

# 1,000 Acres On Ragged Mountain Protected From Development

By Maddie Hanna  
Concord Monitor staff

Condensed from December 19 Concord Monitor

A nearly 1,000-acre plot of land on Ragged Mountain in Hill [bordering Andover and the east side of the Ragged Mountain Resort in Danbury, and including the headwaters of Mountain Brook, which feeds Elbow Pond] will be protected from development under an agreement between the landowner and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

The society recently purchased a conservation easement for 960 acres of the March Pond Forest, paid for primarily with grant money from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said Brian Hotz, the society's director of land protection.

The easement, which the society paid for with \$235,000 in grant money and \$40,000 from donors, connects to a much broader section of land that conservationists are working to protect, Hotz said. And several of its streams feed into Smith River, which the society has targeted as an important tributary of the Merrimack River and suitable for restoring the Atlantic salmon population.

A conservation easement appeals to many landowners, Hotz said, because "it's a process for really conserving the land's values, or attributes, but still retaining ownership of the property." Though the landowner retains ownership, he turns over the chance to develop it further, which explains the monetary value of the easement. But easements are individualized, Hotz said, and in this case, the owner, who sold the land at a below-market price, kept the rights

to develop a portion of it – two sections of about 3 acres each, Hotz said.

Land has been turned over to conservation easements at a "pretty steady pace" in recent years, Hotz said. "I think the difference is there aren't really that many large parcels left. So having properties that are 1,000 acres," he said, is significant.

Besides preserving streams involved with the project to restore Atlantic salmon, the easement covers an area that "provides good habitat" for a number of species, Hotz said, including bears, bobcats, and songbirds "that need that interior forest land that isn't fragmented."

March Pond, which is about nine acres in size and sits near the middle of the area, has geese, ducks, and otters, Hotz said.

The purchase ties into what the society calls the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Initiative, an effort by about 20 agencies to conserve a large path of land that stretches from the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts to Mount Cardigan in New Hampshire. That initiative, which Hotz said began around 2002, was partly a reaction to population growth, especially regarding immigration from Massachusetts to the southern part of New Hampshire, said Joyce El Kouarti, the society's communications director.

As people noticed farms disappearing in favor of subdivisions, they realized "it was nice to have that farm there; it was nice to have those woods there," she said. "It was an opportunity, I think, for the conservation community to build on that – yes, yes, you're noticing what we have . . . and don't just assume it's always going to be there."

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Vienna Marcus presents her Christmas list to Santa Claus.

Staff photo: Bob Bussey

## Town Celebrates Christmas At Bluewater Farm

By Jackie Adams  
Bluewater Farm & Lodge

Seeing all of the children with Santa at the Christmas party at Bluewater Lodge was a great way to start the holiday season. We had about 60 children visit Santa, and they were all just adorable!

Our crafters were great sports, and we thank them for participating. We also want to thank the Andover Service Club for all the great baked goodies,

and of course a special thanks to Santa for being there!

This wrapped up a very successful year of community events at Bluewater Farm. We look forward to 2009 and getting together again.

Our first event will be our Cabin Fever Dance on Saturday, February 9. Be sure you look for all the details in this issue of the *Beacon*.

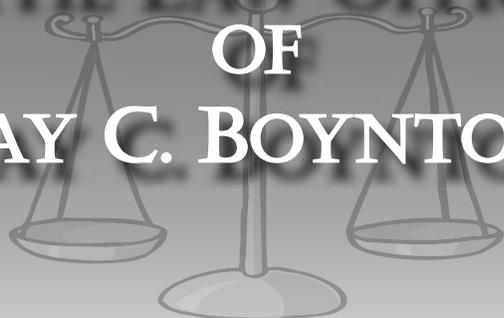
See you there!

### ODD JOBS WANTED!

Two Andover boys (ages 12 and 15) are looking for odd jobs at homes in the Andover area. Willing to stack wood, mow lawns, clean up yards, walk dogs, etc.

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