



Hazen Land Purchase

Public Information Session

March 1, 2016

Amherst Town Library

Amherst, NH

The Opportunity



- The Town of Amherst and Piscataquog Land Conservancy (PLC) have the opportunity to purchase three lots totaling 227 acres +/- of undeveloped land, and protect them as permanent conservation land for the people of Amherst.
- The purchase price is \$1 million. \$450,000 would come from Amherst taxpayers via Town Warrant Article #31, which will be voted on next Tuesday, March 8th.
- Article 31 is unanimously supported by the Amherst Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen and Ways and Means Committee.

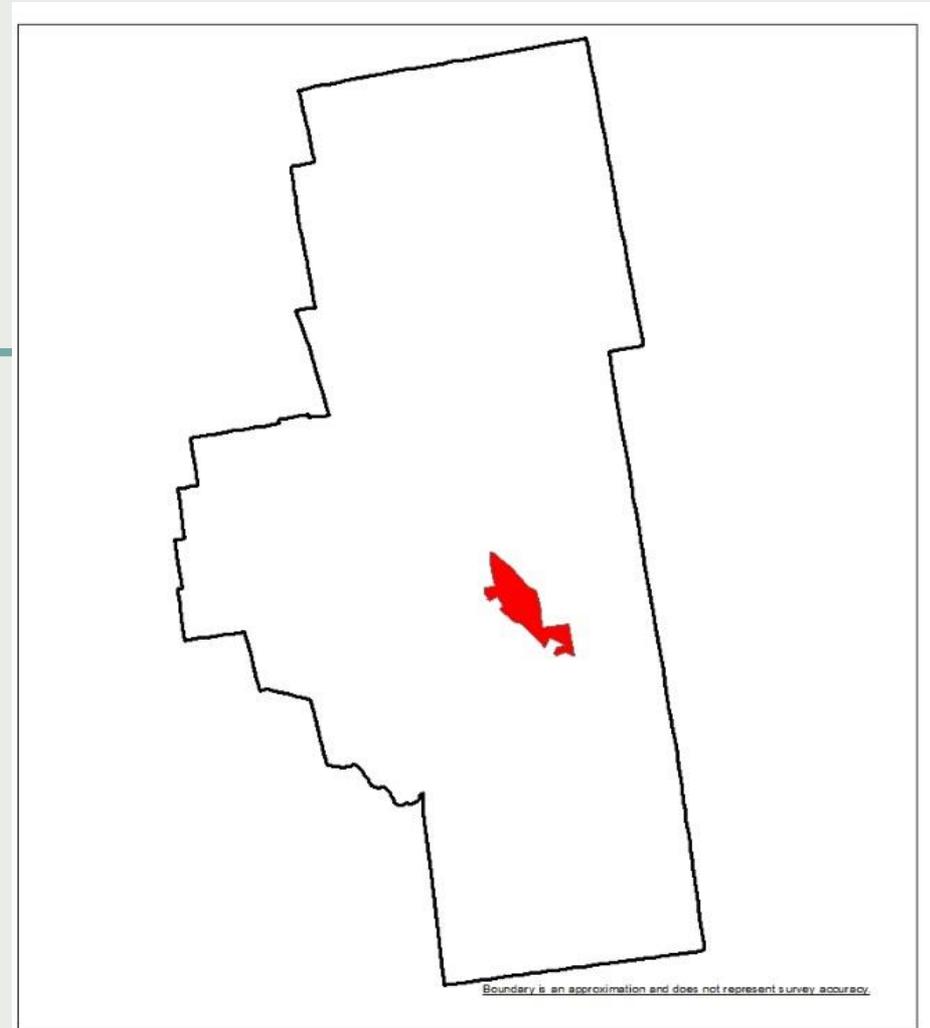
Who is PLC?



- The Piscataquog Land Conservancy (PLC) is a private non-profit land conservation organization (or “land trust”) based in New Boston.
- PLC was founded in 1970, has a staff of four, and currently owns or holds easements on 104 properties totaling more than 6,200 acres.
- PLC recently expanded their service area to be available to help towns in the Souhegan watershed, including Amherst.
- The Amherst Conservation Commission reached out to PLC in December 2015 to see if we could help with the Hazen lands.

Where is the land?

- Bounded by Spring, County and Upham Roads.
- Located about a mile and a half southeast of the Amherst Town center, 1.5 miles from the Souhegan Woods Golf Club, 2 miles from the High School.



