

MEMORANDUM

HARVARD FOREST

To Martin H. ZimmermannFrom B. M. KelleyDate July 26, 1968Subject PISGAH FOREST RESERVATION - FUND #2193/2

This Reservation was originally acquired by Harvard University through individual donations with the expressed intent of maintaining the old growth forest undisturbed by man to carry out original purposes of preserving area in a wild state. (as a "museum")

Old records reveal desire of a donor to have property remain under administration of a university rather than town or state.

July 26, 1968

Mr. Clayton N. Heath, Jr., Chief
Special Forestry Programs
State of New Hampshire
P.O. Box 856
Concord, N.H. 03301

Dear Mr. Heath:

Mr. Cutler of the Harvard University Administration has sent me a copy of your letter to him of July 19 and has asked me to answer your question about the use of Harvard University's property in the Pisgah Wilderness area in Winchester, New Hampshire.

This reservation was originally acquired by Harvard University with the expressed intent of maintaining the old growth forest undisturbed by man. There is a small endowment that goes along with it which enables us to do some research on it. Our present work involves ecological studies of the vegetational changes over time. Mr. J. David Henry has reconstructed forest growth and change over the last 300 years on a one-tenth acre plot. He pieced this story together from a detailed examination of wood fragments, microtopography and stem locations, a method first used by Dr. Earl Stephens at the Harvard Forest in 1952. Mr. Henry has received a Master of Forest Science degree for this work. He and Dr. Mark Swan are currently preparing the material for publication.

No silvicultural or other management projects will be carried out there. The Pisgah tract will exclusively be used for research of an undisturbed wilderness area.

I hope that this answers your question. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely,

Martin H. Zimmermann
Acting Director

MHZ/bmm

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
HARVARD FOREST
PETERSHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
U. S. A. 01366



AREA CODE 617
724-3285

June 24, 1977

Selectmen
Town of Winchester
Winchester, NH 03470

Gentlemen:

Your notice about the reassessment of Harvard Pisgah Forest in Winchester has come to me for action. Unfortunately, I must teach summer school classes on June 27, 28 and 29 so I cannot contact the Sewall Company. Will you please bring this letter to their attention?

Our 20-acre tract is the wooded top of a hill that must remain forever wild. The University accepted this land as a gift with the stipulation that it can never be developed or used for any purpose except the study of natural forest growth.

At the time we got it the area was covered by a primeval forest which all blew down in the 1938 hurricane. Mindful of the requirement that the land be left to natural processes we did not salvage any of the down timber. To date two studies have been made which cast important new light on the natural processes of forest development in the region.

In light of the very limited use that can be made of this remote tract a value of over \$500 per acre seems excessive. There is no legal possibility for us to use the land for anything except a natural preserve. In light of this it appears that the current use value should be much lower. I believe that the present recommended value for such land under Chapter 79-A, section 79-A:2; XIII is \$10 per acre.

Will you please take the above facts into consideration and set a more realistic value on this property? Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Ernest M. Gould, Jr.
Ernest M. Gould, Jr.
Forest Economist

File for Current use because of the restrictions on this land.

Sincerely yours
James W. Sewall Co.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
HARVARD FOREST
PETERSHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
U. S. A. 01366



AREA CODE 617
724-3285

August 29, 1977

Selectmen
Town of Winchester
Winchester, NH 03470

Gentlemen:

Thank you for the information on Current Use Assessment. I have checked it over carefully and believe that our Pisgah tract meets the criteria listed under Wild Land, Natural Preserve Land.

This tract was a 20 acre piece of virgin timber purchased from the Dickinson Real Estate and Lumber Company in 1926. Money for the purchase was donated with the express understanding that the area would be preserved permanently in its natural state. This tract is very unusual in that it was never logged or farmed and consequently had trees that were over 300 years old. Most of these blew down in 1938, but consistent with the object of keeping the area undisturbed, the trees were not salvaged and lay on the ground today.

Two major studies of plant succession unaffected by man have been made of this area that is the only piece of land in central New England we know of where such studies can be done.

We will continue to preserve this forest tract for research and ecological study. In addition, the area is open to the public without charge for passive wild land recreation. This policy has been in effect for over 50 years and we do not expect it to change in the future.

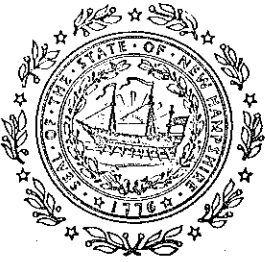
In light of the unique undisturbed natural condition of this area we ask that it be valued and taxed as Natural Preserve Land as authorized under RSA 79-A as amended. We hope the enclosed application will take effect this year since we did not receive the reassessment notice until after the normal April 15th filing date.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Martin H. Zimmermann'.

Martin H. Zimmermann
Director

MHZ:ts



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of RESOURCES and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

P. O. BOX 856...STATE HOUSE ANNEX...CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE...03301

December 8, 1971

Mr. Walter Lyford
Harvard Forest
Petersham, Massachusetts

Dear Walter:

My apologies for the delay in following through on your inquiries during the conference at Syracuse.

