THE AUSBON SARGENT LAND PRESERVATION TRUST

Helping to Preserve the Rural Landscape of the Mt. Kearsarge/Ragged/Lake Sunapee Region
Andover, Bradford, Danbury, Goshen, Grantham, New London, Newbury, Springfield, Sunapee, Sutton, Warner & Wilmot



Summer 2025



Sharing the Land

From the Executive Director Hans Carlson



hen you get a group of land-trust folks together, there are a couple of ways that the conversation generally goes. If there are more stewardship people involved, then there's a lot of discussion about the "forever" work you read about in the last Chatter. Monitoring and management – the good, bad, and ugly – hold no end of stories. We all love to compare notes or talk about a complication that no one has heard of before, and the same is true if land acquisitions folks dominate these conversations. Their stories are similar, but are about things like surveyors, appraisers, or title complications.

We entertain each other with these stories, but we teach one another with them, too. I suppose this is true of every professional group, and you can learn a lot about the details of land conservation by just listening. These stories are usually detail rich because we are detail-oriented people; that's the nature of this work. But if you listened to only these conversations, you might come away with the feeling that we are purely transactional people, and this is hardly ever the case, in my experience.

Almost everyone I know in land conservation has aspirational beliefs that balance the transactional details with which they spend their days. These aspirations are the things we share with the landowners with whom we work, who are quite often only interested in the transactional details to the extent that they need them to make their conservation vision a reality. These aspirations are what we share with all our supporters, too, who also have conservation aspirations for the land.

It's interesting to consider that the transactional details are focused almost exclusively on real estate law and the rights of individual property owners, but our conservation aspirations are more often focused on seeing land as a shared resource. Landowners talk about wanting to share their land with future generations or share recreational opportunities with the community. Others want to make sure that there is room in the world for humans to share the land with the plants and animals who depend on it too, and to share their knowledge about these other residents on the land. Even those who work the land often see conservation as a way of keeping their land as a viable part of a shared local economy that benefits their communities.

Quite often landowners have a mix of all these ideas rolled up in their vision of the land, and our job then becomes figuring out the transactional details that need to happen to fulfill a landowner's aspirations. That happens by listening to their stories of the land and the people they associate with that land. It means sharing the meaning held in the land for them, and this is probably the most powerful part of conservation for me.

I think many in this work share that feeling, so it's funny that more of our professional conversations don't focus on this sharing of meaning. I suppose we don't often have the time to go deep in professional settings, but maybe it's just human nature, too, to shy away from these kinds of conversations. Our work would probably be better if we did, though.

As you read through this Chatter, I encourage you to think about the shared meaning wrapped up in the stories. Together, we are working to conserve something that is special to us all, and this is both the actual land, but also the memories and emotions that are tied to that land. I encourage all of us, too, to share this meaning with one another. I think we would all be inspired if we did.

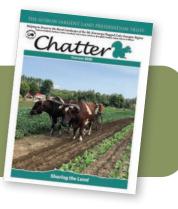
Thanks to you all for supporting our collective work at Ausbon Sargent, we are very grateful for your care for this organization. I hope I have a chance to meet many of you, now that the weather has opened up and we are able to be out and about.





ABOUT THE COVER >

Farming with oxen at Alprilla Farm in Warner, NH on one of the many Courser easements. Read more about Noah and Sophie Courser-Kellerman's farm on page 13.



This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land

By Kristy Heath, Development and Communications Coordinator

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." – Dennis Hall

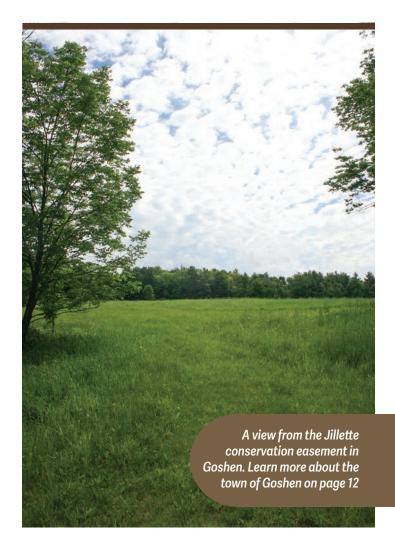
There are several iterations of this quote that have appeared throughout time, from our forefathers and as part of Native American proverbs. The sentiment really makes us think about how our actions today will enhance or take away from the land our future generations will inhabit.

