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Forest Notes

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

Trailhead to Lake Solitude Secure

A Year on the Floodplain

Going Solar at Home

SPRING 2016

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS

SINCE 1901

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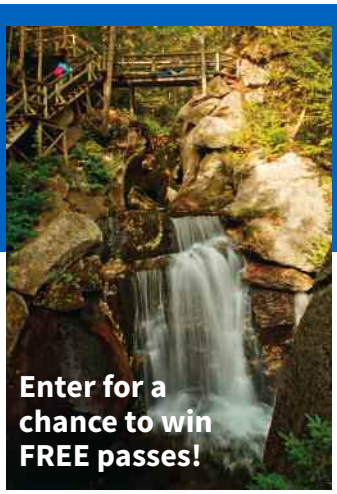
FOREST SOCIETY 2016 PHOTO CONTEST

CALL FOR ENTRIES



Lost River Gorge and Boulder Caves, North Woodstock.

Enter your best shots taken on a Forest Society reservation by October 5 for a chance to have your photo published in the winter issue of *Forest Notes*, and win free passes to Lost River Gorge and Boulder Caves or a Forest Society hat or t-shirt.

The top three winners will be chosen in these categories:

Lovely Landscapes — your best shot highlighting the forest, fields, waters and mountains you find on any of our reservations.

Having Fun Outdoors — people enjoying one of our reservations.

Dog Heaven — dogs having their day on one of our reservations.

Flora & Fauna — wildlife, plants or other beautiful natural resources you encounter on our reservations.

Young Shutterbugs — photos of any subject taken on our reservations by anyone under age 18.

Top photo by Jerry and Marcy Monkman, EcoPhotography. Left photo by Eliza Cowie. Middle photo by Kirsten Durzy. Right photo by Bart Hunter.

Deadline for submissions is October 5.

Go to forestsociety.org/photocontest for rules and how to enter

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

On our cover:

Lake Solitude, by Jim Block. The pristine pond is one of the rewards of a hike up the Andrew Brook Trail on Mt. Sunapee. Access to the trail is secure now that the Forest Society has purchased the Newbury property that hosts the trailhead. Story, page 26.

Photo of Jane Difley on the following page by John Anderson.

Half a World Away

As we caught our breath at the top of the hill, the Kakamega rainforest stretched out in all directions below. To the east were the escarpments that define the western edge of the Great Rift Valley, one of the destinations during my recent trip to Kenya. Wisps of smoke from the forest betrayed illegal operations making charcoal. In a region of poverty, these incursions are constant, despite the protections on this remnant of the vast rainforest that once stretched across east central Africa.

Our guide, Wilberforce (he seemed to have only one name), a tall naturalist versed in every detail about the forest, paused with us to admire the landscape. We had climbed the hill on a trail that was more worn into the hillside than built, evidence of a well-loved, oft-visited viewpoint.

The trees in this forest seemed incredibly tall to this New England forester, and the number of species reflected the diversity of plant and animal life here. Wilberforce knew every tree, animal and plant, but more, he knew their medicinal and practical uses. There was the little yellow flower that numbs the mouth on chewing— good for toothaches. The branches of a shrub sweep household floors, leaving behind a delightful fragrance and keeping insects at bay. He was a man in love with this habitat, the place, and its many stories. And he was concerned about its protection and the threats to its existence, even as he enjoyed being in its shade.

Half a world away from New Hampshire, the forests of Kenya are loved by many, over-used and abused by a few, and studied for their many secrets. Climate change is worrisome to Kenyans, as it is to us. Over use threatens certain habitats, as it does in New Hampshire. But Wilberforce is a lot like the Forest Society. Like us, he sees the best hope for his forest in teaching people to love it so that they will care for it. What a pleasure to come home to a place where Forest Society members love New Hampshire's forests enough to care for them and help us carry out this hopeful work we call conservation.

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 $40 and includes a subscription to *Forest Notes*.

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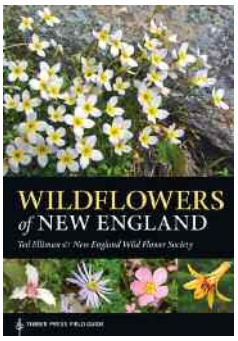
What's That Plant?
New Field Guide Makes it Easy to Find Out



The New England Wildflower Society and plant ecologist Ted Elliman have created a new field guide to more than 1,000 New England wildflowers and small shrubs. *Wildflowers of New England*, published by Timber Press, organizes annuals, perennials and biennials, both native and naturalized, first by color and then by number of petals and patterns of the leaves.

The book's preface teaches fundamental concepts about plants and New England's ecosystems, including an explanation of flower and leaf forms and structures.

Plants adapt to the underlying landscape's features. The author describes the New England landscape: the geologic forces that shaped it, prominent features of topography, and climate. He details the types of forests, wetlands and coastal plant communities that occur in New England, with landscape photos illustrating the different community types.

Forest Fairy

This lovely drawing was mailed to the Forest Society by Courtney Benton of Rochester Hills, Mich., with the following note:

"I found your website on Facebook, and I'm a fan of New Hampshire. I'm sending you a fairy for your place. She will help protect and take care of the forests. I believe that she will work!"

Thanks Courtney!

Stay Up to Date with Forest Society News

We share news about events, conservation projects, places to hike, natural history, accomplishments and public policy in many forms besides your quarterly *Forest Notes*. Get the latest updates on these channels:

Website blogs: Go to www.forestsociety.org to find blog posts about current projects, natural history, policy issues, events and more. Just hit "What We Do," then "News and Events." The website is also where you'll find the Reservations Guide, which provides trail maps and information about visiting Forest Society reservations.

E-newsletters: Subscribe to our monthly *Forest Society News* for updates on all aspects of conservation. Subscribe to our monthly *Forest Advocate* for news about legislation and public policy issues concerning conservation. You can sign up for one or both at www.forestsociety.org or by clicking "sign up" on our Facebook page. Or just email your request to bcharpentier@forestsociety.org.

Facebook: "Like" us on Facebook to see nature photos and get updates on our latest projects, events, volunteer opportunities and much more. See more photos by following @forestsociety on Instagram, and tag your own photos with #forestsociety.

Twitter: Follow @JackatSPNHF and @MattatSPNHF to get tweets about policy issues like Northern Pass and other current issues in N.H. conservation from Vice President of Communication and Outreach Jack Savage and Public Policy Manager Matt Leahy.

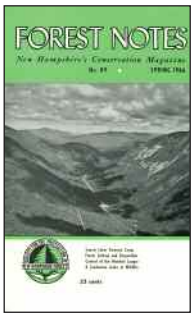
NHPR/Union Leader: Listen for natural history features from the Forest Society and N.H. Audubon on "Something Wild," airing Friday mornings at 8:35 a.m. on N.H. Public Radio. And look for our bi-weekly conservation column, "Forest Journal," in the Life section of the *N.H. Sunday News*.

Forest Society Lead Forester Wins Regional Award

The N.E. Society of American Foresters (NESAF) honored Forest Society Lead Forester Wendy Weisiger with its Mollie H. Beattie Young Forester Leadership Award at its annual meeting recently. This award is presented to a NESAF member under 40 who has shown leadership in a program or project benefiting the practice of forestry.

Weisiger, who has worked at the Forest Society for 12 years, works with staff and consulting foresters and operators to manage the Forest Society's 180 forest reservations—54,500 acres around the state

50 Years Ago Today in Forest Notes



The Spring 1966 *Forest Notes* reported that at least another 20 towns would be joining the 21 in 1965 who voted at Town Meeting to establish conservation commissions. The legislation enabling the commissions had just been passed in 1963, with strong advocacy from the Forest Society. The article promoted conservation commissions as an ideal mechanism for conservation education. "There is no better way of instilling a conservation ethic than by participation in a community conservation project," the article stated.

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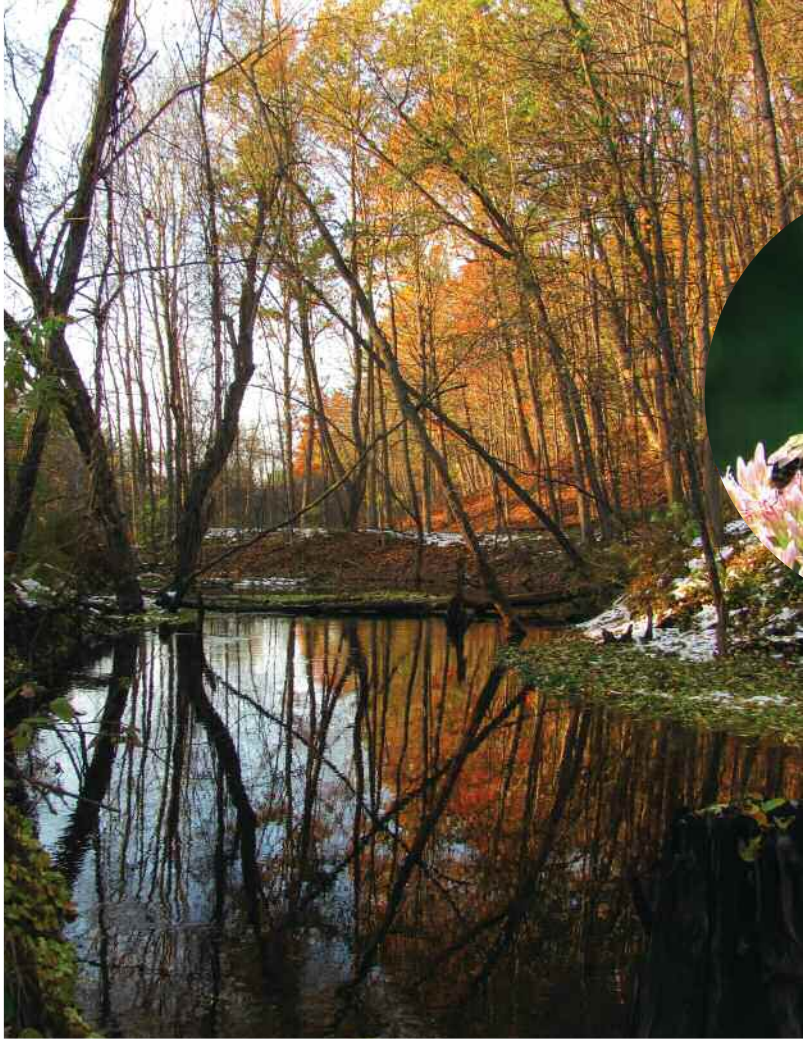





CIRCLE OF SEASONS

ON THE MERRIMACK FLOODPLAIN

BY ELLEN KENNY

As a teacher of English language learners in elementary school, one task I never get tired of is teaching newcomers to our country about the four seasons. It's hard to overestimate how exciting it is for a child from Congo or Nepal to experience snow for the first time. On the flip side, it's hard to imagine what a refugee family from a country where mangos are available year round thinks when stepping off a plane in Manchester at the end of November, walking out of the airport in flip-flops and peering out the window of a car driving up I-93 North at the bare trees, a brown landscape and a sullen late autumn sky.

I work hard to reassure children who arrive in late fall that it won't always look like November, that leaves will grow on those bare limbs and grass will be green again, but I'm not sure if anyone actually believes me until they've seen it for themselves. I still find it pretty unbelievable myself. Here in New England, we can easily lay claim to living where our seasons, while not necessarily reliable, are at their most expressive, and I believe that one of the best places to appreciate their nuances and subtleties has to be a New Hampshire floodplain.

I have the privilege of being able to walk the Merrimack River floodplain near the Forest Society's Conservation Center in Concord most mornings on the way to my school, and many evenings as well, and I always have my camera on hand. I've found that walking with the camera focuses my attention, and making the same walk daily has deepened my appreciation and awareness of the features of the landscape that are always there but always changing—for example, the edge of the river where it meets the bank. I feel the need to record what it looks like on a still summer morning when the water is like glass and tiny snails have made winding tracks in the mud, in early spring when the edge is strewn with red maple buds, in late summer when a pair of goldfinches might be canvassing for snails, and so on through the seasons, with their different lights and moods.

From years of walking I have years of pictures; the act of looking has become a form of worship, and the pictures function both as a daily record and my own personal hymn of praise. What follows here is a tour of the floodplain's seasons and a glimpse of some of the wonders that a daily walk there can reveal.

Clockwise from top, left: *A deer in the buttonbush; a back channel in autumn; a hickory bud; iced-in silver maples after late-winter flooding.*

June/July/August

Our tour begins in mid-June,
in the grove of silver maples at the ox bow . . .

When you get to the end of the narrow point, take off your shoes. It's a warm June morning, the sun-dappled water in the oxbow is only knee high, and the river bottom is sandy. It's time to follow the example of the great blue heron that you're likely to see close by, its long neck angling out of the pickerel weed. It's time to wade. Why? Because it's only while you're wading, staring down at the cool, firm sand between your toes, that you'll notice the hundreds of mussels scattered throughout the river bottom, slowly and imperceptibly traveling on their mysterious mussel errands.

