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Forest Notes

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

A 180,000-Acre (So Far) Idea:

50 YEARS of Conservation Commissions

WINTER 2015

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS

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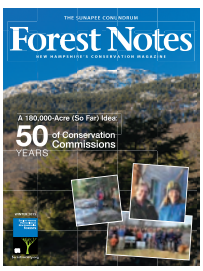
FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS



Our cover photo of Mt. Monadnock was taken from the property of Charlie Royce, who died Nov. 4. Charlie, a former state representative from Jaffrey, was instrumental in helping to protect land on and around Mount Monadnock, where he served as the manager of Mt. Monadnock State Park from 1962 to 1972 and headed the Monadnock Advisory Commission. He will always be remembered as a true friend of the mountain and to land conservation in New Hampshire. *Photo by Jerry and Marcy Monkman, EcoPhotography.*

Insets: Conservation commissions at work, l to r: David Wood and Richard Hocker in Grantham; Evy Nathan and Sarah Sallade in Kingston; Hooksett celebrates conservation successes with Gov. Maggie Hassan. See story on page 4.

Two Words

When I asked the woman stopped in our staff parking lot if I could help, she said, "No, I'm waiting for my daughter-in-law." Then she asked, "Are you Jane?" I answered in the affirmative and she said, "Thank you for everything you do!"

I'm always a little startled when someone thanks me for the work the Forest Society does, because it's our members, volunteers and donors who make the work possible. As I travelled the state last year, I heard "thank you" often. In Sugar Hill I was thanked for fighting Northern Pass, when in fact, it's the citizens of that small community and many others who are doing a lot of heavy lifting in that effort.

In Jaffrey, I was thanked for protecting Mount Monadnock and for our vigilance at protecting the mountain's flanks. In Stark, for accepting gifts of land and easements to protect the watershed of a pristine lake. The members of the Garden Club of America, gathered in Dublin, thanked me for setting an example of how good forestry made land conservation possible. In Stewartstown, I was thanked for our steadfastness in our opposition to Northern Pass. In Wolfeboro, it was the trust a landowner felt in us as she donated her land for a Forest Society reservation. In Gilford I was thanked for a campaign to protect hiking trails on Mount Major. And in Portsmouth, I heard 'thank you' for protecting Creek Farm from development.

In each case, the grateful individuals were part of the reason the work could be done. They were generous with their time, their resources or their skills. They had helped, inspired, funded or otherwise made the accomplishment possible. The fact is we share in the work because we love the forests and mountains of our state. We believe that we have a responsibility to those places that we love and that collectively we can protect the forests and waters and views and mountains from destruction. We know what we want—a "New Hampshire everlasting and unfallen," as Thoreau put it—and we participate in securing that with our actions.

Thank you!

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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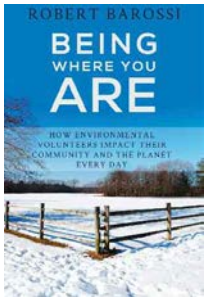
Forest Society's new website up and running

Visitors to the Forest Society's new website will find an exciting new look, clearly organized information, an easier-to-use Reservations Guide and a responsive design for mobile platforms.

Launched in early January, the site was redesigned from the ground up by Echo & Company of Boston. The site's expanded features include more forestry information, FAQs about using Forest Society properties and access to blog articles on wildlife, land conservation, education, advocacy and forestry best practices. The Reservations Guide provides downloadable trail maps, photos and "what to do and see" information for 36 of our forest reservations.

Members and friends will be able to easily support conservation projects with new online forms. We invite you to take our new site for a spin and register at www.forestsociety.org.

New book features Forest Society land stewards



A new e-book by Robert Barossi called *Being Where You Are: How Environmental Volunteers Impact Their Community and the Planet Every Day* features interviews with 10 of the Forest Society's land stewards.

Available from iTunes, Amazon or Barnes and Noble, this e-book gets into the heads of environmental volunteers here in the Northeast. Barossi interviewed volunteers after volunteering himself with the public relations staff of the Trustees of the Reservations in Massachusetts. That led to interviews of Forest Society land stewards and many other volunteers in the region.

"The environmental volunteers I met inspired and amazed me with their passion, enthusiasm, dedication and spirit," Barossi writes in the introduction. "They made me want to know more about who environmental volunteers are and why they do it. I began to ask questions, such as, Who are these people who volunteer? What motivates people to volunteer for the environment? What keeps them doing it year after year—what brings them back?"

The book's collection of "in their own words" stories answers those questions and explores the strong connection with the land that will be familiar to Forest Society members and friends.

Basic tracking help that fits in your coat pocket

Wondering who visited your property and left their calling card? A new tracking guide was recently published to help outdoors enthusiasts to identify wildlife tracks and scat. Vermont forester and author Lynn Levine has published *Mammal Tracks and Scat: Life-Size Pocket Guide* as a waterproof, easily pocketed companion to her more detailed *Mammal Tracks and Scat: Life Size Tracking Guide*. The pocket guide is illustrated with simple drawings rather than color photos. The drawings are life-size, which can greatly help discern between wildlife species. The guide is available from www.Heartwoodpress.com.

Seeking new partner for Creek Farm in Portsmouth

The Forest Society is looking for an appropriate replacement lessee for the buildings at our Creek Farm Reservation in Portsmouth and has contracted with Jane James, broker for ReMax By the Bay, to market the lease. In August, the Forest Society announced that Cornell University, the leaseholder of the buildings and grounds of Creek Farm, has given formal notice, triggering an exit clause in the lease. Cornell used Creek Farm as a mainland office for students and staff in support of educational programming conducted at the Shoals Marine Lab (SML) on Appledore Island.

"While we are sad to see such a perfect match for the facilities go, we feel good about the timeframe, more than two years, in which to identify a partner that can make use of the facilities and land that is compatible with the Forest Society's mission and the ongoing public enjoyment of the property," said Jane Difley, president/forester of the Forest Society.

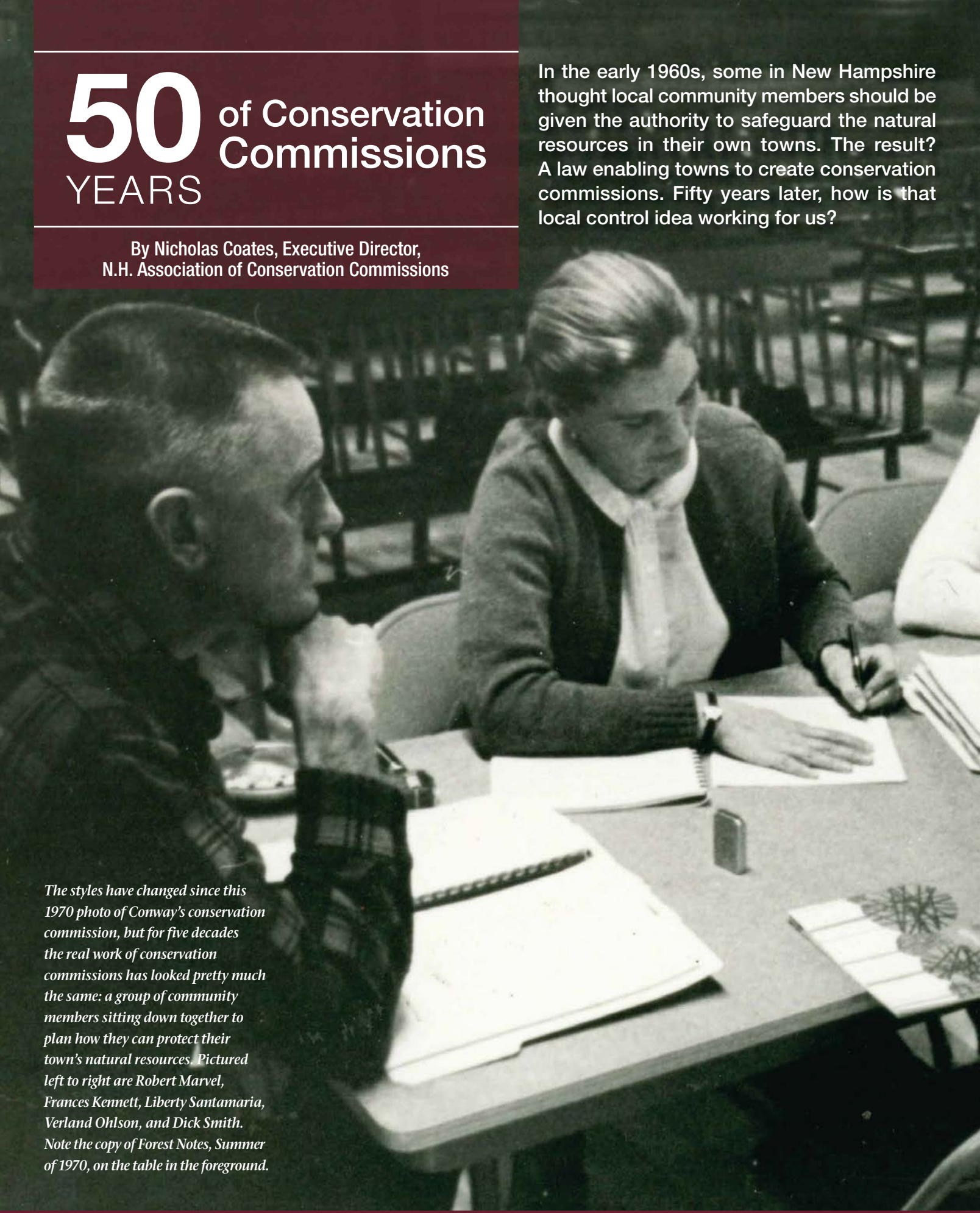
Creek Farm Cottage offers a total of 19,461 square feet, including an unfinished basement of 5,714 square feet, attic of 2,078 square feet, and 1,020 square-foot open porch. There is also a two-story (650 square foot total) utility building with a first floor garage. The property includes a dock on tidal Sagamore Creek, providing water access to the Portsmouth Harbor and beyond. Proposed uses will need to be consistent with city zoning and building code regulations and the historic character of the main building. The N.H. Dept. of Resources and Economic Development holds a conservation easement on some 30 acres of the property. Serious inquiries should contact Jane James at 603-817-0649 or jjames@marplejames.com.

The buildings and dock are on the Forest Society's 35-acre Creek Farm Reservation located off Little Harbor Road in Portsmouth. It was once part of the 18th-century farm of royal governor Benning Wentworth. The main house and grounds were created for Arthur Astor Carey in 1888, and then purchased in 1957 by Lillian and Chester Noel.

50 YEARS of Conservation Commissions

By Nicholas Coates, Executive Director,
N.H. Association of Conservation Commissions

In the early 1960s, some in New Hampshire thought local community members should be given the authority to safeguard the natural resources in their own towns. The result? A law enabling towns to create conservation commissions. Fifty years later, how is that local control idea working for us?



The styles have changed since this 1970 photo of Conway's conservation commission, but for five decades the real work of conservation commissions has looked pretty much the same: a group of community members sitting down together to plan how they can protect their town's natural resources. Pictured left to right are Robert Marvel, Frances Kennett, Liberty Santamaria, Verland Ohlson, and Dick Smith. Note the copy of Forest Notes, Summer of 1970, on the table in the foreground.

Photo courtesy NHACC.

Left: *Members of the Hooksett Conservation Commission pose on town-owned Pinnacle Park, overlooking their most recent land protection project: the conservation of some 116 acres with frontage along the Merrimack River. Pictured are N.H. state Rep. David Hess, Steve Couture, JoCarol Woodburn and Robert Woodburn.*

Right: *David Wood and Richard Hocker of the Grantham Conservation Commission walk along Skinner Brook, on the town's Brookside Park property.*

Photos this page by Emily Lord.

