



# Belchertown Land Trust, Inc.

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The Belchertown Land Trust offers to transfer ownership of the Upper Bondsville Dam to the Swift River Preservation Association**

*Belchertown, MA., August 11, 2011* – The Belchertown Land Trust (BLT) has sent a letter to the Swift River Preservation Association (SRPA) offering to transfer ownership of the Upper Bondsville Dam. The BLT is under a state order to repair or remove the over one-hundred-year-old dam. Estimates provided in several engineering studies place the cost of either option at approximately \$350,000 with annual maintenance and inspection costs of \$5,000 if the dam is repaired.

The SRPA is suing the BLT, asking the court to not allow any action which will result in the dam being removed, although the BLT has yet to make a decision. A number of public meetings regarding this issue have been held by the BLT in addition to a series of engineering studies outlining various courses of action.

The BLT acquired the dam in 2006 as part of a successful effort to maintain open access to the shore of the Swift River along what is known as the Chickadee Trail. Unfortunately, the dam had to be acquired as part of this transaction. Following the near-failure of a dam in Taunton in late 2005, the state enforced new dam regulations and the Upper Bondsville Dam has been rated as a Significant Hazard and in Poor condition. All of the engineering studies undertaken for the BLT that have been accepted by the state concur in these findings. One study that proposed reclassifying the rating on the dam was not accepted by the state.

"The goal of this offer is to place control of the dam with those that have stated they have a vested interest in the dam and the impoundment remaining in place," said BLT President Jim Fox. "This seems to be a far more viable option than spending everyone's limited funds on lawsuits, lawyer's fees and court costs. We hope that the SRPA will give this offer serious consideration so that we can continue in our efforts to preserve open space for all the residents of Belchertown and not have to focus the time and energy of our volunteer Board of Directors on legal action."

Copies of a number of studies regarding the dam as well as a timeline of events are available at the Belchertown Land Trust web site at [www.BelchertownLandTrust.org](http://www.BelchertownLandTrust.org).

*The Belchertown Land Trust is a non-profit, 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation of open space in Belchertown.*

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[www.belchertownlandtrust.org](http://www.belchertownlandtrust.org)