In 1999, Hazel Johnson from Goshen wrote a letter to the Land Trust following her donation of 60 acres to her town, which she placed under easement. Her family had lived and farmed that land since 1925. Hazel offered "I do not believe we can really OWN the land. All we can do is care for it." Those who have been connected to the land for their livelihood and dependence for food are apt to see their acreage from another perspective. They may wonder "what will happen to my land after I'm not here to take care of it?"

We humans claim ownership over the land on this planet, as we all travel through space together — but is it really OURS to own? I like to think that the land is ours for today, but when we die and return to the land, it then belongs to the next generation, and the next. We should recognize that first and foremost, we are stewards of the land, not its owners.

Protecting land with a conservation easement ensures that, unless necessary and has been written into the easement language for the agricultural usage of the land, it will never be developed or subdivided. Most development creates pollution and degradation of the natural benefits that sustain life on our planet. It may seem like a giant leap to connect a conservation easement with saving the planet, but we need to start somewhere. We need to pinpoint our vulnerable properties that require protection for survival now and into the future. These are the properties that promote clean water and air, abundant wildlife habitat, and access to agricultural lands.

Today's real estate market boasts soaring land and home prices. It is tempting to see our undeveloped property as a funding source, but we must consider this: the land is more important as it stands, than it does as dollars in the bank. When the opportunity exists to make a decision that will be carried out forever, choose to make a positive impact on the people and wildlife, and our planet! A conservation easement becomes part of a property's deed and is a promise of forever. Any money made by selling a piece of land that is vulnerable to pollution or degradation will be spent within a lifetime or possibly the next. But a property conserved is a property that will sustain the people and wildlife that depend on it forever.



In 2014, Bea Jillette, another landowner from Goshen, protected her 51 acres with a conservation easement and echoed this sentiment in the winter 2015 issue of Chatter: "Today I no longer think of my land as money in the bank, but rather as something beautiful and vulnerable that must be protected." Her acreage is managed for timber and hay production and will not be further developed. Bea's property adds to over 17,000 acres of other contiguous conservation land in the area, creating a haven for wildlife, and ensuring the continuation of highly ranked forestry soils for future timber and hay production.

Some might claim that one property doesn't matter or that protecting one property won't make a difference. Both Hazel and Bea both thought beyond this notion and beyond the ownership and the financial benefits of their land. In their small town of Goshen, they have set a selfless example for the good of all. They are saving our planet for the future, one acre at a time.

Kristy has just completed her 10th year at Ausbon Sargent and is the Development and Communications Coordinator. She enjoys camping throughout New England, boating and skiing. A NH native, she currently resides in New London.





Hikers travel along the Wright property, which includes a small segment of the SRKG trail network

LAND PROJECT UPDATE: The Wright Property

In 2004, the Red Water Creek Alliance was formed by four like-minded organizations: Ausbon Sargent, Lake Sunapee Protective Association, the Sunapee Conservation Commission, and the Sunapee-Ragged Kearsarge Greenway (SRKG) Coalition. The Alliance set forth to raise \$140,000 to purchase the development rights to one of Lake Sunapee's most important wetlands. After a successful campaign, the wetland was protected and named The Frank H. Simpson Reserve. While this process was underway, neighbor Marcia Wright immediately offered to donate a conservation easement on her 27.13 acres that abutted the wetlands. Because her property has over 600 feet of road frontage on Route 103-B in Sunapee, Marcia's easement helps protect the wetland and provides rural open space views to the public as they drive by. An added benefit of the easement is that the property is open for year-round public access.

The Wright property includes mixed woods forest, five acres of wetland, and a perennial stream that flows into the Red Water Creek wetland which is significant because it empties into Lake Sunapee. The wetland area enhances the water quality through nutrient retention, preventing excessive nutrients like phosphorus and nitrates from entering the lake. The Wright

property is part of a larger ecosystem including more than 1,000 acres of protected properties, all of which provide significant habitat for diverse wildlife populations.