The soundscape on this mid- summer day and in the weeks that follow is rich and complex. Starting in the silver maples, robins and rose-breasted grosbeaks are singing their songs, declaring their territory, and sounding the alarm as you might be approaching their nest areas. As you make the circuit around the back path, the standout song is that of the veery, or rather multiple veeries overlapping like a descending spiral of bells. The indignant soprano alarm squeals of chipmunks ring throughout the woods, especially when dogs are around, and in the background, an American toad chorus serenades the marsh. Walk along the stream, and you'll hear a catbird singing a joyous, chaotic celebration in the brambles. And then there is the wood thrush.

Coming from the dark recesses of the pines, the song is ethereal and hard to locate, but I managed to photograph one of them this summer as he was singing. Astonishing to watch such a humble looking little brown bird, beak open, pouring forth what is arguably the loveliest of North American bird songs, and in between calls, nonchalantly preening a few feathers and having a scratch at his chin. June is a month of awe.

Come July, the milkweed is suddenly in full, fragrant bloom with 24/7 nectar production. Meanwhile, the swallows that returned the month before are swooping and darting above the river with tremendous energy and purpose, disappearing into the holes in the bank with their insect catch and then pulsing back out again.

SUMMER

Clockwise from top, left: *Close-up of pickerel weed; morning light in the silver maples; singing wood thrush; milkweed along the riverbank; mussel patterns in the sand.*

FALL

Clockwise from top, left: *Maple leaves afloat; pileated woodpecker; autumn morning; spider web on the riverbank; grey squirrel.*

September/October/November

A battalion of blue jays is apparently in charge of the back path, and the quiet of the woods is broken by their jeering, scolding, bickering, chiming and yodeling—constant communication that sometimes draws upwards of 20 or more birds, sailing in from all directions to harass a hawk searching for a roosting place. The jays give it no quarter, jeering it right across the river.

The asters are blooming, bringing sparks of color to the low growth on either side of the path along the river. The green, chlorophyll-drunken summer is muted now, replaced with gold, purple, beige and brown. As you walk along the buttonwood marsh, you'll see that the pickerel weed is bronzed like old, tarnished armor, and individual leaves stand out from the crowd, twisting this way and that as their chlorophyll production ceases, becoming veined and streaked with colors like stained glass. Although the marsh at first seems empty of waterfowl, the periphery erupts with an upward flight of wood ducks as you turn to leave.

Now that the bank swallows have left, and before it gets too chilly, take off your shoes and walk along the river bank in the early morning. Almost immediately, you'll notice the dazzling array of spider webs that bejewel all of the shrubs and grasses down the length of bank, briefly catching and holding the first rays of morning sun. Autumn mornings are the best time to appreciate the spiders' artistry.

Sit beside the stream for awhile, and watch maple leaves sail by, skimming along on their reflections. While you sit there (on an ash trunk, felled by one of the resident beavers), you'll become aware of waves of small birds—marsh sparrows and white throated sparrows, that are jostling in the grasses and shrubs that line the stream—moving quickly, gathering seeds, passing through.

Follow the wild rebel yell of the pileated woodpecker and there he is, clinging vertically to a red maple tree—his bright red crest lit up like a match stick in the morning sun.

December/January/February

Winter is a long season of waiting,
and it rewards the patient observer.

Last winter was my lucky winter for otters. One morning, I was standing at the edge of the marsh thinking about ice (and thinking about my fourth grade boys, all of whom come from equatorial climates with no experience of cold, who have seen and fallen in love with the ice on the pond near our school, and who I hadn't yet taught about the dangers of thin ice), when this otter popped out of a hole in the ice right in front of me. I pretended I was a tree. Another otter appeared, and the two of them romped around on the bank, sliding into the water, popping up again and again over and under a dead tree. What a delightful morning. I arrived at school and was relieved to find all of my fourth grade ice lovers present and spent the morning honing their understanding of the dangers of ice, and the concept of melting. When I asked what they thought would happen if the ice cracked and they fell in, they all said (without hesitation), "Snakes would eat you up." Working hard to fill in the information gaps!

•

Sit on the bench down the path from the beaver dam. Expect nothing. Just keep sitting. Think about your grocery list, or (in my case) a new way to teach short vowel sounds. Stare into the distance at the bare trees on the hillside across the water. Don't move when you hear something rustling through the leaves. Turn your head just a fraction and behold—a mink!

•

Snow transforms the landscape by covering, concealing and drifting, but most importantly, by what it does to the light. On a sunny day in the silver maple grove, light paints the snow like a happy toddler with pots of blue finger paint, and the shadows of bare trees and tall grasses become slashing blue lines or quivering purple stripes.

I can't walk the river path on a January morning and see the pine tree snags, imprisoned by ice with their bone grey limbs reaching up against the cold, white sky, without my high school Shakespeare coming to mind:

... these boughs that shake against the cold
Bare, ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang—
Winter is the season of faith and anticipation—
these bare, ruined choirs will have their day again.

WINTER

Clockwise from top, left: *Beaver-felled ash tree; river otter; mink; goldfinch; nature's ice sculptures.*

SPRING

Clockwise from top, left: *Painted turtle; new ash leaves; great blue heron with pickerel; wood duck; the path through the silver maples in cheerful spring green.*

March/April/May

Spring, finally...

When spring comes to the floodplain, it utterly transforms. Shazaam! It's the annual miracle and it's hard to know which direction to look. The sunlight flooding in from overhead unfurls the Jack-in-the-pulpits and coaxes the fiddle heads awake. Look carefully along the river path and you might notice several stands of ladies slippers nodding their pink heads beneath some yew shrubs along the bank.

The maple and ash trees above are hopping with the joyful noise of a huge flock of robins. Look up and scan those branches and you just may see the silhouette of a duck. In early May, the open cavities of these trees are being scouted out by female wood ducks for nesting sites, and if you're quiet, you may hear one's anxious mutterings in time to see it before it takes off.

The ground beneath your feet is soft and muddy, and soon your boots are decorated with little red maple buds that have fallen from above as the tips of the silver maples begin their push to leaf. Listen for rustling in the leaf litter—a writhing pile of garter snakes, emerging from their winter burrow to warm up in a shaft of spring sunlight!

The joy is contagious. You can't walk the floodplain in spring and not catch it, and not feel like right here, right now, there's a very small corner of the world that is absolutely fine.

GOING SOLAR

A Homeowner's Perspective on Switching to Sun Power

By Tom Howe

At noon on sunny days, I'm easily distracted. I'm likely thinking about the photovoltaic array we recently installed at our home in Gilmanton: "How many kilowatts are we generating right now? How much of that is our house using, vs. going into the grid?"

My wife, Sarah, and I have worked to minimize the carbon footprint of our old farmhouse over the years. We use our big woodstove as our primary heating source and cut the 4.5 cords of firewood we need each year from our 15-acre woodlot. Although we'd been thinking about a solar system for years, our daughter's graduation from college last spring and the resulting liberation from tuition payments helped catalyze our decision to go solar. This past December 8th, we started generating electricity from the sun.

Our system consists of 24 flat, black panels made by SolarWorld and set in two rows on a large metal, ground-mounted frame. Anchored by concrete footings running five feet deep, the array sits on the edge of a small field behind our barn and is set in a fixed position—no moving parts. This location provides the best unobstructed, true-south exposure, unavailable from the roofs of our house and barn. It's also within the exclusion area that's not part of the conservation easement we donated to the Five Rivers Conservation Trust. The fully loaded frame stands about 10 feet tall and 40 feet long, so we also wanted a site that would minimize visual impact from the road; our house and barn, plus topography, screen it well.

From the array, a cable runs underground to the barn. There, it surfaces and leads into a wall-mounted inverter, a box that converts the electricity from direct current to alternating current. From there, an aboveground cable snakes its way to the main breaker box in our basement. Adjacent to that spot, on the outside of our house, two new meters have replaced the one we used to have. The whole process, from signing a contract with the installer to generating our first kilowatt hour (kWh), took about three-and-a-half months, but this can vary for all sorts of reasons.

I had to fell four big trees to gain the minimum 80% shade-free exposure we needed to receive the state's subsidy for our system. (I only *brushed* the barn with one limb; the chicken fence didn't fare so well!) A giant pile of "rounds" awaits splitting and assures my exercise this winter, plus much of our wood supply two years out.

We decided to buy and own this system outright because we like the idea of controlling its use and realizing its long-term financial and environmental benefits. (Other options are available, such as a company owning and maintaining the system on your property without any cash outlay by you.) We decided not to buy a battery backup, at least for now, due to the significant added cost of a

Middle and right photos courtesy Tom Howe. Left and inset photos by Brenda Charpentier.

Above, left and middle: *Tom Howe and Sarah Thorne opted to install their solar panels in the field behind their Gilmanton farmhouse, where the panels get more true-south exposure than they would atop either the barn or house.*

Above, right: *Site work included digging a shallow cable trench.*

Inset: *Meters on the house show the total electricity produced and how much has been imported (bought) vs. exported (sold) to the Co-op since the solar system was installed.*

required second inverter. This means that whatever electricity our system generates at any given moment goes first to meet the electrical demand of our home at that time. If the array is making more power than our house is using at that time, we "export" (sell) the surplus into the grid and get credit for this on our next monthly bill from the NH Electric Cooperative. When our array shuts down at night, or is otherwise not making enough power to meet our household's demand at the time, such as on a cloudy day, we "import" (buy) the electricity we need from the grid. Our electricity is measured in terms of "kilowatt hours" (kWh), one kWh being enough electricity to power 10 100-watt lightbulbs for an hour. We're currently selling our surplus electricity to the Coop for 12.7 cents/kWh and buying what we need at the higher price of 16.2 cents/kWh, but this of course will differ from one utility company to another.

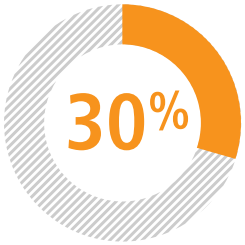
N.H. Renewable Energy Property Tax Exemption:

RSA 72:61-72 permits cities and towns to offer exemptions from local property taxes for certain renewable energy installations. These include solar systems (thermal and photovoltaic), wind turbines, and central wood-fired heating systems. Woodstoves and fireplaces are not included. The goal of the exemption is to create a tax neutral policy within a municipality that neither increases an individual's property tax, nor decreases the municipality's property tax revenues. By implementing it as a tax neutral policy, homeowners do not have a disincentive of higher property taxes for installing a renewable energy system, and since there is no net reduction in municipal tax revenues, other taxpayers in a municipality are not affected.

— from the N.H. Office of Energy and Planning website, nh.gov/oep.

Our estimated "payback" period is about 10 years, i.e. how long it will take for our electrical cost savings to equal our upfront, net cost to buy and install the system. We have no anticipated maintenance costs. After 10 years, once our system has paid for itself, our array will essentially make money for us. If we don't stay in our house that long, various studies suggest that we'll still

SOLAR
By the Numbers



The federal Investment Tax Credit for solar installations. It's currently scheduled to ramp incrementally down to 10% by 2022.

70+
Number of solar companies working in New Hampshire

48% Drop in the cost of residential solar photovoltaic system prices in the U.S. since 2010.

The number of homes in New Hampshire that solar installations could have powered by the end of 2015. (Vermont had enough installations to power 19,000 homes; Massachusetts had enough to power 163,000 homes.)

recoup our initial investment in the form of added resale value to our property. Our panels are guaranteed for 25 years, with a predicted lifespan well beyond that. Beyond the financial benefits, we smile every day knowing that we're further lessening our carbon footprint and living more sustainably.

Kim Frase, of Frase Electric LLC, in Sandwich, N.H., designed and installed our system. Having installed more than 60 such systems, he made the process easy for us. We deliberately had him install more generating capacity, 6.84 kilowatts, or kW, than our household currently uses, to accommodate the possible future addition of an electric vehicle. At noon on the winter solstice, with full sun, the array was producing 5.3 kW, or 78% of its theoretical capacity. Our highest output to date has been 6.0 kW, at noon on a sunny March day. To our surprise, Kim said March or April, not the summer solstice, is when we can expect the maximum output, due to strong sun, still-cool temperatures (hot temperatures reduce production), and the pre-leaf condition of the few, distant trees reducing the array's exposure to the first and last rays of light each day. Although we had only a few snowfalls last winter, the panels seemed to clear themselves of snow within a day or so, depending on conditions. But I couldn't resist going out and speeding up the process with a long-handled broom—didn't want to pass up any of that silent, free power!

