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For Immediate Release

New Federal Funding for Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership

Second year of funding for regional conservation effort in western New Hampshire

CONCORD, N.H., Nov. 3, 2009--The FY 2010 Agriculture appropriations bill recently passed by Congress included a second year of funding for the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership (Q2C), a collaborative land conservation initiative in the Monadnock Highlands of western New Hampshire and north-central Massachusetts. The funds will be used to support the permanent protection of priority lands in the New Hampshire portion of the Q2C region, via a competitive grants process.

The \$282,000 appropriation was requested by U.S. Congressman Paul Hodes (NH-02), who secured start up funding for the project in federal FY09. "These funds will help the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership continue its outstanding work," said Congressman Paul Hodes. "I am pleased to support this partnership that will continue to preserve New Hampshire's drinking water, wildlife, and natural environment for future generations."

This year's request was also supported on the Senate side by U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen. Senator Shaheen stated, "Preserving New Hampshire's forests and natural refuges is key to the state's outdoor tourism industry. These expanded conservation efforts will protect our state's character and make the best use of our natural resources for years to come."

"Securing federal funding to support land protection in the region has been a long-time goal of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership," said Jane Difley, President/Forester of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, who coordinates the partnership. "We are tremendously grateful to New Hampshire's congressional delegation for securing the additional resources that conservation in this region so clearly needs."

U.S. Senator Judd Gregg stated "New Hampshire is well known for its natural beauty and unique natural ecosystems. Unquestionably, the Forest Society is a major reason why the state enjoys this reputation. Over the last 108 years, it has been a leading champion of efforts that have strengthened the quality of life here. The organization's commitment to land protection and the sustainable use of natural resources is impressive. The Q2C

Initiative is another illustration of this dedication, and I would like to thank SPNHF's staff and supporters for everything they are doing to protect our state's treasured places."

The two-state Quabbin-to-Cardigan region spans one hundred miles from the Quabbin Reservoir northward to Mount Cardigan and the White Mountain National Forest, and is bounded to the east and west by the Merrimack and Connecticut River Valleys. Encompassing approximately two million acres, the region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, ecologically-important forest left in New England. Well-known conservation areas in the region include Pisgah State Park, Mount Monadnock, the Wapack Ridge, Andorra Forest, Pillsbury and Sunapee State Parks, Mount Kearsarge, Gile State Forest, Ragged Mountain and Smarts Mountain.

The new funding will come from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and will be allocated to land protection projects through a competitive grants process administered by the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership, a group of 27 private organizations and public agencies working on land conservation in the area. A request for proposals is currently open for the funds appropriated in federal FY09. To learn more, visit www.q2cpartnership.org

The Q2C Partnership worked for more than three years to develop a conservation plan for the region. It identifies approximately 600,000 acres of core conservation focus areas that represent the region's most ecologically significant forests. These conservation focus areas represent about 30 percent of the two-million-acre region, and are currently 39 percent protected. The new federal dollars will be targeted to protect additional land in these top priority areas.

New Hampshire's State Conservationist George Cleek said, "As the Natural Resources Conservation Service's mission is to 'Help People Help the Land', the Quabbin-to-Cardigan (Q2C) Partnership will help us meet that goal by increasing conservation easements in New Hampshire through this unique public - private partnership. Through this partnership, the NRCS can reach out to landowners who haven't been able to take advantage of NRCS conservation easement programs. The result of the partnership will be the creation of conservation easements on land not covered by other federal programs, thereby protecting more of New Hampshire's natural resources."

To learn more about the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership, visit www.q2cpartnership.org.

Q2C partner organizations include the Appalachian Mountain Club, Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust (NH), East Quabbin Land Trust (MA), Franklin Regional Council of Governments (MA), Harris Center for Conservation Education (NH), Harvard Forest (MA), Highstead, Land Trust Alliance, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Massachusetts Dept. of Fish & Game, Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation & Recreation, Monadnock Conservancy (NH), Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MA), Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust (MA), The Nature Conservancy, New England Forestry Foundation, New Hampshire DRED - Division of Forests & Lands, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, North County Land Trust (MA), North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (MA), Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Southwest Region Planning Commission (NH), Trust for Public Land, The Trustees of Reservations (MA), Upper Valley Land Trust (NH), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

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