

SOCIETY FOR THE
PROTECTION OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE
FORESTS



SINCE
1901

123rd Annual Report



**SOCIETY FOR THE
PROTECTION OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE
FORESTS**

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Mike Smith*



*Flower at
Deepwood Forest.
Photo by Ryan Smith.*

* Denotes non-trustee or former trustee.

The mission of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, adopted in 1904, is to perpetuate the forests of New Hampshire through their wise use and their complete reservation in places of special scenic beauty.

Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

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info@forestsociety.org | forestsociety.org



Letter to Members

Fiscal Year 2024 (May 1, 2023–April 30, 2024)

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and our staff, we want to thank you, our members and supporters, for making Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) another successful year. As this annual report indicates, the Forest Society is in solid financial position overall as we strive for operational budget stability year to year.

Net assets from operations increased by \$2.5 million, including \$1.3 million in land donations, \$1.1 million in gifts to the endowment, and a strong year for our Annual Fund and our stumpage income. In addition, thanks to a strong year in the financial markets our investments were up by \$2.1 million, bringing our total net assets to \$105 million.

Most importantly, we're pleased to report that we conserved 5,400 acres in FY24, including more than 4,200 acres in fee that we own and manage sustainably.

We acquired 3,700 acres of working forest in Shelburne, N.H., in Coos County. Featuring more than a mile of frontage on the Androscoggin River and adjacent to the Appalachian Trail Corridor, this property exemplifies our highest priorities for conservation: a working forest with exceptional wildlife habitat for wide ranging and migratory species, outstanding recreational opportunities, and a wonderful set of community partners. We thank our donors, the Town of Shelburne, our partner, The Conservation Fund, and all who helped make this possible.

In tandem with completing the Shelburne project, we also celebrated the completion of our energy-efficient conservation and education center in Bethlehem, Forest Society North at the Rocks. Since holding our Annual Meeting on site in September 2024, we welcomed new staff to The Rocks who are developing educational programs and are already busy hosting community groups, nonprofit partners, and others, both in the renovated 1884 Carriage Barn and the outdoor amphitheater. We've also improved the Gardener's Cottage on site, now accommodating overnight guests in partnership with Bretton Woods Vacations, creating a unique experience while financially supporting our mission-driven activities.

Forest Society North better positions us to work with communities, stakeholders, and partners to affect land conservation and stewardship, keep forests as forests, and enhance lives and livelihoods in the North Country.

FY24 was not only focused on the North Country, however. This year we saw the culmination of long-held dreams of truly visionary and generous families. In New Durham, the donation of 318 acres as an addition to our Jennings Forest brought that forest to a total of 700 acres. In Canterbury, we acquired an easement of nearly 400 acres at the Deepwood Forest. In Lyme, a 50-year member commemorated the occasion by donating a conservation easement on 32 acres; in Sugar Hill, an addition of 20 acres to an existing easement protects wonderful views; in Columbia, a 10-acre easement addition further protects the Upper Connecticut River watershed; and in Hopkinton and Henniker, the donation of an easement over 437 acres adds to a large block of protected forestland.

We are continuing to invest in infrastructure that helps us welcome and engage with people on our lands, improving the visitor experience. Generous donors made it possible to build public restroom facilities at Creek Farm in Portsmouth, where we partner with the Gundalow Company to host nature day camps for children all summer long.

At Mount Major in Alton, among our most visited destinations, we acquired 25 acres from the NH Department of Transportation that includes the main parking area, giving us the opportunity to plan for future improvements.

Always seeking to improve efficiency, FY24 saw us implement a number of changes in our business systems and upgrades, including our website.

We now own more than 63,000 acres across New Hampshire. Our stewardship of these nearly 200 places include harvesting activities that have multiple objectives, including wood products, timber stand improvement, wildlife habitat resources, and increasing forest resilience in the face of climate change. In FY24, we treated 700 acres, or 1 percent of our land base.

Addressing climate change starts with reducing emissions where possible. To that end, having worked with the UNH Sustainability Institute to assess our carbon footprint, we are prioritizing investments that will further reduce our own emissions—a key component of our climate action plan. With geothermal and solar energy systems in place at The Rocks, we are now planning for additional air source heat pumps, EV chargers and solar expansion for our buildings where possible.