Marcia has recently decided to give an outright donation of her easement property to Ausbon Sargent. Now that Ausbon Sargent owns the property, it will be managed under our feeowned lands policy. The public will still have access to the land, and any forest management will be guided by a forestry management plan written by a licensed forester. This plan will focus on continued protection of the water quality of Red Water Creek to help the water quality in Lake Sunapee from being degraded.

We are grateful for Marcia's generosity both in 2004 and today. We are also fortunate to have excellent partners in the Sunapee Conservation Commission, willing to assume responsibility to monitor the easement annually.



The NH Wildlife Action Plan:

Sharing Information for the Benefit of All

By Andy Deegan, Land Protection Specialist



Photo curtesy of Jen Esten

riginally created in 2005, the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) is currently underway with its second revision. Every 10 years NH Fish and Game partners with other state agencies as well as non-profits and land trusts to determine the "Species of Greatest Conservation Need," assess current habitat conditions, and look at the threats to habitats and how we can best protect them. The plan identifies significant wildlife habitat and ranks these areas as either "Highest Ranked Habitat by Condition in NH," or "Highest Ranked Habitat by Condition in the Biological Region and Supporting Landscapes." The goal of the WAP is to focus efforts for conservation and management in these areas to help protect wildlife. Since the last update in 2015 over 170,000 acres of "Highest Ranked Habitat" have been conserved in the state; it is definitely time for a update!

Ausbon Sargent uses the WAP as a way of evaluating a potential project. If the property contains valuable wildlife habitat, then it is important to conserve so the species that need that specific set of natural conditions can continue to thrive. Because of the conservation successes of Ausbon Sargent and other conservation organizations, some species no longer have the "Greatest Conservation Need" designation. However, due to new threats, some species have declined to the point that action must be taken to ensure their survival. The WAP is an important tool to ensure that we are protecting the most important habitats for those species in need.

Ausbon Sargent has its own conservation plan, which utilizes the WAP as a guide. In addition to the Plan, Ausbon Sargent uses its own data on soils, water resources, resiliency, and land management to determine which areas to focus our conservation efforts on.

Using ArcGIS software, maps are created to show where these resources are most present. A shade of color is added for each resource value present and for each shade added, the darker the color becomes. The darker colors signify the most sensitive areas to protect.

It is important to review these kinds of plans periodically to determine if changes need to be made or if some of the data used to make decisions has changed. The WAP incorporates new data, methodologies and public input to identify species and habitats that are at the greatest risk. New data could be that a known rare or endangered species was found in a new area. This information would lead Fish and Game to alter their maps to include this area as significant wildlife habitat. With increased citizen science opportunities and easier methods for reporting individual species, data biologists have more data to determine the range of species and how those ranges change over time. In some cases, areas that were listed as "Highly Ranked Wildlife Habitat" are no longer listed as such in the new WAP. This does not mean the land is no longer valuable wildlife habitat. These areas are still important for providing resources to our native wildlife species.

Ausbon Sargent must periodically review and update its own conservation plan. The information shared by Fish and Game in the WAP is incredibly helpful in Ausbon Sargent's own planning. It is always a shared effort in protecting wildlife and the habitat they need.

Andy has worked as Ausbon Sargent for 17 years as the Land Protection Specialist. He lives in New London with his wife and two children. In his free time, he enjoys birding, kayaking, hiking and generally being outside.



Sarah Burtnick



Jamie Wilson

Ausbon Sargent Welcomes New Stewardship and Program Coordinator

Following the departure of Anne Payeur from Ausbon Sargent this spring, Jamie Wilson, former Stewardship and Program Coordinator, was promoted to Stewardship Manager. Jamie has hit the ground running, and is enjoying her new role, alongside our newest staff member, Sarah Burtnick. Sarah was hired in May and moved from Pennsylvania to New Hampshire to start work on June 2, 2025. Sarah received a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies with minors in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Geography from George Washington University. Immediately after graduation Sarah completed a six-month term with AmeriCorps at Squam Lakes Conservation Society in Holderness, NH where she spent time monitoring properties, working with volunteers, and exploring New Hampshire. Sarah said, "I am excited to return to New Hampshire, as it quickly became one of my favorite places when I worked at Squam Lakes Conservation Society. My love for hiking and the outdoors has guided me towards conservation work. I am enjoying being part of the Ausbon Sargent team, supporting stewardship and the awareness of land protection."

