

Views from Mount Grace

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C O N S E R V I N G T H E L O C A L L A N D S C A P E TM



This view of Mt. Monadnock is from the New England National Scenic Trail. Securing a permanent route for the Trail, which draws thousands of hikers each year, has been one of many benefits of the Metacomet-Monadnock Forest Legacy Project.

Northfield Mount Hermon School Protects Scenic Trail

BY DAVID KOTKER

Just west of Crag Mountain, New England's National Scenic Trail heads east toward the Warwick town line and nearby Mt. Grace.

Northfield Mount Hermon School has now protected this section of the trail, selling 117-acres of land, including _ miles of trail, to Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust as part of the Metacomet-Monadnock Forest Legacy Project.

"Northfield Mount Hermon School and Mount Grace have been collaborating on this effort for over five years," explained Bob Macomber (NMH '60), a former trustee of the school who helped negotiate the

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Serving:

Ashburnham

Athol

Barre

Bernardston

Erving

Gardner

Gill

Greenfield

Hardwick

Hubbardston

Leyden

Montague

New Salem

Northfield

Orange

Petersham

Phillipston

Royalston

Templeton

Warwick

Wendell

Westminster

Winchendon

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Protects Scenic Trail

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sale. "It became clear that this land could be a central piece to the Northfield section of the National Scenic Trail because it provides a more direct and more attractive hiking connection for adjacent sections of the Trail. With the opportunity to participate in both a healthy recreational use and a long term conservation effort, the NMH Board readily approved this conveyance."

Mount Grace will transfer the property to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in 2012, when it will be added to the Northfield State Forest.

"We have a truly awe-inspiring wetland system and wilderness back there," said Mount Grace Conservation Director David Graham Wolf. "The property is part of a nearly 8,000-acre roadless area, making it a very significant biodiversity hot spot for our region. This is a big win for land conservation."

This is the seventh property protected through the Metacomet-Monadnock Forest Legacy Project. Partners in the project include local towns, Mount Grace, the Massachusetts

Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Greater Northfield Watershed Association, and the USDA Forest Service, which provided a \$1,645,000 grant to conserve the land. Northfield Mount Hermon's decision to join in the Forest Legacy application was a major factor that played into the award of the grant. Mount Grace has conserved more than 4,000 acres in Franklin and Worcester Counties through the Forest Legacy program.

"Mount Grace has done an exceptional job of securing parcels that exemplify the natural beauty of the region in order to protect it for future generations," said Congressman John Olver. "This acreage is located in the heart of a region with strong economic ties to forestry, recreation, and tourism. Conserving this land protects not only this unique economic asset but also critical habitat for forest interior species and the viewshed for the New England National Scenic Trail."

Other grants in support of the project were provided by the Bafflin Foundation, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, and the Fieldstone Foundation.