

Baseline Documentation Report:
Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction

Owner: Annette Gibavic

Holder of Conservation Restriction: Rattlesnake Gutter Trust

June 5, 2007

Baseline Documentation Report: Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction

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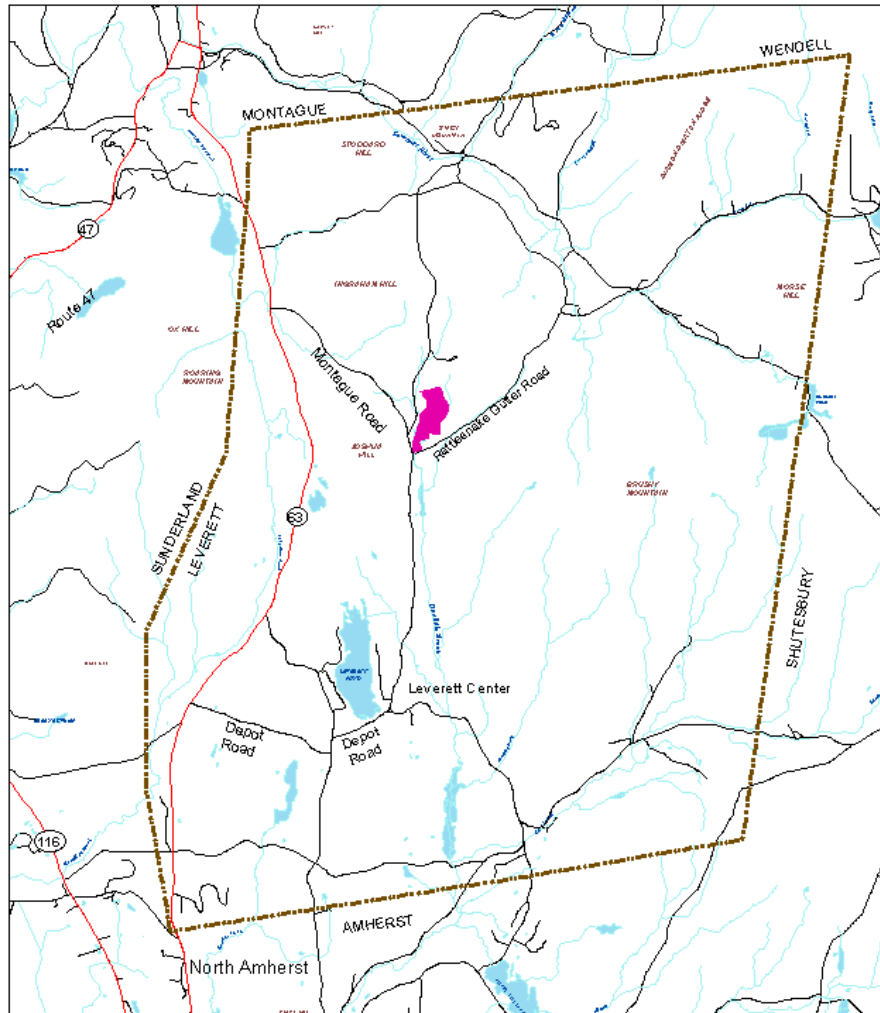
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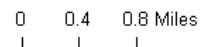
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- p. A3.24 Town of Leverett, deed

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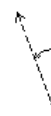
A5. Forest Report, Brayton F. Wilson



