

Farms among grant winners

2 local farms, three churches among winners

LCHIP AWARDS

\$3.5 million awarded across state, including to Pearl Farm and Morrill Farm

By ETHAN DeWITT

Monitor staff

Two local farms and a trio of houses of worship will receive more than \$500,000 from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, part

of a number of awards announced Wednesday by Gov. Chris Sununu.

At an award ceremony in Concord, Sununu and LCHIP Executive Director Dijit Taylor handed out \$3.5 million in total awards to churches, meetinghouses, farms, nature preserves and historical buildings, distributing grants to help preserve 33 projects across the state.

In total, the grants will help preserve 3,500 acres from future development and help fund restoration projects at a number of historic buildings, includes the repair or replacement of leaking roofs, repointing mortar in walls and chimneys,

rebuilding historic shutters, structural repairs to failing framing and foundations, according to LCHIP.

“Even though I’ve been doing this for nine years, it is still a thrill to see this year’s grant recipients,” said Taylor in opening remarks.

All grants must be matched dollar for dollar by the recipients, which is

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often achieved through partnerships with other non-profits or fundraising.

“You all made it successfully through a long and complicated process,” Taylor said. “Your projects truly are special.”

Pearl Farm in Loudon

One of the largest grants is directed to the Pearl and Sons Farm in Loudon, which grows corn, vegetables and hay and produces

on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

Bow Baptist Church

Formerly the Bow Baptist Church, the Crossroads Community Church, received \$12,500 to support the restoration and repair of the original shutters.

The church has already undergone extensive repairs after a lightning strike ignited a fire that destroyed the steeple in 2018. The new steeple was installed by crane and crews in August.



With Mt. Kearsarge in the background, Rob Morrill of Morrill dairy farm in Penacook uses a tractor and hay attachment to move and gather hay on a 40-acre parcel of land in Boscawen near the Webster border.

GEOFF FORESTER / Monitor file

maple products off 11,000 maple taps across 279 acres of land.

The \$270,000 award to the Trust for Public Land was the third-largest grant of the 32 awarded this year.

Morrill Farm in Boscawen

Another \$85,000 will go to dairy farmers Bob and Sherri Morrill to bolster a planned preservation easement for 115 acres of farmland in Boscawen.

Under that plan, the easement will transfer to the New Hampshire Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, ensuring that the land must be preserved as farmland and can't be developed. The completion of that easement is dependent on additional funds.

First Baptist Church in Gilmanton

The existing First Baptist Church on Province Road in Lower Gilmanton was constructed in 1842 and is on the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance's Seven to Save list. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1989, the church continues to hold monthly summer services, a Christmas celebration, and other special events.

LCHIP awarded \$81,600 to help maintain the community landmark. The scope of work being considered is extensive and includes addressing a leaking roof, leaking bell tower, structural issues pertaining to the improper support of the bell tower, movement of the existing granite foundation and deteriorated chimneys.

South Sutton Meetinghouse

Sutton Historical Society will receive \$52,500 for steeple repair work at the South Sutton

“We are very grateful for LCHIP’s investment in our historic building, an investment that will help it retain the beautiful architecture of 1832,” said Richard Huntley, pastor of the church.

Preserving N.H.

The demand for preservation grants remains high and this year was no exception. The program received applications for grants totaling \$7 million; it ultimately could award only half of that amount.

Against that backdrop, LCHIP officials have been pressing to expand the fund in recent years. This year, a bill to raise the county-administered fee on property transfers that pays for much of the grants was vetoed by Sununu.

The governor argued the increase – from \$25 to \$35 – was too high a burden and that additional contributions should instead be made voluntary.

The debate could carry into 2020. Sen. David Starr, a Franconia Republican, plans to introduce a bill that would make those additional LCHIP contributions optional.

And Sen. Martha Fuller Clark, a Portsmouth Democrat, is also planning to introduce a bill to repeat the attempt to raise the fee to \$35.

On Wednesday, Sununu praised the program, saying it “defines the 603.” “These grants not only help preserve some of our states most important natural, cultural, and historic sites, but provide an immeasurable benefit to Granite Staters,” Sununu said.

Since 2000, LCHIP has awarded \$37 million and helped preserve or revitalize 218 historic structures and protect more than 283,000 acres around the state.



First Baptist Church in Gilmanton was built in 1842.

Courtesy



Howard Pearl of Pearl Farm in Loudon grows sweet corn and other vegetables for over a dozen New Hampshire grocery stores.

Monitor file

Meetinghouse built in 1839, which is Sutton's first grant from LCHIP.

The interior of the building remains as it was when constructed, with a only few minor changes, including repairs after a lightning strike in 1898, according to the Sutton Historical Society.

Denominations using the meetinghouse in the past include Calvinist Baptist, Universalists, Osgoodites, and Seventh Day Adventists. At present, there are two annual services, Old Home Day and the Children's Christmas Pageant. The meetinghouse was entered