For the first month of operation, including much cloudy winter weather and a low-angled sun, we generated a total of 340 kWh. Away on vacation for one of the four weeks, we used a total of 403 kWh during the month. Of the power we produced, we actually used only 15% of it (52 kWh) directly at our home, to our surprise. The 85% balance (288 kWh) was surplus, i.e. more than our house was using at the time, which we exported to the grid. During nights and cloudy days, when we used more electricity than our array was producing, we imported 351 kWh from the grid. So for

HOT TOPIC IN N.H. LEGISLATURE:
Legislature Acts to Allow More Homeowners and Businesses to Sell Excess Energy into Grid

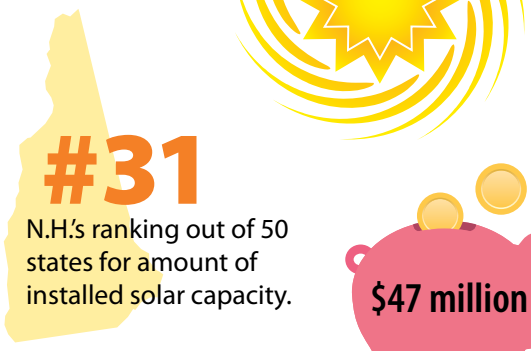
Net metering refers to the ability of the owner of solar panels or other small scale, on-site power source (known as a distributed generation system or DG) to sell the excess electricity they generate back to their local electric company via the power grid. Net metering policies were introduced across the country to encourage the growth of these DG systems. The policy appears to be working; the National Conference on State Legislatures says U.S. solar capacity has increased 418 percent since 2010 and more than half of this increase comes in the form of solar panels at homes and businesses.

Specific policies on the monetary value of this excess energy and how much DG systems can sell back to the utilities vary by state. Until just recently in New Hampshire, we had a cap of 50 megawatts of electricity generation, divided up by the state's largest utilities, that could be "net metered." As New Hampshire was about to reach this cap earlier this year, lawmakers passed legislation to double it to 100 megawatts. Gov. Maggie Hassan is expected to sign the legislation into law soon.

Many renewable energy advocates are encouraged by the Legislature's move to raise the cap, in order to continue to encourage the growth of renewable energy and to give businesses and towns a tool to control their energy costs. On the other hand, critics of net metering say raising the cap will increase the cost of maintaining the utility poles, wires, transformers, circuit breakers and the other parts of the distribution system that are paid for by those without DG systems.

For updates on renewable energy issues or others under debate in the N.H. Legislature, subscribe to our *Forest Advocate* e-newsletter by visiting forestsociety.org and choosing "sign up."

— Matt Leahy, Forest Society public policy manager



— 2015 data from the Solar Energy Industries Association

the four weeks, our utility company will charge us for our net *importation* of 63 kWh, i.e. the difference between the surplus 288 kWh we generated and exported to the grid, vs. the 351 kWh we imported. A cool website enables us to look at all the stats for our system for whatever period we want, and even shows the real-time output for each of the 24 panels!

If there's a power outage, our system stops working, since parts of it need electricity to function and we have no battery backup. Within perhaps a year, Kim thinks that Tesla Motors and the manufacturer of our inverter (SolarEdge) will finalize agreements enabling us to add battery storage without having to install a second inverter. Once we have this added capacity, when the power goes out, our system will still function. We'll have available the electricity stored in the batteries, plus whatever our array continues to generate from then on. We'll be glad to have this option for dealing with the increased number and severity of extreme weather events predicted in association with climate change.

As for financials, we paid $27,000 to purchase and install our system. However, we're getting $13,300 back in credits and rebates, so our final, net cost will be $13,700, or only half! Specifically, we'll get a federal energy tax credit of $8,175 on our IRS return, a benefit that Congress just renewed through the year 2021. The state is giving us a rebate check of $3,750 (for new installations, this has since dropped to $2,500), and the NH Electric Coop has sent a check for $1,375. At present, the Coop is the only utility in New Hampshire providing a rebate.

Our installer projects an annual 10% rate of return on our investment, i.e. our annual cost savings as a percentage of our upfront investment. Also, you needn't be concerned about increased property taxes resulting from your solar-oriented, capital improvement to your property—*if* your town has elected to exempt such facilities under the provisions of RSA 72:61-72, the Renewable Energy Property Tax Exemption (Gilmanton has.) For a list of which towns have approved such exemptions, plus lots more info about other governmental subsidies, go to: https://www.nh.gov/oep/energy/saving-energy/incentives.htm.

On a recent day, well after sunset, I was curious to see what the panels were doing. To my surprise, they were still producing a little electricity. That got me thinking: Will they make power from the reflected sunlight of a full moon? I've pegged the next date and will be setting my alarm to find out!

Tom Howe is senior director of land conservation at the Forest Society. His wife, Sarah Thorne, is a former Forest Society staff member who now teaches science in the Lakes Region. Tom and Sarah welcome questions about their solar power system and are happy to give tours to visitors. Contact thowe@forestsociety.org.

Guided Hikes and Fun at The Fells

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events. See more at www.forestsociety.org

Explore the Natural and Cultural Land Use History of The Fells

June series will deepen your understanding of forest ecology

A three-part series of summer evening hikes led by Forest Society Director of Education Dave Anderson. Learn about forest ecology, forest history and how people have shaped the forests surrounding the formal landscape gardens and architecture at The Fells Historic Estate and Gardens. Attend one or all three programs.

Co-sponsored by the Forest Society and the Fells.

The series costs $15 for nonmembers and $10 for members and starts at the Gatehouse kiosk, the Fells Historic Estate and Gardens on Lake Sunapee, 456 Route 103A, in Newbury. Registration required by calling 763-4789 x3, emailing info@thefells.org, or visiting www.thefells.org.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 4 TO 7 P.M.

Introduction to the Forests of The Fells

From seedlings and saplings to snags and stumps—this hike will interpret the forests at The Fells using trees as clues to regional forest history. Where are the oldest trees at The Fells and where are the youngest—and *why?* What factors—both natural and cultural—shaped the forests and wildlife habitats? Learn how local and regional disturbance histories, coupled with natural forest succession, shaped tree species composition at The Fells.

Difficulty: A moderate walk of about 1.5 miles along trails, with off-trail exploration along the shore of Lake Sunapee and returning uphill on the Ecology Trail along Beech Brook to the Gate House. Preregistration required.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 4 TO 7 P.M.

The Hidden History of the Fells

This walk at the Forest Society's Hay Forest Reservation will visit virtually unknown features of the former "Fells Farm" era during the tenure of Clarence L. Hay and Alice Appleton Hay. Hidden in the woods of the Forest Society's Hay Forest Reservation are cement cisterns that once fed water to The Fells, early logging trails and the ruins of a former maple sugarhouse. We'll visit the cellar hole ruins of the Milton Clark & Nathan Baker farm—the final and most expensive—of seven farms purchased by Secretary John Milton Hay. We'll visit the Sarah Bartlett cellar on the "Old Farm Road Trail" and the impoundment, filter house and cistern house which still provide gravity-fed water to fountains in the formal gardens of The Fells.

Difficulty: A guided hike of about 2.5 miles will include more rugged sections of off-trail exploration and easier walking along trails and woods roads. Pre-registration is required.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 4 TO 7 P.M.

In the Company of Light: Readings from the Works of Naturalist John Hay & Picnic on Sunset Hill

Naturalist John Hay was fond of hiking the hills of New Hampshire. Follow his footsteps to see spectacular views from the summit of Sunset Hill, the ancestral Hay family summer picnic spot. Dave will read several passages from John Hay's writings—all inspired by John Hay's boyhood rambles.

Difficulty: A comfortable, leisurely pace on a moderate, 2.4-mile round-trip hike that gains 550 feet to the 1,800- foot elevation at the summit. BYO picnic supper; preregistration required.

Soaking up the sun atop Sunset Hill.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4 | 10 a.m to 4 p.m.

Wildflower Festival

The Rocks Estate, Bethlehem

This day-long event features programs on the intriguing history of The Rocks, the flora growing there, beekeeping, and mushroom identification and foraging. Take either a morning or an afternoon guided tour of the Mile Path. Learn about the forest management plan for the property, and listen to presentations by a local beekeeper and an expert on foraging for mushrooms.

$10 per person; bring a brown bag lunch to enjoy at the property. For more information or to reserve a place on the tour, visit www.therocks.org, e-mail info@therocks.org, or call 603-444-6228.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11 | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Field Trip to Moody Mountain Forest

Wolfeboro

Join us for a public hike to celebrate one of our newest reservations, the 252-acre Moody Mountain Forest Reservation in Wolfeboro. We'll walk to the height of land along a new, mile-long loop trail created at the request of land donor Cecily Clark, who requested the trail be built to provide recreational access for the community. Forest Society staff will guide this hike through a beech-oak-hemlock forest with areas of spruce and white pine. The reservation is named after Abner Moody, Cecily Clark's great, great, great grandfather, who was granted the adjacent 320-acre Moody Mountain Farm for his Revolutionary War service. Join us to open the new trail and

celebrate the cultural and natural history to be enjoyed at this new Lakes Region gem.

Easy, 1.5- mile round-trip. Preregister at signup@forestsociety.org or by calling 224-9945.

SATURDAY, JULY 9 | 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Explore Proposed Addition to Black Mountain Forest Reservation

Sutton

Join us for a rugged hike to the interior of an incredible 230-acre, scenic tract with an extensive woods-road and skid trail network. The property contains specialized wildlife habitat including a spring-fed trout stream at the headwaters of Stevens Brook and a high saddle containing a large vernal pool. The rocky summit ledges and steep, south-facing rock talus slopes feature a rare sedge species and old growth red oak forest. Overlooking the Kearsarge Regional High School, this property is proposed to be added to the Forest Society's adjacent 1,060 acre Black Mountain Forest Reservation.

This is a rugged, often steep hike including sections of off-trail bushwhacking. Preregister at signup@forestsociety.org or by calling 224-9945.

Photo by Carrie Deegan.

Volunteers improve Monadnock's trails at MTW 2015.

FRI.-TUES., JULY 15-19 | 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Monadnock Trails Week

Mt. Monadnock State Park, Jaffrey

Join the Forest Society and N.H. State Parks in restoring hiking trails on Mount Monadnock. Come for one day or several, alone or with friends! Prior trail maintenance experience is welcome but not necessary. We will restore trails, build drainage waterbars and construct footbridges and stone staircases.

To sign up, contact Jenn Seredejko at Jseredejko@forestsociety.org or 224-9945.

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

Summit Circle *($5,000 and up)*
Event Builders, LLC
Paradigm Computer Consulting

Chairman's Circle *($2,500 to $4,999)*
EOS Research
Merrimack County Savings Bank
Northeast Delta Dental
Northland Forest Products
SCM Associates

President/Forester's Circle *($1,000 to $2,499)*
Atta Girl Records
Eastman Hill Enterprises, Inc.
Harold W. Bodwell & Sons, LLC
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Inn on Golden Pond
Lumbard & Kellner, LLC
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Superior Nut Company, Inc.
The Siemon Company

Steward *($750 to $999)*
BCM Environmental & Land Law, PLLC
Winnipesaukee Chocolates

Partner *($500 to $749)*
Arcomm Communications Corporation
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Durgin & Crowell Lumber Co., Inc.
Harvest Capital Management, Inc.
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Jed Schwartz Productions
Kane Conservation
Long Term Care Partners, LLC
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NH Conservation Real Estate
Peabody & Smith Realty, Inc.
Precision Lumber, Inc.
R. M. Piper, Inc.
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VPS Drywall, LLC

Colleague *($250 to $499)*
Ambit Engineering, Inc.
Birch Hill Summer Camp, Inc.
Cersosimo Lumber Co., Inc.
Cleveland, Waters and Bass, P.A.
Concord Cooperative Market
Devine, Millimet & Branch, P.A.
Doucet Survey, Inc.
Fuller's Sugarhouse, LLC
Great Brook Veterinary Clinic, LLC
Half Moon Enterprises
Kel-Log, Inc.

Colleague *(continued)*
LaValley Building Supply, Inc.
Limington Lumber Company
Lincoln Financial Group Foundation
Meadow Leasing, Inc.
North Woodlands, Inc.
Northern Design Precast
Pine Springs
Ridgeview Construction, LLC
The Adair Country Inn and Restaurant
The Music Mill
Wendell Veterinary Clinic
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Amica Companies Foundation
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ExxonMobil Foundation
f5 Networks
Fairpoint Communications
FM Global Foundation
Gartner
GE Foundation
Global Impact
Green Mountain Coffee
Hewlett Packard Company Foundation
The Home Depot Foundation
Houghton Mifflin Matching Gifts Program
IBM Corporation
Lincoln Financial Group Foundation
Long-Term Care Partners
Lumina Foundation for Education
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Merck Partership for Giving
Meredith Corporation Foundation
The Millipore Foundation
Morgan-Worcester, Inc.
Open System Resources, Inc.
Oracle Corporation
Payden & Rydel
Pfizer Foundation
Prudential Matching Gifts Program
Saint-Gobain Corporation
Shell Oil Company Foundation
Tender Corporation
Textron Matching Gift Program
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And many thanks to those businesses who give less than $250.

The Forest Society…Where Conservation and Business Meet

For information on business memberships, please contact Susanne Kibler-Hacker at (603) 224-9945 or via email at skh@forestsociety.org.