Town of Leverett

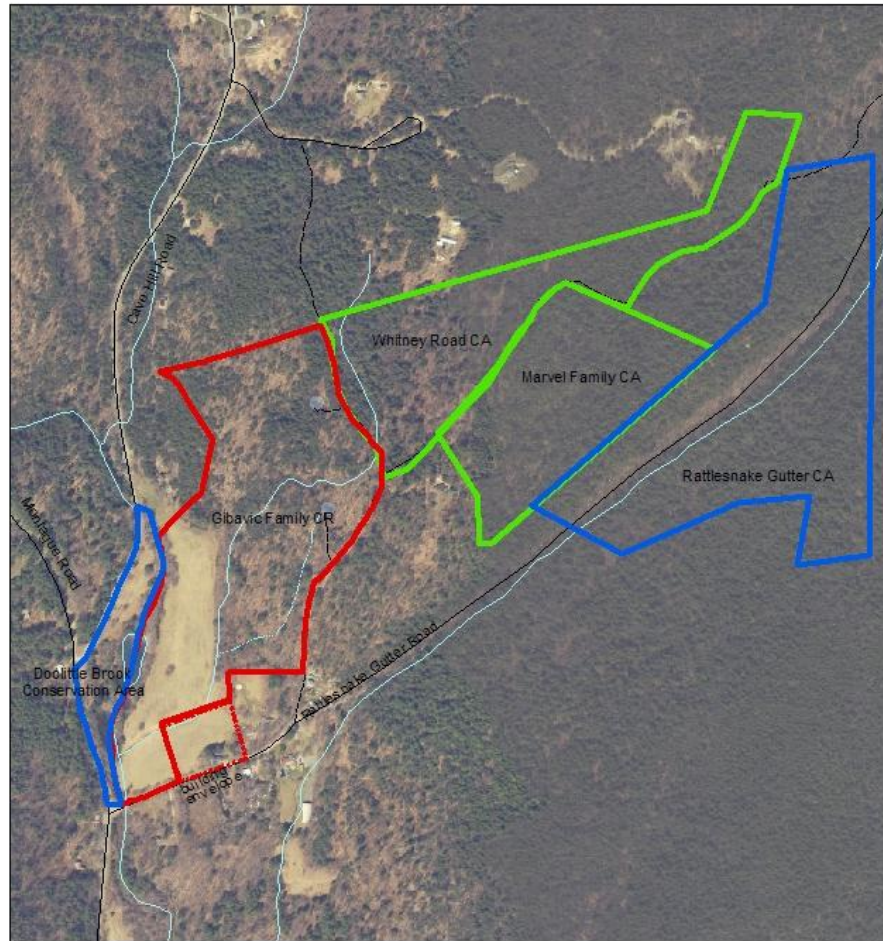


Directions to Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction
 From the south: From Route 63, turn east on Depot Road.
 Follow Depot Road as it turns left and then right.
 At the fork, bear left to Leverett Center
 (where the road you are on becomes Montague Road).
 Go north 1.8 miles to Rattlesnake Gutter Road.
 From the north: From Route 63, turn east on Montague Road.
 Follow Montague Road 1.5 miles to Rattlesnake Gutter Road.
 The CR is behind the white house (#6).



Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction	
land description	
location/street address	6 Rattlesnake Gutter Road, Leverett, Massachusetts, 01054
directions to site	<p>Directions from Route 63.</p> <p>From the south: turn east on Depot Road. Follow Depot Road as it turns left and then right. At the fork, bear left to Leverett Center (where the road you are on becomes Montague Road. You will have gone 1.6 miles from Route 63). Continue from Leverett Center beyond the school and safety complex to Rattlesnake Gutter Road (another 1.8 miles).</p> <p>From the north on Route 63, turn east on Montague Road. Follow Montague Road 1.5 miles to Rattlesnake Gutter Road.</p> <p>The land is on the north side of the road behind the white house (#6)</p>
acreage	40 acres approximately
structures	none in proposed CR
physical description	<p>Meadow east of Doolittle Brook (also streamside trees and shrubs)</p> <p>Forested rocky hillside with 2 vernal pools</p>
special habitat(s)	<p>Meadow (10 acres approximately) includes both wet areas along intermittent water sources (Doolittle Brook, pond, and feeder streams) and a dry hayfield.</p> <p>Hillside (30 acres approximately) includes vernal pools, stream drainage habitat and dry, cliff areas.</p>
special species(s)	Survey in process, meadow does have displaying American Woodcock. Vernal pools will be certified.
special views(s)	Open meadow and forested hillside visible from two commuter roads (Montague and Cave Hill Roads) and from one road with both local and recreational traffic (Rattlesnake Gutter Road).
special other	<p>Property connects 4 already-established Conservations Areas (2 owned by town, 2 by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust - the land trust that will hold this CR.) North of this property Cave Hill Road is developing rapidly.</p> <p>Meadow is designated by the town as an aquifer protection zone.</p> <p>Rock formations hidden under the meadow, but visible on the hillside, are part of the Pelham Dome formation. The outcrops/cliffs on the hillside are especially impressive.</p> <p>Forested hillside is part of a network of trails radiating from the part of Rattlesnake Gutter Road that is closed to traffic. The Gutter has long been a destination for residents and tourists.</p>

Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction and Contiguous Protected Areas

