



NEWS RELEASE

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DORIS DUKE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Environment Program

Multi-Million Dollar Initiative Will Help Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire Conserve Natural Areas Identified as Priorities in Their State Wildlife Action Plans

Initiative's first success is the conservation of a forested area near the York River in Maine

NEW YORK – The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) has awarded a \$6 million grant to support the creation of Saving New England's Wildlife, a new initiative announced today by the Open Space Institute (OSI) to protect areas identified as high-priority wildlife habitat by Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts in their State Wildlife Action Plans. OSI's multimillion-dollar initiative provides grants to other conservation nonprofits for the purchase of land and permanent conservation easements.

The first success under this new initiative is the protection of Highland Farm in York, Maine, which links the un-fragmented forested area around Mt. Agamenticus to conservation lands along the York River. This is the first of fifteen projects that the initiative plans to support over the next eighteen months.

"In a time of limited resources, we are pleased to be able to announce this bold new initiative aimed at helping these states protect the landscapes they have identified as their top conservation priorities," said Kim Elliman, Chief Executive Officer of OSI. OSI capitalized its new initiative with the \$6 million grant from DDCF and a \$1 million gift made anonymously by another private charitable foundation, and the grant from DDCF will be matched 5 to 1 with additional funding from public and private sources.

The state wildlife action plans were first conceived in 2000, when Congress mandated that each state develop a comprehensive strategy for conserving its wildlife. The states submitted their plans to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the fall of 2005, and all of the plans were approved by February of 2007. In order to establish a common conservation agenda that could achieve broad acceptance, the state wildlife agencies developed these plans in collaboration with scientists, sportsmen, conservation organizations and other interested members of the public. The plans consider a broad range of wildlife, looking at game and non-game species, and aim to help keep currently common species from becoming endangered.

"The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is proud to support this new initiative, which seeks to help these states realize the vision that they have put forward in their wildlife action plans," said Dr. Mark Shaffer, director of the Environment Program at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. "With a 40-year record of leadership in land conservation and conservation finance, OSI is well-positioned to work with partners across New England to make a difference for wildlife habitat." Saving New England's Wildlife is the fifth in a series of regional initiatives that DDCF has funded across the nation to conserve areas identified as priorities in state action plans.

"Acquisition is expensive and must be targeted to achieve impact. The state wildlife action plans offer a blueprint by which states can focus their acquisition dollars," said Peter Howell, OSI's Executive Vice President. "Using the action plans, state funding programs, such as Land For Maine's Future Program, offer an essential match to private funds such as those from Saving New England's Wildlife, and a strong commitment from these states to implementing their action plans is essential to attracting additional private and federal funding."

Representative Dawn Hill from Maine's 149th District also commented on the project. "The protection of Highland Farm is a boon for all of Maine, for both the people who live here and the species who call this property their home. This project represents the best of what Land For Maine's Future can achieve," said Representative Hill. "I hope looking ahead, the LMF, strengthened through more funding in 2010, will continue to be such an excellent tool for the protection of Maine's bounty of natural resources."

The York Land Trust partnered with The Trust for Public Land to permanently protect Highland Farm. The approximately \$3 million the organizations needed for the project came from a broad array of sources, including \$118,000 from OSI, \$477,000 from LMF, and \$500,000 approved by York voters. The York property is one of fifteen projects that OSI will fund through Saving New England's Wildlife and the first completed in Maine. The project preserves 151 acres of habitat for seven threatened and endangered species, including restoration sites for state-endangered New England Cottontail, and it safeguards drinking water for residents of three towns. The project also provides recreational and educational opportunities and links to a 40-mile trail system around Mt. Agamenticus.

"We are thrilled to be the inaugural grantee of these funds which were critical to the completion of our project. It's great to add OSI to our expansive list of private and public funding partners that have all recognized the outstanding qualities of Highland Farm and lent their support and encouragement to ensure its protection," said The York Land Trust's executive director Doreen MacGillis.

"The Highland Farm project was successful because the effort combined an incredible vision for conserving these 150 acres, the skills and tenacity of the York Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land, and the generous financial support of public and private supporters to attract the \$3,100,000 required to protect the beautiful landscape and critical habitat at Highland Farm," said Wolfe Tone, Maine State Director, the Trust for Public Land. "The Trust for Public Land and the project partners are incredibly grateful to the Open Space Institute for its generous support of the project. Together, the partners, visitors today, and future generations who will enjoy the beauty of Highland Farm can cheer this great accomplishment."

The identification of Highland Farm as key habitat is just one example of how the action plans are promoting partnerships around a common agenda, providing a to-do list and measuring tool for wildlife conservation efforts.

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The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (www.ddcf.org) is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties.

The Open Space Institute (www.osiny.org) protects scenic, natural, and historic landscapes to ensure public enjoyment, conserve habitats, and sustain community character. OSI achieves its goals through land acquisition, conservation easements, regional loan programs, fiscal sponsorship, creative partnerships, and analytical research. OSI has protected more than 100,000 acres in New York State. Through its Northern Forest Protection Fund and Conservation Finance Program, OSI has assisted in the protection of an additional 1.7 million acres in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina and Georgia.