

## Land Conservation in Merrimack

When landowners consider the long-term options for their farm, forest or similar open space parcel they are often challenged in finding a source of information on the process of land conservation and the available opportunities. With children moving away, not always sharing an interest in the land along with the increasing costs of maintaining the farm or forest land, one option is to sell the family land to a developer. Not everyone wants to take that course of action but finding and understanding other options is not an easy task.

The Merrimack Conservation Commission (MCC) is able to offer a limited amount of guidance – contact [merrimackoutdoors@merrimacknh.gov](mailto:merrimackoutdoors@merrimacknh.gov) for information. Some individuals prefer not to seek assistance from a public organization. There are several other resources including the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (the Forest Society), local land trusts such as the Souhegan Valley Land Trust and several national organizations.

Recently the MCC was contacted by The Russell Foundation and after reviewing their land conservation program we believe it is a viable option for your consideration. The Russell Foundation has a primary mission to protect and preserve the natural attributes of open space. They have concentrated their efforts in the Piscataquog River Watershed since establishment in 2003 as a private foundation. They are now expanding their services to Merrimack and other surrounding towns. In addition to offering land conservation information to interested Merrimack landowners, on a no-cost basis, they also provide funding for land and water conservation activities.

Director Ian McSweeney will meet with private landowners and answer their questions about protecting the land they value. Ian will explain the ins and outs of conservation easements – a means to protect the land you own without surrendering your ownership and management options. The Russell Foundation is familiar with local, state and federal protection options including the tax implications. They are able to work hand in hand with private landowners, community groups, conservation partners and others to permanently protect open spaces.

To contact Director Ian McSweeney call 603-801-3120 or email [Ian@russellfound.org](mailto:Ian@russellfound.org) and sit down over a cup of coffee and learn more about the options available to conserve the land you value.