Evy Nathan was making a presentation at the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions' annual meeting last fall when she clicked on some slides that roused the 230 people in the audience to sit up in their chairs with a collective 'Wow.'

The first photo showed volunteers from the Kingston Conservation Commission and other adults gathered at the entrance of the Old Frye Farm Town Forest. A group of school buses barreled toward them down the road, full of kids ready to pull invasive weeds and clean up the property. The next photo showed kids getting off the buses, and getting off the buses and getting off the buses. It wasn't just a troop; it was a whole army of budding conservationists. Nathan counted 190 students and volunteers that day all coming out to experience this land, many for the first time.

Then came the photos of the aftermath—trash bags stacked three and four high, full of weeds, and students with mud on their faces and shovels in their hands smiling ear to ear.

"I just want people to open their eyes and see New Hampshire's beauty," Nathan said in an interview later. "The woods, the rivers.... Get excited about the outdoors and enjoy it. And not deface it. I guess my goal is environmental enlightenment."

Early on, Nathan, who chairs the commission, realized that with its limited budget, its members would have to be creative to get things done. Connecting to the local high school and science teacher Sarah Sallade "has been a wonderful thing" that has really helped the commission's work take off, she said.

The creativity that Nathan tapped into in Kingston is a hallmark of conservation commissions statewide. So is the grassroots activism symbolized by volunteers coming together to protect the natural resources of their own town. It was this idea—of local guardians and caretakers—that sparked the legislation that enabled towns and cities in New Hampshire to create conservation commissions back in 1963, around the time when Rachel Carson was publishing her seminal call to environmental action, *Silent Spring*.

The work of establishing local commissions started a few years earlier, and the Forest Society was a driving force. Les Clark, the Forest Society's education director, attended the first New England Conservation Commission Conference held at Harvard University in 1960, and the Forest Society sent letters to members and educated groups around the state about the need for local action. The Forest Society later urged individuals in many communities to be the ones to place warrant articles proposing conservation commissions onto their Town Meeting agendas.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first seating of a New Hampshire conservation commission—six pioneering people in Hollis in 1965. After 50 years, it's worth asking: What difference have conservation commissions made? How is the idea working for communities today?

One gauge is to look at how many towns and cities have voted at Town Meeting or in city councils to create the optional commissions. In 1966, the number was 38. Today, 216 out of 234 municipalities have taken up the charge. Even more telling is the amount of land permanently protected through conservation commissions' work. Thousands of volunteers over the years have conserved some of the most important and iconic lands in our state, and in total have protected more 180,000 acres of important farmland and forestland for the next generation to experience. Working with private landowners and land trusts, conservation commissions have been

Students from Sanborn Regional High School gather for a celebratory photo after a workday on conservation land in Kingston. Photo by Evy Nathan.

the public partners on voluntary land conservation, identifying priorities for conservation set forth by residents and helping protect those important places that make our communities great.

As the executive director of the N.H. Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) since January of 2014, it's been my privilege over the past year to hear from conservation commission members about what's working in their communities when it comes to natural resource protection. So far, I've visited more than 70 commissions and met many others at regional meetings. (Luckily, I have a fuel-efficient car and very patient wife.)

The challenges that commissions around the state face are similar. Development pressure, the need to engage more people in their work, finding ways to fund projects—the list goes on. But the ways in which they are meeting those challenges are as unique as the communities they live in.

Planning pays off in Hooksett

In Hooksett, where the town has conserved nearly 25 percent of its land, members have chosen to focus on building the case for conservation through thorough planning, a focus on communicating the benefits of conservation and establishing places where residents can go out and enjoy the outdoors. Getting to that point, though, was a decades-long process.

They faced a tough challenge in 1999 through 2002 when a proposed development sought a delisting of "prime wetlands" status in the town ordinance. This brought protest petitions, generated some "hard feelings" and jeopardized the status and effectiveness of the commission with other town officials, said Chair Steve Couture. Since then, they have taken steps to rebuild the respect for the commission by identifying priority open spaces and highlighting those priorities as part of the town's master plan.

Couture said one of the first things commission members did was to work with the Southern N.H. Planning Commissions through a N.H. Department of Environmental Services Regional Environmental Planning Program grant to update the town's Natural and Current Resources Inventory. The same year (2004) they created an Open Space Plan and updated the town's master plan, and in 2008 they underwent a "cost of community services" study.

"That gave us the building blocks, then we started communicating our priorities," Couture said.

In that busy year of 2004, they also convinced voters to increase their Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) allocation to the town's Conservation Fund from 25 percent to 100 percent. Voters later reversed that decision, but later again changed course in favor of a higher percentage. The Conservation Fund gives towns and cities the ability to set aside money for natural resource inventories, maps of town/city properties, wetlands evaluations, purchases of land or conservation easements and so forth.

Beyond methodical and logical planning, Couture attributes the conservation commission's success on the LUCT issue and overall to a level of credibility they have established with their Town Council and voters.

The commission has two lawyers in vice chair Cindy Robertson and David Hess (who also serves as the town's representative in the Legislature), another state representative in Frank Kotowski and a planner in Couture. Beyond their professional acumen, Couture said that the commission has made a point of keeping open lines with the Town Council and Planning Board, and they have worked

hard to not be adversarial to developers, and to be cordial whenever possible.

"We take the approach, 'How do we work within the regulations?' " Couture said. "We work on giving them a gentle nudge to try to do better. For example, we might encourage using a more effective stormwater best management practice than what they proposed."

They have also worked hard to be a good partner with other boards and civic organizations. A Heritage Commission member, for example, has helped them with gathering information about the cultural resources of the town and the properties they are working on. They also worked on a land swap project with the Parks and Recreation Department that built a lot of good will that is now bearing fruit on a commission project.

Other partnerships, like working with the local Kiwanis chapter to help with stewardship and the Boy Scouts on a kiosk for a property, have also helped community members start to make the connection to conservation in their town.

This connection is reinforced in the way the commission talks about conservation. For example, in a community survey the commission took, they asked questions like, "What's important to you?" In brochures about their lands, they used language like "our heritage" and "our land," helping residents understand that conservation is for the whole community, not just a select few.

Their approach is paying off. The Pinnacle granite outcropping that was noted by Henry David Thoreau in his trip down the Merrimack River and the Head & Son Brickyard that provided the bricks for the Amoskeag mills are both symbolized on the town seal; the Conservation Commission has secured easements on both properties.

The case for 'spend now, save later'

In true New Hampshire fashion, the legislation that enabled conservation commissions some 50 years ago didn't come with funding attached. In the early years, with support from the Spaulding-Potter Charitable Trusts, matching grants to begin open space land acquisition and natural resource surveys were provided to conservation commissions. Additional technical assistance grants were provided by the Trusts and in 1971 the NHACC was incorporated with Tink Taylor as its first executive secretary. These days, conservation

AFTER STUDY, LEGISLATORS REPORT A NEED FOR STATE LEADERSHIP AND FUNDING OF CONSERVATION

A joint legislative committee created last year to take the pulse of conservation in New Hampshire recommended in its final report that the State step up its leadership and funding of land protection. Created by legislative mandate, the bipartisan committee issued its 117-page final report on Oct. 31. The Forest Society, one of the nonprofit conservation organizations noted for its work in the report, contributed conservation data to the study.

The report noted that nearly 30% of the state's land is protected from development, but said "much more needs to be done." Seventy percent of conserved land is held by the federal or state government; nearly 10 percent is held by municipalities, nearly 20 percent is held by nonprofit land trusts, and the remainder belongs to quasi-public entities like school or water districts.

"Many important natural assets continue to be at risk, including prime agricultural lands so necessary to sustain our farming and horticultural industries, critical lands essential to maintaining our drinking water supplies and habitats that are needed to support the state's thriving and diverse wildlife population and important recreational activities," the report states.

The committee also recommends "that the State take a greater leadership role in both supporting and facilitating land protection throughout the state" in order to protect and expand the New Hampshire economy.

The committee also recommends that the State:

- Fully fund the state's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) in the next legislative session.
- Constitutionally protect LCHIP from being raided to fund state government in the future
- Introduce legislation in 2015 to create a commission to identify priority areas for conservation and to plan how to conserve them, including realistic budgets and potential sources of funding before it is too late. The committee recommends that this commission complete its work by Dec. 31, 2016.
- Restore funding in 2016 and 2017 for several conservation programs created in the past but not funded, including up to 1.5 million for Source Water Protection Program and up to 3 million for N.H. Agricultural Lands Program (ALP), which would enable the State to leverage federal matching funds.
- Seek immediate funding for a study of what lands in New Hampshire are most in need of protection.

The Freese Town Forest—and its beaver-designed wetland shown here—is protected from being developed or sold off in the future, thanks to the conservation commission's success in educating Town Meeting voters, who agreed to put a conservation easement on the property.

Photo by Serita Frey.

commissions fund projects through the LUCT and through town warrant articles, the state's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), fundraising campaigns and partnering with land trusts.

Looking at the big picture, conservation plays a key role in protecting drinking water, working farms, working forests, plant and animal habitat and tourism and visitor spending. In 2012, the Trust for Public Land completed an economic analysis on the return on investment in New Hampshire through a variety of state sources that fund land acquisition. It found that for every $1 invested in land conservation there was an $11 return on investment on natural goods and services to the state's economy. What it shows is that while there are limited dollars available for conservation in New Hampshire, the state dollars that are being invested are effective.

The economic case is one that conservation commissions are becoming savvier at making, but there's still work to do. Eleven N.H. communities have completed "cost of community services" studies. The results show that land conservation saves cities and towns money through avoided costs on infrastructure and municipal services like roads, water supply, wastewater and stormwater facilities, schools, police and fire services.

The American Farmland Trust compiled the results. Their analysis shows that open spaces and working farms and forests require on average 56 cents in services for every $1 paid in taxes, while residential lands require an average of $1.12 in services. Local land protection also increases land values, which contributes an untold amount of dollars in property taxes that are essential to municipalities.

Being able to add economic benefits to all of the other reasons to conserve land helps when raising money for projects. In Center Harbor, the conservation commission successfully worked with voters at the 2014 Town Meeting to increase the percentage of the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) that is deposited into the conservation fund from 25 to 50 percent.

Maureen Criasia, vice chair of Center Harbor's commission, started building support for the increase well in advance of Town Meeting. After contacting NHACC for reference materials, she created a summary document explaining why the commission was looking for an increase. She used the document when talking to elected officials and residents and also for discussion points during Town Meeting.

The document explained how the LUCT works and what state law allows funds to be used for. It also outlined the rationale for retaining important open space and the town's rural character. The document highlighted what surrounding towns had for LUCT percentages, examined other NH municipalities in comparable size population, and provided examples of important conservation projects that have been supported by the conservation fund.

Case Study: Grantham

The Grantham Conservation Commission has been working on finding the balance between growth and conservation, and how to articulate the benefits of conservation to convince voters to invest more tax dollars in the acquisition of open space.

Grantham has been one of the fastest growing towns in the state. There were 700 people counted in the 1970 Census but 3,000 people in the 2010 Census. The Eastman residential development, which was initially billed as a retirement/second home housing community, has instead brought an influx of young families who commute to the Lebanon/Hanover area.

