

THE PUSH TO BURY NORTHERN PASS

# ForestNotes

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

## MT. MAJOR a Beloved 'Everybody Mountain'

Celebrating  
'Something Wild'



AUTUMN 2013

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By Brenda Charpentier

*Chat with hikers on the trails and summit of Mt. Major, southwest of Lake Winnipesaukee, and you'll hear that this is not just another pretty place. Its loyal fans treasure it as a tradition, a rite of passage, a Lakes Region classic. What they don't know is that its trails are on unprotected land, and that is something the Forest Society and the Lakes Region Conservation Trust aim to change.*

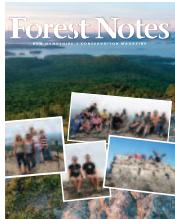
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*On our cover:*

The view from Mt. Major.  
Photo by Jerry and Marcy Monkman, EcoPhotography.



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## THE FORESTER'S PRISM

# The First Step

**O**n a clear day you can see forever from the top of Mt. Major! I hiked the mountain recently on a perfect day. Lake Winnipesaukee sparkled below us, the MS Mount Washington—looking like a toy boat—cruised on its surface. The White Mountains formed the horizon, majestic and mysterious, while other hikers milled around us: children, dogs, hikers with poles, groups of young campers, hikers in flip flops. It's true that everybody hikes Mt. Major!

I usually prefer quieter summits, but I observed what a treat this was—a place where even the most neophyte hiker can tackle a mountain, be outside, admire the view and get some exercise. What's not to love? The people's mountain, indeed. And that doesn't consider the view *from* the lake—with Mt. Major as a prominent feature.

This mountain anchors the Belknap Range—a string of mountains largely unbroken by development or roads—that stretches from the lake west to Gilford, north to Gunstock and south to Sunset Lake. There are miles of trails, some generously hosted by private landowners and some crossing conservation land. This is another of New Hampshire's very special places.

The Forest Society has a history of protecting iconic places. In some cases, we do it puzzle piece by puzzle piece over long periods of time (as we have on Mt. Monad-

nock or in the Quabbin-to-Cardigan region). Other times, we protect regions by policy means—as we did with the White Mountain National Forest by working to pass the Weeks Act.

In most cases we work with partners, as we are doing on Mt. Major. The Lakes Region Conservation Trust also has a history of protecting great places, and together we are working to add another 950 acres to those places that are conserved and available for public use.

With ownership will come challenges; the trails on Mt. Major are in danger of being loved to death and are in need of repair. There are ecologically sensitive areas that need wise stewardship. With any hike, however, the path to the summit begins with the first step, and that first step is to buy these tracts on the beloved mountain! If you've ever hiked Mt. Major or other parts of the Belknaps, I hope you'll help out!



*Jane Difley is the president/forester of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.*

### Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

A non-profit membership organization founded in 1901 to protect the state's most important landscapes and promote wise use of its renewable natural resources. Basic annual membership fee is \$35 and includes a subscription to *Forest Notes*.

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By Jack Savage

## 50 Years Ago in Forest Notes



The Forest Society's ability to act quickly has greased the skids on many successful cooperative conservation projects over the years.

In the fall of 1963, *Forest Notes* reported that Gov. John King and his Executive Council were ready to acquire nearly 600 acres of land from the Forest Society on the slopes of Kearsarge Mountain as an addition to the state park. The Forest Society had bought the property two years before, in order to hold it safely off the real estate market while a \$10 million bond issue for park expansion slowly wound its way through the state Legislature.

"Gov. King ... has repaid the Society on the basis of its actual cost and carrying charges and so the State has acquired title on a thoroughly satisfactory basis," the article said. "This kind of service is made possible by the continuing interest of our membership, and so we pass along to you the thanks of Governor King on behalf of the State of New Hampshire."

## New Trustees, Officers

At the Annual Meeting in September, Forest Society members voted in Andy Lietz of Rye and Lorin Rydstrom of Hollis as new trustees, and re-elected Deanna Howard of Etna and Jack Middleton of Freedom for second terms on the board.

The trustees elected Bill Webb of Holderness as the incoming chair, with Kathy Enegess of Jaffrey as vice chair and William McCarten of Lancaster treasurer. The members elected Deanna Howard as secretary.

Outgoing chair Carolyn Benthien, the first woman to serve in that role, will remain on the board. Leonard "Hunt" Dowse, Midge Eliassen, Howard Moffet, Hank Swan and Stephen Taylor were congratulated for their service, as their terms as trustees have expired.

## Confessions of a Failed Country Gentleman

Satirist PJ O'Rourke entertained those who attended the Annual Meeting in Meredith with tales of his conversion from city slicker to New Hampshire landowner.

"I bought land," O'Rourke recounted. "First a little, then more, and finally, too much. In doing so I learned that property deeds in this part of the country can go back 300 years, and in every one of those years the surveyor made a mistake."

"One attempt at New England agriculture just explains everything about Manifest Destiny," he continued. "I am nonetheless a farmer. My property is a certified tree farm, and a demanding life this turns out to be. Sleet, snow, frost and freezing rain, the crop must be brought in, every thirty years, regardless. And while I'd like to tap my trees for maple syrup I seem to have found the only place in New England between Bridgeport and Bangor without a single Sugar Maple. It turns out that there is very little market for fir syrup."



PJ O'Rourke entertains with tales from his tree farm at the Forest Society's Annual Meeting Sept. 28th.

## Forest Society Earns Accreditation from Land Trust Commission



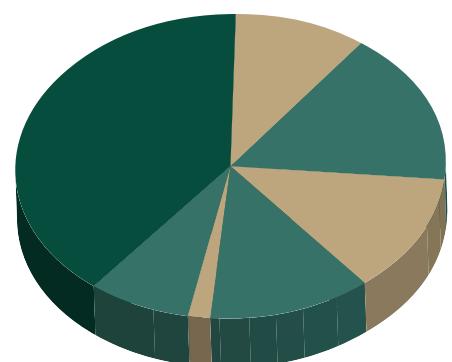
After an extensive evaluation that included digitally scanning more than 300,000 documents, the Forest Society has been awarded accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The Forest Society is one of seven land trusts in New Hampshire and 230 across the country to be awarded accreditation since 2008.

"The accreditation process has made the Forest Society better at what we do," said Jane Difley, president/forester. "Accreditation is an important symbol of everyone in the land trust community taking responsibility to voluntarily meet the standards in order to promote the integrity of our mission. It will only strengthen the trust our donors and supporters have in us."

## Conservation in a Pie Chart

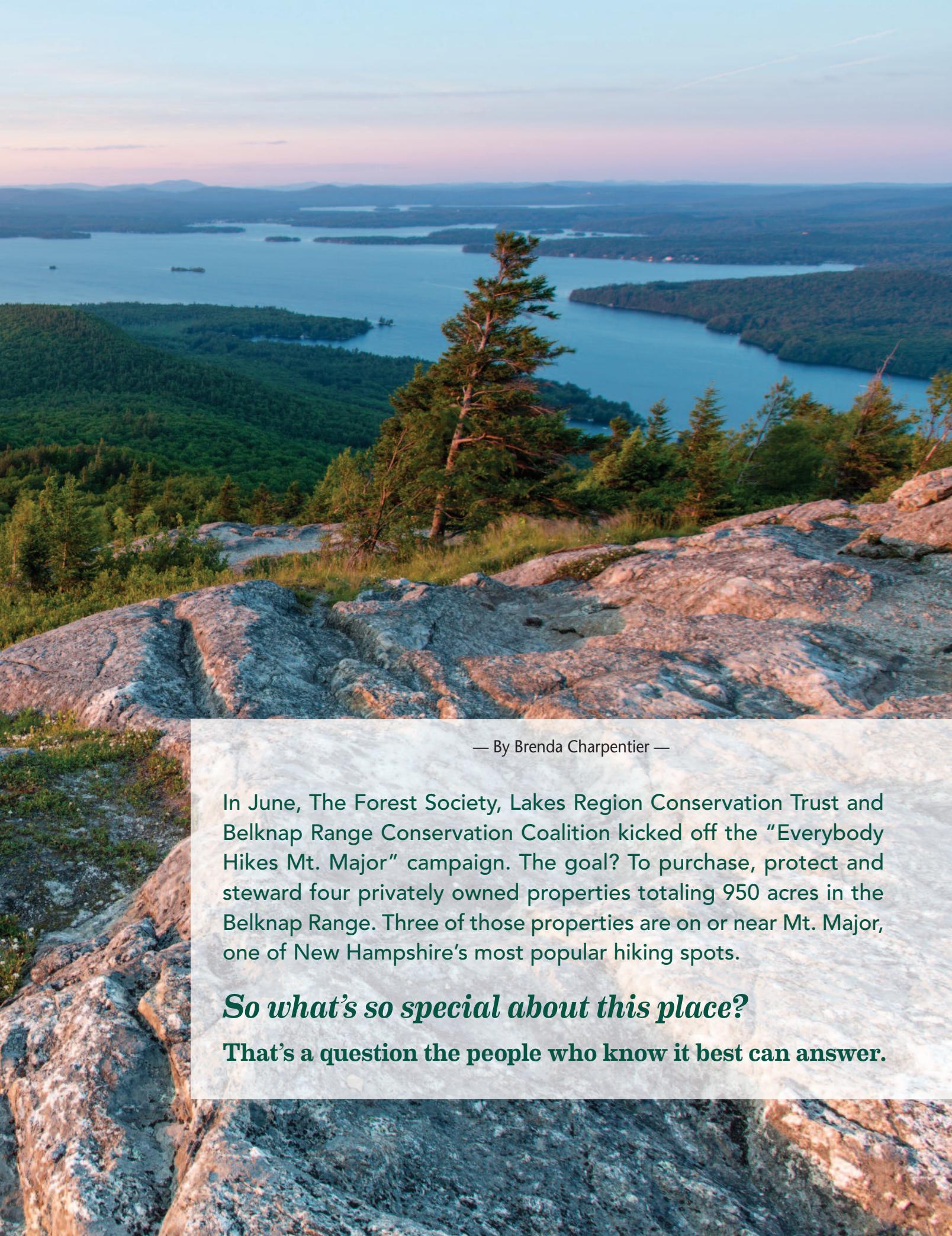
The Forest Society's annual report for fiscal year 2012 is available online at [www.forestociety.org](http://www.forestociety.org) (click on the 'About Us' tab and look for 'Annual Reports'). You'll find a letter from Jane Difley, our president/forester, and financial statements and graphs showing revenue and expenses.

If you'd prefer to receive a printed copy by mail, contact Denise Vaillancourt by e-mail at [dvaillancourt@forestociety.org](mailto:dvaillancourt@forestociety.org) or by phone at (603) 224-9945, and she'll be happy to have one sent to you. ☺





Protecting the  
*everybody*  
Mountain



— By Brenda Charpentier —

In June, The Forest Society, Lakes Region Conservation Trust and Belknap Range Conservation Coalition kicked off the "Everybody Hikes Mt. Major" campaign. The goal? To purchase, protect and steward four privately owned properties totaling 950 acres in the Belknap Range. Three of those properties are on or near Mt. Major, one of New Hampshire's most popular hiking spots.

***So what's so special about this place?***

**That's a question the people who know it best can answer.**

# Protecting the *everybody* Mountain



*Previous page, above and top right:* From the top of Mt. Major, elevation 1,786 feet, hikers can see the full expanse of Lake Winnipesaukee surrounded by the Ossipee and Sandwich ranges and, on a clear day, beyond to Mt. Washington. Photos by Jerry and Marcy Monkman, EcoPhotography.

*Smaller photos starting at far right:* The Barry family from Madbury; Art Richardson of Alton makes his first ascent of the day; sisters Maureen Bedrosian of Methuen, Mass., and Joanne Cranshaw of Salem, N.H., take a break from picking blueberries; sisters Gayle and Cathryn Smart of Princeton Junction, N.J., sit atop Phippen's Hut. Photos by Brenda Charpentier.

## Voices of Mt. Major

**O**n a sunny summer afternoon on the rocky top of Mt. Major in Alton, two college-age sisters from New Jersey snapped photos of each other with their smartphones. Two middle-aged sisters from Salem and Methuen, Mass., filled containers with blueberries. Nearby, a couple from Madbury enjoyed the view of Lake Winnipesaukee with their three grandkids who were visiting from Florida.

They were strangers to each other, but not to the mountain. They were from different generations and places and backgrounds, but they shared a common bond, revealed with big smiles when asked what brought them to Mt. Major that day.

"We've been coming up here all our lives," said Gayle Smart, 23, about herself and her sister Cathryn Smart, 19. They visit their grandparents in Wolfeboro every summer, and every summer they make it a point to climb Mt. Major together. "It's a staple. We get the same picture every year standing in front of the lake. We have a progression showing us growing up," Gayle said.

"This is my tradition," said Maureen Bedrosian, one of the blueberry pickers, adding that she's been hiking Mt. Major from June to October for years. "I missed the blueberry season one year and I was bummed out for the whole year."

