

# Preserve Clark Farm & Forest

The Windham Land Trust urges you to **VOTE YES** for a bond to preserve Clark Farm & Forest on November 3.

**Vote Yes for the Clark Farm!**



Jerry and Marcy Monkman/Ecophotography.com

The town of Windham has a one-time opportunity to permanently preserve 551 acres in the heart of town currently owned by Larry and Ann Clark. The Clarks will be retiring in a few years, and as one of Maine's fastest-growing towns, Windham must act now to see this land forever preserved, rather than developed.

The purchase price of the land and easements is \$2.6 million. The project has already received \$1.4 million in grants towards the purchase, making the town's share of the cost \$1 million. *(The remaining funds will be raised through private donations.)* A \$1 million bond to preserve Clark Farm is up for voter approval in November.

Conservation of this land will:

- **Help preserve the rural, scenic character of Windham.**

Protecting the farm from development will preserve the rural character and way of life that Windham offers. Along with this protection comes permanent public access for walking trails, snowmobiling, hunting, and access along the Pleasant River. Development will erase all these benefits. The town's comprehensive plan calls for preservation of Clark Farm.



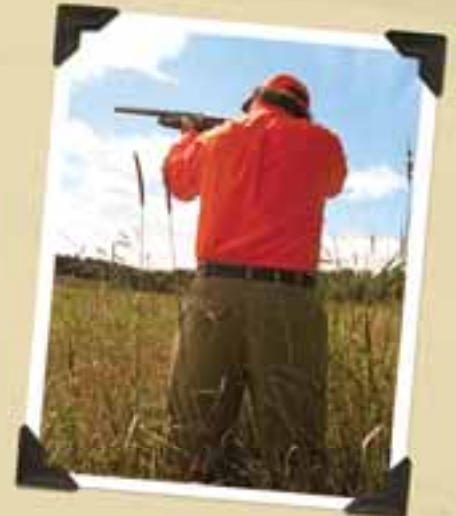
Jerry and Marcy Monkman/Ecophotography.com

- **Save the taxpayers money.**

If the land is developed into house lots, the costs of education and municipal services will far surpass tax revenues from the new homeowners. Letting this land be developed would cost taxpayers more in the long run.

- **Keep the farming tradition alive in Windham.**

The Maine Farmland Trust will help identify new farmers who will keep the prime agricultural soils in use. Continued agriculture helps preserve the environment, safeguard clean water in Black Brook and the Pleasant River, and sustain the availability of locally-grown food.



Sheila Corey

[www.theWindhamLandTrust.org](http://www.theWindhamLandTrust.org)

## The following have endorsed a YES VOTE to preserve the Clark Farm and Forest on Tuesday, November 3:

- Windham Drifters Snowmobile Club
- The Windham Land Trust
- Senator Bill Diamond
- Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
- Representative Mark Bryant
- Representative Gary Plummer
- The Windham Town Council
- David Tobin, former State Rep.



*“This is land that I played on as a child, hunted as a teenager and snowmobiled on as an adult. Most of the places that I could participate in those traditional activities as I grew up in Windham are no longer available for public use. We have an opportunity to assure that this land that I have used over many years will be there for future generations to continue those traditional activities.”*

—Representative Gary Plummer

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** If voters approve the bond, who will own the property?

**A:** The property will consist of three parcels. 233 acres will be purchased by a new farmer and put into agricultural use, with a permanent agricultural easement held by the Maine Farmland Trust. The public will continue to have access to this parcel for traditional uses. 76 acres will be owned by the Windham Land Trust for public use. The remaining 242 acres will be owned by the Clarks, but the Windham Land Trust will hold a conservation easement over those acres, insuring that if and when the land is ever sold, it can never be developed.



**Q:** If we turn down the plan, can we try for conservation again later?

**A:** This opportunity will never come again. The landowners have offered to sell the land for conservation, but if we turn them down, they can proceed to sell it to another party, including developers. Meanwhile the \$1.4 million in grants awarded to the project will go to other towns.

**Q:** How much will this cost homeowners?

**A:** The town plans to issue a 20-year bond to pay for the conservation purchase, and that will be paid off by the town's revenues from property taxes. The estimated impact on the average homeowner will be about \$9 per year for the 20-year life of the bond. The actual amount will be determined by interest rates. Note, however, that development could end up costing taxpayers more than conservation.

**Q:** Won't developing the land bring in more tax dollars?

**A:** Yes, BUT the additional tax dollars are not enough to cover the costs of education and other town services. New homes require additional taxpayer expenses for schools, public safety, roads, and maintenance. Calculations reveal that if this piece of property were subdivided for “highest and best” use, 155 new houses would be built, costing the town of Windham \$85,736 per year not covered in the property taxes they would pay.

For more information or to get involved in the effort to conserve the Clark Farm and Forest, contact the Windham Land Trust, care of Dennis Hawkes, [info@thewindhamlandtrust.org](mailto:info@thewindhamlandtrust.org), phone 892-5537 or visit [www.thewindhamlandtrust.org](http://www.thewindhamlandtrust.org).