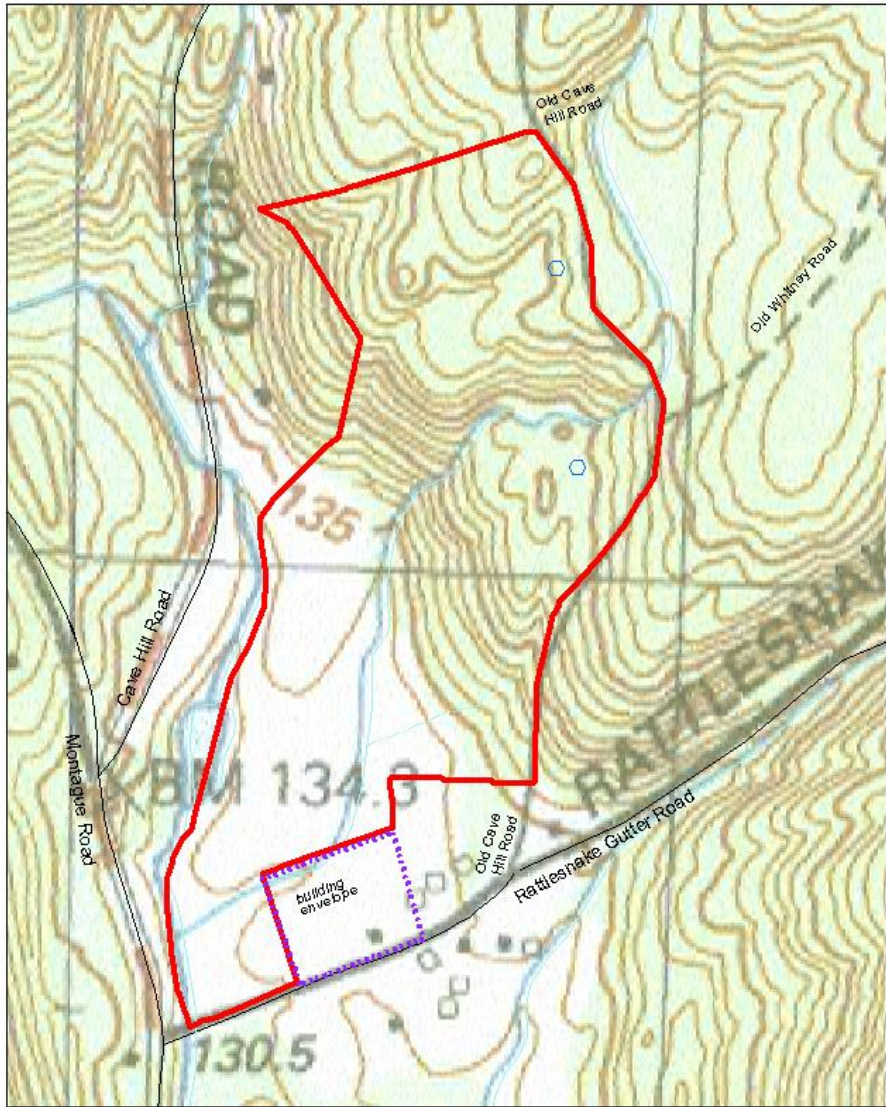


0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

- Gibavic Conservation Restriction
- ⋯ Gibavic building envelope
- Whitney Road Conservation Area (RGT-owned)
- Marvel Family Conservation Area (RGT-owned)
- Doolittle Brook Conservation Area (town-owned)
- Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation Area (town-owned)