With those families have come children and with those children has come the need to expand the schools and to maintain other municipal buildings and roads, said Conservation Commission member David Wood. He added that the town's 2005 master plan spells out the desire by residents to maintain Grantham's rural character. In 2009, there was a critical conservation lands index completed that laid out the areas of Grantham that could be conserved. The challenge, Wood said, is that the view of conservation in town is mixed.

"People love the rural character; however, New Hampshire folk don't want to be told what to do with their property," Wood said. "So when rules and regulations are put in, there's resentment. There's still a general lack of appreciation of the economic benefit (in terms of reduced taxes) of open space as opposed to residential development. So voters reject recommendations to increase taxes to purchase open space, even though in the long term the purchase would reduce taxes."

But Wood said there are positives that the commission can build on.

Many of the families that have moved to town are committed to conservation and the members of the newly appointed Open Space Committee, including its acting chair and conservation commission member Susan Buchanan, are laying the information base that will allow purchasing opportunities to be prioritized.

At the urging of its new chair, Sheridan Brown, the commission has become more active in seeking out partnerships and has begun

Photo by Emily Lord.

The creation of walking trails was identified as a priority by Hooksett citizens surveyed by the town's conservation commission. Seeking community input and successfully communicating priorities have been hallmarks of the commission's successful projects over the past 10 years.

WHAT DO CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS DO?

Conservation commission members are volunteers—appointed by boards of selectmen, alderman or mayors—who work to study and protect natural resources. They also:

- develop long-term plans and strategies for the protection of important places
- work to permanently protect land
- provide educational programs and hikes, educate the public about renewable energy
- manage city and town lands for timber production, recreation and wildlife
- advise other boards on the importance of the town's natural resources
- work with the state's Department of Environmental Services to provide local comment on wetland permits

working with the Parks and Recreation director on organizing activities. They are also trying to build trails in Brookside Park and to find ways to involve the community, especially children. They are working on planning a snowshoe hike this winter, and they are looking into programs they think would interest the community, like talks about invasive insects.

And, despite their challenges, the commission has still made recent progress on a land protection project. They just purchased a six-acre parcel, which they hope to improve with hiking trails and which is now joined with Brookside Park to create a contiguous, 20-acre tract for people to experience.

Now the real work will begin, Wood said. The commission has been working with landowners over the past eight years to conserve a couple of significant parcels. In the next year they are planning to build the case with taxpayers for an open-space bond at Town Meeting so that they can take the next steps with the owners.

"The opposition will clearly be from people who do not want to see an increase in their taxes," Wood said. "There are a lot of people in town with fixed incomes, and even for those who are working, taxes are rising faster than salaries. No one wants to increase taxes even more to buy land. But on the other hand, the community is under pressure to grow, and if it grows residentially then it means a greater increase in the long term."

Along with the planning they've done, the partnerships they are building and the events on existing conservation properties, the commission has been talking with members of other conservation commissions in towns that passed open-space bond articles to understand what worked and what didn't. They are also working to educate themselves on what the impacts on taxpayers could be

From the Spring, 1965 issue of *Forest Notes*: "The development of the town's natural resources and the protection of watersheds and open spaces should not be left entirely to state and federal governments. This act gives an opportunity at the grass root level to evaluate and plan for resource management within the town and according to its needs and desires."

and how they will answer the tough questions that will come up. They realize they are going to have to do a lot to listening and a lot of communicating one on one with voters.

Only two more classrooms can be added to their local school before there will be a need for a new school. Long-time commission member Dick Hocker said enough housing lots are already available for development to increase the school age population above the school's capacity.

"It's not if, but when it's going to happen, and we're not prepared for it," Wood said.

Real Protection for Town Forests in Deerfield

A paraphrase of a refrain that I've heard in my visits to conservation commissions is," trees don't need schools."

But one of the misconceptions about town/city forests is that they are permanently protected properties. In fact, the legislative body of municipalities (town meeting or city council) can vote to establish town/city forests and can just as easily vote to remove a town/city forest designation. In New Hampshire, the statute enabling local designation and management of town/city forests provides two options for municipal forest managers: a forestry committee created for that purpose, or, by vote of the legislative body, a conservation commission may manage the town or city forest.

In Deerfield, conservation commission members, along with former member and current volunteer Frank Mitchell, have been working for the past four years to ensure their town forests were permanently protected with conservation easements. Their approach was to focus on publishing articles in the local newspaper in support of the easements and accompanying the articles with photos of the properties.

Their first article focused on laying the groundwork for the values of public conservation lands such as the importance of wildlife habitats, how they provide places for people to enjoy and how they contribute to the town's character. The article also explained how the conservation commission wanted to make sure the forests remain a permanent living legacy for the town and was taking two steps: first, working with the town's forestry committee to create management plans; and second, to permanently protect the land. They also highlighted that easements deliver on the wishes of the people who donated the land.

The article was brief and promised more details to follow in the coming weeks. The second article provided a brief profile and map of each of the properties and highlighted that as owners of these public properties, residents had the right to enjoy them and to share the responsibility for managing them. The commission got its message across while also educating residents about the opportunities they have to enjoy nature.

The final article highlighted the fact that the conservation commission and the select board had introduced a warrant article for voters to consider. It took a question and answer format with questions like:

- Why would the town permanently conserve our Town Forests and Conservation Areas?
- Have other towns done this?
- What are conservation easements and how do they work?
- Who would be responsible for administering and monitoring of the conservation easement?
- Will this cost the taxpayers?
- What's the next step?

Success didn't happen overnight, but commission members' work finally came to fruition when voters at Town Meeting in 2010 and 2011 voted in favor of putting conservation easements on the properties. The last easement project was completed last summer.

The result is that eight properties totaling almost 700 acres are permanently conserved under easements. The commission shared one final article in the local paper in September that thanked voters for their support and again went through the benefits of the easements.

Water quality watchdogs

When conservation commissions began in New Hampshire, some of our rivers were so polluted that signs warned people away from swimming or fishing in them. Conservation commissions were the driving force, with the Forest Society's support, for legislation in 1973 to extend conservation commissions' authority to wetlands protection. Commissioners got to work on the local level to convince their selectmen of the need for sewers and sewage treatment plants and over the last 50 years have been a critical part of cleaning up and protecting water quality across the state.

Today the state statute allows a conservation commission to request time to investigate an application for a dredge-and-fill permit filed with the N.H. DES Wetlands Bureau. The conservation commission is the one municipal body with authority to "intervene" (request this delay). The conservation commission may also

Photo courtesy NHACC.

Photo by Evy Nathan.

Photo by Emily Lord.

Left: *The Rye Conservation Commission made its first land purchase in 1972: five acres at the edge of a pond off Brackett Road. In their report to the town, commissioners noted that their focus for land acquisition was solely on preserving wetlands, not on land suitable for housing. Statewide, attitudes about protecting developable land have changed a lot since then.*

Middle: *Students from Sanborn Regional School use "weed wrenches" to pull invasive weeds at the Frye Town Forest in Kingston.*

Right: *Evy Nathan, chair of the Kingston Conservation Commission Chair, and Sarah Sallade, science teacher at Sanborn Regional High School, have forged a partnership that has gotten students outside and involved in conservation projects.*

prepare the report and maps for the local designation of "prime wetlands."

There are 33 towns and cities that have elected to designate "prime-wetlands" and had them approved by the state. Municipalities take this step to add a higher level of protection to these wetlands of exceptional value and their surrounding upland buffer.

Gilford was the first town in the state a have a prime wetlands designation, which is something conservation commission members proudly talk about. As a Lakes Region community, the commission feels that protecting their wetlands is a critical piece of protecting their community's resources and economy.

Engaging Youth and the Community in Kingston

The conservation commission in Kingston that Evy Nathan leads discovered the ingredients for a successful secret sauce for community engagement: a strong partnership with the local high school and an embrace of social media.

The youth-infused invasive weeds workday Nathan spoke about at the 2014 NHACC annual meeting is just one of several fueled by the support of Sanborn Regional High School, where teacher Sarah Sallade has integrated the commission's work into her curriculum. Students have participated in clean-up and replanting projects on town properties through their classes and their Senior Day of Caring. Perhaps most impressively, students planned and implemented the installation of water quality improvement projects with landowners around the local Pow Wow Pond. They produced vegetative buffers, infiltration projects and rain gardens.

"The connection to the high school has blossomed into this wonderful thing," Nathan said. "Their cooperation and understanding of the work, and the excitement of the science staff—it's been great."

Nathan and Sallade point to the example of a student who participated in one of their workdays to show how their partnership is making a difference. The girl asked if the forest they were working in belonged to Nathan. "I told her, 'No, this is your forest. It's the town forest; it belongs to everyone, the taxpayers.' "

Sallade added, "Once you get kids out into the woods, that's where kids ask those kinds of questions. That's why it's so important." She went on to say that there is a lot of value in getting kids out to local conserved properties. Many don't spend much time outside, but once they get a structured opportunity and have a good time, they realize they don't have to go far to do it.

Nathan said the commission's successful community outreach is also a product of their partnership with a citizens group called Friends of Kingston Open Space (FOKOS) that concentrates on easement and acquisition projects, and the Southeast Land Trust.

"Our goals at first were small and short sighted," Nathan says. "Even those took time. But as we got them done, things started to pick up steam."

The commission has also been meeting people where they gather, not just in person. The biggest growth in Facebook's users is adults over the age of 55. Nathan said the commission's Facebook page has been a tremendous networking tool for getting people

"What we're talking about is the right of a town to control its own destiny."

— Malcolm Taylor, first executive director
of the N.H. Association of Conservation Commissions,
as quoted in the *Keene Sentinel* on Dec. 8, 1972

interested in their work. A quick scan of their Facebook page and you'll see two to three short posts a week. It's mostly pictures of conservation properties in town or reposts of photos from partners. There are pictures of sunsets with a kayak, video of a blue heron and beavers in action, a cardinal in a marshland and so on. Pictures are worth a thousand words, as the saying goes.

Many commissions around the state have struggled to get more people interested and supportive of their work. In the last year, NHACC has heard from at least a dozen commissions who are having a hard time attracting new members as older members leave. Not so in Kingston. Nathan recently placed an ad in the local newspaper for an opening on the commission, and 10 people responded. They are now looking for ways to get these new volunteers involved in their work.

"All of the little efforts are becoming cumulative," Nathan said. "There's a general shift in attitude about open space in the community. If we do enough self-promotion and if we acquaint people with it, they will come along with us."

The Kingston Conservation Commission's work with its local high school is innovative, though it isn't unprecedented. Around the state, conservation commissions have been engaging schools as a way to build the next generation of conservationists and to get others involved. Farmington has two students (non-voting) on their commission. Washington has led vernal pool walks for the younger set. Merrimack has taken students out to a timber harvest operation.

CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS

216
Towns/cities that have seated conservation commissions

180,000
Acres conservation commissions have helped to conserve statewide

11
Commissions that have conducted "cost of community services" studies

33
Commissions that have designated "prime wetlands" in their town/city

97
Percent of N.H. citizens who say they support land conservation

The Next 50 Years?

Whether in good or difficult economic times, residents of New Hampshire have supported conservation for all that it does for their communities. A 2012 public opinion survey conducted by UNH found that 97 percent of voters support land conservation efforts in the state and that they also see a connection between conservation and the state's economy.

Looking ahead to the next 50 years, conservation commissions will continue to be the local stewards of natural resources, but they will need to solve some tough emerging challenges.

Last summer, a legislative study committee was tasked with determining the status of conservation in New Hampshire (see results summary on page 8). One of the key findings was that more than two-thirds of our lands that are critical to maintaining clean sources of public drinking water are unprotected. The availability of clean drinking water is the foundation for making our state attractive for residents, commerce, and tourist-dependent businesses. While communities, the state and conservation organizations have shown a wise use of dollars in conservation, the challenge of protecting drinking water supplies is going to require conservation commissions being particularly resourceful with limited tax dollars.