Follow the Yellow Blaze Trail: Meet Len Martin

By Carrie Deegan

If you've been hiking on a Forest Society reservation in the past six years, chances are the yellow trail markers you followed were painted by Len Martin.

Len has been a volunteer for the Forest Society since 2010, when he attended the land steward training in order to steward the Bockes Memorial Forest in Londonderry. He spent a good year diligently monitoring the convoluted boundaries at Bockes Forest (a property that abuts more than 70 residential parcels), but Len isn't the kind of guy who likes to be tied down to just one place. He started volunteering for trail workdays on other properties and quickly gained an appreciation for the variety of forest types and natural communities on the Forest Society's reservations. And when we needed "roving" volunteers to make annual monitoring visits to properties without stewards, Len jumped at the chance.

"After the experiences I gained at various workdays, the thought of "freelancing" and having the opportunity to explore new places all the time was extremely attractive," Len said.

Roving stewards often visit some of the Forest Society's most remote reservations, those that are difficult to access and don't have any recreational infrastructure to speak of. Many don't even have woods roads or a property sign. That's not a problem for Len.

"I love bushwhacking," he said. "It feels like I'm really out there, away from it all. It's very serene. Plus, some of the things I've gotten to see off the beaten path—wonderful creeks, beautiful isolated ponds, or monster pine trees with 17 huge trunks growing together—those are things I wouldn't have seen sticking to the roads and trails."

Len is a fan of the front-country experience too. He's a self-confessed "workday junkie" who will travel almost anywhere in the state, especially if there are trails to mark and logs to peel. Len has marking trails down to a science: one peanut butter jar of yellow paint will last exactly as long as it takes his foam brush to wear out from scraping the bark of the trees he's painting. Grab a refill, and a new foam brush, and he's good for another mile of perfect little drip-free rectangles.

Len Martin paints blaze marks along the trail at Bockes Memorial Forest.

When asked why he likes marking trails so much, as opposed to other tasks like building bridges or working on drainage, he said, "It may not be as physical as some of the other work, but I can really get in a zone. It's a zen experience for me." And then he added, "But secretly... it's because I get to walk the whole trail that way, and I'm not stuck in one project location."

Keep on rolling, Len. We promise you won't gather any moss volunteering with the Forest Society.

Carrie Deegan is the volunteers and community engagement manager at the Forest Society. If you would like information about volunteering, email her at cdeegan@forestsociety.org.

Along the Skid Trail for Forestry 101

By Brenda Charpentier

Teacher Pat Thorpe came to a tour of the timber harvest site at the Forest Society's Ashuelot River Headwaters Forest in Lempster because she owns a camp nearby and she wanted to improve her tree ID skills. But after spending a mild January morning with a group led by three foresters and a naturalist, she said she got so much more. More about forest ecology and sustainable forestry that her students will soon learn about, too.

"I just got about a month of lessons!," she said at the end of the tour. "I'll take all of this back to class with me."

The Forest Society offers two public "timber tours" a year at Forest Society reservations where harvests are taking place. The tours provide an opportunity to show community members, landowners and anyone curious about forestry and logging which trees are being harvested, how they are being harvested and why, as well as how the harvest fits into the long-range management plan for the property.

The tours are especially instructive for landowners.

"There are many things to consider when cutting your woodlot, like sustainability, wildlife, timing, environmental considerations, and many best management practices and laws. This can be a daunting task for many landowners, and our tours help explain how the process works and what a forester can do for them," said Wendy Weisiger, lead forester for the Forest Society and one of the tour leaders in Lempster.

A slow walk along the skidder trail gives participants plenty of time to ask questions. Invariably, they are surprised to learn about the wide range in how much money each log represents for the landowner, depending on whether it would be sold for woodchips, fine furniture or something in between.

"We always talk about the wood markets and end products, about the destination for those piles of logs, what they're going to be turned into and what they're worth," said Dave Anderson, the Forest Society's education director.

Consulting forester Jeremy Turner discusses how the harvest on 195 acres will accomplish some of the goals for the 1,827 acres that are conserved at the Ashuelot River Headwaters Forest. Those goals are discussed in a blog post you can access by searching for "Ashuelot timber harvest" at forestsociety.org.

Wendy Weisiger, Forest Society lead forester, Jeremy Turner, consulting forester, and Dave Anderson, Forest Society education director, talk over how saw logs are measured and valued for sale.

Tour leaders explain why it's important to remove every tree in a 3-acre "patch cut,"—also called a small clearcut—when trying to encourage a new, young forest to grow and benefit wildlife species that require shrubby habitat. Removing all shade allows the most sunlight and heat to reach the soils and seeds, nurturing a faster-growing replacement forest.

Turner and Weisiger show the locations of mills in New Hampshire and nearby states that will receive truckloads of logs from the Ashuelot harvest. Depending on species and quality, the wood may become pellets for woodstoves, pallets, tool handles, flooring, lumber, chips for biomass plants or veneer for fine furniture, among other products.

The tour was the first for Cindy Miner, who lives near the Ashuelot reservation in Lempster. "The expertise here was excellent," she said. "It would be very good for people who are against logging to come on these tours to get educated."

Showing that sustainable harvesting encourages healthy, diverse forests is indeed one more reason the Forest Society offers tours. Many people associate logging equipment with development, Anderson said, and often mistakenly assume that some sort of construction will follow a harvest.

That's never the case on Forest Society land, and he loves to tell people on the tours: "What's going in here after the harvest is ... another forest."

Tours are usually offered in summer and winter. We'll post the next tour on the events page at forestsociety.org when details are in place.

By Brenda Charpentier

Top photo by Jerry and Marcy Monkman, EcoPhotography; Bottom photo by Tom Howe.

Top: *The trailhead property in Alton provides access to the breathtaking view of Lake Winnipesaukee from the Mt. Major summit.*

Bottom: *Dave Roberts may know the Belknap Range better than anyone after exploring them for more than two decades and mapping trails to encourage others to get out there, too.*

Conservation Heroics—and Patience—on Mt. Major

Forest Society Acquires Key Trailhead Property

The Forest Society closed on the 72-acre property that is the gateway to the popular hiking trails up Mt. Major in Alton in December. This parcel was part of the successful "Everybody Hikes Mt. Major" project of 2013-2014 that resulted in the much quicker purchase of three other properties in the Mt. Major vicinity. Closing on this last key piece—the first tract entered by some 80,000 hikers annually—was delayed as the Forest Society worked through unanticipated title issues.

The seller was Dave Roberts, without whose commitment and patience this effort could not have been successful. Dave is a longtime Forest Society member and a founder of the Belknap Range Conservation Coalition who spent decades exploring and mapping the Belknap Range after retiring from teaching high school in Farmington.

When the property was about to be sold before the Forest Society could act to buy it, Dave quickly bought it and held onto it while we raised the funds to buy it from him. No one realized that the process of establishing a clear title would take more than a year. Thanks to Dave's unending patience, as well as that of major funders including the Open Space Institute, LCHIP

(the N.H. Land and Community Heritage Investment Program), and the Town of Alton, this critical piece is now a permanent Forest Society trailhead.

Though the Everybody Hikes Mt. Major campaign is now officially complete, there is still much unprotected land on Mt. Major and in the surrounding Belknap Range. The Forest Society will be working to conserve more parcels of this important New Hampshire icon as opportunities arise.

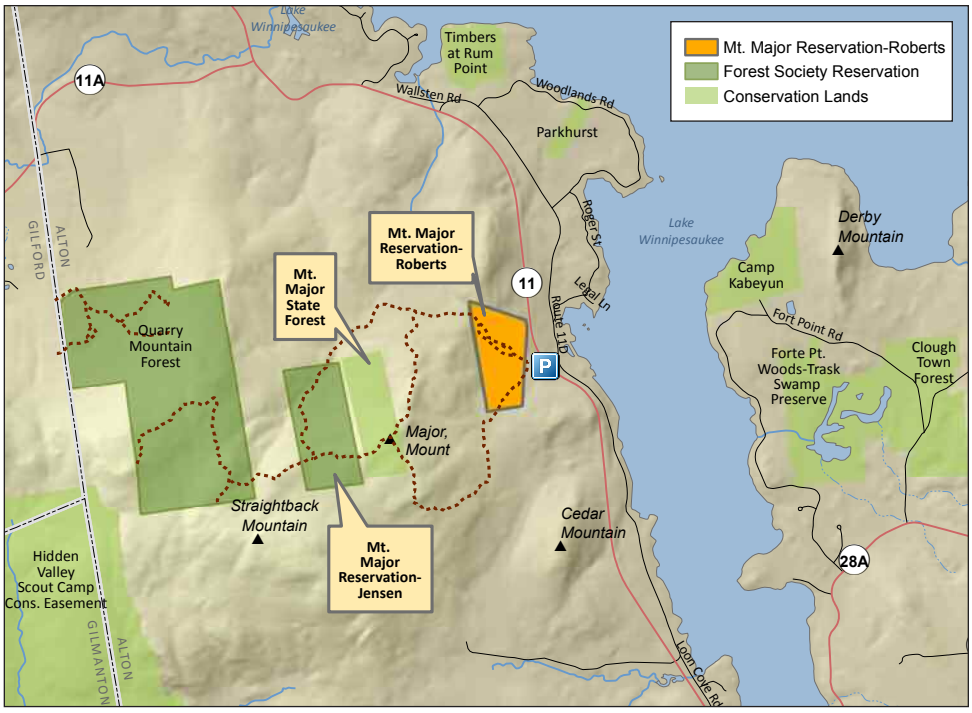
Stewardship Update

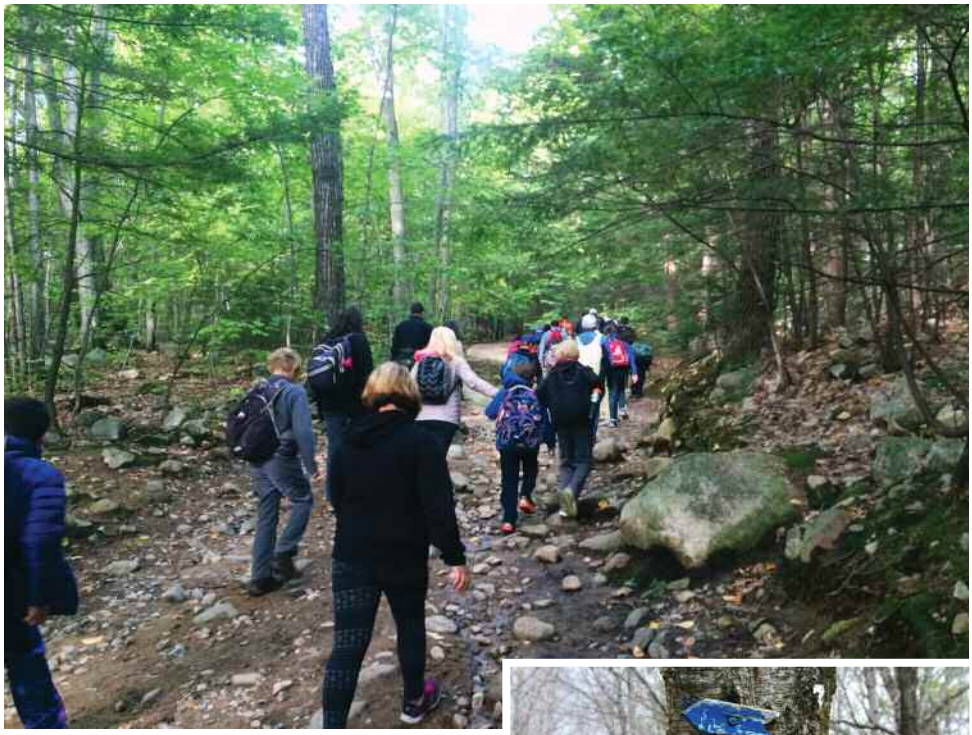
With ownership of recreation land on Mt. Major and the nearby East Quarry Mountain comes the responsibility to care for— steward—these important areas, especially where heavy usage has created the need for management to protect the resource from being "loved to death." Several stewardship projects are in the works:

- Porta-potties will be available for hikers in the parking lot off Route 11. The Forest Society plans to have them installed on a trial basis for the summer hiking season.

- Plans are taking shape to deal with the problem of significant trail erosion on Mt. Major. The assessment and planning will continue this summer for the trails the Forest Society owns (many sections are privately owned without protections in place).

- To improve access to the 455-acre Quarry Mountain Forest on East Quarry Mountain, the Forest Society is planning a new parking area, trailhead and kiosk off Reed Road in Alton. The extensive trail system in the Belknaps extends from Mt. Major to Quarry, Straightback and other Belknap peaks. This new parking area and trailhead will take some pressure off the main Mt. Major trails and parking area while providing access to great hiking in other parts of the range. The work is planned for the fall.