RGT = Rattlesnake Gutter Trust

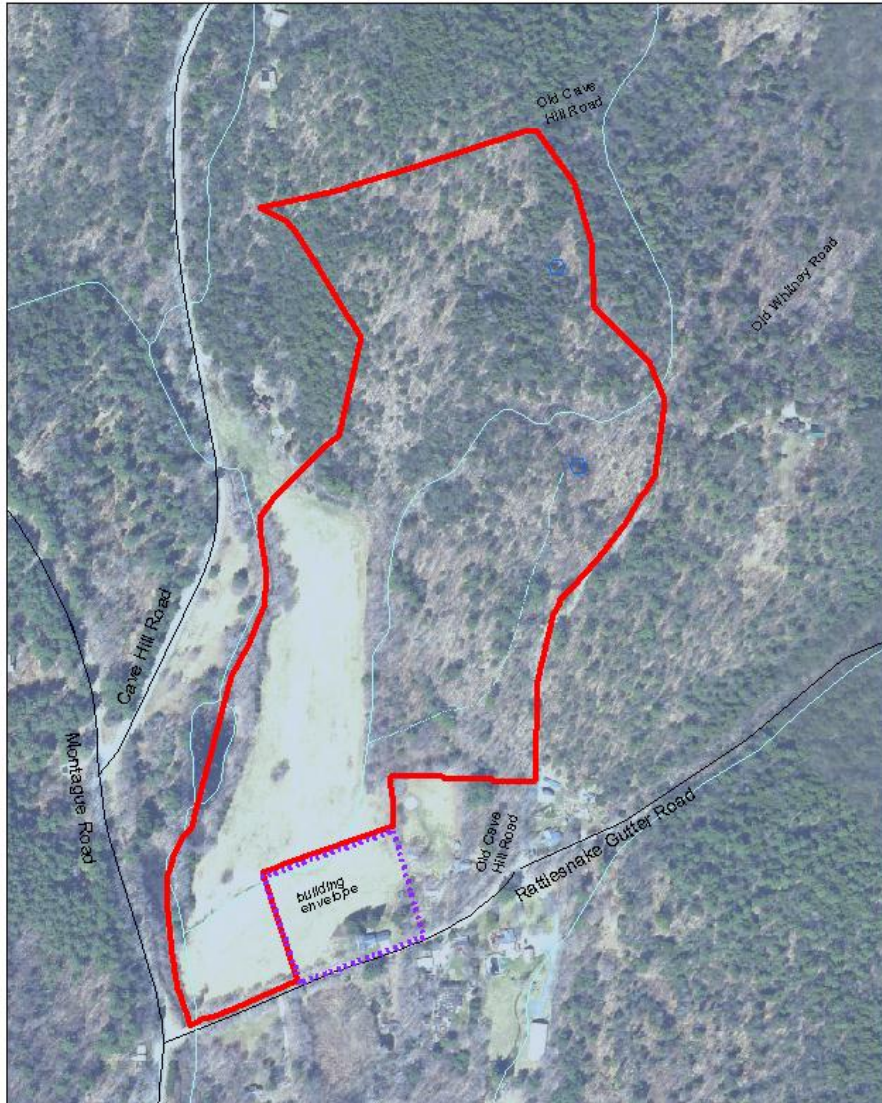




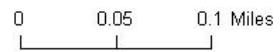
Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction



0 0.05 0.1 Miles



Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction



Land History – 6 Rattlesnake Gutter Road

The Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 1, page 422, dated 1790, records a deed transfer for this property from Elisha Clary to Joseph Williard, both early settlers in the town of Leverett. The property bounds refer to butternut, rock maple, hickory, and ancient chestnut trees, as well as to stake and stones, and the town road. A lumbering business was in progress at the time of the sale, with references to a steam mill on the premises and continued use of the “tenement and part of barns” until conclusion of the lumber job. The presence of buildings is also evidenced by a reference to “the house I now live in.” The deed’s reference to the “ice pond” indicates that ice was harvested.

The early central chimney house had a Federal main block added by the next owner, Joshua Hobart, in 1792. Hobart came from Taunton with family and possessions in an ox-cart, including a divided cupboard, with baby on one side and prize pig on the other! The Hobart family was active in Leverett for many years, owning the house for nearly 100 years. A turn-of-the-century Howes Brothers’ photograph of the house shows a farm family assembled with horse and buggy, family cow. Next owners were Charles Pratt and his son John, who made ash baskets. In the early twentieth century, Maurice Glazier, lumberman, sugar-maker and road commissioner owned the property. The present owners purchased the property in the early 1950s.

Like most Leverett farms, this was essentially self-sufficient in the early days, housing cattle, horses, chickens and carrying on lumbering. The large 19th century barn, which collapsed in the 1960s from heavy snow, had hay mows, cattle and horse stalls, a barnyard well. The barn was last used for poultry. Like most agricultural land remaining in Leverett, the 10 acre field has grown hay, except for a period in the 1960s and 70s when it was planted in field corn, although the presence of a corn crib indicates earlier plantings. Current “livestock” consists of hives of bees, one resident cat and visiting family dogs. The field, hayed annually, and woods are enjoyed by hikers and birders.

Purchased in 1952, this has been the home of George and Annette Gibavic and their four children, the younger two having been born here. The woods have been hiked and loved by all. Assisting in the haying of the field has been enjoyed by three generations. The grandchildren have learned and honed their driving skills around the perimeters of the field. One winter dog-sledding was added to cross-country skiing.

Early protection of the land consisted of placing it in Chapter 61B in 1990, recognizing that the area is increasingly desirable for development. A desire to further assure this heritage for future generations has led to the decision to further protect it with a Conservation Restriction, held by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, Leverett’s land trust, of which the owner is a charter member.

Annette N. Gibavic

Description of the Property

The Gibavic Family Conservation Restriction includes a 10-acre meadow along Doolittle Brook and another 30 acres of forested hillside just east of the meadow (*see Section 2. Maps*). This CR will connect 5 acres of protected property to the west with 86 acres of protected land to the east. (*See Section 2. Maps, 2.1 Gibavic Family CR and Contiguous Protected Areas.*)

The Meadow, 10 acres approximately

The meadow is bordered by the forested hillside section of CR on the northeast; surveyed property on the north; Doolittle Brook on the west (and the town-owned Doolittle Brook Conservation Area beyond); and a road, the building envelope, and surveyed property on the south. (*See Section 7. Boundary Information.*) All boundaries are, therefore, easily defined and monitored.