The proverbial greying of the Granite State is another challenge. As conservation commission members grow older across the state, they will need to figure out how to engage the next generation so that the legacy of last 50 years is carried forward.

There are no easy solutions to these challenges, and there will be no one solution that works. To help, the NHACC has launched new field-based training sessions with partners like UNH Cooperative Extension to educate commission members on how to work with youth and schools, how to coexist with beavers and other wildlife, how to build trails, and how to use mobile technology for mapping. We also have programs coming on how to use social media and how to lead wildlife tracking expeditions.

Perhaps the best way to inspire the next generation, as Rachel Carson inspired the last generation, is to make conservation real and tangible by connecting people to the land. Conservation commissions are uniquely positioned to foster those connections. They will continue to innovatively meet the challenges of the next half century and in so doing, they will continue to protect the quality of life we enjoy in the Granite State.

Nicholas Coates is the Executive Director, N.H. Association of Conservation Commissions.

HARVESTING BENEFITS

How Timber Management and Recreation Can Coexist on State Lands

Photo courtesy Nansen Ski Club.

BY **BRAD SIMPKINS**, DIRECTOR, N.H. DIV. OF FORESTS AND LANDS
AND **PHILIP BRYCE**, DIRECTOR, N.H. DIV. OF STATE PARKS

Forest management and outdoor recreation are two long-standing and significant uses of the New Hampshire landscape. Our 84-percent forested state is the backdrop for nature-watching, hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and snowmobiling, to name a few popular outdoor activities. The same forests we recreate in supply a multitude of wood products, thermal and electric energy fuel, and pulp for making paper. Our forests, and the recreational opportunities they provide, support our personal, social and environmental well-being, while contributing billions annually to the Granite State's economy.

At first glance it may seem counterintuitive that the commercial extraction of forest products and outdoor recreation can coexist on the same property. However, a closer look reveals not only that they can and do coexist, but also that in many situations it is the management of the forest that enhances, contributes, and makes possible these recreational opportunities.

The selling of forest products is often the revenue source that provides a landowner with the ability to keep their forests as forest, verses selling it for

One of the best examples of the overlap of recreation and timber harvesting is the recreational access provided by logging roads.

ABOVE: A young skier enjoys the groomed trails of Milan State Park. The trail system was created by a timber harvest and is maintained by the Nansen Ski Club.

LEFT: A hitch of trees is skidded along a logging road at Greenfield State Park. The recreational benefits of logging roads include snowmobiling, skiing, hunting and hiking access.

Photo courtesy DRED.

development. Without economic incentives to retain land in forest and support the costs of ownership, we would lose the very open space that so much of our outdoor recreation depends upon. Forest management also contributes to recreation in many other ways. Management provides a diversity of habitats and cover types, thereby producing and enhancing opportunities for wildlife viewing, hunting, and recreational botany. And one of the best examples of overlap of recreation and timber harvesting is the recreational access provided by logging roads. It would be cost prohibitive to construct these roads for recreational access without the timber revenue.

Conversely, recreation gets people outdoors and connecting with our forests. It was often outdoor recreational experiences in our youth that instilled the love of the outdoors and provided the catalyst for many of today's foresters and natural resource professionals to go into their chosen profession. And now as those foresters carry out their work, there is a unique opportunity to connect people to forest stewardship when they see management activities first hand while recreating. This mutually beneficial relationship is well demonstrated on many lands throughout the state. Great examples can be found on the White Mountain National Forest, Forest Society lands, town forests, privately-held forestlands, and lands managed by the N.H. Dept. of Resources and Economic Development (DRED).

DRED owns more than 173,000 acres of land, manages an additional 45,000 acres of public land, and oversees 235,000 acres of conservation easements. All of the lands held by this state agency are collectively known as "reservations." The coexistence of forest management and recreation has long been a hallmark of the agency's land management mission, and is actually directed by state law. Specifically, RSA 227-H:1 states that all reservations are managed to: *"provide forest benefits and for the purposes of demonstrating sound forestry principles, protecting habitat for plants, animals, and other organisms, conserving forested watersheds, preserving areas of rare and exemplary natural beauty and ecological value, and providing for perpetual public access and use."* It is clear that the drafters of this legislation had multiple-use management in mind.

DRED reservations are managed jointly by the Division of Forests and Lands and the Division of Parks and Recreation. The Division of Forests and Lands is charged with protecting and promoting the values provided by trees, forests and natural communities, while the Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with providing recreational, educational, and inspirational experiences through the management of the state's natural, recreational and cultural resources. While our two agencies may have differing missions, we work together to manage the same lands.

LEFT: At Bear Brook State Park in Allenstown, an infestation of red pine scale killed large stands of mature red pines, which were harvested.

Photo courtesy DRED.

Projects at several state parks in recent years demonstrate cooperative management and illustrate how forest management and outdoor recreation can complement each other:

- The forest resources at Greenfield State Park, which just celebrated its 50th anniversary, had not been actively managed. This resulted in even-aged stands of overcrowded, mature trees and the loss of screening between campsites. Timber harvesting was used to remove damaged and declining trees from in and around the campsites to provide a safer recreational environment for visitors and to encourage the growth of young trees to provide screening and privacy between campsites.

- While implementing a timber harvest at Weeks State Park, the Division of Forests and Lands worked with the Division of Parks and Recreation and its Bureaus of Trails, Historic Sites and Park Operations to eliminate user conflicts in the park. Skid trails were laid out collaboratively to facilitate the relocation of snow machine traffic from an existing hiking and cross country ski trail, thus separating these uses to allow a more pleasurable experience for all.

- Red pine scale, a destructive, invasive insect, was recently discovered in New Hampshire at Bear Brook State Park. The infestation impacted close to 200 acres of red pine plantations including the "D.A.R. Plantation," a landscape feature at the gateway to the park for 75 years, as well as many stands along recreational trails. A timber harvest quickly and safely removed the potential hazard trees before they could pose a threat to visitors recreating at the park.

- Parklands that have little or no development also benefit from forest operations. The recent completion of a management plan for the 13,361-acre Pisgah State Park has allowed for the creation of several areas of young forest habitat on this otherwise mature, even-aged landscape. This diversity of forest structure creates wildlife habitat that will benefit a large suite of game and nongame species and provides numerous recreational opportunities for hiking, hunting, wildlife watching, wildflower identification and wild berry picking.

BELOW: Removing damaged and declining trees at Greenfield State Park allowed new trees to regenerate and form natural screens between campsites.

Photos above and left courtesy DRED.

ABOVE: Two years after a timber harvest at Pisgah State Park in Cheshire County, young aspen grow in the newly sun-filled openings, creating a young-forest habitat used by diverse wildlife species.

RIGHT: A patch cut created a viewscape for skiers at Milan Hill State Park.

Photo courtesy Nansen Ski Club.

› Many of our state reservations are often the heart of our rural communities. The Nansen Ski Club, known as the oldest ski club in America, was in danger of losing its trail system because of the sale of private forestland. To continue this valuable North Country recreational tradition, DRED offered them a permanent home at Milan Hill State Park. A timber harvest was used to help create an extensive network of cross country ski trails and redevelop a former campground to include "yurt" campsites, providing a unique overnight winter experience, and summer campsites. Much of the clearing that occurred for this project created several scenic vistas of the surrounding hills and mountains that can be viewed from the campsites and trails.

These examples are just some of the ways that forest management and recreation coincide across our landscape. Many more illustrations could be presented from the woodlots owned by the more than 120,000 private landowners across the state, representing 75% of the forests of New Hampshire. This patchwork of private and public working forestlands has provided generations of Granite Staters and visitors with exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities. With wise management and the continued ability for landowners to practice good forestry, these forests can continue to provide wonderful opportunities for generations to come.

Providing recreational opportunities is integral to what we do as forest managers. Timber management and forest recreation go hand in hand, and without those harvests in the past we would not have the extent of recreational opportunities we enjoy today. We owe it to future generations to continue to provide recreational opportunities in an affordable way with timber harvesting projects.

Brad Simpkins and Philip Bryce serve as the directors of the Div. of Forests and Lands and the Division of Parks and Recreation, respectively, located within the N.H. Dept. of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). *A special thanks goes to Will Guinn, Regional Forester, and Johanna Lyons, state park planning and development specialist of DRED, for contributing to this article. For more information about the state parks mentioned in this article, visit www.nhstateparks.org.*

Lecture Series Will Inform, Inspire and Entertain

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

BRETZFELDER PARK FAMILY LECTURES

Learn about New Hampshire's great outdoors in this free series. Most presentations take place at the Bretzfelder Memorial Park, on Prospect Street in Bethlehem; the Feb. 18 event takes place at the nearby Rocks Estate. Call 444-6228 or go to the calendar page of www.therocks.org for more information. Preregistration is not required.

FEBRUARY 11, 7 p.m.

The Winter Hexagon: How to Identify the Brightest Stars in the Winter Sky

Astronomer Ben Moss, astronomy teacher at the White Mountain School and board member of the Northeast Kingdom Astronomy Foundation, will teach star identification in the winter sky using Powerpoint, planetarium software, and an outdoor night tour (weather-permitting). Warm clothing is highly recommended!

FEBRUARY 18, 7 p.m.

(Rocks Estate in Bethlehem, not Bretzfelder Park)

The Adventures of Buffalo and Tough Cookie

Dan Szczesny, author of *The Adventures of Buffalo and Tough Cookie*, will present his acclaimed hiking memoir. Szczesny's book chronicles his journeys with his 9-year-old ward and ambitious hiking partner, and the bond that developed between this unlikely pair that transformed their lives.

Co-sponsored by the Ammonoosuc Chapter of N.H. Audubon (This event takes place at The Rocks Estate, not Bretzfelder Park.)

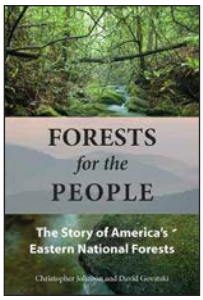
FEBRUARY 25, 7 p.m.

Brazil's Northeast Rainforest, its Ecology and its Fabulous Birds

Birding enthusiast Mary Boulanger presents photographs, bird calls, and a discussion of the ecology of the rainforest and how it affects the types of birds found there. Her presentation will be based on her travels to South America, Central America, Texas and Asia. Birds featured will include the fascinating antbirds, manikins, macaws and monjitas.

COTTRELL-BALDWIN LECTURES

The popular series returns on Tuesday nights in March. 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. For directions, see forestsociety.org/thingstodo or call 224-9945.



MARCH 3, 7 p.m.

Forests for the People: What's Next for America's Eastern National Forests?

David Govatski, co-author of *Forests for the People*, tells the story of how a diverse coalition of citizens, organizations, and business and political leaders worked to create eastern U.S. national forests and the issues facing them today, such as shale oil extraction, restoration ecology, invasive insects, burgeoning recreation and calls for preservation vs. multiple use management.

MARCH 17, 7 p.m.

Movie Night: *The People's Forest*

Acclaimed film-maker David Huntley will present the film, *The People's Forest*, the result of his two -year collaboration with the Center for Rural Partnerships at Plymouth State University and the Museum of the White Mountains. The film tells the story of how "the land that nobody wanted" became the White Mountain National Forest.

Courtesy of New Hampshire Historical Society.

Loading up a logging train on the East Branch & Lincoln Railroad.

MARCH 24, 7 p.m.