Feel free to swing by the office to welcome Sarah!

Native Pollinator Garden

Recent studies show that honeybee colonies have been declining on an average of 40-50% annually, and entomologists at Washington State University say that loss could jump to 70% in 2025. As part of an initiative to spread awareness on the importance of native plants, specifically pollinator friendly plants, Ausbon Sargent partnered with Ella Doherty, an AmeriCorps member at Colby-Sawyer College, and Nick Scheu, the former Landscape Director at The Fells. The objective was to plant a certified pollinator-friendly garden in front of the Ausbon Sargent office. After many meetings and months of planning, the garden was planted during the month of June with the help of volunteers from Colby-Sawyer College and the community. If you're interested in learning how to share your land with native bees and other pollinators, search online for "UNH Extension pollinator habitat."



Volunteers helped begin the planting on a very wet June morning.



Participants in one of our monitor trainings.

Monitor Training

At the beginning of June, Ausbon Sargent held two volunteer monitor trainings where 30 new volunteers learned how they can help steward our land. The participants braved ticks, black flies, and muddy conditions. Volunteer monitors are Ausbon Sargent's largest group of volunteers and play an essential role in helping to manage over 14,000 acres of conserved land. As the acreage of conserved land that Ausbon Sargent holds an interest in grows, so does our need for additional monitors. If you would like to know more about this program and how you can get involved, please email sburtnick@ausbonsargent.org.



Volunteer Party Update

During the month of May, Ausbon Sargent traditionally holds its Volunteer Appreciation Party to thank its volunteers for the tremendous amount of time and expertise they give to the Land Trust. This year's gathering was held at LSPA's Center for Lake Studies in Sunapee Harbor. About 70 volunteers joined the party, and conversation and tasty bites were enjoyed! Executive Director, Hans Carlson, thanked the volunteers for the many hours of work they provided to Ausbon Sargent over the last year. He noted the importance of every volunteer hour, whether it be spent stuffing envelopes, serving on a committee, doing trail work, or monitoring a property. Over the past year, Ausbon Sargent employed the help of over 200 volunteers who provided over 2,000 hours of work! If you'd like to volunteer at Ausbon Sargent, please let us know. There is always something going on and some way we could use your time and talents.



New Website Launched

Ausbon Sargent is happy to report that it has recently updated its website, which was last done 10 years ago. When we heard that the platform on which the site had been running would no longer be supported, it was decided that it would be a good time to update both the platform and the overall look and feel of the site at the same time. We especially like the easier access to trails and events, and the visual impact of our photos for those who might be cruising the site to see what we do. Because it is still new, we are happy to receive reports on bugs or anything that might cause confusion on the site. Please send any observations to: kheath@ausbonsargent.org Thank you!

Costs associated with this upgrade were generously provided by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and The Virginia Cretella Mars Foundation.

Many thanks to these wonderful supporters of Ausbon Sargent!

NEW HAMPSHIRE



L-R: Jen Deasy, Russell Moore (Trustee), Jamie Wilson, Hans Carlson, Tim Fleury, Andy Deegan

Staff at the Annual Saving Special Places Conference

CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Several staff and a board member from Ausbon Sargent attended the annual Saving Special Places conference in Concord, NH in April. It was a worthwhile opportunity to take part in workshops, listen to speakers, and network with colleagues and experts in the field. It was good to see our local county forester and Ausbon Sargent committee member, Tim Fleury, who let us grab a photo between sessions.



Membership & Annual Fund

Ausbon Sargent wants to thank our Membership, Annual Fund and Corporate Matching Gift donors from 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025.

*denotes gifts to both Membership & Annual Fund.

+denotes a corporate matching gift.

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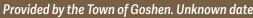
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Thank you to every donor your generosity fuels our mission and strengthens our community. We are deeply grateful for your support.







Gunnison Lake in the fall

Town Spotlight: The Town of Goshen

Goshen is part of Sullivan County and was first settled in 1768 as part of Saville (now Sunapee). It was incorporated in 1791 when a southern portion of Wendell (now Sunapee), was combined with land from Fisherfield (Newbury), Lempster, Unity, and Newport to form a new town. The name "Goshen" may have come from Goshen, CT where many residents had relatives and had served in a Revolutionary regiment with soldiers from that same town.