"Oh, 20, 30 years," said Jean Barry, trying to remember how long she and her husband John have been climbing Mt. Major. With church groups, scout troops, school field trips, and now with their grandchildren. "It has been a favorite place to start the grandchildren in the sport of hiking," Jean said.

Turning to her granddaughter Sophia, 11, and tapping her on the knee, she said, "Maybe you'll bring your kids here one day."

So what keeps people coming back?

"The view is spectacular," Jean said, echoing the first thought of many hikers interviewed.

But the view is not the whole story of this mountain. It has other attributes that taken together, make it a Lakes Region classic. Its location plays a big part. It's next to Lake Winnipesaukee



## ***Really? I thought this was all public!***

Most hikers react with some version of these words when told that the trails on Mt. Major are on mostly private land. The only public parts are the parking area, owned by the Department of Transportation, and the 60-acre summit, owned by the Department of Resources and Economic Development. In between, the trails utilize land owned by a handful of private landowners.

A sampling of hikers along the trail reveals both strong ties to the mountain and strong support for its permanent protection.

**“**It's really important to protect this. I mean it's one of the most family-oriented mountains we have.

If this place was lost, I would lose, like, my memories.  
I'd be really bummed that I couldn't come up here  
with my children some day and share my experience with this mountain.

It's a place that our family always goes to. I have pictures of just me,  
me pregnant with my daughter, and then with my daughter,  
and then with her the first time she climbed on her own two feet.

To have this go away? That would be devastating.

I trained on this mountain in high school, running up here for soccer....  
So this is a ton of memories and a ton of my past is on this mountain.

We fell in love on this mountain.

Losing areas like this would take away part of New Hampshire and what it stands for.



**”**

## MR. PHIPPEN'S HUT

By Dave Roberts



Photo courtesy Dave Roberts.

During the fall of 1925, Mr. George Phippen, the then-owner of the top of Mt. Major, took the trouble to build a stone structure. It was intended to be a place where hikers could seek shelter from harsh weather, or perhaps spend the night in anticipation of viewing a spectacular dawn on the morrow. It had a stone bench, a window to the south, and a door facing eastward. It was roofed over and contained a small woodstove to provide for the relative comfort of any persons who might wish to use it, as the door was left unlocked.

Sometime during its first winter, the fierce winds that blow across this completely exposed summit proved to be too much for the roof and it was blown off. During the summer of 1926, Mr. Phippen built a much sturdier roof made of successive layers of spruce poles, corrugated iron and boards. He firmly bolted it to the masonry, making sure to leave no overhang beyond the walls that might provide some purchase for the winter winds. The new roof lasted for two winters before it too was blown down the mountainside. The impending Great Depression kept Mr. Phippen from attempting further repairs, and the hut seems never to have had another roof.

The hut still serves, in a modest way, the role Mr. Phippen had envisaged for it, as it is used during the colder months. On a cold day in January, a chance to gain shelter by hunkering down in the lee of the northerly wall is an advantage very much appreciated. On days such as that, anyone taking advantage of the ruins should make a mental note to be thankful for folks like George Phippen, who manage to rise above the level of selfishness and mean-spiritedness to demonstrate a spirit of goodwill and benevolence—fortunately there are still many such among us.

Mr. Phippen's nephew has remarked that his Uncle George, who purchased the mountain top in 1914 (for \$125) dearly loved the view (and the blueberries) and attempted to turn the area over to the State of New Hampshire in the early 1920s so others could benefit from it in perpetuity. Unfortunately, the project fell through. During the Depression years, the land reverted to the Town of Alton for taxes. In 1956, the townspeople of Alton voted to pass the land to the state for "public park purposes." The summit is now Mt. Major State Park, while the surrounding land and its hiking trails remain privately owned.



*With an elevation gain of 1,124 feet, the hike to the summit of Mt. Major requires a relatively modest effort in return for a breathtaking view of Lake Winnipesaukee, seen here at sunset in July. Photo by Jerry and Marcy Monkman, EcoPhotography.*

and easily accessible off Route 11. Most hikers can summit in a little over an hour, so it's a relatively quick escape to the soothing balm of granite, trees, sky and lake. Vacationers can hike the mountain in the morning and be swimming, paddling or fishing in Winnipesaukee by afternoon. The three main trails are easy to moderate, so hikers of all ages and abilities can make it to the top.

"Come one, come all, this is an everybody mountain," said hiker Brian Nevins, who was enjoying the sunset atop the summit one evening.

And at the top, the remains of a stone hut, built in 1925 to shelter hikers, still serves as a focal point. Hikers can get out of the wind behind its wall, but they usually sit on top of it for pictures and eating snacks.

Add to all of that the memories of previous hikes, maybe a lifetime of previous hikes and all the memories of good times with family and friends.

"For many people, Mt. Major was the first hike, and they hike it again and again, and with their children and grandchildren," said Don Berry, president of the Lakes Region Conservation Trust.

When Berry was growing up, his family spent summer vacations at a camp on Winnipesaukee's Alton Bay, and he remembers



# Protecting the *everybody* Mountain

the excitement of hiking Mt. Major as a kid of 6 or 7 with his sister and friends. The fathers took the kids up, and one of the neighbor girls brought a mirror with her and used it to send a signal down to her mom back at the lake.

"She used the mirror to catch the sunlight and flash a signal that we made it to the top," Berry said.

This sense of a shared experience, with Mt. Major as the magnet drawing people back, shows the social side of this place. The summit is small enough to invite hellos among fellow hikers and friendly conversations about the view, the trails, the weather. It's the tie that binds members of the groups that come up from schools, camps, churches, clubs and groups of hiking friends.

Chris Vinciguerra was walking down the trail one afternoon in July with his friends from Portsmouth, who had all climbed Mt. Major for the first time way back in elementary school.

"Mr. Shelton was the gym teacher. I came up with him and my fourth grade class," Vinciguerra said. "It was such a memorable experience—I even remember which socks I was wearing because that day was awesome."

While Mt. Major serves as an introduction to hiking and the glories of the natural world for many, it is also something of a mountain of youth for seasoned local hikers who have adopted it as a rewarding experience that doesn't require a long drive to the White Mountains.

Art Richardson, 70, of Alton, climbs Mt. Major six days a week, and not just once but several times a morning, often joined by like-minded friends. "Every time I see the sunrise, it's a little different," said Richardson, while standing on a granite slab midway up the mountain one morning and watching a shockingly orange sun rise over Alton Bay.

Richardson is up and down the mountain twice before a lot of us have had breakfast. He said he's met most of his friends on the trails.

"I love this mountain. It just seems to have it all," Richardson said. "The hiking experience, the friendships, the beauty, the fresh air, the great views. It's all here."

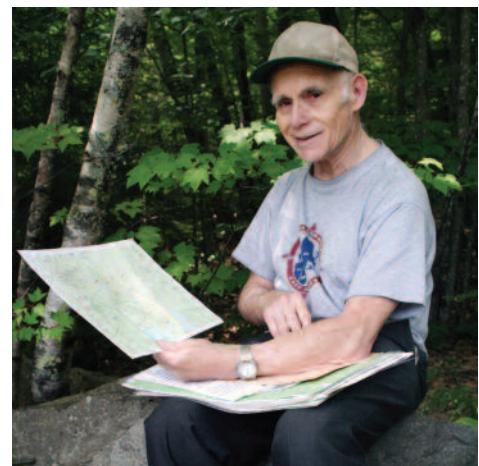
The close ties people have developed with Mt. Major have been possible only because of the generosity of the current and former landowners who have allowed hikers to cross their private properties on the way to the state-owned summit.

There are no guarantees for the future, and when realizing that access could one day be cut off if the land isn't conserved, most hikers react like Vinciguerra: "It would be a terrible, terrible loss to this area and to everyone who comes to visit."

Mt. Major is many things to many people: the source for health and wellness, the first real hike, the inspiration for a love of nature, a place to make memories with family and friends. The successful completion of the current conservation effort will ensure that the experience so near to the hearts of so many will continue, and the traditions will endure. ¶

# Protecting the *everybody* Mountain

Dave Roberts, shown holding some of his trail maps, inspired conservation groups, including the Forest Society, to form the Belknap Range Conservation Coalition.



## A Teacher-Turned-Explorer Can't Help but Show the Way

Dave Roberts honored as Forest Society's Conservationist of the Year

By Brenda Charpentier

Exquisite waterfalls, gorges, caves, boulders, views, flumes, remnants of a quarry, an iron mine and farms: If there's a beautiful natural feature—or an interesting man-made one—in the Belknap Range, Dave Roberts has found it.

Few people know the Belknap Range as well as Roberts, 78, a retired teacher from Farmington who dedicated himself to exploring the range after retiring 23 years ago. And he shared his discoveries in true explorer fashion—detailed maps. His were the first comprehensive hiking trail maps of the range, given to local libraries to share as long as they only charged what it cost to reproduce them.

"I found lots of views that you didn't know of before," Roberts said in a recent interview. "I knew a few people equally avid about the

beauty of the natural world. I figured there must be others like us."

Turns out there were many others like them, and Mt. Major and the Belknaps have grown increasingly popular as destinations for not only hiking but also snowmobiling, horseback riding, hunting and skiing. All along the way, Roberts, a volunteer director of the Belknap Range Conservation Coalition (BRCC) since its inception in 2006, has encouraged others to explore and conserve the land by sharing his discoveries and his maps. He may have retired from the classroom, but he never stopped being a teacher.

"If you're going to have a world that's nice to live in, you're going to have to have folks who are really enthusiastic about being out in it. Then they'll make an effort to contribute to its

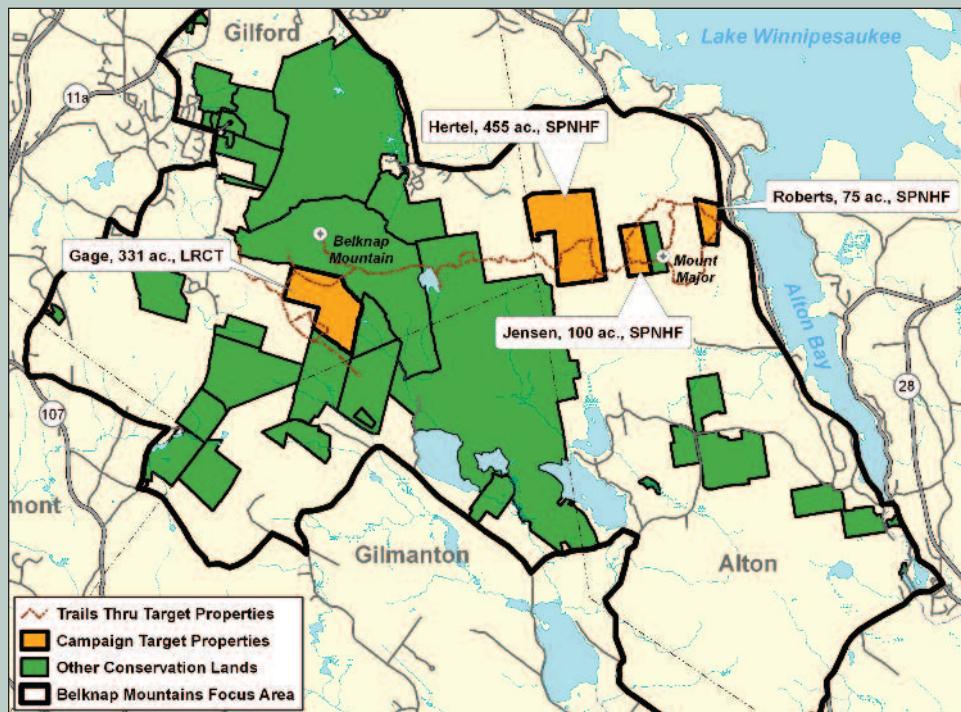
protection," he said.

The Forest Society honored Roberts for his own enthusiasm and efforts by presenting him with the 2013 Conservationist of the Year award at the society's Annual Meeting Sept. 28 in Meredith.

"With his vision and persistence, Dave inspired others to discover and appreciate the trails and treasures of the Belknap Range and—following his lead—to work to protect them," said Jane Difley, Forest Society president/forester, when presenting the award.

Roberts' clever method of getting people to care about the Belknaps was to put into their hands maps that would enable them to experience the range for themselves.

Some of his maps read like treasure hunts,



## The "Everybody Hikes Mt. Major" Project

The Forest Society and the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) have agreements with four landowners to purchase and protect four tracts of land—about 950 acres—in the Belknap Range. The partnership seeks to raise \$1.8 million by Dec. 1 to close on the properties. Two of the tracts are on Mt. Major. One encompasses the summit and slopes of East Quarry Mountain, and one is on Piper and Belknap mountains.

The Belknap Range features large, as-yet unfragmented forests covering more than a dozen mountains in the towns of Alton, Gilford, Gilmanton and Belmont. Extensive trail systems offer opportunities for hunt-

with abbreviations marking features worth finding: BF for boulder fields, RF for rockfall, C for boulder caves. One of his most utilized maps was one that helped hikers traverse the entire range, from Belknap Mountain to Mt. Major.

