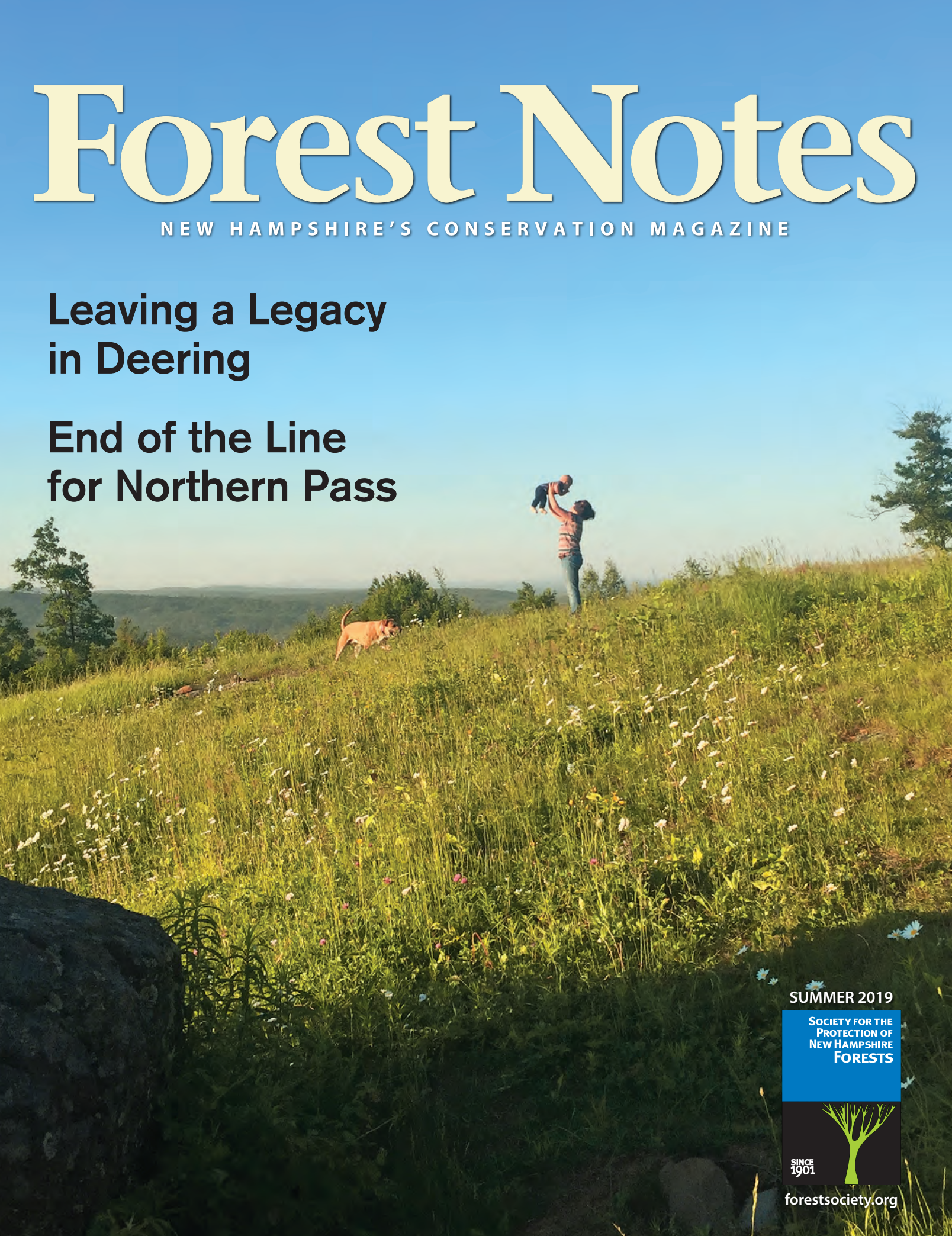
Forest Notes

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

Leaving a Legacy in Deering

End of the Line for Northern Pass



SUMMER 2019

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS

SINCE 1901

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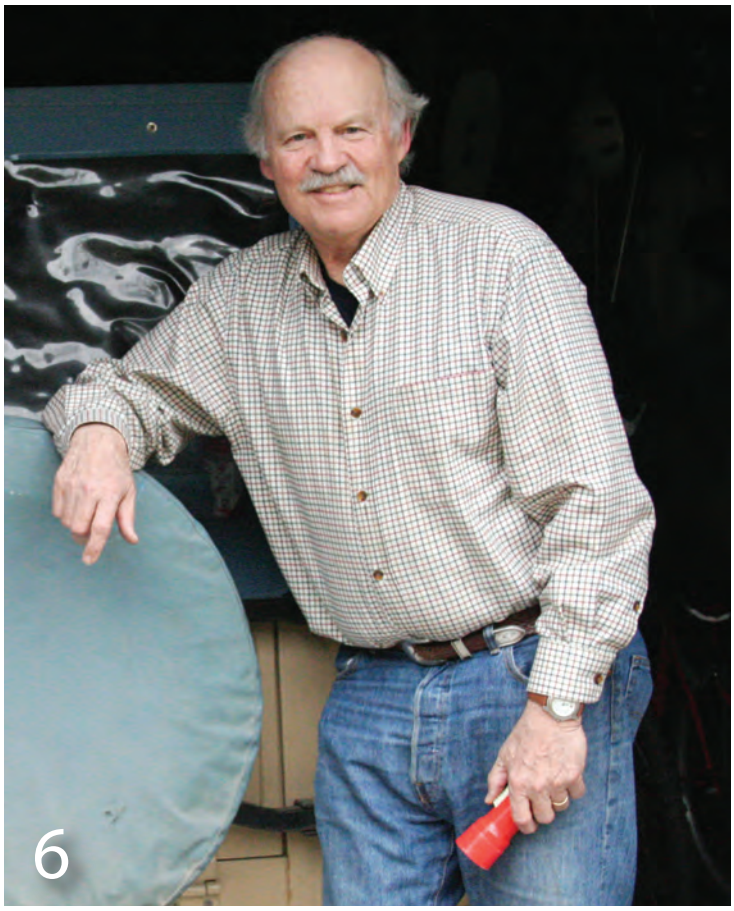
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

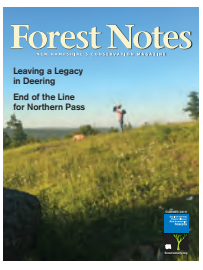
SINCE 1901

EMILY LORD (MERRIMACK RIVER OUTDOOR EDUCATION & CONSERVATION AREA, CONCORD)



FEATURE

DEPARTMENTS



On our cover:

Protected through the efforts of Jon Dawson (see The Capitalist Conservationist, page 6), High Five Reservation in Deering is a special place to all, including Jennifer Wright and her family. Wright fell in love with her fiancé at the reservation, and it's also their son's favorite spot. Photo: the Wright family.

(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) JACK SAVAGE, EMILY LORD, CARRIE DEEGAN

Against All Odds

We won! There are no more hearings, no more strategy sessions, no more next steps. The New Hampshire Supreme Court has definitively ruled that the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) did its job thoroughly and according to law in denying Northern Pass a certificate of Site and Facility. Even the Governor, a Northern Pass supporter, agreed it was time to move on.

This is your victory, because it's your New Hampshire. You stood up for the values that matter most in the Granite State; you were an active participant in defending our forests, conserved lands and landscapes from an ill-conceived power line that would have scarred 192 miles of our beloved state. You and your neighbors stated clearly that Northern Pass was not in the best interests of our communities or our environment. You worked tirelessly to be heard, against all odds.

The moment is historic—on par with other campaigns to keep New Hampshire, New Hampshire. In the 70s, the effort to save Franconia Notch from a four-lane Interstate was precedent setting. As with Northern Pass, there were many twists and turns to the process that ended—after many years—with the road we now know through the Notch. Thanks to the tenacity of the Forest Society, the Appalachian Mountain Club, concerned citizens and many other interests, the Notch remains a natural attraction for citizens and visitors alike.

Similarly, the long campaign to protect the White Mountains (the reason the Forest Society was founded in 1901) took more than a decade. John Weeks, a Lancaster native and Congressman from Massachusetts, worked creatively to pass legislation that relied on commerce law "to protect the headwaters of navigable streams" and the possibility of a White Mountain National Forest became a reality.

In all three cases those who love New Hampshire and its rugged, scenic mountains, forests and waters could not be dissuaded. They stood up and stood their ground, against all odds.

We must remain vigilant. There will be other proposals for energy facilities. We remain alert and engaged. But for now we celebrate our success, the friendships we've forged along the way and the beauty of New Hampshire's unspoiled 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 nonprofit 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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Carey Cottage Revival

In mid-June, the Forest Society announced that it has reached an agreement in principle with a local family foundation on a long-term lease of the Carey Cottage at Creek Farm in Portsmouth, N.H., subject to due diligence over the summer.

Under the agreement, the foundation will provide funding for the renovation of the Carey Cottage and Chinburg Properties will renovate the building, including the Music Room.

"The key to saving the Carey Cottage has always been finding a partner with the means to restore it, a proposed use that complements Creek Farm's status as a conserved space open to the public, and a track record that suggests they can maintain the building over time," says Forest Society President/Forester Jane Difley. "We're delighted to consider the foundation and Eric Chinburg [president of Chinburg Properties] as the team that can accomplish those goals."

