PROTECTING THE LAKE SOLITUDE TRAILHEAD

Forest Notes

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

Connected by the Places We Love

Photo Essay: Paws and Peaks

WINTER 2015–16

Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

SINCE 1901

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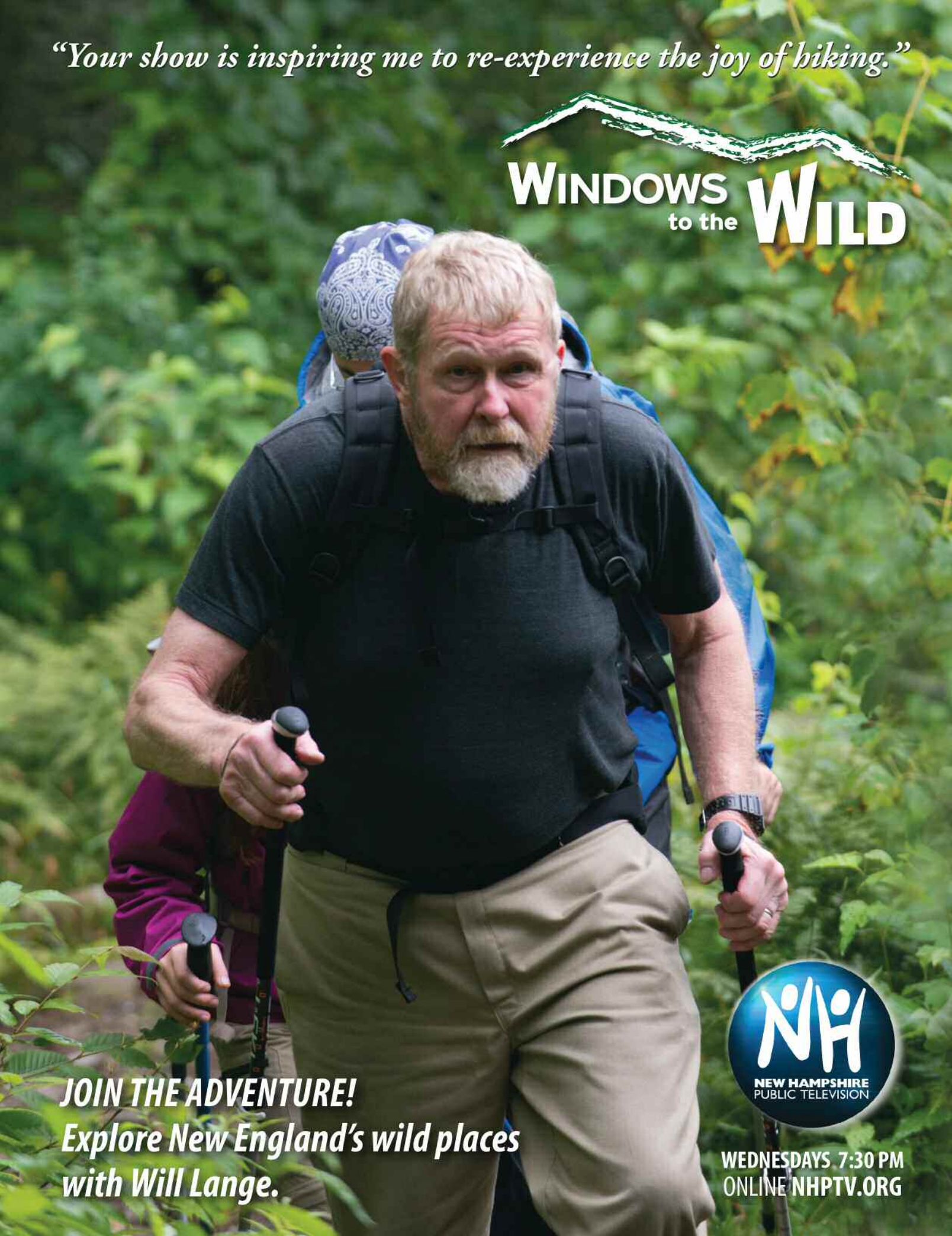
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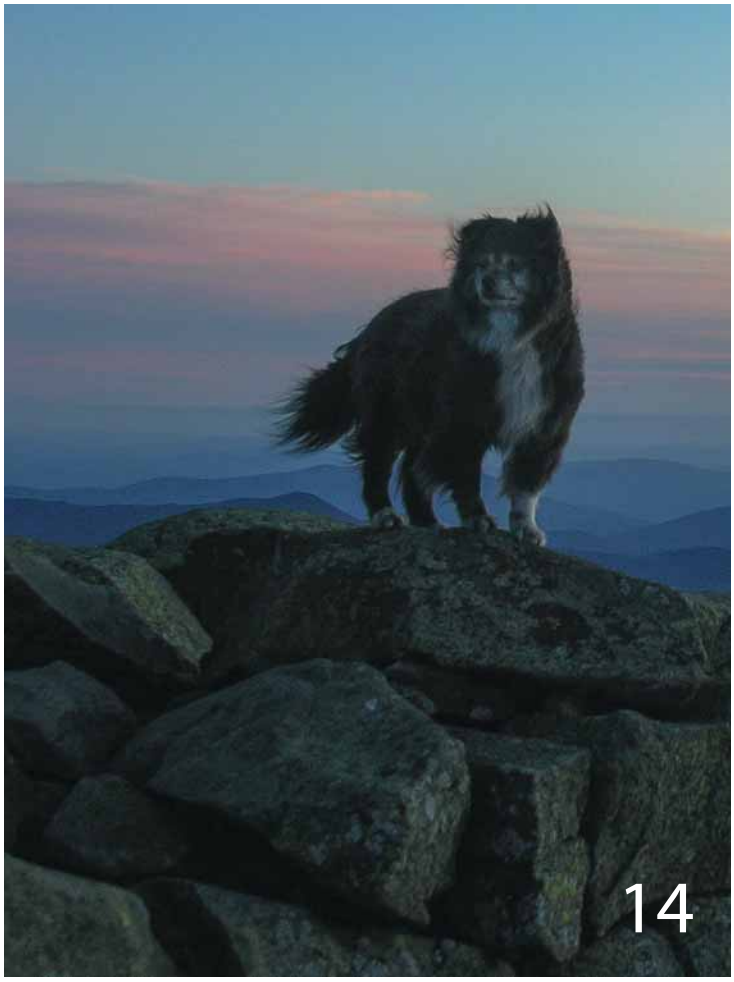

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

On our cover:
A wagon ride at the Forest Society's Rocks Estate in Bethlehem is one way to enjoy the winter season. Photo by Matt Kalinowski.

This column is excerpted from Jane's address to members at the annual meeting on Sept. 26. To read the entire speech, please see forestsociety.org/blog-post/speaking-forests.

Forest Sounds

There's an odd perception that a forest left to do what it does—that is, to grow trees, take up carbon, filter water and be home to wildlife—is nonetheless "empty." One developer has asked me, "Why do you care if we put towers and powerlines through that forest? There's nothing there!"

Never tell a forester that it's okay to fragment a working forest because "there's nothing there."

The Forest Society speaks up for the forests to such developers in large part because, like most conservationists, we feel that the forests speak to us.

Granted, we may each hear something a little different. For some of us, a forest speaks when it reverberates with the sounds of children at play, exploring, climbing, laughing. The sounds of wonderment.

Others hear the forest in the nearly-silent footfalls of a hiker along a trodden path, in tandem with the pant of a faithful dog. Some of us hear the forest in the dee-dee-dee of a chickadee, the squeak-and-scrunch of a chipmunk scurrying through the leaves, the drum of a ruffed grouse.

With a little imagination, we can hear the forest speak when we turn on the tap in our kitchen to draw a glass of cool, clean water or draw in a deep breath of clean air.

And for some of us, the sound of the forest crescendos when a mature tree is harvested, landing with that satisfying "whump" on the forest floor. A well-felled tree is full of meaning for us—it is warmth from our woodstove, a sturdy home, a favorite chair, the paper in our book and even the light that lets us read it. Or, if you must, the power for your Kindle.

It can be difficult to hear the forest in places where there are more people than trees. Where machines and TVs and mobile devices define our world. In large halls where people argue over building the next big box store, the next parking lot, the next powerline. In these places, the forest sometimes needs help. The Forest Society will keep speaking up, but it cannot be a solo—our forests need a choir like you to sing their praises.

Let forests be forests.

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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Forest Society Welcomes New Board Members

Three new members have joined the Forest Society's Board of Trustees for three-year terms: John Brighton of Hanover, Amy McLaughlin of Exeter and Merle Schotanus of Grantham. They replace retiring board members William "Tuck" Tucker and Pam Hall. At the annual meeting Sept. 26, members approved several board role changes. Officers are William Webb, chair; Deanna Howard, vice chair; Andy Lietz, secretary; Bill McCarten, treasurer; and Jane Difley, president/forester.

John Brighton is majority owner and president of a New Hampshire-based fire protection company. His family owns an old hill farm in Sullivan County, where he became involved with the Forest Society during land conservation projects in the area.

John Brighton

John was the catalyst behind the conservation of the Farnsworth Hill Forest Reservation and the abutting MacNeil Family Forest in Washington. In 2014, the Forest Society named him the Conservationist of the Year in recognition of those efforts. John and his wife Susan live in Hanover.

Amy McLaughlin

Amy McLaughlin currently works with her husband as the controller in a business they started in 2012, Fluid Equipment Solutions of New England, LLC, a commercial HVAC equipment engineering sales company serving New England. For 15 years prior, she worked in the pharmaceutical industry in sales and account management.

Amy is actively involved in the Exeter community, where she lives with her husband and two school-age children. She serves as the board chair of Squamscott Community Commons, as a member of the Piscataqua Regional Advisory Board for the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and as an ambassador for the American Independence Museum in Exeter. She is a co-founder and past board chair of the Exeter Area Conservancy.

Amy graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1997 with a B.A in Business Management and Health Management Policy.

Merle Schotanus

Merle Schotanus is a retired fruit grower; a former N.H. state representative who served for seven terms, and a 25-year U.S. Army paratrooper who achieved the rank of czolonel before retiring from the service in 1974. He then moved to Grantham with his wife, Helen, and developed and operated Sugar Springs Farm for 21 years. He holds BA and MA degrees in Political Science from Ripon College and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, respectively, and is a graduate of the National War College in Washington, D.C.

Merle is a returning board member, having served from 1994 to 2000. He has been a conservation leader in New Hampshire for more than three decades, recognized as the Forest Society's Conservationist of the Year in 2004, a New England Outstanding Tree Farmer and N.H. Tree Farmer of the Year in 1978, a N.H. Timberland Owners Association Outstanding Legislator in 1992 and a Friend of Extension in 2010.

A 10-term moderator for the Town of Grantham, he has served on many boards and commissions, including the University System of N.H., N.H. Public Television, N.H. Nature Conservancy, Conservation New Hampshire, and Grantham's Planning Board and Conservation Commission.

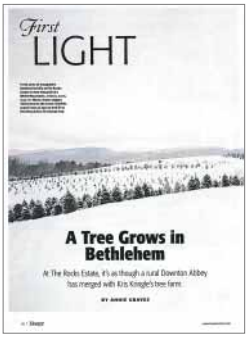
A Heat-Treated Forest

The Forest Society joined several other organizations and agencies to conduct a prescribed burn at our Harmon Preserve in Freedom in late September. This is an effort to restore the globally rare pitch pine-scrub oak ecosystem found on this property. Before fire suppression efforts by humans, this natural community burned periodically on its own (it's very dry), and the fires perpetuated the habitat.

This is the second burn we've hosted on the property since we've owned it. This one burned just over 100 acres, successfully removing the top layer of organic material to expose the mineral soil and create optimal conditions for pitch pine. The burn team was led by The Nature Conservancy and was made up of some two dozen forest firefighters from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and Americorps. TNC has been leading the burns for us through an agreement we have as part of the N.H. Prescribed Fire Council.

The controlled burn created optimal conditions for pitch pine to grow. Photo by Wendy Weisiger.

Rocks Estate Written Up in *Yankee*



The November/December issue of *Yankee Magazine* features an article on The Rocks Estate, the Forest Society's Christmas tree farm and North Country education center in Bethlehem. The story calls the farm a cross between Downton Abbey and the land of Kris Kringle, because of its history as a retreat for the family of a wealthy industrialist and its modern role as a treasured part of many families' Christmas traditions.

Talking With Winslow Homer

The Power of Place and How It Connects Us

By Mel Allen

I've been at *Yankee* since 1979 and have given talks to many groups, small and large, but I can't think of any group that better embodies not only what has been at the heart of *Yankee* but also what has inspired people throughout the nation when they think about New England: the preservation of landscape, the sense of deep roots, the power of place. I feel we are connected through a shared love of place as the prevailing New England story. New England is a region so compact, so woven with landscape and history and ancestry and tradition that the sense of place burrows more deeply here than anywhere else.

I know there are many people who live here who take New England for granted. It's the easiest thing to do, like looking at the face of a loved one so often that you no longer really see it. This is what happened in the '60s and '70s, and even into the early '80s, when some of the most cherished and historic houses in various towns and cities in New England fell to wrecking balls. In their place rose condo complexes, parking lots, home developments and department stores. Many forgot how lovely those faces had been. *Yankee* never forgot.

Weatherbeaten, Winslow Homer, 1894, oil on canvas, 28 ½ x 48 ⅜. Portland Museum of Art, Maine, bequest of Charles Shipman Payson, 1988.55.1.

Yankee magazine editor Mel Allen has spent the last three decades telling the stories of New England. As the keynote speaker at the Forest Society's annual meeting in September at the Rocks Estate in Bethlehem, he wove together some of those stories to show how a passionate sense of place defines us and can prevail over hardships and greed. In many ways, this is the Forest Society's story, and it is with pleasure that we present it to you here.

We're a magazine with 80-year-old roots in New England and an ethic that honors preservation and conservation. The Forest Society's roots go deeper, to 1901, and your members are made up of people whom I consider the unsung heroes of New England: people whose love of the land, whether it be forest, or open space, or waterways, or mountains, transcends the lure of immediate financial gain. Members who trust that the generations who come after us will continue to honor what you have done.

The story of Vermont farmer Romaine Tenney's battle to keep his farm intact appeared in the March/April 2013 issue of *Yankee*.

Our March/April 2013 *Yankee* cover bore the title "Power of Place" and is perhaps the favorite issue I have worked on in my long tenure at *Yankee*. I worked closely with Howard Mansfield—one of the best writers about and defenders of "place" I know—on two stories in that issue. In "I Will Not Leave," Howard told of Vermont farmer Romaine Tenney, who said he would die before he would agree with a court order for him to leave his farm so that Interstate 91 could have an easier—less costly—route through his land. And he kept his word. On his gravestone his family had inscribed: "Guardian of his land & friend to all." The second story, "My Roots Are Deeper than Your Pockets," resonated especially with many of you here tonight.

I want to read a short, important passage from that story. The reader has met Lynne Placey and knows about the love she has for the land where she lived with her husband Donald and where they raised their children. Her land is square in the path of Northern Pass and its towers. Her husband had died and life was not getting easier. Her nephew had agreed to sell his property for more money than he had ever dreamed of having at once—and he was trying to persuade Lynn to follow suit. This prompted her to write a letter to the local paper.

