

Meredith, NH



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO
LEASE TOWN AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

**PROPOSALS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN 12:00 NOON
ON **TBD**
AND SHALL BE MAILED OR EMAILED TO:**

Meredith Conservation Commission
5 Highland St
Meredith, NH 03253
conservation@meredithnh.org

The Town of Meredith in Belknap County seeks proposals from individuals or entities wishing to lease part or all of the following agricultural areas owned by the Town as described further below. The area is identified on the attached maps.

Proposals are sought from a partner or partners willing to work with the Town to maintain soil fertility and other natural resources while managing the areas for agricultural uses. As these are public lands, the Town seeks to balance the use of these areas for food and forage production while also protecting the resources for future generations. Uses of these lands shall therefore conform to the Town's Forest Management Plan, which seeks to both sustain and improve natural resources over the long-term.

Upon request, the Town will provide all lessees with "Control of Land" documents needed to enroll in the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a voluntary cost-share program that offers financial reimbursement to farmers following conservation practices.

The Town will accept proposals for all or some of these areas. Proposals should indicate preference and describe intended management.

Meredith Conservation Commissioners are available to tour the properties with interested parties. Please contact Scott Powell at (603) 279-7449 or by e-mail at conservation@meredithnh.org

A. AREA AVAILABLE FOR LEASE

Approximately five acres of prior farm land located on the Page Pond Community Forest adjacent to the parking area at the entrance of Barnard Ridge Road.

B. PRICING

The Town seeks a five-year lease with the possibility of renewal for good performance. Proposals should specify proposed payments per acre, per year, for the duration of the lease. It is the intent of the Town that lease payments shall minimally cover the cost of any real or personal property taxes arising from its use of the Property.

C. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Proposals must be submitted to the Meredith Conservation Commission as noted above, and clearly labeled “PROPOSAL FOR LEASE OF TOWN AGRICULTURAL LAND.” The deadline to submit a proposal is 12:00 NOON on **TBD**, at which time all submissions will be opened in the Meredith Conservation Commission Office. The public is welcome to attend, although a contract will not be awarded on that date.
2. Proposals must include the following:
 - a. Name, phone, e-mail, and mailing address of primary contact person.
 - b. Description of the areas sought, and proposed use for each area.
 - c. Proposed annual payments, per acre, for the land to be leased.
 - d. Proof of insurance.
 - e. Description of present farming activities, including acreage and location(s) farmed, crops raised, ownership, nature and location of equipment, number of seasonal and permanent employees, and description of farming practices.
 - f. A specific strategy for maintaining soil health and fertility for the duration of the lease, including soil testing, fertilization, sub-soiling and/or soil aeration.
 - g. A description of any anticipated tilling, including type of machinery, timing, and use of cover crops or other management practices intended to minimize soil compaction and erosion.
 - h. A description of any anticipated herbicide or pesticide usage, including the types of materials and frequency of use.
 - i. Proposals may include additional information pertaining to qualifications, experience, land ethic, management approach, or other documentation for the Town to consider.
3. The following factors will be considered as the basis for award of the proposal, with priority to be determined solely by the Town:
 - a. Compliance with sustainable management practices including compliance with the **MANUAL OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS) FOR AGRICULTURE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE** (published by New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food)

- b. The use of organic farming practices
- c. Qualifications/experience
- d. Town residence
- e. Value of proposed rental payments

D. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The Page Pond Community Forest is managed by the Meredith Conservation Commission for wildlife, water quality, and recreation purposes and abuts residential properties. Lessees shall recognize that all precautions and considerations must be taken to minimize impact on the residents.
2. The land is on Meredith Neck in close proximity to wetlands that drain to Meredith Bay in Lake Winnepesaukee. The use of pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers is discouraged.
3. A year-round trail and parking area is adjacent to the fields. Lessees shall recognize that this trail and parking area must be kept open and unobstructed for public access at all times.
4. Conservation restrictions in Warranty Deed #1711433 recorded in the Belknap County Register of Deeds, book 3136, page 294 must be observed. The deed allows the construction of roads, fences, barns, farm stands and other structures necessary for the purpose of agriculture.
5. There is municipal water available along Barnard Ridge Road. There is also the possibility of using an existing well which hasn't been used for many years.
6. Assessment of the land in conjunction with the UNH Extension Service has identified a non-inclusive list of preferred and non-proffered uses including:
 - a. Preferred:
 - i. Hay
 - ii. Mixed vegetable crops
 - iii. Small fruit orchards
 - iv. Apiculture
 - v. Wildflowers
 - b. Non-preferred:
 - i. Large livestock
 - ii. Large fruit orchards
 - iii. Corn
7. The lessee will be required to comply with all terms and conditions as set forth in this request for proposals, except as may be specifically exempted by the Town in writing, and to execute a written lease using this RFP as a basis. Failure to execute a contract within 30 days of written notification from the Town may constitute cause for cancellation of the proposal acceptance and award.
8. It is anticipated that the Meredith Select Board will select the awardees during a public meeting. The final decision to lease these lands will be made by TBD per NH RSA xxx.
9. The Town reserves the right to issue one or more leases for these areas, to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any informality or technical defects if, in the Town's sole judgment, the best interest of the Town will be served.

10. The chair of the Meredith Conservation Commission will be the primary point of contact for any questions or issues that arise during the lease period.
11. To the fullest extent permitted by law, lessee shall protect, indemnify, save, defend and hold harmless the Town of Meredith, including its officials, agents, volunteers, and employees, from and against any and all liabilities, obligations, claims, damages, penalties, causes of action, costs, interest and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorney fees, which may become obligated by reason of any accident, bodily injury, personal injury, death of person, or loss of or damage to property, arising indirectly or directly under, out of, in connection with, or as a result of the lease or the activities of the lessee or its agents, employees, contractors or subcontractors.
12. Prior to commencing work, the lessee shall demonstrate that it carries a general liability policy with limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate and naming the Town as "primary and non-contributory".
 - The Contractor shall provide proof of automobile insurance coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000. The Contractor will furnish to the Town a Certificate of Insurance and an endorsement prior to executing the Contract or commencing work, demonstrating that the Town and its officials, agents, volunteers and employees are named as an additional insured on the general liability and automobile liability insurance coverage.
 - The Contractor shall provide proof of workers' compensation insurance that meets State of New Hampshire required limits. The Contractor's workers' compensation coverage must waive subrogation against the Town and its officials, agents, volunteers and employees.
 - The Town shall not be required to insure the lessee or any subcontractor.

*The Town reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals or part of a proposal, to waive any technicalities, informalities or irregularities, and to be the sole judge of the suitability of the proposals offered. Questions regarding this request for proposals should be directed to **Scott Powell**, (603) 279-7449 (TBR), Meredith Conservation Commission Chair or conservation@meredithnh.org*