Our advocacy continues to focus on forest landowner issues, including supporting Current Use Taxation, sustainable forestry, and funding for land conservation, while urging common-sense statewide action on climate change.

The Forest Society's accomplishments are made possible by individuals. So many extraordinary people devote their time, expertise, philanthropy, and advice to making the Forest Society better every day. We were deeply saddened over the past year to lose three people who truly made the Forest Society better: former trustees Bill Webb of Holderness, Don Wharton of Landaff, and Doug McNinch of Manchester. Their long-standing commitment to our cause was exemplary.

Thank you for making possible the accomplishments highlighted in this annual report. Your commitment to our mission, and your trust in our ability to achieve that mission, is our greatest asset.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Savage". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Jack Savage
President



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drew Kellner". The signature is more formal and less cursive than the one above, written over a white background.

Drew Kellner
Board Chair

Land Conservation Achievements

Land Protection

Conservation vision became reality in Fiscal Year 2024 across the state. The Forest Society's acquisition of 3,700 acres in Shelburne marked the achievement of a goal long pursued by community members and conservation partners. This forest, stretching from the Androscoggin River to Bald Cap Peak, represents a diversity of habitat, hiking opportunities, and timberland.

In Hopkinton, New Durham, Lyme, and Sugar Hill, four different families accomplished their longtime aspirations of conserving the land they love for the benefit of all. The Wells, Maley, Mudge, and Connors families put their generosity into action by donating land or easements to expand protected areas. With grant support, we were able to work with the Coskies in Middleton and the Sterns in Canterbury to acquire easements that protect outstanding natural and recreational resources. We also partnered with the Town of Londonderry to protect Lithia Spring, and with the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust to conserve the

Messer Farm in New London. The visions of both John Lanier and Marilyn Johnson survived their lifetimes. In Columbia, an addition to the Lanier easement protected frontage on the Mohawk River and in Bethlehem, the Johnson-Clark Forest and Marilyn's Woods transferred to Forest Society ownership. We are deeply grateful and look forward to stewarding these lands into the future.

Easement Stewardship

The Forest Society now holds nearly 800 conservation easements, which require vigilant oversight and collaborative relationships with landowners. In FY24, Forest Society Easement Stewardship staff visited with 156 landowners and monitored 317 properties on the ground, covering nearly 73,000 acres. Six volunteer easement monitors assisted staff in monitoring 6,310 acres. Taking easements and fee lands together, the Forest Society now protects over 200,000 acres statewide.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Landowner	Acres	Location	Property Name
Michelle Cormier and Stephen Ossias	10.2	Columbia	Lanier Conservation Easement Addition
Margaret and Gregory Connors	20.61	Sugar Hill	Connors Conservation Easement Addition
Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust	144	New London	Messer Farm
Town of Londonderry	53.88	Londonderry	Lithia Spring
Tony and Joann Coskie	70.82	Middleton	Coskie Conservation Easement
John Mudge, George Mudge and Eleanor Cares	32.46	Lyme	
Kenneth and Ilene Stern	397.18	Canterbury and Northfield	Deepwood Forest Conservation Easement
Binney and Robert Wells	457	Henniker and Hopkinton	
Total: 8 projects	1186.15		

RESERVATIONS

Grantor	Acres	Location	Property Name
Estate of Marilyn Johnson	103.3	Bethlehem	Johnson-Clark Forest
Estate of Marilyn Johnson	59	Bethlehem	Marilyn's Woods
State of NH Department of Transportation	25.4	Alton	Addition to Mt. Major Reservation
Bayroot LLC	2671	Shelburne	Shelburne Valley Forest
The Conservation Fund	1030	Shelburne	Bald Cap Peak Forest
Elisabeth Maley	318	New Durham	Addition to Jennings Forest
Total: 6 projects	4206.70		