"On principle," Lynne wrote, "the idea of a foreign corporation coming into our pristine North Country to ruin it for their personal gain went against everything I believe in."

As Howard wrote: "She was not for sale. Against all that money, she put up "my conscience, my ethics, my devotion to New Hampshire's beauty, the memory of my husband, the love for my children and grandchildren, my concern for the health of those living near the towers, and more ...." She asked that everyone stand together: *Don't believe them when they tell you Northern Pass is a done deal, that your land will be worthless if you don't sell. Don't let them isolate you; don't let them scare you. Don't sell out your neighbors.*

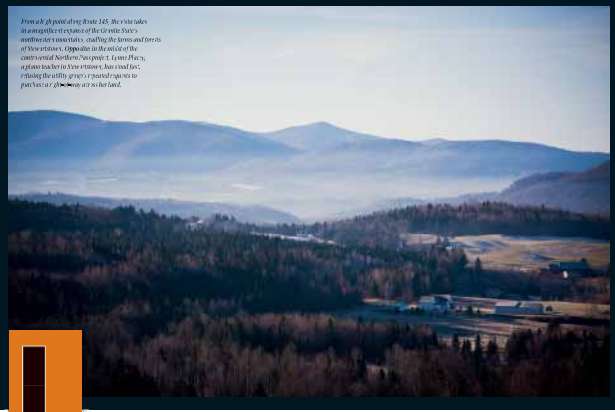
photographs by
JARROD McCABE

Dairy farmer Rod McAllaster on his land in Stewartstown.

'MY ROOTS ARE DEEPER THAN YOUR POCKETS'

Essayist Howard Mansfield finds that love of place can run so deep that it's like faith. You can't explain it—it's just there.

In his many notable books, including Turn & Jump: How Time & Place Fell Apart; The Same Ax, Twice; *and* In the Memory House, ***Howard Mansfield** has explored the meaning of place and how roots, tradition, memory, and everyday artifacts provide meaning in a world geared to rootlessness and change. His new book,* Dwelling in Possibility, *will be published this September (Bauhan Publishing). A version of this article also appears in the March/April 2013 issue of* Yankee Magazine.



From all high points along Route 145, the vista takes in a magnificent expanse of the Granite State's northeastern mountains, exalting the farms and forests of Stewartstown. Opposite in the midst of the controversial Northern Pass project, Lynne Placey, a piano teacher in Stewartstown, has vowed her refusing the utility company's repeated requests to purchase a right-of-way across her land.

"You know material things are going to eventually rust out, break. I think it's more important to leave my children and my grandchildren the inheritance of land. And they can enjoy working on the land just the same as we have."

LYNNE PLACEY IS A 66-YEAR-OLD widow who loves teaching piano in her small house in Stewartstown, N.H. She gives lessons on her mother's instrument, which was made the year her mother was born, 1920. "I've enjoyed every minute of what I've done for 30 years," Lynne says. "People say, 'How do you listen to all those sour notes?' I reply, 'Because I know what's coming. I can see down the road.'" She feels "very blessed" to teach piano.

Lynne used to have about 45 students a week. She was able to just get by on that, but lately the number of students has dwindled to about 18 a week. Kids are too busy playing soccer, and not every home has a piano anymore. She doesn't have any other income, except for Social Security. Her late husband, Donald, was ill for more than 10 years, confined to a hospital bed in their living room. Lynne would look after him between lessons. Then she broke her back, and two months later, on October 8, 2009, her husband died. Like many people, she didn't have health insurance, and the long illness had wiped out their small savings.

A year later, her nephew Landon Placey came by to tell her how she could make a half-million dollars, just as he had done; her money worries would be over. He asked her not to tell anyone else about his visit; this was just between them. Landon had sold his property, 114 acres, to a utilities group, Northern Pass Transmission LLC, that wanted to build big high voltage transmission towers across his land. He was one of the first to sell, and the contract he'd signed required him to secretly offer her the same opportunity, he said.

Lynne's husband had left her 78 acres on Holden Hill, about nine miles from her home. Her land was right next to her nephew's, and it was in the path of the proposed power lines. Landon stayed quite a while trying to convince her to sell. Lynne told him what she'd told a real-estate agent who had called a month earlier. "I'll listen to what you have to say, but I'm not selling."

The Northern Pass project is a $1.1 billion joint venture of Hydro-Québec, NSTAR, and Northeast Utilities (parent company of Public Service of New Hampshire), aiming to build a 180-mile transmission line through the Granite State. To do that, they want to cut 40 new miles of right-of-way to accommodate towers as tall as 80 to 140 feet. Since it was announced in October 2010, the project has angered and divided residents of the North Country.

—

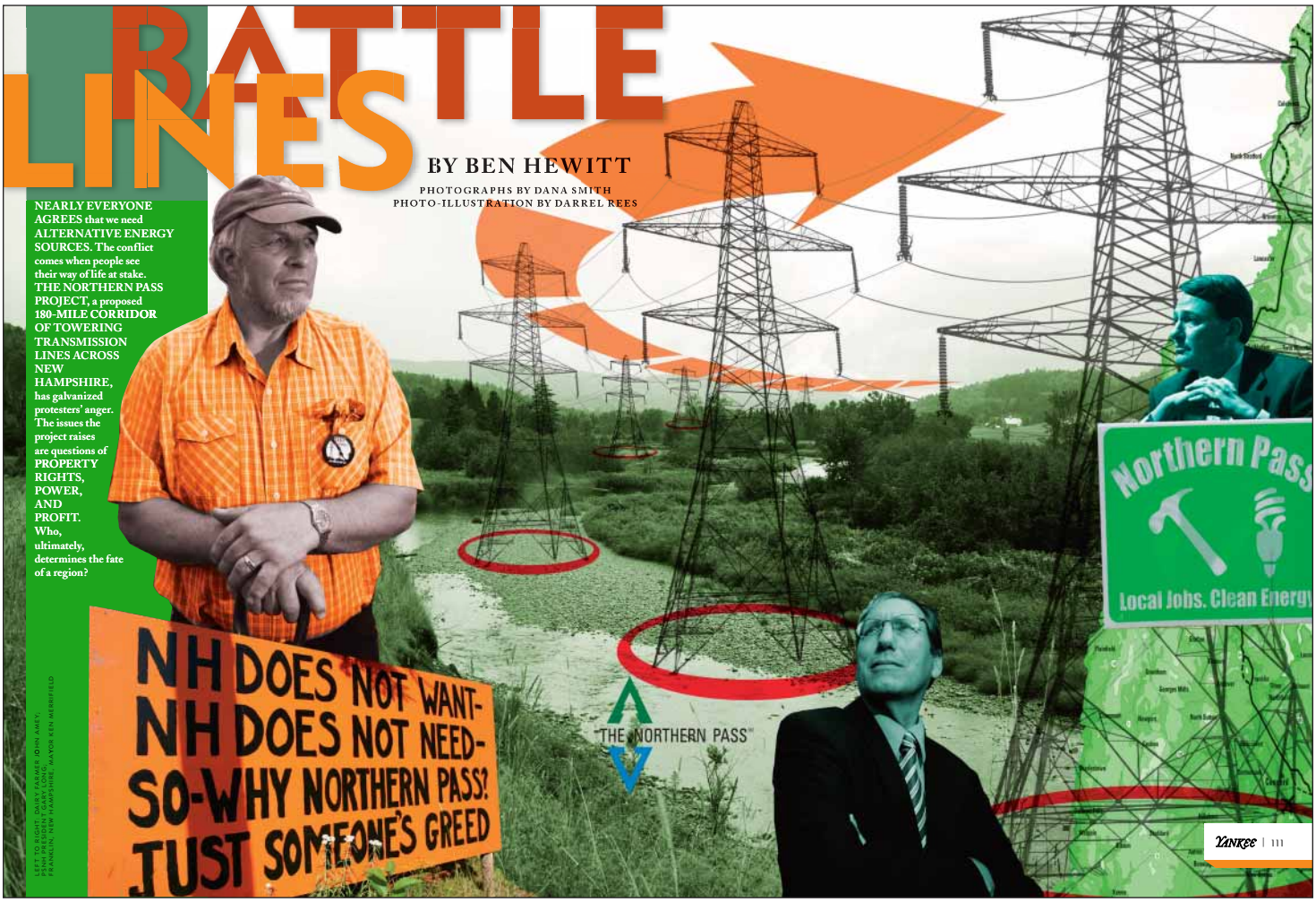
ON ONE OF THEIR FIRST DATES, DONALD TOOK LYNNE TO SEE his land on Holden Hill. "I think he was trying to impress me," she says. Donald was one of eight children who had inherited land

"I know in my heart," she concluded, "I am doing what is best for my beloved North Country." She signed it: "Yours truly, a devoted native."

In that same story we meet Rod McAllaster, a farmer also from Stewartstown. I am quoting here: "Rod McAllaster could have sold his dairy farm for $4 million. But where would he be? He would have sold himself off the earth. This is his place; he was born here. At age 60, he's a man who knows what he's about. He loves this land. When a real-estate agent showed up unannounced at his farm, Rod told him, "I'm not interested at all. I don't even have to think about it." There was no amount of money the man could offer. *"My roots are deeper than your pockets,"* Rod told him.

A few years before this story, *Yankee* did another one by the gifted Vermont writer Ben Hewett. We called it "Battle Lines." In that story we meet John Amey, from Pittsburg. At the time, the proposed route of the power lines would cut through his 1,200 acre farmstead: Ben heard him speak at a meeting: "They still don't get it: that there's nothing you can pay to get someone to give up a way of life." Amey spoke mildly, clipping his words in the manner common to the region. There was no bravado or rancor in his statement; he was simply laying out the facts as he saw them. *The sky is blue, the sun is round, maple trees keep growing, there's nothing you can pay to get someone to give up a way of life.*

Forest Notes and *Yankee* both published the story of New Hampshire landowners taking a stand against the Northern Pass power line proposal in their spring 2013 issues.



"They still don't get it, that there's nothing you can pay someone to give up a way of life," John Amey of Pittsburg is quoted in a *Yankee* story written in 2011.

Yankee was started, really, over the expression: a way of life.

When *Yankee's* founder, Robb Sagendorph, began his little magazine in a hexagon cabin on a Dublin hillside in the midst of the Depression, he knew that in a country undergoing profound societal change, people would be hungry for and drawn to place, and that no place in America possessed such a sense of tradition and continuity—a place with an identity so strong that no matter where you were, if you said "I'm a New Englander," people would have a sense of who you were. That was what he wanted to capture: in words and photographs, the feel and mood and character of this special place, so connected to the nation's roots that in a sense every American belonged to it, or wanted to. Or needed to.

Robb Sagendorph saw a way of life he loved struggling and fighting to hang on. He saw the idiosyncratic Yankee in danger of becoming everyman. So he created something unique: a magazine that held the voices of a region within its bound pages. And as New England changed and evolved, so too did the magazine. At first there were 613 subscribers to his amateurish looking magazine. But it struck a chord with people wanting a connection to place. And that connection to place remains at the core of what I do every day.

I know Rob Trowbridge, our long-time publisher who died in 2003, would have been pleased to have a *Yankee* editor here. I emailed Paul Bofinger (retired former president/forester of the Forest Society) a few days ago to get his memories of working with Rob. Here in part is what he responded:

I suspect that you are aware that Yankee *and* Forest Notes *are the two oldest continually published magazines in New Hampshire. At least that is what Rob and I believed. Rob was an enormous benefit to us; first as a state senator when he was chair of the finance committee. Once I was dealing, without much success, with Dartmouth when they put the Gile Forest up for sale with no restrictions during a real estate development build up. They would not even consider a*

modestly reduced price to keep it in conservation even though they received it as a gift from a bereaved lumberman (whom I knew from my lumber days) whose son died while a student there.

After I explained this to Rob, he called the college president and treasurer. He convinced them to offer us a very good price so we could hold the land until the State could step up, reimburse us and make it a state forest. Rob was in a position to put real pressure on the money people at the school and he was not bashful. A noted Upper Valley land speculator and developer was hot for the land. Rob's comment, when it was over: 'They don't call them 'The Big Green' for just their football jerseys.' He was a fierce proponent for the Forest Society.

So now here is another connection. There is no more beautiful a drive in New England than coming through the Notch. I have never driven the Parkway and not wanted to pull over and just look around. Probably few in this room were members of the Forest Society in 1959 when the New Hampshire Legislature approved the plan to build a four-lane interstate through the Notch. If you find news accounts of the time, you'll see there was ample support for the project: It would create hundreds of jobs; it would funnel tens of thousands of tourists into the North Country who would then pour tens of thousands of dollars into the local economies. Who could not want that?

Well the Forest Society for starters, and Paul Bofinger, who said "not so fast." In *Yankee's* 60th anniversary issue in September 1995, we ran a story titled "60 People Who Make New England New England." We named Paul "A Guardian of the Land." Paul had moved to New Hampshire in 1956 and in 1961 when the proposed highway debate was in full rage, he became the president/forester of the Forest Society. The battle he helped lead wound its way through public meetings, numerous studies, a lawsuit. Ultimately the Federal Highway Administration realized that this was a battle that conservationists would fight as if their lives were at stake. In a sense they were. The compromise, this beautiful two-lane highway, required Congress to pass a special amendment to alter the normal Interstate standards.

When I researched this battle, I was struck by so many common themes connecting that time to the Forest Society's voice against Northern Pass: the promise of thousands of jobs, the prosperity that is sure to follow, the claims by powerful interests that conservationists are holding back progress. It is as though this one clear voice has echoed through the decades telling us all, that these are fights that we cannot lose. That there can always be an alternative if we show there is no backing down. If Congress can be persuaded to write a special amendment, then maybe a powerful utility company can eventually understand that the people who live in the North Country along with this Forest Society that has helped frame the debate for the land, cannot be coerced or lulled into thinking that the phrase "economically unfeasible" means the same thing in a boardroom as it does to the people in Colebrook or Laconia or even Concord.

When we did a timeline in *Yankee* of major New England environmental battles, we quoted Elizabeth Courtney who was executive director of the Vermont Natural Resources Council. She said that when environmentalists find themselves pitted against private industry, state and federal governments, or even public opinion, they must keep fighting, because, as she puts it (paraphrasing David Brower), "Our victories are temporary, but our defeats are permanent."

I told Jack Savage (vice president of communications and outreach at the Forest Society) that I was pretty sure that I could weave NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, one of the most unpopular persons to claim New England as a second home, into this talk—and maybe I'd be the first one to ever use a football analogy in a talk to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

A few weeks ago I spent two days at Prouts Neck, Maine. This is where the great painter Winslow Homer immortalized in his dramatic canvasses the sea pounding relentlessly onto the rocky shore. Homer's former home and studio is now a museum beside a one-mile walking trail called the Cliff Walk. Thick bushes and walls and fences separate multi-million dollar mansions. One of these mansions belongs to Roger Goodell. His summer home

NH Economic Development Division photo by Trask's Studio.

Looking south at the heart of Franconia Notch at its narrowest point with Echo Lake and US Route 3 in the foreground. Had conservationists not intervened, the Interstate would have been cut into the ledges at the left.

