



# NEWS

**For Immediate Release**  
**April 3, 2013**

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## **PURCHASE OF LAND PROTECTS WATER FOR DURHAM AND U.N.H.**

**DURHAM, N.H.** - The successful purchase and conservation of 171 acres in Sprucewood Forest along the Oyster River in Durham will permanently protect drinking water for the town and for the University of New Hampshire, The Trust for Public Land announced today.

“The Oyster River is one of the primary sources of drinking water for both residents of the town and students at the university. Protecting Sprucewood Forest will also help safeguard the Spruce Hole aquifer – a future source of water for Durham and UNH – resulting in a clean water supply for almost 16,000 people on the municipal water system,” said Gregg Caporossi, Project Manager for The Trust for Public Land. “This effort fits clearly with our mission of protecting land for people and is reflected in the way that this community responded to the opportunity to protect their most valuable resource - water.”

“The purchase of this property builds on Durham’s long history of protecting land around the Spruce Hole bog and aquifer. The future well site and the majority of the aquifer will be on properties now owned and/or controlled by the Town of Durham. It’s been a terrific project, whose success reflects the extraordinary coordination, creativity, and dedication of our partners, The Trust for Public Land and the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service. We count ourselves very fortunate,” notes Robin Mower, Durham Town Councilor.

"The project protects an undeveloped buffer along 4,640 feet of the Oyster River, a tidal tributary to the Great Bay. The preservation of the shoreline significantly enhances the ability of wildlife to move across this densely populated area and will provide water quality protection to the Great Bay estuary," said Thomas Burack, Commissioner for the NH Department of Environmental Services.

In addition to protecting water, Sprucewood Forest provides excellent wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Of critical importance, the property contains suitable habitat for New England Cottontail, a state-listed Endangered Species. Sprucewood Forest is now part of the conservation and recreation fabric along the Oyster River, connecting over 2,200 acres of existing conserved land and trails, including the recently acquired Amber Acres farm, as well as iconic properties such as College Woods and Spruce Hole Bog, a National Natural Landmark.

“Working together with partners such as The Trust for Public Land ensures that communities like Durham can maintain a sustainable supply of clean drinking water, abundant recreational opportunities, and unique wildlife habitat for years to come,” said Rick Ellsmore, NRCS NH State Conservationist.

The Trust for Public Land raised more than \$4 million to buy the land, and is selling it to the Town of Durham. Money for the purchase came from a variety of federal, state local and private sources. The major portion, \$2.46 million, was funded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Wetlands Reserve Program. Additional funds included \$500,000 from the NH Aquatic Resource Mitigation Program, \$111,700 from NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) and the NH Mooseplate Program, along with \$20,000 from the Lamprey River Advisory Committee. These grant awards were matched by \$375,000 from the Town of Durham's Conservation Fund and complemented by over \$556,000 in gifts from 115 private individuals and foundations from Durham and the greater Seacoast.

Founded in 1972, The Trust for Public Land is the leading nonprofit working to conserve land for people. Operating more than 30 offices nationwide, The Trust for Public Land has protected more than three million acres from the inner city to the wilderness and helped generate more than \$34 billion in public funds for conservation. Nearly ten million people live within a ten-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. Learn more at [tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org) (<http://www.tpl.org/>).

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