to protect natural, cultural, and historic resources across New Hampshire," observed LCHIP Board Chair Amanda Merrill, a former state senator and representative from Durham.

She continued "It's a pleasure to work with dedicated colleagues from non-profits, local government, and citizen groups to preserve the places that make our state special."

For more information about the Belmont Conservation Commission, visit <http://www.belmontnh.org/boardconservation.asp> or call 267-8300, ext. 125.

About New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program is an independent state authority that provides matching grants to New Hampshire communities and non-profits to protect and preserve the state's most important natural, cultural and historic resources. Its legislatively mandated mission is to ensure the perpetual contribution of these resources to the economy, environment, and quality of life in New Hampshire. Since its inception in 2000, the program has provided 385 grants which have helped to conserve more than 279,000 acres of land for food production, water quality, ecological values, timber management and recreation including hunting and fishing and supported 241 projects to rehabilitate historic structures and sites. Grants have been awarded in all parts of the state and in 153 of New Hampshire's communities. Forty million dollars of state money have leveraged more than \$280 million in funds from other sources. LCHIP grants are supported by fees on four documents recorded at the Registry of Deeds in every county of the state.

For more information about LCHIP, visit lchip.org or call 224-4113.

Perry Smith — Courtesy Rick Ball, Belmont Land Use Technician, LCHIP Executive Director Dijit Taylor, Board President Amanda Merrill and Denise Naiva, Chairman of the Belmont Conservation Commission attended the presentation of the LCHIP awards.