The painter Homer Winslow (1836-1910) captured the essence of the sense of place in his New England scenes. **Above:** Weatherbeaten, 1894, oil on canvas, 28 ½ x 48 ⅜. Portland Museum of Art, Maine, bequest of Charles Shipman Payson, 1988.55.1. **At left:** Pickerel Fishing, 1892, watercolor on wove paper, 11 ¼ x 20. Portland Museum of Art, Maine, bequest of Charles Shipman Payson, 1988.55.1

is easily the most elaborate amongst a sea of elaborate homes. Castle like, really.

The view if you sat on one of the multiple balconies must be breathtaking. One of my colleagues has a friend who installs television and video equipment in southern Maine. One of his jobs was to outfit the Goodell mansion. Remember, the view is one immortalized in paintings. My colleague's friend told him he installed 128 televisions in this house. Maybe that was hyperbole? Maybe exaggerated? Maybe it was only 100? Seventy? But I picture Goodell on a blue sky day, gazing not at the sea, nor the sky, nor the boats slicing through the waves, but going room to room to room, everywhere surrounded by a picture of the world reflected on a television. Winslow Homer and Roger Goodell shared the same landscape. But never, ever could they share a single word or feeling about it.

That is how I picture the battles ahead. Today and tomorrow it will be Northern Pass; another day, another battle with some other powerful, moneyed entity. Where I live my neighbors have the threat of a natural gas pipeline and compressing stations in their face every day. It is the daily conversation. It is the front page of the weekly papers. Every week. *Yankee's* story on this will be out in the January/February issue.

The people whose business plans call to alter the landscape forever, will never be able to understand the land the way you do. The sea, the mountains, the soft farmland, the stands of forests—they are out there, but the people behind the powers you will be confronting in the years ahead will only be seeing their electronic screens with the graphs and charts. Whether you are a farmer, a logger and woodsman, or simply someone who values your home ground, *you* could talk with Winslow Homer and he could talk with you. You both understand the power of place.

One of my all time favorite movies came out in 1983. It was called *Local Hero*. The movie is set in a small Scottish fishing village, and an oil company with unimaginable millions wants to buy the entire village—give the hard working fishermen enough money to pack up and move to the bright lights of Glasgow or Edinburgh.

The company president is played by Burt Lancaster and he sends a young representative there to do its work, and the oil company assumes it's going to be smooth sailing. What fisherman wouldn't want to stop grinding away against the waves and cold seas? But an interesting thing happened. The oil company man who arrives with cash and a briefcase starts to be beguiled by and then to love the sense of belonging in that village and by the end he conspired to keep the people there. (That is called a "spoiler." Sorry.) Just a fictional movie?

When I lived in Maine through the '70s, the environmental battle of the day revolved around the Pittston Oil Company's efforts to build a massive oil refinery in Eastport. It was a 10-year battle, 1973 to 1983. It was during that time I became close friends with the oral history writer Lynn Franklin, whose daughter I taught in fourth grade. Lynn would travel the state, tape recorder in hand, and record the stories of ordinary, yet extraordinary people. Sara Akers was one of them. She was an old woman then, and lived in Eastport. I have never forgotten her words: She talked about being a young girl and playing and dreaming beneath the Eastport sky, the ocean at her feet. She said, "Where else would I ever want to go? How could there ever be money enough to replace that?"

The people whose business plans call to alter the landscape forever will never be able to understand the land the way you do.

I have had one of the best professional lives imaginable. When Jud Hale hired me, he said go where you need to go, find the stories that mean the most to you and bring them back. And I found the most memorable stories involved people who cared passionately about something—mostly about the land and their place upon it. They knew the fragility of their place. They did not take it for granted and were willing to fight to keep it. These people I know you would have wanted to know, and they would have wanted to know you. Because a sense of place extends beyond acres—it lives wherever there is a love and commitment so deep that it becomes its own reason for living.

I spent a few days climbing and hiking all through Baxter State Park in Maine with the park supervisor Buzz Caverly. He was the last ranger who knew the remarkable Percival P. Baxter, who gave 200,000 acres and the park's centerpiece, Mount Katahdin, to the people of Maine along with this enduring message: "Man is born to die. His works are short-lived. Buildings crumble. Monuments decay, wealth vanishes, but Katahdin in all its glory forever shall remain the mountain of the people of Maine."

On the plateau I asked Buzz a question: If he were someday told that he'd have to leave Baxter State Park and would be allowed just one more day's camping, where would he choose? His face grew pained. "First of all," he said, "I wouldn't go. I'd fight to stay." But when pressed, he spoke about Russell Pond Campground as though it were sacred ground:

"You're seven miles in by foot, so already you have solitude. If I don't want to fish, I can hike. If I don't want to hike, I can swim. If I don't want to swim, I can take a canoe and paddle the lake. If I don't want to canoe, I can climb Lookout Rock, or I can climb Katahdin. If I don't want to climb Katahdin, I can go have a nap and listen to the wind blowing through. And if I don't want to go to bed at night, the whippoorwills are going to put me to sleep. *Now what else do you want for a life?*"

I once spent time on the Tuttle farm in Dover, N.H., long before it was sold a few years back. It was famous as the oldest family farm in America, dating from 1632. Twelve generations of Tuttles had worked the same land, and the patriarch of the family when I saw them was Hugh Tuttle, who died in 2002. "I keep having this feeling when I'm walking across a freshly cultivated field," Hugh Tuttle told me. "I'll suddenly think, 'My God, my ancestors have put a foot right there, where I've put mine. Would they approve of the way I'm treating the land?'"

This whole idea of love of land that runs this deep is one that connects the passions of the artist with the passions of the caretaker of this land.

I wrote about the Bachelder family in Epsom, N.H. Instead of selling their land and dairy herd, like so many hundreds of small dairy farmers in the past 20 years—they determined to rebuild, with the help of neighbors, after a devastating fire. Ruth Bachelder is a born storyteller, and it was as if she had waited to simply tell the story—not of the fire, but of the family, about her roots as a farm girl, about her courtship with her husband, Charles, all those years ago. "He was a farm boy. I was a farm girl," she began.

They married in 1963 and built a home together, waiting and looking to find a farm. "The first time I saw this land," she said, "this fella had lost his wife, so he was selling. The house was half tore up, rain was pouring through the roof. A real mess. We went to the bank and said we'd like to buy it. They thought we were crazy. It was $25,000, and I thought, *We'll be in debt forever*. We started with nothing. But this was going to be our future."

She talked about the joy of working from dawn to dusk, fighting to keep a little farm going. I had not known very much about the plight of the small New England dairy farmer when I entered Ruth's home, until Ruth and her daughter Sarah explained it to me. There are dairy farms in Idaho, Sarah told me, with thousands of cows. She and her family were milking fewer than 40.

A hard life, Ruth said over and over, but one she would never trade. "I can't tell you how rewarding the farm life is," Ruth said. "Every kid had chores. Then they'd go off and play, and when dinner was ready, I'd get out in the middle of the road and yell and they'd come running."

Here in New England | BY MEL ALLEN

Fire on the Farm

LET'S START JUST BEFORE THE FIRE. Just before flames tore through the hayloft stacked with 5,000 bales. Just before the smoke billowed through the barn, the cows terrified and men fighting back panic, struggling to get the herd out before everything burned down. Because to understand the loss of a single small family farm, it helps to see what was there before. ¶ It's August 27, 2004. Early evening, about 6 p.m., dinnertime, except farmers don't eat until the chores are finished and there was still the last wagon of hay to get in, and the cleanup after milking.

The farm is called Spooky View, named for the cemetery that abuts its land, and it's one of only three dairy farms remaining in Epsom, New Hampshire, a small town east of Concord. A generation ago there were eight. It's an old story—the decline of the family dairy, the land sold to developers for housing lots—but consider: In the 1920s there were more than 14,000 such farms in the state; as late as 1983, there were still 625. On this summer day, Spooky View Farm is one of only 135, and it is one of the smallest.

Inside the barn, Keith Bachelder has just finished milking his 35 cows and feeding an equal number of heifers. Keith owns the cows, having bought them from his parents seven years earlier, but everyone helps out—dad, mom, sister, brother, relatives, friends. It's how small family farms have always made do. Only a few weeks before, he has finally paid off the loan to buy the herd. Outside, his father, Charles, along with cousins and friends, is throwing the last bales onto the hay elevator that trundles to the second-story loft. Charles and his wife, Ruth, bought this farm in the early 1970s when Keith was a baby. Charles is well into his 60s, and he's spent nearly every day of his life on farms.

If you look around, you'll see right away that this is no postcard dream of a farm. Four old tractors and parts lie here and there, ready to give life to another machine. The barn sidles against a garage—the garage to the main house where Ruth and Charles live—all of it useful, none of it especially photogenic. Across the street is the house Keith shares with Sarah, his sister, and just up the road, next door to the farmhouse, lives Brent, their brother. Family and cats are everywhere. A working farm. Home. Where they raised the animals they showed at fairs, and friends came over for Ruth's home cooking and cakes and cold glasses of freshly ladled milk.

Ruth grew up on a dairy farm right here in Epsom. "We did all the milking by hand," she says, "my brothers on one side, me on the other." She and Charles started going together when Ruth was in high school. "He was a farm boy and I was a farm girl," she says. They married in 1963 and built a home together, waiting and looking to find a farm.

"The first time I saw this land," she says, "this fella had lost his wife, so he was selling. The house was half tore up, rain was pouring through the roof. A real mess. We went to the bank and said we'd like to buy it. They thought we were crazy. It was $25,000, and I thought, *We'll be in debt forever.* We started with nothing. But this was going to be our future."

That was in 1970. Every night when Charles got finished working at a nearby farm, he and Ruth came up here and stayed into the night fixing things up. "We've always been a couple," Ruth says. "We milked together. Got sawdust together, hayed together. I only got mad at my husband once. I slammed the barn door and then went back and did chores." They went to auctions together, too, building their herd one cow at a time. "November 12, 1971," Ruth says. "It was Keith's third birthday and we had cake and the milk truck came for our first shipment of milk."

PHOTOGRAPHS: PETER GRANDMAISON/*THE CONCORD MONITOR*

To pay the bills, Charles kept on at the neighbor's farm and Ruth did the milking and chores at Spooky View, hauling 50-pound pails of milk across the barn. She came to the farm with two small children and soon had two more. By then, Charles was staying here at Spooky View. They joined a milk co-op and checks came twice a month. "Always on the 5th and 20th," Ruth says. "That's when you sat down and paid bills. Some years were awful lean. We just had to cut back then. It was just so hard to keep going." But even while farmers all around them cashed in their land, they stayed. "I can't tell you how rewarding the farm life is," Ruth says. "Every kid had chores. Then they'd go off and play, and when dinner was ready, I'd get out in the middle of the road and yell and they'd come running."

They had only 14 acres of pasture, not enough to grow their own feed. Whenever they had a little money, they added to the herd, building up to 35 milkers. One night, Charles went to the Deerfield Fair to watch the horse pull. He was leaning on a fence and somehow he caught his finger up in a halter, and the horse snapped it right off. When the call came, Ruth gathered up the kids, they got the cows milked, and *then* they went to the hospital. "It's just the way it was," Ruth says. "The cows always had to come first."

Keith saw how hard his parents were working, how tight life was financially after all that time, and he went into welding, working a lot in high-rise construction. But he stayed a farm boy at heart and kept working here and there for other dairy farmers, all the while looking around for his own land. The farm he was meant to be on was right in front of him all along. Ruth took stock of her age and Charles's. She wanted the farm to stay in the family. "I said to Dad," Ruth recalls, "'We should see if we can sell the cows to Keith.' Dad asked Keith if he wanted to farm." Yes, he really did.

And that is why on this summer evening Keith has just finished milking and Charles is throwing the last bale onto the elevator, which is overheating, though nobody knows it. He looks up and sees the flames. "Fire!" he yells, and then everyone starts running for the animals. The next few minutes are gone from Keith's memory: "I don't remember nothing. I still don't and I don't know as I want to," he says.

What he doesn't remember is how the barn seemed to fill with people pulling and tugging at the cows until all but one were out, how the cows ambled about bewildered until they could be herded together in the pasture. Firemen from 13 towns came screaming up Center Hill Road, but the flames fed on that hay and tore through the woodwork until there was nothing left but mounds of ashes. Neighbors came running and carried to safety every scrap of belongings from the house, even Ruth's cookbooks, because it was touch and go for a while as to whether the house would also catch fire.

Keith Bachelder holds his mother, Ruth, as flames consume their family's livelihood in Epsom, New Hampshire. On a hot August evening in 2004, a four-alarm fire broke out of the hay elevator and ripped through the Bachelder barn, spreading to the dairy, a storage shed, and one end of the garage. All but one cow survived, but the outbuildings, containing milking equipment and 5,000 bales of hay, burned to the ground.

An Epsom, N.H., farming family's decision to rebuild after a devastating fire was featured in a *Yankee* story titled "Fire on the Farm."

One night, Ruth's husband Charles went to the Deerfield Fair to watch the horse pull. He was leaning on a fence and somehow he caught his finger up in a halter, and the horse snapped it right off. When the call came, Ruth gathered up the kids, they got the cows milked, and *then* they went to the hospital.

"It's just the way it was," Ruth said. "The cows always had to come first."

I believe Ruth could have talked to Winslow Homer about what it is like to love a place.

I want to end with a passage from the recent *Forest Notes*: It is written by George Frame, senior director of forestry here at the Forest Society. It is titled "Three (Whispered) Cheers for the Undiscovered Places."

There have to be places where those of us who don't like crowds, who don't enjoy white-water canoeing, or who feel they may be getting too old to hike all day at elevations over 4,000 feet, can go and just enjoy the woods. And for me that means quiet strolls, listening to birds calling, catching a bear or porcupine up a tree, being buzzed by an upset broad-wing hawk when you have ventured too close to the nest tree, photographing mushrooms or colorful lichens up close.... or stumbling upon an old cellar hole...or finding a pre-Civil War cemetery and letting my imagination take me into the lives and trials of the folks who chose to live and die "so far back in the woods." When there is no big view to see, no grand natural beauty smacking you in the face amidst the summer crowds, look closer and see the small things, and see how wonderful these small things can be.

Everyone here understands the beauty of not only the grand places but the small things. That is why you and Winslow Homer would be able to look and talk, and why the long stream of briefcases who will always come along hoping the day will arrive when you won't find the wonder in these small precious places, will never know who you are. You speak a different language. You see with different eyes.

Thank You.

From left to right: *Charley Morgan, Dave Chase, Jane Difley, Mike Kezar, Diane and Don Bilodeau, Lynn Placey, Rod and Donna McAllaster, Daryl and Brad Thompson and Arlene Placey. Not pictured: Carl and Carole Lewis and Green Acre Woodlands.* Photo by Diane Forbes.

North Country Landowners Honored as Conservationists of the Year

Forest Society President/Forester Jane Difley presented the 2015 Conservationists of the Year Award at the 114th Annual Meeting held at the Rocks Estate in Bethlehem Sept. 26. Here are her remarks.

