

## **Town of Andover receives Land Donation from Thomas D. Talbot, completing Successful Formation of New Town Lot**

**Deed Signing Ceremony on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 12:00 P.M.**

On Wednesday, January 19, 2022, Andover Town Officials and others met at the Town Hall to witness Thomas D. Talbot signing the deed that conveyed ownership of his 7.84-acre "Wildcat Lot" over to the Town of Andover. This signing brought to a successful conclusion a multi-year project to combine five separate lots into a single 37.74-acre contiguous lot now belonging to the Town of Andover. The new lot was formed from two lots previously owned by Andover, two lots donated by the Northern Connecticut Land Trust and finally Talbot's lot on Wednesday. These five lots are shown on the accompanying map. The newly formed lot is adjacent to the Andover/Bolton town borderline, lying between Shoddy Mill Road and Boston Hill Road - and is part of a very large forested undeveloped section of Andover. Representing the Northern CT Land Trust was Patrice Carson, President of the Board of Directors, and also, the Director of Community Development for the Town of Bolton.

The Town of Andover thanked the Conservation Commission for their great efforts in making this moment happen, as it is a proud and exciting one in Andover history. The Andover Conservation Commission, chaired by Michael Palazzi, led the Andover effort to bring the project to a successful conclusion. Mike Palazzi shared, "The Town Clerk Carol Lee and Assistant Assessor Roberta Dougherty were very helpful in locating maps. It's a beautiful property - it is landlocked so hopefully we will be able to acquire a right of way, but it will be preserved as Open Space." Thank you to the current Conservation Commission members for their dedication: Mike Palazzi, Mary Ann Gile, Hank Gruener, Carrie Crompton, Gary Gile. Resident Irv Staley shared that Don Smith, Director at the Northern CT Land Trust, helped initiate the land transfer.

*Here is a history of the land acquisition process including the old story of the "Wildcat Lot":*

In the spring of 2019, the Northern Connecticut Land Trust (NCLT) approached Andover officials and inquired if Andover would be interested in accepting a donation of the two NCLT properties in Andover. These properties were donated to the NCLT in 2000 by F. William Finley and his sister Ruth Finley Bell. The properties had been in the Finley family since 1877 when as the result of a judgement against the previous owner for an unpaid debt, the deputy sheriff of Tolland County set off these lots to David C. Finley, grandfather of the brother and sister donors.

Shortly after, Andover was approached by the NCLT, Andover wetlands agent John Valente contacted Thomas D. Talbot inquiring if he would consider donating his 7.84-acre property as that would connect all five properties and Talbot agreed. This lot has a place in Andover history as the deed for the conveyance of this lot in 1849 is on Page 1 of Volume 1 of the Andover Land Records and thus was the first property recorded in the Andover Land Records after Andover became a town in 1848. The Talbot family acquired this lot in 1948 when Talbot's parents Roscoe and Margaret Talbot, who were realtors, accepted the lot as a real estate commission instead of money. The lot is adjacent to a large lot called the "Wildcat Lot" in early deeds and the Talbot family also started calling their lot the "Wildcat Lot".

Talbot as a boy once asked his father why it is called the "Wildcat Lot". His father answered that a long time ago, a man lived nearby deep in the woods and kids came around "pestering him" so he spread the word there were wildcats in those woods to keep the kids away.

The Conservation Commission engaged the Connecticut Resource and Conservation and Development Environmental Review Team to assess the offered properties. In June 2020 the review team issued a fifty-page report that concluded "The parcels under consideration by the Town of Andover contain significant natural resource value and would enhance existing open space already owned by the town." Following the favorable environmental report, the Conservation Commission shepherded the proposed acquisitions through favorable votes by the town Planning and Zoning Commission, the Board of Selectmen, and finally by a town wide vote by the voters of Andover.

Patrice L. Carson, president of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust, signed the deed transferring the trust property to Andover on December 7, 2021, and as noted earlier, Thomas D. Talbot signed his deed on Wednesday, January 19, 2022.