Goshen:

- Has a population of 796 people (2020 census)
- Is 22.5 square miles with 0.1 square miles of water, lying almost fully within the Connecticut River watershed
- Includes a small area at the southeastern corner of town that has the headwaters of West Branch Warner River, which is part of the Merrimack River watershed
- Has points of interest including Gunnison Lake (The Goshen Ocean), and Mount Sunapee, which occupies the eastern edge of town
- Has a highest elevation of 2,529' which is an unnamed knob on the ridge near Goves Mountain
- Was home to John Williams Gunnison (1812-1853), US Army officer and explorer of the American West

Protected Land in Goshen:

- Four properties in Goshen are protected by Ausbon Sargent, comprising 208 acres (about 32.5% of the town):
 - » Johnson/Town of Goshen 60 acres
 - » Garvey-Waynes Woods 70 acres
 - » Jillette 51 acres
 - » Hermit Wowods 27 acres
- Other lands in Goshen are protected by state and private easements/ agreements including Sunapee State Park, Pillsbury State Park, and the Pillsbury Sunapee Highlands.



Volunteer monitors walk the Hermit Woods property with landowners, Sandy Sonnichsen and Allen Howe on a yearly monitoring visit



Alprilla Farm: The Next Generation of Courser Family Farming

By Kristy Heath

he term "family farm" is common in New England, and generational farming is not unusual. In Warner, the Courser family follows suit on both accounts. Over 1,200 acres of land has been protected by the Courser family through seven Ausbon Sargent conservation easements. These easements help to protect the agricultural integrity of the lands that have been worked by the Courser family since the late 1800's. Nearly 200 years later, another generation of Coursers has found happiness and fulfillment in farming on this special land.

Sophie Courser-Kellerman, the daughter of Tim and Jenny Courser, grew up in Warner on the family farm. While she wasn't expected to work on the farm, everyone was involved in lending a hand to complete various tasks and chores. Along with her siblings and cousins, Sophie learned to drive oxen, which was a family tradition supported by the landscape, and that she incorporates into her farming today. She fondly remembers helping with the sugaring operation, snowshoeing with family to collect sap in buckets in a sugarbush without sap lines. "It was a magical time," Sophie recalls, created by the family that worked together and spent time at the sugar house; several March birthdays were celebrated over boiling sap!

Sophie (middle) with her dad and sister Sadie (left), in his crop pumpkins. Thirty years later, this field on Schoodac Road is the main growing area for Sophie and Noah's full-time farm business. Sadie is now a livestock farmer.

While an Art History major at Vassar, Sophie began to realize how much the farming lifestyle appealed to her and that perhaps she had taken it for granted. She changed her major to Environmental Studies, with the plan to someday get back to the land. Fast forward to today: Sophie and her husband Noah, a self-proclaimed "farming addict" farmed for ten years on his family's land in Essex, MA which they called "Alprilla Farm." When the opportunity arose in 2022 to come home to Warner and farm on her family's land, the two packed up and moved Alprilla Farm to New Hampshire.

Sophie and Noah appreciate that they can now live near the land they are working, and they feel that they can freely invest themselves, their money, energy, and focus, upon the land. They find comfort in knowing that the property they are farming won't ever be developed and are grateful to those who put the conservation easements together with the Coursers, which included a few excluded areas where a house could be built. "Working the landscape, being involved with it, and keeping a viable farm and business are central to maintaining the rural character of Warner. It is so important in a community that a family can live in a home surrounded by the land they are farming." The Courser-Kellerman duo said they appreciate how



The Alprilla farmstand display at the Winter Farmer's Market in Concord

Continued from page 13

the easement restrictions are so supportive of additional farming infrastructure like a greenhouse or shed, which they would like to add as time goes on.

Sharing food is another level of rural character. Sohpie offers "We are growing food that we intend for our neighbors to eat; it is a give and take with the community. We want to grow the food that people, 20 miles away or less, want to eat."