The Conservationist of the Year Award is among the most prestigious recognitions at the Forest Society. Past Conservationists of the Year include Gov. John and Anna King, U.S Sen. Judd Gregg, descendants of John Wingate Weeks and the naturalist John Hay. The Conservationist of the Year honors people whose work to promote and achieve conservation is exemplary, people whose actions have made a difference not just for their own backyards but also statewide. Often those deserving of the award have chosen to give up something in order to accomplish a conservation outcome for the greater good. I think everyone in this room has made one kind of sacrifice or another in the name of conservation. In our Conservationist of the Year we look for those who stand out through the magnitude of the action they undertook.

A few years ago, a large utility began buying up thousands of acres of the North Country in order to build a massive transmission line through our state despite widespread opposition. Northern Pass representatives went door to door in Pittsburg, Clarksville and Stewartstown offering increasingly staggering sums to landowners, often pitting neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, brother against sister. Despite spending $40 million over the course of a year, they have still not successfully acquired a complete route for their towers and lines through that area.

And the biggest reason that they have not is because of the actions of a few key landowners who, by an accident of fate, owned land along the potential routes Northern Pass was hoping to acquire. Routes across one of the most stunningly beautiful areas in New Hampshire. A few key landowners, supported by a community standing in opposition the unnecessary industrialization of a landscape they cherish, recognized that they were in unique positions to say no to the money that Northern Pass was offering in an effort to save a larger landscape we all cherish. Or as one of them so famously put it, "Our roots are deeper than their pockets."

The landowners we are recognizing today then went one step further. Each of them chose to put permanent conservation easements on their lands that will forever protect their land from towers and power lines—overhead or underground. Today they are our heroes, and their words and deeds continue to inspire an entire state to demand that we not sacrifice our scenery. Please join me in congratulating our Conservationists of the Year, the landowners who stood tall against Northern Pass:

:::

Don and Diane Bilodeau
Dave Chase
Green Acre Woodlands
Mike Keezer
Carl and Carole Lewis
Rod and Donna McAllaster
Charley Morgan
Arlene Placey
Lynne Placey
Brad and Daryl Thompson

:::

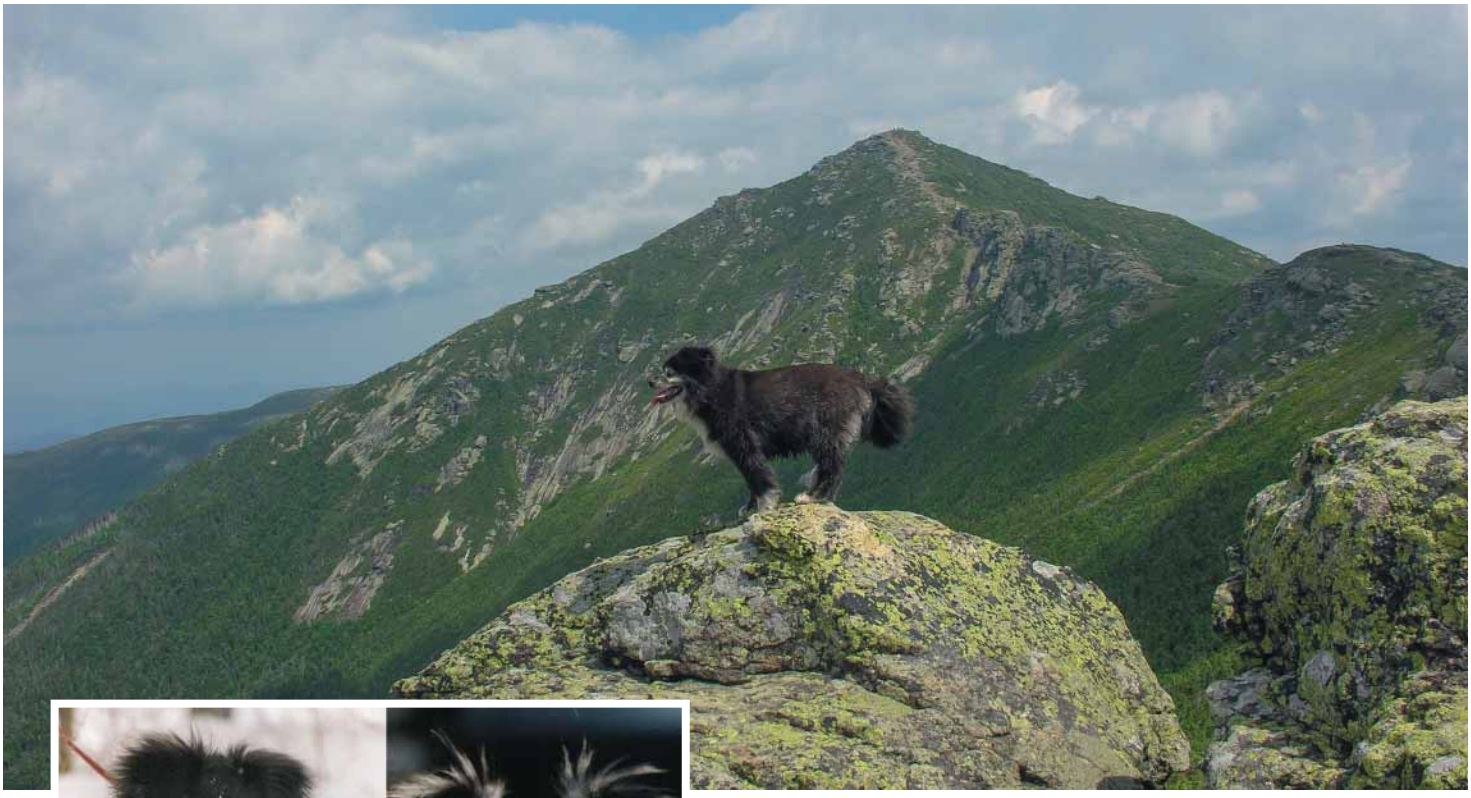
PechaKucha is a Japanese word meaning "chit chat," and it is also the name of a presentation style that originated in Japan about 12 years ago but has swept across the globe as an innovative and fun art form. PechaKucha Nights are events featuring many short presentations back to back, each one only six minutes and 40 seconds long. Each PechaKucha is limited to 20 slides, and the speaker has only 20 seconds to narrate each slide.

Kevin Talbot of Kingston, N.H., used the PechaKucha form to tell the story of Emma, the tiny Pomeranian mix that showed up at his and his wife Judy's home 14 years ago and quickly revealed her mighty spirit for mountain adventures. Here is Kevin's PechaKucha story, edited for our magazine format.

The Soul of an Explorer

How a Little Stray Dog Turned into a Mighty Trip Leader

By Kevin Talbot



While she was growing up, my wife, Judy, had never been able to have a dog. Now her father was dying, and in a dream, Judy saw her father stand up to walk, but he faltered and collapsed to the floor. She rushed to his side, but there where he had been was a tiny, black dog. Ten days after my father-in-law's funeral, Emma walked into our lives, apparently a stray. We took her in. Our chance meeting rescued her from the streets of Lawrence, Mass., and brought her to the summits of hundreds of hills and mountains over her 14 years.

^ She led us to the summit of Mount Flume in February 2008, 11 miles round trip via the Osseo Trail. Even in snowshoes, the steep sections were difficult as the fine, deep, granular snow would not compact and we would take two steps forward and slide backwards five.

Winter always seemed to be her favorite. Her thick, black double fur was super warm. She would often suffer on our summer hikes, especially above tree-line where there was no shade, but it was perfect for the cold temps, and when she got too warm, she would just stick her face in the snow.

Although she never reached all 48 of New Hampshire's 4,000 footers in winter, she did reach 41 of them, including Washington and Jefferson in winter, two of the tallest and most difficult to obtain in any season. Not bad for a 14" at the shoulder, 22-pound pomeranian/mix.

My wife and I had done a small bit of hiking, but when Emma came along she quickly showed us that she was one tough cookie, seemingly undaunted by any obstacle, whether man, beast or mountain. She came with no AKC papers, but she showed us she was 100% White Mountain Dog.

^ On the mountain trails there are always opportunities to cool off, and she would always take full advantage. Water would do in a pinch, but she preferred the long-lasting cooling effects of mud. In her whole life I don't think she was ever clean for more than an hour.

As the years passed, she taught us that there was much more to hiking in the mountains than simply bagging the next peak. We needed to take time to enjoy the experience, to let the cleansing effect of the mountains renew our spirits. We all looked forward to every trip.

The drudgery of our everyday life would melt away as we stood together on one rocky outcrop after another. Mother earth was laid at our feet, and father sky wrapped us in billowing clouds. With each hike we would leave the troubles of the world behind and find ourselves as part of the miracle of our surrounding universe.

Often the rigors of the trail would test our mettle. Heat, humidity, biting insects, frigid cold, fatigue: We learned the struggle was not with the mountain as much as within ourselves. When I would be ready to give up in despair I would look up, and there would be Emma waiting and wondering why I was taking so long.

^ Emma would often lead us above tree line in the Presidential Range, some of the highest and most difficult peaks in New Hampshire. A day like this can turn windy, cold and foggy in an instant, or the hot sun can beat down on your black fur. The rocks are quartzite and mica/schist and very abrasive on padded feet.

< In 2010 Emma had a chance meeting with a very young and handsome Australian cattle dog named Mr. Blue. She was 10 and he was 2, but they became the best of friends and loved to share adventures. A rescue like him, she taught him the manners of a good trail dog, and he taught her to always be young at heart.

> Often our adventures would include awakening on a mountain top in the wee hours before dawn to the voice of the white-throated sparrow. Like ourselves, I believe Emma absorbed these moments when all the world was calm quiet and the rising sun would bring the forest to life around us.

Over the years images like this of Emma became well known among different hiking circles, and she gathered a large following on the internet hiking forums. Often people would spot her on the trail and exclaim “Emma!” Once on a remote mountain in Maine a woman approached me and asked in French, “Is that Emma?”

It is said a dog comes into our lives to teach us joy and love, and leaves us much too soon to teach us loss and sorrow. During her years with us on earth she was at our sides as we buried our mothers and some dear, departed brothers and sisters, as well as my oldest son. Like dust in the wind, we will all take this trail someday.

Pictures and words can never fully describe the joy and happiness a dog can bring into your life if you are willing to give them the time and attention they so desperately need from you. For close to 14 years I watched my wife and Emma perfect this relationship. It was an honor and a privilege to be a part of something so wonderful.

^ As is so often the case in life, on the day she came to us we did not know she was coming, and on the day she left us we did not know she was leaving. This is the last photo of our little girl I would ever take, cooling off in her favorite mud. A few hours later her tiny but mighty heart gave out. She had taken the path where we cannot yet follow.

As the long days, weeks and months passed, I pored over thousands of photos of her I had taken and realized I had not taken nearly enough. In all of the world's natural beauty we had witnessed and shared together over 14 years, nothing was more special to us than this tiny heartbeat at our heels who could conquer any mountain.

Photo by Carrie Deegan.

Students and their chaperones gather for a brief meeting atop Mt. Major while Dave Anderson of the Forest Society points out far-off mountain ranges.

Enrichment Education, Mountain Style

By Brenda Charpentier

It's a sunny October morning and a group of fourth graders has almost reached the rocky top of Mt. Major when three boys pop into view above them, outlined by clear blue sky.

"Hey guys, hurry up," one yells down. "We found Mr. Phippen's Hut!"

Then all the kids are off and running, exploring the summit along with the rest of the 70 or so fourth graders from Little Harbour School in Portsmouth.

The hike has been an annual tradition for the school for decades, but for the past two years it has been informed by a pre-hike Forest Society presentation that has shared the mountain's ecology and history—one aspect of which is the story of Mr. Phippen's Hut, built at the behest of former summit owner George Phippen to shield hikers from summit winds back in the 1920s.

Photo by Brenda Charpentier.

Students from Little Harbour Elementary School take a tree-identification break at a striped maple growing along the trail.

Photo on left by Brenda Charpentier; photo on right courtesy Sant Bani School.

Top, left: *Fourth graders from Portsmouth eagerly await friends approaching the summit.*

Top, right: *Students from the Sant Bani School in Sanbornton pause for a photo mid-way up to the summit.*

The presentation, by Forest Society Education Director Dave Anderson, gives kids an overview of the mountain's trees and forests, wildlife habitats, geologic features, local landmarks and cultural history including trail safety and hiker etiquette. It results in students (and their parent chaperones) arriving at the mountain on hike day in full scavenger-hunt mode, ready to find natural and cultural features they saw in the presentation.

"This makes the hiking experience not only a fitness activity to the summit, but a learning experience along the way," said Sean McGrimley, the P.E. teacher at Little Harbour who organizes the hike. "Students stop to discuss many of the aspects Dave touched on in his pre-hike presentation. Overall, I have observed Dave's enthusiasm to spread throughout the entire group."

The Forest Society is in Year Two of the Mt. Major Outdoor Classroom Project, an effort to partner with schools already visiting Mt Major for field trips in order to offer resources and expertise—at no cost to schools. The project grew out of the Forest Society's recent acquisition of land on Mt. Major and the stewardship and outreach opportunities that arise from owning segments of one of the most popular hiking trails in the state. Grants from the Dorr Foundation and an anonymous donor support the project.

The goal is to enrich school hikes but not to actively teach *during* the hikes, Anderson said, because part of learning to love the outdoors is being free to explore at will.

"We don't want to get in the way of their experience. That's so important. They need to be able to just climb the mountain and enjoy the hike," he said.

Pre- and post-hike school visits work well to enrich students' experiences. This fall, Anderson visited the K-8 students at Sant Bani School, a private school in Sanbornton, before their hike and an enrichment class at Portsmouth Regional Middle School after theirs.

Hillary Pincoske, who leads the Sant Bani hike, said her school uses the event to teach ecology and hiking etiquette and skills, and Anderson's visit "added a whole new element to the conversation."

"His passion for New Hampshire forests is contagious, and we were thrilled that our students and staff could learn from someone with so much passion for what he does," she said.

Especially for older students, the hike opens the door to talking about conservation, Anderson said. "We can get into what land trusts do and questions like how much land should be conserved and who gets to decide what gets built and what gets conserved," he said. "I like to ask kids what they'll be able to do in a few years ... vote!"

Joining with school groups for Mt. Major events is another way the Forest Society can be a resource. Students involved in the Outing Club and the Environmental Club at Prospect Mountain Regional High School, for example, have held April "Earth Day" clean-up events at Mt. Major that were supported by Forest Society staff.

The Forest Society is actively seeking more schools with which to partner in the Mt. Major Outdoor Classroom Project, because engaging kids is critical to the future of conservation in New Hampshire.

"Mt. Major is the ideal outdoor classroom for students who will soon be the generation of adult decision makers taking care of our special places," Anderson said.

Does Your Local School Hike Mt. Major?

The Forest Society is seeking to expand our outreach efforts to provide resources to schools that hike Mt. Major for field trips. To become a partner in the Mt. Major Outdoor Classroom Project, contact Forest Society Education Director Dave Anderson at danderson@forestsociety.org.

Two Lecture Series Focus on Wildlife

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

BRETZFELDER PARK FAMILY LECTURES STARTS FEB. 3

Learn more about nature in this free series. Most presentations take place at the Bretzfelder Memorial Park, on Prospect Street in Bethlehem; however, the Feb. 17 event takes place at the nearby Rocks Estate, 4 Christmas Lane in Bethlehem. Call 603-444-6228 or go to the calendar page of www.therocks.org for more information. Preregistration is not required.

