

News from Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
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New Federal Law Gives Fairer Tax Benefit for Voluntary Conservation Agreements

DEERFIELD N.H., September 6, 2006 – Generous landowners who donate voluntary conservation agreements, also known as conservation easements, to Bear-Paw Regional Greenways are inspired by many things: they love the Bear-Paw region, they feel connected to their land, and they wish to leave a legacy for future generations. This inspiration is at the heart of Bear-Paw's work to permanently protect valuable natural resources. But for almost all of Bear-Paw's donors, donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income tax deduction that comes with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in the community.

Congress recently passed a new law that enhances the tax benefits of protecting private land for many landowners. The legislation improves the tax incentive for conservation easements by allowing conservation easement donors to:

- Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%);
- Continue to take deductions for as long as 15 years (up from 5 years) after the initial deduction; and
- Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry.

Congress also passed tighter appraisal standards for such gifts and stronger penalties for appraisers who violate the standards.

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA) led the effort to get Congress to approve this new law. LTA is a national organization that sets national standards for conservation organizations like ours, provides training and networking opportunities, and represents the land trust community in Washington, DC. Bear-Paw Regional Greenways has been a member of LTA for many years. The new law will make it easier for others in Bear-Paw's community to build on their love of the land and permanently protect the important lands of the region. To learn more about these new developments, visit www.LTA.org.

Bear-Paw Regional Greenways is a non-profit land trust led by resident volunteers who are concerned about the loss of natural areas throughout the organization's seven town service area of Candia, Deerfield, Epsom, Northwood, Nottingham, Raymond, and Strafford. Bear-Paw exists to safeguard native wildlife and plant habitat, water resources, working farms and forests, scenic vistas, and recreational opportunities. The organization is committed to ensuring that the region's most important natural features continue to be available for future generations and is working to promote voluntary land protection through outreach, education, and project assistance. For further information about how to become a member, land protection options for landowners or volunteering with the land trust, please contact Daniel Kern at Bear-Paw Regional Greenways, Post Office Box 19, Deerfield, NH 03037, 603 463-9400, or info@bear-paw.org. You can also visit their website at www.bear-paw.org.

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