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Lakes Region groups among those that share LCHIP money

By THOMAS P. CALDWELL, THE LACONIA DAILY SUN Dec 7, 2018 Updated Dec 7, 2018

CONCORD — Several projects in the greater Lakes Region are beneficiaries of grants from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, including Belmont's Save Our Gale School Committee.

Belmont's \$110,000 grant, announced on Friday, will help toward the relocation of the historic school, built in 1894, to a new site where it can be converted into agency or professional space. The Laconia Area Land Trust has agreed to purchase the building for \$1 and redevelop it, once it is on a new site.

The committee has estimated that it will cost \$395,000 to purchase land and move the building. The Shaker Regional School District has agreed to provide \$70,000 toward the effort, so the LCHIP grant brings the support to \$180,000. The Save Our Gale School Committee also has established an account at Franklin Savings Bank and a GoFundMe page for donations as it works toward the August 2019 deadline for moving the school.



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The Gale School is one of the projects listed on the 2017 Seven to Save list by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, and last July it was named to the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places.

Built by Cyris Norris, the building — named after Napoleon B. Gale, a state legislator who served in 1867 and 1868 and left \$10,000 to the town — has served generations of Belmont students.

Tilton School

The Tilton School received a \$9,250 grant to help study the needs and prioritize the options for the 1863 Tilton Mansion, which currently serves as faculty housing and a library and arts center.

Built by Charles E. Tilton — whose impact on Tilton and Northfield includes the Tilton Arch, fashioned after the Arch of Titus, and the downtown statues — the original portion of the mansion is in the Mansard of the Second Empire style, with hipped roof, while the remainder of the building carries more Gothic features.

The Tilton family sold the mansion to Dr. and Mrs. Charles Powers in 1952. They planned to turn it into a nursing home but, instead, operated a boarding house until the private school purchased it in 1962. It became a library and, later, a dormitory for 40 boys. In 1980, the stables were turned into the Daly Arts Center.

“The Tilton Mansion is an iconic landmark for the town of Tilton and is a beautiful and important part of our historic downtown,” Tilton Selectman Pat Consentino said. “I encourage Tilton School to continue their good stewardship of the mansion.”

Recognizing several building issues that will require significant capital investment, the school applied for the LCHIP grant to create a blueprint for future phases of building restoration.

“We’re so honored to be chosen for the planning study,” said Head of School Peter Saliba. “This investment and partnership will allow us to secure the longevity of the building as it continues to serve as a signature of the local community and our school.”

Other grantees

The Land and Community Heritage Investment Program provided \$130,000 in a follow-up award from last year’s planning grant to help the Lakes Region Model Railroad Museum save, rehabilitate, and reuse the Wolfeboro Railroad Freight shed, a rare railroad service building.

Canterbury Shaker Village received a \$97,339 grant to assist with the preservation of the Turning Mill Pond, a key feature of both the landscape and the industrial history of the National Historic Landmark District.

The Tuftonboro Conservation Commission received a \$72,500 grant to help protect 140 acres of Great Meadow, a high-value wetland complex that feeds into Lake Winnepesaukee. It is seen as helping to secure the town's long-term water supply goals.

In all, the program awarded \$3.9 million in matching grants to 42 projects across the state. Grant recipients are required to provide at least one matching dollar from another source for every dollar received from the state through LCHIP. This year, the grantees will provide more than \$3.70 for each state dollar.

The smallest grant is \$7,500 for a planning study to help the Great North Woods Committee for the Arts explore what is needed to convert the former Shrine of Our Lady of Grace into a cultural and arts center. The largest grant of \$350,000 will help the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire create the Birch Ridge Community Forest in New Durham.

The 18-member LCHIP Board of Directors selects the grant recipients. The board's legislatively mandated mission is to ensure the perpetual contribution of historic and cultural resources to the economy, environment, and quality of life in New Hampshire.