FEBRUARY 3, 7 p.m.

The Legacy of Trail Clubs in the White Mountains

Local hiking columnist and author Mike Dickerman of Littleton presents this program based on the Museum of the White Mountains exhibit that he is co-curating this year with Steve Smith of Lincoln.

FEBRUARY 10, 7 p.m.

What's New in Astronomy

Ben Moss, an astronomy teacher at the White Mountain School and board member of the Northeast Kingdom Astronomy Foundation, will present astronomy findings from unmanned missions and telescope projects over the past two years.

Learn about African lions Feb. 17.

FEBRUARY 17, 7 p.m.
(The Rocks Estate in Bethlehem, not Bretzfelder Park)

Tanzania: From Mahale Chimps to Serengeti Cats

Chuck and Betsey Philips, who have traveled extensively in Africa in the past 20 years, will present two distinct eco zones of Tanzania—the Mahale Mountains on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and the plains of the Serengeti.

FEBRUARY 24, 7 p.m.

The Nature of Iceland

Naturalist David Govatski of Jefferson will present the flora, fauna, geology and culture of Iceland, the Land of Fire and Ice and home to 10 million Atlantic puffins and millions of other seabirds. Basing his presentation on his visits there as an expedition ship naturalist, Govatski will explore the country from Surtsey in the south to beautiful Lake Myvatn and Grimsey Island on the Arctic Circle in the north.

A black guillemot.

COTTRELL-BALDWIN LECTURES START MARCH 1

The popular Cottrell-Baldwin Environmental Lecture Series returns on Tuesday nights at 7 p.m. in March. Mark your calendars for March 1, March 15, March 22 and March 29, and join us for free presentations, refreshments and good conversation at the Henry Baldwin Forestry Education Center at the Caroline A. Fox Research and Demonstration Forest in Hillsborough. This year's theme is Creatures Great and Small in the Granite State. For directions, see www.forestsociety.org/thingstodo or call 224-9945.

MARCH 1, 7 p.m.

Understanding Bobcats in the Granite State

John Litvaitis, UNH professor of Wildlife Ecology and Rory Carroll, UNH Wildlife and Conservation Biology graduate student, present their research about this fascinating feline in New Hampshire forests.

Explore the latest bobcat research March 1.

MARCH 15, 7 p.m.

The Scoop on Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases

Scott Rolfe, Community Forester with the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, will discuss ticks, Lyme disease, co-infections and how to protect yourself and your family from tick-borne pathogens.

MARCH 22, 7 p.m.

Bats in New Hampshire

Susi von Oettengen, USFWS Endangered Species Biologist, will discuss the bat species that call New Hampshire home and the prognosis for our bats in the face of white-nose syndrome.

MARCH 29, 7 p.m.

What's Bugging New Hampshire's Moose?

Kristine Rines, N.H. Fish and Game's Moose Project leader for 28 years, will present the life history and current status of moose in New Hampshire including the causes of recent declines and results of ongoing research.

The Cottrell-Baldwin Environmental Lecture Series is co-sponsored by The N.H. Division of Forests and Lands, Fox State Research and Demonstration Forest and the Forest Society.

FRI. JAN. 22 | 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
SAT. JAN 23 | 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

N.H. Farm and Forest Expo

Radisson Hotel, 700 Elm St., Manchester

Join the Forest Society and other exhibitors for N.H.'s indoor winter fair and trade show with nearly 100 exhibitors, free educational workshops, N.H.-made products, kids' activities and a winter farmer's market. This year's theme is "Growing N.H.'s Future with Agriculture and Forestry."

For workshop topics, visit nhfarmandforestexpo.org.

Learn about sustainable harvesting practices Jan. 30.

SATURDAY, JAN. 30 | 9 a.m. to Noon
(SNOW-DATE: FEB. 6)

Timber Harvest Tour

Ashuelot River Headwaters Forest, Lempster

Join Forest Society staff and a Meadowsend Timberlands consulting forester for this guided winter timber harvest tour at the 1,852-acre Ashuelot Headwaters Forest. Topics include patch cuts, individual tree and group selection techniques, apple tree release for wildlife, best management practices and wood markets.

Register early for more details at signup@forestsociety.org or call 224-9945.

MARCH 12, 19-20, 26-27 AND APRIL 2

The N.H. Maple Experience

The Rocks Estate, Bethlehem

Join us for guided tours of our sugaring operation at the Rocks Estate, the Forest Society's North Country Conservation and Education Center. Take a wagon ride, tap a maple tree with the group, learn tree id and the history of maple sugaring, attend a chef demonstration and taste some maple treats.

Reservations required. Call 444-6228 or send an email request to info@therocks.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 24 | 1-4 p.m.
(SNOWDATE: FEB. 25)

Winter Mammal Tracking and Wildlife Ecology

The Fells and Hay Forest Reservation, Newbury

February begins the breeding season for many wild mammals! Learn animal tracking tips and who is most active in the winter woods during this workshop led by Dave Anderson, the Forest Society's education director. A 30 minute indoor presentation will review four basic track patterns followed by a guided outdoor hike.

Who went there? Learn how to identify wildlife tracks Feb. 24.

Fells or SPNHF members $16; non-members $20

BYO snowshoes. Off-trail hiking may be possible depending on conditions. Meet at The Fells Gatehouse, 456 Route 103A Newbury.

Limit 20; advance registration and payment required. To register, call Mary Lou at 763-4789, ext. 6. or go to www.thefells.org.

Co-sponsored by Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and The Fells.

Photo on left by Brenda Charpentier; historical photos courtesy of the Darvid family.

Left: *Anna Darvid has lived on the Easton farm for her entire life. She remembers her father, an immigrant from Lithuania, planting the acorns that have grown into the mature oaks that shade her house today.* Photo by Brenda Charpentier.

Right, top: *Stanley, Agnes and children in front of the farmhouse. "They put so much work into this place," Anna Darvid says of her parents. "I didn't want to see it go to houses."* ***Right, bottom:*** *Tonie Darvid drives the wagon and Stanley Darvid is in the background taking a break after completing the last load. Tonie was helping the family during one of his leaves from military service.*

Landowners Honor Hard Work of Immigrant Parents

The farm that sustained the family is now sustained in turn

By Ryan Young

The Darvid farm is a familiar landmark in Easton. Heading north on Route 116, you pass its fields after emerging from the dense forest cover of the White Mountain National Forest. Many White Mountains hikers appreciate the beauty of the farm twice and from two perspectives—you can't get to the Reel Brook Trailhead without passing the Darvid farm, and you can't hike the Kinsman Ridge Trail without noticing the cleared fields in the valley below.

Anna Darvid was born on the farm and still lives in the farmhouse. She knows the land and the memories it holds, memories of how it became the picturesque spot it is today. "My mother and father worked very hard, and it wasn't always easy for anyone," she said.

Anna's father, Stanley Darvid, was born Steny Davidid and emigrated from Lithuania in 1908. Her mother, Agnes, emigrated from Poland in 1910. They met and married in New Hampshire, and in 1921 bought 150 acres of land in Easton to farm and raise a family on. Anna and her brother Tonie Darvid inherited the farm and are the last remaining Darvid children. They were predeceased by their brothers and sisters Sophie, John, Joe and Julia.

Anna is a modest and plain-speaking woman. Her tenure in this place bridged the Great Depression and the Great Recession. For 30 years she worked for New England Telephone. When they offered her an opportunity to relocate farther south, she had no interest in leaving Easton and decided instead that it was time to retire and stay on the farm.

Developers have approached her on several occasions with interest in buying the land. I imagine she could live handsomely on the proceeds of such a sale. Anna instead insists that this farm will always be a farm and she wants someone else to have an opportunity to farm it. From her perspective, two recent housing developments nearby are enough. She has noticed a trend of more road traffic and fewer songbird visitors. Last summer, Anna and Tonie donated a conservation easement on the family land to ensure that it will never be developed. For

Top photo by Ryan Young; bottom photo by Susan Schibanoff.

Above: *The Kinsman Ridge forms the backdrop of the Darvid Farm, seen from Route 116 in Easton. "People tell me they're glad I did it," Anna Darvid says of conserving the land. "They like to drive by and see open land and wildlife."*

Left: *This scene of one of the Darvid barns near the farm's woodlot makes drivers pull over to snap photos each fall.*

Anna and Tonie, this conservation easement is the legacy of the Darvid family and honors their parents and siblings.

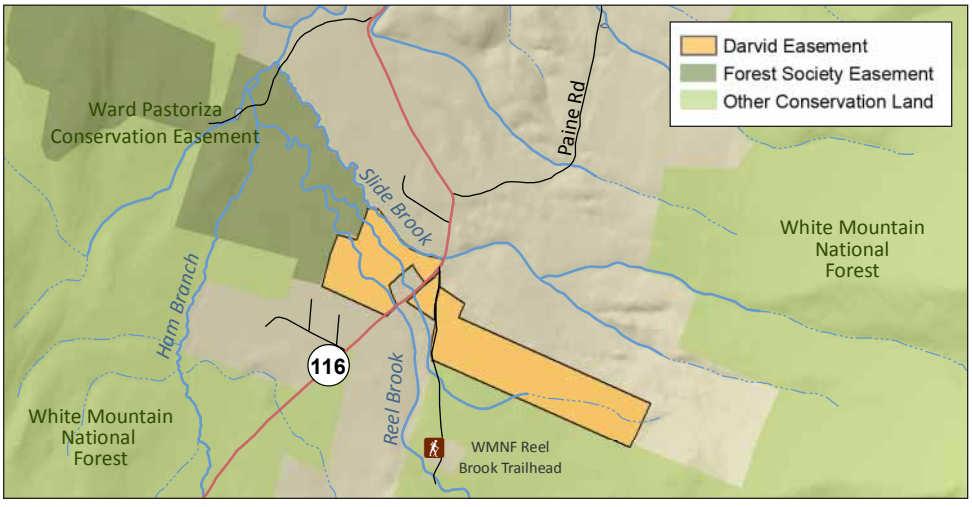
"Our parents put their hearts and souls into this farm," Anna said. "After all their hard work here, I didn't want houses to be built on this land."

The conservation easement was also a priority and significant achievement for the community. The Town of Easton was instrumental in protecting the property. Members of the Easton Conservation Commission approached Anna and Tonie to discuss the possibility of a conservation easement, and the town also made a significant financial contribution to complete the transaction.

"The residents of Easton have long felt that the Darvid Farm exemplifies the incredible beauty of the Easton Valley, as well as the fortitude of its residents," said Roy Stever, co-chair of the commission.

Anyone visiting the farm and walking the fields can appreciate Anna's love for her family home. The farm is blessed with fertile soils and plenty of fresh water. Slide Brook and Reel Brook meander through the property.

Heading west along Reel Brook, where it flows between hayfields, will lead you to the back pasture on the western end of the property that abuts another conservation property owned and managed by Ruth Ward and her daughter Kris Pastoriza (In 2011, Ward and Pastoriza donated a conservation easement to the Forest Society on 361 acres of land). Looking east from the fields, you can see the expansive ridgeline of North and South Kinsman.

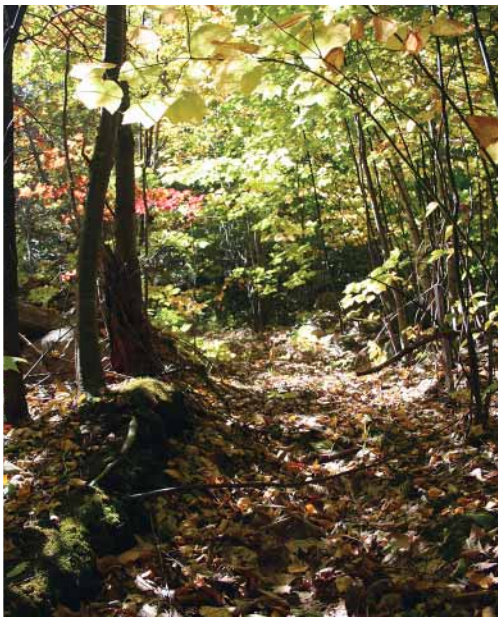


Off Reel Brook Road, at the foothills of the Kinsman mountains, is the Darvid woodlot. This 100-acre tract is a dense spruce-fir forest along the road. As you enter the woodlot and start to climb toward the Kinsmans, the composition changes. The forest canopy opens into a colorful Northern hardwood forest filled with the sights and sounds of wildlife.

The Darvids have long used this lot for fire wood and for hunting squirrels. When times were lean, Stanley Darvid or one of the brothers would head into the woods and return with wild game for supper. Under the terms of the conservation easement, this section of property east of Reel Brook Road will be open to the public for foot travel.

The Darvids grew most of everything else they needed. They grew all sorts of vegetables and raised chickens, pigs and cows. The horses provided the farm power,

Continued on page 31.



Photos this page and opposite by Forest Society staff.

Left: *Dijit Taylor, executive director of the N.H. Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, poses with Brian Hotz, vice president of Land Protection at the Forest Society.*

Right: *A woods road/trail provides pedestrian access through the addition.*

A Win for a Working Forest

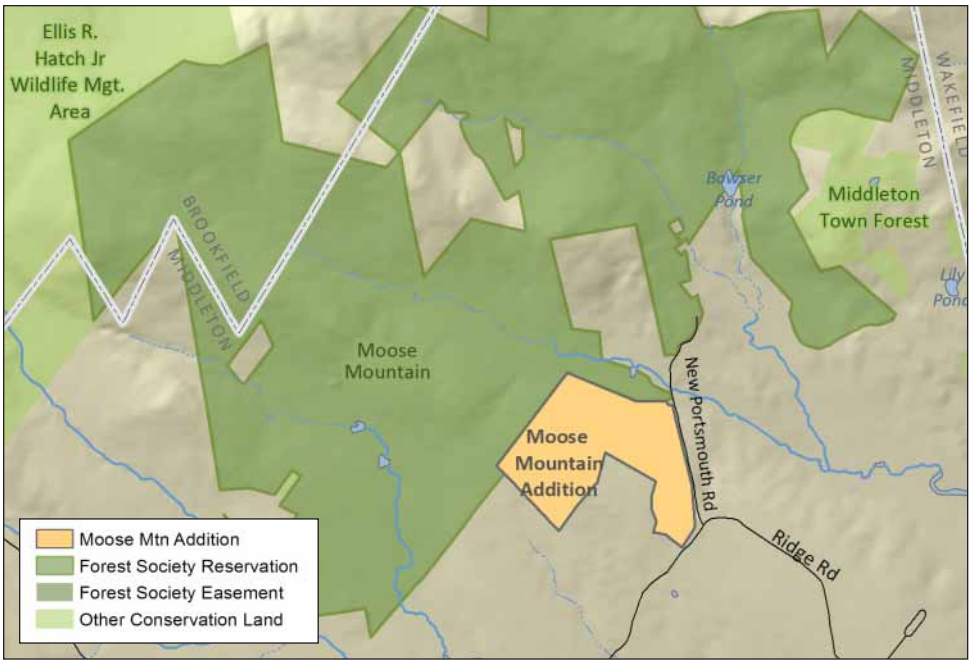
Moose Mountains Reservation Grows by 150 Acres

The Forest Society's Moose Mountains Reservation in Middleton and Brookfield has grown 150 acres larger, thanks to a successful fundraising campaign and collaboration with the Moose Mountains Regional Greeenways (MMRG).