The Carey Cottage will become the headquarters of a newly created center dedicated to fostering the growth and success of nonprofit organizations. The building will also host other nonprofit organizations.

"We had been looking for an appropriate place to house the center when we became aware of the Carey Cottage," said the foundation's principals. "In partnership with Eric and the Forest Society, we think we can use the Carey Cottage to advance the center's mission while preserving an historic building."

The Carey Cottage as seen from Sagamore Creek.

The center will provide the space, tools, and connections that nonprofits need to build strong organizations, thriving local economies, and vibrant communities in the region. Through incubator and accelerator services, workshops, events, and other programs, the center will help nonprofits become successful organizations.

"I'm looking forward to renovating the Carey Cottage and making it work for the community," said Eric Chinburg. "We take pride in our ability to repurpose unique buildings while maintaining public use of the surroundings."

Chinburg Properties is a land development, design, construction, and property management firm headquartered in Newmarket, N.H. For more than 20 years the company has preserved numerous historic mills and schools in the Seacoast and central New Hampshire. Chinburg projects are known for unique design aspects utilizing original materials and creatively incorporating them into the project. These projects have successfully incorporated residential and mixed-use components and have been successfully managed over the long term.

"I want to thank the multiple other individuals and entities who reached out constructively and worked with us in good faith on ideas and other proposals for an appropriate re-use of the Carey Cottage," says Jack Savage, vice president of communications/outreach at the Forest Society. "We look forward to working with the foundation and Chinburg as we continue the Forest Society's mission to conserve Creek Farm and provide public access to the Sagamore Creek waterfront."

Learn More

To learn more about Creek Farm partnerships and programming, turn to page 14.

Mark Your Calendars

A unique exhibit of paintings by father-daughter artists Doug Richards and Laura Aldridge will be on display at the Forest Society's Conservation Center from September 1–October 30, 2019.

Both artists were born and raised in the Concord area. Doug currently lives in Bow and Laura presently makes her home in rural Nelson County, Va. Both of them are well grounded in their home states and intrigued by their physical surroundings and the seemingly endless beauty of where they reside. They both say that wherever they look, there is always another view ready to be interpreted and painted. They are both primarily self-taught artists and experiment with different materials and styles of painting as their painting interests and skills continue to evolve.

All of the paintings on display are for sale with 20 percent of the sale price going to benefit the Forest Society's conservation work. Visit forestsociety.org/events for more information.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) KARLA CINQUANTA; (THIS PAGE) EMILY LORD

Rebuilding The Rocks

By Will Abbott

On February 13, 2019, two of the historic structures remaining at The Rocks in Bethlehem, the Tool Building and the Electric Plant, were totally consumed by an accidental fire. The Tool Building served as the Forest Society's North Country Education and Conservation Center and included classroom space, public restrooms, offices, storage space for farm equipment, a workshop, an apartment, and an old blacksmith shop, which Forest Society staff used as a staging area to decorate Christmas wreaths. The Electric Plant served as a seasonal gift shop.

The fire all but eliminated the Forest Society's capacity to operate both its public education activity and its Christmas Tree Farm. Recovery is already underway, though. New Christmas trees were planted this spring, and the property will be open for business as usual during the Christmas season. This summer, visitors can still enjoy The Rocks' Maple Museum, its trails, and the landscape.

The fire has created new opportunities for the Forest Society. With the Tool Building and Electric Plant gone, the panoramic landscape as viewed from the developed core of the farm has been reborn. The Board of Trustees is considering next steps. What will The Rocks look like in the future? What experiences will we offer and how will they advance the Forest Society's mission? These are some of the questions the board will be addressing this summer. If you have thoughts you'd like to share, please email us at ideasfortherocks@forestsociety.org.

Learn More

For more information on The Rocks and its Tool Building and Electric Plant, visit https://bit.ly/2JEnPvH.

WEB EXCLUSIVES

For the Love of Ferns
forestsociety.org/ferns

A writer's deep fascination for New England ferns

Building Bridges
forestsociety.org/buildingbridges

The Forest Society joins forces on a bridge build

In the Hot Seat
forestsociety.org/leavenotrace

Read about Mount Major's summer as a Leave No Trace Hot Spot

Maria Finnegan (left) and Laura Cordero (right) admire the beauty of the White Mountains during their first visit to Lost River Gorge.

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Summer 2019 Events

118th Forest Society Annual Meeting

Saturday, September 28, 2019 | Gunstock Mountain Recreation Area

Six different half-day field trip choices beginning at various times and ending by 3:30 p.m. Business meeting and awards begin at 4 p.m. followed by a reception, dinner, and more! For more trip details and to register, visit forestsociety.org/2019-annual-meeting or turn to the back cover.

Annual Meeting Trips

11 A.M.–3 P.M. | COST: $40

Bear Island Boat Excursion

Join Jack Savage and Denise Vaillancourt of the Forest Society for this rare opportunity to visit Bear Island Forest Reservation on Lake Winnipesaukee. We'll travel by boat from Cattle Landing in Meredith to explore Bear Island's interior with a break for a BYO picnic lunch. This trip is weather dependent.

12–3 P.M. | COST: FREE

Morse Mountain Preserve Hike

The trail loop at the Morse Preserve winds through fields and forests to reach spectacular views of the Belknap Range, Mount Major, and Lake Winnipesaukee from atop 1,400-foot Pine Mountain surrounded by blueberry barrens. BYO picnic lunch to enjoy with the views.

12–3 P.M. | COST: $16

Top of the Belknaps Chairlift and Hike

This 2-mile round trip guided hike from the summit of Gunstock Mountain (2,244') descends the white-blazed Saddle Trail then ascends the blue-blazed Belknap Range Trail to the fire tower at the summit of adjacent Belknap Mountain (2,382'). Enjoy early fall foliage scenery and learn about recreation trails in the Belknaps.

1–3 P.M. | COST: FREE

Weeks Forest Hike

Enjoy excellent hiking trails and early fall foliage season color on this forestry-themed guided hike at the Weeks Woods in Gilford. Learn from NH foresters about timber harvesting and forest structures that provide diverse habitat opportunities for wildlife.

1–3:30 P.M. | COST: $15

Fall Mushroom Identification

Learn about mushroom lore and misconceptions from NH mushroom expert, Rick Van de Poll. Learn about key identification characteristics, grouping mushrooms by colors, growth form, and substrates. Rick will share tips for collecting, identifying, and may bring samples of safe and common edible wild mushrooms.

1–3 P.M. | COST: $16

Gunstock Aerial Chairlift Ride

Relax. No hiking required! Enjoy a leisurely 15-minute chairlift ride to the summit of Gunstock to reach views of Lake Winnipesaukee and beyond. Forest Society staff at the Gunstock Mountain summit will greet members and help to identify features in the view.

AUGUST 13 | 3:30–4:30 P.M.

Tree ID at the Merrimack River Floodplain

Concord, N.H.

Join Linden Rayton, Forest Society floodplain education coordinator, at the Merrimack River Conservation Area to explore the most common trees you see here and in your neighborhoods, along with some specialties you won't see in a city park.

To register, visit forestsociety.org/events.

AUGUST 14 | 6–7 P.M.

Hawks and Owls: Eyes of the Wild

Bretzfelder Park, Bethlehem, N.H.

Join a naturalist from Squam Lakes Natural Science Center to peer into the raptor world through an up-close experience with live hawks and owls. Compare the fascinating similarities and differences between hawks and owls to discover how they are perfectly suited to the habitat niche they each fill.

The program is interactive and designed to engage and educate audience members of all ages. Cost: Free.

AUGUST 15 | 3–4:30 P.M.

Musseling on the Merrimack Meander

Concord, N.H.

Join Linden Rayton, floodplain education coordinator, to cool off at the end of the day and discover all sorts of fun things.

We will have nets and tubs to catch and release our findings. To register, visit forestsociety.org/events.

AUGUST 21 | 6–7 P.M.

Fantastic Fungi Foray

Bretzfelder Park, Bethlehem, N.H.

Join expert mycologist Rick Van de Poll for another North Country review of the incredible diversity of edible and poisonous mushrooms in the woods. This hour-long field foray will discover a number of fascinating fungal forms, including chaga, polypores, and evanescent molds.

Bring a basket, knife, hand lens, and your favorite camera. Cost: Free.

For a complete list of summer events, check out forestsociety.org/events.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) EMILY LORD, ANDY CROWLEY, NICK WHITES (LEAVE NO TRACE), VICTOR CORDERO

It was a Jeep ride that brought Jon Dawson (right) and the Forest Society's Brian Hotz together to realize a conservation vision.

The Capitalist Conservationist

Jon Dawson's legacy by the numbers: 20 years and more than 40 projects to strategically protect more than 5,000 acres in Deering, Hillsborough and Henniker

By Jack Savage

Twenty years ago, Jon Dawson found himself doing something that was arguably uncharacteristic. As a sought-after money manager who carefully observes the trends and cycles that drive the economy and who can rattle off economic statistics that mean the difference between investment feast or famine, he was anything but strategic about his end-of-year philanthropy.