Properties Acquired for Later Transfer

Estate of Andrea Gloria S. Hawkins	4	Warner	Acquired for future sale to State of NH Division of Forest and Lands
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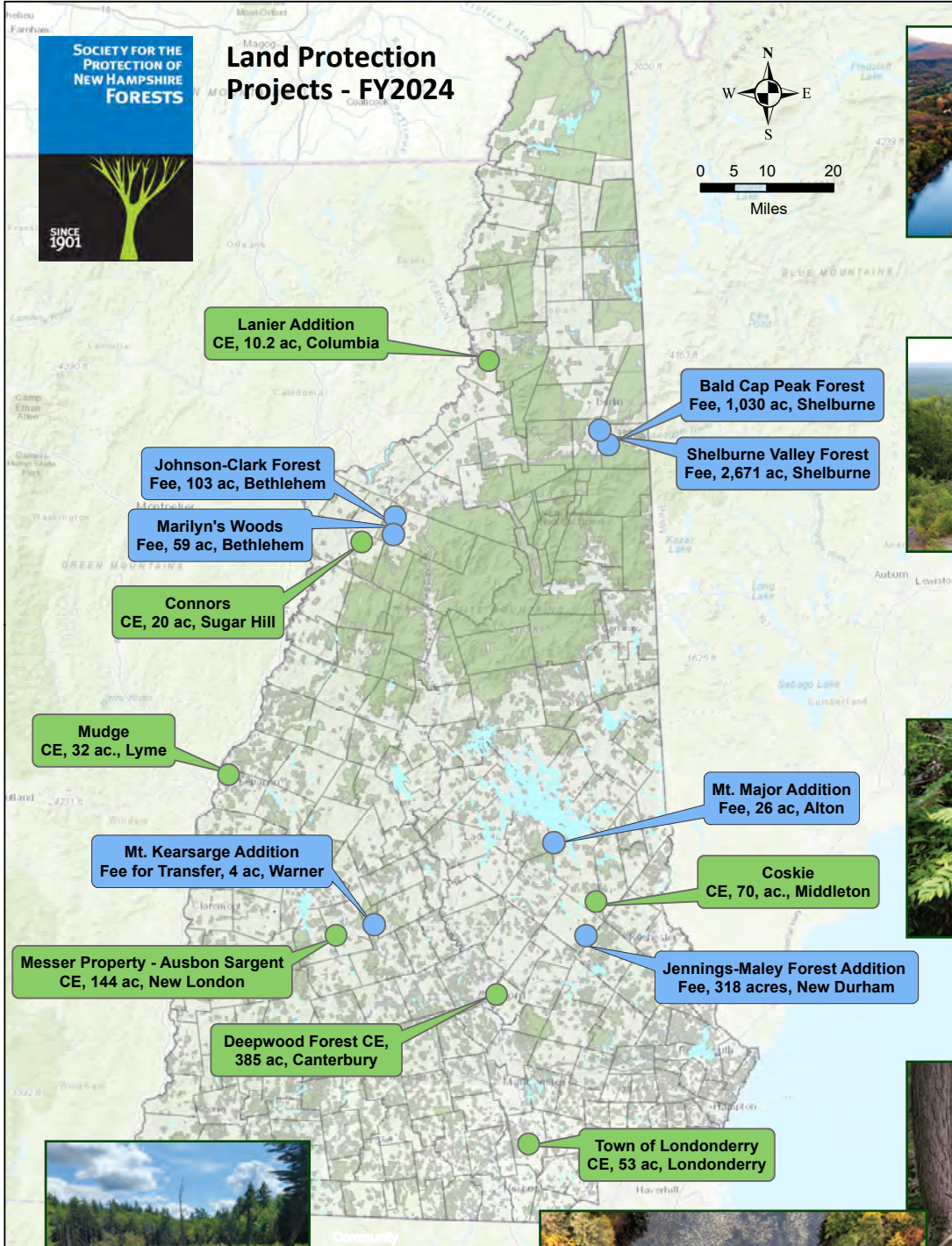
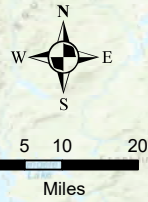
GRAND TOTAL: 15 PROJECTS

5,396.85

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS



Land Protection Projects - FY2024



The Shelburne Valley Forest includes 1.6 miles of frontage on the Androscoggin River in Shelburne.



