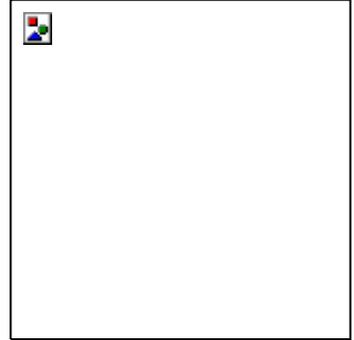


For Immediate Release

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\$50,000 awarded for Accessible Trail in Acton

ACTON – Three Rivers Land Trust is celebrating a \$50,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a state-administered program that provides funding for projects that facilitate diverse trail use. The grant will be used to help make the Goat Hill Trail in Acton accessible for people using wheelchairs and other mobility devices. The land trust is holding a guided tour of the 0.8-mile trail on April 23rd at 9AM for those interested in visiting the trail and learning more.

Since 2016, Three Rivers Land Trust and the Town of Acton have pursued the dream of having a “universal access” trail to the summit of Goat Hill, which has spectacular views over fields and orchards to nearby lakes and also the Presidential Range in the distance. When complete, the trail will allow hikers of all abilities to access the summit picnic area and these scenic views. The recently awarded RTP grant will cover about half of what is still needed to complete improvements to both the trail and the summit.

The summit of Goat Hill rises 161 feet above the parking area on H Road in Acton. Creating a trail with the gentle grades needed for universal access has been a unique challenge on this rocky landscape. The land trust broke ground on the trail shortly after the purchase of Goat Hill by the Town of Acton in 2018. The purchase was part of a wider conservation effort that protected 240 acres from development. The Goat Hill Trail began as a rough-cut track, but each phase of development since then has made the trail easier to use.

Recent visitors to the trail might wonder what more there is to do – the last round of construction in 2021 created a five-foot-wide, easy-to-walk, gravel-surfaced route from the parking lot all the way to the grassy summit, which has become a well-known destination in Acton. However, the trail and the summit both need additional modifications before they can be considered accessible for wheelchair users and other mobility devices. During this last phase of construction, the land trust aims to meet or exceed Forest Service guidelines for accessible trails, which will include staying within strict grade limits, offering appropriate resting areas, and re-finishing the surface with harder-packed gravel. To determine the trail’s needs and make a plan for these final modifications, the land trust contracted with Mike Cooper of Caribou Recreation Development, a professional trail builder who has experience in creating and renovating accessible trails. Mr. Cooper analyzed the current trail foot by foot, made recommendations for the necessary changes, and also came up with an accessible design for the planned picnic area at the summit.

Three Rivers Land Trust is currently fundraising to match the \$50,000 RTP grant, and is in the process of selecting a trail builder with appropriate experience for this important completion phase. For more information about the trail or the upcoming hike, please reach out to Development Director Ruth Gutman at ruth@3rlt.org or call/text Executive Director Cheri Dunning at (207) 358-9695.

The Three Rivers Land Trust is a membership-supported organization dedicated to building stronger, healthier communities through the protection of wild and working landscapes in Acton, Alfred, Lebanon, Shapleigh and Sanford/Springvale. Named for the Little Ossipee, Salmon Falls, and Mousam Rivers, Three Rivers Land Trust holds conservation easements to protect farms, forests, and wetlands, and maintains preserves which provide recreation and hunting access.

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Attached Photos:

1. Three Rivers volunteers take in the view in 2020, before removal of the old picnic tables
2. A near-finished section of trail near the parking area.
3. A young visitor to the Goat Hill summit waves at Square Pond, one of two local water bodies visible from the hilltop.

Photo Credit: Three Rivers Land Trust