"A true aficionado of the Belknaps has to take the cross-range hike," Roberts said. "I made an entire map to allow them to do that with some ease."

Before his map, there was only one trail, "and not a very handsome one," said Roberts. He drew a line on his map that takes hikers to the top of East Quarry and West Quarry mountains along what is now known as "the Quarry Trail," named for the abandoned granite quarry there, and to the top of Mt. Klem, for "some of the best views of Lake Winnipesaukee around."

Since much of the land on Mt. Major and the Belknaps is private, Roberts always included a note somewhere on his maps, encouraging hikers to use the land "with great care and respect." (The "Everybody Hikes Mt. Major" campaign seeks to buy four of these private properties in order to keep them open to the public.)

The BRCC provides a new Belknap Range map now, dedicated to Roberts, that features the most clearly marked trails. The Forest Society has printed a tough, waterproof version showing Belknap Range trails on one side and

Mt. Major and Gunstock Mountain trails on the other and is sending it as a thank-you gift to donors who give \$50 or more to the campaign.

Roberts had already hiked the 4,000-footers in the White Mountains when he decided to focus on the Belknaps as a retirement project. They were closer to his Farmington home than the White Mountains and he was already familiar with Mt. Major, which was close to the W. Alton camp his family had when he was a boy. He realized that, with the exception of Gunstock Mountain and its recreation area, there were many other peaks, brooks and valleys in the 31,665-acre range that weren't well known and represented something of an undiscovered country.

He started by following the brooks in the range, carefully noting the locations of waterfalls, gorges and flumes while roaming.

"I'm much more contented off the trails than on them," he said. "There was always the excitement of discovery. And there's a comfort in knowing your landscape."

Roberts also researched the range to learn more about odd or interesting relics he found: a charcoal kiln, leftovers from an iron ore mine, cellar holes and logging remnants. He consulted libraries as well as old-timers who knew of some of the first families in the area and how they used the land.

One of the stories he uncovered was how George Phippen, one-time owner of the Mt. Major summit before it became state property, built the peculiar stone structure there as a hiking shelter. Phippen, who lived in Florida but summered in the Lakes Region, hired a local farmer and his horse for the project in 1925 (See Roberts's account on page 8).

"I think his interest was in serving the hiking public," Roberts said.

It originally had a wooden roof—actually two roofs, both of which blew off during winter storms. The second roof landed—intact—about 200 yards down the slope toward Alton Bay, where it remains to this day, well hidden in the woods.

"It would have been nice to have been there (to see it sail off), but you probably would have traveled right with the roof," Roberts said.

After so many years of appreciating Mt. Major himself, Roberts sees its popularity as a means to an end.

"There are some people for whom hiking Mt. Major is a tradition, and some people for whom it's becoming a tradition, and that's good. That means they'll respect it," Roberts said. "These folks fell in love with the natural world as a result of this experience, and we can use that kind of influence. And it's good for the spirit. It's been good for mine, anyway." ▶



The 331-acre tract for sale in the Moulton Valley of Gilford contains old-growth forest, uncommon natural communities and geologic formations, wetlands and recreation trails. To experience this property first-hand, join us for a guided hike on Oct. 19 (see page 23 for details). Photo by Rick Van de Poll.

ing, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. Besides their recreational, scenic and habitat value, these forests protect the water quality of Lake Winnipesaukee.

At the range's eastern end, Mt. Major beckons as one of the most popular hikes in New Hampshire. By purchasing these four properties, the Forest Society and LRCT can ensure continued access to this beautiful region for future generations. ▶

If you would like to join with us to protect Mt. Major and the Belknaps, please donate online at [www.forestsoc.org](http://www.forestsoc.org) or use the mail-in form at the back of this Forest Notes. For a donation of \$50 or more, we'll send you a thank-you gift of a waterproof map of hiking trails in the Belknap Range. Thank you!



on the air



Inside the NHPR production studio, left to right: Rick Ganley, *Morning Edition* host, Dave Anderson, Forest Society education director, and Andrew Parrella, NHPR production director.



Chris Martin



Rosemary Conroy



Francie Von Mertens

# Nature News on the Radio

For 15 years, *Something Wild* has informed and entertained on NHPR

There aren't too many radio stations where you might hear the hoot of an owl or the slap of a beaver tail, let alone a snippet of insight into the natural world. *Something Wild*, a weekly feature on N.H. Public Radio (NHPR), is something special.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the show, a partnership of NHPR, The Forest Society and the Audubon Society of New Hampshire. Each week, *Something Wild* presents a 2-minute explanation of N.H.-specific natural history, seeking to help people understand and appreciate what they see and hear in their backyards

and the local landscape. Wildlife, plants, stone walls, forests, rivers—all aspects of the outdoors are explored on the show. It airs each Friday at 8:35 a.m. during *Morning Edition* and repeats each Sunday at 10 p.m. during *Living On Earth*.

*Something Wild* is one of NHPR's longest running programs, said Betsy Gardella, NHPR's president and CEO. "In a state that is passionate about the environment and deeply interested in the beauty and science of the natural world, *Something Wild* delights our thousands of listeners every Friday morning and Sunday night," she said.

Over the past decade and a half, writers and on-air hosts Rosemary Conroy and Dave Anderson have created these audio postcards for the Forest Society. Their counterparts at the Audubon Society have included Iain MacLeod and Scott Fitzpatrick, and the current team of Francie Von Mertens (script writer) and Chris Martin (host).

To celebrate the 15th anniversary, we delved into the *Something Wild* archives to find samples of autumn-themed shows that are too good not to share in print. We hope you enjoy reading them as much as we did.

Tune in to listen to *Something Wild* on Fridays at 8:30 a.m. during *Morning Edition* and Sundays at 10 p.m. during *Living On Earth*. To listen anytime or to sample an audio archive of past *Something Wild* features, visit the *Something Wild* page on the NHPR website, [www.nhpr.org](http://www.nhpr.org).



## Fallen Apples

By Dave Anderson

— AIR DATE: SEPT.13, 2013 —

*The pasture apple tree is laden with fruit, but not for long.* Photo by Dave Anderson.

Robert Frost's poem "Unharvested" begins:

A scent of ripeness from over a wall.  
And come to leave the routine road  
And look for what had made me stall,  
There sure enough was an apple tree  
That had eased itself of its summer load,  
And of all but its trivial foliage free ...

Closer to home, birds rustle the leaves in the layered canopy of apple boughs overhead. Gaps in the leafy Sistine Chapel ceiling fresco reveal puffy, white clouds against a deep-blue, late summer sky.

The upper boughs of these—my favorite trees—are heavy with apples ripening in the September sun. Soon, apples will begin to fall, hitting the ground with a hollow thud. Everywhere sweet windfalls will litter the orchard floor. They'll lie broken and bruised, their soft brown flesh gone mealy.

I'll pick through the firmest fruit to find most are flecked with brown scabs of apple rust or black, powdery mildew. Only a rare few will have ripened to perfection, fallen, bounced and rolled to rest resplendent in the green grass.

But be careful before you bite one! They're riddled with hidden hornet and ant tunnels. By night, the deer, coyotes and a bear will visit to crunch and slurp sweet apple slurry. Sheep that formerly inhabited these pastures always enjoyed fallen apples as a supplement to the monotony of pasture grass. I'll imagine a ghost herd of them.

The season of falling apples and longer nights has arrived. Soon the last early Macs will rot and dissolve in the morning frost. Speaking of Frost, he ends his poem:

... The ground was one circle of solid red.  
May something go always unharvested!  
May much stay out of our stated plan,  
Apples or something forgotten and left,  
So smelling their sweetness would be no theft.



# on the air

**M**igration is in the air, and with it monarch butterflies, true royalty not just of the insect world, but of migration, too. Monarchs show up in New Hampshire in July as migrants completing the last stage of a long journey. It's a journey their grandparents, or great-grandparents began.

Monarchs by the millions spend the winter in a few forested mountain sites in Mexico. In March, they stir from winter torpor with flight that sounds like a mass of rustling leaves. Soon the journey north begins. This generation completes the first stage. They die soon after reaching the Gulf Coast of Texas and, most importantly, milkweed. That's where females lay their eggs to produce the next generation of migrants north.

Spring through summer, a monarch butterfly lives only a month or so. Then, right about now in fact, along comes the super-generation that will survive through the winter, eight months or so. These are the migrant marathoners that fly thousands of miles back to Mexico.

When you see monarchs high overhead or sipping nectar in local gardens and wildflower fields, you are witnessing one of the most impressive migrations of all. In late summer, days grow shorter, nights colder, and milkweed yellows with age. Monarchs know it's time to go. And they know where to go, to a forested region in Mexico, a veritable pinprick on the global map. Next March this super-generation will stir, soon to begin the first stage of the journey north.

Monarch butterflies have a large and dedicated fan club. Southerners plant milkweed and northerners tend butterfly gardens. And we take our hats off as the monarchs of migration pass by, wishing them well on their most impressive journey south.

## The 'Super Generation' of Monarchs

Written by Francie Von Mertens

Read on air by Chris Martin

— AIR DATE: SEPT. 18, 2009 —



*Monarch butterflies may look fragile, but the "super monarchs" of fall are tough enough to fly to Mexico. Photo by Dfikar/Dreamstime.com .*

## Love That Leaf Litter

By Rosemary Conroy  
— AIR DATE: OCT. 11, 2002 —



Leaves: a forest's nutrient-rich mulch.

Photo by iStockphoto.com/temmuzcan.

**M**ost of the time, conservationists think litter is bad. Except when it's *leaf* litter. Leaf litter is really cool stuff and, in my opinion, way under appreciated.

Walk into any patch of woods and look down, and you'll see twigs, decaying leaves, and dirt—the visible components of leaf litter. This is, believe it or not, the richest part of our natural communities.

That's because so much happens there—basically the life of the forest begins and ends in the leaf litter. Every plant large and small germinates, takes root, and grows supported by its complex web of life.

And when those plants die, they are recycled. This is one of the leaf litter's key roles—with the help of its microscopic fungi and insects, it breaks down organic matter to be reused by other plants and animals.

Without that efficient recycling system, life on this planet could not survive for long. But unfortunately, many people do not realize

how important leaf litter is and spend a lot of time trying to get rid of it.

For example, at this time of year, many homeowners rake perfectly good leaves into plastic bags and then deposit them in garbage dumps.

Those leaves will never break down into nutrients that can be re-taken up by a growing maple or oak tree. And so that tree will then clean that much less air, and help filter that much less water and support that much less wildlife.

All so our surroundings will look ever more tidy.

It is ironic that carefully manicured lawns and gardens have become a sign of wealth when you consider how biologically impoverished such landscapes really are.

So do your part—dump those leaves where they can break down naturally. Become a litter bug—a LEAF litter bug, that is.

## Bird Song Symphony Reprise

By Dave Anderson  
— AIR DATE: SEPT. 11, 2009 —

**T**he southern migration of New Hampshire songbirds is under way. With breeding and chick-rearing duties fulfilled, colorful breeding plumages molt to drab fall colors, creating confusion in identification of fall warblers.

Birds that once carefully defended spring breeding territories now abandon them, and are much less fussy about their habitat choices. In springtime, a Black-throated Blue Warbler insists on setting up housekeeping in a rich hardwood forest. In the fall, you are just as likely to find them in a parking lot in Manchester.

Researchers recently discovered that songbirds also adopt a more leisurely pace during the fall migration as compared to spring. Researchers mounted miniature tracking devices on woodthrushes and purple martins breeding in Pennsylvania to

track the birds' autumn migration to South America and their subsequent return to North America.

The data showed that songbird migration rates are two to six times faster in spring than in fall. A purple martin that took 43 days to reach Brazil in the fall returned to its breeding colony in only 13 days the following spring, when hurrying north to claim the best real estate.

A nostalgic autumn sound is a faint reprise of the spring songbird symphony. In response to falling light and falling hormone levels, birds sing a fragmented farewell. Amid metallic call notes—chips and ticks of feeding and location calls—are occasional snippets of song, recognizable, even if raspy and partially-rendered.

The diagnostic song of a white-throated sparrow is often reprised briefly on autumn



A woodthrush hunts for invertebrates on the forest floor. Photo by Sandi Mitchell/Dreamstime.com.

mornings by fledgling adolescent males practicing, with voices cracking, an imitation of the parental song they imprinted upon as nestlings.

Their quavering notes are a bittersweet parting; more sweet than bitter.



# on the air



## Goshawk Vs. Chickens

By Rosemary Conroy

— AIRDATE: OCT. 20, 2006 —

*Playing dead (convincingly) helped this free-range chicken escape from a goshawk determined to dine on poultry. Photo by Rosemary Conroy.*

**G**oshawks. The ancient Persians called them Baz Nama—“King Hawk.” Attila the Hun wore one on his helmet to scare his enemies. Carl Linnaeus labeled it “Accipiter gentilis”—the noble seizer. An interesting play on words.

So you can see why I was excited when a goshawk landed right outside my office window recently. It was a big beautiful female—feathered steely gray with fierce blood red eyes.