Tony and Joann Coskie enjoy the view from Phoebe's Nable. Their 70-acre easement land in Middleton is adjacent to the Moose Mountains Reservation.



Hayes Brook, a perennial stream at the Jennings Forest Maley Tract in New Durham.



Ken and Ilene Stern and their dog Jojo at Deepwood Forest in Canterbury and Northfield.



The Wells Family easement in Hopkinton and Henniker protects extensive wetlands and meadows as well as mixed forest types.



Beaver pond from above at Deepwood Forest in Canterbury and Northfield.

MAP SOURCES: ESRI, HERE, GARMIN, INTERMAP, INCREMENT P CORP, GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GEOBASE, IGN, LADASTER NL, ORDANCE SURVEY, ESRI JAPAN, METI, ESRI CHINA (HONG KONG), (C) OPENSTREETMAP CONTRIBUTORS, AND THE GIS USER COMMUNITY

FOREST SOCIETY ARCHIVE

Managing Land to Benefit People and the Planet

The unusually wet summer of 2023 and intense wind storms over the winter of 2024 kept our stewardship staff busy over the fiscal year – but responding to weather events is inherent in land management. This year the Forest Society continued to enhance the climate resilience of our forests and recreation infrastructure by participating in applied research, improving trails to address drainage and runoff issues, and collaborating with other leaders in the field of climate science and forest health. Highlights from the year include:

Forestry

In FY24, the Forest Society conducted 13 timber harvests, treating nearly 700 acres in accordance with management plans for each property. These harvests generated 2.6 million board feet of sawtimber and 20,500 tons of low-grade wood, which is used for pulp, firewood, and biomass.

At the Millicent Scott Gardner Memorial Forest in Hollis, our foresters conducted a targeted harvest designed to remove large pines that were shading out a dwindling population of butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), a declining and important plant in New Hampshire.

Forestry staff also joined a group of land managers, foresters, and climate scientists, coined the Climate Resilient Forest Management network, to analyze how they might manage lands, specifically in the context of climate change, at a landscape level. Funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, organized by The Nature Conservancy, and led by Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS) and University of Vermont Forestry, the group developed targeted climate resilient management plans for projects guided by NIACS's Forest Adaptation Workbook. The project included plans for how to implement management practices, including on a harvest at the Forest Society's Peirce Wildlife and Forest Reservation in Stoddard, and then share takeaways from each project at future group site walks. The harvest plan for Peirce was put into action over the winter of 2023–24, and we hosted a timber tour to view the results in January 2024.

Staff foresters continue to collaborate with our natural resource partners and rely on those partnerships to accomplish much of our important conservation work. Those relationships also serve to advance our understanding of how lands can be managed well in a changing climate.

Recreation Management

Lost River Gorge in North Woodstock and Mount Monadnock in Jaffrey, Marlborough, Dublin and Troy, remain two of the Forest Society's most visited and iconic destinations. In FY24, Lost River (operated by White Mountains Attractions) welcomed 54,273 visitors, and Mount Monadnock (operated by NH State Parks) received approximately 125,000 visitors. Combined with the estimate of 80,000 visitors annually at Mt. Major, these three places are enjoyed by more than 250,000 people every year.

In FY24, we hosted more than 35 workdays on Forest Society properties, bringing together staff and volunteers to build drainage structures at the Langenau Forest in Wilton, re-route the trail at the Welch Farm and Forest in Hancock, replace bridges at Cockermouth Forest in Hebron,



Top: The Climate Resilient Forest Management Network in the field.

Bottom: With assistance from a grant from VolunteerNH, 40 new land stewards completed the Land Steward Training Program in FY24.

improve trails at Lamprey River Forest in Epping, and construct bog bridging at the McCabe Forest in Antrim. We were joined by volunteers from Hypertherm, Southern NH University, Mainstay, Bangor Savings Bank and many others – and many hands contributed to preparations for our 2023 Annual Meeting at The Rocks. In FY24, we updated our website visitor guide as well as our mobile trails app, powered by OuterSpatial, to provide better information to the public about recreational opportunities.

