



**MONADNOCK  
CONSERVANCY**

Together, protecting forever  
the land we love

**Newsletter**

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

# This Land Is Farmland

The region's largest dairy  
farm now conserved

**Chickering Farm, in Westmoreland, N.H., has been in the Chickering family for more than 200 years.**

Eighty-five-year-old Arthur "Jim" Chickering is the sole owner of the farm and manages its day-to-day operations, including the care of 400 dairy cows. The 350-acre farm is one of the last of its kind in the area and the largest remaining dairy farm in the Monadnock region. →

## This Land Is Farmland, *continued*

Jim has spent his whole life working the land, and his deep connection to it motivated him to conserve the property. With dairy farming an increasingly difficult business, there was a high risk that the land would be lost to development, but Jim refused to let that happen.

As Jim explained, “I couldn’t bear to see my fields plowed over for houses. This land — this good soil — is meant to be farmed. I’m so glad to know that the land will stay in farming and that future generations can enjoy the land as much as I have.”

The farm is rich with history as well as biodiversity. It is located along Route 63 and has been farmed by the Chickering family for six generations, since 1801. The property stretches for more than a mile along the Connecticut River, and it includes

“*This land —  
this good  
soil — is  
meant to be  
farmed.*”

— Jim Chickering

prime agricultural soils and forested floodplain, both rare resources in the state. A variety of wildlife, including bald eagles, deer, bear, and coyote, call the farm home.

Mill Brook, with its refreshingly cool water and deep pools, is a favorite swimming spot for locals and has long been open to the public. Now that the land is protected, people will get to continue enjoying this special place in perpetuity.

## Thank You

The Chickering Farm is the largest farmland project to date to be protected with the Conservancy. Its success is in large part due to the generous support of the USDA’s Agricultural Land Easement program, the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the 1772 Foundation, the Russell Farm and Forest Conservation Foundation, the Thomas W. Haas Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the New Hampshire State Conservation Committee’s “Moose Plate” Grant Program, the Town of Westmoreland, and several anonymous donors.



# Siblings' Foresight

## Keeping a corner of Keene rural and scenic

**Charlie Domina fondly recalls the time he spent on his family's land** on Daniels Hill Road in Keene. He enjoyed frequent wildlife sightings through the years and, as a kid, climbing trees and doing chores.

"I remember sleeping on the porch and hearing the whippoorwills. We used to spend a lot of time walking in the woods, climbing trees. There was no running water in the house, so we had to fetch all of the water from the spring behind the house. That was my duty to go down there with a pail," Charlie said.

Charlie and his sister, Judy Dimock, were inspired to protect this special place. One reason was that their late sister, Emily Stone, requested it — so they made the decision in her honor.

"It was really her wish; she wanted it preserved. I think our mother would have liked it as well," Charlie reflected.

A second reason was that they believe in the importance of conservation. The recently donated conservation easements enlarge an existing 800-acre block of conserved land, which includes the Horatio Colony

Nature Preserve. By protecting the property, it will never lose its integrity as undeveloped land and forest — especially the quarter mile of scenic road frontage along Route 9.

"We always thought conservation was a good thing to do. It's a good way to preserve it, and obviously we don't want it developed. It's an important piece of property for Keene. It's close to the center of town, but it's really still quite rural. It will be nice to maintain it that way," Charlie concluded.



# Woods, Water, Wildlife

## A family's decision about the land honors dad

**The Royce family knew William “Billy” Royce would have wanted to protect the land,** even though he didn't get the opportunity to do so in his lifetime. Billy had a natural love for the outdoors, took pride in his large vegetable garden, and was known for his large woodpiles that he single-handedly split and stacked.

“He believed in land, he cared for land,” said his son-in-law Kit Shotton.

Billy raised cows and pigs for meat and chickens for eggs on the small family farm that he ran on the property. He also tapped maple trees and produced maple syrup. The fields were hayed and used for pasture. During Billy's later years, the fields grew in, but his daughter Beth has started to reclaim

them, revive the large garden, plant new apple trees in the orchard, and raise goats and chickens. She also led her family in conserving the land with the Monadnock Conservancy in honor of Billy.

The 110-acre property in Jaffrey, N.H., is predominantly forested. It has one mile of frontage along Mountain Brook Reservoir, a publicly accessible body of water that has potential as a future drinking water source. There is a variety of habitat for animals such as deer, beaver, turtles, and loons.

“If we couldn't have saved the land, I would have had to leave the area because I couldn't drive by and see it built up. Now I don't have to worry about that,” Beth shared.

“*We care about our mountain, we care about our area.*”

– Beth Royce

### Thank You

Funding for this project was generously provided by the USDA's Agricultural Land Easement program, the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the New Hampshire State Conservation Committee's “Moose Plate” Grant Program, the Jaffrey Conservation Commission, and C&S Wholesale Grocers Inc.