"A lot of my compensation in the 1990s was performance based," Dawson explains. "I never had much idea until late December what I was going to get, and then I'd call up my accountant and he'd tell me the optimum amount to give away.

I'd have my shoebox with all my solicitations, and if you were at the bottom of the shoebox, you were out of luck."

His wife Deborah suggested that there might be a more effective way, and posed the question, What did Jon really want to accomplish with his philanthropic giving?

"I said I wanted to preserve land in Deering, New Hampshire, and start a charter school," he recalls. "So we focused our efforts on that."

Two decades later, Dawson has made it possible to conserve more than 5,000 acres in the Deering area, based on a vision of creating a conserved greenway between New Hampshire Audubon's Deering Wildlife Sanctuary and the Vincent State Forest in neighboring Weare, and along Hedgehog Mountain in Hillsborough.

Evolution of a Conservation Ethic

Dawson has a lifelong connection to Deering, thanks to the circa-1780 home that his family has enjoyed seasonally for seven decades. He grew up spending summers and autumns in the house, exploring and hunting on the 240 acres that surrounds it.

"When I was growing up, this area was pretty remote. No electricity," he says. "These were the days before I-91 and it took six and a half hours to get here from our home in Connecticut. There were old blueberry bushes and apple trees, great ground cover for grouse. Woodcock were abundant. We hunted in my early years.

"The thing I liked most was probably the penny I got for taking the caterpillar cocoons out of the building, a penny per," he laughs. "I was always a capitalist."

Even his less remote Connecticut childhood was rural, as his parents moved to a small farm outside of town after Jon recovered from rheumatic fever, hoping the move would keep young Jon out of strenuous school sports.

"As a result of Rheumatic Fever, I had a murmur and damage to the heart valves, and they gave me a big speech after being in bed for six weeks," he recalls. "I had a very stern Hungarian doctor who said 'we're going to let you get up but you have to be really careful because this can come back in your early thirties and if it does it will kill you.'"

"So my little eight-year-old brain tried to process that. I basically decided that if I'm going to die in my thirties, then I'd better pack a lot in between. So, it had the diametrically opposite effect and I wound up playing 23 seasons of contact sports, playing football, hockey, and lacrosse."

"My parents left a comfortable house close to the school and other kids and moved about four miles away—they might as well moved to Mars in terms of having any social life," he says. "On two sides of our property were watershed properties and they had a big reservoir that had a lot of bass in it. We had sheep, and chickens were probably the most profitable thing I ever did. It was a small farm."

As an adult, Dawson followed his father's lead and expanded their Deering property by acquiring more land.

"In 1972, before Watergate, I was in the stock market and I wanted to take my money out of the market and I had a choice between buying a condo in Aspen, a cottage in Carmel two blocks from the sea, or 87 acres here. I bought the land even though you could leverage the condo or cottage with a mortgage. Needless to say it wasn't the best economic decision I've made."

The conservation made possible by Dawson included the Hedgehog Mountain Forest, now more than 1,000 acres.

In 1981, Dawson's parents died tragically in a plane crash in Africa, and as the only child, he inherited the Deering property. He began improving it, fixing the house and barn, getting local David Allen to rebuild the stone walls, putting in a pond, planting thousands of daylilies from nearby Davis Brook Farm and an orchard with apples, pears, and peaches.

A Larger Conservation Vision

Dawson credits the proximity of New Hampshire Audubon's Deering Preserve to his own property with his awareness of land conservation. His first involvement in helping protect land was with a tract that abutted the Audubon's land.

"And then around the time Deborah was telling me to focus, I met Brian [Hotz, Forest Society vice president for land conservation] and we did the Wilkins-Campbell Forest with frontage on the Deering Reservoir," Dawson says. Through the Tyrell Foundation, named in honor of his uncle, Dawson funded the transaction that allowed the 215-acre property to become a permanently protected Forest Society Reservation.

Seeking a partner to accomplish more, Dawson invited Hotz to go for a drive to look at land in Deering.

"I got Brian in my 1978 Jeep and we drove down a couple of Class 6 roads with the Jeep on about a 45-degree angle going over boulders and I told him—'this is what we we're going to do.' At first he thought I was crazy," Dawson recalls. "And he was sheet white for about a week from the ride in the Jeep."

This came at a time when the Forest Society was beginning to think more strategically about land protection, wanting to be more proactive and to think about broader landscapes. The timing was right for a good match.

"But the deal was that I would drive from then on," Hotz jokes.

"The vision was clear from the start," says Dawson. "I said

(OPPOSITE PAGE) JACK SAVAGE; (THIS PAGE) FOREST SOCIETY FILES

we want to connect the Contoocook River with Vincent State Forest, and we want to protect Hedgehog Mountain."

Hotz points out that the landscape that has been the target of Dawson's vision is worth conserving. "It's stunning land," he says. "Ecologically it's very rich, and diverse—shorefront to farmland to timberland and everything in between."

Dawson was actively involved in what has turned out to be a 20-year conservation initiative. He approached landowners personally, and once flew to California to meet with a landowner to talk about the possibility of conserving their land. He easily recalls the details of every transaction—number of acres, the cost per acre, and the circumstances surrounding the project. In some cases, he acquired a property with a house, fixed up the house, then sold the house at a price that allowed the protection of the surrounding land at a bargain price.

Dawson says he wanted to do it in a way that wasn't seriously damaging to the tax base and the long-term future of the town and its revenue sources.

"So, for example, we didn't protect land that was better suited, long-term, to development," he says. Ed Cobbett, chair of the Conservation Commission at the time, played a central role. Dawson also worked with other conservation groups on some projects.

Dawson attributes some of the success to good timing.

"I learned in my business that things go in cycles," Dawson says. There were two things that happened that really helped us. The first was that the real estate market got so hot, the home-building market got so hot, that there was an inefficiency because builders were so busy they weren't land-banking. Then 2008 happened, and after '08 we were the buyer of last resort and values were down. Those two phases from late '90s to '08 and then '08 forward, each one of them was ideal for what we were trying to accomplish.

A Little Bit of Luck

Until now, Dawson has preferred not to be acknowledged as the moving force behind the Tyrell Foundation's generous donations. But now that he has largely achieved his conservation vision ("We're done," he states.) he is more willing to step out from behind the curtain.

"I'm 75 years old," Dawson says. "I've never found any benefit to getting recognized for giving money away. But I'd like to have some of it memorialized so future generations can understand what we did."

Dawson recognizes that for all his talents in business, he has also been "More than sprinkled with good luck, like all people who are successful." Lucky to be a white male in post-World War II America, lucky to get into Stanford Business School. He tried to enlist in the Navy during the Vietnam War, but ultimately was turned away because of the aftereffects of his childhood disease.

Instead, he got a job in New York in the investment business, then got his law degree at night. He started his own firm in 1981, barely survived the crash in 1987 and then, in his own words, "went on a tear for a lot of years."

Which is also what he did with land conservation in Deering.

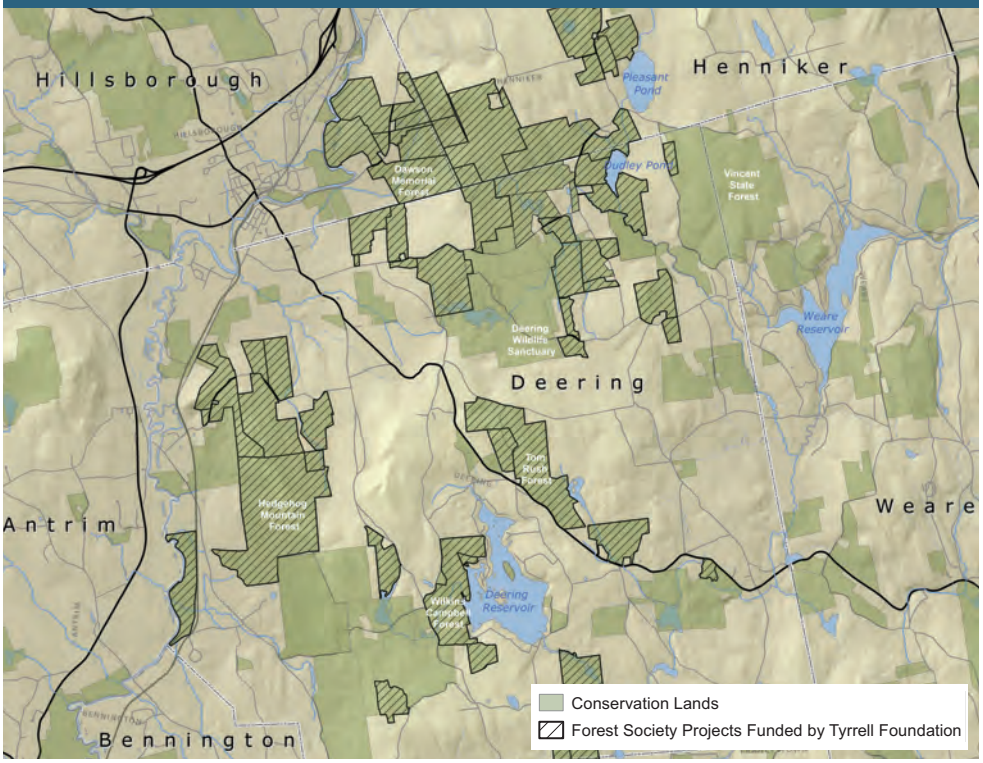
"I think what's amazing to me is that you start out, you look at something, it seems crazy—I'm sure Brian thought I should be committed when I told him what I wanted to do," Dawson says. "I think it's a lesson—you can accomplish a lot if you're long-term oriented and just keep at it and have integrity.