The only problem was that this magnificent seizer had ahold of one of my Silver-laced Wyandottes. My free-range chicken was about to become hawk hash!

An interesting dilemma: the naturalist in me was oohing and ahhing over the close proximity to this rather elusive winged predator. The farmer in me was a bit upset, to say the least, about the predicament of my poor hen. What to do? Well, when in doubt, document: I grabbed a camera and began clicking away.

This unnerved the goshawk and it took off. The hen, to my great surprise, leaped up with a loud squawk and ran for cover. She'd been playing dead—and quite convincingly, I must say.

Nevertheless, the accipter was bound to be back. One of our largest woodland hawks, this round-winged, long-tailed predator is more common now than 50 years ago. As all our farmland grew back into forests, it created great habitat for goshawks—and their numerous prey.

When not picking off their domesticated distant cousins, goshawks dine on wild animals as big as woodchucks and as small as shrews.

Unfortunately, that particular predator was set on a chicken dinner. She later picked off one of my oldest New Hampshire Reds. Sad, yes, but I tried to see it his way: That earthbound old biddy is now part of a majestic goshawk. Not too many chickens get such a grand finale.

## Don't Blame the Goldenrod

Written by Francie Von Mertens

Read on air by Chris Martin

— AIR DATE: AUG. 21, 2011 —

**A**s fall, the golden season, approaches, there's a wildflower that leads the way. Note that I said "wildflower," not "weed." I speak in defense of goldenrod.

As some eyes grow itchy and noses runny, goldenrod often is blamed.

But it's airborne pollen that causes allergies . . . pollen from some trees, some wildflowers, and all the grasses.

Flowers that depend on insects—not air—for pollination can be told by their bright colors or strong scent. All the better to lure insects in. Goldenrod pollen is large and sticky, well designed to attach to visiting insects, including honeybees. Goldenrod nectar is a key ingredient in late-summer honey.

The allergy villain this time of year is ragweed, dull of color and lacking scent, with lightweight, barely visible pollen designed to be carried by the wind.

Goldenrod comes in a wide variety of species, from subtle to showy, with hundreds of tiny golden flowers on each plume. Some of our showier native species have been added to celebrated perennial gardens in England.

Its Latin name, *Solidago*, meaning to strengthen or make whole, comes from its history as an herbalist's cure-all. In Colonial times, roots, flowers and leaves were shipped back to England by the boatload. During the American Revolution, colonists drank tea from goldenrod leaves to replace tea from England.

Later in American history, dyes from its flowers added one of the few bright colors to a prairie pioneer's wardrobe.

In closing, I can't resist saying that these lovely, under-appreciated wildflowers are nothing to sneeze at. Indeed, at one time, goldenrod concoctions probably treated sneezing and wheezing. And today they remain a tonic in another way—for human eyes as they grace the natural landscape. ☺



*Goldenrod plumes are more beauty than beast and certainly nothing to sneeze at.*

Photo by Brenda Charpentier.

*Pine Tree Shillings, featuring a tall pine and the colonial spelling of Massachusetts, are valued at anywhere from \$750 to \$63,000, depending on their condition, variety and survival rate. Many experts believe that large planchet Pine Tree Shillings like this one were struck by a rocker press. A strip of sterling silver was fed into the press's rollers, which stamped the coin's images on both sides. The coin was then cut out using metal shears.*



# The Subtly Subversive Pine

Colonial America's first coins honored trees, not British authority

By Wendy Beattie

Tall white pines tower above other trees in New England forests and have roots that run deep in history. In fact, pine trees were among the earliest designs used on some of America's first coins—the silver Pine Tree Shillings.



A collection of these historic coins is on display at Littleton Coin Company, in Littleton, N.H. Collector/numismatist David Sundman, president of Littleton Coin, calls them one of the nation's most interesting coins.

"The Pine Tree Shilling is steeped in our region and the nation's early history," Sundman said. "When I hold one, it's like holding history in my hand. You can't help but wonder who used it and for what purposes."

A small group of Pine Tree Shillings found some 135 years ago in Exeter, N.H., attest to their importance in New England's colonial economy and the area's development as a trade center. As a worker moved sand in the 1870s, he uncovered 30 to 40 Pine Tree and

other Massachusetts shillings, named in the British tradition for coins valued at one-twentieth of a pound. The box that held them had mostly rotted away, leaving behind the silver coins.

## A symbol of economic strength

When New Hampshire's first colonists arrived in 1623, they took note of the tall white pines along the riverbanks. Standing 150 to more than 200 feet tall, with few branches, these trees were perfect for ship's masts and spars. By 1634, Portsmouth sent its first shipment of masts to England. The tall trees played an important part in the colony's trade, and today some roads in New Hampshire bear the name "mast road" for the trail once used to drag the

*David Sundman, president of Littleton Coin Company, displays his collection of Pine Tree Shillings at the company's offices in Littleton. The coins were minted in pre-Revolutionary America and honor white pines, which were highly valued for building ship masts.* Photo by Stephanie Westover.

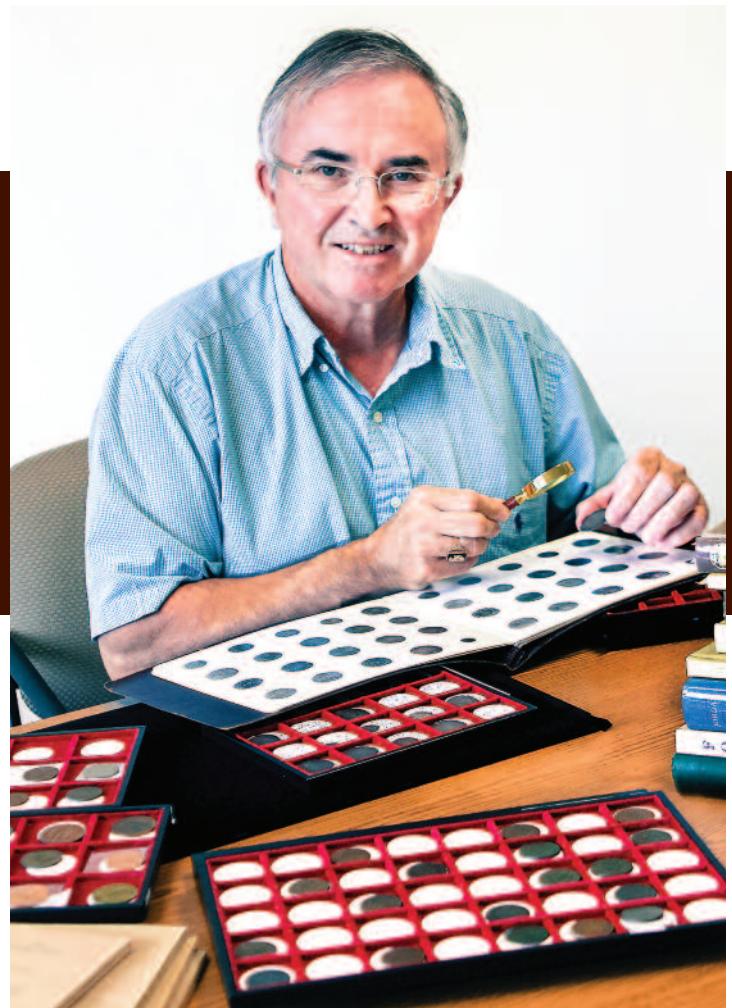
huge pines to the water. Boats sailed from New England ports carrying timber, furs and fish to trade. But the colonies lacked “hard” money—gold and silver coins, hampering their ability to buy English and European goods to use at home.

In the mid-1600s, Massachusetts and New Hampshire shared the same royal governor. However, the right to strike coins was a right of kings, long considered a symbol of power and authority. And in 1652, England was a commonwealth and had no king—Charles I had lost his head a few years earlier. That’s where Yankee ingenuity came into play. In May of that year, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony boldly authorized Boston silversmith John Hull and his partner, Robert Sanderson, formerly of New Hampshire, to set up a mint to strike America’s first coins. The pair began minting sometime in September, at a building located on Hull’s Boston property, near present-day Downtown Crossing.

America’s first silver shillings simply displayed “ne” for New England, but within a year, their designs evolved to show trees. After all, what would the upstart New Englanders show on their coins? Certainly not the king! First came the willow tree, then oak and finally the pine. Possibly Hull and Sanderson chose trees to decorate the obverses (head sides) of their coins to further thumb their noses at England. Trees were familiar, a valuable export, one the Royal Navy depended upon, and none more so than the white pine.

### The “king’s pine”

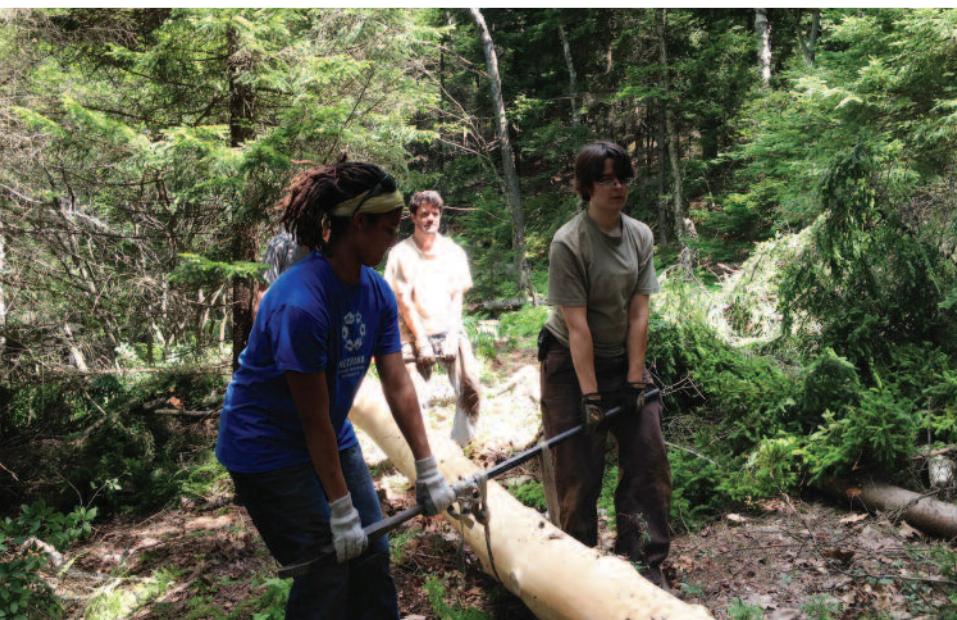
England took note that the New England colonists were producing ships and high quality marine supplies, and officials became concerned about the availability of future timber supplies for the crown. Most old-growth trees in England suitable for shipbuilding had been cut during the Middle Ages, and the country imported wood from the Baltic countries, competing with other European nations. English shipyards and the Royal Navy used thousands of trees to build ships, and New England’s forests filled with white pines provided a ready supply. The king appointed men



to survey all the forests in the colony near navigable waterways then select the best trees for the crown. The tallest and straightest pines were marked for masts, becoming the “king’s pine.”

Pine Tree Shillings of 1667-1682 were the final designs in America’s first coin series. The obverses show the pine standing tall and straight, with the colony’s name “masathvsets” (Massachusetts) surrounding it. The reverse (tail side) bears the date 1652, the denomination, and the words “new england,” surrounding it. Earlier Massachusetts Bay coinage struck by Hull and Sanderson also bears the 1652 date, even though the mint operated from 1652-1682/83. Perhaps once again displaying a subversive cleverness, the colonists “froze” the date to a year when England was a commonwealth, without a king. Using this date gave the appearance that the Massachusetts Bay coins had been struck “legally” at a time when there was no monarch.

Eventually in 1660, England got its monarchy back, and King Charles II clamped down on the rebellious colony by revoking its charter. More than a century would pass before America would again issue its own coins, this time under the federal government of the United States. But Pine Tree Shillings had made their mark. Like the tree found on the coin, they tower above others in America’s coinage history. ¶



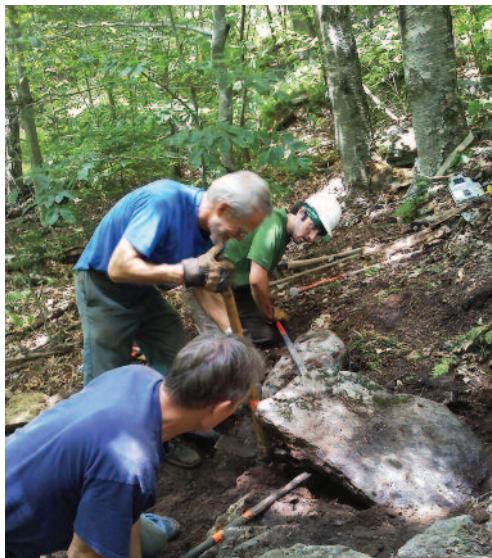
## 'The Time Just Flew By'

Improving Monadnock's trails in a 5-day blitz took brawn, humor . . . and lots of doughnuts

**M**onadnock Trails Week brought together 82 volunteers for five days of trail work from July 12-16. It was the best turnout in the history of the event, with volunteers logging 1,027 hours on the mountain, improving the hiking experience for all who will visit in the coming year.

