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PROTECTION
OF
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FORESTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPNHF TEAMS UP WITH DURHAM TO PROTECT RIVER LAND

[DURHAM] — The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) recently sold a 18.7-acre tract of land on the Lamprey River to the town of Durham for permanent protection. The scenic parcel has more than 500 feet of frontage on the Lamprey, and is located between town-owned land at the historic Wiswall Dam and Packers Falls. The Lamprey is one of two nationally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in New Hampshire.

The land's former owners, Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair Weeks, Jr. of Concord, Massachusetts donated the property to SPNHF in 1993 with the understanding that the conservation organization would eventually sell it with deed restrictions. This way, the long-time SPNHF members were able to protect their ecologically significant property and provide financial support to SPNHF's land conservation programs.

After SPNHF received the donation, Dave Funk, chair of the Durham Conservation Commission, suggested the town of Durham should buy it because it is located in their high-priority conservation area. "We have been looking forward to protecting this land for a long time," said Funk. "This property is an asset for the town and, combined with our other parcels, has great recreation potential." SPNHF sold the land for half its potential value as a house lot. The purchase was approved by the Durham Town Council on January 26 and purchased with the town's Conservation Fund, raised in part from current use change tax penalties.

SPNHF director for land conservation, Paul Doscher, noted that this property is an important step in securing further protection for the Lamprey River. "The generosity of conservation-minded landowners like the Weekses is key to protecting the exceptional natural values that qualified the Lamprey as a Wild and Scenic River," Doscher pointed out. "Federal designation recognizes the river's value, but it imposes no regulation of land use. If this beautiful river is to remain truly wild and scenic, it must be voluntarily protected by the river's landowners. Mr. and Mrs. Weeks, SPNHF, and the Town of Durham have set an example we hope others will follow."

Judith Spang of Durham, chair of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, expressed enthusiasm about the Weeks tract deal. The Committee is seeking to protect a number of other Lamprey parcels and has several landowners interested in selling or donating conservation easements. A conservation easement leaves the land in the hands of its owners, but prevents development and other uses that would damage its natural values.

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1901 that has helped protect over one million acres in the state. SPNHF has programs in land protection, environmental education, advocacy, and sustainable forestry. Contact them at (603)224-9945 or visit their web site at www.spnhf.org.