"The great thing I love about the Forest Society is the integrity with which they do things. And that matters," says Dawson, who praises Hotz highly for his work. "It matters not only in terms of what you think about yourself but when you're trying to get other people to come to the table with you, you better have a good reputation. Each transaction enabled the next deal to be easier. It all just came together—it's the persistence of over 20 years piece-by-piece picking away at it."

Jack Savage is vice president for communications and outreach for the Forest Society.

Forest Society Conservation Lands funded by the Tyrrell Foundation from 1999–2019

Deering, Hillsborough, Henniker, Weare, NH



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Since 1901

And many thanks to those businesses who give less than $250.

The Forest Society…Where Conservation and Business Meet

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

Third grade students from Antrim Elementary School (left) peel back a cover board to search for red-backed salamanders (right) sheltering in the cool soil.

Students Investigate Red-Backed Salamanders at McCabe Forest

By Carrie Deegan

If you've ever rolled over an old log or tipped up a large rock in a New Hampshire forest, you've probably encountered a red-backed salamander. In a study at Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest in Woodstock, N.H., researchers found that red-backed salamanders were the area's most abundant terrestrial vertebrate, and their total biomass equaled or exceeded that of small mammals and birds. Translation: there are lots and lots of them. The red-backed salamander's relative abundance, combined with the fact that it maintains small, stable territories, means that it is a particularly cooperative animal to study.

This is exactly what 3rd grade students at Antrim Elementary School are doing on the Forest Society's McCabe Forest, which is less than a mile walk from their school. The students are participating in a regional citizen science effort called SPARCnet, short for Salamander Population and Adaptation Research Collaboration Network. In fall 2018, the students, coordinated by the Harris Center for Conservation Education in Hancock, N.H., placed fifty 10" x 10" untreated cover boards on the forest floor in a grid formation. Red-backed salamanders utilize the undersides of these boards as they would a rock or rotting log habitat, which offer shelter and retain soil moisture, keeping the salamanders' skin damp.

In May 2019, students, led by their teacher Tom Morse and Harris Center educator Karen Rent, returned to the research site where they paired up to collect data. One student would slowly raise a cover board to examine what was beneath it, and another student would write down what they observed before gently laying them back into place. Sometimes a student found a red-backed salamander, and sometimes other interesting critters. "Ants! So many ants!" remarked one student. "A moth just flew out!" said another. The data collected from the two study plots, which

contained 50 cover boards each, was varied. On the first study plot, the students observed grubs, slugs, spiders, and beetles, in addition to two red-backed salamanders. On the second plot, students found 12 salamanders. Rent asked the students why they thought the salamander abundance was so much higher on the second plot. "I think it's way damper over here," offered one girl, "and their skin needs to stay moist and cool to breathe." She was on the right track, as red-backed salamanders don't have lungs and instead exhibit "cutaneous respiration," exchanging oxygen directly through well-moistened skin, explained Rent. Salamanders favor sites that stay cool and damp, and the amphibians' sensitivity to moisture variations is one reason that scientists believe they may be good indicators of environmental change over the long term.

Not only do students get to use the data in their own classes, they are also contributing to regional research.

Once Morse's students return to the classroom, they'll use their findings to practice math concepts such as graphing and fractions, comparing data collected from different study plots and during different seasons and weather conditions. Over the years, Morse's students will collect more data, which they'll also enter into the SPARCnet regional database. "This is one of the things I really love about this project," notes Rent. "Not only do students get to use the data in their own classes, they are also contributing to regional research. Plus, I really love giving kids the opportunity to just look closely in a really small space." After wrapping up a day of field research, the students' observation skills were clearly on alert as they spotted a red eft and a camouflaged wood frog on their hike out. "It's so great to have the McCabe Forest within walking distance of our school," says Morse. "We are really lucky to have it." For the Forest Society, the feeling is definitely mutual. Our organization benefits when community members utilize our forests, especially when young New Hampshire residents learn about biodiversity and forest dynamics. It's a win-win for everyone, including the red-backed salamanders.

Carrie Deegan is volunteer and community engagement manager for the Forest Society.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT) EMILY LORD, BRETT AMY THELEN

Planting for the Future

Volunteers Help Establish American Chestnut Seed Orchard

By Carrie Deegan

It's not easy to find someone who remembers standing under the shade of a mature American chestnut tree anymore. My 95-year-old grandmother is even a few years too young for that privilege. The fungus causing chestnut blight *(Cryphonectria parasitica)* was discovered affecting trees in New York City, in 1904, and by 1930 most of the chestnuts along the eastern seaboard were dead. Because the fungus does not attack the trees' root systems, chestnut saplings continue to sprout adventitiously in southern New Hampshire forests, pushing up over and over again from ancient root stock only to succumb to blight before they are old enough to flower and to produce seed. I still love to find these young trees, even knowing they are doomed. It is a sad reality for a tree that once numbered in the billions and was prized for its beauty, nutritious nuts, and straight-grained, rot-resistant wood.

Clockwise from above: *Forest Society Forester Gabe Roxby (left) adds soil amendments to planting beds while volunteers Greg Kreider of Lyndeborough (middle) and Dave Heuss of Concord (right) place stakes and tree shelters; volunteer Kay Hartnett of Deering pulls weeds around a chestnut seedling; sprouted chestnuts are ready for planting in the Tom Rush orchard.*

Today, a group of Forest Society volunteers is working to change the fate of the American chestnut in New Hampshire. In partnership with the Vermont–New Hampshire Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), the Forest Society recently established a chestnut seed orchard at the Tom Rush Forest in Deering, N.H. On a sunny day in May, volunteers braved clouds of blackflies to pick stones, roots, and clods of grass from an old field that was newly plowed and harrowed. "Preparing the site took longer than expected, but the volunteers pulled together and we got it done," said Forest Society Forester Gabe Roxby, who is coordinating the project. Once the planting beds were level and smooth, volunteers laid down weed-control fabric and amended the soil before setting off to plant 600 chestnuts. "This is everyone's favorite part," said TACF New England Regional Science Coordinator Kendra Collins as she plucked a few chestnuts, already sprouting small white roots, from a bag of damp peat moss. Collins demonstrated to the group how to gently bury each nut and surround it with a tree shelter to keep mice, voles, and deer from making a meal of the tender seedlings.

The chestnuts are from four different trees in a four distinct breeding lines, and were produced by TACF through several generations of backcrossing between Chinese and American chestnuts. The resulting trees should look and function like American chestnuts, but are actually one-sixteenth Chinese chestnut (on average), which will hopefully confer some degree of resistance to chestnut blight. "To find out whether they are resistant," said Collins, "we have to grow them. There is no shortcut to that step." Eventually the Tom Rush orchard will contain as many as 3,000 trees, each individually numbered and tagged, from twenty different breeding lines. When trees are approximately five years old, they'll be "challenged": directly inoculated

Volunteer Dennis Sawyer of Deering checks each tree shelter to record which nuts have germinated during a summer workday.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) CARRIE DEEGAN; EMILY LORD; CARRIE DEEGAN; (THIS PAGE) EMILY LORD

with blight fungus, and TACF science staff will rate each tree's level of disease resistance, in order to determine which have acceptable levels. Trees that succumb to the fungus, or are deemed to have low levels of blight-resistance, will be removed from the orchard until only the strongest remain; a sylvan version of the *Hunger Games*. TACF's ultimate goal for this orchard seems modest, if not a bit depressing: "We're hoping that twenty trees out of the three thousand will show significant resistance," explains Collins. "The rest will die or be removed from the breeding population." The upside is those 20 trees will get TACF one step closer to developing a truly blight-resistant population that can eventually be re-established in New Hampshire's forests.

At the end of the planting day, the volunteers were exhausted but still smiling. "I'm totally whupped," said volunteer Len Martin, "but I really enjoy being a part of something like this and I can't wait to see those little guys popping up out of the ground and growing." A sense of ownership and protectiveness for these chestnuts has already developed among the volunteers, which is a good thing since the seedlings will need considerable maintenance in the coming months: weeding, watering, and protection from predators. "Will you send around an email with photos when the seedlings emerge?" asked volunteer Walter Neuman. We promised him that we'd send out "new baby announcements" as soon as we could.

The volunteers totally understand that re-establishment of the American chestnut in our forests isn't likely to happen in their lifetimes, but if they have some small role in making it possible for their grandchildren or great-grandchildren to have the privilege of standing under a mature American chestnut tree someday, that is enough for them.

Carrie Deegan is volunteer and community engagement manager for the Forest Society.

Learn More:

If you are interested in helping with orchard maintenance and future planting days, contact Carrie Deegan at cdeegan@forestsociety.org.

