

## **Warrant Article #13**

### **What is Article 13?**

- ◆ Article 13 requests the town to raise \$80,000 (4.9% of the cost of the easements) to join with a qualified land trust and USDA (NRCS) to purchase conservation easements for development rights on the Frye and High Mowing lands.
- ◆ If Article 13 is approved, Town of Wilton will hold development rights in perpetuity, and the land will be protected forever.
- ◆ The Wilton Conservation Commission, the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee, and the Souhegan Valley Land Trust have voted to support Warrant Article 13. The Winter Wanderers Snowmobile Club also support Article 13.

### **What is a conservation easement?**

- ◆ A conservation easement is not a deed to the land itself. It permanently conveys specific rights, defined in the easement, to a qualified organization such as a land trust, to hold and enforce the conditions of the easement.
- ◆ The original owner or owners continue to own the actual land, subject to those conditions. These rights prohibit building sub-divisions, industrial parks, certain structures, mining the land, and so forth - those activities that destroy the environmental values of the property. Activities that are compatible with the natural environment, like farming, fishing, forestry and passive recreation, are supported.

### **What are the benefits?**

- ◆ Wilton's investment toward these easements will ensure public access and grant the Town participation in the wording of the easements.
- ◆ Wilton's contribution to the purchase of the easements will open doors with other granting organizations that would not otherwise contribute without local support, greatly leveraging the town's contribution.
- ◆ The 154+/- acres to be conserved are the highest-ranking un-conserved contiguous parcels of land in Town of Wilton Natural Resource Inventory and will create over 460 +/- acres of contiguous conserved land on Abbot Hill.

### **What are the benefits of conserving land?**

- ◆ Wildlife and habitat protection, farmland soils, and well head protection are a sound investment in the wealth of the future.
- ◆ Open land contributes to the attractiveness of the town for residents, visitors, and businesses, bringing revenue into the town.
- ◆ Residential development on this acreage would cost the town far more every year than the one-time amount requested for the conservation easements.
- ◆ Conserved land does not lose its value, add to town budget deficits, or require expensive town services.

### Tax Facts:

- ◆ The easement on the Frye land is being purchased at full market appraised value, not donated by the Fryes, therefore, there are no tax advantages for the Fryes.
- ◆ The portion of Frye land placed under conservation easement would remain in Current Use. The Town received \$522 in 2013 on their parcels. This will not change.
- ◆ High Mowing School has paid property taxes to the town of Wilton for over 70 years, and is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest taxpayer (residential, commercial, and industrial) in the town of Wilton.
- ◆ **A town contribution of \$80,000 will cost the average household a one time only tax of \$50**

### Project Facts

- ◆ The purchase price of the two easements on the Frye land and High Mowing land is \$1,627,882.50
- ◆ High Mowing School will purchase the Frye land with funds from private donors once the conservation easements are in place. The School will not hold any interest in the conservation easements, in accordance with Federal Law.
- ◆ This will be a separate sale from the purchase of the easements, which will occur after the easements are in place. Town money will not be used for the purchase of the Frye land.
- ◆ HMS is investing in this conservation project with a focus on the long-term future, during which time HMS will continue to pay property tax to the town of Wilton, as defined by NH law.

### Project Costs

* Frye Conservation Easement	\$1,020,000.00
* High Mowing School Conservation Easement	<u>427,882.50</u>
* TOTAL Conservation Easement purchase cost	1,447,882.50
* Total Conservation Easement Project costs	<u>180,000.00</u>
* TOTAL COSTS	\$1,627,882.50
<b>Funds allocated to date:</b>	
* NRCS Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) Grant allocation for Frye Land	\$510,000.
* NRCS (FRPP) Grant allocation for High Mowing Land	\$285,255.
<b>Costs covered to date:</b>	
* Costs covered by High Mowing for contract escrow deposit	\$80,000.
* Project costs covered by High Mowing, to date	\$40,000. +/-
* Project costs covered by the Russell Foundation, to date	\$10,000.
* Project management costs covered by Yggdrasil Land Trust	\$70,000. +/-