

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE


January 30, 2023



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Sandgate, Vermont | The Archaeological Conservancy acquired the Egg Mountain Archaeological Site, a significant hillside settlement located in Vermont, on December 12, 2022. The Conservancy purchased the site from The Conservation Fund, which pre-acquired Egg Mountain in 2017, essentially buying time to enable the final conservation outcome. A grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board will be used to cover the costs of surveying and purchasing the 89-acre property.

The site is nestled in an undisturbed section of forest that served as a possible hiding spot for Daniel Shays, the historical figure who played a pivotal role in the political, economic, and social history of the early United States. The uprising orchestrated by Shays in Western Massachusetts between 1786-1787 helped persuade early American lawmakers of the need for a strong national government and contributed to the drafting of the United States Constitution. Shays led rebels, known as Shaysites, in an attack on the Springfield armory. When they were fired on by a militia protecting the armory, the Shaysites fled and the uprising was effectively over. The leaders, including Shays, escaped to New Hampshire and Vermont.

Several cellar holes, combined with stone walls and other landscape features, suggest this was the location of a sizeable community. The site is largely undisturbed, and the archaeological deposits offer a picture of a late eighteenth-century rural settlement. Much of the knowledge of Egg Mountain comes from work carried out by Steve Butz, a New York high school teacher and amateur archaeologist who has extensively researched the site and conducted archaeological field schools as part of the Shays Settlement Project with in recent years. Butz and his students have mapped features of the site and uncovered artifacts such as metal tools, ceramics, belt buckles, pipe stems, faunal remains, and glass that date to the late eighteenth century. Butz has also conducted extensive archival research that supports evidence that Shays fled to this settlement.

Kelley Berliner, the Conservancy's Eastern Regional Director, stated, "It is really unusual to find a whole community of historic sites with this level of integrity. Beyond the possible association with Shays, there is tremendous potential for future research on late 18th-century rural settlement in Vermont."

The Conservation Fund acquired the Egg Mountain Archaeological Site as part of a 23,000-acre purchase of working forestland from a timber investment company. Known as Cowee Forest, the once family-owned forest was purchased through the Fund's Working Forest Fund® program, which is dedicated to mitigating climate change, strengthening rural economies, and protecting natural ecosystems through the permanent conservation of at-risk working forests.

"The unique opportunity we had here to preserve the Egg Mountain Site made it all the more important for us to conserve the Cowee Forest with a loan from the Richard King Mellon Foundation," said Sally Manikian, New Hampshire and Vermont representative of The Conservation Fund. "Preservation of the Egg Mountain Archaeological Site exemplifies the Fund's multi-faceted and community-focused approach to land conservation. That we had a hand in

providing rich educational opportunities and could help connect residents and visitors with this area's history makes this project all the better.”

Preservation of the Egg Mountain Archaeological Site will contribute to public knowledge about the site's significance and the importance of cultural resource preservation. The land will be maintained as an open-space research preserve and protected against any future development. The Conservancy plans to continue working with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board as well as the Town of Sandgate to develop educational materials about the site.

About the Archaeological Conservancy

The Archaeological Conservancy, established in 1980, is the only national non-profit organization dedicated to acquiring and preserving the best of our nation's remaining archaeological sites. Based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Conservancy also operates regional offices in Mississippi, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Nevada. <https://www.archaeologicalconservancy.org/>

About the Conservation Fund

At The Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are redefining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect more than 8.5 million acres of land, including over 260,000 acres in Vermont. conservationfund.org