Center for Wildlife's Nature's Natural Bug Brigade Program teamed up with the Forest Society to host a day of building bat houses and learning about the mainly nocturnal mammals.

New Programming and Partnerships in Portsmouth

By Naomi Houle

I have worked for the Forest Society for almost two years as a conservation easement steward in the southeast region of New Hampshire where I am responsible for monitoring more than 180 conservation easements and deed restrictions. In April 2019, I was asked to take on the role of Creek Farm's part-time education program coordinator while also retaining my position as manager of easement stewardship. I was excited to take on this role and to spend more time down in the seacoast area. I am particularly excited about this opportunity because in 2017 I graduated with a bachelor of science in marine, estuarine, and freshwater biology from the University of New Hampshire. So you could say that salt water runs in my veins. In this position, I look forward to utilizing my background in marine intertidal systems, specifically in the Great Bay, and exploring Creek Farm's shoreline along Sagamore Creek with progam participants this summer.

Creek Farm Partnerships

Most programs the Forest Society hosts at Creek Farm have been in partnership with local organizations. The goal of these events is to promote the work the Forest Society is doing in the Portsmouth area as well as strengthening our relationships with groups that are already doing incredible work there.

The Center for Wildlife based out of York, Maine, is one partnership that comes to mind. Over the last year, they have organized events with Forest Society staff at Creek Farm to share their wildlife knowledge through educational programming. In May, the Center for Wildlife's Nature's Natural Bug Brigade Program introduced participants to bats local to the New England area. Attendees were also given the opportunity to build their own bat houses to take home.

Other partners include professors from the University of New Hampshire's Shoals Marine Lab, who, in 2018, led guided walks along Creek Farm's shoreline. The professors talked about estuarine habitats

and even brought a small group out to their lab on Appledore Island off the coast of New Hampshire for a tour.

Other groups such as the New Hampshire Audubon Association's Seacoast Chapter and the nonprofit Gulls of Appledore have led various bird walks at Creek Farm, too.

Partnership with the Gundalow Company

The Portsmouth-based Gundalow Company is entering its third summer hosting their summer camps for kids at Creek Farm. We feel fortunate that this great camp has chosen Creek Farm as its home base for summer programming, and Gundalow Company camp director Gretchen Carlson couldn't agree more. "Creek Farm is a hidden gem in Portsmouth and it allows us to run a play-based, nature-exploration camp right here in town on Sagamore Creek," says Carlson. "Our program uses Creek Farm's wide range of habitats, including the cobble beach, the saltwater pond, the marshes and creek, the mudflats, and the woodland walking trails. Campers are free to explore and learn in this beautiful, safe place."

The Forest Society also participates in other public events with the Gundalow Company such as this year's First Annual Piscataqua RiverFest held at Strawberry Banke & Prescott Park on June 1. The Gundalow Company expanded their annual Round Island Regatta to include collaborations with other Seacoast organizations this year and we were fortunate enough to join in the festivities! Be sure to look for this event again in 2020!

From top: *Creek Farm Education Program Coordinator and Manager of Easement Stewardship Naomi Houle paddles Sagamore Creek during the Conservation Law Foundation and Forest Society's cleanup day; a family explores Creek Farm's waterfront lawn.*

Groups Hosting Their Own Programs at Creek Farm

A few other organizations host classes and events at Creek Farm as well. This summer marks the second year that Kathleen Larney has led her Tinkergarten programs at Creek Farm, which enable young children and their parents to have semi-structured outdoor time exploring the natural world. When asked why she enjoys performing her classes at Creek Farm, Larney says "[the property] offers so many different types of natural spaces for kids to play and to discover the outdoors. There is an open, grassy area for games, trails and wooded areas to explore, and access to Sagamore Creek allows us to enjoy the water and learn about the tidal creek." Larney also says that Creek Farm is a great spot to run her program because it is so easy to get to and it is accessible. Even though it is so close to downtown Portsmouth it feels so secluded and away from everything and everyone. It's also really special in that it offers access to both the woods and a tidal creek."

The Forest Society is also fortunate enough to have meditation leader Liz Korabek Emerson lead morning and evening sessions throughout the summer on the property's beautiful lawn.

What's Next?

We are excited to work with one of our newest partners this summer, the Portsmouth Paddle Company. Stay tuned for future paddling outings! For upcoming events and programs this summer at Creek Farm, visit forestsociety.org/events.

Naomi Houle is the Creek Farm education program coordinator and the easement stewardship manager for the Forest Society.

EMILY LORD (X3)

Orphan Bear Cubs Returned to Forest

By Dave Anderson

Black bear expert and rehabilitator Ben Kilham knows firsthand as to how bears are superbly adapted to living in New England's forests. As the owner of Kilham Bear Center in Lyme, N.H., he has rehabilitated and released hundreds of injured and orphaned black bears from Vermont and New Hampshire since opening the center in 1993. Kilham notes that black bears rely on the availability of autumn foods—acorns, beechnuts, and apples—to fatten up before hibernating through a long winter of scarcity. Following successive years of ample food availability, bears struggled to forage for red oak acorns and beechnuts in autumn 2018. The nuts were literally nonexistent, and apples were also scarce. The lack of food contributed to a widespread famine for many wildlife species, and a ripple effect has continued up the food chain in 2019. Without these nutrition sources, nursing sows' milk dried-up earlier in the season during the time when mothers and cubs should be gaining weight, not losing it, before the winter. As a result, bears left their core territories travelling widely in search of food, taking risks and encountering hazards along the way.

Left: *Since 1993, Ben Kilham has rehabilitated and released hundreds of black bears in forests across New Hampshire.*

Right: *Vermont veterinarian Walter Cottrell (middle) works with Vermont wildlife biologist Jaclyn Comeau (right) to attach ear tags and examine and monitor the health of the sedated bears slated to be released from the Kilham Bear Center. More than 60 yearling cubs were released in May, including 14 on Forest Society reservations.*

By January 2019, the autumn food shortage had taken a toll on adult black bears. Kilham had admitted 70 orphaned bear cubs into his facility. Road kills were the primary source of bear mortality resulting in orphaned cubs, while others were killed by homeowners or law enforcement as a result of entering homes, garages, and chicken coops in search of food. Some people asked, "If starvation is a normal part of the acorn crop famine, why rescue or interfere in a natural process?" This might be true, but bears are not adapted to crossing high-speed highways.

Other adult bears were killed during hunting season. New Hampshire Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist Andy Timmins said that approximately 80 percent of the adult sows harvested by hunters in 2018 had cubs that year. Concerned citizens reported the orphan cubs, who were subsequently caught by Timmins and other wildlife agency personnel and then transferred to Kilham.

Some willing landowners and volunteers assisted in live-trapping cubs under the oversight of Timmins. One incident occurred on Thanksgiving Day at Carrie Deegan's home in New London, N.H. Deegan, the Forest Society's volunteer and community engagement manager, spotted a young bear, whose mother had been recently struck and killed by a car on I-89, sheltering in a pine tree outside her dining room window. Following Timmins' instructions, Deegan set a cage trap baited with doughnuts in her backyard and eventually caught and transported the cub to Kilham.

All of the orphans caught during the fall and early winter spent the next few months at Kilham's facility. First-year bear cubs normally weigh between 35 and 40 pounds, but they were arriving at the facility 10 to 15 pounds underweight. Kilham's goal was to fatten the bears and prepare them for release come spring.

In April 2019, Timmins reviewed a portfolio of larger and more remote Forest Society reservations with a goal of releasing 14 of the orphan cubs in areas of New Hampshire that aren't typical release sites, such as Coos County. The rest would be released onto state-owned, public forestlands.

Over a couple days in mid-May, New Hampshire and Vermont wildlife biologists went to work at Kilham's facility sedating the cubs and attaching numbered tags, correlated to their sex and their release date and location, to the cubs' ears. The cubs

Left: *Carrying a sedated, 50-plus-pound yearling bear to a cage lined with straw is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Dave Anderson to give a real bear hug.*

Right: *After transporting the bears to a remote location, Dave Anderson removes a side panel from a crate and stands back to watch a fattened yearling bear hastily disperse into the surrounding forest.*

were not radio-collared for future tracking purposes. Walt Cottrell, a skillful Vermont veterinarian, performed a cursory exam listening to the bears' hearts and administering a shot of an anti-worm and -mite medication. After their check-up, the groggy cubs, weighing up to 50 pounds each, were moved into wooden crates or aluminum dog kennels for transport. At the undisclosed release sites, cubs were uncaged and released into the expansive forests.

Kilham notes a cub's most immediate priority after release is to feed on emerging leaves and tender grasses and ferns, a salad bar diet *normally* augmented by leftover acorns or beechnuts, called "hard mast" by wildlife biologists. The nuts remain palatable until they begin to sprout in late May. "Spring is always a lean time for bears trying to restock body fat they lost during their denning period," says Timmins. "Bears leaving hibernation have body weights depleted by thirty to fifty percent of the body fat that sustains them." The situation is most difficult for nursing sows emerging from hibernation with newborn cubs. Kilham and Timmins cited several juvenile and adult bears that they had recently handled while performing March den checks that were substantially underweight compared to weights achieved during more typical years.

