



PROTECTING THE LAND YOU LOVE

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Bob Stratton
Environmental Program Manager
Fisheries and Wildlife Program Support Supervisor
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
284 State Street, 41 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0041

May 6, 2020

Dear Mr. Stratton,

Frenchman Bay Conservancy (FBC) will accept a \$100,000 financial contribution from Silver Maple Wind as mitigation for their anticipated impact on migratory songbirds stemming from their proposed 20 megawatt wind power development on Pisgah Mountain in Clifton. FBC will use this contribution toward the purchase of roughly 1400 acres of land in Hancock, Maine, adjacent to land conserved to mitigate passerine impact from the Weaver Wind project.

Frenchman Bay Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust, established in 1987, with a mission to conserve distinctive ecosystems, lands and waters for the benefit of all in the Union River and Frenchman Bay watersheds east to the Hancock County line. In our 32 year history, we have conserved over 8000 acres of land through preserves and conservation easements, strategically focused on conservation objectives and where appropriate, public access walking trails.

FBC is under a purchase and sale contract in the 1400 acre property with landowner HC Haynes, until the end of this calendar year. To date, we have raised \$562,000 toward the \$900,000 needed to conserve the property. Our budget is appended to this letter for reference. The contribution from Silver Maple Wind will bring the total revenue to \$662,800, leaving us with roughly \$237,200 to raise so that we can close on the property. We will continue to seek out foundation grants and philanthropic donations from individuals to close this financial gap.

We are naming the property Frenchman Bay Community Forest.

We will develop the management plan for the property once we purchase it. However, at this time, we intend to manage the property primarily as an ecological reserve with minimal timber harvest intervention. We do anticipate an initial harvest of the property so that we can accelerate a transition from the current even-aged stand of early successional species to a more diverse, later-successional forest. Any interventions will be informed by a licensed forester with guidance from an advisory panel. We welcome participation on this advisory panel from Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and we will be in touch later this year with a request and to share our current planning in greater detail.

Frenchman Bay Conservancy has been coordinating directly with New England Forestry Foundation, owner of the 3100 acre property purchased from HC Haynes by Long Road Energy and used as mitigation for the Weaver Wind project. Our two organizations will continue to work together jointly to ensure that we meet our long-term conservation objectives for the two properties.

Initially, we anticipate a management approach similar to that called for in the Shorebird Habitat Management Plan (SHMP) produced for Weaver Wind for the region directly north of Frenchman Bay Community Forest. The management proscripton states on Page 46 of the SHMP:

To restore late-successional or old-growth conditions in Zones A and C, we recommend employing silvicultural techniques that are known to favorably enhance the structural complexity of older forests – in both time, and space. An active approach would accelerate the desired future conditions that support healthy populations of our Top-Tier species. Ideally, these treatments would generate some income to help offset restoration and habitat enhancement activities (e.g. crown thinning around legacy trees and creating canopy gaps that benefit birds). Keeton reports that management for old-growth characteristics can pay for itself when site and market conditions are favorable (Keeton 2020).

Over time, we anticipate moving to an ecological reserve approach with no active management. The long-term comparison of Frenchman Bay Community Forest to the neighboring 3100 acres managed by New England Forestry Foundation may provide valuable insights on the costs and benefits of active management to promote passerine species diversity.

Given the current mix of habitat types on the property, and the eventual transition to a mature forest over several decades, a habitat type that is under-represented in the Downeast Coastal Plain, we anticipate that this large, undeveloped habitat block will provide valuable songbird habitat for numerous priority species. We will gladly work with agency or private sector biologists as necessary to gather more specific field data if funds are available for this work. Desktop analyses of the property illustrate a variety of forested wetlands on the property, particularly around Kilkenny Stream, and along the West Branch of Egypt Stream, as well as a deer wintering area that spans the Downeast Sunrise Trail on the northern end of the property.

We'll gladly discuss financial or management considerations further. We're pleased to accept Silver Maple Wind's financial contribution, and to conserve the Frenchman Bay Community Forest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Dority". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Aaron Dority
Executive Director