 Hazen Project
 Amherst Boundary

Locator Map

Hazen Tracts
227.5 +/- Acres
Amherst, NH



0 3,100 6,200 Feet



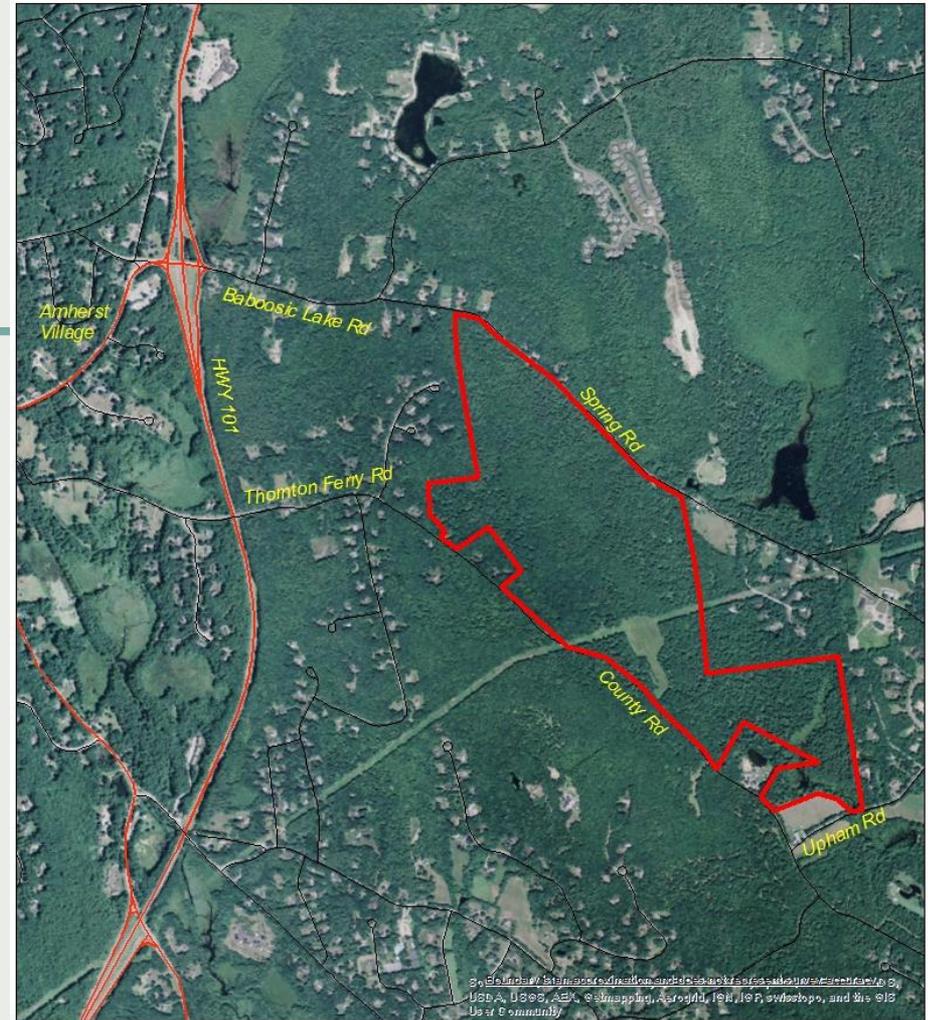
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Map Preparer: T.E. Jones



Where is the land?

- Land is part of larger group of lots totaling 352 acres that is currently on the market, and being actively marketed by the seller's broker, Landvest.