One of those volunteers was first-timer Jackie Stetser, a Forest Society volunteer land steward for Cottrell Place in Hillsboro who decided to give Monadnock Trails Week a try—despite some initial trepidation. Following is an excerpt from Stetser's blog ([www.monadnockfilm.com.](http://www.monadnockfilm.com/))

*Clockwise from top, left:  
Campers from Camp Wa-Klo get ready to head out for some trail work on the White Dot Trail; Volunteers Ed Scott, Mike Zlogar, and Ray Jackson (left to right, forefront) maneuver a large rock on the Fairy Springs Trail using a trail winch called a gripohist; A large timber is moved using many hands. Left to right, volunteers Katherine Ketter, Joe Terry, and Benny Wheat get a workout on the Sidefoot Trail; Land steward Len Martin (left) and Forest Society forester Wendy Weisiger peel a freshly cut spruce log for use as a trail drain on the Sidefoot Trail.*



## Trail Work

By Jackie Stetser

Maybe it was the word “work.” I don’t know. I just wasn’t sure that I wanted to get involved. I wasn’t sure that I wanted to turn my favorite fun activity into work. I did not know if I was strong enough to do all the work. What if I’m asked to move rocks, I wondered? Heavy rocks are not what I want to be moving!

John Bigl (land steward for the Monadnock Reservation) put me at ease, letting me know that I had options on what I would be doing. A group of 11 of us worked on building the bridge on the Parker Trail. We raked, cut back brush and branches and created a new section of trail. John (Stetser, Jackie’s husband) worked with Dave Anderson (the Forest Society’s director of education and volunteers) carrying 16-foot-long planks for the bridge. We worked for six hours, and the time just flew by. We laughed, told stories and ate together.

I found that trail work is nothing to fear. It’s a great way to meet people who love nature, and give back to Mount Monadnock, my favorite place to both work and play!

State Park Manager Patrick Hummel recently wrote (in his Monadnock Weekly Report blog): “The touching part of our ongoing relationship with this mountain is that we, as a people, have also been there

*Left: Land steward Alan Cort (bottom) and Forest Society intern Andrew Lampron (far right) hold up a large rock with iron bars while Trailwrights volunteer Bruce Richards adjusts the soil underneath it. Photo by Wendy Weisiger.*

*Middle: Land steward John Bigl enjoys a well-deserved doughnut at the end of a long workday on the Parker Trail. Photo by Carrie Deegan.*

*Right: Aaron Horner (center) is still smiling on the Pumelly Trail after becoming the only volunteer to complete 10 consecutive days of Monadnock Trails Week (2012 and 2013). Photo by Wendy Weisiger.*

when Monadnock needed us. Monadnock needs us just as much as we need it; the mountain needs you. There is a continuous 130-year history of people and organizations fighting for this mountain. The Town of Jaffrey stood up and protected Monadnock from private enterprise and exploitation. The State of New Hampshire stepped up and protected Monadnock from private logging operations that would have stripped her eastern sides bare. The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests was not only there to save Monadnock from private housing developments, but it also has continued to conserve land as recently as 2012, protecting another 400 acres of our beloved peak.” (The Forest Society now owns more than 4,000 acres on Monadnock, leased to the State to run as a state park.)

Giving back to Monadnock was a special time for me. I’ll be back next year even stronger. I know that I’m capable of doing trail work. Actually, just about anyone could! I was able to stop when I was tired,

### VOLUNTEER-POWERED IMPROVEMENTS OF 2013

- New 16-foot footbridge over Ainsworth Brook
- Trail reroutes and brushing in of old trails
- Trail drainages scraped and cleaned
- New rock trail drainages created
- Streams cleared of jams and debris
- New 15-step rock staircase built
- Opening cleared of saplings
- 20-step rock staircase built at Jacob’s Ladder
- Bootleg sidetrails brushed in

and no one cracked a whip or brow beat me into doing more than I felt capable of doing. Yes, it was a very meaningful, fun day!

I left the state park knowing that I was a part of something important. ☺

# Sending Reminders of New Hampshire Across the Country and Around the World

By Meghan McCarthy McPhaul

**W**hen Alison Kee finds the tall cardboard box postmarked “The Rocks Estate” on her Oviedo, Fla., doorstep in December, she knows a bit of home has arrived for the holidays.

Like other folks living across the country and beyond who order their Christmas trees, holiday wreaths and maple syrup through The Rocks’ mail order system, Kee looks forward to the arrival of that slice of New Hampshire each year.

“Living in Florida is especially difficult during Christmastime,” says Kee, who grew up down the road from The Rocks in Bethlehem, N.H., but moved south in 2001 with her husband, Jim. “By ordering our tree from The Rocks, we are able to bring a little of New Hampshire into our house when it is still 65 degrees outside, and it feels a little more like home.”

While choose-and-cut and tag-your-own (see next page) are the mainstays of The Rocks’ Christmas tree business, this tree farm and Forest Society North Country Conservation and Education Center ships some 250 fir trees and 500 holiday wreaths—plus ornaments, accessories and maple goodies—to homes near and far each year. Trees from The Rocks have been shipped to each of the 50 United States and, through the national Trees for Troops program, to military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For Fred and Gale Tobbe of Northwood, N.H., sending wreaths from The Rocks to family and friends has become a holiday tradition—and a way to support the Forest Society.

“We absolutely love the Forest Society,” said Gale Tobbe. “We really don’t have time to volunteer, so this is one way we can contribute, by sending wreaths all over.”

Rob Carter ordered a few hundred quarts of Rocks Estate maple syrup to give as holi-



Carleen Quinn packs a shipping box with maple products made at The Rocks Estate, the Forest Society’s Christmas tree farm and North Country Conservation and Education Center in Bethlehem.

Photo by Nigel Manley.

day gifts to clients of his Washington, D.C.-based, online advertising company. He and his wife, Ronnie, and their two children also give syrup to friends and family members—and keep plenty for their own use as well.

“We thought we’d do something a little bit out of the ordinary but still meaningful, and it really created a happy sensation with our clients and customers,” Carter said. “We got a lot of compliments and a lot of notice from folks.”

For the Carters, giving Rocks syrup is really giving a gift from home; Rob is the great-great-grandson of John Jacob and Frances Glessner, who developed The Rocks Estate at the turn of the 20th Century. Rob spent the summers of his childhood in Bethlehem and still has family living in the area.

“We get to tell our friends here in Washington, D.C., that the maple syrup, which we call liquid gold, comes from my son’s

and daughter’s ancestral home in Bethlehem, New Hampshire,” Carter says.

Mail order customers at The Rocks may choose from a variety of sizes of Balsam and Fraser firs, including the popular Victorian Classic Christmas trees, which have a bit more of an open stature.

To help keep the holidays simple, orders may be placed in advance of the holidays, and customers can select the date they’d like their items to ship. Gale Tobbe always orders her wreaths in October, crossing one thing off her holiday to-do list early. The wreaths arrive like clockwork the first week of December.

“It’s so easy, and it gives so much joy,” Tobbe said. ¶

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Meghan McCarthy McPhaul is a freelance writer and award-winning author, as well as a member of the Forest Society. She's lucky enough to live close to The Rocks, where her family finds the perfect Christmas tree each year.

# Join Us for a Fall Hike in the Belknap Range

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events

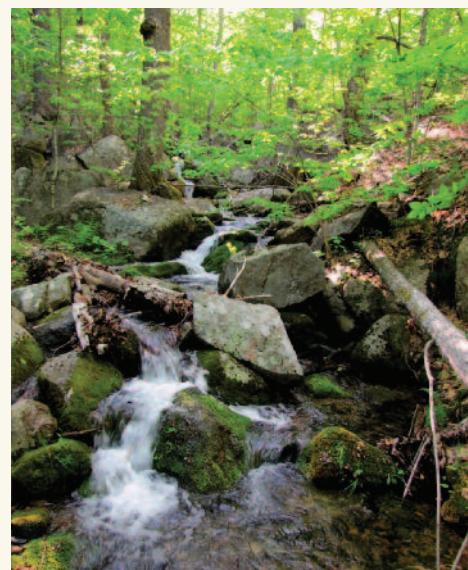


Photo by Rick Van de Poll.

SATURDAY, OCT. 19 | 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
(heavy rain date: Sunday October 20)

## Remote and Scenic Hike: Moulton Brook and Jail Pasture

*Belknap Range, Gilford*

Ecologist Rick Van de Poll conducted a comprehensive ecological inventory of the 331-acre Gage Parcel with its lesser known “Jail Pasture” and hidden natural features for the Lakes Region Conservation Trust and the Forest Society. He will co-lead this full-day, rugged and off-trail hike which will access the remote Moulton Brook Valley in the interior of the Belknap Range. The former summer cattle pastures and rocky talus slopes contain “old-growth” forests and other uncommon natural communities and are home to bear, coyotes, bobcat and moose as well as rare plants.

*Free. Co-sponsored by Lakes Region Conservation Trust and Belknap Range Conservation Coalition.*

*Difficulty: Rugged and strenuous, full day includes off-trails bushwhacking and steep terrain. Register at [signup@forestsoociety.org](mailto:signup@forestsoociety.org) or call (603) 224-9945.*

OCTOBER – DECEMBER

## Tag-Your-Own and Choose-and-Cut Christmas Trees

*The Rocks Estate, Bethlehem*

The Rocks is open to tag-your-own tree customers weekends through Oct. 20. Visitors are welcome to select a tree in the field and decorate it with personal flair, then return beginning Nov. 23 to cut and buy their tagged tree. The Rocks’ shops, featuring hand-made and unique holiday and gift items, will be open weekends after Nov. 23 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

For tree seekers who want to cut their own Christmas tree or select one from the retail lot at The Rocks, the farm opens for the season Nov. 23 and will be open daily (except for Thanksgiving Day) through Dec. 24. Horse-drawn wagon rides are offered weekends through Dec. 21.

*For more information visit [www.TheRocks.org](http://www.TheRocks.org).*



## ART EXHIBITS

*These exhibits can be viewed Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm at the Conservation Center Conference Room, located at 54 Portsmouth Street in Concord, NH. As the Conference Room is also used for meetings, please call (603) 224-9945 before visiting to confirm that the room is open.*

OCTOBER

## Surface Designs of Caroline Liebenow

Caroline Liebenow of Nashua draws her inspiration from nature, international travels (including five years living in Finland), and an appreciation of French Provencal, English and Italian Renaissance motifs. She works in photography and graphic design, in addition to creating hand-decorated silks and velvets. For more information about her work, visit her website at [www.BlueCapeDesign.com](http://www.BlueCapeDesign.com).



*“Admiration,” by Caroline Liebenow.*



NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

## Pastel Paintings of Linda Dessaint

Linda Dessaint of Antrim expresses her deep love for the New England landscape through beautiful pastel paintings evoking the joy she finds in nature. She is a member of the New Hampshire Pastel Society, the Monadnock Area Art Association and the Pastel Painters of Maine (signature membership). For more information about her work, visit [www.lindadessaint.com](http://www.lindadessaint.com).

*“Secret Spot,” by Linda Dessaint.*



*The Lewis property in Columbia is mostly forested, with frontage along Roaring Brook and a beautiful hilltop vista. Photos courtesy of the Lewis family.*

## A Place for Outdoor Adventures, Wildlife Habitat

Family's easement in Columbia creates a linked landscape 65,000 acres strong

By Brenda Charpentier

**W**hen Carl Lewis was a kid growing up in Colebrook, the land his family owned seven miles away along Roaring Brook in Columbia was like a big, wild playground for hunting, hiking, fishing and swimming.

"My father would come home from work and I'd get home from school, and we'd head out. We spent a lot of time there," Lewis said.

Lewis and his wife Carole now live in Pembroke and own 295 acres of that same land in Columbia, visiting regularly for outdoor adventures with sons Matthew, 10,

and Nathan, 8. Mostly woods and brook frontage, the land rises up to beautiful hilltop views of the valley below and into Canada and Vermont. As a young couple, the Lewises intended to permanently protect the land but thought of it as something they would do "someday."