Boom to Bust and Back Again: Is the Past a Prologue for N.H. Agriculture?

Stephen Taylor, former N.H. Commissioner of Agriculture, will discuss the rise and fall of the great sheep boom, hill farm culture, the influence of the N.H. Grange, family dairy farms and 4H. New niche markets, the local foods movement and farmers' markets, plus specialty "boutique farms" and soaring interest in backyard poultry, sheep and goats, llamas and alpacas, are creating a renaissance for farming in New Hampshire.

MARCH 31, 7 p.m.

Oh, to Be Young Again: An Aging Forest Means Trouble for Some N.H. Wildlife

Jim Oehler, a habitat biologist with the N.H. Fish and Game Dept., presents the Young Forest Project, a partnership working on behalf of the many wildlife species that require young forest habitats even as the Northeastern forest continues to mature. Populations of wood turtle, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, whip-poor-will, brown thrasher, indigo bunting, New England cottontail, snowshoe hare and bobcat have declined, and no fewer than 65 reptiles, birds, and mammals—all of which need young forest—have been designated species of greatest conservation need in the Northeast. Learn how the partners in the Young Forest Project are working to change this trend.

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.

SATURDAY, FEB. 21 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Snowshoe Hike at Morse Preserve

Alton

Join Forest Society land stewards Ken and Suzanne Marvin for a guided snowshoe hike on the Forest Society's 431-acre Morse Preserve on Pine Mountain in Alton. This moderately challenging 1.7 mile loop hike offers one of the finest views of the Belknap Range and Lake Winnipesauke for the amount of effort expended! Learn about forest animal tracking and get some exercise too!

Bring snowshoes, a bag lunch and water, and dress appropriately in layers for comfortable hiking in winter weather. Meet at the Mike Burke Town Forest parking area on Avery Hill Rd, Alton, N.H. No dogs please. For questions or to pre-register (appreciated) please email the Marvins at ksmarvin@ gmail.com.

MARCH 14, 21-22, 28-29 & APRIL 4
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

New Hampshire Maple Experience

The Rocks Estate, Bethlehem

Experience the tradition of sugar making with hands-on learning and tasty treats. The tour includes an interactive step-by-step demonstration of crafting maple syrup, complete with a visit to the onsite sugar house and to the interactive maple museum and education center. Take a horse-drawn wagon ride through the historic 1,400-acre estate!

Reservations are highly recommended (444-6228), but walk-ins are welcome on a space available basis.

FRIDAY, MAR. 20 | 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Wild Apple Tree Release and Pruning Workshop

Alton

Releasing and pruning wild apple trees can keep them healthy and result in greater fruit production for use by a wide variety of wildlife. This basic introduction to releasing and pruning wild apple trees, with both indoor classroom session and outdoor field practice, will be led by Nigel Manly (director of the Forest Society's Rocks Estate). The indoor portion will be held at the Gilman Library (100 Main St., Alton) and we will carpool to the nearby Morse Preserve for some field pruning practice.

Bring a bag lunch and water, and dress in warm layers for outdoor practice. Workshop is FREE and pre-registration is requested. Visit www.forestsociety.org/events to register, email signup@forestsociety.org or call 224-9945.

FRIDAY, MAR. 27 | 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Become a Conservation Center Emerald Ash Borer Naturalist!

Concord

Are you interested in learning and teaching others about the Emerald Ash Borer in New Hampshire? Do you live within a reasonable drive from Concord? We are looking for volunteers to become field naturalist tour guides for the EAB infestation at the Forest Society's Conservation Center—we'll train you to give the tour, and then work with you to schedule tours for conservation commissions or other groups as they are requested. The tour will be hands-on and will focus on identification of ash trees, field markers and symptoms of EAB in ash, and what people should do if they believe they've found EAB in their community.

Registration is FREE but space is limited so sign up soon! Email cdeegan@forestsociety.org to register or call 224-9945.

SATURDAY, FEB. 28 | 9 a.m.
RAINDATE: SUNDAY, MARCH 1

Winter Mammal Tracking Hike

The Fells and Hay Forest Reservation, Newbury

Whose tracks are those in the snow? Which wildlife are the most active in the winter woods? Find out during this popular, annual late winter mammal tracking workshop led by Forest Society naturalist Dave Anderson. We'll start indoors, then move outside for tracking on snowshoes. Warm footwear is mandatory. BYO snowshoes.

$5 for Forest Society and Fells members
$10 for non-members.

Photo by David O'hearn.

An astute tracker sees stories in the snow. Here, a bobcat has followed a deer through the woods.

Co-sponsored by The Fells. To register, call 763-4789 x 3 or visit www.thefells.org. Supported by grants from the N.H. Charitable Foundation's Wellborn Ecology Fund, and the Creekmore and Adele Fath Charitable Foundation.

ART EXHIBITS

FEBRUARY

Photography of Lori Belloir: *The Importance of Place*

Graphic designer and photographer Lori Belloir presents landscape photographs of her beloved New Hampshire. Her somewhat autobiographical photos communicate the treasured places she has known in a visual dialogue about the importance of place and conservation.

MARCH AND APRIL

Mark Vernon: *New Hampshire Green and Blue*

Mark Vernon creates relief sculptures, three-dimensional sculptures, mobiles and layered compositions. Most of the sculptures and mobiles are made from varying thickness and kinds of wood, cut with multiple surfaces, thus providing a unique means to create depth and to utilize color.

Exhibits can be viewed Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Conservation Center Conference Room, 54 Portsmouth St., Concord. The conference room is also used for meetings, so please call ahead at 224-9945.

The Sunapee Conundrum

Many questions need answers in order to set the right precedent for state parks

By Will Abbott

New Hampshire will soon face a defining moment concerning the future of its stewardship of its state park system. Will the State allow the lease of the existing ski area at Sunapee State Park to mushroom into much more, or will it keep things as intended when the State entered the lease? The argument has been brewing since shortly after the State first entered the lease in 1998 with Tim and Diane Mueller, then owners of The Sunapee Difference, a limited liability corporation established to hold and operate the lease.

The New Hampshire Supreme Court itself weighed in, after years of legal wrangling, when it ruled in 2013 that the State was under no legal obligation under the 1998 lease to allow any expansion of the ski enterprise or the leased area. The lawsuit leading to the court's decision was filed by the Muellers in 2007, and it sought more than $13 million in damages from the State because then Gov. John Lynch refused to allow any agreement expanding the original lease to be brought before the Executive Council. In its ruling, the court dismissed the damage claim, on grounds that there was no state obligation to expand the lease and that it was the Governor's constitutional prerogative to decide against bringing a proposed lease expansion to the council from the State's Department of Resources and Economic Development (which is the state agency where the Division of Parks & Recreations is situated).

Why did this situation end up in court? One can only conclude from all the filings that the Muellers felt some entitlement to expanding the Sunapee lease, even though the court ultimately ruled that no such entitlement exists. The original leased area included the ski trails, lifts and buildings in place in 1998. Of the state park's 2,300 acres, the original lease encumbered just under 1,000 acres. After the Muellers were told by the State in 2003 that expanding the ski area into the eastern section of the park (the so-called "east bowl" of the mountain) would not be permitted because expansion would adversely affect old-growth forest, they secured options on 652 acres of land on the west slope of Mount Sunapee in the town of Goshen. In 2004 they proposed a "west bowl expansion" that would include more than 250 condominium

Photo courtesy Mt. Sunapee State Park.

Above: *The challenge at Sunapee is whether to allow the private lessees who run the ski operation to expand onto private land they own.*

Right: *A vintage brochure for Mt. Sunapee State Park highlighted that the park belongs to the citizens, "for YOUR year 'round enjoyment."*

units as part of the expansion project. This is when Gov. Lynch stepped in and said "No." The Governor said that state parks belong to all of the citizens of New Hampshire and should not be used to leverage private residential development (with ski-in amenities) on the slopes of Mount Sunapee. And the legal battle began.

One irony in all the wrangling is that few people question whether the Muellers have done a good job operating the existing lease. All reports are that the existing lease is working for both parties, and that skiing at Sunapee is a better experience than it was when the state ran the ski area. The revenues the State collects from the lease go toward funding capital improvements at the other State-owned ski area, Cannon Mountain in Franconia Notch State Park. The challenge at Sunapee is whether to allow the Muellers to expand ski operations, and, if so, under what conditions.

The Forest Society started acquiring land on Mount Sunapee in 1911. Its goal at the time was to protect the mountain from excessive timber harvesting and to secure it for a recreating public. In 1947, through a friendly condemnation, the State took title to 1,100 acres the Forest Society had accumulated as well as to other privately owned lands to create Mount Sunapee State Park and to build the ski area. At the time, the ski area was developed as part of the larger park to encourage outdoor public recreation. Since 1947 the State has periodically acquired additional real estate to grow the park to its present 2,300 acres.

In June of 2014, the Mount Sunapee Resort (now owned by a real estate investment trust called CNL Properties, LLC but still operated by the Muellers) proposed essentially the same "west bowl expansion" that Gov. Lynch rejected a decade ago with one change. This time the lessee claims to have no plans for residential development as part of the expansion. When asked at a public hearing whether the development is dependent on residential development, a spokesman for the resort said: "We have no plans for any residential development at

Sunapee continued on page 22.

Northern Pass Could Show True Innovation by Using Breakthrough Technology

By Will Abbott

New Hampshire has an opportunity to demonstrate how truly innovative technology can help sustain the natural landscapes that are vital to our economy and our sense of place.

Four years ago when Northern Pass first proposed to build an overhead power line from Pittsburg to Deerfield (well above tree line) that would permanently scar one of the assets we value most, the new technology for burial of High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables then available was limited to a capacity of 1000 megawatts. Because Northern Pass was predicated on a capacity of 1200 MW, its promoters suggested that the new technology was not appropriate for their project.

Earlier this summer one of the two leading international manufacturers of HVDC cable systems announced a breakthrough in their underground HVDC cable technology that increases the carrying capacity of their system to 2600 MW. Rather than embrace this new development, Northern Pass executives insist on keeping their heads in the sand. Despite occasional claims that some sort of grand compromise is in the works, they stand by their 187-mile project with 179 miles of overhead towers well above tree line and eight miles of buried cable in the Coos County communities of Clarksville and Stewartstown. They are proposing to bury the eight miles—which would cross lands and conservation easements held by the Forest Society—in an attempt to connect the parcels of land they have acquired to build a new right of way enabling the otherwise overhead facility. Absent eminent domain, it is the Forest Society's position that Northern Pass cannot cross our conserved lands.

Northern Pass officials acknowledge that the new HVDC burial technology is less expensive to build per mile than

Photo courtesy ABB.

New technology, such as the 525kV cable manufactured by Swiss company ABB Group, has been developed for undergrounding electricity transmission systems.

the conventional burial technology. They acknowledge that they have explored the new HVDC buried technology. What they won't acknowledge is whether they have actually priced out the new HVDC system assuming it would be buried along an existing transportation corridor, which the N.H. Dept. of Transportation says could be available for such an energy corridor. They continue to assert that completely burying the line—as they propose to build it—will cost upwards of $20 million a mile, without disclosing the assumptions or the engineering design that yields such a cost estimate.

If you assume, as Northern Pass asserts, that the $1.4 billion project as proposed includes $250 million for the DC/AC converter station they currently plan on building in Franklin, the balance of $1.15 billion will be the cost of building the 187-mile line. This approximates $6.2 million per mile for the 187-mile line. If Northern

Northern Pass continued on page 23.

Sunapee continued from page 21.

this time." The unspoken reality is that residential development may come later.

