



Ossipee Mountains

Forest Legacy Tract, New Hampshire

March 2002

The Ossipee Mountains are considered by many geologists to be the best example of a ring dike formation in the world. A ring dike is the remains from a long extinct volcano that has eroded over millions of years. The Ossipee Mountains are a nearly circular range, 10 miles in diameter, located at the center of the former volcanic crater. The clustered Ossipee Mountains have nearly a dozen peaks above 2,000 feet, two of which are above 2,500 feet, offering a scenic backdrop to the many lakes in the area.

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Forest Legacy Program Manager Deirdre Raimo

Adding to the scenic character of the mountains is the absence of development within the mountains themselves. The mountains are also easily accessible for recreation as many trails for hiking and snowmobiling are located in the area.

The State of New Hampshire, Department of Resources and Economic Development permanently protected a 5,372-acre property in the Ossipee Mountains on March 27, 2002, through the purchase of a conservation easement. The \$1,685,000 easement was purchased with \$1,400,000 USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy funds and the landowner, Chocorua Forestland, donated the remaining value. The property remains in private ownership and will continue to be managed for forest products guided by a state approved forest management plan. The purchase of the conservation easement by the State of New Hampshire ensures that the property will not be developed and continue in traditional forest and recreational uses.

“It is exciting to be a part of the protection of the Ossipee Mountains Forest Legacy tract because it is one of the few Forest Legacy tracts that complements a world-renown geological feature,” says Deirdre Raimo Northeastern Area Forest Legacy Program Manager. “The easement will include the protection of Special Management Areas that have been identified to ensure protection of sensitive areas, including two old growth forests totaling 27 acres.”

Recreation opportunities on the property will continue. A State snowmobile trail is protected through a

Snowmobile Agreement between the landowner and the State of New Hampshire. The 4.8-mile trail utilizes the network of truck roads and skid trails throughout the property. Six miles of maintained hiking trails are also protected from development, including trails that ascend the summits of Bayle and Flagg Mountains.

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. These forests provide essential wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, afford outstanding scenic views, are home to historic sites, and/or provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private while ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.



This snowmobile trail leading into the Ossipee Mountains Forest Legacy tract is one of the many recreational opportunities protected by the conservation easement on the property. Photo by Neal Bungard