The property, purchased in September, is located along New Portsmouth Road in Middleton. It consists mostly of working forest that is part of the headwaters of the Salmon Falls River, noted by the U.S. Forest Service as one of the most threatened in the country.

"Protecting water quality, wildlife habitat and working forests that give us local wood products is important for all of us, but the personal benefit of this project that most people in the region might notice most is the beautiful, unbroken forest landscape along the Moose Mountain ridge that is visible from all around Lake Winnipesaukee," said Jane Difley, the Forest Society's president/forester.

The Moose Mountains Reservation, as seen from a clearing on the addition.



Left: The addition is a working forest that will continue to be managed for timber.

Project grants came from the N.H. Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the Adelard A. and Valeda Lea Roy Foundation, the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, and private individuals.

"This project could not have happened without the help of the LCHIP committee and our other funders who saw an opportunity to enlarge this wonderful block of conserved land that so many people have worked for so many years to protect," Difley said.

The Moose Mountains Reservation, which now spans 2,475 acres, abuts the state's Ellis Hatch Jr. Wildlife Management Area as well as tracts of Middleton Town Forest land. The area is a high priority for local conservation efforts of the Moose Mountains Regional Greenways, which partnered with the Forest Society on the project.

MMRG founding member Cynthia Wyatt said that "the addition of this property fills in a strategic puzzle piece of MMRG's regional vision to build and connect contiguous greenways of conservation land."

"This area is a priority for us because it is a large and relatively unfragmented habitat that supports a host of far-ranging species, including black bear and moose, and it also provides outstanding recreation activities," added Keith Fletcher, MMRG director of land conservation. "It is our pleasure to work again in partnership with the Forest Society to add land to the Moose Mountains Reservation, one of our region's great conservation projects."

Consulting Foresters

The Forest Society encourages landowners to consult with a licensed forester before undertaking land management activities. The following are paid advertisers.

Top photo by Forest Society staff; bottom photos courtesy of the Shost family.

Above: *The wetlands on the Shost farm were created by beavers in the 1940s. The beaver pond provides nesting trees for a great blue heron rookery and habitat for a variety of wildlife species.*

Left: *Deer fawns and a barred owl.*

'For the Animals'

Family of Wildlife Enthusiasts Conserves Goffstown Farmland

By Brenda Charpentier

From her chair by the large window overlooking a field that slopes down to a farm pond and apple trees, Gayle Shost watches wildlife every day. At the very least, she'll see the birds mob the feeders, and at the most she'll see fawn triplets frolic in the grass, turkeys hurl themselves up into the tallest trees to roost, a fox skitter through or a hawk swoop past on the hunt.

As a girl, she ran through that same field. As a mother, she watched her kids play there and as a wife she helped her husband pick the apples and mow the hay. Now she's elderly and doesn't get out on the land much, but from her vantage point at the window she can see it all and it's enough.

"It's so pleasant to sit here and watch the animals... I feel I'm right out in it," Gayle said during a recent visit at her home.

So when she and her son Duston Shost, who also lives on the family farm in Goffstown, were asked by a friend and apple customer who is on the Goffstown Conservation Commission to consider conserving the land, they saw an opportunity to make sure the wildlife would never be displaced.

"All around us, it's all developed," Gayle said. "The easement allows the animals to have a place of their own where they are not invaded upon. We want to have it safe forever."

In a collaborative effort of the Shost family, the town and the Forest Society, the Forest Society acquired the conservation easement on 177 acres of the Shost's farm, Sugar Bush Farm, in September.

The easement protects stellar wildlife habitat. A short truck ride beyond Gayle Shost's window view lies an extensive wetlands, the heart of which is a large beaver pond that supports a great blue heron rookery and a host of wetlands animals like turtles, amphibians and birds. The forests and fields that make up the rest of the property offer important edge habitats and the variety of cover and foods that attract an even more diverse mix of species.

The land's high points, fields that provide a view of the Uncanoonuc Mountains and, on a clear day, all the way to Boston, would be highly desirable as view lots if they were ever lost to development, but the easement prevents that from happening.

Photos this page by Forest Society staff.

Above, top: *At the high point of the conserved land, hayfields and apple trees grow where the elevation provides a scenic look at the Uncanoonuc Mountains.*

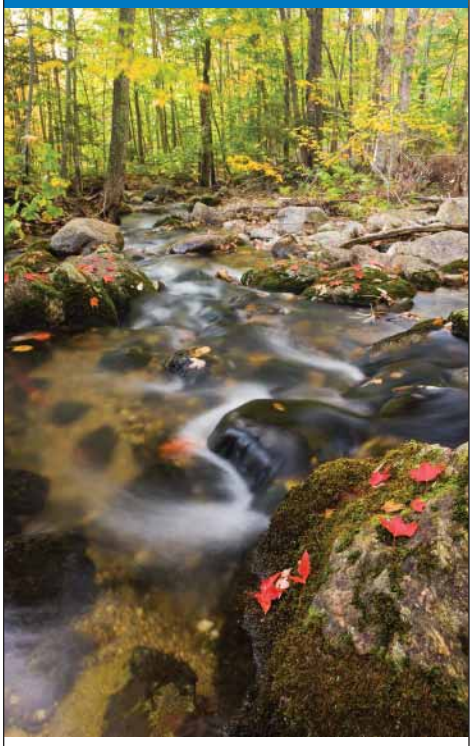
Above, bottom: *A flock of turkeys takes advantage of the dropped apples in the Shosts' orchard.*

Jean Walker, the chair of the Goffstown Conservation Commission and the friend who suggested an easement to the Shosts, said the area around Sugar Bush Farm is a priority for the town because of its habitat diversity, the development of other old farms in town and the proximity to other conserved land.

"This is a very important piece and we are very excited about this project," she said. "It's close to two other conserved properties, so this puts a big area under protection."

The state Dept. of Environmental Services recognized the importance of the property's wetlands by supporting the conservation project with an Aquatic Resources Mitigation grant. The rest of the funding was provided by the town's conservation fund, the Forest Society and private contributions.

The Assets to Acres Program



How do you turn a house or house lot into a forest?

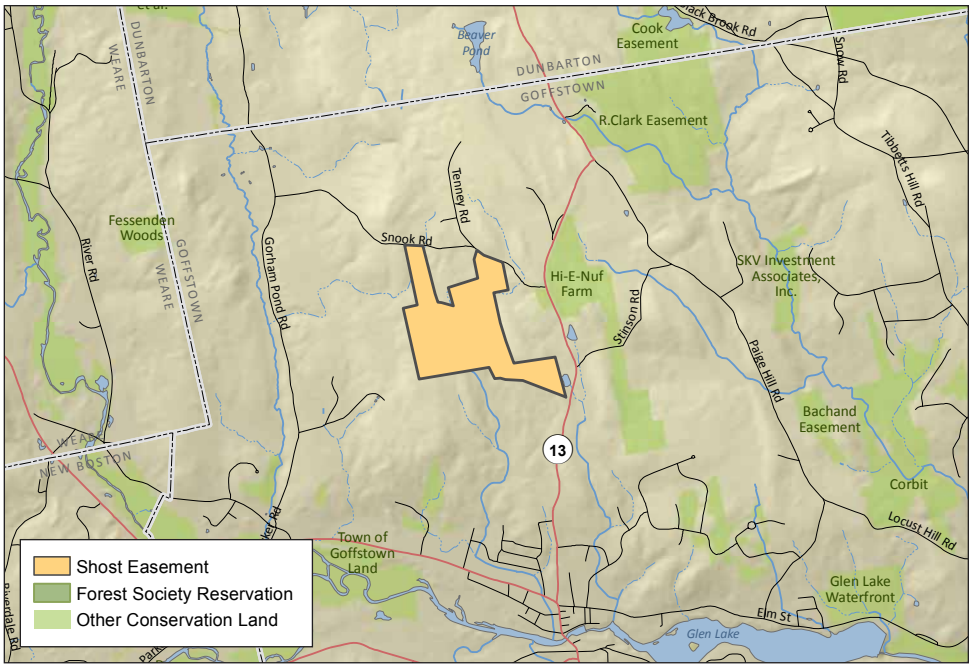
Most people know that the Forest Society accepts donations of conservation land and conservation easements—gifts that protect our forests, rivers, lakes, mountains, and fields for future generations.

But did you know that the Forest Society also accepts gifts of other real estate?

Donating real estate to the Forest Society enables you to quickly liquidate the asset, receive a potential tax deduction, and support land conservation efforts in New Hampshire.

Gifts of houses, cottages, house lots and even woodlots that can be sold by the Forest Society generate funds that will be used to purchase important conservation lands and provide for the stewardship of our forest reservations and conservation easements.

To find out how you could convert your "asset" into conserved "acres," call Susanne Kibler-Hacker or Brian Hotz at (603) 224-9945 or visit www.forestsociety.org/A2A.



Honoring the family heritage

The Shost farm has been in Gayle Shost's family—the Whipple family—for five generations. The farmhouse was built in 1807. Gayle and her sister grew up on the farm, and she remembers her father and grandfather making deliveries of eggs and apples to Manchester and the surrounding towns. Her grandfather made those deliveries by horse and wagon. At one time, the farm boasted 7,000 chickens, in addition to apple orchards, a maple sugar operation and hay fields.

Gayle also remembers her father mowing the land that is now underneath the beaver pond. It was a productive hayfield until beavers had other ideas in the 1940s. It's been a wetland ever since, enjoyed by the family as an ice skating pond in the winters and a wildlife watching spot all year round.

"We used to camp along the shore and watch the beavers and listen to the heron chicks squawking," Duston Shost said.

Gayle and her late husband Stephan raised their children on the farm, after Stephan completed his military service and they settled down in Goffstown. The Shosts continued the farming tradition but times were changing and outside jobs were necessary as well. Stephan worked the farm when he wasn't working at the Rockinham Park racetrack, where he worked until he was 90.

"My father would have liked the easement very much. He loved animals, too," Duston said.

Today Duston also works both off and on the farm, still growing and selling apples and mowing the fields to keep the forest from overtaking them and to provide hay for friends' horses. His sister Stephanie (Shost) Yost helps out as well. The farming lifestyle is very much alive, especially when Duston drives to what seems like the top of the world on summer evenings, to the upper fields to mow and prune apple trees, or when Gayle puts up quarts and quarts of peaches from the farm's peach trees.

Considering the hard work of all the family members over five generations who have cared for the land and have been sustained by it, the Shosts had another reason to conserve the land.

"It's in memory of those who went before us," Gayle said. "They cleared the woods, built the stone walls, planted the apple trees and made sacrifices to keep the farm going."

The past and present generations of farmers who kept so much of the land intact are directly responsible for the farm's attractiveness to wildlife today. Conserving the land is the ultimate way to keep that sustaining tradition in place for the future.

Darvid continued from page 25.

alongside the children who all had a hand in the farm duties at some point in their lives. Still, Anna said the children always made time for fun. "The boys always went fishing, and we would all walk a mile down to Shingle Mill," she explained. Shingle Mill is still the locals' swimming hole, now known as Slippery Rock.

Anna said the hardest times that she remembers came during World War II. The economy was slow, and her parents didn't have a lot of help because her three brothers were serving overseas. A neighbor boy too young to enlist helped Stanley Darvid with haying and other chores as his service on the Homefront. The farm did not have any machinery until they purchased a tractor with a mower in 1949, after the economy had recovered from the war.

When the economy improved, summer residents and visitors to the valley knew they could get staples at the Darvid Farm. If they had a surplus, the Darvids would sell eggs, milk, butter and potatoes. "People would come all the way from Littleton to buy potatoes. That was back when a bushel was 60 pounds, not 50, and a bushel only cost a dollar," Anna said.

What remains of the farm life are mostly relics of a past era. The fields are not cultivated, but they are maintained by neighbors frequently enough to keep the brush out. The barns are full of tools and equipment that were once depended upon for the livelihood of eight people, but are used only occasionally now.

Nevertheless, some parts of the farm life continue. Anna grows potatoes and tomatoes, feeds the birds and watches the sun rise over Kinsman Ridge and set behind the Cooley-Cole ridge. At one of our kitchen table meetings, Anne told me that she doesn't have any vices, "but I do yell at the squirrels when they steal food from the bird feeders."

I asked Anna if she intended to revive the farm now that the conservation easement project is completed, and she laughed heartily. "The Darvid family's days of farming this land are over," she said. "But in a few years it may be another family's turn to bring it back."

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

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

Forest Society Challenges Northern Pass in Court

Attorneys file lawsuit in Coos Superior Court, Motion at NH SEC

Use of Forest Society land would facilitate towers and powerlines where there are none today

By Jack Savage

On Nov. 19, 2015, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests filed suit against Northern Pass in Coos County Superior Court as part of the ongoing effort to defend the Washburn Family Forest and other conserved lands against commercial development.

The suit came one month after Northern Pass filed an application to the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) to permit and build its 192-mile private transmission line.

"The Forest Society has a legal and ethical obligation to defend our conserved lands against commercial development such as Northern Pass," said Jane Difley, president/forester. "Northern Pass cannot show that it has the property rights it would need to build the facility it is looking to permit through the SEC. Nor does Northern Pass, as a merchant transmission project, have the ability to use any form of eminent domain to acquire those rights."

Tom Masland and the lawyers at Ransmeier & Spellman, P.C, representing the Forest Society, filed the suit citing the Northern Pass application to the SEC as an improper attempt to make use of lands the Forest Society owns. The Forest Society has asked the court for a declaratory judgment to find and rule that Northern Pass's proposed use of the Washburn Family Forest is unauthorized.

"Northern Pass is a private entity seeking to make use of Forest Society lands for the exclusive use of Hydro-Quebec," said Masland. "It is our strongly held view that they cannot do so without the Forest Society's permission."

The lawsuit also asks the Court to issue a permanent injunction preventing Northern Pass from taking any action relative to the Washburn property regarding their proposed transmission line without the Forest Society's permission.

Motion at SEC

The Forest Society also called on the SEC to declare the application filed by Northern Pass on Oct. 19 incomplete, because the applicant cannot show that it has the property rights necessary to build the project and the SEC has no authorization to grant such rights.

"To go forward on the Northern Pass SEC application before addressing property rights issues would be a monumental waste of time," said Amy Manzelli of BCM Environmental & Land Law, PLLC, representing the Forest Society. "Northern Pass could not build its project without adequate property rights even if a permit was granted, and the SEC itself cannot resolve the property rights issues the Forest Society is contesting."