Pisgah Wilderness State Park acquisition is pretty well achieved, and many of the buildings have been torn down. Funds are not now available for development of the concentrated use areas, primarily at Fullam Pond. No elaborate schedule is available - funds depend on our legislature - but it will probably be several years before it is in operation.

The full-time manager is Cecil W. Parker, 10 Concord Road, Keene, N. H., Tel. (603) 352-0611, and he has keys to gates.

The next, winter issue, of Forest Notes will include a compilation of big trees so far submitted.

I enjoyed seeing you and participating in the conference and look forward to our future meetings with pleasure!

Sincerely,

Peter H. Allen
Research Forester

PHA/dm



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of RESOURCES and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

P. O. BOX 856...STATE HOUSE ANNEX...CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE...03301

May 21, 1975

Mr. Martin H. Zimmerman, Director
Harvard Forest
Petersham, Massachusetts 01366

RE: Parcel #45, Harvard Forest

Dear Mr. Zimmerman:

Since 1967 the State has been acquiring land in the towns of Winchester, Chesterfield and Hinsdale for a new State Park to be named Pisgah Wilderness.

Harvard University owns twenty acres in the south central part of the park.

In telephone conversations and by correspondence, it was understood the University was quite anxious to be assured the area would remain undisturbed.

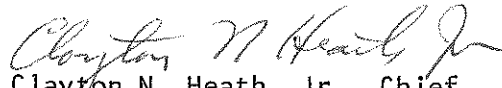
The Division of Parks is willing to assure the University that no trails or other improvements will be constructed near the University property that may attract the public or that would alter the present level of use.

The State would like to acquire title to this twenty acre parcel but feels the University's scientific program can best be carried to completion under the continued ownership by the University.

Nevertheless, we would like some commitment by the University that no buildings will be constructed on the land and if it is to be sold, the State will have first refusal.

May I hear from you on this matter at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,


Clayton N. Heath, Jr., Chief
Special Forestry Programs

CNH/arr

TOWN OF WINCHESTER
NEW HAMPSHIRE



OFFICE OF
THE SELECTMEN

Winchester N.H.
Jan 7/35-

A.C. Cline

Pelersham

Dear Sir:-

Mass.

Your letter Jan 4th
recd.

In regard to the assessed
valuation of Harvard University
Pisgah Property we will
take the matter up with
in April or May when
if property is being considered
for taxation

Yours truly
H. J. Henderson
Selectman

April 17, 1935

Mr. H. F. Henderson,
The Selectmen,
Town of Winchester,
Winchester, N. H.

Dear Sir:

A letter just received from the Treasurer's Office in regard to taxes on Pisgah property owned by the University prompts me to remind you that you swore to let me know when you are ready to consider the matter. In your letter of January 7 you stated that this would be in April or May. I shall be glad to come up to Winchester any time you say.

Very truly yours,

A. C. Cline
Asst. Director

TOWN OF WINCHESTER
NEW HAMPSHIRE



OFFICE OF
THE SELECTMEN

Winchester N.H.
4/29/35-

A.C. Clow

Petersham

Dear Sir:-

Mass.

You can get in touch
with the Selectmen of Winchester
May 2 or 3 from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.
In regard to your Piggish
property in the town

Yours truly
H. F. Kendera
Selectman

Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests

Telephone, LA Fayette 6969

3 Joy Street

BOSTON, MASS.,

March 12, 1935


Mr. A. C. Cline,
Harvard Forest,
Petersham, Mass.

Dear Mr. Cline:

In checking some records of reservations here it appears desirable to secure some additional information concerning the Pisgah Forest in Winchester, N. H. Do you know whether this tract was acquired as a public or semi-public reservation, either by Harvard University or other agency? In the absence of Mr. Ayres, who is in Washington just now, the writer cannot determine just what is the status of this project. As you doubtless know, Dr. Fisher was much interested in preserving this area, which included some primeval Pine trees.

Any information you can give will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


Assistant.

January 4, 1935

The Board of Selectmen,
Winchester, N. H.

Gentlemen:

On August 24th last I addressed a letter to your Board, in care of Mr. Henderson, on the subject of the assessed valuation of the 20 acre tract of old growth forest on Pisgah Mountain, the title to which is held by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

As stated in my previous letter, this tract apparently is assessed for \$500 per acre, which we feel is considerably higher than justified by the present stand of timber. As a matter of fact, the old pine is steadily declining through death or windthrow, and the other species are very defective from extreme old age. You undoubtedly know that we shall never cut the old stand, since the object of acquiring it was to make long time studies of the natural changes which take place.

I would welcome an opportunity to talk over the matter with you, and can arrange to drive up to Winchester at most any time convenient to you.

Very truly yours,

A. C. Cline
Asst. Director

December 8, 1934.

Mr. LaFell Dickinson,
Dickinson Real Estate & Lumber Co.,
Keene, N.H.

Dear Mr. Dickinson:

The Treasurer of the University has asked me to get in touch with you regarding the execution of a statement to the effect that the Directors of your Company approved your action in executing and delivering your Company's deed of the 20-acre Pisgah tract to the President and Fellows of Harvard College under date of December 17, 1926. I believe the Treasurer's office some months ago provided you with a copy of the form of statement desired.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would act on this matter at the next meeting of your Board of Directors.