That day came quicker than they anticipated when they learned from a neighbor that their land was potentially in line with a string of Northern Pass land purchases that formed the utility's intended route for high-voltage transmission towers and lines through Coos County. They then learned

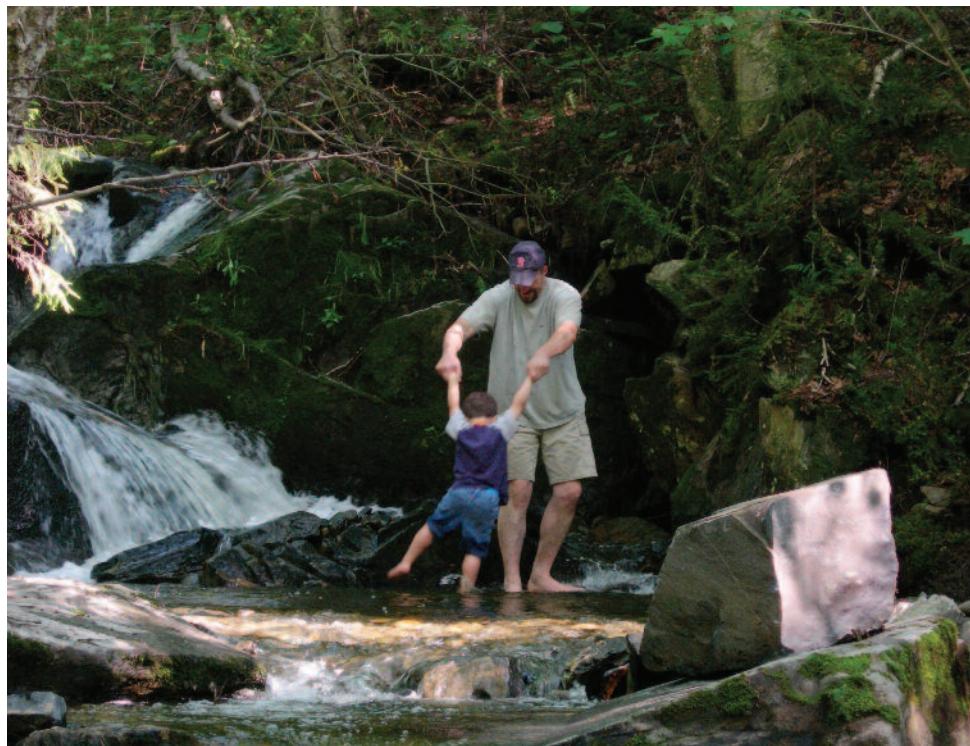


*Permanently protecting the land honors the memory of Carl Lewis's father, Darwin "Bud" Lewis, and the cherished times the two spent walking through the woods, hunting and fishing together.*



*Top: The Lewis family at home in Pembroke: Carole, Matthew, Carl and Nathan.*

*Bottom: Carl Lewis and his son Matthew cool off in Roaring Brook.*



that the Forest Society was working to block that intended route now and in the future by working with landowners to place conservation easements on several key tracts. Concerned about the detrimental aesthetics Northern Pass would bring to the area, as well as losses in property values for the region, the Lewises decided the time was

right to make sure their land remained unmarred forever.

“Everything I enjoy about the land they would ruin,” Lewis said.

The conservation easement protects the Lewis land not just from utility lines but also from future residential and commercial development. That protection carries

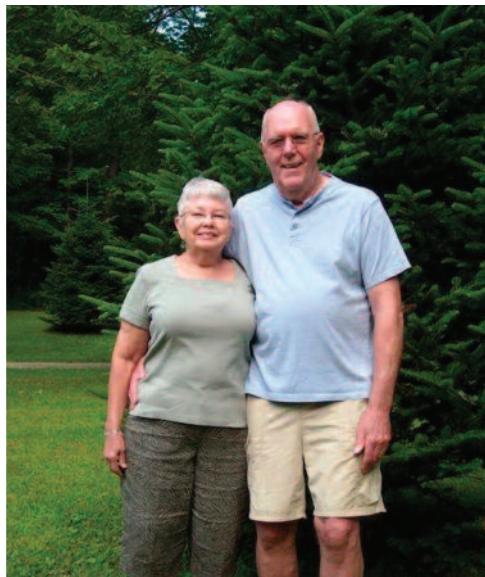
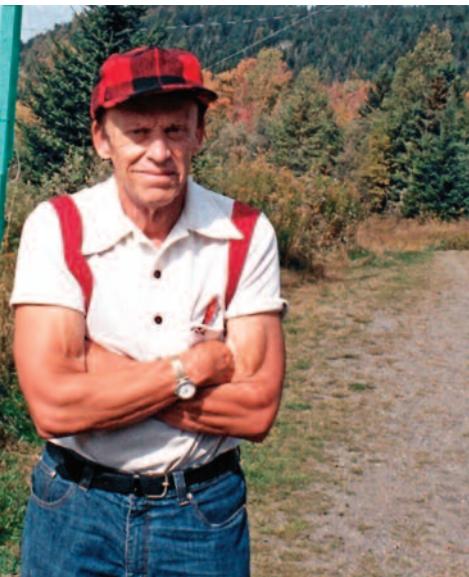
tremendous ecological benefits, because the Lewis land connects adjacent protected lands including the Balsams Wilderness and Nash Stream State Forest, creating a conserved landscape of more than 65,000 acres. Landscape connectivity is critical to wildlife species that require large, unfragmented habitat, such as pine marten, fisher, northern goshawk and Canada lynx.

“This property is incredibly important as a landscape linkage between existing conserved areas and for its natural resource values,” said Chris Borg, the Forest Society land protection specialist who worked closely with the Lewises. “The property essentially represents the headwaters for Roaring Brook, a tributary of the Mohawk River, so from a water-quality perspective this land’s protection contributes substantially to downstream users. The property also supports a wealth of plants and animals including at least a dozen neotropical migratory warbler species such as the declining Canada warbler.”

The Lewises often see evidence of the property’s habitat value first-hand. “While hiking, I’ve seen moose, fisher, fox and bear,” Lewis said.

Habitat, water quality, landscape integrity—they’re all reasons enough to conserve land, but there’s more. For Carl Lewis, the easement also protects forever the place that holds memories of his outdoorsman father Darwin “Bud” Lewis, who passed away in 1992.

“My dad was a real outdoorsman—hunting, fishing, trapping, he did it all,” Lewis said. “I spent a lot of time there with him, so the land has a lot of sentimental value for me.” ¶



**Left:** David Chase uses his 12-acre property as a woodlot. Rather than accept \$1 million offer for his land, he opted to permanently prevent utility lines on his property by virtue of an option for a conservation easement with the Forest Society.

**Middle:** Charley Morgan of Clarksville said he refused Northern Pass offers of a land swap because he's against a new power line corridor destroying the views and emitting electro-magnetic energy in Clarksville.

**Right:** Diane and Donald Bilodeau donated an easement on their 26 acres in Clarksville to make sure the land would stay open for northern harriers and closed to utility towers. The Bilodeaus and their grown children agreed, Donald Bilodeau said: "Don't sell for anything."

## The Unwilling

For these heroic North Country landowners, relationships with land and neighbors triumph over personal profit

By Brenda Charpentier

**I**t's been more than nine months since David Chase turned down Northern Pass's offer of \$1 million for his 12-acre woodlot in Clarksville he said was valued at \$32,000. He's had plenty of time to look back on his decision.

Does he have any regrets?

"No, I don't have any regrets. Everybody needs money, but money is not the end all," he said.

Instead of allowing his land to be used for a private high-voltage electricity line, Chase joined with several other Coos County land owners to work with the Forest Society to block Northern Pass's plan to erect transmission towers and lines through their scenic neighborhood. They have granted the Forest Society easements

or easement options on their land that prohibit utility towers and lines.

They could have simply said no to any Northern Pass offer, but easements stay with the land forever no matter who owns it in the future, and they send a clear message: not here, not ever.

Chase lives in Lancaster but has a portable sawmill on his Clarksville lot and cuts firewood for himself and others. He hopes to someday build a little camp there. He acknowledges that he may have considered the offer under different circumstances, but there was too much to lose by selling to Northern Pass.

His property is right across the road from his good friend Charley Morgan's house, and his gain would have been his friend's loss:

"Charley took me in when I got divorced. He gave me a place to live. If you were to put towers there (on his 12 acres), the line would go right next to his bedroom. There was no way I was going to be his friend if I sold out."

Northern Pass has spent an estimated \$45 million buying land for its transmission line, and utility officials often refer to working with "willing landowners." Chase and his neighbors count themselves among the unwilling.

Chase said he had multiple offers from Northern Pass over about a year and a half's time. At first, a man approached him when he was sitting on his sawmill and offered him double what his land was worth if he would agree to sell that day.

## The Forest Society thanks the following businesses for their generous support.

"I said no way, I have to think about this," Chase said.

Then, a realtor he had done business with in the past called representing Northern Pass and offering a land swap. His 12 acres for a parcel on a pond valued at \$112,000, more than three times the value of his piece. "I actually did go look at it. I was just curious. You needed a bulldozer to get to the place. I told her I'm not interested. She wanted to visit. I told her no, don't bother. She came anyway."

The next offer was \$300,000, Chase said. "I always told everybody my land is not for sale. They don't want to hear that. They just want to keep making more offers."

The certified letter that came next promised to be the final offer: \$1 million if he responded within 48 hours, Chase said.

"By then I had already started the easement. I knew what my final decision was going to be."

Being faced with such a decision makes you think hard about what you believe, what's important in life, he said.

"Northern Pass absolutely doesn't make sense. I don't believe it's right for New Hampshire. It's totally wrong."

Chase's friend Morgan has lived on his eight acres for the past 31 years. At 81 years old, he said he has no desire to live anywhere else and turned down Northern Pass's offers of land swaps. "I want to make 100 on this land and have them (the town) give me the Golden Cane," he said.

Currently, Northern Pass's preferred route would utilize land other neighbors have sold, so he would look at the towers and lines out his windows despite having an easement option on his own property. "It would go right in front of me, then go underground when it gets out of my view," he said. "It's mind-boggling."

Morgan's reasons for keeping Northern Pass off his land are many, but he especially doesn't like the thought of North Country people being treated like peons, stepped on by a giant corporation from Canada (Hydro Quebec, the private corporation behind the Northern Pass project).

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**Top:** Charley Morgan has owned his home on eight acres in Clarksville since 1982. If it is built as proposed, the Northern Pass transmission towers and lines would cut across this view from his home.

**Bottom:** The Bilodeau property is part of a former farm. If the current proposal from Northern Pass becomes reality, utility and towers would go up adjacent to their land, cutting across to the left of the building in the photo and then heading straight behind it. Photo by Donald Bilodeau.

"I hope we can completely stop this stuff. This is an economically depressed area. We don't need our tourism industry wiped out," he said.

Diane and Donald Bilodeau of Gilford protected their 26 acres along Route 145 and Wiswell Road in Clarksville by donating an easement because they love the land and wanted to do anything they could to save the incredible views near the vacation home Donald built in the late '80s.

"I can't tell you how many people stop their cars there on Route 145 to see that view. That's where the lines will be if Northern Pass goes through," Donald Bilodeau said.

The property is mostly meadows and fields. The Bilodeaus have it mowed regularly to protect grassland habitats needed by many birds like the northern harriers that come back to breed every year.

Northern Pass planners announced an adjusted route in response to opposition in

July, but the latest proposal won't do anything to mitigate the visual blight in Clarksville, Bilodeau said.

"The towers are all going to be visible from Route 145. That's what I don't understand. They sent out those brochures saying 'We listened.' Well, they didn't listen. They're going right there in front of everyone."

*"They (Northern Pass) sent out those brochures saying 'We listened.' Well, they didn't listen."*

— Clarksville landowner Donald Bilodeau

Turning away inquiries from Northern Pass representatives about selling their land was a testament to the strong ties to the land all members of the family feel, Bilodeau said.

"We could have made a lot of money," he said. "I have two grown daughters, and we're all in agreement: Don't sell for anything."

Nancy Dodge's home is just down the road from the 160-acre property she protected from transmission lines with an easement option, which gives the Forest Society the right to a future easement. Her land's north boundary marks the line between Clarksville and Stewartstown. An outspoken critic of Northern Pass and active letter-to-the-editor writer in the Colebrook Chronicle, Dodge said she and many of her neighbors wanted to do whatever they could to stop the lines and towers from getting from Stewartstown to Clarksville.