# A Place for Porcupines

## Couple wants all critters to have a forever home

**When you talk to David and Louisa Birch about the land, you'll quickly hear about their love of wildlife.** The Birches are especially delighted to share that the 364 acres they own between Old Marlborough and Old Troy roads in Dublin, N.H., is home to American kestrel, deer, bear, moose, and especially porcupines.

There are two porcupine families that live on the property, one of which has been there for four generations. David and Louisa have observed each generation, giving some of the porcupines nicknames — Hortense, Harriet, Henrietta, Homer — and teaching their dog to give them the space they need to breed and thrive.

“A couple of years ago, in the spring, I looked out the window and there

was a mother with her baby. She was patting her baby while nursing,” Louisa recalled. “No one could hate porcupines after seeing that.”

David and Louisa feel passionately about the wildlife and wanted to be certain that the woods, meadows, and streams will continue to be safe places for the critters to live and breed — even after they no longer live in Dublin. They have seen what can happen when habitat was carved into building lots on the Jaffrey side of the mountain, which is why they chose to donate a conservation easement on their land to the Monadnock Conservancy.

“Now the critters will have the land,” David said, sharing why he was committed to conservation. “It’s wonderful to have habitat like this where the animals feel comfortable and can move freely.”

“Now the critters will have the land.”

— David Birch

## Thank You

The Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership awarded grant monies toward this project.



# Gramwick Trail Ribbon Cutting & Hike

Join us for the formal opening of this pondside trail

**You are invited to the dedication of the Gramwick Trail** on our Mountain Brook Reservoir property in Jaffrey, N.H., on **Saturday, June 22, at 11 a.m.** Property donors and long-time trail stewards Herb and Colette Gramm, along with Tom Sedgwick's family, will share a few words about their love for the land and why they decided to create a trail and work with the Monadnock Conservancy to protect it for future generations. There will be two guided options for the hike: a short, easy walk that will take about 40 minutes round-trip or a longer, more moderate hike that will take about 60 minutes. You are welcome to decide that day which hike you prefer. For more information and to RSVP, please email Lindsay Taflas at [Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org) or call her at 603-357-0600, ext. 113.



Top and right: Emily Hague. Bottom left: Katrina Farmer.

## Kick Up Your Heels!

A harvest barn dance to celebrate 30 years of local land conservation

**The Monadnock Conservancy is turning 30** — what a great excuse for a party! Come for a fun, family-friendly evening of dancing and good eating at Mayfair Farm in Harrisville, N.H., on **Saturday, November 2, from 5 to 8 p.m.** Highlights include tours of the farm, where you'll find pigs, sheep, chickens, and stunning views from the green pastures; a live band; farm-to-table fare; and a cash bar. The evening wouldn't be complete without outdoor games and a campfire (bring your S'mores stick). Reserve tickets in advance before they sell out: \$30 per adult, \$10 for ages 7–12, children 6 and under are free. Please get your tickets online (see our Facebook page) or at the Monadnock Conservancy office. For more information, please email Lindsay Taflas at [Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org) or call her at 603-357-0600, ext. 113.



Alison Marie Photography

# Today, next month, and into the future

## Your help is key to sustaining conservation in our region

Monthly donors provide a regular stream of revenue that allows us to focus more on the conservation of special places — such as farmland, woodland trails, and wildlife habitats — and less on fundraising.

Jack Calhoun and Beth Healy recognized right away that giving a monthly donation affords such opportunities. And, Jack said, it's better for their personal cash flow.

Will you join Jack and Beth and become a monthly donor today? It's safe, hassle-free, and easy.

Please email Lindsay Taflas, development director, at [Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org) or call her at 603-357-0600, ext. 113. Monthly gifts can be set up to be paid directly from your bank account, credit card, or debit card.



### Thank you to our current monthly donors...

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“To ensure that opportunities for wildlife sightings and spiritual restoration are available for future generations, we choose a monthly sustaining donation.”

— Jack Calhoun & Beth Healy,  
Harrisville

### Would you like to further your support?



If you'd like to contribute to this year's annual fundraising campaign, please email Lindsay Taflas, development director, at [Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org](mailto:Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org) or call her at 603-357-0600, ext. 113. Or, you can use the enclosed reply envelope or donate online at [MonadnockConservancy.org](http://MonadnockConservancy.org). Thank you!



Together, protecting forever  
the land we love

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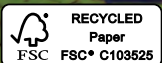
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**Save the Date!**  
**30th Annual Celebration**  
Saturday, September 14, 2019, 9 to 11 a.m.  
Alumni Recital Hall, Redfern Arts Center  
Keene State College, Keene, N.H.

Emily Hague



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