



Alan Stearns &lt;alan@rrct.org&gt;

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## Unveiling the Big Falls Preserve (New Gloucester Selectmen)

1 message

**Alan Stearns** <alan@rrct.org>

Thu, Jan 3, 2019 at 2:28 PM

To: Carrie Castonguay <ccastonguay@newgloucester.com>, "Steven Libby - Portland Insulation, Inc." <stevenlibby@portlandinsulation.net>, karenlgilles@gmail.com, jsdavis4@yahoo.com, selectmanlynnconger@maine.rr.com, Linda Chase <ldchase3@gmail.com>  
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Board of Selectmen  
Carrie Castonguay, Town Manager  
Town of New Gloucester

cc: Various

Dear Carrie and Members of the Board of Selectmen:

On behalf of the 700 families and individuals that form the Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT), it is my pleasure to announce the creation of a new RRCT preserve straddling the boundary line of New Gloucester and Auburn.

I write to let you know that Michael and Julie Fralich and I plan to update you in person at the beginning of your meeting next week (January 7th, 7pm, public comment agenda). After that meeting we'd be more than happy to continue dialog with the Selectmen or any town committees by reference or invitation.

This [new Big Falls Preserve webpage](#) provides maps, photos, and a description of the property.

Attached is a letter from Michael and Julie that outlines their vision and their remarkable decades of stewardship of the property. I hope you will join me in applauding their generosity and vision as donors of this new community asset.

We are communicating with the City of Auburn in the same spirit. RRCT's work in the City of Auburn is seamlessly aligned with the Androskoggin Land Trust.

While this preserve will be independent of Town of New Gloucester and City of Auburn operations with no cost to the town or city, the working relationship between the Town of New Gloucester and the trust has recently been very strong thanks to mutual consultation and teamwork. Our decision to unveil this project at your meeting signals our intent to continue using the Town of New Gloucester as one of RRCT's most important partners and sounding boards as we continue to advance the community's vision of land conservation and active outdoor recreation. Our goals are that our trails and programs always be free, always be open and inviting to the entire breadth of our communities, and always be driven by community-based leadership.

Together with the town and other conservation organizations 2018 was an important year for land conservation in New Gloucester, even as southern Maine development pressures and land ownership changes create even more reason to focus on the future. As New Gloucester continues to prosper with growth and new residents, it is more important than ever that we work together to reach toward common goals of hunting access, fishing access, farmland preservation, and stewardship of the town's ecological gems. In 2017 and 2018 three different New Gloucester families donated strategic parcels of land to RRCT. Also in 2017 and 2018 we were able to conserve land with two other families as willing sellers, and to protect a key snowmobile trail connection working with the Town and CMP. The work of other land conservation organizations working in New Gloucester -- including the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife -- has been parallel and exceptional.

Importantly it is landowners who are members of the community -- the Fralichs and others -- who are making the most important and most generous decisions to shape the future of New Gloucester.

While the trails on the new Big Falls Preserve need some work and need posted maps before being truly open, we will be inviting the public to join us with guided support and pitch in on some trail work at upcoming trips or sessions of [RRCT's Trail Crew](#) and [RRCT's Rain or Shine Club](#). We'll have those trips scheduled soon.

The Royal River Conservation Trust works in all of the communities that form the Royal River watershed. In our thirty year history, we have helped conserve more than 4000 acres in the watershed including the iconic 1700 acre Shaker Village conservation easement in New Gloucester, two public hand-carry river access points in New Gloucester, and five assisted expansions of Bradbury Mountain State Park. As part of our commitment to make our work as free as possible to all Maine people, this week we again donated [three 2019 Maine State Park passes to the New Gloucester library](#) and [four to the City of Auburn library](#), and we renewed our financial support of the [Auburn's Police Athletic League's growing outdoor programs](#).

Thank you for your support.

*Thanks,*

*Alan*



## Royal River Conservation Trust

Alan Stearns, Executive Director

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**Fralich letter to Town of New Gloucester.docx**

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