

June 6, 2014

Charles and Nancy Butterfield
433 Oxbow Road
Hinsdale, NH 03451



Together, protecting forever the
land we love

Dear Charles and Nancy,

As the owner of land protected by a conservation easement, you are well aware of the careful management it takes to keep your forests and fields healthy. We are truly grateful for your partnership with the Monadnock Conservancy in stewarding your land for all its benefits, from wildlife habitat and quiet enjoyment to timber production and the cultivation of hay or other crops.

We are writing to you today because we believe you and other conservation land owners like you may have unique insights into a significant challenge facing our region, namely the lack of affordable and secure access to sufficient farmland for new and existing farmers. The Monadnock Conservancy, the Cheshire County Conservation District (<http://www.cheshireconservation.org/>), University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (<http://extension.unh.edu/>) and Land for Good (<http://landforgood.org/>) have been awarded a federal grant to study this problem, and specifically the dynamics of matching *farmland seekers* with *non-farming land owners* through leases or other formal agreements. We believe you could help us understand this issue because you own land with agricultural potential.

The purpose of this project is *NOT* to place farmers on your land, though that may be a secondary outcome in a few willing cases. Rather, we simply want to learn your perspectives on actual or hypothetical cases of someone farming on your land. Even if you never have, or never would, consider making your land available for another's use, your opinion could be valuable to us.

How can you help? We hope you will join other landowners for a two-hour focus group at 6:45 PM on Tuesday, June 24th in the Antioch University New England dance studio located at 40 Avon Street in Keene. We will provide food, drinks and discussion questions; all you need to do is talk. A separate focus group will gather farmland seekers.

If you already know you're willing to attend, please email Ryan at Ryan@monadnockconservancy.org or call 603-357-0600 ext. 103 before June 17th. Otherwise, one of us will call you in about a week to assess your interest.

Sincerely,

Ryan Owens
Executive Director

Emily Hague
Stewardship Director

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