



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Shaker Village Preservation Effort Completed**

Partnership concludes project to protect 1700-acre farm at Sabbathday Lake

**New Gloucester, Maine** – The Trust for Public Land (TPL) announced today that a two-year effort to preserve the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village has reached a successful conclusion. A conservation easement over the land and a preservation agreement over the historic buildings now guarantee that the historic farm will never be developed.

The Sabbathday Lake Shaker village, forest and farm, a National Historic Landmark comprised of 1700 acres and 19 historic structures and landscape features, is the last place where Shakers farm, work and worship. And thanks to over 200 years of stewardship, the land encompasses diverse wildlife habitat, walking and cross-country skiing trails, fertile agricultural soils, and productive woodlands.

Under the terms of the completed easements, the Shakers have sold their rights to develop the property, and the proceeds will help them make needed upgrades and repairs on the property and buildings. The easements allow for sustainable farming, forestry and low impact recreation, while prohibiting development and inappropriate uses.

The Shakers will continue to own and manage the property, farming the land, pasturing animals and leasing orchards and fields to neighboring farmers and apple growers. The historic buildings, including the only active Shaker Meeting House, along with culturally important landscape features, such as the stone walls and archeological sites, will never be significantly altered. If the Shakers ever chose to sell the land or buildings, the easements will remain in force and these important resources will be protected regardless of ownership.

Brother Arnold Hadd, one of the members at the Sabbathday Lake Shaker community, said, “Stewardship is a primary concern for the Shakers: be it our faith or our land. This project will help us to ensure the preservation of the Village for future generations not only for Believers, but for all people. This easement will enable us to retain the land entrusted to us by our founders over two hundred years ago, so we can maintain our home, farm and forestlands. We are grateful to God and to all those people who worked so hard on our behalf to make this project a reality.”

TPL, a national non-profit organization with an office in Portland, Maine, and the lead project partners – Maine Preservation, the Royal River Conservation Trust, New England Forestry Foundation, Friends of the Shakers’, the State of Maine and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – worked to raise \$3.5 in funding to purchase the easements and endow a stewardship fund for the future care of the land and buildings.

That Land for Maine’s Future Program contributed \$805,000 to the project, and the NRCS’s Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program awarded a grant of \$505,000. The remainder of the funds came from private contributors, who donated nearly \$2.2 million. The private fundraising campaign continues, as partners are working to secure the final \$200,000 to complete the endowment for the upkeep of the property.

Governor John Baldacci, U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe, and U.S. Representative Tom Allen were honorary chairs of the private fundraising campaign. Governor Baldacci said, “Maine, through our Land for Maine’s Future Program, was proud to be a partner in this preservation effort. The Sabbathday Shaker farm is an important legacy. With real estate prices increasing quickly in southern Maine, these special places that connect us to our past are vanishing. I commend the Shaker Community for its vision and commitment to Maine’s future.”

“The ways of the Shakers are important to American culture, and their fields, farms and forests are critical to the rural legacy of southern Maine. I commend the Shakers and their many supporters for bringing this exciting project to its successful completion and am pleased to support this unique project,” said U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe.

“At Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village, a unique, special chapter in Maine and America’s heritage and culture remains suspended in time,” U.S. Representative Tom Allen said. “I was honored to serve as a co-chair of the effort to protect not only the land and the physical infrastructure, but also the community and way of life that are Sabbathday Lake.”

Maine Preservation, an organization which promotes protection of Maine historic places, will steward the historic preservation easement with Shaker community. According to Executive Director Roxanne Eflin, “The Shaker community is a National Historic Landmark, and its significance lies in its aggregate of buildings and their setting as well as in the extensive and varied cultural landscape which forms the scope of a hard won and exemplary life.”

The Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) is the local land trust covering the project area. The Shakers’ land lies at the headwaters of the Royal River, making it a cornerstone in the effort to protect the health of the river and its wildlife corridor. Henry Nichols, RRCT’s

Executive Director, said, “We were extremely honored and pleased to work with the Sabbathday Lake Shakers and other partners to help make the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village, Forest and Farm project a resounding success. While the project is significant for Maine and appealing nationally, it is at its core an important local project. Maintaining farming, forestry, traditional recreation and the property’s rich living history provides a unique anchor to our vision of the region, connected conservation lands from Sabbathday Lake to Casco Bay.”

Whitney Beals, Director of Land Protection for the New England Forestry Foundation, stated, “We are very pleased to be part of this successful conservation partnership, working with the Shaker community to ensure permanent protection of its 1,700 acres of working forest and agricultural lands. Out of necessity, historic preservation efforts usually focus on individual buildings or small sites and not on the larger context. The farm and forestlands are integral to the Shaker village, to its history, and to its economic future. Conserving the land is both critical and timely. We applaud the Shakers and their many supporters for their vision.”

“In cooperation with key state and local government, we have been making a difference for the future of agriculture in Maine,” said Joyce Swartzendruber, State Conservationist for NRCS in Maine. “We are pleased to be a partner in this effort.”

Sam Hodder, Senior Project Manager for TPL, said, “This Shaker community is a real part of the Maine landscape. TPL wants to thank the many donors who have made it possible to preserve the shores of the lake, the forest, and the fields just the way they have existed for generations.”

**The Trust for Public Land**, established in 1972, specializes in conservation real estate, applying its expertise in negotiations, public finance, and law to protect land for people to enjoy as parks, greenways, community gardens, urban playgrounds, and wilderness. In Maine, TPL has protected over 87,000 acres with projects ranging from city parks and pathways to coastal habitat and working farms and forests. For more information, visit TPL on the web at [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org).

**The Land for Maine’s Future Program** was created in 1987 in response to concerns over the loss of critical natural area, wildlife habitat and farmland along with traditional access to undeveloped lands for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. To date, the Land for Maine’s Future Program has protected over 215,000 acres of Maine’s best recreational and natural areas. The program also seeks to protect farmlands through the purchase of development rights and public access to water for fishing, boating, and commercial marine activities. To learn more visit <http://www.state.me.us/spo/lmf> .

**The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program** (FRPP), a program of the 2002 Farm Bill and administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, helps farmers keep their land in agriculture and prevents conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, and local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farmland protection programs to purchase conservation easements.

**The Royal River Conservation Trust** is a regional land trust serving the 12 communities of the Royal River. Since 2002 FORR has helped conserve over 250 acres of land in the Royal River estuary and along stream corridors by partnering with landowners, municipalities, government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Founded in 1971, **Maine Preservation** is the statewide private nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the preservation, protection and vitality of Maine's historic places and encouraging quality design that contributes to the livability of our communities. The membership-based organization accomplishes its mission through advocacy, easements, education, and outreach. To learn more visit [www.maine Preservation.org](http://www.maine Preservation.org).

Founded 30 years ago, the **Friends of the Shakers'** sole mission is to work with the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Community, through hands on labor and fund raising, to help perpetuate the Shakers' property. The Friends has a global membership.

Founded in 1944, the **New England Forestry Foundation** is a regional conservation organization promoting sustainable forest management throughout New England, pursuing its mission through five main activities: forestland protection, forest management demonstration, conservation education, policy development, and forming forest conservation partnerships with other private non-profits, landowners, and public agencies.

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