***Above:** A school group starts up the main trail.*

Tucked Away on Pawtuckaway

Town, Landowners Save Lakefront to Save the Lake

It takes Sam Demeritt about half a second to pinpoint what galvanized his town of Nottingham to tap into its Conservation Fund to conserve a certain 95-acre forest owned by Rick and Helen Fernald.

"This project was all about keeping Pawtuckaway Lake from being impacted more," said Demeritt, the chair of the Nottingham Conservation Commission.

Pawtuckaway is Nottingham's biggest lake. It's treasured by anglers casting for bass, pickerel and crappies, by waterskiers and kayakers and by swimmers and wildlife watchers, whether they're locals or visitors enjoying Pawtuckaway State Park, which surrounds nearly half of the lake's jagged shoreline. The lake's shores tell a compelling story and seem to offer a choice. Homes line the east and south, while the west and north shores host a couple of public beaches but are still largely undeveloped, thanks mainly to the protection of the state park.

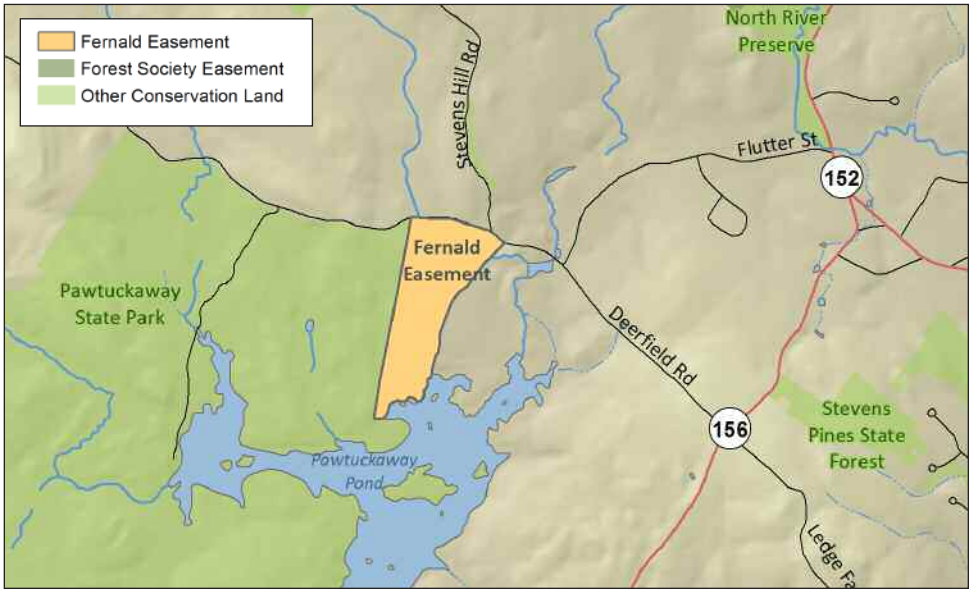
The 95-acre forest sits next to the state park and is also bordered by the lake on one end and Deerfield Road on the other. A stream runs through several forest types there that show abundant signs of moose, deer, otter, porcupine, fishers and many other animals. Near the border with the park, black gum trees have grown large enough to be more than 300 years old. One huge black gum tree just a few feet over the border, in the park, is likely to be a whole lot older than that.

When members of the Conservation Commission got the opportunity to partner with the Forest Society to acquire a conservation easement on the Fernalds' land, there wasn't much debate about an opportunity to keep such a special piece of lakefront undeveloped. The town's selectmen unanimously agreed to support the project, and additional funding came from a grant from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries

Top photo by Jeff Sluder; bottom photo by Brenda Charpentier.

Above: *Pawtuckaway Lake as seen from the newly conserved land in Nottingham.*

Right: *Rick and Helen Fernald have strengthened the Fernald family's already significant contribution to conservation by making possible the protection of land adjacent to Pawtuckaway State Park.*



Partnership, plus many generous individual contributors.

"It's extending the area covered by the park, and it also has all that frontage on Pawtuckaway Lake. If you put homes in there, you'd ultimately have everything draining into the lake," Demeritt said.

Fortunately Rick and Helen shared the town's desire to protect the land and the lake. They made the project possible by selling the conservation easement to the Forest Society for far less than its market value.

Although the Fernalds live in Wolfeboro, Rick grew up in Nottingham, where his family has roots going back to the 1700s and has passed down what he calls "a land-loving gene" from two sides of his family. Rick's grandfather and great uncles worked together back in the 1930s and '40s to collect parcels of land in the Nottingham area to use for cutting timber. His grandmother on the other side of the family also owned land in the area that was passed down through the generations. The easement land is part of one of those parcels that came from Rick's grandmother.

The Fernald family has already worked with the town and the Forest Society to protect several of the other family properties now owned by Rick, his brother, Jim Fernald, and sister, Deb Fernald Stevens. In 2006, the siblings sold a conservation easement on 2,027 acres, known as the Mulligan Forest, to the Forest Society, again making the project possible by offering the development rights at a below-market price. That easement, acquired through grants, town funding and individual contributors, enabled the Mulligan Forest to be protected from future development and subdivision but open for public recreation like hiking and hunting. It is still well managed by the Fernald family to furnish lumber and firewood.

The property on Pawtuckaway is similarly managed for timber.

"It's been a good pine lot," Rick said.

The desire to conserve it came in part from the success of the Mulligan Forest project, he said, and from witnessing how the area where he grew up has changed and many forests have disappeared in a fast-growing area of New Hampshire.

"This seemed to be the time to do it, and an easement is a good way to protect the land from development but still be able to log it from time to time," he said.

Every easement is unique, and the Fernalds' easement on the Pawtuckaway land makes provision for the town, which holds an executory interest in the easement, to put in a small parking area in consultation with the Fernalds to make the land more accessible for low-impact recreation. As the beauty of the land is enjoyed by the community in the future, the land itself will continue to offer a home to wildlife and a buffer of protection to Pawtuckaway Lake.

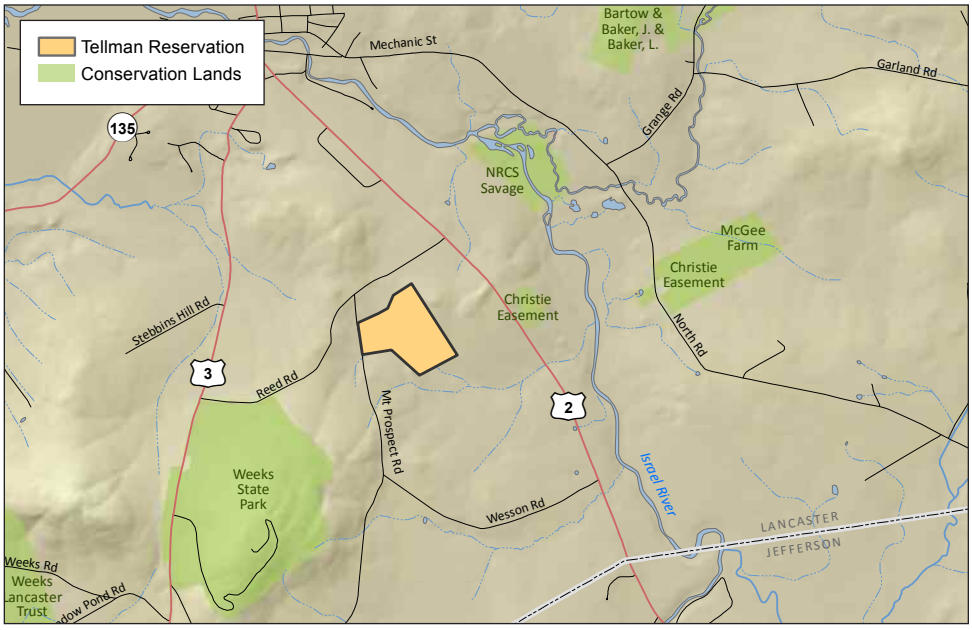
From Colorado, with Love

How does a Colorado couple come to donate land in Lancaster, N.H. to the Forest Society? It began in 1969.

Steve and Gaynelle Tellman fell in love with a patch of woods in Lancaster not long after falling in love with each other. He was in the Navy; she had grown up in a military family. They'd seen lots of places, but they honeymooned in New England and knew it was where they wanted to live when Steve completed his service.

So they settled on Whitefield, near family members, and one day noticed a particularly attractive part of nearby Lancaster that was part of a large farm. The land wasn't for sale. But they talked to the farmer who owned it anyway and asked if they could buy some. To their surprise and happiness, he said yes.

He sold them a 75-acre piece with a nice flat area with southern exposure for a house and a spring-fed stream of crystal clean water.



"We would drive over there after dinner, cut brush, get bonded with the land, work on it. We explored just about every inch of it," recalled Steve. "We were young... we loved that property. We had a place all staked out for a house."

Then the economy tumbled and career necessity sent the Tellmans to New York. They held onto the land, hoping to be able to move back some day and pick up where

Continued on page 27.

Photo by John Welch/johnwelchphoto.com; Opposite page, top by Jack Savage.

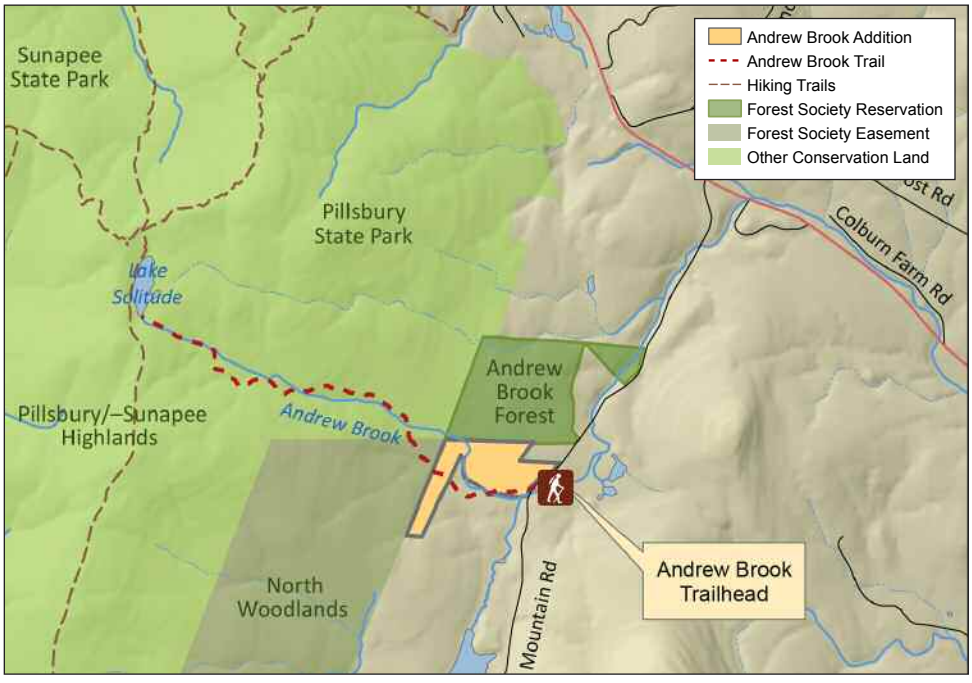
The Andrew Brook Trail is a 2-mile ascent up Andrew Brook on the eastern side of Mt. Sunapee to Lake Solitude, a pristine pond surrounded by conifers. It then meets up with other trails leading to the scenic White Ledges area and to Mt. Sunapee's peak.

Security Measures for Beloved Mt. Sunapee Trail

Members of the hiking community around Mt. Sunapee put their enthusiasm for a popular trail to Lake Solitude to work and quickly helped the Forest Society raise funds to conserve the property where the trail begins.

The Forest Society purchased the 33-acre trailhead property, off Mountain Road in Newbury, in order to protect access to the Andrew Brook Trail.

"So many people who love this trail assumed that the trailhead was part of Mt. Sunapee State Park, but in fact it was privately owned and therefore vulnerable when it came up for sale," said Jane Difley, Forest Society president/forester. "Now that the Forest Society owns it, public access is protected, and we want to thank the fans of this trail for helping to secure it."



Peaceful times at Lake Solitude await hikers at the top of the Andrew Brook Trail.

The opportunity to save the trailhead property resonated in the community, said Midge Eliassen, a former Forest Society trustee who is also a member of the Sunapee Women's Adventure Group (S-WAG), whose members supported the project.

"We think of it as one of our most special places," Eliassen said. "We know our grandparents took picnic hikes and sleepover fishing trips to Solitude. We have introduced our grandchildren to the rewards at the end of the trail: the huge old birch, the quiet, beautiful lake, and the long views from the rocky cliffs over the lake. No one wanted to take a chance that the property would pass into private hands and access via the trail, along the brook and past the giant erratic boulders, might be closed off."

Support also came from the Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway (SRKG), Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway, Friends of Mt. Sunapee, Lake Sunapee Protective Association, Cardigan Highlander Volunteers, the Newbury Conservation Commission, individuals and family foundations.

