

Conditional Use Permit Application for the Powder Major's Farm

In conserving the entire Powder Major's Farm (240 acres), the Goss family wishes to fulfill a dream of preserving this historic farm for future generations while adhering to Madbury's Master Plan goal of maintaining the town's rural and agricultural character.

When the sale of the Powder Major's forest goes through, Beth and Chuck Goss won't receive any cash from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests. We will retain the house and the fields effectively keeping the farm intact and preserving the legacy of the Demeritt family who helped found and build this town. We love the history of the property and its ties to the American Revolution. We have great admiration and respect for the patriot John Demeritt (the Powder Major) and the role he played in the cause for liberty at a most critical time in our history. As you may know, in the early spring of 1775, Demeritt transported gun powder to Bunker Hill (actually Breed's Hill) which he and other patriots had removed from Fort William and Mary as the first offensive action of the Revolutionary War. A portion of that gunpowder, which was stored in his Madbury barn, was successfully used against the world's best army in the name of American freedom. Because of Demeritt's action the NH line held and the rest, as they say, is history! We want to make sure that history is not forgotten.

We want to make the Powder Major's Farm a place that provides a teaching moment for any and all that come here. To that end, we would like to use our 211 year old barn as a venue for special events and a variety of gatherings that could help showcase the property and its history and also help pay for its restoration and maintenance. This is how other farms have managed to stay in families and out of developer's hands. The Powder Major's farm has survived for 294 years we'd like to see it go another 300 years. But, all too often, "exhaustion of resources" is cited as the reason to sell the family farm. As members of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, we are acutely aware of the loss of farmland and barns throughout the state.

In the words of the NH Preservation Alliance, "Barns tell the history of New Hampshire: from hardscrabble beginnings to the sheep and dairy booms in the 19th century, virtually every rural homestead and village property included a barn. As you travel through New Hampshire today, it's impossible not to see that this legacy of hard work and community is crumbling around us. We're losing historic New Hampshire barns at a rate of nearly one per day, and experts point to a big bubble of need because of deferred maintenance in many 19th century barns."

With an assist from agritourism, old barns in NH are seeing new life and family farms are being preserved. According to Lorraine Merrill, NH's Agriculture Commissioner, "agritourism may be a new word but, it is not a new phenomenon. Actually, farm families were the pioneers of New Hampshire's tourism by taking in summer guests and paying guests for various periods of time on their farms. It has a long heritage. Agritourism activities," she says, "are an increasingly important part of what farmers do to stay viable."

Robert Johnson, policy director at the New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation, also supports agritourism. "What I tell folks is, the money in agriculture in New Hampshire today is not necessarily in the quantity produced, but in the experience provided. That's why we really fought

so hard to incorporate the agritourism definition under marketing. That's what all these farms are doing.”

The Powder Major's farm has been a landmark in town since the early 1700's. From raising sheep, to running a lumber operation, to crop production, and maple sugaring, the farm has a long history of agricultural production. That's why the NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Services, is pursuing an easement on 34 +/- acres of the Powder Major's farm to preserve much of the open farmland for current and future agricultural use, which includes agritourism.

In pursuing the conservation route for the farmland, as opposed to development, we do forfeit much of its value – but, our goal has long been to maintain this historic farm, by whatever means possible. The Goss family has been a good land steward for several generations. As we transition to new stewardship of the property with Chuck and Beth Goss taking on sole ownership of the Powder Major's farm and the Forest Society owning the Powder Major's forest, it is our hope that the town will work with us in our efforts to make the farm sustainable and forever preserve Madbury's role in the history of this country.

Our plan is to host special events at the farm under the town's new agritourism ordinance. We'd like to have as much flexibility as possible with these events. Our vision is to host events most likely through the months of May to October. We envision using our historic barn and an accessory structure behind it for special events which would include, but not be limited to, historical and agricultural exhibits, recreational activities, gatherings, farm-to-table events, on-farm weddings and similar events. After restoring the barn, we plan to display exhibits that share the agricultural history of the farm, reinforce Madbury's role in the American Revolution and showcase timber frame structures that define a colonial homestead.

Conditional Use Permit: Section 9

A) Sufficient off-street parking is provided to accommodate any employees & visitors.