In 2024, the Forest Society trained 40 new volunteer land stewards in trail maintenance, boundary monitoring, stewardship, and community outreach. The Land Steward Program began in 1993, now 30 years in existence with 150 active and trained volunteers who extend our stewardship reach across the state.

Connecting People and Places



Clockwise, starting at top left: UNH Wildlife class uses hand tools to manage for New England cottontail at the Hills Family Forest in Durham.

Top right: Pausing for a photo at Monadnock Trails Week 2023.

Center right: With UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Timberland Owners Association, the Forest Society cosponsors the popular Women in the Woods program. Pictured here: a successful chainsaw workshop.

Bottom right: 5 Hikes Challenge hikers at the Morse Preserve in Alton.

Bottom left: Building an owl box at Creek Farm in Portsmouth.

Center left: Bethlehem Elementary School students plant Christmas trees that they will care for through the Forevergreen program at The Rocks.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP) JEFF LOUGEET/UNC; FOREST SOCIETY ARCHIVE; (THIS PAGE) FOREST SOCIETY ARCHIVE

Welcome to Forest Society North at The Rocks

In September 2023, the Forest Society held its 122nd Annual Meeting at Forest Society North at The Rocks in Bethlehem. This event also marked the unofficial grand opening of our newly renovated and reimagined northern New Hampshire hub. The day was nothing short of spectacular: 250 attendees gathered to celebrate amidst the vibrant colors of autumn. They toured the beautifully restored Carriage Barn, featuring advanced geothermal and solar energy systems, strolled through the Christmas tree farm, and toasted the occasion with a special batch of Rocks Red Ale from Rek-Lis Brewing. The celebration concluded with breathtaking views of the White Mountains from the amphitheater, accompanied by a performance from poet Howard Mansfield and musician Ben Cosgrove.



The Carriage Barn.

Although construction wasn't fully completed until spring of 2024, the 2023 holiday season and 2024 maple season helped break in the new building. We also welcomed new staff—Rocks Program Director Scarlett Moberly and Administrative Assistant Lauren Thomas—and updated the three-bedroom Gardener's Cottage, located adjacent to the amphitheater, which is now available for short-term rentals and wedding packages.

The Forest Society North at The Rocks campaign stood at \$7.7 million toward its \$8.5 million goal at the end of FY24. More than 450 donors contributed to the campaign, many more than once, with gifts that ranged from \$1 to \$1 million.



Above: The entry of the Carriage Barn blends old and new.



Left: Howard Mansfield and Ben Cosgrove perform in the new amphitheater at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

Forest Society North at The Rocks Campaign

Thank You to our Leadership Donors

\$500,000+

Anonymous
David Emerson Killam
Melinda Richmond

\$250,000 – \$499,999

Anonymous
Alnoba Lewis Family Foundation
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\$100,000 – \$249,999

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Allyson and Matthew Hicks
Elisabeth Mathey Landry
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MLK Fund