"Hikers and other folks in the community stepped up to save this trailhead property for everyone's future benefit," said SRKG member Gerry Gold. "Also amazing to me is the Forest Society's persistence and leadership on Mt. Sunapee, working with landowners to conserve property after property."

The Forest Society's conservation efforts on Mt. Sunapee date back to 1911 when the organization conserved its first property in the area. In 1947, the organization transferred more than 2,100 acres to the State of New Hampshire to be run as Mt. Sunapee State Park.

In 2006, the Forest Society led a campaign to conserve 1,100 acres of land on the eastern slope of Mt. Sunapee adjacent to the state park. An easement there protects the middle section of the Andrew Brook Trail. In 2010 the Goubert family of Sunapee donated 75 acres of land next to the newly purchased 33-acre property. Both will now be called the Andrew Brook Forest Reservation.

The Andrew Brook Trail and others in the vicinity have been maintained for decades by the Cardigan Highlanders Volunteer Trail Crew. Crew leader Craig Sanborn said the group has adopted the trail and makes sure the path is clear, well marked and well drained. Anyone interested in volunteering to help maintain the trail can contact Jenn Seredejko at jseredejko@forestsociety.org.

Tellman continued from page 25.

they left off. That "someday" stayed in the back of their minds for years, then decades. Meanwhile, beavers enjoyed the big wetlands complex and snowmobilers used the well- established trail across it, with the full blessing of the Tellmans, who said they were glad the snowmobilers enjoyed it.

"We didn't want to be hasty and give it up too quickly. We thought it might be a place where we wanted to retire," Steve said.

But by retirement time, Ridgeway, Colo., with its dry mountain climate, enticed them to stay there instead.

So it was time to decide what to do with the Lancaster property that nurtured their dreams in youth and kept their memories in older years. It was so much more than a commodity to them. Gaynelle has a degree in natural history and Steve, who worked in the wood products industry, has a master's of forestry. They value conservation and have a deep love of nature.

"That piece of land grows spruce and fir beautifully," Steve said.

They had heard much about the Forest Society from Steve's brother and sister-in-law, Dave and Tanya Tellman, longtime members who live in Whitefield and have volunteered as docents at the Forest Society's Rocks Estate for 25 years. An idea developed.

"We were attached to that land in a very sentimental way, so we thought, why don't we donate it?," Steve said.

The Tellmans made this gift with no strings attached, giving the Forest Society flexibility in how it will be used to support the conservation mission. "We like and trust the Forest Society. They can go ahead and do whatever they want with it," Steve said.

The Forest Society continues to work on conserving abutting land that will improve access, recreational opportunities and forest management possibilities. If we are successful, this keystone gift will become a recognized Forest Society reservation.

Photo by Ryan Young.

While the Tellmans have been away, beavers have made good use of their land, now donated to the Forest Society.

"Steve and Gaynelle Tellman truly understand what makes New Hampshire special," said Jane Difley, the Forest Society's president/forester. "And we are honored that they chose to support our conservation work with such a generous and thoughtful gift."

Leaving on a High Note: Landowner, Donors Add 261 Acres to High Watch Preserve

For retired businessman Patrick Marks, the 261 acres of land next to Green Mountain and the Forest Society's High Watch Preserve in Effingham meant privacy and peaceful walks in the woods. Good times hunting with friends and family. A view of the White Mountains from the back yard, where he kept Peking ducks, donkeys and chickens. For a time it meant the solace of home.

Patrick Marks greets the welcoming committee at his former home in Effingham.

And it was also a collection. He bought the first piece in the early '80s and started adding adjacent pieces as they came up for sale. Over the years, after registering the land as a Tree Farm, managing it for timber and supporting conservation efforts on nearby properties, he came to see the land in a way that other conservation-minded people will readily relate to.

It was a piece of a puzzle—a puzzle depicting a map—that he wanted to color "conserved" green. When his life went in new directions and he decided to move from New Hampshire to South Carolina, the time had come.

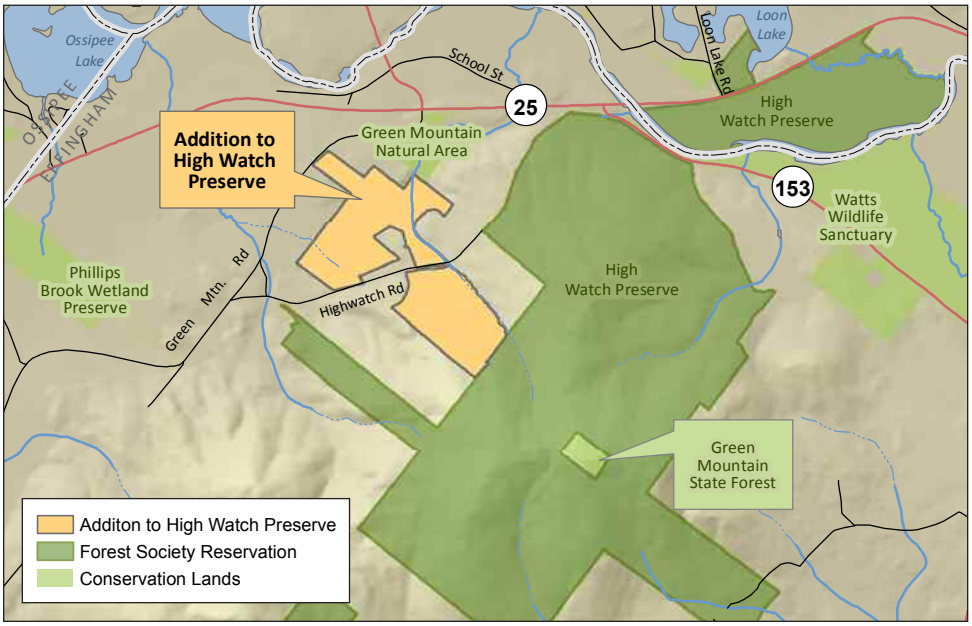
"High Watch Preserve was already there and this property, I thought, would be a great fit for putting some of the pieces of the puzzle together. When you look at a map and see how much land is conserved nearby, you want to help complete that puzzle," Marks said by phone from South Carolina.

So, Marks offered to sell the land—three parcels in all—to the Forest Society for much less than its market value so that the Forest Society could add it to High Watch. But first the Forest Society had to raise the funds to purchase and steward the land. Many individual donors recognized the opportunity and came through to help. Now the High Watch Preserve is 2,366 acres strong and one of the Forest Society's largest reservations.

"Taking into account two more adjacent Forest Society parcels and abutting lands conserved by other groups, this addition has created one single, contiguous, conserved block of 15 tracts totaling 11,519 acres, across two states—land conservation on a truly landscape scale," said Tom Howe, senior director of land conservation at the Forest Society. "Equally inspiring is Patrick's generosity. We couldn't have conserved this land without his terrifically discounted price."

High Watch offers great hiking trails up to the summit of Green Mountain, where you can see spectacular views of the surrounding mountain ranges in New Hampshire, Maine and sometimes even Vermont. The addition adds great wildlife habitat and timber management opportunities, with its stands of pitch pine, younger hardwoods and white pine, boggy wetlands and parts of Hodgdon Brook and Leavitt Brook. Both brooks eventually feed into the Ossipee River. This is the watershed for the critical Ossipee aquifer, the largest underground source of pure drinking water in the state.

"It's a beautiful piece of property," said Marks. "I decided the best thing to do was to keep it in conservation—that way, the whole thing stays the way it is."



For a trail map, photos and hiking information for Green Mountain via the High Watch Preserve, visit the Reservation Guide at forestsociety.org.

Monadnock Wishes Fulfilled

In a wood-sided, 1950s station wagon stuffed full of brothers and sisters, two weeks' worth of summer clothes and the family dog, Susan Stowell McCracken and her siblings were so excited to reach Mt. Monadnock after their long trip from Pennsylvania that they would start singing, "Over the river, and through the woods, to Grandmother's house we go!"

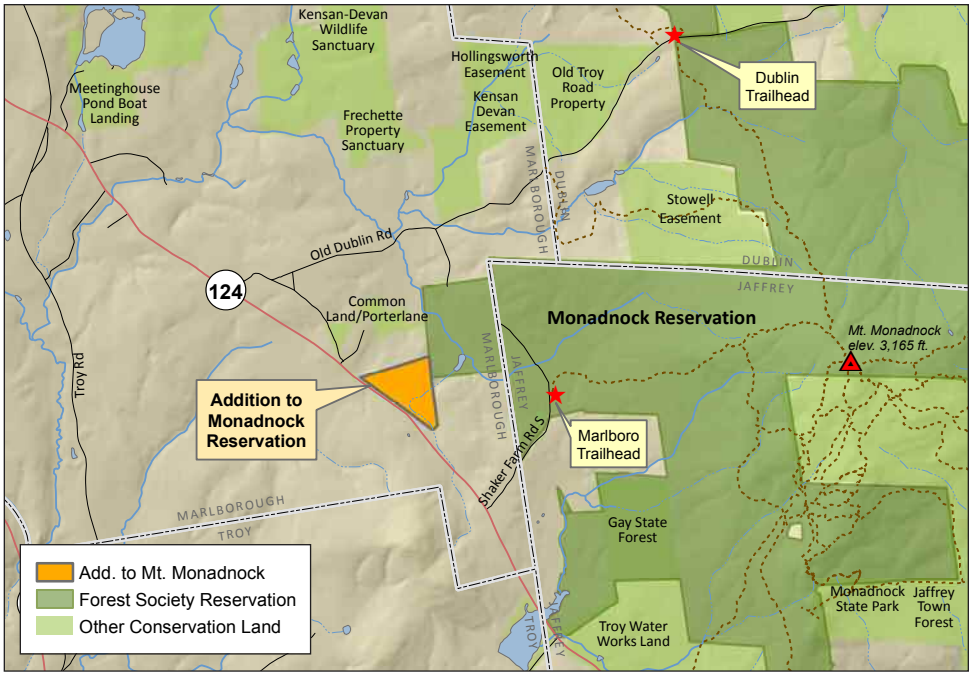
Driving the car was Joseph Stowell, Sr., whose mother, Sarah Stowell, was the grandmother the children were happily singing about. For Joseph, it was coming home to Monadnock's western slope, where he grew up on land that hosts part of the Marlboro Trail. For his wife and children, it was coming back to another adventuresome summer vacation in the New Hampshire forest.

"We always felt like we were so deep into the woods. There was no electricity, and it was like going back in time. We felt like pioneers. And the mountain was ever present," McCracken said in a phone conversation from her home in Maine.

McCracken's grandparents, Edmund Channing and Sarah Russell Stowell, were both Boston physicians who bought close to 400 acres of abutting parcels in Jaffrey and Marlborough in the early 20th century. They fell in love with the place they called Underhill, built a home there they called The Chalet and moved there to raise their three sons.

Joseph Stowell grew up and moved away to practice medicine in Pennsylvania, where he and his wife Jane raised Susan, her twin Sally, Joe Jr., Fred, Cecile and Chrissey. But Underhill and Monadnock always remained a part of her father, McCracken said.

"He was at home in the woods. When he and my mother were engaged, they climbed to the top of Monadnock. When we were little, climbing Monadnock was a must every summer, and Daddy would carry the youngest of us up in a basket. Upon reaching the top, we would signal down to Grandma with a mirror and she would signal back from the veranda of the Chalet. We would pick blueberries along the way and when we arrived back, Grandma would make us a blueberry cake."



Mt. Monadnock wouldn't be the amazing place it is without families like the Stowells, who have once again enabled the Forest Society to acquire land at Monadnock's foot.

Years later after his parents died, Joseph Stowell bought Underhill from his brothers, and the family continued to visit. Though no one lived there any longer and the homestead burned down, the land was still a treasured destination for extended family gatherings and cookouts. Before her father died in 2003, he made his wishes for the land known.

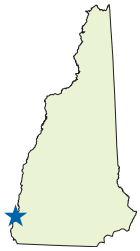
"We all were conscious of how much he loved the land," she said. "He never really had it in writing, but he talked about wanting the land to go to the Forest Society for preservation. We wanted to make sure that happened."

In 2012, the family sold 363 acres to the Forest Society. And this past winter, they generously offered the last piece, 49 acres off NH Route 124, to the Forest Society at far less than its appraised value. Thanks to grants from the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Initiative and individual donors, the Forest Society was able to acquire the piece in late December to enlarge the Mt. Monadnock Reservation and the stronghold of more than 5,000 acres of conserved land on and around Mt. Monadnock.

The 49-acre piece offers diverse wildlife habitat including wetlands, a stream and a well managed forest that is a certified Tree Farm. With its protection comes the fulfillment of Joseph Stowells' wishes for his family's beloved Underhill.

"Now it's in conservation and it can continue to be enjoyed," McCracken said.

Longtime Forest Society Members Protect Prime Agricultural Land in Walpole



Aside from stints at UNH and in the Army, John Hubbard has lived his entire life in Walpole, where his family roots go back to the 1700s. He's seen the town grow and change over the years but thinks there are some things that should not change, such as the flat, fertile farmland along the Connecticut River.