As I watched some of the rehabilitated cubs return to the forests, I wondered about potential conflicts with resident black bears. Kilham explained that "bears form relationships, and given time, they make friends." I imagine some of the Class of 2019 might meet again one day and perhaps recognize one another from their shared communal den at the Kilham's facility.

After all the bears were released, Timmins noted that they would have been mortalities if it wasn't for folks like the Deegans. "The cub in New London picked the right yard when it visited the Deegan's house," he said. Timmins concedes that had the cubs died, the overall impact on the statewide bear population would have been minimal. But, in light of the overwhelming public interest to help black bears, it is important to save as many orphans as possible. The response by New Hampshire Fish and Game to get orphan cubs to the Kilham Bear Center reflects this overwhelming public sentiment. It was also a rare opportunity for a few Forest Society staff to help release and repatriate bears into new forest homes from which they would disperse.

"The Forest Society has been a tremendous help and I feel great about the partnership we formed. The success of rehabilitating cubs includes the fact that [the organization was] willing to help… If the Forest Society did not own large conserved properties, we wouldn't have adequate release sites in parts of the state where these bears were first picked up." In that sense, the success of this effort also celebrates the protection of forest habitat over decades of conserving land statewide. These protected habitats give Kilham's rehabilated bears the best possible chance to survive the early life trauma of having been orphaned as cubs.

Naturalist Dave Anderson is senior director of education for the Forest Society.

Learn More

To see more photos and a video of the bear releases, visit forestsociety.org/bear-releases.

For more information about the Kilham Bear Center, visit kilhambearcenter.org.

For details on bear incidents in New Hampshire, visit nhpr.org/post/update-nhs-bear-population.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) DAVE ANDERSON (X2); (THIS PAGE) CARRIE DEEGAN (X2)

Water for the Win: Protecting a Critical Piece of Land in Manchester

By Kelly Cioe

Manchester Water Works (MWW) and the Forest Society worked together to permanently conserve 1,942 acres surrounding Tower Hill Pond in Candia and Hooksett. Thanks to multiple grants and private donors, the Forest Society acquired a conservation easement on the land that MWW will continue to own and manage. The nearly 2,000 acres is part of the 8,000 acres MWW owns and manages to ensure clean drinking water to the City of Manchester and surrounding towns. "The Forest Society has long recognized that one of the ways that our work protecting forests connects to people's everyday lives is by providing clean drinking water," says Jane Difley, president/forester for the Forest Society. "We're proud to have been selected to protect this important watershed."

The Manchester Water Works Project surrounding Tower Hill Pond in Auburn has received wide-ranging support from the local conservation commissions, through donations from generous donors, and grants from LCHIP, the Merrimack Conservation Partnership, and the Department of Environmental Services.

The Tower Hill Pond conservation easement conserves 10,624 feet of undeveloped shoreline and is critical to maintaining the water quality of Tower Hill Pond. The land includes intermittent and perennial streams, including Maple Falls Brook, and more than 70 vernal pools. The property is nearly 80 percent forested; with two dominate forest communities of Appalachia-oak-pine and hemlock-hardwood pine. MWW has a professional forester who oversees the management of the land for its forest resources, specifically to protect the water quality.

While clean drinking water was a major impetus for the project, the land also offers significant wildlife habitat, including at least a dozen rare or threatened plants and animal species designated by the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau. The list includes common loons, a kettle bog, a dry Appalachian oak forest, and other plants.

Minutes from downtown Manchester, the land offers area residents numerous recreational opportunities, including a six-mile trail system of fire roads used by mountain bikers, hikers, dog walkers, and runners. There are also several state designated snowmobile trails. The pond, open to kayaking and fishing, is stocked with trout.

"Tower Hill Pond is an ideal setting for Manchester residents and visitors to participate in an array of four-season outdoor recreation opportunities, while at the same time providing clean drinking water," says Mayor Joyce Craig, City of Manchester. "I commend the partnership between the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Manchester Water Works in preserving this natural resource by guaranteeing the land will not be developed and protecting the pristine water quality for future generations."

For historians, the property is home to old stone foundations from the Maple Falls Brook mill. The site was utilized as early as 1796 (known at the time as Steven's Mill), with a natural waterfall with water flowing over stepped ledges to power the mill.

The project was funded by grants from the Department of Environmental Services' Water Supply Land Protection Grant Program, Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund Program, and the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. Additional, funding was provided by the Merrimack Conservation Partnership and numerous private individuals.

In 2007, MWW and the Forest Society jointly conserved 460 acres featuring approximately four miles of frontage along Lake Massabesic in Auburn, includ-

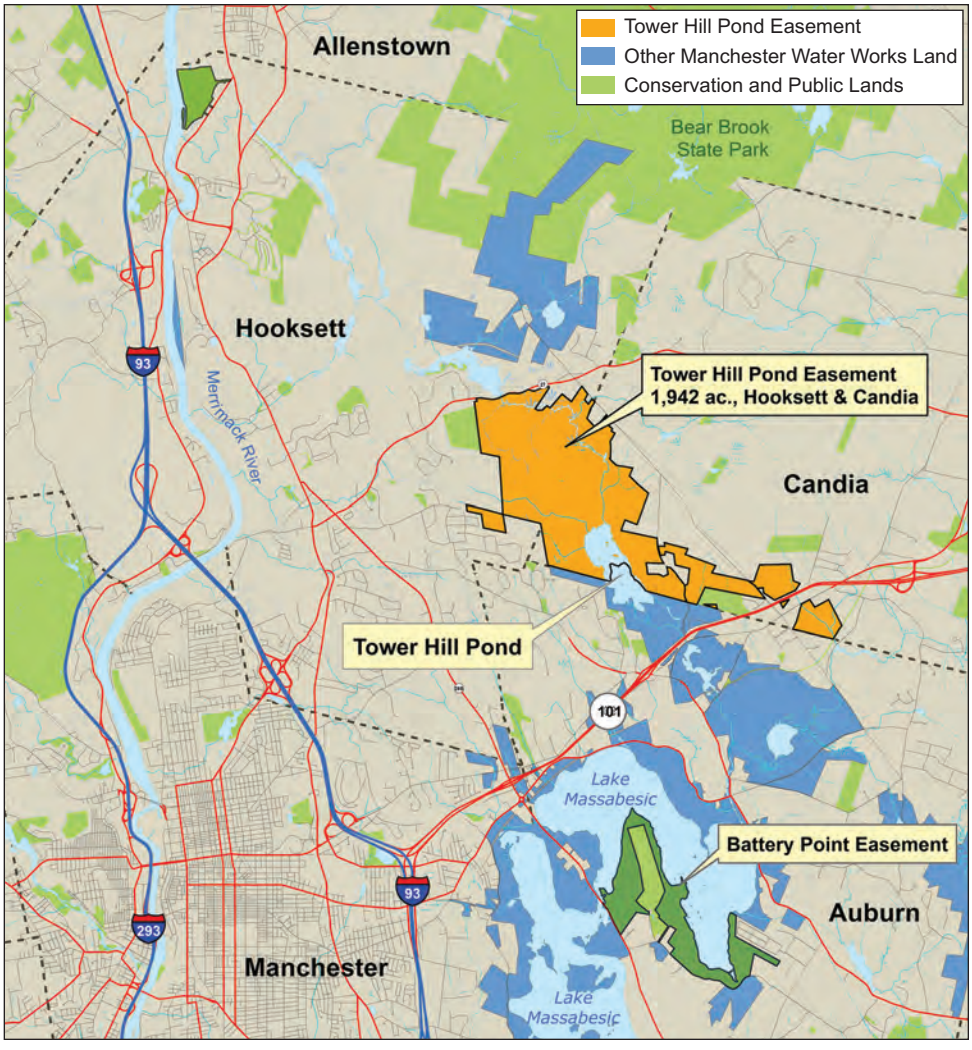
Left: *Minutes from the City of Manchester and boasting a six-mile trail system, Tower Hill Pond offers area residents numerous recreational opportunities.*

Right: *(left to right) John O'Neil, forester/watershed and property manager for Manchester Water Works; William R. Trombly Jr., president, board of water commissioners; Mayor Joyce Craig, City of Manchester; Jane Difley, Forest Society president/forester; and Brian Hotz, Forest Society vice president for land conservation.*

ing Battery Point, the "crown jewel" of the shorefront.

"The NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) encourages all water systems to work with partners in the land conservation community to improve the protection of their sources," states Sarah Pillsbury, Administrator of the NHDES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau. "On a statewide level, three-quarters of our high-priority water supply lands are unprotected. The Tower Hill Pond project is a great example of water suppliers and the land conservation community working together to protect water supply sources for the future and NHDES looks forward to supporting other similar projects."

"We are very excited to partner again with the Forest Society to now conserve the land around Tower Hill Pond for future generations to enjoy," states John O'Neil, forester and property manager for MWW. "It is one of my favorite forests to visit in my workday and also during my free time with my family. I am truly grateful to see this property saved from any possible future development and that it may remain forever a forested landscape."