Other Courser endeavors on the land are already producing maple syrup, hay, timber harvests, pumpkins, sweet corn and other summer veggies, blueberries, pulling oxen, a small raw dairy, pork, beef and eggs. Sophie and Noah are joining in with their focus on growing vegetables for winter, like root vegetables, squash, garlic and potatoes, as well as some grains like wheat, rye, dry corn and beans. The family farms continue to share the load from time to time. For example, sometimes the family's cows graze around the Alprilla Farm vegetable fields. They share their land, back and forth for the benefit of all. "We are excited to be reconnecting with this land that I loved so much in childhood, and to be able to continue our farming career in Warner alongside our large extended family."

Products from Alprilla Farm can be found through their CSA, at Sweet Beet Market in Bradford, and the Winter Farmer's Market in Concord. Check out Alprilla farm at: www.alprillafarm.com and get to know a little more about your local farmers!

Calendar of UPCOMING EVENTS

Please check the Ausbon Sargent website for updates and/or join our eNews list to get details sent to you as they become available. All events, except for fundraisers marked with a (\$) are free and open to all, but space is limited, and registration is required.

Please contact sburtnick@ausbonsargent.org for more information or to register.

Dragonfly Walk August 12th at 2pm

Learn about dragonflies and their habitats in our region. Catch, identify, and release some local specimens. All ages welcome with an adult.

Hospital Days Parade

August 2nd at 10am – Main Street New London Watch for Seymour the Squirrel as he rides along the parade route! A summer event that is not to be missed!

Two Mountain Farm Field Day with NOFA-NH

August 7 from 4-6pm at the Broshek/Bye & Munene Easement in Andover

Two Mountain Farm and the Northeastern Organic Farmer's Association are holding a field day to focus on installing and using a rainwater catchment system. Register at: nofanh.org/events/two-mountain-farm

Mushroom Identification Walk

September (Date/location TBD)

Skywatch with the New Hampshire Astronomical Society

September 18 at 7:30pm (Location TBD)

Gaze at the stars in the dark sky with the experts at the ready. All equipment included. All ages welcome with an adult.

VINS Presentation: Owls and their Calls

October 11 at 10am at the Wilmot Community Association Come to see real live owls and learn about their calls and what they mean! All ages welcome with an adult.

Fall Foliage Walk

October (Date/location TBD)

Ausbon Sargent's Annual Meeting

October 19 at 3pm at the Newbury Town Office Meeting Room Members are invited to come hear about what Ausbon Sargent has been working on over the last year, as well as learn about upcoming projects. Refreshments served. Postcard invitations will be sent to members in early October.

Holiday Party Fundraiser (\$)

December 8 at 5:30pm at The Livery in Sunapee Harbor Members will receive a postcard invitation to "Save the Date" in early November. Tickets will be available online. A wonderful way to kick-off the holiday season!



Our Gift, Our Way

By Ann and Marc Davis

Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust is among several organizations that – if there's any money left when we die – will get a portion.

Although many people shy away from pondering this topic, including charitable organizations has been part of our estate planning for more than a decade.

We chose Ausbon Sargent for three important reasons:

- 1. We have a more than two decade connection to the organization through our volunteer work and conservation easement donation.
- 2. We trust Ausbon Sargent's staff and board of trustees to steward our donation wisely.
- We do not have children, consequently we view supporting Ausbon Sargent through our conservation easement and gift from our estate as a legacy that will benefit the region and its people in perpetuity.

We are pleased and proud to publicly proclaim our commitment to Ausbon Sargent!

In 2007, Ann and Marc Davis put a conservation easement on their 470-acre "Woods Without Gile" property which spans between the towns of Springfield and Wilmot. The Davises manage the "Woods Without Gile" to improve timber quality and to protect the excellent wildlife habitat, open space, and watershed values of the property. In 2022, Ann and Marc were named "Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year" by the NH Tree Farm Program. In 2024, the couple was named "Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year for the Northeast Region" by the American Tree Farm System. Ann and Marc routinely hold hikes and birding walks on the property, which is open to the public for low-impact recreation.



These Acorn Society members have notified us that they have provided for Ausbon Sargent in their estate plans.

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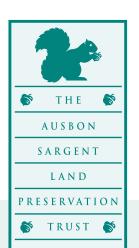
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If the Land Trust is named in your estate plan or if you would like to discuss a possible bequest, please contact us at 603-526-6555 or info@ausbonsargent.org so we can set up an appointment to share information and answer questions. Those who prefer not to be recognized can remain anonymous.

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