As in 2004, the proposed expansion into the mountain's west bowl would represent a 20 percent growth in land needed for the ski area and in the number of skiers that could be accommodated. As in 2004, the new expansion proposal would build much of the new ski infrastructure on 652 acres of land in Goshen that abuts the park boundary and is today privately owned by the Muellers (not CNL Propeties, LLC). As in 2004, the Resort is claiming that the expansion would lead to substantial economic benefits for the region (with little documented analysis to support the claims). As in 2004, the 2014 plan would significantly alter the visual and ecological status quo on Mount Sunapee's western flank.

There remain many unanswered questions about the June 2014 expansion plan. Is the expansion something the State truly desires for Mount Sunapee State Park when all of the pros and cons are taken into account? How will the State manage the expanded ski area with bifurcated land ownership—partly on State-owned park land and partly on privately owned land that happens to be owned by the lessee's hired operator? How is the revenue from the ski area with bifurcated land ownership distributed? Would the State be better off owning all the land onto which any expanded ski area would be built? How will the expansion be financed, and by whom? If residential development is only something delayed for public relations purposes, who will decide about the future of any such residential development and when will these decisions be made? Has DRED determined that the west bowl has old-growth forest, and, if so, will DRED draw the same line regarding adverse impacts of expansion into the west bowl that it drew in 2003 to prevent any expansion into the east bowl? Will DRED insist on objective economic analysis of the purported regional economic benefits? Would the expansion as proposed alter the character of Mount Sunapee as a natural icon, and, if so, are such alterations acceptable?

If DRED, after fully answering these questions, determines that the public interest is best served by denying the proposed expansion, New Hampshire would still have a family ski area at Sunapee well run by its current lessee. If DRED determines that the public interest is best served by allowing some expansion, it would presumably only reach such a conclusion by assessing all the costs and benefits. The conundrum is that the choice by the State in this case concerns a proposed expansion of the ski operation at Mount Sunapee State Park; but the choice also sets a standard by which all public lands owned by the State are managed in the future. We need to get this right.

The Case for a Comprehensive Energy Siting Plan in New Hampshire

We should be thinking more like foresters and less like dart players

By Will Abbott

Good foresters are able to see ahead 50 to 100 years, mostly out of necessity. Because of the life cycle of trees, good forest planning requires a forester to choose what the forest being managed today will look like in 50 to 100 years. New Hampshire should apply a similar standard to the choices it makes for siting new energy infrastructure, particularly the kind of infrastructure that carries energy and fuels long distances and requires considerable disturbance to the landscape to be built.

Energy projects like the Northern Pass (proposed to bring electricity from Quebec to southern New England through 31 New Hampshire communities) and the Northeast Energy Direct gas pipeline (proposed to bring natural gas from Pennsylvania to New England through 17 southern New Hampshire communities) raise a host of basic questions whose answers may depend on the thoroughness and thoughtfulness with which the questions are posed. Call it good planning. It is what good foresters do, and it is what good policy-makers should do to best meet our future energy needs.

Foresters think decades ahead when deciding which trees to mark for harvesting. Should we do anything less when deciding where to site new energy projects?

If future energy markets are to be driven by the marketplace itself, which seems to be a trend now favored by many stakeholders in the energy marketplace (from producers to consumers), New Hampshire as a state and New England as a region must come to terms with the fact that siting decisions for new and upgraded energy infrastructure must be made in a way that recognizes and respects local land-use plans and individual property rights and values. Quite apart from whether the proposed energy development itself is desirable from the perspective of consumers (and developers), new projects that would negatively impact the natural resources and/or personal property values

within one or multiple communities must pass more than an energy needs test.

Common sense suggests that New Hampshire and New England should undertake a master planning process—much like communities now undertake to guide local land use—to choose appropriate corridors for new or upgraded energy and fuel transmission facilities. If master plans could pre-select appropriate corridors for facilities that are determined to meet a public need, and if the planning process for pre-selected corridors included the full participation of communities impacted, New Hampshire and the New England region could approach future energy transmission infrastructure needs in a way that is much more rational than the one-off game of darts that we presently use.

The presumption that we need each new long-distance transmission facility should be challenged in every case. Once a decision of need is made, the developer should be encouraged to select a corridor that has been pre-qualified for such a facility, according to a state plan that has fully vetted the corridor with the communities and landowners that would be most directly affected. Such a process will not eliminate objections of some communities and some landowners to specific projects, but it would bring some common sense planning to a process that is now severely lacking in forethought.

Northern Pass continued from page 21.

Pass were to price out the cost of building its 1200MW line using the new HVDC buried cable technology along Interstates 91 (in Vermont) and 93 (in Vermont and New Hampshire), how would it compare? If a thorough analysis were done of such a project, including the costs of the new cable, the cost of trenching and the other project development costs, what would such a project cost?

This is a question New Hampshire deserves an answer to. Sooner rather than later.

Photo (left) by Brenda Charpentier; (right) by Gabe Roxby.

Left: *Cecily Clark, whose great, great, great grandfather Abner Moody was rewarded with a chunk of Wolfeboro land for serving in the American Revolution, has conserved well over 600 acres with easements and her recent donation.*

Right: *A purple trillium.*

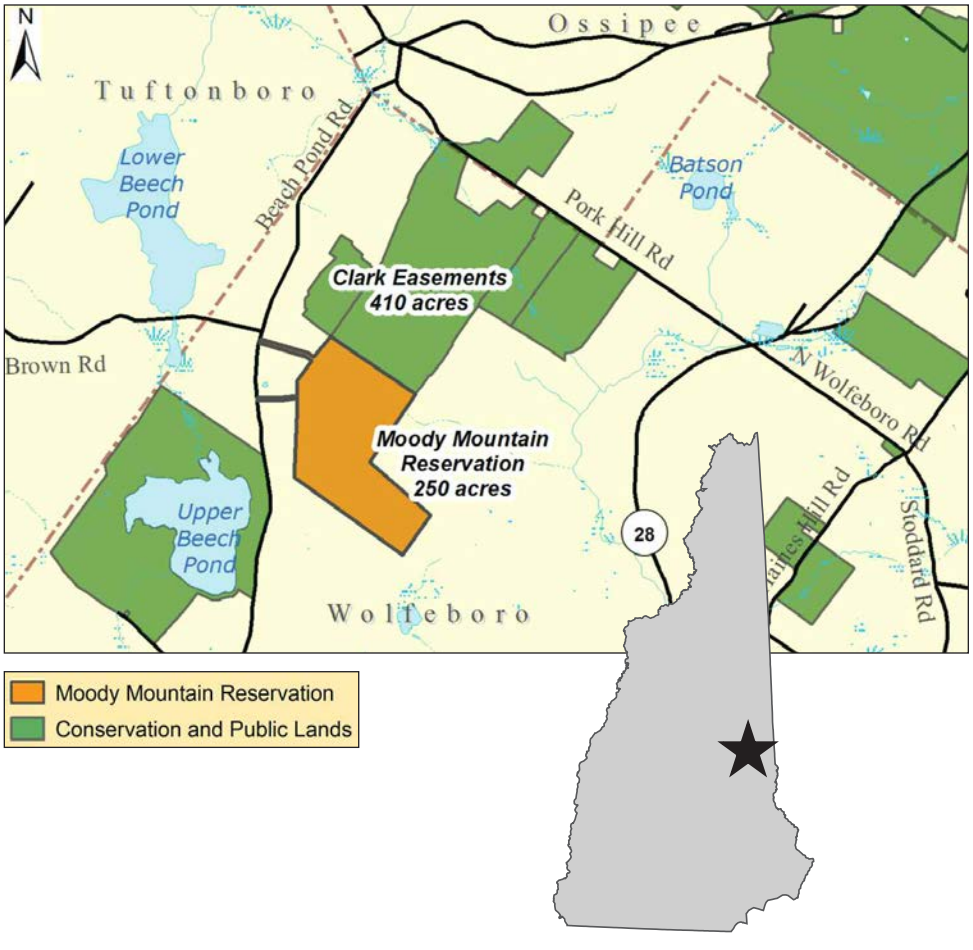
Flower Power

Land donation creates new Moody Mountain Reservation in Lakes Region

Cecily Clark was a young girl when victory in World War II brought the end of gas rationing on the New England home front. That meant her Navy veteran father could reinstate the routine of driving the family up from Massachusetts to their ancestral farm in Wolfeboro. Deemed old enough to explore the woods without grownups, Cecily and a friend determined on one of these post-war visits to follow the brook through the forest to see where it might lead. But it was the discoveries along the way that began to instill a delight so strong that it—like the memory of that time—has never left her.

"There were purple trillium growing there. I had never seen them before and I thought they were exquisitely beautiful," Cecily said.

Now a vigorous 80, Cecily remembers well those childhood days of freedom in the woods, with the water gurgling and the sprightly wildflowers pushing up through the leaf litter and the soft green moss. She imagined deer sleeping there. "It was magical," she recalled on a recent morning at her home.



Those experiences were the beginning of a lifelong relationship with the land around Moody Mountain, named after her great, great, great grandfather Abner Moody. He was granted land there as a reward for his service in the Revolutionary War. As attested by the rock walls on the hillsides, farmhouse and barn, Moodys farmed the land in the late 1700s, and it has been passed down through the generations since then. Cecily's father, Philip Moody Clark, added to the property by buying an adjacent piece with a farmhouse on it.

Mowing to keep the fields open, clearing brush and enjoying a cabin in the woods were some of the constants of family life on Moody Mountain. "I was a tomboy and I loved doing that kind of work," Cecily said. As soon as she got her driver's license she drove herself up to Wolfeboro, and it was just a matter of time before she decided to

Clark continued on page 26.

A Community Upholds its Land Heritage

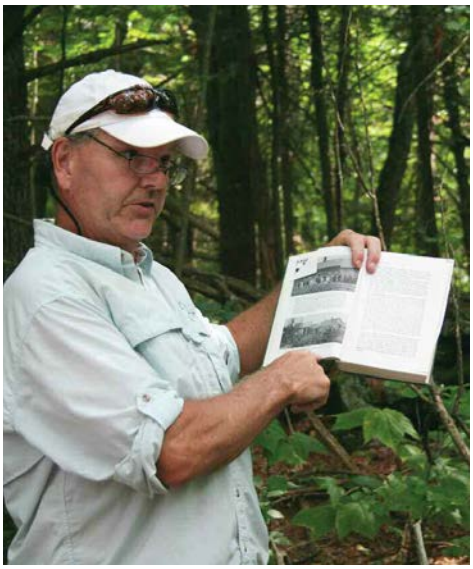
'This is Important Stuff. It Needs to Happen.'

By Brenda Charpentier

During a guided hike last summer along the rutted Old Marlow Road in the little town of Washington, local landowner and conservationist John Brighton stopped near one of the old cellar holes beyond the road's stonewall border and started to read from a book he carried. He read of families—of Clydes and Farnsworths, of Snows and Saffords—some of the founders of the town who likely stored their potatoes and apples in those cellar holes during the community's hilltop farming heyday in the 1800s.

It was a defining moment in the effort to acquire and conserve 245 acres of what is now forested high country, home to moose and bear rather than sheep and chickens. This land had a history, and conserving it upheld a tradition of valuing the land and drawing sustenance from it. The successful effort to add this property, now called the MacNeil Family Forest after its most recent owners, to the Forest Society's abutting Farnsworth Hill Forest Reservation, was personal for the community. It had everything to do with connections—connections community members felt to their town's rural heritage and the people who made the town, for sure, but much more than that.

Community continued on page 27.