"Without eminent domain, it is unclear how Northern Pass could build the facility

DIFLEY COMMENTS ON DEFENDING CONSERVED LANDS IN COURT

On Thursday, Nov. 19, the Forest Society announced that it was taking Northern Pass to court. The following is an excerpt of President/Forester Jane Difley's comments:

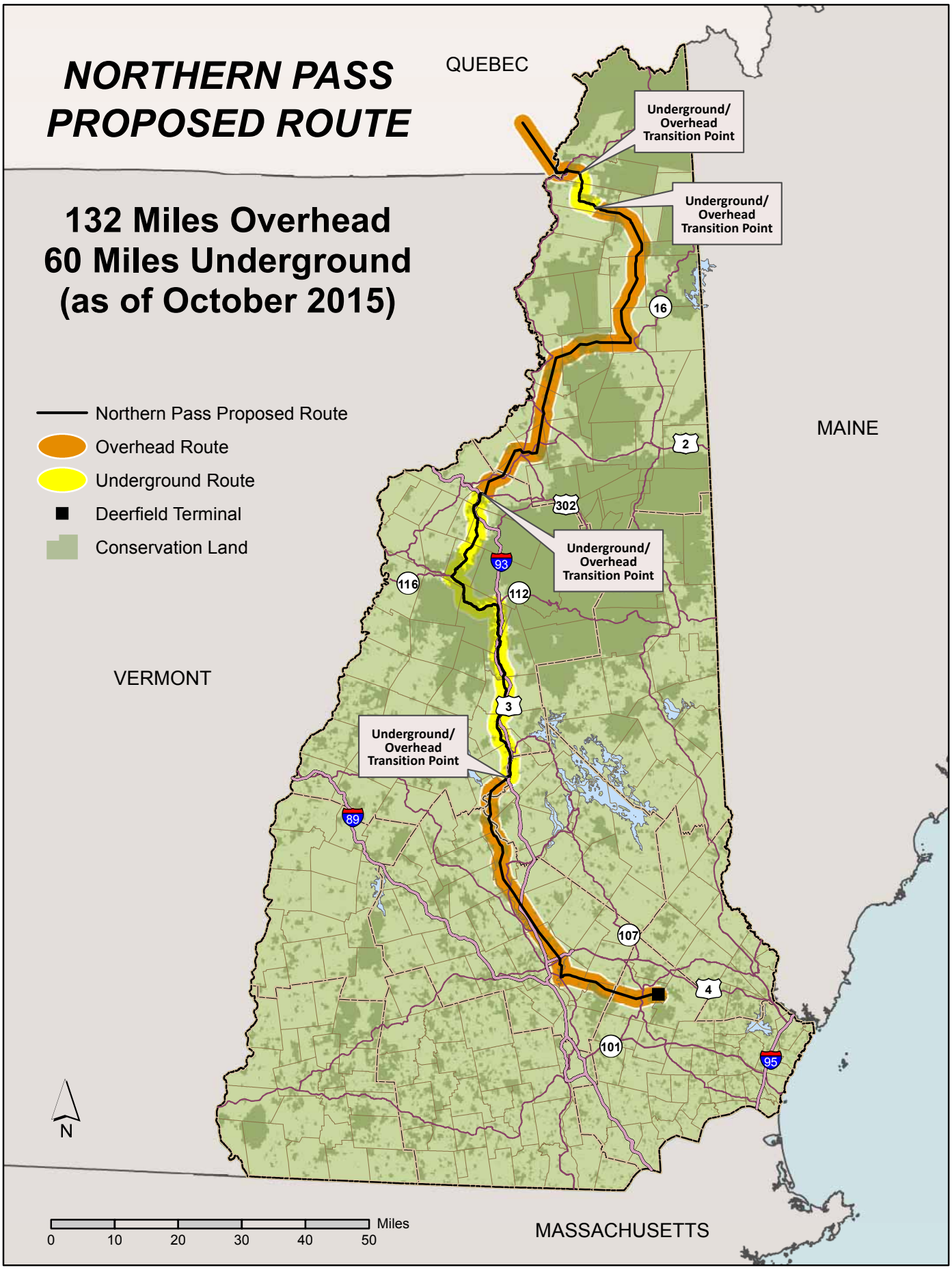
"The Forest Society has advocated against Northern Pass as proposed for nearly five years. Our Board of Trustees took this position in large part because we have a legal and ethical obligation to defend existing conserved lands from commercial development such as Northern Pass.

We have not taken a position against the idea of making it possible for Hydro-Quebec to transmit more electricity to the southern New England market. Rather, it has been and remains our position that if Northern Pass is to be built, it should be done in a way that respects New Hampshire's communities, scenic landscapes, conserved land, and the interests of landowners. More specifically, our board has advocated full burial along appropriate transportation corridors if such a transmission line is to be built through New Hampshire.

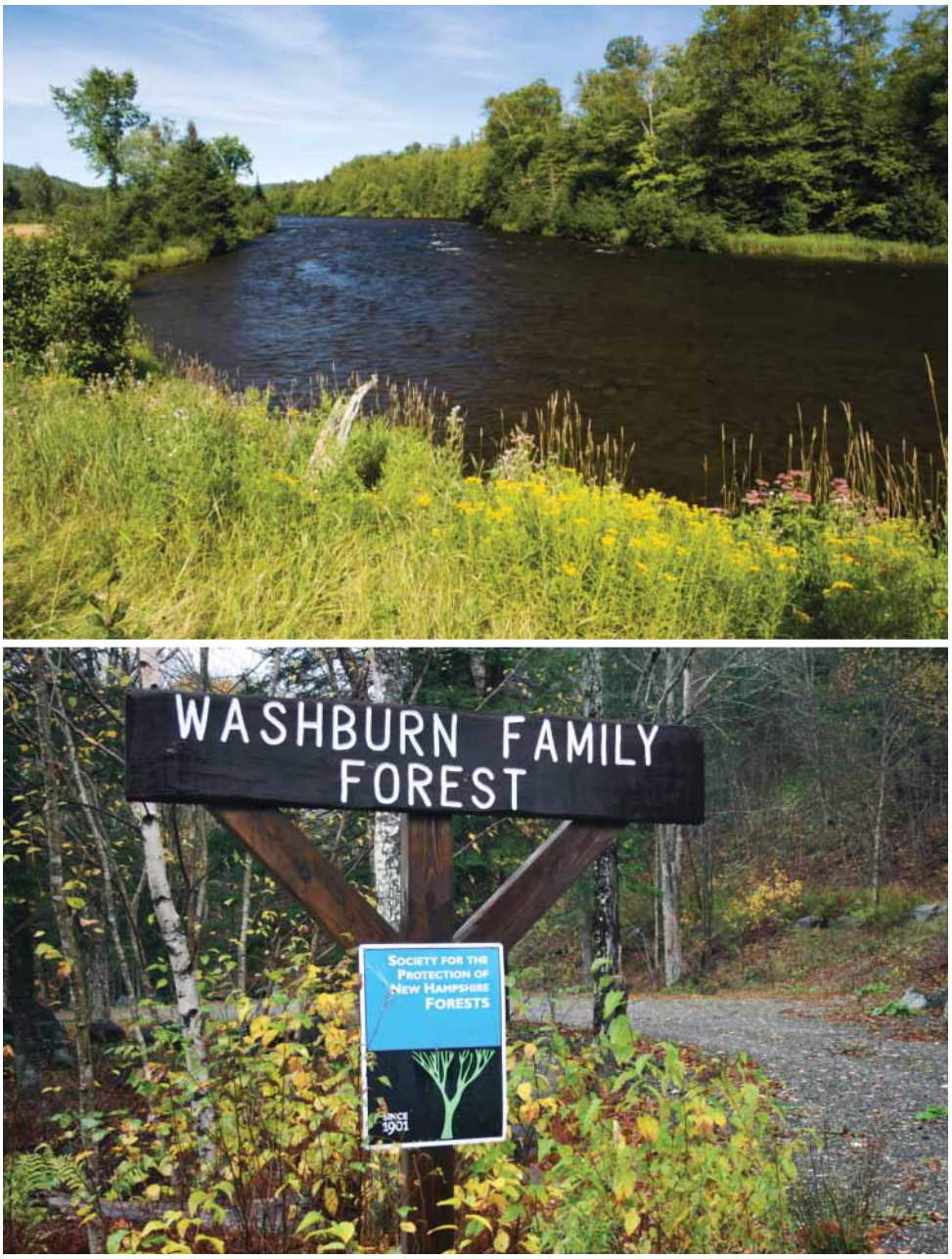
Unfortunately, Northern Pass has chosen not to listen to us, nor the dozens of communities, nor the thousands of other stakeholders who have objected to an overhead transmission line scarring our state. Instead, they are attempting to permit a transmission line that would be overhead for 132 of 192 miles. And in its application to the Site Evaluation Committee, Northern Pass seeks a permit to build a private transmission line on conserved land we own in Clarksville, NH, known as the Washburn Family Forest, without our permission. Their proposed use of our land would facilitate miles of overhead transmission lines and towers where there are none today.

As a consequence, we sued Northern Pass in Coos County Superior Court.

We believe the principles behind our defense of these property rights are of interest to every landowner in New Hampshire."



Map by Anne Deely/Neatline Associates.



With frontage along the Connecticut River, the Washburn Family Forest in Clarksville is a 2,128-acre conserved Forest Society reservation. The Forest Society's lawsuit seeks to prevent Northern Pass from using this land—under the river and under Route 3—to bury a section of its transmission line.

described in its application without our permission," Difley said. "And given that they are proposing to use our land to facilitate miles of overhead line where there are no transmission towers today, we aren't likely to let them dig in our dirt."

"While these specific property rights issues are of paramount importance to the Forest Society, we believe that the principles behind them are of interest to every landowner in New Hampshire," Difley added.

The Forest Society has called on Northern Pass to bury its proposed transmission line entirely along appropriate transportation corridors. The current Northern Pass proposal buries only one-third of 192 miles through New Hampshire.

The Forest Society also filed a Motion to Intervene on the Northern Pass application with the SEC.

Current Status of the Project

In August, Northern Pass officials announced that they were making several changes to their transmission line proposal. They said they would make it a lower capacity line (1090 Megawatt) in order to take advantage of new cable technology that is less expensive to bury. The route would still start in Pittsburg and end in Deerfield, but they now propose to bury 52 miles through the White Mountains region and eight miles near our Washburn property.

As the map shows, that leaves 132 miles of overhead transmission line and towers. That would leave communities north and south of the White Mountains stuck with the visual scar of Northern Pass.

When Northern Pass officials were asked why they chose to bury the line in the White Mountains and not in other parts of the state, they answered that "We did not hear a lot of statewide or stakeholder-wide expression for any particular town, other than the White Mountain National Forest."

This is despite the thousands of comments that were made as part of the permitting process through the US Department of Energy, the votes of more than two dozen towns along the proposed route, and thousands of signatures on multiple petitions. At SEC public input sessions in September 2015, 80 percent of the comments either opposed Northern Pass or called for full burial of the transmission line.

Meanwhile, Northern Pass still needs a federal Presidential Permit. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement in July, and was scheduled to hold hearings in early 2016. A final decision on that permit is not likely to occur until after the state SEC makes its own decision. A final SEC decision is more than a year away.

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

Issues to Watch in the 2016 N.H. Legislature

Upcoming bills concern LCHIP, Energy Siting, Farm Easements, Fish and Game Funding

By Matt Leahy

While policy disagreements between the New Hampshire Legislature and the Governor delayed final approval of the State's 2016/2017 budget, the compromise both sides reached removed any uncertainty the budget stalemate created over the direction and priorities for the state during the next two years. For the Forest Society and one of our top issues, the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, the agreement contained good news: LCHIP will receive $3.5 million in each of the next two years. This outcome is the direct result of the advocacy efforts supporters have made over the last several years and demonstrates the continued recognition about the program's benefits to our state. Thanks to everyone who gave their time, expertise and passion to this campaign.

Now we need to look ahead to 2016. During the fall, legislators who intend to file bills during the upcoming session must file a legislative service request (LSR) which is a bare-bones summary of the bill's intent. The LSR does not include specific language but a review of all the LSRs will provide a State House observer a good idea of the issues the Legislature will be debating and discussing. With that in mind, these are some of the issues we will be following in 2016.

1) **LCHIP:** As noted, it is on sound financial footing for the next two years. However, an LSR filed in the House would seek to repeal the program. Obviously, this proposal has raised serious concerns and is one we will need to address in 2016.

2) **Energy:** As in 2015, we anticipate the Legislature will devote significant time on this issue. Will the Legislature change New Hampshire's renewable portfolio standard (RPS) in such a way that favors large hydroelectric projects? Will it amend the state's eminent domain laws in response to the proposed natural gas pipelines? Will legislators again attempt to remove New Hampshire from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative?

3) **New Hampshire Fish and Game Department:** One LSR aims to repeal the authority the Fish and Game Department was recently granted to set the fees for its licenses. That authority was designed to help the department address its chronic budget shortfalls. Will the Legislature continue to address this problem or will it take steps that could exacerbate the funding challenges at Fish and Game?

4) **Agritourism:** A New Hampshire Supreme Court decision in June that seemed to limit a farmer's ability to conduct activities considered to be "agritourism" kicked off discussions in both houses on how to respond to that ruling. We agree that ensuring farmers' ability to maintain the viability of their farms is an important public policy goal. However, will the Legislature's efforts to meet that goal unintentionally impact the existing easements land trusts hold by allowing activities that were not envisioned at the time those easements were approved?

5) **N.H. Land Conservation Commission:** No bills will be considered in 2016 regarding the Commission. However, the commission itself will be meeting regularly throughout the year to craft a plan outlining the specific natural resources that are at risk and determining some specific goals for how our state can better protect those resources.

Even though the budget has been settled, we anticipate the State House will be as busy as it was in 2015. Stay tuned to our website for updates on these issues, and likely many others, in the months ahead.

Matt Leahy is public policy director at the Forest Society.

Meet Ray Jackson, Volunteer of the Year

By Brenda Charpentier

Ray Jackson has a way to describe people who regularly build or maintain hiking trails, often in mud, summer heat, rain and bugs, and just keep coming back for more.

That's trail crazy.

You can see it when certain people are working really hard in the woods—they're probably sweaty, dirty and tired, but they don't have to dig too deep to find a smile and a willingness to sign up for the next workday. They've crossed the line. They're hooked. They're a lot like Ray Jackson.

"Once you cross that border, you become trail crazy," Ray explained. "You understand it needs to be done, you enjoy the work, and you know you don't have to kill yourself... you can stop anytime and watch everybody else work!"

And such is the good humor that Ray shares out on the trail and has been sharing for nearly 25 years as a Forest Society volunteer land steward.

The Forest Society recognized Ray's commitment and decades of contributions by awarding him the Trish Churchill Volunteer of the Year Award at the annual volunteer appreciation dinner in early October.

Ray started volunteering with the Forest Society back in 1992, when he worked with Phil Heald, Jr., a landowner, conservationist and longtime N.H. state legislator whose family donated what is now known as the Heald Tract in southern New Hampshire. Phil was committed to building a network of trails on the family's 1,400+ acres. When the Forest Society started the Land Steward Program in 1993, Ray was one of the first to sign on, and the Heald Tract was the property he committed to caring for. Ray and Phil worked together for 18 years designing, building and maintaining the Heald Tract trail system, work that Ray continued after Phil's death in 2007. Looking back, Ray counts his friendship with Heald as one of the highlights of his many years of volunteering.

Like Superman wore his S costume, Ray Jackson wore his Forest Society land steward t-shirt under his jacket to the Annual Meeting last fall. In true superhero fashion, he stopped to do some trail work on his way to the meeting.

"He was just a great guy. I had lost my dad when I was 14, and Phil kind of became a father figure to me," Ray said.

