



CONTACT: Jack Savage, (603)224-9945;
cell (603)724-5362;
jsavage@forestsociety.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**FOREST SOCIETY ACQUIRES PURCHASE & SALE AGREEMENTS TO PROTECT LAND ALONG
INTENDED NORTHERN PASS ROUTE**

***Trees Not Towers* Campaign to Raise \$2.5 Million to thwart Northern Pass and protect scenic views and
existing conserved land**

Concord, NH August 20, 2012--The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests has signed purchase-and-sale agreements with four landowners to put conservation easements on more than 1,500 acres of land in Coos County. The land under agreement lies directly in the obvious intended path of Northern Pass, and thus disrupts the project's ability to move forward with that route. The conservation easements will be perpetual, running with the land regardless of who may own the land in the future. In order to acquire the easements and thwart the intended Northern Pass route, the Forest Society is seeking to raise \$2.5 million by October 31, 2012.

"Northern Pass's intended route through Coos County would scar some of New Hampshire's most scenic forested and agricultural landscape with unsightly towers and powerlines," said Jane Difley, president/forester of the Forest Society. "By conserving these 1,500 acres we are taking another step toward compelling Hydro Quebec, Northeast Utilities and PSNH to realize that they need to look at other alternatives for their private, commercial power line project."

The Forest Society's objective is to protect New Hampshire's scenic rural landscape from Northern Pass. "It is clear from Hydro Quebec's business plan and Northeast Utilities' property acquisitions that they are thinking beyond this one project," adds Difley. "It's no secret that Hydro Quebec seeks to export four times the power that would be transmitted by Northern Pass alone. New Hampshire needs to protect itself from an industrialized corridor that could support multiple transmission lines in the future regardless of the outcome of the immediate Northern Pass proposal. For that reason we are doing what we do best—permanently protecting our state's forests from reckless, unnecessary development by working with willing landowners."

The Forest Society's *Trees Not Towers* campaign is the beginning of a strategy to ensure that an industrialized corridor with multiple transmission lines does not happen to New Hampshire's lands and scenic vistas. The Forest Society has reached agreements with landowners of 1,500-plus acres, and continues to discuss with other landowners the possibility of additional easements as deemed necessary.

The Forest Society has opposed Northern Pass as it has been proposed in part because of its legal and ethical obligation to protect existing conserved lands. If built as proposed, the Northern Pass transmission line and 1,100 towers would directly and indirectly impact more than 15,000 acres of conserved land involving 153 different parcels owned by private individuals, local communities, land

trusts such as the Forest Society, the State of New Hampshire, and the federal government. There can be no question that this is a project with a statewide impact on the precious natural resources that support a substantial part of our economy and traditional way of life.

“We are taking action to protect land in Coos County as a way to defend conserved lands across 180 miles of New Hampshire from Pittsburg to Franklin to Deerfield,” Difley said.

Among the impacted conserved landscapes would be a stretch of ten miles through the White Mountain National Forest, which the Forest Society was founded to help establish and protect. Also directly impacted would be the Forest Society’s Rocks Estate in Bethlehem, which was protected specifically because of its outstanding views of the Presidential Range.

“For more than a century the Forest Society has worked to protect New Hampshire from threats like Northern Pass,” said Carolyn Benthien, president of the Forest Society’s Board of Trustees. “Decades ago Franconia Notch was threatened by a proposed four-lane highway. We prevailed then and we intend to prevail now.”

The Coos County parcels involved in the *Trees Not Towers* campaign to date include three in Stewartstown and one in Columbia. The largest parcel includes 967 acres owned by the McAllaster family, who have been on the land for generations. They operate a dairy farm and rely on the land for hay and pasture. The McAllaster Farm is also a certified Tree Farm, and includes a maple sugaring operation. A major snowmobile trail managed by the Colebrook Ski-Bees crosses the McAllaster land, providing access to between Colebrook, Coleman State Park and Pittsburg. The Cohos hiking trail also makes use of the McAllaster property. The height of land on Mudgett Mountain provides spectacular views west into Vermont, south to the White Mountains and east to Dixville Notch, Table Rock and the Balsams. In January 2012, the Forest Society successfully worked to conserve the Balsams landscape.

Immediately west of the McAllaster Farm is more than 500 acres owned by Green Acre Woodlands. The parcel sits high upon North Hill, offering 360-degree views. Two smaller parcels owned by Lynne Placey of Stewartstown are key to disrupting the path Northern Pass is attempting to use and protect the flank of Holden Hill. The fourth parcel, 300 acres owned by the Lewis family, links the southern boundary of the Balsams property to the northern boundary of Nash Stream State Forest.

“Simply prohibiting towers, power lines and a permanently cleared right-of-way on these particular lands make any one of these conservation projects worthwhile,” said Difley. “The fact that their protection disrupts what is clearly Northern Pass’s intended route makes them doubly important.”

The purchase-and-sale agreements give the Forest Society a window of opportunity to raise the \$2.5 million necessary to close the transactions. The deadline to raise the needed funds is October 31, 2012.

“Without eminent domain, Northern Pass has little or no chance of completing this route,” Difley reiterated. “We are confident that with the support of all those who value New Hampshire’s scenic landscape we will reach our goal. Northern Pass is anything but inevitable.

“PSNH, Northern Utilities and Hydro Quebec have turned a deaf ear to overwhelming public opposition to their private transmission line proposal. They have ignored the 30 towns that voted to oppose Northern Pass,” Difley said. “We are confident that with the support of all those who value New Hampshire’s scenic landscapes we will reach our goal. There may be a way for Hydro Quebec

to sell its power to New England, but New Hampshire should not allow its scenery, economy and way of life to be spoiled as a consequence.”

The Forest Society is a private, non-profit land trust and forestry organization established in 1901. It currently holds more than 750 conservation easements statewide permanently protecting more than 100,000 acres of New Hampshire’s landscapes. The Forest Society also owns 171 forest reservations constituting more than 50,000 acres in 95 New Hampshire communities.

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