Photos this page and opposite by Jed Schwartz.

John Brighton reads about early settlers of Washington who farmed the high country there during the 1800s.

Clark continued from page 25.

move up permanently in 1968. Cecily added another piece in 1972, when she bought a 250-acre property that is next to the family land and accessed along Beach Pond Road.

Determined to protect this special place, Cecily donated conservation easements on 462 acres of family land in 1994. And in November, she donated the 250-acre piece to the Forest Society, to be conserved and managed as the Moody Mountain Reservation.

"From the time I was 12 I've been prowling the property and working on trails and just enjoying being there. I care about this land, I want it to be a habitat for wildlife, and I also want other people to be able to enjoy it," Cecily said.

The founder of the Ossipee Children's Fund, which provides financial assistance for programs of childcare, recreation, education and enrichment for local lower income families, Cecily has long invested in her community. The land donation is one more contribution. Moody Mountain Reservation, like the Forest Society's 178 other reservations, will be open to the public for hiking, skiing, hunting, wildlife watching and other non-motorized recreation. At Cecily's request, the Forest Society is in the planning stages of creating a looping nature trail that will make the land more accessible.

"It will be a moderate trail, about a mile and a half through the forest, providing opportunities for walking through great habitat for deer, moose, bear and wild turkeys," said Ryan Young, the Forest Society land protection specialist managing the project.

The reason it is excellent wildlife habitat is the diversity of cover and food this land offers. There's plenty of softwood cover, hardwood mast sources like oak and beech, and wetlands, vernal pools, open ledge and streams. And because of Cecily's previous easements and those of her neighbors, there are now 980 contiguous acres in the Moody Mountain area protected. Just below this large chunk of conserved land, across Beach Pond Road, lies Upper Beech Pond, the source for Wolfeboro's drinking water. Keeping so much land above it intact and undeveloped is good for the water quality of the pond.

"This property is truly amazing, as is Cecily Clark's care of it and generosity," said Jane Difley, the Forest Society's president/forester. "We know she is placing her trust in us to care for this land as well as she and her family have, and we are honored to be able to carry on that stewardship."

A wildlife enthusiast who keeps birding field guides close at hand, Cecily is a gifted sculptor. Birds and other wildlife are favorite subjects for her artwork and motivations for protecting the land, as is a conservation ethic that she attributes to her father's example.

"I got a sense of custodianship from my father—that I had to take care of the property," she said.

She said the reason she bought the additional 250 acres in 1972 was to keep them out of development so wildlife would have an undisturbed place to live. Seeing the land become a Forest Society reservation and knowing it will be protected forever brings a sense of relief, she said, as did her previous easement donations.

"I felt a big burden was lifted off my shoulders," she said. "I know the land is in good hands."

On a walk at the MacNeil Family Forest, neighbors and Forest Society staff discuss the benefits of adding the property to the Farnsworth Hill Forest.

The connection often on Brighton's mind is the one that people will be able to make to nature in the future because today's generation is taking steps to ensure that possibility.

"This is something that will always be here—a place where people can go and hike and hunt and reflect on what's important to them. People in this area really recognize that this is important stuff. It needs to happen," Brighton said.

An even more tangible connection is the physical one to all the surrounding land, because the MacNeil Forest was the proverbial "missing piece of the puzzle" in the area. Now that it's conserved, it links the Farnsworth Hill Forest to Washington's town forest, the Ashuelot River Headwaters Forest and the Long Pond Town Forest. Now that it, too, is conserved, it completes a large, contiguous block of conserved land that will remain open forever for wildlife habitat, recreation and the safeguarding of the water quality of nearby Millen Lake, the Ashuelot River and Ashuelot Lake.

It was hearing about the property's role in connecting other conservation lands that moved the landowners, the MacNeil Family, to generously agree to sell the property to the Forest Society for far below its market value.

"Moving some of our land to the Forest Society made perfect sense," said John MacNeil, of Lincoln, Mass. "We learned that the land we held connected to other pieces, and that was something we could help out with. And we wanted to preserve the integrity of what the land was, and this was a way we could do that," he said.

MacNeil's grandparents bought the land and the house (which will remain in family ownership), in the 1930s when it was a working farm. MacNeil's parents both loved spending time there, as has his own family over the years. The conservation of the land, "preserves those family ties," MacNeil said.

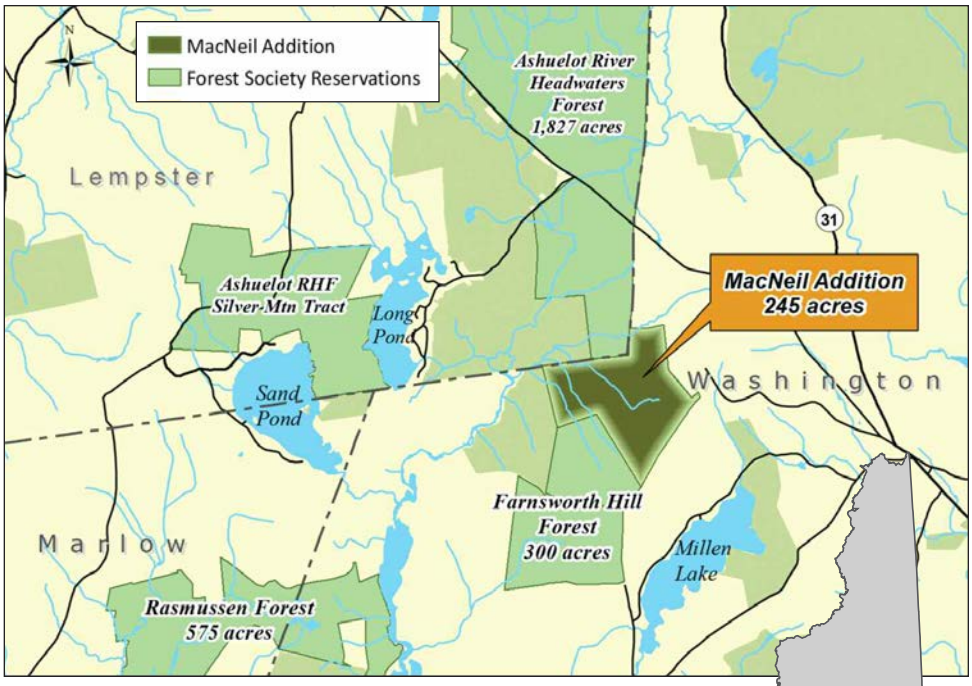
The MacNeil piece was a priority for the Washington Conservation Commission, which provided funds for the purchase with the help of the Davis Foundation and many individual donors.

Its priority status arose from its location as a link to other conserved land as well as to the high quality wildlife habitat and recreational potential. The N.H. Fish and Game's Wildlife Action Plan ranks it as

FOREST SOCIETY EASEMENT WILL ADD LAYER OF PROTECTION TO 644-ACRE TOWN FOREST IN LEMPSTER

Even when land is public-owned as a town forest, it can get fragmented or sold off piece by piece at the discretion of the prevailing powers of town government. The Town of Lempster has ensured that its 644-acre Long Pond Town Forest cannot be whittled away in the future by conveying a conservation easement on it to the Forest Society. Approved by voters at the town meeting last spring and conveyed in December of 2014, the easement will keep the property intact for wildlife habitat and recreational uses.

The town forest is an important piece of the region's conserved landscape. It abuts both the Forest Society's Ashuelot River Headwaters Forest and Farnsworth Hill Forest and is located in the corridor between the public lands surrounding Pillsbury/Sunapee state parks and the Forest Society's 1,100-acre Andorra Forest. The land is crucial to helping preserve the high quality water in Long Pond and the Ashuelot River. Residents use the forest for recreation, especially around Duck Pond and the state-designated snowmobile trail that travels through the property.



the highest quality habitat of its kind in the state. The unmaintained Old Marlow Road, a long-ago main travel route to Washington, is a popular snowmobile trail in winter and a peaceful walking trail past many cellar holes and stone walls in all seasons.

"Visitors from near and far will enjoy the wild diversity of this remarkable landscape, now connecting thousands of acres of undivided wilderness in Washington and Lempster," said Jed Schwartz, chair of the Washington Conservation Commission. "Wildlife and natural resources will thrive without restriction on this unmeasurably valuable landscape."

Town of Mason Protects Cultural and Recreational Assets — Part II

The network of trails around the town of Mason's historic granite quarry, once the hub of civic life and now a refuge for walking, horseback riding, swimming and biking, was further protected last fall when Mason donated an addition to the conservation easement it gave to the Forest Society in 2013.

The original easement protected 110 acres around an abandoned quarry that in the 1800s furnished grand granite monuments and building materials to cities all over the nation. The recent easement addition protects an additional 125 acres of surrounding land that is also owned by the town. Mason residents approved the easement at its town meeting last March.

The quarry itself, filled in with water, is a popular local swimming hole. Old railroad beds throughout the area connect to a large network of trails in the region and are enjoyed by dog walkers, joggers and horseback riders. The new easement will protect these cultural and recreational assets as well as wildlife habitat, including several beaver flowages and a portion of a Black Gum Swamp.

Acorn Action

We Plan, Work, then Hope for Red Oak Regrowth

By George F. Frame, CF

One of the more interesting timber sales on Forest Society property this year is at the Emily and Theodore Hope Forest in Danbury. We're using a "seed tree cut" for part of this harvest to encourage red oak to grow.

The site is very good for red oak, producing a high percentage of quality sawlogs and veneer. It would be nice to think we could just harvest the red oak and get more back, but that doesn't usually happen unless you make some effort. The old timers used to say "Cut pine get oak, cut oak get pine." And that certainly is the case when one species populates the understory of the other. They seem to like the same sites and don't mind taking advantage of each other. However, at the Hope Forest we want to have red oak follow red oak.

Silviculture, the science, art and practice of growing trees, is very specific for each species. There are many factors to successfully regenerating a tree. It is likely we don't know all of them and of the ones we know, we can only control a few. What we know about red oak is that it needs some shade, that a high percentage of the acorns are rendered unusable every year, that the acorns need to overwinter before they will sprout and that if buried they have a much better chance of becoming seedlings. We also know that red oak doesn't fill the air with acorns every year. In fact, only one of every three to five years is considered a good year, one in which the trees will drop prodigious numbers of acorns. An acorn has to make it to welcoming ground, then survive a gauntlet of turkeys, deer, insects, fungi, excessive moisture, freezing temperatures, periods of just enough sun and others of just enough shade. Then it might, perhaps, become a tree.

So, if we want to have any chance at all of regenerating red oak, we need to make things easier for those acorns. And that's what we have tried to do at the Hope Forest. The first thing we did was to wait! We waited for a bumper seed crop year. We also waited until the market was strong for the red oak that would be removed, because the high quality deserved good prices. When those two factors coincided, the seed trees were designated by a forester to remain while the rest of the stand was marked for removal.

Photo by Wendy Weisiger.

The red oak trees still standing at the Hope Forest harvest site are seed trees whose acorns will fall on ground cleared of competition and prepped to be as amenable as possible for acorn sprouting.

The seed trees will provide additional acorns over the next few years, and their shade will shelter the expected oak seedlings on their journey upwards. During the operation, the logger skidded logs throughout the harvest area and not just on selected trails. This disturbs the maximum amount of leaf litter and turns the top layer of soil to loosen it and make it more receptive to acorns. In the process, acorns are pushed into the soil, hiding them from predators and adding a few percentage points of probability that they will sprout in the spring.