"All we have left up here is tourism," Dodge said. "Pretty much people come here because it's beautiful. It won't be beautiful with gigantic towers up here all over the place." ☀



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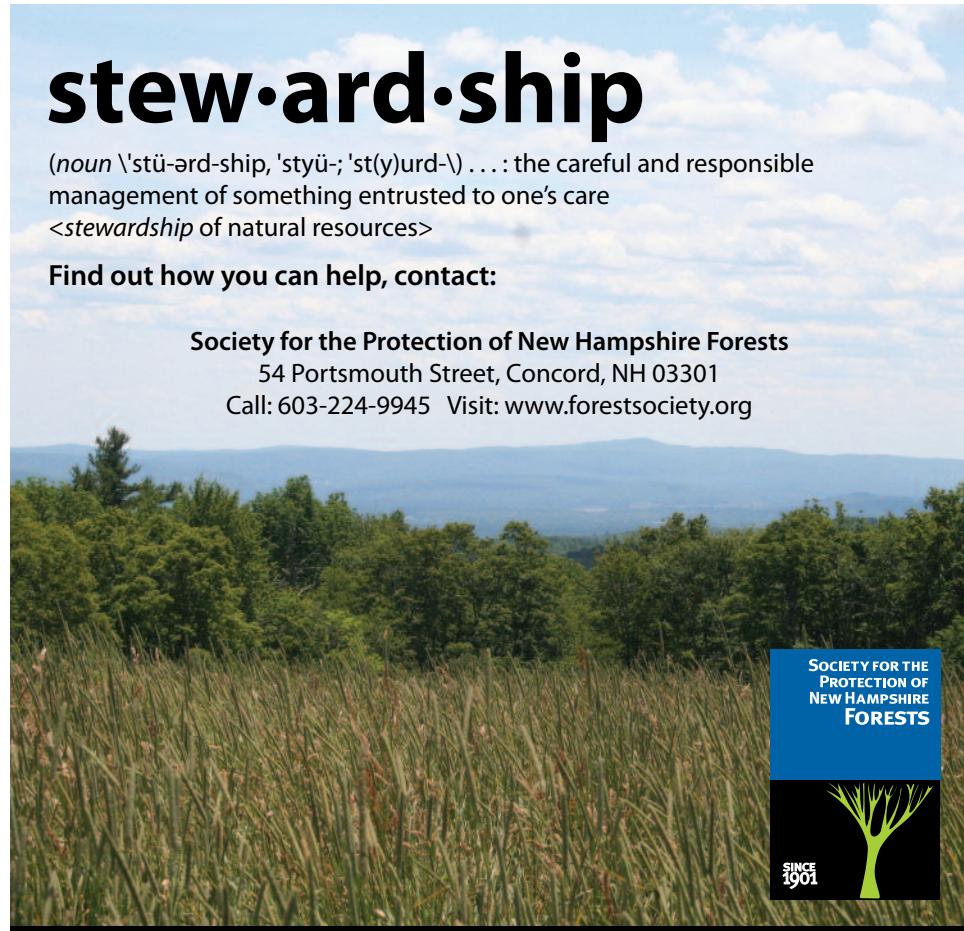
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*Above:* The Pennichuck conservation easement conserves 218 acres on the north side of Pennichuck Brook. The property features diverse wetlands habitats and hosts a great blue heron rookery. Photo by Mike Speltz.

*Left:* Great blue herons nest in colonies, preferring to build their nests toward the tops of trees in areas close to water. Photo by Gilles Malo/Dreamstime.com.

## Safeguarding the Water Supply for Southern New Hampshire ... and Herons

Pennichuck easement protects critical wetlands

By Mike Speltz

What do a couple of dozen great blue herons and their offspring, 85,000 residents of southern New Hampshire, and more than 100,000 state-endangered plants have in common? They can all breathe a huge sigh of relief.

The heron's rookery has been secured, the people's water supply has been secured, and the habitat of the aquatic plant *Bidens laevis* has been secured—all by the Forest Society's purchase of a conservation easement

on 218 acres on the north side of Pennichuck Brook, the boundary between the City of Nashua and the Town of Merrimack.

Most folks taking the Industrial Drive exit off the Everett turnpike these days are headed for the new Merrimack outlets (and a few head east to the Budweiser plant). However turning left on four-lane Continental Boulevard soon brings you past an extended length of chain link fence, erected by the Pennichuck Corporation to

protect its water supply land along Pennichuck Brook (Pennichuck supplies drinking water to the aforementioned 85,000 people from an intake just downstream from the newly protected land). Beyond the physical protection offered by the fence, Pennichuck worked with the Forest Society, the City of Nashua, and the Department of Environmental Services (DES) Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund program to add the permanent legal

protection of a conservation easement to the great majority of the property.

Natural resources on the property include stream banks, a white oak-red maple basin swamp, vernal pools, a 14-nest heron rookery, and more than 63 acres of wetlands ranging from forested to open water. The N.H. Wildlife Action Plan evaluates 95% of the property as Tier 1 (best in state) habitat.

The list of "... without whom this project would not have been possible" is lengthy. The Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund awarded the project the largest grant yet made since the DES program began. The Pennichuck Corporation staff were indispensable in assisting with project details supporting the completion of due diligence tasks, and working to meet DES requirements. The City of Nashua Conservation Commission supported the initiation of the project and the drafting of the grant request. The city staff, from Mayor Donnalee Lozeau to the financial and planning staffs, cooperated with DES to comply with numerous administrative requirements. John Patenaude, CEO of Pennichuck, provided personal leadership throughout the project to make things happen, both big and small. Wetland scientist Mark West documented the breadth and scope of natural resources on the property, and he will manage the restoration efforts that are an integral part of the project.

You can stand in the middle of this easement and still pick up traffic sounds. Or you can listen to the herons squabble over nesting territory, the "scree" of redwing blackbirds patrolling the wetlands, or the rustling of small mammals. In other words, we have a choice in considering whether the glass is half full or half empty.

Yes, there are eight lanes of traffic within earshot, mostly carrying consumers to buy things they may not need. But, whether those consumers realize they need it or not, we have secured their clean water in a world that has a fighting chance to retain its biodiversity—and maybe even survive the flooding that comes with a changing climate. ☺

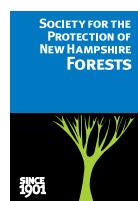
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# Back to Square One for Northern Pass?

Burial alternatives gaining steam

By Jack Savage

In Colebrook, toward the end of the fourth and final hearing held by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to get public input on what should be included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Northern Pass transmission line, retired librarian Francis Hayes rose from her seat. Supported by a walker, she slowly made her way to the podium, then turned to face the 350 people gathered in the school gymnasium.

"I'm almost 91 years old," she said. "I was born in Colebrook and lived here all my life. I want future generations to enjoy the same beauty I have enjoyed. I do not want to see beauty of this area destroyed by the towers of Northern Pass." The crowd gave her a standing ovation.

Francis Hayes is not alone in her sentiments. Of the 2,000 people who turned out to four DOE hearings, an estimated 1,700 are opposed to Northern Pass. Of the 188 people who spoke at the hearings, 153 spoke in opposition to the project while 35 spoke in favor.

And so it would appear that Northern Pass, the proposed 187-mile transmission



*Colebrook resident Francis Hayes, 91, brought the crowd to its feet at a Northern Pass scoping hearing Sept. 26.*

line that would drape two-thirds of New Hampshire with power lines on more than 1,500 towers, ended an active summer no further along than it was in March 2011, when a first round of DOE hearings yielded the same overwhelming opposition to the project.

If there is a difference between then and now, it is in the widening recognition that

burial of proposed transmission lines is in fact a viable option—at least if done so along transportation corridors. The Forest Society, among others, called on the DOE to include in the EIS an analysis of at least two burial alternatives for Northern Pass. Northern Pass, for its part, has maintained that complete burial of the proposed line would be too expensive—though they acknowledge that it is Hydro-Quebec who would foot the bill given that the line is for HQ's exclusive use to export electricity to the southern New England market.

In late June Northern Pass submitted to the DOE a revised application for a Presidential Permit, which it needs to cross the international boundary. This had been expected given that they had spent some \$40 million to buy out landowners in Pittsburg, Clarksville, and Stewartstown in an attempt to line up an overhead route after having lost the ability to use eminent domain. But the application is weakened considerably by presenting a route that is of questionable legality.

Given the steadfast refusal of key landowners to sell, the Forest Society's cam-

## NORTHERN PASS TIMELINE 2013

**February:** Forest Society closes on conservation easements, including 1,000 acres in Stewartstown owned by Rod McAllaster and family, permanently prohibiting transmission lines above or below ground.

**April:** Forest Society closes on the Lewis family easement in Columbia, blocking Northern Pass passage to the south of the conserved Balsams landscape.

**May:** Aware that Northern Pass was attempting to breach the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters easement in Stewartstown, Forest Society releases legal opinion noting the illegality of using that conserved land for a private, commercial power line such as Northern Pass.

**June:** Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D) and former Sen. Judd Gregg (R), co-author an op-ed making it clear that it would be inappropriate for Northern Pass to violate the easement. "When we worked together in 2001 and 2002 to protect this land, we imagined towering trees protected for future generations, not transmission towers. We believe the state has a responsibility to actively protect these lands for our children and grandchildren," they wrote.

**June:** Northern Pass submits revised application to the DOE for a Presidential Permit suggesting that they would use state and local roads to bury eight miles of the 187-mile line in an attempt to connect the dots. Breaching the Headwaters is still part of the application as an "alternate" route. The revised proposal does not make use of significant land purchases by Northern Pass, including a 20-acre parcel acquired for \$4 million.

paign to put key lands under conservation easement that would prohibit transmission lines, and the inviolability of the existing easement on the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters, Northern Pass was facing a stalled project. They responded by presenting their intended route through the Headwaters as an alternative, then drawing lines along state and local roads to bury some eight miles to connect the dots of a revised preferred route. The short sections of proposed buried transmission line dive under lands owned by the Forest Society and other private landowners, including lands under easement that specifically prohibit underground transmission lines.

Following the hearings, the legal viability of the proposed route is still unproven. There have been calls for the DOE to reject the application on that basis. The Forest Society also called on the DOE to consider whether the overwhelming public opposition to Northern Pass as proposed is evidence enough to determine that the project is not in the public interest, and if so, to reject the application without pursuing the EIS further.

Additional comments can be submitted to the DOE through Nov 5, 2013. Instructions on how to submit those comments can be found on our website, [www.forest-society.org/np](http://www.forest-society.org/np). ¶

*The following op-ed, by Carolyn Benthien, chair of the Forest Society's board of trustees, and Jane Difley, Forest Society president / forester, appeared in newspapers in September.*

## New Hampshire Can and Must Control the Northern Pass Process

By Carolyn Benthien and Jane Difley

In 2010 Northeast Utilities and Hydro-Quebec proposed a new 180-mile overhead transmission line they call Northern Pass, with new towers well above tree line through two-thirds of New Hampshire. After reviewing what was presented by the developers, the Forest Society's Board of Trustees voted to oppose the project as proposed. A recent amendment by Northern Pass, LLC, to its original proposal tinkers at the edges of a deeply flawed project that has failed to acquire a legal contiguous route.

We believe today, as we did then, that this proposal threatens our scenic landscapes and existing conserved lands, including the White Mountain National Forest, our own forest reservations, and dozens of other lands protected by other organizations. This is unacceptable.

Our position accepts that there may be reason to consider allowing Hydro-Quebec to export additional power in the future. There is already one 2000 megawatt line from Hydro-Quebec that runs through New Hampshire to Massachusetts, bringing electricity to the New England grid. This line is presently not used to its capacity. The Forest Society, along with many others, has consistently pointed to other viable alternatives for transmission of more electricity from Quebec to southern New England where the demand for this power may someday exist. But today the power is not needed to keep the lights on in New England, and today New Hampshire is a large net exporter of electricity to the rest of New England.

After nearly three years of debate, widespread public opposition, and repeated efforts by Northern Pass to manufacture public benefits, the Forest Society believes today that if the Northern Pass transmission line is to be built at all it should be buried—from beginning to end—preferably along existing state-owned transportation corridors such as state highways and rail beds. This option addresses most of the objections that so many New Hampshire landowners rightfully share while presenting the opportunity for the state to realize much-needed revenues through the leasing of those underground corridors.

*Continued on page 34.*

**July:** PSNH announces that Gary Long is stepping down as CEO. He is replaced in September by Bill Quinlan of Connecticut Light & Power, another NU subsidiary.

**August:** The Forest Society, after research, notes that we own land under one section of proposed buried line. We contend that Northern Pass cannot use that land without our permission or without eminent domain. Northern Pass disputes this claim, suggesting that the Site Evaluation Committee could permit use of any road anywhere in the state. Others dispute this.

**September:** Jane Difley and Carolyn Benthien issue a statement (see sidebar above) on behalf of the Forest Society Board of Trustees calling on state leaders to fast-track the responsible use of existing transportation corridors for transmission developers

**September:** Gov. Maggie Hassan issues an op-ed in response to a *Boston Globe* editorial. "Expanding traditional energy sources like large-scale hydropower does not mean just accepting what Northern Pass has put on the table, and no one should accept Northern Pass's assertion that the only way for New England to access Canadian hydropower is to trade away the majestic beauty of the White Mountains."

**September:** The U.S. Department of Energy holds a second round of scoping hearings to get public input on what should be included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Northern Pass. The Forest Society calls on DOE to include at least two underground alternatives in the EIS. Despite massive paid advertising, Northern Pass fails to generate significant public support.

*To read the full text of the statements and op-eds referenced in the timeline, visit [www.forest-society.org/np](http://www.forest-society.org/np).*

Continued from page 33.

To be sure, there are still serious questions about the wisdom of allowing Hydro-Quebec yet another tentacle into our region. We should consider carefully the consequences of enabling the vast flooding of forests in Quebec, and be particularly skeptical of the carbon reduction claims. Energy flowing south means dollars flowing north, and has the potential to undermine regional energy conservation and the development of home-grown renewable power generation. A study of the “no-build” option—or what would happen if Northern Pass is never built—is warranted.

Northeast Utilities and subsidiary PSNH, for their part, have acknowledged that burial is possible; in fact they have now proposed to bury eight miles, or four percent, of their now 187-mile line. But they have complained mightily about the additional cost—even though it is Hydro-Quebec that would foot the bill (as it should, for Northern Pass is a private line for their exclusive use). The implicit suggestion from Northeast Utilities and Hydro-Quebec is that scarring New Hampshire’s landscapes is an acceptable subsidy to their bottom line.