(OPPOSITE PAGE) BRIAN HOTZ; (THIS PAGE, FROM LEFT) BRIAN HOTZ, EMILY LORD

From left: *Gap Mountain Land Steward Hiel Lindquist takes a break during Monadnock Trails Week last summer; Land Steward Program Coordinator Andy Crowley patrols a section of trail.*

A Passion for Land, A Passion for Stewardship: Forest Society Land Stewards

By Andy Crowley

From dusty desert paths to steep Himalayan passes to rugged and wet New England treadway, I have hiked many trails. Over the years, I have covered many miles, but never have I hiked a trail that maintains itself. Where there are trees, there are blowdowns; where there is rain, there is erosion; and where there are people, there are visitor-created impacts. How then do these trails, woods roads, and parking areas endure over time? There is a long and complicated answer to that question, but the short version is free labor. Volunteers do the bulk of the work to maintain trails across the country, and here at the Forest Society, we have our own dedicated community of volunteers that we call land stewards.

Since 1993, the Land Steward Program has recruited, trained, and mobilized more than 300 volunteers to maintain the Forest Society's 185 reservations. Every spring, the Forest Society inducts nearly 25 new volunteers into the program. Some stewards commit to the minimum of monitoring their assigned reservation four times a year. Others, like Hiel Lindquist, who monitors the trails on the heavily trafficked Gap Mountain Reservation in Troy, may visit the property four times a month. Land stewards have a keen insight on the communities and individuals who recreate on our reservations. They are in tune with the needs of the users as well as the needs of the land in order to keep the trails functional. If it wasn't for the effort Hiel puts into maintaining his trails, Gap Mountain could one day look like the heavily eroded and over-used paths of its neighbor, Mount Monadnock in Jaffrey.

Stewards play a critical role in monitoring our land on foot and in keeping our Reservation Stewardship staff informed of any issues. If a tree falls across a trail or a bog bridge needs fixing, the stewards let us know. With more than 55,000 acres of forestland to cover, our staff could never cover the ground our stewards can. If it wasn't for their tireless work, recreation opportunities on Forest Society land would not be what they are today.

In addition to monitoring for vandalism and conducting basic trail maintenance, stewards are the Forest Society's ambassadors to myriad hikers, paddlers, and dog walkers. These face-to-face interactions go way beyond what our website, newsletters, and various social media platforms can deliver. If you hike to the top of Eagle Cliff to watch the sunset over Squam Lake this

summer, you might have run into land steward Bob Holdsworth educating hikers about packing out their trash or staying on trail. A Leave No Trace master educator, Bob uses his soft communication skills to encourage visitors to treat the land with respect and leave the area better than they found it.

If you see one of our community conservationists while on a walk in the woods, don't fret, they're not there to be the party police. Instead, take a moment to thank these volunteers for the work they do. Our stewards speak for the countless trees on our reservations, and they've got a lot to say.

Andy Crowley is the land steward program coordinator for the Forest Society.

Learn More

Visit forestsociety.org/land-steward-program for more information about volunteer opportunities.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT) EMILY LORD, RYAN SMITH

NH Supreme Court Denies Northern Pass:

With No Path Forward, Eversource Pulls Plug

By Jack Savage

On July 19, the New Hampshire Supreme Court issued a written decision that unanimously upheld the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) decision to deny a permit for the proposed Northern Pass transmission line. A week later, and with no pathway forward, Eversource announced it would no longer pursue the project.

The Court strongly affirmed the SEC's decision, finding that the SEC fully complied with the law and with SEC rules to administer the law. It would not appear that there is any realistic path forward for Northern Pass.

"We applaud the decision by the Supreme Court. We took on Northern Pass because we saw the proposed overhead line as a direct threat to conserved lands in the state, including three of our Forest Reservations and dozens of conservation easements," said Jane Difley, president/forester of the Forest Society. "We felt privileged to stand with the thousands of individuals, dozens of communities and partner organizations who expressed appreciation for what we believe makes New Hampshire special. We want to thank all of those who invested a significant portion of their lives over the past nine years in hopes of this outcome."

"This legal victory is a win for everyone in New Hampshire and beyond that treasures New Hampshire's superior landscape and outdoor recreation," said Amy Manzelli, BCM Environmental & Land Law, who represented the Forest Society at the SEC and the Supreme Court.

"We have reviewed the record and conclude that the Subcommittee's findings are supported by competent evidence and are not erroneous as a matter of law. Accordingly, we hold that the petitioners have not sustained their burden on appeal to show that the Subcommittee's order was unreasonable or unlawful," concluded the Supreme Court. The decision was written by Associate Justice Anna Barbara Hantz Marconi, with the other four justices concurring.

In its written decision to affirm the SEC ruling and deny the appeal, the Supreme Court rejected Eversource's arguments one by one, reaching the following conclusion:

"The legislature has delegated broad authority to the Committee to consider the 'potential significant impacts and benefits of a project,' and to make findings on various objectives before ultimately determining whether to grant an application." Appeal of Allen, 170 N.H. at 762 (quoting RSA 162-H:16, IV). In this case, the Subcommittee considered and weighed extensive evidence including testimony from 154 witnesses and over 2,000 exhibits presented by the parties, including 160 intervenors, conducted seven site visits, and held 70 days of adjudicative hearings. Our review is limited to determining whether the Subcommittee's findings are supported by competent evidence in the record and are not 31 erroneous as a matter of law. In doing so, we defer to the Subcommittee's resolution of conflicts in the testimony and its determination of the credibility of witnesses and the weight to be given evidence. We reiterate that it is not our task to reweigh the evidence or to determine whether we would have credited one expert over another. We have reviewed the record and conclude that the Subcommittee's findings are supported by competent evidence and are not erroneous as a matter of law. Accordingly, we hold that the petitioners have not sustained their burden on appeal to show that the Subcommittee's order was unreasonable or unlawful.

Jack Savage is vice president of communications and outreach for the Forest Society.

Learn More

For a link to the full Supreme Court decision and other resources regarding Northern Pass, visit forestsociety.org.

Calculated Conservation

Finding the Middle Ground Between Conservation and Development

By Matt Leahy

The case for conservation's community-wide benefits is compelling. Consider a 2019 study of New England cities and towns, led by scientists at Harvard Forest, Amherst College, the Highstead Foundation, and Boston University, that concluded land conservation has a positive effect on local economies. The report echos a similar assessment the Trust for Public Land released in 2014, which showed that for every dollar invested in land conservation, New Hampshire's economy saw a return of eleven dollars in natural goods and services.

Other research that makes the case for conservation include a 2014 American Waterworks Association study on how the protection of forested watersheds leads to

higher drinking water quality and lower municipal costs to treat that drinking water supply. In 2018, the Northern Forest Center, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, and the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions conducted a massive, multi-year inventory of New Hampshire town-owned land. The study determined that town and cities own more than 180,000 acres of undeveloped forests, fields, and wetlands that generate about $146 million a year from recreation and forestry industries.

Given the depth of these kind of studies, it would be reasonable to presume that across-the-board support exists in our state for land conservation. Yet, that is not the case. In fact, some people contend the impact is just the opposite. For example, opposition testimony presented in the New Hampshire Senate this year on Senate Bill 74, legislation to increase the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program's dedicated fee, claimed that housing prices increase when land is no longer available for development. The bill was actually amended to include a study committee tasked with examining the economic impact of land conservation on housing prices. The overall goal of this legislative study will be to develop a strategy that balances the need for responsible housing with the need for responsible land conservation. Its specific duties include analyzing the impact of land conservation on a municipality's property valuation per pupil as well as investigating the impact of conservation and housing on local property taxation.

SB 74 does not explain the term "responsible" but the implication behind the amended bill seems to be that the development of housing, especially affordable workforce housing, and the long-term protection of our state's important natural areas are in conflict. Setting these two important goals against each other undermines a long-established practice in New Hampshire of collaboration among stakeholders and a shared commitment to problem solving. At worst, the legislation's call for a vaguely defined approach to balancing housing development and conservation could be interpreted as a call for statutory limits on these activities.

The Samuel A. Tamposi Water Supply Reserve is a 1,400-acre town-owned forest with extensive wetlands and trails in Barrington. The property is being managed by the town for drinking water protection and forestry and wildlife resources.

EMILY LORD

Perhaps a constructive first step for the SB 74 study committee would be to refocuse its purpose by initiating a gathering of all those interested stakeholder groups. This is actually not a new idea: In 2008, the Legislature established the Housing and Conservation Planning Program (HCPP), which provided matching grants to towns and cities looking to hire technical assistance related to planning for local housing and conservation needs. Long-term planning included growth and development that encouraged a balanced housing stock, including higher density and workforce housing opportunities. The program also promoted the reuse of existing buildings, including historic properties, while protecting the municipalities' natural resources through more efficient and compact development.

One of the prime benefits of the HCPP was to create a forum where developers and conservationists could work together to find better and more sustainable approaches to land development. Unfortunately, budget cuts in 2009 eliminated the program's funds, and in 2011 the Legislature repealed it entirely. In the process, we lost a venue for proactive, community-building dialogue.

Despite its genesis, the SB 74 study committee potentially presents a new opening for a thoughtful conversation, in which the Forest Society intends to participate. After all, a vibrant town or city has both a robust economy and a healthy environment. Far from being an obstacle, land conservation, as the aforementioned studies demonstrate, is a catalyst to achieving both of those outcomes.

Matt Leahy is public policy manager for the Forest Society.