Now we'll wait again to see if our efforts produce the desired results. Mom Nature is not as predictable as we would like. She makes the rules and all we can do is play the game without knowing them all. In a few years we'll revisit the Hope Forest and do some counting in the harvest areas. The chances are pretty good we'll find red oak seedlings during that visit. But for now it's only a hope.

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

Photo by Laura Alexander.

Respecting their elders: Students from Colby Sawyer College admire an old maple during a field trip to an old-growth forest in Newbury.

Living on Forest Time

What are mere decades to a forest?

By Dave Anderson

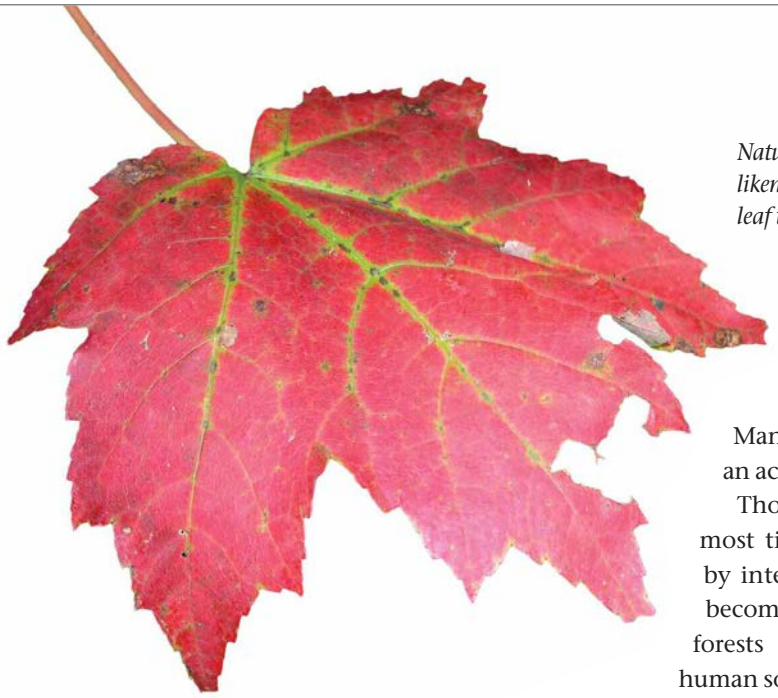
To aged, mature trees of the New Hampshire forest that surrounds us, it must seem that people live the equivalent of "dog years." That's better than insect years I guess. We humans—we race and we run, burning our limited time while ruling the planet, just as dinosaurs once did!

We live fast. Clocks and calendars run our days. Weeks and months accumulate into years and then into decades the same way fallen leaves accumulate and decay to create forest soil.

Why the rush? Perhaps we should make time to admire the slower passage of it in forests. Rather than resetting clocks to Daylight Savings or Eastern Standard times, why not try "forest time" for an hour or two? For the purposes of meditation and reflection, I can't think of a more inspiring, peaceful setting.

At age 83, my now-departed friend, the naturalist John Hay, wrote in *In the Company of Light* (1998) about trees he once knew:

> *"When I go back to my boyhood home in New Hampshire, I meet them again, spreading new branches across the path in front of me, as if to remind me that I once swung on them in passing, when they and I were young. Their time-holding relieves me of my own precarious hold on the years ahead.... What can life hold for us that*



Nature writer John Hay likened the veins in a maple leaf to the veins in his hand.

Managing forests becomes an act of faith.

Those who've spent the most time amid the trees—by interest or occupation—become instructors of what forests can and will teach human society if we slow down enough to patiently listen and observe.

Somewhere, some forester is sowing the seeds of optimism as well as uncertainty for future forests. In another 83 years—mere decades to the trees—a new generation of landowners, foresters and loggers will own and manage our state's woodlands in a future most of us will not live to see. The time we can spend today walking in the woods or working within the slow time scale of forests provides reassurance of things longer-lasting than our personal travails, longer than our lifetimes. It's humbling.

John Hay admired old trees and extolled the virtues of what we might learn from time spent among them. In his *A Beginner's Faith in Things Unseen* (1995), he suggested we might re-create ourselves in the forest or even see ourselves reflected in the architecture of a single maple leaf:

> *"I think I have the silent chemistry in me of the lands in which I grew up...roots are my own assurance of gravity and holding on. My inner clock circles with the trees as far as the skies that wheel above our house. I count on an all-pervading greenness to fix the sun. I hold my hand with its own veins and arteries up to the sunlight, and see in it the image of a leaf."*

equals the suspension of growth and time in a young tree?"

Professional foresters grow to understand the slower pace of "forest time" almost innately. The wisdom of decisions when implementing written forest management prescriptions can take many decades to be revealed in measured results. Foresters are trained by their professional experience to adopt a long view, knowing that their best work will benefit successors as yet unborn. It's a refreshing perspective. Forestry is the antithesis of instant gratification.

Tree rotations of 80 or 100 years or more in forests cannot be hastened. Growing trees takes time. Forests comprise complex aggregations of species. Even the tiniest soil samples reveal a universe of fungi and bacteria interacting with higher plants. Changing wildlife populations are vectors of seed dispersal or selective regeneration. Exotic insects and diseases affect mortality. The potential impacts of climate change are as yet unknown. Many of the foresters I've met are quick to admit how much we simply do not yet know.

Future uncertainty is the rule. Natural disturbances occur frequently. There never seems to be any absolute certainty about future stand composition and conditions. Forestry is truly as much art as it is science.

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

Photos this page by Jeff Sluder.

Left: *Atlantic white cedar swamp habitat in New Durham.*

Right: *Looking out onto Pawtuckaway Lake from the proposed conservation easement area in Nottingham.*

4 Projects, 4 Opportunities Around State

Each year, the Forest Society conserves, on average, about 6,000 acres of land that will remain unspoiled forever. We are constantly working with many partners to add those acres. Here are descriptions of four current projects that show our commitment to conserving a diversity of N.H.'s special places.

New Durham: A Chance to Conserve Imperiled Habitat

The Forest Society has an opportunity to add 38 acres of a rare habitat type to our Cooper Cedar Woods Reservation in New Durham. The tract contains Inland Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, a habitat type designated as critically imperiled in New Hampshire. White cedar swamps were once common along the East Coast but so many have been filled in or cut that they are among the rarest types of wetlands in much of their range. Only about 500 acres of White Cedar Swamp remain in New Hampshire; this type of natural community is found in saturated soils that host not only the cedars but also other uncommon plants and animals. An aquifer lies underneath more than half of the rare habitat on this tract. Protecting the land above will safeguard the local water supply below.

The New Durham Conservation Commission has pledged to cover most of the project cost of about $56,000 to protect this land, subject to approval of the project by the Board of Selectmen. The Forest Society must raise $11,000 by to cover the balance of the purchase, transaction and stewardship costs. The Forest Society will own and pay taxes on the land and add it to the Cooper Cedar Woods Reservation to likewise be managed as an ecoreserve that is open to hunting, hiking, wildlife watching and other pedestrian recreation. The addition will connect the existing Cooper Cedar Woods to the New Durham Town Forest and the state's Merrymeeting Marsh Wildlife Management Area.

Nottingham: Partnering to Protect Lakefront Land

The Forest Society and the Nottingham Conservation Commission are working to acquire a conservation easement on 95 acres of land on Pawtuckaway Lake. Once added to existing conservation lands, including the abutting Pawtuckaway State Forest, it will become part of the largest contiguous block of protected land in Southeast New Hampshire!

Thanks to the generosity of landowner Helen Fernald in offering to sell the easement for far below its market value, the easement will guarantee public pedestrian access to the land. The Nottingham Conservation Commission plans to build trails, a kiosk and small parking area along Deerfield Road to enable community access to land that the N.H. Wildlife Action Plan designates as the highest quality habitat of its type in the state.

Since this forested land drains into Pawtuckaway Lake and features wetlands and a stream called Mile Brook, protecting the land also protects water quality and a swamp that is home to black gum trees estimated to be at least 300 years old. The Nottingham Conservation Commission has committed to funding the purchase price for this easement. Now we must raise $21,000 to cover the transaction, legal and stewardship costs to bring this project to a successful finish.

Left: *The view across the Darvid Farm in Easton.*

Right: *An opening on the proposed addition to the Moose Mountains Reservation in Middleton.*

Easton: Conserving a Community Asset

More than 144 acres of forests, fields and wetlands, with the bonus of a spectacular open and unspoiled view of Kinsman Ridge from Easton Valley Road in Easton, are being conserved through the generous donation of a conservation easement to the Forest Society by Anna Darvid and her family. In order to accept the donation, we must raise $30,000 to cover the transaction and stewardship costs of the project. The Town of Easton has committed $1,500 to jumpstart the effort.

The property is a beautiful community asset, and the easement will guarantee public pedestrian access to its lush forests east of Reel Brook Road. The combination of fields, upland forest, wetlands and a segment of Reel Brook provides excellent habitat to a diversity of wildlife species. The easement will prevent development that would mar this lovely spot and will preserve the spectacular view enjoyed by drivers heading in and out of the White Mountain National Forest.

Moose Mountains: Adding 150 Acres to Reservation

Hikers, skiers, hunters and snowmobilers enjoy the views, trails and rugged terrain of the Forest Society's Moose Mountains Reservation in Middleton and Brookfield. This reservation has grown to become 2,335 acres strong since we and our partners conserved the first parcel there in 2008. Now, we have an opportunity to keep 150 more acres of this landscape open and undeveloped.

The Forest Society is working with Moose Mountains Regional Greenways to raise $361,000 to buy and steward a parcel on New Portsmouth Road in Middleton that abuts the Moose Mountains Reservation. Progress has already been made toward this goal, with individual donors providing $75,000 and the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program awarding $112,000 to the project, leaving $174,000 to raise through grants and donations.

The property is in an ideal location to provide access to the extensive trail system on the Moose Mountains Reservation, and the adjoining 1,492-acre Ellis R. Hatch Jr. Wildlife Management Area owned by N.H. Fish and Game.

If you would like to help with any of these projects, please complete the form below and mail it with your donation to the address on the form. Or, donate online at forestsociety.org. Thank you!

☐ **YES, I WANT TO HELP THE FOREST SOCIETY PROTECT FORESTS, FIELDS AND WETLANDS**

Name: _____

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☐ Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution for $_____ to support (circle one):
New Durham **Nottingham** **Easton** **Moose Mountains**

☐ 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.

Hiel Lindquist
Fitzwilliam
Member since 1998

"I was a member of the Forest Society for a number of years before I became a volunteer land steward when I retired. The Forest Society's Gap Mountain Reservation in Troy and Jaffrey is my territory as well as several miles of the Metacomet Trail that passes over the summit on its way to Grand Monadnock. Gap Mountain is popular for hikers, so the trails get heavy use, requiring constant attention and maintenance. I have always been an outdoors-type person, and the Forest Society provides a great outlet to work on the land and assist in the conservation of open space in New Hampshire. It is a pleasure to work with like-minded volunteers and Forest Society staff.

As a native of New Hampshire, I am keenly aware of what we have lost in the name of progress. My grandfather's farm along with the town center where I grew up was destroyed in the 1960s to make way for an interstate highway interchange. Most of the area of my childhood is now suburban tract housing. While some development is inevitable, the cheapest, most expeditious path of development is not always best for the long-term good of our communities. Working with the Forest Society, we can ensure that the most sensitive areas of our state are conserved before it is too late. Once open space is gone, it is gone forever."

MEMBERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

Hiel Lindquist is among the 10,000 members who helped the Forest Society protect more than one million acres in New Hampshire. To join him, use the envelope in this issue or contact Margaret Liszka at 603-224-9945.