That prime agricultural resource should stay that way, Hubbard said, and that's why he and his wife Carol have donated a conservation easement on the 12 acres of it they own along River Road to the Forest Society. They bought the property in the mid-1970s and have leased it to the abutting Boggy Meadows Farm to grow hay and corn. The 461-acre Boggy Meadows Farm is also conserved with a Forest Society easement, and the Hubbards decided a similar layer of protection would be right for their land.

"It's not far from Route 12, and it would make a good housing development for someone, but I didn't want that to happen to such nice farmland," Hubbard said.

The easement preserves the scenic, rural experience of anyone using the abutting Cheshire Rail Trail—a 42-mile multi-use trail that runs from Walpole to Keene—or traveling down River Road.

The Hubbards' easement donation is in keeping with a family tradition of philanthropy. That tradition grew out of the success of the family poultry breeding business, Hubbard Farms, which John Hubbard joined after serving in the Army and where he worked until he retired. Hubbard Farms was founded in Walpole by Hubbard's grandfather, Ira Hubbard, and his uncle, Oliver Hubbard, in 1921. John's father Austin and uncle Leslie joined the business and together they built it into an international leader in poultry genetics, starting with the New Hampshire Red, a breed sought after for meat and egg production. In 1974, Merck & Co. acquired the business.

The Hubbard family has shared their success in many ways, but especially by providing scholarships and foundational support for science programs at UNH. John Hubbard continues the commitment as a founding member of the UNH Foundation.

Also a longtime Forest Society member, Hubbard said he has always felt that protecting New Hampshire's natural resources is important and that in Walpole, one of those resources is agricultural land.

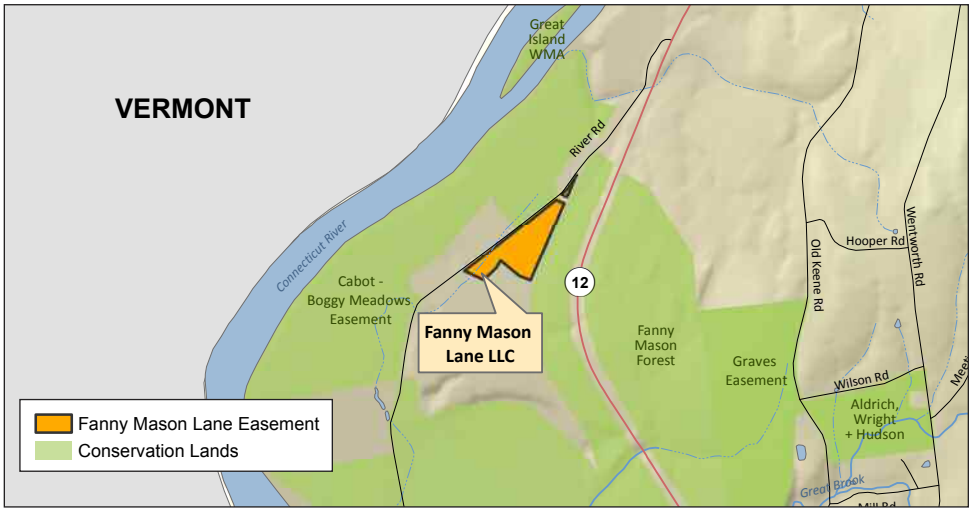
The Hubbard property is located in an area of Walpole that is noticeably different from much of forested, rocky New Hampshire because of its proximity to the Connecticut River. As Hubbard described it, "It's just wide open farmland down there."

Thanks to the Hubbards' donated easement, that open farmland—a piece of Walpole's agricultural heritage—will remain intact for generations to come.

Top photo by Ryan Young; bottom photo by Brenda Charpentier.

Left: *The Hubbards' easement protects working farmland near the Connecticut River.*

Right: *John and Carol Hubbard at home in Walpole.*



All five of the public hearings drew large crowds like this one in Plymouth.

SEC Meets the Northern Pass Opposition

By Jack Savage

The New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC), tasked with processing the 27,000-page application submitted by Northern Pass, held five public hearings in the first half of March. Held in Colebrook, Plymouth, Meredith, Concord and Deerfield, the hearings offered the first opportunity for the public to voice opinions about the controversial project directly to the seven people who, presumably, will decide whether to grant a permit for the 192-mile transmission line proposal, and if so, under what conditions. SEC, meet the Northern Pass opposition.

For some of the SEC members, the hearings appeared to be an introduction to the issues involved in Northern Pass. In contrast, some of the people who spoke against Northern Pass first did so way back in March 2011, when the first set of Dept. of Energy hearings was held. Remarkably, the determination of those opposed to overhead towers and transmission lines has not wavered—if Northern Pass had ever hoped the opposition would tire and disappear, it was clear from these latest hearings that it has not.

That may be due to the success the opposition has had so far. The project was initially projected to be nearly complete by now. Instead, it faces a very uncertain future despite changing to new cable technology and agreeing to bury 52 miles through the White Mountain National Forest. There are an unprecedented number of intervenors in a permitting process that isn't set up to deal with them. After more than five years, and despite spending enormous amounts of money on paid advertising, Northern Pass is a troubled, controversial project that needs to accelerate in order to catch the competition in a race to serve a perceived market in southern New England, but it can't. And outside the permitting process, Northern Pass is facing a lawsuit over property rights, brought by the Forest Society and funded by thousands of individuals.

The SEC visited a number of sites along the proposed Northern Pass route as part of their travels to and from the March public hearings. Often, those opposed to Northern Pass greeted the SEC along the way, as was the case at the Rocks Estate in Bethlehem.

All five hearings were well attended. The ersatz meeting hall inside the Plymouth State hockey arena in Holderness was overflowing, with some attendees relegated to watch remotely from a separate room. In Deerfield, SEC Chair Martin Honigberg had to limit questions in the Q&A session because there were so many. Multiple hearings lasted well over five hours.

And to be fair, there were comments in support of Northern Pass as well as in opposition. But many of those in favor would seem to have direct ties to the project, as employees of Eversource, job-seeking International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, or those who stand to benefit directly from Eversource largesse. As one commenter noted, "They [Eversource] leave a lot of residual money around." Among the many eloquent words offered in defense of New Hampshire's landscape were those of Ted Fitts, a landowner in Whitefield:

"The issue here is NOT about individual jobs, nor about individual rights to use land or corporate rights to provide services, nor about individual preferences," he said to the SEC. "The one issue in front of you is your responsibility to our COMMON birthright: an environment preserved from selfish and greedy assault and scarred by corporate muscle. The lands around our communities, the vistas we see, are not the provenance of the powerful and the wealthy and the greedy. The scar that enormous towers represent stands as emblematic of a willingness to give privilege to profit over preservation..."

Next Steps

Shortly after the last hearing, the SEC issued an order outlining which parties who petitioned to intervene would be granted intervenor status. That order also grouped intervenors together broadly, which prompted many to question the process. The grouping of intervenors subsequently was adjusted by the SEC at a hearing in early April.

What many are waiting for is an SEC decision on a schedule for the balance of the process. Northern Pass clearly wants to move the SEC process along its intended timeline to reach a decision by December 2016. Counsel for the Public Peter Roth noted that no project before the SEC has ever met a one-year timeline, and suggested an 18-month schedule. The Forest Society has offered that a two-year schedule is more realistic.

At some point, the SEC will also determine when to schedule two additional public hearings it agreed should be held to gather input on additional information required as part of the Northern Pass application under new SEC rules adopted last December.

Jack Savage is the Forest Society's vice president of Communications and Outreach.

MUDDY WATER AT THE BALSAMS

Late in 2015, the Board of Trustees of the Forest Society approved a request by Balsams View, LLC, and Dixville Capital, LLC, for an amendment to the conservation restrictions on 20 of the 5,690 acres of land surrounding the Balsams Resort to allow the construction of two ski lifts and certain trails. The amendment required specific mitigation that significantly enhances the protection of old growth forest and high-elevation habitat.

The amendment and mitigation was subsequently approved by the Charitable Trusts Unit of the Office of the New Hampshire Attorney General. Final completion of the amendment is dependent on the Balsams owners meeting conditions, including acquiring additional lands that will be conserved.

"Many in New Hampshire, including the Forest Society, wish the owners of the Balsams good fortune in redeveloping the Balsams," said Board Chair William Webb. "That is, in small part, why we listened carefully as we considered requests for an amendment. We said no to some proposed changes, and we were careful to follow a process that yielded a greater conservation outcome."

However, by early spring 2016, Eversource had muddied the waters by announcing it was making $2 million available to developer Les Otten and his partners in the Balsams, with promises of more to come if Northern Pass were ever permitted. Otten then spoke out in favor of Northern Pass.

Serious concerns were then raised when Otten approached the North Country Chamber of Commerce and the Colebrook Board of Selectmen insisting that they change their opposition to Northern Pass at the SEC. Local media reported that his message was simple: The Balsams redevelopment won't go forward without big money from Northern Pass, and that money only comes if Northern Pass is permitted.

"While northern Coos County has a big stake in the outcome of the Balsams redevelopment, every New Hampshire resident should be deeply concerned by this latest attempt by Eversource to peddle influence and interfere in local issues that have little to do with their proposed 192-mile transmission line," Webb said.

The issue is troubling because it appears that Eversource is perverting the permitting process for Northern Pass by making direct payments to elicit support for its struggling project.

Let's Make Forests Common Ground in the Climate Change Debate

By Matt Leahy

Climate change. Now there is a term that will set off intense debates. For many Americans, however, the phrase leaves them feeling overwhelmed or just confused. After all, what can they do to stop the flooding of U.S. coastal communities, the onslaught of larger, more intense hurricanes or the extinction of 25 percent of all the plants and animals on Earth?

Obviously, those are significant potential outcomes associated with unchecked global warming. To expect Americans to take on these problems, in addition to all the other work and family responsibilities they have to deal with every day, is asking a lot. Perhaps too much.

But suppose policy makers and those who are deeply concerned about the changing climate presented the issue in different terms? Suppose we started looking for commonsense solutions that Americans can embrace as part of their daily lives? Suppose one of those solutions involved something that is an integral part of New Hampshire's landscape and cultural and economic fabric? That something is (cue drumroll) our forests. Let's start talking about the role that investing in forest conservation can play in mitigating the negative effects of climate change.

This idea is not new. In fact, the New Hampshire Climate Action Plan, released seven years ago, listed it as Overarching Strategy 7. The U.S. Forest Service released a report back in 1999 describing how urban forests can reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2). A sample highlight of that report observes, "Trees around buildings can reduce the demand for heating and air conditioning, thereby reducing emissions associated with production of electric power."

Without diving deeply into the science here, forests store more carbon than they release, with the ability through photosynthesis to remove CO2 from the atmosphere. The Climate Action

Plan pointed out that N.H. forests take up the equivalent of 25 percent of the manmade emissions each year. In order to increase or maximize this ability, the Action Plan recommended creating new incentives to forest landowners to manage commercial timber over longer rotations and giving these landowners more incentives to enroll in market certification programs that promote sustainable forestry.

So far, most of the action items outlined in Strategy 7 of the Action Plan have not been implemented. Does this mean they cannot be? Absolutely not. U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen is sponsoring legislation, titled the Forest Incentives Program Act of 2015, which if passed would direct the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to establish a forest incentives program to achieve supplemental greenhouse gas emission reductions and carbon sequestration on U.S. private forest land. So clearly, there is momentum at the federal level on this issue.

Let's build on that energy back home here in New Hampshire. The Granite State is the nation's second most forested state (after Maine). By using the power of trees, we can strengthen forest health and the forest products economies in our state. We can help to address a major public policy challenge. And, we can offer citizens who have felt overwhelmed at the mere mention of the phrase 'climate change' a path to act. That seems like a pretty good deal.

Matt Leahy is the public policy manager at the Forest Society.

At Retirement Forestry's Lessons Come Full Circle

By George F. Frame, CF

It's an odd thing to think that, after so much time working to build a professional career, the building part is over and it's time to slow down. I retired in January, so this is my last Woods Wise column.

It is most appropriate that I spent the last years of my forestry career at the Forest Society as it was this organization and the N.H. Garden Club's New Hampton Chapter who sponsored my attendance at the Spruce Pond Conservation Camp way back in 1962. I knew I wanted to be a forester, and the camp was the reinforcement I needed to commit to the path into the forest.

To be honest, I don't remember a lot about the experience. I do remember learning that when you put a Sweet Tart candy into a bottle of soda the resulting foam would entirely drench a thin camp mattress. I also remember a pretty girl from Alstead, but I don't remember her name.

Of course I remember walking with and being instructed by knowledgeable men, some in uniforms of conservation organizations and some in woodsman's working garb. I remember stopping along trails, looking at and touching leaves and bark, stones and water, scat and fur. Mesmerizing lessons of habitats, tree growth, cambium, phloem, Latin names, strange tools, all too much to absorb. I remember wanting more, to know it all, so I could live in the wild, live off the land—totally missing the point of forestry and confusing it with the life of Grizzly Adams.