Learn More

Read more about the 2019 town and city conservation land study at https://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/news/study-land-conservation-boosts-local-economies.

Inset: *Dorn Cox and his father, Chuck Cox (left), pose for a photo on their family's 200-plus-acre Tuckaway Farm this spring.*

Above: *Important agricultural land that Tuckaway Farm has relied on for over 50 years.*

Protecting a Family Farm in Lee

This summer, the Forest Society is working together with Dorn and Sarah Cox of Tuckaway Farm and their parents, Chuck and Laurel Cox, to buy a conservation easement on a 36-acre property adjacent to the farm that the family purchased earlier this spring.

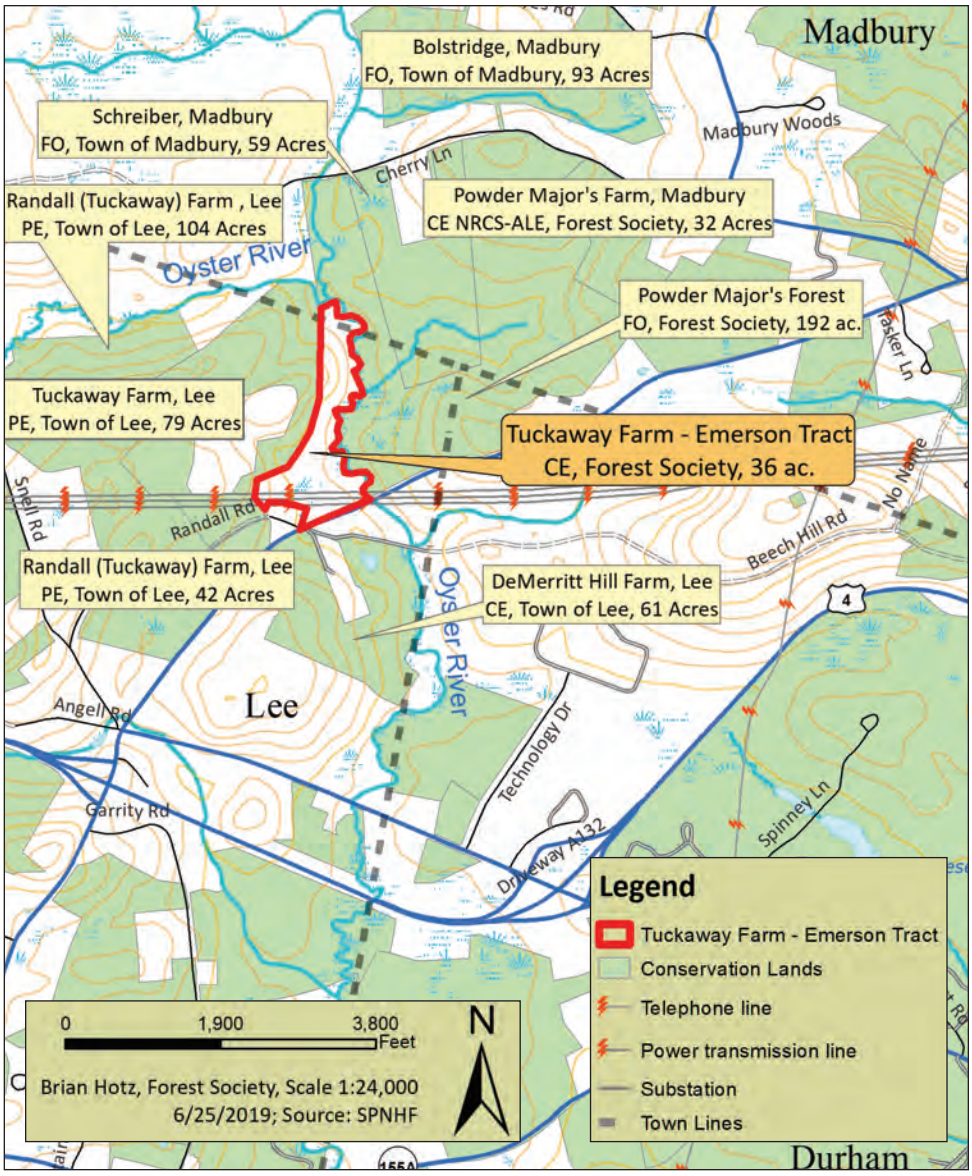
Nestled in the northeast corner of Lee, N.H., the 200-plus-acre Tuckaway Farm is subject to an existing conservation easement held by the Town of Lee and is located directly across the Oyster River from the Forest Society's 192-acre Powder Major's Forest. The three-generation family farm is "tucked away" along the river and is located just 2 miles from Durham center and the University of New Hampshire. The Cox family have farmed the newly acquired 36 acres of land for nearly 50 years and it's an important component to their operations, so much so that they bought the land and the abutting house when it went on the market last winter. The old historic home on the property, which will be excluded from the proposed easement, will become a farming education center. "The land

Protecting 4,000 feet of frontage on Oyster River would help conserve important wildlife habitat and public drinking water.

is highly productive farmland, a critical linkage in existing conservation land and ecologically rich," says Brian Hotz, Forest Society vice president for land conservation.

The Cox family have farmed organically for more than 50 years, growing vegetables, fruits, hay, mushrooms, and grains, and have produced livestock and poultry. They currently operate a Community Supported Agriculture program and a bread club and they also sell to area restaurants, markets, and school districts. The property itself is valuable farmland with excellent agricultural soils. Its wildlife habitat value is enhanced by the fact that it has over 4,000 feet of frontage on the Oyster River, which is a drinking water source for the city of Durham and the University of New Hampshire. The river corridor provides critical and diverse habitat for many freshwater and anadromous fish species that depend on the habitat connectivity provided by the river and undeveloped surrounding areas.

The Forest Society is looking to raise $292,000 dollars to purchase the easement and cover the project and stewardship expenses. To date we have raised $107,000, but we still need to raise the remaining $188,000. Your contribution will help us to protect this critical link of farmland in southeast New Hampshire. To donate, visit forestsociety.org/tuckawayfarm or mail in the form below.



☐ YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT THE FOREST SOCIETY'S WORK AT TUCKAWAY FARM

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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
Tuckaway Farm Appeal
54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301

Or donate online at forestsociety.org/tuckawayfarm.

For more information, call Susanne Kibler-Hacker at 603-224-9945 or email skh@forestsociety.org.

Thank you for your help!

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It's Time for Early-Bird Registration

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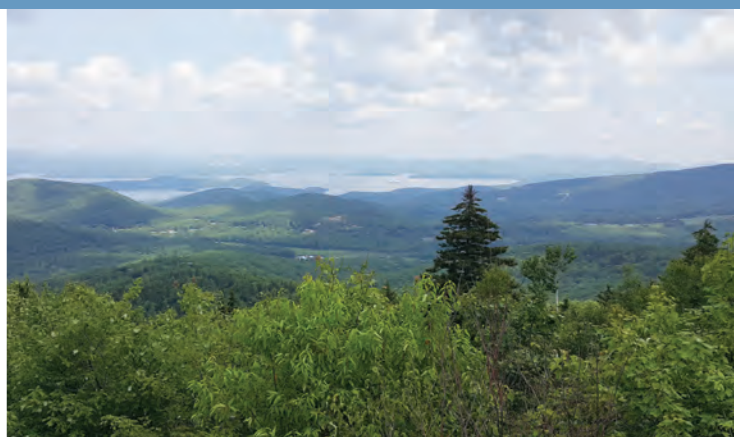

(FROM LEFT) KARLA CINQUANTA, TOM HOWE

The 2019 Forest Society Annual Meeting at Gunstock Mountain Resort will celebrate retiring President/Forester Jane Difley's 23-year career.

LOCATION: ***Gunstock Mountain Resort, 719 Cherry Valley Road, Gilford, NH 03249***

FIELD TRIPS ***(Choose from six different half-day field trips)***

- **Bear Island Boat Excursion, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., Cost: $40**
- **Evelyn H. & Albert D. Morse Preserve Hike, 12–3 p.m., Cost: Free**
- **Hike from Gunstock to Belknap Mountain and Back With Scenic Chairlift Ride, 12–3 p.m., Cost: $16** ***(payable to Gunstock on day of event)***
- **Weeks Forest Hike, 1–3 p.m., Cost: Free**
- **Fall Mushroom Identification, 1–3:30 p.m., Cost: $15**
- **Gunstock Aerial Chairlift Ride, 1–3 p.m., Cost: $16** ***(payable to Gunstock on day of event)***

MEETING SCHEDULE

3:30 p.m. – ***Registration***
4:00 p.m. – ***Business Meeting and Awards***
5:00 p.m. – ***Reception (cash bar)***
6:00 p.m. – ***Dinner***
7:00 p.m. – ***Program***

COST: Early-bird price is $65 per person prior to August 30. Regular price is $75 per person. **Final registration deadline is Monday, September 16.**

Pre-registration is required. There will be no on-site registration. Please register early as space is limited. For more information and to register, please visit forestsociety.org/2019-annual-meeting or contact Linda Dammann at 603-224-9945 x325 or ldammann@forestsociety.org.

Turn to page 5 for field trip details.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 16

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