With nearly 40 acres of land surrounding the Powder Major's barn, there is no need for any off-street parking on Cherry Lane. There is ample land to accommodate parking on-site and if there were to be a need for additional parking we could utilize the landing area (aka log yard) next to the Cherry Lane field.

Local ordinances often call for parking to be provided at a rate of one parking space for every three guests or, 4 patrons per vehicle. If we use that standard, an event with 150-200 guests would require no more than 50 parking spaces. That amount of parking could easily be absorbed on the farm property. The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests tell us that town selectmen have asked for a 30 space parking lot on Cherry Lane in anticipation of an influx of visitors to the forest preserve and Goss trails, so efforts may already be underway to accommodate additional traffic flow on Cherry Lane.

Current athletic events in town bring increased traffic to both Town Hall road and Route 155, on a regular basis. Any event we might schedule at the Powder Major's farm would bring no more wear and tear on roads than existing events.

B) Any internal vehicular roadways can accommodate any employees & visitors

There are no internal roadways at the Powder Major's Farm, there are two driveways that lead to the barn which would allow for a circular flow of visitor traffic and could easily accommodate parking and proposed traffic volumes. The Cherry Lane landing (aka log yard) also has a driveway that leads to a wide open area that could also accommodate parking. .

C) The proposed site design is configured in a manner that minimizes and mitigates any impacts to environmental resources and neighboring properties.

The proposed site consists of an existing barn (circa 1806) and an additional accessory structure erected behind the barn. Both structures would not be visible from the road and therefore would have little or no additional impact on environmental resources and neighboring properties.

D) The scale, size, frequency of events and operating hours shall not produce unreasonable impacts or nuisances to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Powder Major's farm is setback from the road in a private setting, buffered by a forested perimeter that is bordered by Madbury athletic fields, the Madbury town cemetery, and 190 +/- acres of land soon to be conserved by the Goss family with a sale to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Given the remote nature of the site, the impact on a few nearby houses would be minimal.

The Powder Major's property has abutters on one side only and they are located across the street from the farm. Our closest neighbor is nearly 600 feet from our barn, the venue site. (See exhibit)

- 1 Cherry Lane: David Olds & Jennifer-Miksis-Olds (800 feet)
- 3 Cherry Lane: David & Carrie Ayers (575 feet)
- 5 Cherry Lane: Darlene & Randall Stillwagon (700 feet)
- 7 Cherry Lane: David & Shawna Coppola (1,100 feet)
- 9 Cherry Lane: MaryAnne Lustgraaf & Laura Fant (1,000 feet)
- 11 Cherry Lane: Anne & Kurt Kimball (1,450 feet)

Proposed events would likely have no more than 200 guests – in an area where athletic events draw as many as that number on a regular basis to the abutting Tibbetts fields often with public address systems utilized.

Events at the Powder Major's farm would utilize the barn and attached accessory structure. Activities would be concentrated in the area behind the barn which would keep any noise to a minimum. Proposed events would most likely occur on weekends and would not begin before 8:00AM and would conclude by 11:00PM. Any amplified music or sound would be contained to the barn and be curtailed by 10:30 pm. Portable restrooms would be used for events or new bathrooms would be installed in the accessory structure behind the barn along with a new septic system. Any required water would be provided by an existing artesian well on the property.

As you probably are aware, area farms are already practicing agritourism with no real issues. The DeMeritt Hill Farm in Lee, which is only one mile away from the Powder Majors farm, hosts the annual Haunted overload, which brings in 7,000 visitors in a season, as well as a farm stand, special event rentals and hay rides. The Coppal Farm located on North River Road in Lee operates a corn maze, and offers wagon rides and sleigh rides. The Flag Hill Winery, also in Lee, offers weddings and events. The Emery farm in Durham offers a farm stand, corn maze and wagon rides. The Kitz farm in Strafford, NH, (population 3,991) provides weddings from May to October (24 events) with an average attendance of 150-200 guests, and the town has been very supportive of their operation. We hope to have the same supportive relationship with neighbors and the town and require flexibility to accomplish our goal of sustainability.



Powder Major's Forest

Powder Major's Farm

Tibbetts Field

Parking Area

Additional Parking

Cherry Ln

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Madbury Cemetery

To Conservation Trail System Parking Area