Very truly yours,

ACC.C

Assistant Director

TREASURER'S OFFICE, HARVARD COLLEGE

No. 24 Milk Street

Boston,

February 7, 1935

Mr. A. C. Cline, Assistant Director
Harvard Forest
Petersham, Mass.

Dear Mr. Cline:

As you doubtless know, the College pays a tax on all its property located in the state of New Hampshire. This includes, of course, the twenty odd acres located in the town of Winchester. We have become reconciled to paying a tax but we feel that being asked to pay a tax upon an assessed valuation of \$10,000 on this tract is most unwarranted. It may be that the Committee who bought and gave this tract and who, I understand, has been paying the tax may consider the assessment and the tax fair. Mr. Shattuck feels, however, that the above valuation is entirely unfair and that an assessment of \$500 per acre is very unjust.

If no effort has been made heretofore will it be possible for you to interview the assessors with the thought of a reduced valuation.

The value given in our tax returns has been \$8,000 but this year it is to be reduced to \$2,000.

Yours very truly,

HWW JCH

H. W. Willwood

February 12, 1935.

Mr. H. W. Wellwood,
24 Milk Street,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Wellwood:

I have your letter of the 7th regarding the tax on our old growth forest in Winchester, N.H. Some weeks ago I took up the matter with the Board of Selectmen of Winchester and they have agreed to let me know when to come up there for a conference. It will come some time next month, when they are making up their assessments for the year. The assessed valuation is unquestionably too high, and I shall do my best to convince the Board of this fact.

Yours very truly,

ACC.C

Assistant Director

STATE TAX COMMISSION
NEW HAMPSHIRE

JOHN R. SPRING, CHAIRMAN
NASHUA

EDGAR C. HIRST, SECRETARY
CONCORD

JOHN T. AMEY, COMMISSIONER
LANCASTER

JOHN G. MARSTON
ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION AND
DIRECTOR OF TAXATION OF
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS

HAROLD G. FOWLER
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTANT

LILA A. FREEMAN
CHIEF CLERK

CONCORD

August 22, 1934

Mr. A. C. Cline,
Harvard Forest,
Petersham, Mass.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of August 6 to Mr. Hirst has been delayed owing to his ill health. He was very badly used up after the tax rate work was over this summer and will probably not be able to be very active again until early next month. Today I talked with him about your complaint and he asked me to reply.

There was a great deal of reappraisal work done in the town of Winchester a year or two ago by the selectmen, accompanied by Mr. Arthur Fitch representing this department. Mr. Fitch is now Chief Examiner for the Home Owners Loan Association and it was only yesterday that we could get in touch with him. His recollection is that in the reappraisal this piece of property belonging to Harvard University was reduced in valuation although there had never been any complaint about it up to that time.

If you feel the present valuation is too high you should make your first complaint to the board of selectmen and ask for a reappraisal. It would be best to go to Mr. Henderson, the chairman, personally and ask the board to visit the tract and reappraise it with you. Our office could have someone look at it but this would not be necessary if you can get a reasonable valuation from the selectmen.

Very truly yours,
STATE TAX COMMISSION

By

John G. Marston

Assistant

JCM:S

August 6, 1934.

Mr. E. C. Hirst, Secretary,
New Hampshire Tax Commission,
Concord, N.H.

Dear Hirst:

You doubtless know that a few years ago we purchased in the town of Winchester, N.H. and from the Ansel Dickinson heirs a tract of twenty acres of old growth forest. Since that time we have been paying the town of Winchester on an assessed valuation of about \$500 per acre, making a tax bill of \$288 for the past year. I presume there is an adequate legal reason why we are obliged to pay taxes in New Hampshire, since this question was undoubtedly decided when the tract was acquired, but I do wish we could have the assessed valuation set at a reasonable figure. It so happens that we have an endowment for this old growth tract which at the current rate of interest on University funds yields about \$195. You will see that this means trying to find each year an additional amount to pay the taxes alone, leaving nothing for any studies or observations on the area.

I should be very glad to have your advice as to the best method of procedure in attempting to have the assessed valuation readjusted, and also to know if there is any possibility of having the property exempted from taxation on the grounds that it is owned by an educational institution and used for instruction and research purposes.

Yours very sincerely,

ACC.C

Assistant Director

August 24, 1934.

Mr. Henderson,
Board of Selectmen,
Winchester, N.H.

Dear Mr. Henderson:

Since the death of the Director of the Forest, Mr. Richard W. Fisher, we have been checking over our various properties, and we are especially interested in the 20-acre tract of old growth in your town, since it is the only tract on which we pay taxes. It would appear from the latest tax bill that you have assessed this property at the rate of \$500 per acre, which we feel is higher than justified by the present stand of timber. If you are willing to consider making a reappraisal, I should be very glad to visit the tract with you or supply any information you may require, even to the extent of making an intensive cruise of the timber. It will be possible for me to come to Winchester at almost any time that would be convenient for you.

Yours very truly,

ACC.C

Assistant Director