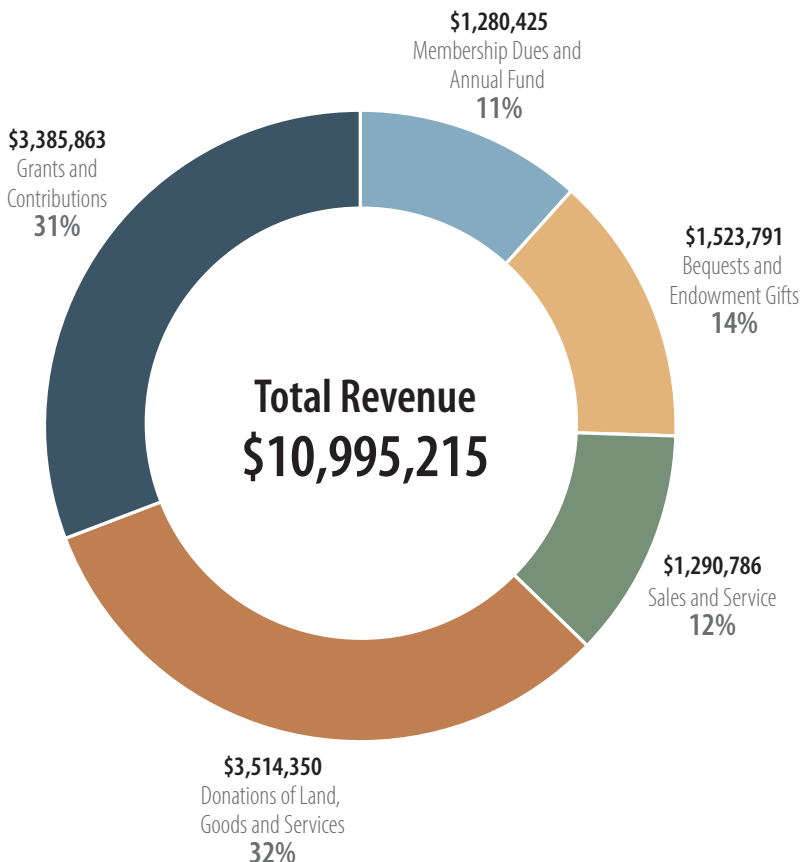
*We are deeply grateful to
all who contributed to the
Forest Society North at
The Rocks Campaign.
More than 500 gifts
supported this effort and
every dollar contributed to
its success. Thank You!*



Financial Highlights

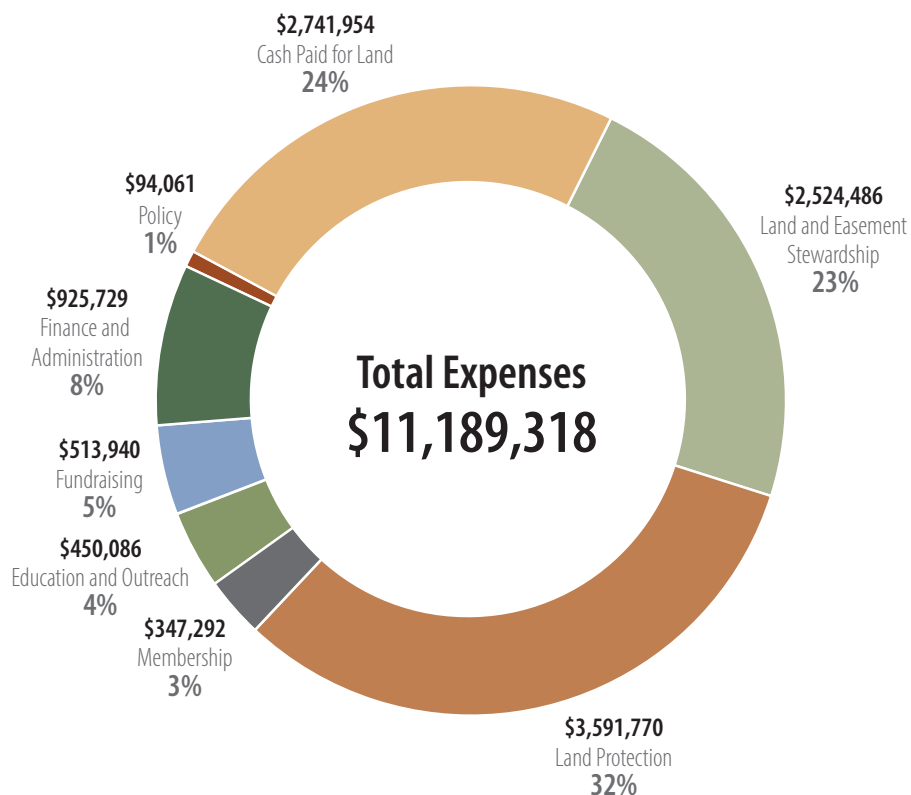
Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Revenue

Grants and contributions include funds for operations and for specific projects, including land protection projects.



Fiscal Year 2024 Expenses

This chart includes the Forest Society's expenses by program (functional expenses) as well as the cash paid for land.



Questions on the financial statements should be directed to Tony Cheek, Vice President, Finance (tcheek@forestsociety.org) or Anne Truslow, Vice President, Development (atruslow@forestsociety.org).

