

# Trust buys Bald Mountain land for open space

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**SOMERS** — The Northern Connecticut Land Trust has bought a 22-acre property on the north side of Bald Mountain for preservation and recreation.

Culver Modisette, land trust president, said the property was purchased from resident Arthur Galbraith for a "a very fair price."

"We are grateful for the opportunity afforded us by Mr. Galbraith, as well as his trust in our organization," Modisette said Monday.

He said the acquisition is a step toward the land trust's goal of preserving Bald Mountain, a hillside rising more than 1,100 feet over the Connecticut River Valley.

"It's nothing dramatic, but everybody hopes that we can protect Bald Mountain,

and this is a step in the right direction," Modisette said.

The property is located off Scully Road, abutting nearly 80 acres of town-owned land. The state owns about 300 acres of undeveloped property in the vicinity of Bald Mountain.

The land trust is currently developing a management plan for the property.

Modisette said the land trust would establish hiking trails on the property, possibly linking them to existing trails on the abutting public land.

The land trust is a non-profit volunteer organization that strives to protect undeveloped land in Somers, Stafford, Enfield, Ellington, Vernon, East Windsor, and Union.

It owns more than 470 acres. Nearly half of the preserved land is in Somers.

Preserving open space is a major compo-

nent of the town's long-term plan of conservation and development.

First Selectman David Pinney was pleased to hear of the land trust's most recent acquisition.

"Way to go, Arthur," he said Monday, after learning of Galbraith's decision to sell the parcel for preservation.

The town recently teamed with the land trust in an effort to buy 267 acres of undeveloped property near the center of town.

Last month, the Board of Selectmen approved a plan to purchase the land for \$1.2 million from the family of the late Howard Whitaker Jr., who developed Cedar Knob Golf Course and the Whit Acres area of Enfield.

According to the plan, the town and land trust would evenly split the price of the land,

which fronts on Wells Road, Gulf Road, and Mountain View Road.

Pinney said the town has applied for a state grant that could cover up to half of the land's price.

"We're waiting on the evaluation of the application," he said. "The prospects seem good."

The town and land trust would evenly split the grant money.

Pinney said the town is finalizing some details of the purchase agreement with the family.

The land trust would raise money to pay for its remaining share through fundraising and additional grants.

The town would retain three building lots from the property that it would attempt to sell to cover its portion of the cost.