-  Hazen Project
-  Local Roads
-  State Roads

Amherst Locator Map

Hazen Tracts
227.5 +/- Acres
Amherst, NH



0 660 1,320 Feet



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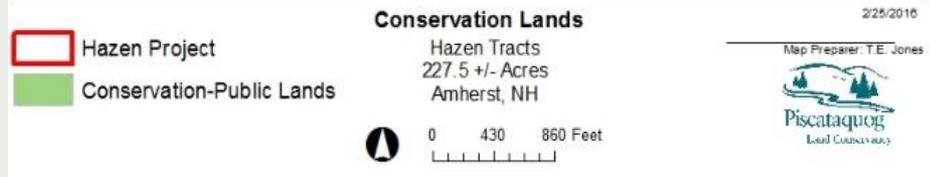
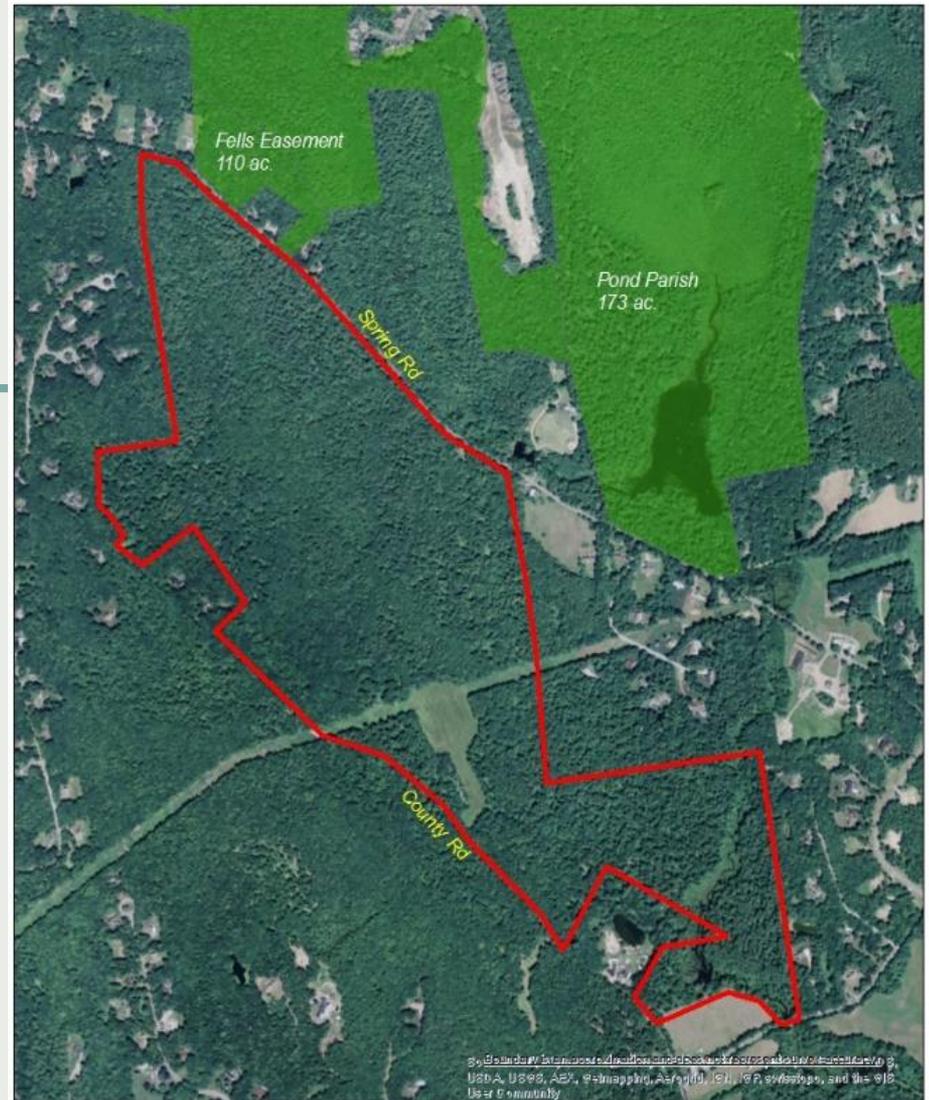
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Other Conservation Lands in Area

- This land is immediately across Spring Road from the Town's Pond Parish conservation area (173 acres) and Fells Easement (110 acres).
- Part of a larger wildlife corridor extending east to the Town of Merrimack's Grater Woods conservation area.





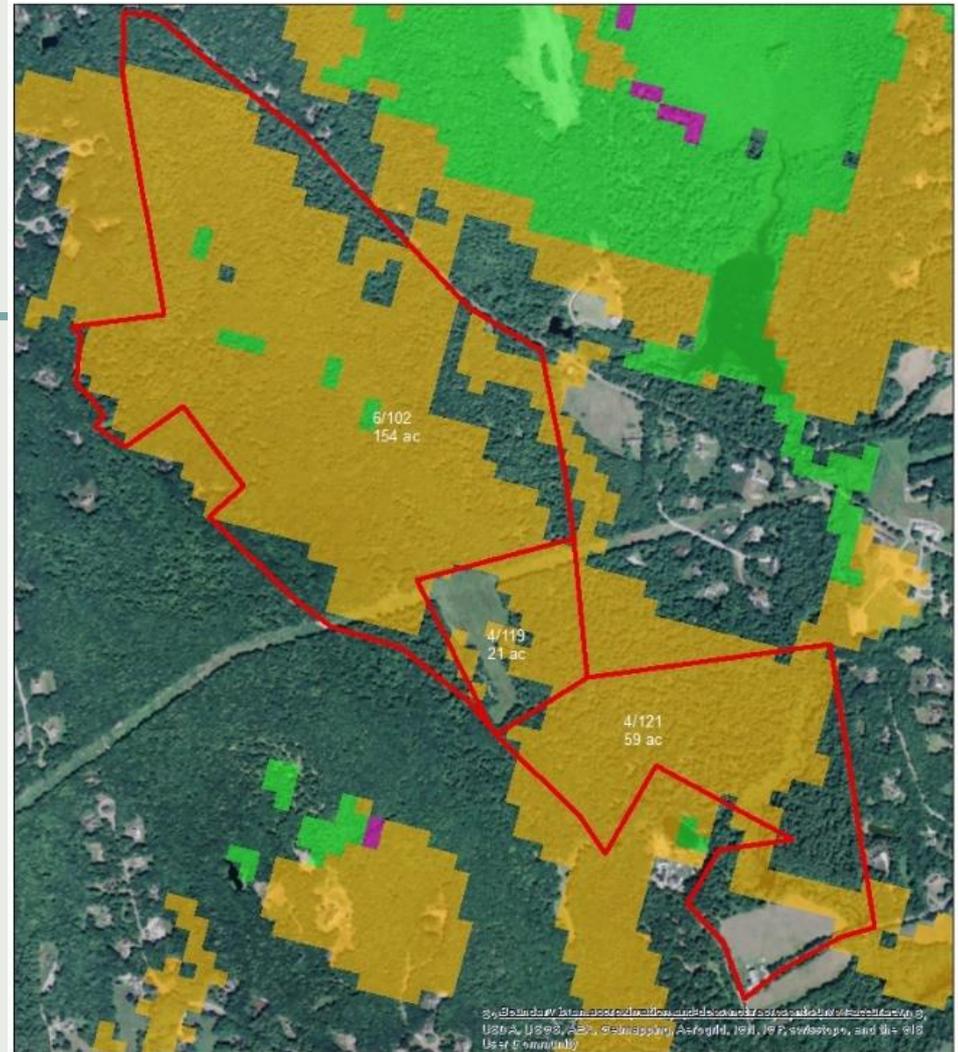
Why Protect This Land?

