

Public gathering Tuesday, May 5  
at Town Hall at 7PM



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Timberland Management • Natural Resources • Real Estate • Land Conservation

April 29, 2015

For over 200 years WD Cowls (Cowls) has been sustainably managing forests in Shutesbury, while cooperating to achieve mutual natural resource and infrastructure goals. Today I am writing you to let you know about Cowls' latest initiatives.

One of our proudest family business achievements was in 2011, conserving 3486 acres in Leverett and Shutesbury, and creating what now is called the Paul C. Jones Working Forest. How can we beat that?!

We're excited to tell you that we're pursuing two more sustainable partnerships with Shutesbury that may come about in the near future: another major Conservation Restriction and a significant investment in producing solar energy that will benefit the town.

Over the past few years we've been working with town staff, committees, and community members to identify ways in which we can help Shutesbury achieve its conservation and development goals.

As a result of numerous meetings and the work of expert consultants we have identified some hundreds of Cowls' acres in Shutesbury that would be ideal for permanent conservation (another Conservation Restriction) to benefit regional watershed protection efforts. We are working with the Kestrel Trust to focus in on specific areas and conservation funding sources and we will keep you updated on our progress.

Cowls has also been helping a potential tenant pursue with Shutesbury how we achieve our mutual goals of energy independence and community sustainability by producing energy in town with solar photovoltaic panels.

Solar energy investor Lake Street Development has identified as ideal solar-producing site thirty acres proximate to Pratt Corner Road and part of Cowls' approximately 830 acre Wheelock lot. Lake Street Development is exploring the possibility of building a 6-Megawatt (MW) solar installation with direct significant benefits to the town by providing additional taxable land, without requiring municipal services.

This site is ideally in close proximity to an electrical substation and associated transmission lines. The eventual fenced-in solar project site will be well-insulated from public roads and view. A security camera system will be put in place to monitor site security. Cowls' logging roads and the balance of the parcel will continue to be available to the public for recreational use, so long as respectful relationships are maintained.

The Town of Shutesbury has been a renewable energy leader in the Pioneer Valley with its Town Hall solar installation and its movement toward becoming a "Green Community". Cowls is excited to have found a tenant who will be able to help bring more, clean, renewable energy to the area and is pleased to be working closely with the Town throughout the process.

Lake Street Development's solar project will soon be moving into the permitting phase through the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. Since you live near the site I wanted to take this opportunity to open up the lines of communication. There will be a formal public hearing process for community input, and a public gathering is scheduled for the evening of May 5 at 7pm at the Shutesbury Town Hall where interested parties can learn more about the project.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact Rayo Bhungara representing Lake Street Development or me directly with any questions or concerns that you may have about the project.

I am enclosing a site map of Cowls' Wheelock parcel showing the approximate location of Lake Street Development's proposed solar installation. I hope we can count on your support of our initiative.

Putting this project's size in perspective, the land area we are seeking to lease to Lake Street Development for the creation of solar energy is approximately 3% of our Wheelock parcel, less than 1 % the size of our recent Conservation Restriction on Brushy Mountain; and less than 1% of our holdings in Shutesbury therefore making the project's impact comparatively small.

Let me know if you have questions or concerns. I hope to see you on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May.

Best regards,

Shane R. Bajnoci

Vice President Timberland Management

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