The meadow is visible from two commuter roads, Cave Hill Road and Montague Road. The meadow is also seen daily by the residents on the lower section of Rattlesnake Gutter Road and the many more visitors who park their cars to walk or bike the closed section of road and the network of woods roads and hiking trails. (*See Section 6. Photographs*, the last four photographs.)

The meadow is mowed late in the growing season to maintain the grasses while protecting nesting and foraging wildlife. It has not been treated with pesticides or herbicides. The 1987 map of the Aquifer Protection District for Leverett shows the entire meadow area (both the meadow part of the Gibavic Family CR and the entire Doolittle Brook Conservation Area) as part of the aquifer protection zone. (*See Section 2. Maps* for topographic, and orthophoto maps of the property and *Appendix 4. Geologic Report* for a bedrock maps of the property.)

There have been no systematic surveys of the flora or fauna of the meadow area. Last year, members of the community enjoyed watching American Woodcock display at dusk - and then hearing a Barred Owl call from the edge of the hillside. The streamside forest is dominated by sugar maple. (*See Appendix 5. Forest Report* and *Section 6, Photograph: P31 and P32* for photographs of cardinal flower and button bush at the edge of the pond.) The pond frequently dries up in the summer.

The Forested Hillside, 30 acres approximately

The hillside is bordered by the meadow on the west and Old Whitney Road on the east and the cluster of protected areas beginning with the Old Whitney Road Conservation Area. (*See Section 2. Maps, 2.1 Gibavic Family CR and Contiguous Protected Areas.*) Because of Old Whitney Road on the east and surveyed properties on the south and north boundaries are defined and can be monitored. (*see Section 7. Boundary Information.*)

Monitoring will be made easier by the network of woods roads and trails already open to the public. (*Section 6. Photographs* for pictures of the woods roads.)

The Gibavic Family CR is located on the west edge of the Pelham Dome, an area of special interest to geologists because it displays a newly-recognized transition zone between Acadian (410-350 million years ago) and Late Pennsylvanian (300-290 million years ago) features. A description of the rock formation and maps from Lisa Oxboel's master's thesis are included in *Appendix 4. Geologic Report*. While these rock formations underlie the meadow and are therefore impossible to see, they are easily seen as the lines of cliffs on the hillside. Views of these outcrops can be found in *Section 6. Photographs*.

The hillside's varied habitat is reflected in the variety of plants growing on both the hillside and along the edges of the meadow. Forest communities include the drier upland and the wetter downslope areas to the east of the meadow. The firewood cutting has been done with care and remaining brush has been piled as wildlife habitat. On the hillside, the two vernal pools, the drainage areas of the streams, and the rocky slope just uphill from the meadow add to the variety and suggest a number of interesting plant-community research projects. (See *Appendix 5. Forest Report*).

Systematic surveys need to be done of the herbaceous species, birds, reptiles and amphibians of the hillside (and, of course, the meadow). The two vernal pools will be certified. (See *Section 6, Photographs* for pictures of the vernal pools and intermittent streams.)

While people enjoy the meadow as they pass by, they enjoy the woods from the trails. Rattlesnake Gutter is probably already the best-used recreation area in the town. Indeed, "Walking the Gutter" has long been a popular pastime: Erastus Field painted ladies with umbrellas standing among rather fanciful waterfalls. Emily Dickinson collected plants for her herbarium there. Today, The Gutter appears in western Massachusetts hiking and birding books; the M-M Trail follows the upper end of Rattlesnake Gutter Road. Old Whitney Road, which borders the Gibavic Family CR is part of a network of trails connected to The Gutter. (See *Section 6, Photographs* for pictures of the trails and woods roads.) We are fortunate that the Gibavic property has long been under Chapter 61B. The CR will keep the property open to the public.

The Gibavic Family CR is 7 miles from the University of Massachusetts and not much farther from the rest of the five college community. The interest in research on the geology and diverse flora/fauna of the property has already been described and will continue. The area is regularly used for university and college geology field trips. In addition, there have been a number of community workshops on the geology, birds, and plants of the area - and these will continue. Last spring's program at the meadow to watch the displaying woodcock and learn about their life history was so popular that it is already scheduled for next spring. And Leverett's annual 5-mile Cave Hill Classic Road Race crosses the meadow the first weekend in May.