

## “Conserving the North Country’s Special Places”

Volume 9.2 – Fall 2009

### The Art of Conservation a Big Success

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Signature conserved landscapes were showcased when nationally known and local artists exhibited their landscape portraits in September and early October at the Sunset Hill House in Sugar Hill. The show brought together the artists who capture our scenic heritage on canvas and landowning families and ACT members who have worked together to permanently protect signature landscapes.

Over 350 people enjoyed the show, and the artists are already talking about next year. One visitor said, “I had no idea how beautiful this work would be. It’s really exciting to see.” Thanks to the artists, patrons who bought the work, and Banks Gallery, which assembled nearly 60 paintings ranging from intimate scenes of the Ammonoosuc River to a breathtaking view of Iris Farm in Sugar Hill. And thanks to volunteers Margo Connors, Martha Evelyn, and board member Lynn Kenerson, who handled the publicity. Images from the show are at [www.theartofconservation.org](http://www.theartofconservation.org).

Visit [www.aconservationtrust.org](http://www.aconservationtrust.org)  
For the most current info!

A beautifully designed hardcover book shows each painting in the exhibit, plus information on the artists. Please contact us at [rbrown@aconservationtrust.org](mailto:rbrown@aconservationtrust.org) or 823-7777 for ordering information.

### Littleton Couple Protects Woodlands for ‘the creatures’



Littleton landowners Carol and Tony Ilacqua conserved 90 acres of their Mt. Eustis Road property with ACT on July 27. The Ilacquas first approached ACT about protecting their property with a conservation easement two years ago. They were dedicated to finding the right solution to provide permanent protection for the land and the wildlife that enjoys the property. Over their more than 30 years of ownership, the couple has worked hard to establish a habitat that supports numerous native species. Knowing that “the creatures,” as Carol puts it, will continue having the land as a sanctuary was important to the couple. While some people conserve their property for the tax credits, the Ilacqua’s motivation was for the animals.

ACT Executive Director Rebecca Brown said, “The Ilacquas show that preserving land is leaving a legacy for their community and their family. Conserved land is really a community asset. ACT’s vision is that we link conserved lands together so that trails for people and corridors for wildlife are protected as part of the green infrastructure.” The Ilacqua property includes a state designated snowmobile trail.

Chris Latulip, ACT’s board president and Littleton resident, noted that it has been nearly a hundred years since a Littleton resident had given such a generous gift to the community; the Dells and Kilburn Crags are two examples of protected property that are enjoyed by area residents. THANK YOU Carol and Tony for setting the example for renewed land conservation in Littleton!

### Farmland & Floodplain Initiative Focuses on Habitat and Economy

Partnering with The Nature Conservancy, ACT is working to protect valuable farmland and floodplain forests along the Connecticut, Johns, and Israel Rivers. Agricultural soils along these rivers are some of the richest in the state, and support many of the major remaining farms in the North Country. Many farmers’ lands also include floodplain forests, a significant and declining habitat in the Connecticut River watershed. These forests provide critical habitat for a variety of wildlife, especially migratory songbirds. Floodplains also act as natural sponges at times of high water, helping protect property downstream from damaging floods. The floodplains along the Connecticut River from Lancaster to Stratford are among the most important natural valley flood storage areas in the entire four-state Connecticut River watershed. Yet very little of these lands have been conserved.

This intersection of human and wildlife needs is at the core of the Farmland and Floodplains Initiative. ACT and TNC are completing a sophisticated GIS analysis identifying the highest priority lands for conservation. We will work directly with landowners on conservation options, and will present community workshops on floodplain and farmland conservation in February and March. “We’re creating win-win situations for farmers, communities, and habitat,” said ACT Director Rebecca Brown. “These lands are a backbone of our watershed’s economy and ecology.”

## Family Conserves Much Loved Sugar Hill Land

Part of a landscape chosen by Sugar Hill residents as one of the most important in town to protect has been permanently conserved, thanks to the great generosity of its owners. The Perkins family donated a easement on their 136 acres on Bronson Hill in August. The family's willingness to permanently protect the outstanding scenic hillside - as well as allow public enjoyment of it - stands as a testament of their commitment to ACT, its values, and to the community.



