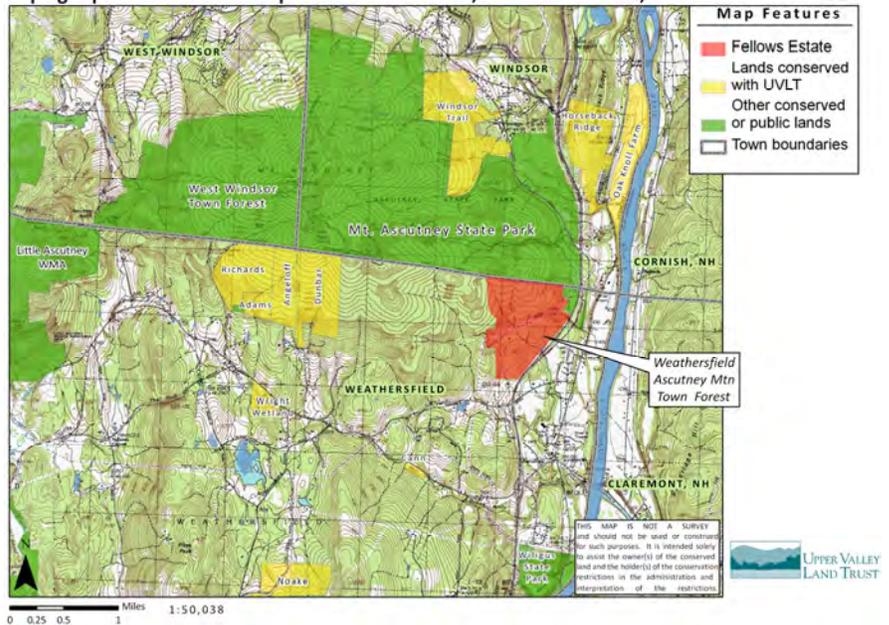


# Conserving a Town Forest for Weathersfield

Located on the southern flank of Mount Ascutney, the 310 acre property owned by the Estate of Janet Fellows is part of a vast expanse of undeveloped land spanning this iconic peak. Local citizens across Weathersfield, led by the Weathersfield Land Preservation Association (WLPA) and the Conservation Commission, are coming together in hopes of seeing this property protected and maintained as a Town Forest natural area. The Upper Valley Land Trust (UFLT) received a grant from the National Scenic Byways Program and the State of Vermont, on behalf of the Town and the WLPA, toward this goal, and now local funds are needed to fill the gap and create Weathersfield's Ascutney Mtn. Town Forest!



*Location of the Fellows Estate land (in red), an iconic property along the Connecticut River National Scenic Byway.*

## What is a Town Forest?

Many towns own and manage forest land that can be enjoyed by the public. These lands serve as working forests for sustainable timber management as well as for recreation. Town forests provide critical wildlife corridors and are places where people can go to hunt and hike and observe wildlife in their natural habitat. Town forests offer scenic benefits and help draw visitors to the area, improving economic opportunities in our region. Large tracts of forest land are critical for water quality protection, serving to filter storm runoff and protect drinking water, and shade surface waters which can be breeding grounds for aquatic insects and fish.

## How does this forest contribute to the National Scenic Byway?

The National Scenic Byway Program awarded a grant to the Upper Valley Land Trust on behalf of the WLPA and the Town of Weathersfield to purchase this land for conservation because of its importance to the scenic quality of the Connecticut River National Scenic Byway.

**Scenery:** Mount Ascutney is a defining landmark in the Upper Valley, a beacon that says “home” to residents who share the mountain and says “welcome” to visitors who come to its towns to enjoy it. Weathersfield residents enjoy views of the southern side of Ascutney from every corner of their town and value its undisturbed forests and rugged slopes as a crucial part of their town’s natural heritage. The Fellows Estate property covers a significant portion of the forested landscape that is visible beneath Mount Ascutney. The conservation of this property will ensure that forestry and other activities preserve the scenic character of the property for the benefit of residents and visitors in Weathersfield.



*Help create Weathersfield's Ascutney Mtn. Town Forest with a contribution to the Upper Valley Land Trust or Weathersfield Land Preservation Association for this project!*

**Recreation:** Conservation of this property will increase the corridor of permanently conserved and public lands around Mount Ascutney to over 5,000 acres! The new Weathersfield Ascutney Mtn. Town Forest can provide additional trails for hikers and adventurous cross-country skiers and snowshoers. The land provides opportunities for hunting, wildlife observation, and quiet contemplation.

**Why is this forest so special?**

**Wildlife Habitat:** This property consists of 310 acres primarily within the Northern Hardwood Forest Formation. Dominant species on southerly facing slopes include sugar maple, white ash, American beech, red oak, hophornbeam and bitternut hickory. Lower canopy layers include red maple, hemlock, white pine, red spruce and some balsam fir. Rocky outcrops in the northern portions of the property create potential den sites for bobcat, and are interspersed with some gently sloping sedge meadows and low-bush blueberries. Wide-ranging mammals, upland songbirds, rare plants – all of these species rely on the contiguous forests of Mount Ascutney.

*Orthophoto showing property boundary and adjacent Ascutney State Park trails*

**Why is this forest threatened?**

Development in the Connecticut River Valley is increasing, even in these challenging economic times. With a conservation agreement in place, residents of Weathersfield will not have to worry about seeing the forest clear-cut, or slopes dug up for extraction of gravel or other minerals. The Town Forest will continue to be a working part of the landscape, producing forest products in a sustainable manner. Forestry activities will be balanced with the other values of the forest, including scenic resources, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Special places like this forest on Mount Ascutney are vital to the way of life that people cherish in our region.



**What can you do to help?**

This conservation opportunity has reached a critical point, and we need your help for success! The Upper Valley Land Trust has secured grants from the National Scenic Byway Program and from the State of Vermont to cover approx. 80% of the project costs. WPLA and the Conservation Commission have pledged to fund raise to come up with the remaining 20% (approx. \$30,000) needed to complete the project. WLPA has committed \$10,000 from its land preservation fund and local donors have pledged \$10,000 more. Now we need YOUR tax-exempt donation or pledge to raise the final \$10,000 to preserve this important Weathersfield property!



**Time is critical!**  
*We only have until Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> to raise the remaining \$10,000 with the existing contract to purchase the property from the Fellows Estate. If we miss this window, the opportunity to acquire and conserve this property for future generations could be lost.*

For more information, contact:	
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