The 636-acre town forest includes most of Tucker Mountain, 1,690 feet in elevation, along with Newbury’s highest point, the 1,742-foot summit of Woodchuck Mountain.

The top of Tucker Mountain was cleared for pastures in 1810 and has remained open since. These grassy meadows have panoramic views, abundant wildflowers and excellent habitat for nesting birds. The forest also has beaver pond wetlands along the West Branch of Halls Brook along with a large vernal pool. Hunters, hikers, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, mountain bikers, horseback riders, and ATV riders all use the mountain. Newbury and Bradford students make yearly treks to the top and have celebrated International Day of Peace there.

The Town of Newbury voted to contribute $25,000 toward the purchase of the town forest. The project was also funded with competitive grants from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Open Space Institute’s Community Forest Fund, the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Vermont Land Trust Forest Fund, Davis Conservation Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation, and charitable donations from the community.

More than 115 donors from the Upper Valley and beyond provided nearly $100,000 in contributions to complete the purchase and endow a fund dedicated to stewardship.

“Gifts were provided by many Newbury residents who have enjoyed the mountain over the years,” said Bob Linck, Central Vermont Regional Director of the Vermont Land Trust. “The outpouring of support shows how important this place is.”

The next step for the Newbury Selectboard will be to appoint a management committee of Newbury residents representing various user groups. The committee will draft a plan for how the forest will be used for recreation, education, hunting and timber harvesting. The plan will also specify access and ecological protects for the land, forests, wetlands and wildlife. The Newbury Conservation Commission will work closely with the committee.

There is an interim management plan, written by a town-appointed committee and chaired by Bob Beaulieu, Newbury’s road foreman. The committee is focused on management that could help control erosion of the Class IV Tucker Mountain Road and avoid future degradation on the mountaintop, where heavy vehicle use has created gullies and damage to the high meadows.

The purchase of the Town Forest took several years and much deliberation because the Town wanted to make sure that many in the community were engaged. The Town wanted to understand potential expenses associated with upkeep of the roads in a time of more frequent and intense rainfall**,** which can quickly wash out sections of road that were once much more stable.  The Selectboard committed to State standards for maintaining Class IV roads and agreed to make every effort to maintain the view through the recommendations of the interim management plan committee, relying on contributions, grants, and volunteer help.

Town forests are a part of Vermont’s proud tradition of community ownership. Today, there are more than 67,000 acres of forestland owned by 172 municipalities around the state, all open to the public to enjoy. Bradford’s Wright’s Mountain Town Forest with its extensive network of trails will likely be a model for the Newbury property, along with Fairlee’s Brushwood Community Forest.

The Newbury Conservation Commission, the fundraising committee and the Vermont Land Trust plan to have a celebration of the Tucker Mountain Town Forest this spring. Until then, community members and visitors should plan to visit [www.newburyconservation.org](http://www.newburyconservation.org/) for information on access to the mountain.

“I’m excited that the town can now take part in the stewardship of the new Tucker Mountain Town Forest,” said Tom Kidder, a member of the local committee helping to protect the land.

“It's important to include hikers, hunters, skiers, ATV riders, snowmobilers in the management -- all who care about the mountain. There are many that who recreate or and admire its ecological features and natural beauty. As a community we can make improvements such as improving trails, controlling erosion and managing the forest sustainably.”

“As a member of the Newbury Conservation Commission, I am looking forward to working with my fellow Newbury citizens to create a management plan that will protect and keep intact the natural habitat of this special place in Newbury, Tucker Mountain Town Forest,” said Michael Thomas, Chair of the Newbury Conservation Commission.

“At the same time the Forest will provide open access to Newbury residents and the public to enjoy and explore the recreational value of the new town forest and its resources. As Chair of Newbury Conservation Commission**,** I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all who have helped to make this possible, and to welcome all who will become involved as we move forward.”

Gus Seelig, Executive Director of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, said, “Congratulations to the town of Newbury for creating and protecting this new town forest for generations to come. VHCB is proud to support this community effort. The management and stewardship plans will ensure the long-term use and enjoyment of the property by residents of Newbury and visitors to the area.”

The Tucker Mountain Town Forest was also supported though the Open Space Institute’s Community Forest Fund, which supports the creation and expansion of community forests in Northern New England. “OSI’s Community Forest Fund invested in the protection of Tucker Mountain because the project creates a permanent and iconic community asset,” said Jennifer Melville, OSI’s vice president for conservation grants. “We congratulate Newbury and the Vermont Land Trust, whose partnership will benefit so many local residents, today and into the future.”

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The **Vermont Land Trust** is a statewide, member-supported, nonprofit land conservation organization. Since 1977, the Vermont Land Trust has protected nearly 2,000 parcels of land covering more than 593,000 acres, or 10 percent of the state. This includes more than 900 working farms and farmland parcels, hundreds of thousands of acres of productive forestland, and numerous parcels of community lands. This conservation work changes the lives of families, invigorates farms, launches new businesses, maintains scenic vistas, encourages recreational opportunity, and fosters a renewed sense of community. For more information or to become a member, visit [www.vlt.org](http://www.vlt.org/).