WATER!

- The land sits on top of an aquifer that most likely already contributes to drinking water wells in the immediate area, and could be a potential source of drinking water in the future.
- “Best of the best” (150 gpm) in 2010 DES study of most favorable gravel well sites statewide.
- Keeping the land above the aquifer undeveloped is the best way to keep the water it contains clean and plentiful, and protected from contamination.
- Along with safeguarding drinking water, protecting the land would protect surface water, wetlands and vernal pools which provide flood storage, aquatic habitat and ground water recharge.

Wildlife & Recreation

- The land’s hemlock-hardwood-pine forest is critical habitat for animals like deer, bobcat, fishers, roughed grouse, and purple finch.
- The land also has potential for the development of recreational trails, including as a possible key component in a “safe routes to school” pathway from Amherst Village to Souhegan High School.



 Hazen Project

NH WAP Tiers 2015

-  Tier 1 Highest in State
-  Tier 2 Highest in Biological Region
-  Supporting Landscape

2015 Wildlife Action Plan

Hazen Tracts
227.5 +/- Acres
Amherst, NH



0 380 760 Feet


2/2/2016

Map Preparer: T.E. Jones



The Dollars and Cents: how was the purchase price determined?

- Purchase price of \$1,000,000 was negotiated on the basis of an appraisal completed January 27th on the three lots.
- The final agreed purchase price translates to \$4,395 per acre, which is right in the middle of the value range established by the appraisal (High=\$5,000/acre, Low = \$3,650).
- Town and PLC feel very comfortable that the negotiated purchase price represents the current fair market value for the land, and is a fair deal for both the town and the sellers.



Where will the money for the purchase come from?

- The Town of Amherst would only contribute half of the purchase price, or \$500,000. \$450,000 of this amount would be raised from taxation via the Article #31. The other \$50,000 would come from existing funds in the town's conservation fund.
- The other half of the purchase price will be raised by PLC between now and the end of 2016 from various public and private grant sources. From a financial perspective, this outside funding makes the purchase not just a good deal for Amherst, but a bargain.



What happens if Article #31 fails?

- PLC has a signed agreement with the landowners to hold the land off the market for 90 days while town voters decide whether to approve the \$450,000 in town funds.
- If Article #31 is not approved, the 90-day purchase option will expire and the land will go back on the open market.
- If Article #31 passes, the Town, PLC and the landowners will enter into a longer-term P&S agreement running through the first quarter of 2017.



What happens if the rest of the money can't be raised?

- If all the funds cannot be raised by December 31, 2016, the town, PLC and the sellers would all be able to walk away from the transaction without any financial or legal penalty.
- If all funds are raised and the project goes to closing, the Town of Amherst would take ownership of the land, subject to a conservation easement held by PLC.
- The easement is an additional guarantee that the land will remain in conservation in perpetuity, and be managed by the town in a way that protects its natural resource values.

What Can YOU do?



- **VOTE YES on Article #31** next Tuesday, March 8th!
- **Tell your friends and neighbors** about the Hazen land conservation purchase, and get them out to vote too!
- There is lots of great information on the Town's website and PLC's website.
- Also see article in Amherst Citizen, local social media.

Questions?

