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## **Nearly 200 Acres Added to the Page Pond Community Forest in Meredith**

*Added acreage will provide both recreational opportunities and clean drinking  
water*

**Meredith, NH** – To the joy of local outdoor enthusiasts, The Trust for Public Land today announced that 198 acres have been added to the existing 567-acre Page Pond Community Forest in Meredith. The expansive property is not only a popular retreat for outdoor recreation, but also protects wetlands, streams, and surface water flowing into Lake Winnepesaukee. Hikers, walkers, and joggers have enjoyed the existing trails since the original 567 acres were protected by The Trust for Public Land in 2010, and this 198-acre expansion will provide easier access for residents of Meredith Village and a new outdoor classroom for the Interlakes Regional School.

The project was funded in part through a \$300,000 grant from the US Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Grant Program. The Trust for Public Land played a major role in creating the program which has provided nearly \$13 million in grant funding for 42 community forest projects in 19 states and territories. The federal funding has leveraged \$28 million in non-federal cost-share.

The State of New Hampshire, on behalf of three different state agencies, provided the largest source of funding for the acquisition. The Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) contributed \$250,000, the Department of Environmental Services (DES) Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund contributed \$107,500, and the State Conservation Committee's (SCC) "Mooseplate" program contributed \$20,000. Additionally, support from the Open Space Institute (OSI), the Town of Meredith, and hundreds of private individuals helped close the gap on the acquisition. "We are very appreciative of USFS, LCHIP, DES, SCC, and OSI's generous support and investment in securing such a special community asset" said J.T. Horn, TPL's Senior Project Manager. "These grants will enable the Town of Meredith to protect critical wetlands and wildlife habitat while also opening the property for new trails

and recreation. The community of Meredith has worked tirelessly to establish this forest and we are proud to partner with them.”

While the property is now permanently protected, it still needs a lot of work before being ready for public use. As part of a private fundraising effort, The Trust for Public Land and a group of community volunteers raised over \$10,000 dollars for immediate stewardship investments like trailhead parking and invasive species removal, and are still working to fund an endowment for the property. “These funds are so important to the sustainable management of Page Pond” said Mark Billings, Chair of the Conservation Commission, “we need to protect our investment, and encourage the public to enjoy and appreciate what conservation can do for our community.”

The Trust for Public Land and the Town of Meredith have been working for many years to conserve the Page Pond Community Forest. Since the 2010 acquisition, the town has built a trail system, conducted a timber harvest, and led outdoor education activities for community members and school children. Both this current transaction and the one in 2010 were led by The Trust for Public Land, with assistance from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). “LCHIP has been pleased to see all of the wonderful work being done at Meredith’s Page Pond Community Forest and is excited to assist with this new expansion” said Dijit Taylor, Executive Director of LCHIP “We applaud the town’s enthusiasm and commitment to the land, and the collaboration and engagement that has made this project such a success”

The USFS Community Forest Program grant was secured by the Town of Meredith after a national competition ranked the Page Pond project as the #1 project in the nation. The project received exceptional support from the entire New Hampshire Congressional delegation.

“Preserving and protecting our great outdoors and public lands is one of the best investments we can make,” said Senator Jeanne Shaheen, D-NH. “I want to thank the Trust for Public Land for their work to conserve Page Pond Community Forest, which serves as an important outdoor recreation area for the Meredith community and Granite Staters. In New Hampshire, we know that investing in our natural treasures is good for the environment and a smart way to lift our outdoor recreation economy.”

“Our beautiful natural resources contribute greatly to our high quality of life in the Granite State, providing a variety of outdoor recreational activities for residents and visitors to enjoy and helping to make our state one of the healthiest in the nation,” Senator Maggie Hassan, D-NH, said. “I am proud to support the expansion of the Page Pond Community Forest Project, which not only provides added recreational opportunities for the community, but builds on our efforts to ensure that all Granite Staters have access to clean, safe drinking water. I commend all of those who helped make this project a success, and I will continue working to build an even stronger, healthier Granite State for our people.”

“I’m thrilled that Page Pond Community Forest in Meredith will be expanding by nearly 200 acres,” said Congresswoman Ann Kuster, D-NH-2. “New Hampshire’s beautiful landscape is central to our identity as a state and this project will protect important wildlife habitats while increasing access for recreational activities. I was delighted to support this project, and extend my thanks to everyone who helped make it possible. I will continue to work in support of conservation efforts so that all Granite Staters can enjoy the land that makes New Hampshire such a special place.”

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**About The Trust for Public Land**

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Millions of people live near a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. To support The Trust for Public Land and share why nature matters to you, visit [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org).