Studying forestry in college, I was shocked and somewhat disappointed that, in addition to being the science of knowing and growing trees, forestry was infused with economics. And again I missed the point and thought the business end was a crass add-on to the real forestry which must, I thought, be practiced somewhere.

After a time I was hired to be a forester with the U.S. Forest Service, every sapling forester's dream employer in that era.

I remember wanting more, to know it all, so I could live in the wild, live off the land—totally missing the point of forestry and confusing it with the life of Grizzly Adams.

While in the Forest Service I learned that being a forester is a special calling. There are ideals, there are important ethics, there are timelines that stagger the imaginations of most, and there are issues that are grappled with continually with no real hope of finding democratic solutions.

I left the Forest Service at a time when the role of a forester within that organization was being diminished by the rise of specialists. Up until the early 1980s, the forester was a generalist as well as a specialist, filling all roles at all levels from ranger districts to the Washington office of the chief. But that all changed, and in my naiveté I again missed the point, picked up my ball and went home.

After several other jobs, some only peripherally related to being a forester and others fully immersed in the reality of being a forester, I came to the Forest Society. Initially I served in a non-forester role, providing occasional forestry expertise as situations warranted. And then, suddenly it seemed, I was still here but in a new role, a forester role and that was pretty cool; lots of acres, lots of issues, lots of properties, lots of people, and lots of need. Some years went by and today it seems I'm thinking less about forestry. There are some other things I want to do while I still can. So, it's time.

Photo by George Frame.

A fond memory: the Victor's Woods Reservation (in Danbury, Alexandria and Hill) after a timber sale in 2014.

Oh yes, I did figure out the point I have missed over the years; it was of course staring at me all the time. Forestry is not about the foresters, it is about the forest and then about the people. It is for foresters to steward the forest in a manner that allows the forest to provide for society while not being lessened. Ninety-three years ago, Gifford Pinchot, America's first professional forester said it like this; "His (the forester's) purpose is to make it (the forest) serve the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time." This is still the only reason for taking up this strange and satisfying calling that is forestry.

Thank you and all my best regards. Perhaps we'll see each other in the woods someday.

George Frame recently retired as senior director of forestry at the Forest Society.

Honoring the Fallen

By Dave Anderson

After heavy rain during a mid-winter thaw, the temperature fell and ice began to form in the rotting heart of a 90-year-old white birch snag leaning heavily. In the absence of even the slightest breeze, the old birch succumbed to gravity, collapsing with a shuddering crash to the forest floor.

The white birch's story began when a tiny seed landed in an abandoned east-facing ox pasture in the early 1920s. The slender seedling grew in full sunshine and was under 10 years old during the stock market crash of 1929. The ensuing Great Depression did little to slow the growth of the vigorous little birch stem.

By the darkening specter of World War II, the 18-year old reigned over a little patch of woods, arching its sleek trunk and casting shade while the living room radio in the nearby farmhouse broadcast news from the European and the Pacific fronts. Young 18- to 20-year olds from New Hampshire villages enlisted to join the fight; this "greatest generation" was raised in a time of peril and uncertainty when the nation was united in the war effort.

As veterans returned from the war, attended colleges on the GI Bill, married and started families, the birch matured and set seeds, part of a cohort of maturing trees in a forest slowly erasing former open pasture.

By the 1950s, red oaks, sugar maples, white ash, beech and hemlocks sifted into the dappled shade of the understory in the 1920s vintage forest of poplar, white pine and white birch. A timber harvest in the early 1960s opened skidder trails when larger white pines were first thinned. A second thinning in 1980 removed red oak and pine saw logs, just before the statewide gypsy moth infestation of 1981 defoliated oaks in midsummer—twice!

By the dawn of a new millennium in 2000, the nearly 80-year old birch began a slow decline. The birch lost limbs with a successive series of ice storms in 1998 and 2008. The birch's thinning canopy of leaves began balding, revealing patches of blue sky. Once tight white bark now peeled, wrinkled and cracked with age lines and wounds from probing insects working beneath the bark. Bronze birch borer and birch leaf miner insects began to make headway against the old tree's defenses.

Woodpeckers drilled through bark to reach termites, ants and beetles. Chickadees and nuthatches enlarged and renovated holes in the rotting wood for cavity nests. Bracket fungi sprouted from the limbs and trunk. The old birch leaned heavily, its heartwood increasingly punky.

The birch died at close to age 90 in 2013. That following spring, no buds unfurled from its skeletal lattice of limbs. Even more insects bored into its wood as woodpeckers perforated the veneer of loosening bark to probe for food. Rainwater seeped further into the heartwood, weakening the integrity of the heavy stem. Successive freeze-thaw cycles of expansion and contraction worked in tandem against microscopic fibers of cellulose and lignin. Small branches and large limbs fell, disappearing into a thick carpet of oak and beech leaves.

More shade-tolerant trees had arrived and long-since surpassed the white birch in girth and height. Moss cloaked the nearby stone wall, edged by ferns and Jack-in-the-pulpit.

Then one night the old birch fell. Upon hearing the crash, my first thought was how fortunate I was to not be standing beneath it. My second thought was of other elderly members of the "greatest generation" now similarly entering dotage, succumbing to their own age-related afflictions.

Upstart beech, maple and hemlock saplings or middle-aged pine and oak saw-logs did not respond to the fall of the patriarch. Stoic stems surround the fallen elder, resolute against the future prospect of a similar fate.

Photo by Dave Anderson.

The old birch lies prone after 90 or more years of providing shade and seeds in its patch of forest.

I sat in the dark listening to echoes of the fallen soldier, the sound of its fall a singular crescendo so unlike wind in the leaves or birdsong from the highest branches.

The natural process of forest succession demonstrates how new generations replace their predecessors. Elders relinquish space and sunlight. Even in decomposition, they nourish a new generation of saplings that strain to reach the leafy canopy above.

It's a slim comfort to understand that the natural law of renewal dictates each generation must succumb to the inexorable passage of time.

Naturalist Dave Anderson is director of education for the Forest Society. He can be reached via e-mail at danderson@forestsociety.org.

Photo of brook trout courtesy of Malcolm Crittenden.

Clockwise from left: *The brook on the proposed addition provides critical habitat for native eastern brook trout. Conservation of this property would enlarge the Forest Society's Black Mountain Forest, next to Mt. Kearsarge's Rollins and Winslow state parks; Lichen-covered oaks cover the high point of land, a nice spot for a picnic; Eastern brook trout.*

Golden Opportunity in Mt. Kearsarge Region

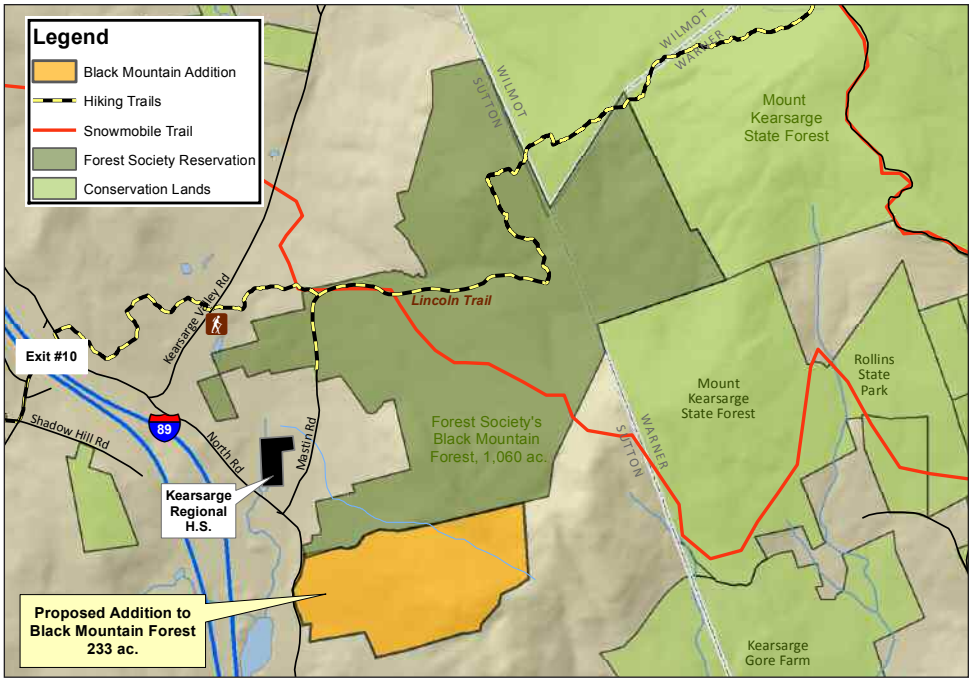
Join Us to Add a Pristine Trout Stream and Uplands to Black Mountain Forest

You might say the opportunity to acquire a 236-acre forest behind Kearsarge Regional High School in Sutton is as golden as the belly of a native brook trout.

Among the compelling reasons the Forest Society has begun work to conserve this property is the pristine trout stream that cascades down the wooded hillside to flow into Stevens Brook, which feeds the Warner River. This stream, as yet unnamed, is clean enough to support a wild population of eastern brook trout, a species very susceptible to disturbance and changes in water temperature and thought to be missing from half of its original range in the U.S. A report from Trout Unlimited's Basil Woods Jr. Chapter and N.H. Fish and Game sets this stream apart as having the greatest density of wild brook trout in the entire watershed.

The surrounding forest is equally unspoiled, with some areas exhibiting characteristics of old-growth forest, with trees some 350 years old.

This property is next to the Forest Society's Black Mountain Forest, 1,050 acres in Sutton and Warner conserved since 2010. The Black Mountain Forest is in turn next to Mt. Kearsarge's Rollins and Winslow state parks as well as a collection of other conserved lands. Adding this property to this conservation area preserves the beautiful unbroken swath of forested hills stretching south from Mt. Kearsarge that you see when traveling on I-89 past Sutton.



Old woods roads offer a beautiful hike past large vernal pools, boulders and hardwoods.

The owner of this property has agreed to sell it to the Forest Society at a reduced price, and we need your help to raise the purchase price, transaction and stewardship costs. We have until June 30 to raise $356,000.

Two grants have already given us a $160,000 jump start! The state's Dept. of Environmental Services (DES) has recognized the statewide importance of this property for water quality in the Warner River Watershed with a $150,000 Aquatic Resources Mitigation (ARM) grant. And the N.H. Fish and Game Dept. has recognized the critical trout habitat with a $10,000 conservation grant.

With frontage on North Road in Sutton, the interior of the property is accessible via old woods roads that take hikers to the high point of land. This destination is the perfect picnic spot surrounded by lichen-covered oaks, boulders and ledgy cliffs above a large vernal pool.

Since it is directly behind the Kearsarge Regional High School, the woods roads are already being used by student athletes for running, and the property offers exceptional educational opportunities for the future.

Please support this important project with a contribution today. Thank you.

☐ **YES, I WANT TO HELP ADD 236 ACRES TO THE BLACK MOUNTAIN FOREST!**

Name: _____

Address: _____ Town/City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

☐ Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution for $_____

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard Number: _____ Exp. 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.forestsociety.org.

For more information, contact Susanne Kibler-Hacker at 603-224-9945 or via e-mail at skh@forestsociety.org.

Thank you for your help!

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THE MANY FACES OF CONSERVATION

Photo by Al Karevy.

Don and Gloria Quigley

Lee, N.H.

Members since 1977

MEMBERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

Don and Gloria 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.

"For nearly 40 years, Gloria and I have made our home, raised our kids and built our careers in the New Hampshire forest. From our tree farm in Lee, it is a short commute to our work at the University of New Hampshire, where I have been privileged to teach for many years in the Forest Technology Program at the Thompson School of Applied Science. The most important career advice I try to impress upon students is that knowledge and skills attained should be augmented by building a professional network. This is best accomplished by engagement with organizations like the Forest Society that influence policy and inform positive change for our natural resources and communities.

Membership in the Forest Society has enriched our lives and strengthened our Lee community in many ways. Thanks to the leadership of a strong Conservation Commission and a sound master plan, our small town has missed few opportunities over the years to protect open spaces and special places. As New Hampshire's leader in land protection, the Forest Society has worked with our town at all levels and currently holds several critical conservation easements in the community including town-owned forest lands. The Forest Society is currently engaged in another important project, the Powder Major's Farm and Forest, in the three-town region of Lee, Durham and Madbury. The Forest Society hopes to purchase the 195-acre farm while the three towns arrange conservation easements for the permanent protection of this critical landscape. This new project is emblematic of the power of partnership in conservation. Acting alone, each of the three towns could not reach across their respective political boundaries to make this a reality. As a forester, I especially appreciate that these towns will also benefit from the Forest Society's commitment to active management of the land, serving as a model and inspiration to other landowners in the community.

You don't have to travel far outside the Granite State until you begin to appreciate how the leadership and legacy of one organization can effect an everlasting landscape."