

Vandermast Property Background

This property abuts Hadlock Community Forest and Hurricane Valley Farm (see attached map). It represents the “missing link” in a ±2,200-acre nearly contiguous conservation corridor stretching from Windham, across North Falmouth, and into Cumberland. Its acquisition would allow for a key trail connection for pedestrians, mountain bikers, and snowmobilers that would link Rines Forest in Cumberland, through Falmouth, to the Lowell Preserve in Windham.

The owner is interested in selling her land east of Hobb’s Brook, approximately 60-acres or half of her property. She has initiated an appraisal and needs only one boundary surveyed. The cost of that survey would be ±\$5,000 and it needs to be completed by mid-August.

A new Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) grant funding opportunity has just opened. Given the property’s strategic location, it would likely be a good candidate for LMF funding. It may also be a candidate for a mitigation grant given the wetlands on the property, including a long stretch of Hobb’s Brook, portions of which have been compromised by two different woods road crossings that need restoration. The LMF grant application is due September 1st; the mitigation proposal on September 15th. Should we get the LMF grant, we could accept reduced mitigation grant funding to restore the stream. There would be no cost to the town for that work.

LMF requires a 50% match. ±180-acres of Hadlock Community Forest are not easement protected. We could likely match the cost of the acquisition, including the cost of the land, appraisal, survey, legal costs, etc., by placing an easement on these acres. If successful, the only cost to the town might likely be the cost of a stewardship fee, perhaps \$10,000, payable to the Falmouth Land Trust for assuming a conservation easement on the property.

Action Required: Authorize the town manager to spend up to \$5,000 for a survey of the property, funds to come from the Open Space Acquisition account.