For an underground alternative to become a reality, New Hampshire must act. First, we must demand that at least one underground alternative be included as part of the Department of Energy’s Environmental Impact Statement, which will inform all the required permitting for Northern Pass. Second, we must enable the state Site Evaluation Committee to require an underground option. Third, the state must act now to fast-track the responsible use of existing transportation corridors for transmission developers. We call on our state leaders to make this a priority today. New Hampshire should determine its own future and make the better option into the easier option.

In New Hampshire we cherish our natural landscape and the economy it supports. We must defend ourselves from those who would sacrifice those values for their own profit. We do that by not only making the right choices, but by making the right choices easy. ♦

*Editor’s note: The following op/ed appeared in newspapers and online after the N.H. Legislature voted to fully restore funding for the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). We thank our members who wrote letters, e-mailed and called their representatives and attended public hearings. Your advocacy made a difference.*

## Preserving LCHIP’s state funding was a group effort

On the eve of last November’s elections, we wrote in these pages that we hoped the next governor and Legislature would restore funding to the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). It seemed a tall order at the time. The conservation program’s supposedly “dedicated” source of revenue—a \$25 fee paid when recording certain real estate transactions—had been raided repeatedly by state budget writers to pay for general government. Yet today we can report that thanks to a truly bipartisan effort, the bait-and-switch on New Hampshire taxpayers has finally come to an end.

It was a long road. In February, newly elected Gov. Maggie Hassan proposed a two-year state budget that partially restored LCHIP’s dedicated funding. The House version of the budget passed in April also diverted some LCHIP dollars, but House budget writers resisted pressure to take more, and they improved on the governor’s proposal by making sure that any funds raised by the LCHIP fee beyond budget projections would go to LCHIP, not the general fund.

Then in early June the state Senate passed a budget that ended all diversion of LCHIP’s dedicated fee, taking the position that the time had come to end the LCHIP raids once and for all. This full restoration of LCHIP’s dedicated fund was included in the final compromise budget passed in June.

Many played a role in what became one of the good-news stories of this year’s budget process. First, Gov. Hassan and her budget team established that the question was not whether the diversion of LCHIP funds would stop, but only when. In the Democratically controlled House, Speaker Teri Norelli and Finance Committee Chair Mary Jane Wallner held the line on LCHIP at a difficult moment in the budget process, and longtime Repub-

lican supporters of LCHIP like deputy leader David Hess worked tirelessly to keep the LCHIP issue on the front burner.

When the budget got to the narrowly divided state Senate, Republican Senate President Peter Bragdon and Finance Committee Chair Chuck Morse took a clear stand on LCHIP. Sen. Jeanie Forrester, a former executive director of Main Street programs, knew firsthand the direct economic benefits of LCHIP and was a key advocate of full funding. Democratic leader Sen. Sylvia Larsen, one of the original architects of LCHIP’s dedicated fund, worked to ensure there was bipartisan support for the Senate’s position.

While this support on the “inside” of the process was obviously critical, the final outcome on LCHIP was also the result of months of sustained effort by town officials, organizations and citizen advocates who contacted their elected representatives, wrote letters to the editor and attended public field hearings across the state. Meanwhile, opinion pages in newspapers across New Hampshire weighed in on the ethical and constitutional problems with continuing to divert LCHIP revenues.

To every New Hampshire citizen who showed up and spoke up for LCHIP over the past six months, you were heard. LCHIP can at last get back to doing the job it was created to do: protect the places that make our state special for today and future generations. That’s something we can all feel good about. ♦

Edward (Rusty) McLear  
CEO of Hampshire Hospitality Holdings  
LCHIP Board Chair

Alex Ray  
Founder/owner  
Common Man Family of Restaurants

# Beware the Ground-Nesting Wasps of Fall

Step too close and they'll treat you like a predator hunting their larvae—ouch!

By Dave Anderson

**B**y September, forests are bone dry. Brushy unmowed fields and woodland edges are cloaked in goldenrod, Queen Anne's lace and woodland asters. When dusty leaves of poison ivy and wild grape vines display the first crimson or gold tinges of autumn, underground yellow-jacket nests reach their annual maximum.

Often built in mouse or mole burrows, papery wasp nests are packed with nutritious, fat and protein-rich larvae. These grubs are defended aggressively by agitated seasonal workers that will soon scatter and lie dead at dawn after a first hard freeze.

Yellow jackets are an important early autumn food source for some insect-eating mammals: most often black bears and skunks. By night, skunks and black bears patrol our pastures and even suburban lawns sniffing for wasp nests and unearthing the tasty larvae. By dawn's light, the evidence includes a wreckage of an unearthed and shredded gray paper nest with dead wasps whose spent stingers had pulsed in the thick fur and skin of nocturnal raiders.

Adult yellow jackets swarm aggressively in collective defense of nests at the slightest provocation. Ironically, hike leaders who stomp past unseen nests are generally spared as are slower hikers in the back of a line. The unfortunate folks hiking in the middle usually bear the brunt of the aerial attack. The scent of stinger venom further infuriates yellow jackets that seem suddenly as thick as mosquitoes. The standard operating procedure is to run and holler: "Bees! Run!"

Of course you don't really need to tell people to run. After an initial moment of confusion and surprise—a sort of delayed perception—neurons register the pulse of intense pain and a sudden conscious awareness of the terrible swarm of stinging



*Yellow jackets feed on insects but will also scavenge sweets—like your open can of soda.*

Photo by James Boardman/Dreamstime.com.

***Yellow jackets are an important early autumn food source for some insect-eating mammals: most often black bears and skunks.***

insects. The instantaneous innate response is to run in cartoon-like cliché: hands waving while pursued by the angry swarm. It's only funny later on.

We once disturbed a large, active underground wasp nest located beneath a loose rock in the middle of a heavily-used Mount Monadnock hiking trail. Several hiking parties on the summit related a similar painful experience. It's a small wonder there were any wasps left with stingers intact by the end of that day. As a public service during our descent, we scrawled and

posted crude warning signs on both approaches—from above and from below. The signs read: "Bees. Run!"

The old Swedish woodsmen like my maternal grandfather have even been known to call these ground wasps "*Jello-yackets*" That's also funny now—in hindsight. ☺

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*Naturalist Dave Anderson is director of education for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. He may be reached via e-mail at [danderson@forestsoociety.org](mailto:danderson@forestsoociety.org).*

# Foresters Could Use a ‘Fast Forward’ Button

Careful timber harvests are a means for healthy forests of the future

By George F. Frame, CF

**A**n upset caller told me recently that we had “destroyed” a particular piece of forest. Statements like this aren’t easy to hear, but they provide an opportunity to try to clear up some misunderstandings about forestry.

Change isn’t always pretty. Maybe I should say new change in the woods is rarely pretty, especially when it happens within your everyday field of view. And, of course the change I’m talking about is the visual change resulting from timber harvesting.

Our mission states that we will seek to perpetuate the forests of New Hampshire through their wise use. Wise use has always meant some level of product or service extraction from the forest done with thought for the future and without damaging the underlying structure that allows our New Hampshire forests to regenerate.

So our mission creates a conflict: How are forests perpetuated by being used? Wouldn’t it be better to perpetuate them by leaving them alone and not using them at all except to walk through and look at? No, not really. Drawing the leave-alone argument out to its ultimate end, New Hampshire’s forests would contain fewer species of trees, mostly very large trees, and compared to the variety that currently exists, relatively few wildlife species.

The only opportunity for variation would be for something new to grow where something old had died and fallen. New forests and the broad array of wildlife and tree species they contain could only form in areas created by wind and ice storms, flood, erosion, fire and other natural events. But in light of a growing human population and societal demands for fire and flood suppression, not to mention the need for products made of wood, the leave-alone alternative would not be wise.

The Forest Society mission recognizes



*A timber harvest last winter changed the look of this area of Victor’s Woods, a Forest Society reservation in Danbury, Alexandria and Hill, and it was also good for the long-term health of the forest.*

Photo by George Frame.

the reality that with land ownership come societal responsibilities. Our resources are available to be shared in a managed, sustainable way to meet society’s demands for all the products and services that our land can provide. At the same time, we recognize that there are unique or rare areas within our ownership portfolio that may meet other needs not yet understood or envisioned.

I understand the feelings some may have upon seeing unexpected changes in the woods. They are the same I felt after years of working with a client to manage a particular piece of woodland and then returning several years later to see that the

land had been sold. In place of a managed forest there were driveways and houses. Progress, change.

You know, the really nice thing about the Forest Society doing timber harvests is that no matter when someone might return, there will still be forest, not pavement, not a house. I won’t be around in 30 to 40 years to see the new forest grow, but that doesn’t really matter because it’s not about me, it’s about my grandchildren’s children and the forest. ♪

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*George Frame is the Senior Director of Forestry at the Forest Society. He can be reached at [gframe@forestsoociety.org](mailto:gframe@forestsoociety.org).*

# Help Improve the Andrew Brook Trail



*The Andrew Brook Trail leads to Lake Solitude, a peaceful destination in any season.* Photo by Jack Savage.

In 2006, the Forest Society partnered with the Town of Newbury and trails groups to protect the 1,100 acre Pillsbury-Sunapee Ridge, and, in 2010, the Forest Society acquired the 75-acre Andrew Brook Forest.

Here's a summary of our other exciting conservation projects in progress:

## **Wilkins Family Forestlands, Amherst and Mont Vernon**

We are closing in on the \$190,000 goal to buy conservation easements to permanently protect more than 500 acres of forests owned by Tom and Sally Wilkins. The Wilkins family, owners and operators of the Wilkins Lumber Company in Milford, manages the forests for timber to provide the region with local lumber. Conserving this group of properties will provide the public access to woods and wetlands in Amherst and Mont Vernon.

## **Maple Ridge Farm, Pittsburg**

The Forest Society is working to buy conservation easements on 282 acres of this beautiful property to ensure that it will

remain open space forever. Maple Ridge Farm is an important property not only for its pastoral views, local history, and working agricultural landscape, but also for its significant frontage along the Connecticut River and Indian Stream.

## **Grafton Pond Stewardship Fund**

This fund will help us to continue to provide outreach to visitors of this popular, pristine pond in Grafton. This outreach includes sharing information about preventing the spread of invasive aquatic weeds, packing out all trash, respecting and protecting wildlife populations and current boating regulations.

## **Everybody Hikes Mt. Major Campaign, Alton and Gilford:**

Please see page 4.

## **Trees Not Towers (No Northern Pass):**

Please see page 32.

If you would like to help with any of these projects, please use the form below. ☺

### **YES, I WANT TO HELP THE FOREST SOCIETY PROTECT FORESTS, TRAILS AND VIEWS**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the (circle one)  
**Andrew Brook Project • Everybody Hikes Mt. Major campaign • Trees Not Towers (No Northern Pass)**  
**Wilkins Family Forestlands • Maple Ridge Farm • Grafton Pond Stewardship Fund**

VISA    MasterCard   Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security code: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail the completed form to: Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests  
54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301. Or donate online at [www.forestsoociety.org](http://www.forestsoociety.org).*

*For more information, contact Susanne Kibler-Hacker at 603-224-9945  
or via e-mail at [skh@forestsoociety.org](mailto:skh@forestsoociety.org).*

SOCIETY FOR THE  
PROTECTION OF  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
FORESTS

**Thank you  
for your help!**



X139FN



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## THE MANY FACES OF CONSERVATION

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Sidney Craven, owner; Marcy Smith, office/sales manager; and Loren Smith, mill manager/sawyer. Photo by Al Karevy.

**G**reat Brook Forest Products has been in existence for 30 years. I bought it three years ago to continue the tradition of custom milling logs harvested by local loggers and foresters. Our timbers are used primarily for post-and-beam houses, barns and other structures by framers. Our services are also available to builders, carpenters and homeowners.

Utilizing the skills of local loggers and foresters to provide timber to local builders shows that we believe in the “buy local, stay local” philosophy. We’ve found we can provide greater efficiency with locally sourced logs. Our timbers are typically eastern white pine and hemlock, and we occasionally fill requests for white oak or red oak timbers.

We have assisted in the preservation of Fort #4 in Charlestown, donated timbers to the Dartmouth College Outing Club Woodsmen Competition, the Cheshire Fair Lumber Jack/Jill Competition, the Cornish Fair Woodsmen Competition, the local high school for students’ woodworking projects, and an Eagle Scout completing his final project to earn his badge.

We were drawn to the Forest Society because of its 100-plus-year record of protecting New Hampshire forests and careful stewardship of the land. The organization is inclusive of various landowners and businesses and representative of sound management practices. We are proud to belong to this exceptional organization in the President/Forester’s Circle.” ♦

**Great Brook  
Forest Products**  
Langdon, N.H.  
*Members since 2010*

## MEMBERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

*Great Brook Forest Products are among the 10,000 members who helped the Forest Society protect more than one million acres in New Hampshire. To join them, use the envelope in this issue or contact Margaret Liszka at 603-224-9945.*