Statement of Operating Activities and Changes in Net Assets from Operations

For the fiscal year ending April 30, 2024

Operating Revenue and Support	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
Annual fund	775,170	—	775,170
Contributions	174,001	1,681,927	1,855,928
Bequests	402,914	—	402,914
Endowment gifts	—	1,120,877	1,120,877
Grants	62,050	1,467,885	1,529,935
Contributions of land	—	1,302,350	1,302,350
Membership dues	505,255	—	505,255
Rental income	381,841	—	381,841
Forest operations	577,202	—	577,202
Reimbursement for services	59,739	—	59,739
Sale of materials	268,724	—	268,724
Donated conservation easements, goods and services	2,212,000	—	2,212,000
Miscellaneous Income	3,280	—	3,280
Total Operating Revenue and Support	5,422,176	5,573,039	10,995,215
Net assets released from restrictions for satisfaction of purpose	3,739,786	(3,739,786)	—
Total Operating Revenue, Support, and Net Assets released from restriction	9,161,962	1,833,253	10,995,215
Program Expenses			
Land and Easement stewardship	2,524,486	—	2,524,486
Land protection	3,591,770	—	3,591,770
Education & Outreach	450,086	—	450,086
Membership	347,292	—	347,292
Policy	94,061	—	94,061
Total Program Expenses	7,007,695	—	7,007,695
Supporting Services and General Expenses			
Fundraising	513,940	—	513,940
Finance and administration	925,729	—	925,729
Total Supporting Services and General Expenses	1,439,669	—	1,439,669
Total Expenses	8,447,364	—	8,447,364
Increase (decrease) in net assets from operations	714,598	1,833,253	2,547,851

Assets

	FY 2024	FY 2023
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	8,468,743	8,879,074
Receivables		
Current portion of contributions receivable	434,000	2,587,142
Other receivables, including bequests	47,782	67,066
Inventories	15,800	7,256
Prepaid expenses	112,854	101,987
Total Current Assets	9,079,179	11,642,525
Property and equipment, net	9,095,512	6,700,309
Investments and Other Assets		
Investments	17,796,355	15,596,680
Contributions receivable, long term, net	11,753	161,107
Inventories, long term	48,218	48,606
	17,856,326	15,806,393
Land	71,309,348	67,265,044
Total Assets	107,340,365	101,414,271

Liabilities and Net Assets

	FY 2024	FY 2023
Current liabilities		
Line of credit	—	710,554
Current portion of notes payable	65,491	11,250
Current portion of annuities payable	11,481	20,981
Accounts payable	105,445	372,035
Accrued liabilities	299,160	274,180
Total Current Liabilities	481,577	1,389,000
Long-Term Liabilities		
Note payable – less current portion	1,655,959	67,500
Annuities payable – less current portion, net	69,329	89,261
Total Long-Term Liabilities	1,725,288	156,761
Total Liabilities	2,206,865	1,545,761
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions	6,165,822	6,354,942
Without donor restrictions invested in land, property and equipment	9,950,048	7,554,845
Total net assets without donor restrictions	16,115,870	13,909,787
With donor restrictions	18,562,818	19,548,215
With donor restrictions invested in land	70,454,812	66,410,508
Total net assets with donor restrictions	89,017,630	85,958,723
Total Net Assets	105,133,500	99,868,510
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	107,340,365	101,414,271

For details, see the complete audited financial statements on our web site at www.forestsociety.org/annual-reports.

Questions on the financial statements should be directed to Tony Cheek, Vice President, Finance (tcheek@forestsociety.org) or Anne Truslow, Vice President, Development (atruslow@forestsociety.org).

Contributed Support

The Forest Society relies on charitable giving to support its operations, for the perpetual stewardship and management of conservation lands, and for the acquisition of land and easements. We are deeply grateful for the diverse support of so many generous donors.

ANNUAL GIVING

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(\$2,500 AND MORE)

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Dudley Baker, III and Jeannette Baker
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Bill and Susan Tucker Charitable Fund – Schwab
Lise Bofinger
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Marilyn Priscilla Johnson | Bethlehem, N.H.