Rufus Perkins, brother Jim, and sister Louisa Porter gave a gift to future generations by protecting what they hold so dear today. The siblings trace their love of the area to their great grandfather's arrival in Sugar Hill in 1885. "We spent many summers as children and all seasons as adults either on Sunset or Bronson Hill," Rufus says. "The long family connection and our appreciation of the special nature of the place made us want to keep it as it is for future generations to enjoy." Their land abuts ACT's Foss Forest and the MacCornack-Evelyn Forest, itself the generous gift from another family with deep local roots. The combined 320 acres form a significant unfragmented tract of forestland that is home to wildlife as well as enjoyed by many for the walking trails and splendid views. The entire ACT Board of Directors has been humbled by the neighborhood effort to conserve these special places. THANK YOU Jim, Louisa, and Rufus for your generous gift and your untiring commitment to our mission, vision and goals. Your leadership has provided us with the vision to truly see the forest for the trees!

## Lancaster Family Joins the 'ACT'



ACT is delighted to hold its first conservation easement CE in Coös County, further expressing its mission to provide services as a regional land trust.

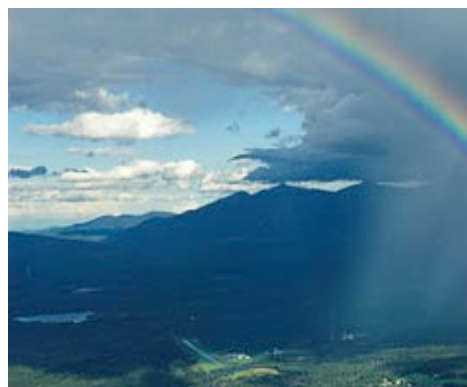
Through local realtor Peter Powell, Edward (Ted) and Lois McGee contacted ACT about conserving a 60-acre parcel of their farm property in Lancaster. They had first approached a larger conservation organization and were told that their parcel wasn't big enough for consideration. ACT was far better positioned to carry out their protection wishes. The property has open farmland and forest, and provides scenic views along North Road and from Route 2, a state Scenic Byway. These factors met ACT's objectives and the conservation easement was completed.

The McGees wished to ensure that their children and grandchildren would be able to enjoy the land that they have loved for over 50 years. The McGee gift will inspire generations to come about the values that Ted and Lois express today. THANK YOU Ted and Lois!

## ACT Helps Regional Airport and Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge

ACT was very pleased to help add land to the Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge in Whitefield and Jefferson this summer. The land was part of mitigation required for the expansion of the taxiways at the White Mountain Regional Airport in Whitefield. Since the airport is adjacent to Pondicherry, this was an opportunity to further expand the refuge.

Working with the Whitefield and Jefferson Conservation Commissions, the Airport Commission, and Friends of Pondicherry, ACT identified suitable land, acquired it using mitigation funds, and then donated it to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The 18 acres are on Hazen Road, at the entrance of the refuge. The land contains wetlands and the shrubby habitat enjoyed by many bird species, including breeding and migratory woodcock.



## A Great Step Forward - Help ACT Hire Local Talent

ACT has a tremendous opportunity to add to our organizational capacity, which continues to be stretched as more and bigger projects come our way. We are extremely pleased to welcome Jessica Bunker to our team. Jessica, a graduate of Profile High School, grew up in Franconia. She graduated summa cum laude from UNH and holds an MS from Antioch New England. She has wanted to return to the North Country and also continue working in the conservation field. She had been working for a southern NH land trust. Jessica generously offered to work with ACT as a volunteer while we raise the funds to hire her, hopefully before the end of the year. We are seeking special donations from individuals to match applied-for foundation support.

Meanwhile, the Board of Directors has embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process to guide ACT's future. Heading the priority list is to become a nationally accredited land trust by adhering to the Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. We are in the process of designing all of our policies and procedures to follow these standards (more information on the Land Trust Alliance and accreditation may be found at [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org)). The addition of a part-time staff person will improve our response time to projects, allow us to undertake more projects, and will help us work toward national accreditation.

We are very excited at the prospect of hiring Jessica and we welcome your financial support to make this position a reality! Please make your contribution to ACT today!