Other highlights Ray points to from his long tenure include working on the Marlboro Trail up Mt. Monadnock with Andy Fast, a former coordinator of the Land Steward Program and working at all the Monadnock Trails Weeks events over the years with current Land Steward Coordinator Carrie Deegan and lead forester Wendy Weisiger.

Ray also volunteers with N.H. Trailwrights, a non-profit trails group, is on the board of the Squannacook River Rail Trail and is a committed volunteer with his wife Jane at their church in Littleton.

At the Forest Society, Ray is a valuable asset to any workday, especially when there's trail work to be done, Deegan said.

"The wonderful thing about Ray is that he knows so much about trail construction and maintenance, and he is enthusiastic about sharing his knowledge in a way that is not intimidating to even the most novice of trail stewards. He loves to see others learning about trail work and the outdoors," she said.

Ray's love of the outdoors began with Boy Scout adventures as a kid. Those good times led to his becoming a Scout leader, then a trails volunteer, all the while developing a deeper appreciation for nature. "It is in a way spiritual. I try to notice what's around me. I think it's good for the soul to be out in the woods," Ray said.

It's likely that the reason Ray has found many friends in the conservation and trails community is the combination of skills and his humble, fun-loving spirit. The backpack he brings to workdays is filled with tools on the inside and decorated on the outside with a stuffed Kermit the Frog.

"It's to remind everyone to not take this so seriously, to have a good time. And kids like it. They say, 'Look Mommy, he's got a frog on his back,'" Ray said.

Now 75, Ray recently retired from his second career as a contractor with the FAA in Nashua. Before that, he worked for AT&T. If this second retirement sticks better than his first, he'll have more time to devote to the "honey do" list at home and to his lifetime avocation: trails work. Rest assured that it will be done with the same good humor as always. "I've got a spare Kermit the Frog at home," he said. "He's unstained and unfaded, and if the one on my backpack falls off, I'll put the other one on."

Forest Society Stewardship: Taking Care of the Land Itself Is Not Enough

By George F. Frame, CF

Time for a pop quiz! What do a fire in Deering, a stone wall in Meredith, a gate in Jaffrey, a culvert in Clarksville, a sign in Lyme and a bee's nest in Alton all have in common?

Time's up! They are all related to the stewardship of Forest Society Reservations and they are also just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

We all have a very specific, finely tuned, definition of stewardship. For some of us it is shepherd and flock, for others it is the support and maintenance of a family, and for others it's a monthly contribution to church or charity. However, when you dip your toe into the cold waters of Reservation Stewardship, you need to take the really broad view. When you own as much wonderful land as the Forest Society, you can't be limited in your approach to stewardship because every facet of land ownership, every opportunity to expand public enjoyment, every decision to take an action impacting the land, has implications related to future opportunities, future costs, and future programs.

Thinking like a forester, my concerns are about the natural resources: wood, water, wildlife, soil and air quality. But as a land manager, the stewardship concerns expand. All the infrastructure—signs, gates, posters, kiosks, culverts, bridges, trails, roads, dams, and parking lots—also need to be considered. So we develop a budget and get the work done. Then the people come, and guess what? They need to be stewarded, too.

Snowmobilers, mountain bikers, equestrians, hikers, dog-walkers, sightseers, swimmers, partiers, ATVers, rope swing builders, hunters, trappers, canoers and kayakers, rock collectors, metal detectors, geo-cachers, gold prospectors, spelunkers, loggers, tourists, researchers, students, law enforcement personnel, DES inspectors, rock climbers, tax appraisers, insurance adjusters, fishermen, photographers and videographers, nude models, mushroom hunters, blueberry pickers, stone wall removers, scrappers, pot growers, brides and grooms, mudders, trespassers, squatters, litterers and maybe one or two others I've lost track of.

Photo by Carrie Deegan.

To encourage enjoyment of scenic Forest Society reservations in Deering, staff and volunteers are building a five-mile connector trail between the Hedgehog and High Five reservations. Pictured during a trails workday are (L to R): Len Martin, Jennifer Adams, Alan Cort, Ben Haubrich, Wendy Weisiger, Bob Macentee, Sam Shain, Bart Hunter, Peter Martin, Hiel Lindquist, Gary Samuels and Dick Goettle.

The point to this is that being a steward to the people, most of whom we invite to use our land, is the biggest part of the stewardship job. It's also the part that is associated with the highest anxiety level and is the most expensive, yet it is the part that can ultimately provide the greatest return to the organization.

The Forest Society has recently spent a lot of time discussing making our reservations more welcoming to members and the general public. How do we do that? (This isn't part of the quiz; it's rhetorical!) We provide more and better information about what our lands contain, we put that information in places where we expect people will see it, and we provide them guidance and encouragement to take good care of the resources. It's building a cadre of caring, thoughtful users, and incorporating their use into the stewardship program of the organization. Responsible visitors help us with our stewardship job, because when many good stewards are caring for the land, they drive out the bad just by being there.

Steward the natural resources well and they can be wisely used in perpetuity. Steward the people well and they can be your eyes and ears, your friends, your supporters, and your stewards in return.

George Frame is the Senior Director of Forestry at the Forest Society. He can be reached at gframe@forestsociety.org.

Left: *Dr. Wyatt Oswald (orange shirt) and two young members of his extended family, Tom Sankovitz and Joseph Grassi, prepare to determine the age of a giant red maple tree at the Hay Forest Reservation in Newbury, as author Dave Anderson records the event for this column and for the "Something Wild" radio show on N.H. Public Radio.*

Right: *Oswald extracts an increment borer from the tree to reveal a cylindrical section of wood showing the tree's growth rings.*

Curious to the Core: How Old Is That Tree?

Story by Dave Anderson, photos by Midge Eliassen

In 1891, Secretary of State John M. Hay began buying land in Newbury to create his summer estate, The Fells, overlooking Lake Sunapee from the foot of Sunset Hill. As a young man, Hay served as one of President Abraham Lincoln's two private secretaries, writing and transcribing political speeches and handling Lincoln's correspondence. That history seems more immediate when walking trails at The Fells or following the trail to the summit of Sunset Hill, where the Hays once enjoyed summer evening picnics.

The "Old County Road" is a Class 6 interior road that bisects the Hay Forest Reservation, the part of The Fells donated to the Forest Society by Clarence Hay and his wife Alice Appleton Hay in 1960. This road once linked the original hilltop village of Newbury to New London center. It was a main thoroughfare, traversing the eastern shore of Lake Sunapee and linking remote hill farms including the Nathan Baker Farm and the Hastings Place—both of which survive only as cellar holes today.

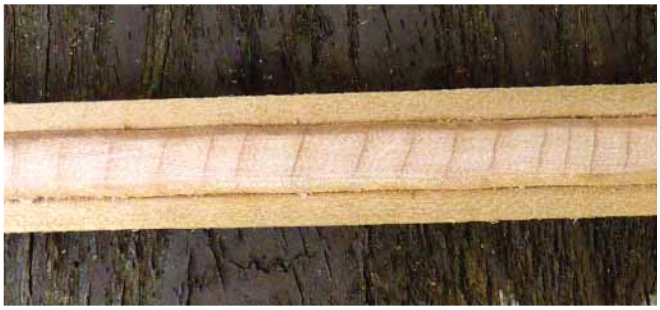
Abandoned pastures along Old County Road are rimmed by stone walls. From behind one stone wall looms a particularly large, shaggy-barked red maple. This largest red maple on Sunset Hill leans conspicuously east, uphill. It had once grown at the edge of an open pasture that now grows beech and hemlock rather than cattle and sheep. The maple's stature is a result of its old age and favored position in full sunlight.

Prevailing westerlies batter Sunset Hill on the windward side, including the fierce 100+ mph winds of the famed "Great Hurricane" of '38, which roared north up the Connecticut River Valley, toppling trees to the east in New Hampshire and to the west in Vermont. The storm—occurring before hurricanes even had names—likely contributed significantly to the maple's conspicuous lean to leeward, arcing high toward the road.

How old is that tree?

We just couldn't say.

So on a humid afternoon in July, with thunderstorms approaching Sunapee from Vermont, we cored the old maple with an increment borer.



Left: *Oswald examines the core to see if it includes the pith at the very center of the tree.*

Right, top: *After gluing the core sample to a piece of wood, Oswald sands the sample, making it easier to count the growth rings.*

Right, middle: *After sanding, the growth rings are clearly seen.*

Right, bottom: *Back at the lab, Oswald examines the core sample under a microscope to get the most accurate ring count.*

Dr. Wyatt Oswald teaches ecology and biology at Emerson College in Boston. Oswald's great interest in dendrochronology has led him to become adept at obtaining, preparing, reading and analyzing increment cores of wood to unravel forest history.

He bored holes on opposite sides of the great red maple, yielding two nearly perfect wood cores—each measuring about 21inches long. Back home, Oswald glued each core to a pine block to dry and sanded them with an orbital sander. He then counted a minimum of 150 rings in each core. He estimated from the tight radius of the curve of the innermost rings that he missed approximately 15 years to the pith at the very center of the tree.

That makes the age of the maple at least 165 years old. The tree cored in 2015 likely began growing around 1850.

If another decade of rings was missed before the pith or if we allow a decade for the tree to attain the height of approximately 4.5 feet where the core was extracted, the red maple would more likely be 175 years old; possibly sprouting as early as 1840. That's just two years after John Hay was born in 1838. For all that time it has stood in this place, where horse-drawn wagon loads creaked past a century-and-a-half ago and where a person can quietly contemplate the passage of time today.

There's something admirable in the time-holding capacity of forests; something felt in the presence of the oldest living trees.

The old red maple invokes the history of New Hampshire hill farms, a famed U.S. president, an American statesmen and humble farmers. The tree recalls the Civil War and the Great Hurricane. The tree that once shaded grazing livestock is now surrounded by young upstarts—beech, hemlocks and sugar maples—that will grow into a future the old maple will never see.

Why do we always seem to want to know how old a big tree is, anyway?

How does knowing that change the tree?

It doesn't. But perhaps it changes us.

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

Photo by Jack Savage.

For hikers, a picnic overlooking Lake Solitude is the reward of a two-mile ascent up the Andrew Brook Trail.

Join Us to Protect the Trailhead for the Trail to Lake Solitude

The Forest Society has the chance to permanently conserve the trailhead of the Andrew Brook Trail, a favorite path to Lake Solitude—the "hidden gem" of Mt. Sunapee State Park in Newbury—and the White Ledges area known for sensational views of the region.

The owner of a 33-acre property that hosts the trailhead, off Newbury's Mountain Road, has agreed to sell it to the Forest Society. Now we must raise the $90,500 needed to acquire and steward the property, and we hope you will give a donation to help.

The Andrew Brook Trail is beloved by many hikers as a sweet ascent along a babbling brook that you rock hop across as you climb through a beech, birch and maple forest. It climbs for two miles before reaching Lake Solitude, a pristine pond surrounded by conifers. It then continues to the White Ledges area on the way to Mt. Sunapee's summit.

In 2006, the Forest Society led a campaign to purchase a conservation easement on 1,100 acres of land on the eastern slope of Mt. Sunapee. This easement protects the

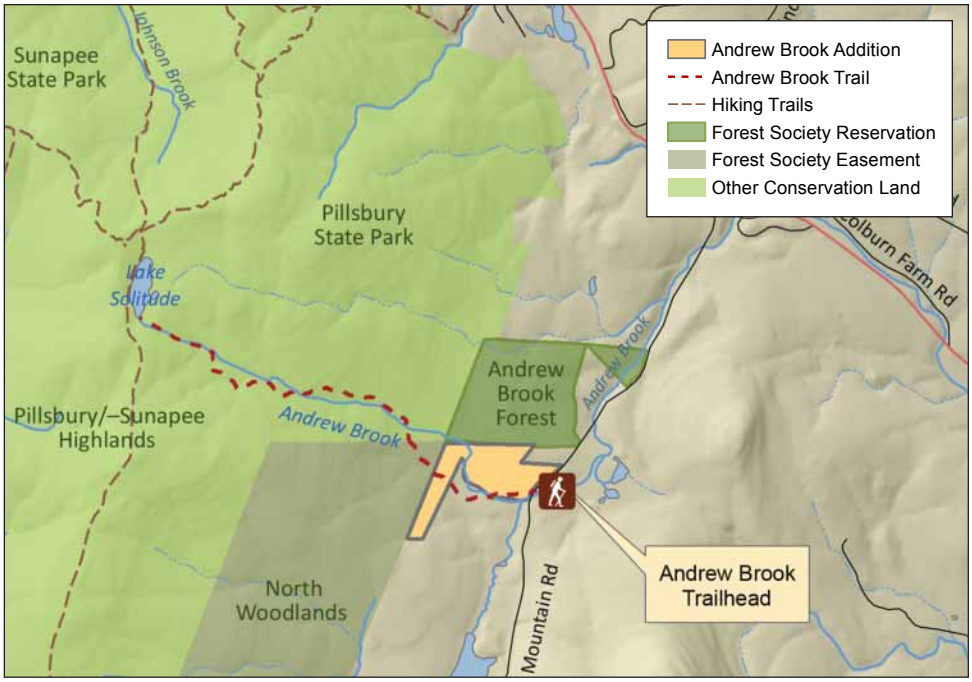


Photo by Carrie Deegan.

Winter hiking on the Andrew Brook Trail.

middle section of the Andrew Brook Trail and was a huge collaborative success celebrated by partners including the Newbury Conservation Commission, Highlanders, the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway, Friends of Mt. Sunapee and the Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway. The trailhead, however, remained in private ownership and unprotected, and it has now been put up for sale.

The property's value for hiking is the most obvious reason to protect it, but its hardwood forest also protects the water quality of Andrew Brook and several other feeder streams, provides high-quality wildlife habitat and enlarges the surrounding block of conserved land including the Forest Society's abutting Andrew Brook Forest, the above-mentioned easement land, and both Sunapee and Pillsbury state parks.

To help us secure this property for the huge public benefit it offers, please send your gift with the coupon below by Jan. 15, 2016. Thank you!

☐ **YES, I WANT TO HELP PROTECT THE TRAILHEAD FOR THE ANDREW BROOK TRAIL TO LAKE SOLITUDE**

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.

Gale and Fred Tobbe

Northwood, N.H.

Members since 1997

MEMBERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

Gale and Fred 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.

"Twenty five years ago, when we were busy with careers, we noticed an article in the newspaper about a guided hike with the Forest Society. We frequently hiked from our home through the woods and thought this hike would be a good opportunity to learn while having fun. That was the beginning of our relationship with the Forest Society. We became members and looked forward every month to exploring another of the Forest Society's conserved lands.

We learned to observe the landscape and see the history of the land. We didn't know that the long, narrow protrusions on our own forest floor were actually the remnants of trees downed by the 1938 hurricane. We learned that an old growth forest doesn't look the way we perceived it would. As we gained knowledge, we realized there was so much more to the landscape around us we did not know. It was then that we made a commitment to volunteer as land stewards for the Ryan Forest in Durham, a small property that borders other properties the Forest Society has conserved.

Now, every time we walk the Durham properties, we practice our orientation skills, observe wildlife and enjoy the changing scenery from season to season. The Forest Society gives us the opportunity to give back to the land that serves us so well."