

6/26/23

Land trust, lake association apply for open space grant

BY KURT MOFFETT
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WINSTED — The Winchester Land Trust, with support from the Highland Lake Watershed Association and the Board of Selectmen, is applying to the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for an open space and watershed land acquisition grant to help protect and preserve 508 acres of land between Rowley Street/Torrington Road and East Wakefield Boulevard.

Trust President Jennifer Perga said if state funding is obtained and additional funds raised, this property, to be named "Laurel Ridge, Pa-

"THIS PROPERTY IS A CRITICAL PART OF THE HIGHLAND LAKE AND STILL RIVER WATERSHEDS. MAINTAINING IT AS OPEN SPACE WILL HELP ENSURE THAT HIGHLAND LAKE STAYS HEALTHY AND CLEAN FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF WINSTED CITIZENS, AS WELL AS THE MANY OUT-OF-TOWN PEOPLE WHO FISH, SWIM, AND WATERSKI ON HIGHLAND LAKE."

JENNIFER PERGA, PRESIDENT,
WINCHESTER LAND TRUST

ganelli Preserve, will help protect and preserve this large scenic block of ridgeline and forest for generations."

"This property is a critical part of the Highland Lake and Still River watersheds," she continued. "Maintaining it as open space will help en-

sure that Highland Lake stays healthy and clean for the enjoyment of Winsted citizens, as well as the many out-of-town people who travel to fish, swim, and waterski on Highland Lake. Good water quality maintains high property values of homes

around the lake, which contribute roughly a third of the town's grand list."

Additionally, the Still River is labeled as "impaired" by DEEP, Perga said. Keeping land forested in the Still River's watershed reduces polluted runoff and enables the ecosystem to recover. The Sue Grossman Greenway, a popular multi-use trail, runs along the Still River.

Perga declined to say how much money the trust needs to purchase the property, or properties. But she did confirm that part of the area targeted for protection was part of plans for a golf course, condominiums and single-family homes about 15 years ago.