Marilyn Johnson was a pioneer in every aspect of her life. After graduating from Radcliffe in 1944, her career began as a Navy WAVES “code girl” cracking Japanese codes during World War II and extended to her appointment by President Jimmy Carter as Ambassador to Togo,

with adventures along the way that read like a spy novel. But Marilyn was also grounded in Bethlehem, N.H., where she could be found on her tractor well into her 90s. Marilyn’s

family moved to Bethlehem in 1858. Her great-grandfather operated the stagecoach that ran from The Flume in Franconia Notch to the Fabeyan House in Crawford Notch. Following her retirement from the foreign service in 1987, Marilyn was an active volunteer at Bretzfelder Park and The Rocks. She donated a conservation easement on 103 acres to the Forest Society in 2007, and in 2015, she instigated a Lewis Hill neighborhood partnership that involved three families joining together to buy 241 acres, donating conservation easements to the Forest Society, and creating the Johnson-Clark Nature Reserve. Upon Marilyn’s passing at age 100, she provided in her will that her share of the Lewis Hill property, 59 acres, and her 103 acres under easement, were transferred in fee to the Forest Society as part of our permanent ownership, which was accomplished in FY24. Marilyn’s life and legacy continue to inspire us.

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Hypertherm and the Forest Society have partnered together since 2014 with a special focus on caring for Grafton Pond in Grafton – a 930-acre gem with a bucolic 300-acre pond.

In the early spring, a crew of Hypertherm volunteers braves the elements to help prepare for the summer season, picking up trash, paddling the pond to search for debris, and helping with repairs or improvements. To our delight, the Grafton Pond Spring Clean Up is one of our most popular volunteer events – when Hypertherm announces the sign up, the event fills up within 24 hours. In addition, the Hypertherm H.O.P.E. Foundation has provided financial



support for stewardship and public outreach efforts at Grafton Pond. Thank you, Hypertherm friends and volunteers!

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Nature Calls at Creek Farm

The Forest Society's Education Center at Creek Farm in Portsmouth is a vibrant community meeting place, where on any given afternoon, dog walkers meet paddlers accessing Sagamore Creek meet campers attending the Gundalow Company's summer camps or afterschool programs during the school year. Following the spectacular renovation of the Carey Cottage by GoodWork in 2020, and the conversion of the existing outbuilding into the Forest Society's education center and office space in 2021, just one thing was still missing: easily accessible public restrooms. Thanks to



the support of a special group of donors, in FY24 we completed construction of public restrooms with space for changing clothes and filling water bottles as needed. We'd like to thank all of the donors to the Creek Farm facilities campaign.

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As an organization that has been dedicated to conserving New Hampshire's landscape for 123 years, the Forest Society is a reliable investment. You can leave a legacy in the place you love by including the Forest Society in your estate planning. Please contact us for more information.

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Believe it or not, that ski condo or that building lot you never built on can be turned into land conservation. Through our Assets to Acres program, you may donate real estate to the Forest Society which we then sell (sometimes subject to conservation restrictions if relevant) and apply the proceeds to furthering our conservation mission.

For more information, please
visit our website or contact
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Since 1901, members of the Forest Society have taken action to protect this land we call New Hampshire. The forests, mountains, lakes, and streams of this state support the health and well-being of our communities, from the Northern Forest to the banks of the Connecticut River to the saltmarshes of the Seacoast.

In a changing world, the Forest Society's conservation work is fundamental to ensuring that New Hampshire continues to thrive with clean air, clean water, vibrant wildlife, and beautiful places that soothe the soul. Caring for these lands in perpetuity is a privilege and a responsibility to future generations. Your membership helps to preserve a way of life that is enriched by the landscape around us—the New Hampshire way of life.

Your membership helps us meet the challenges of today, tomorrow, and beyond.

Thank you for supporting the Forest Society. We can't do it without you.

Cover: Nestled on 1,267 acres in Bethlehem, N.H., the net-zero, energy efficient Carriage Barn at The Rocks opened in FY24, marking a new era of the Forest Society's education and conservation work in the North Country. Photo by Ryan Smith.

