



Saving Scamman Farm

The Southeast Land Trust, Town of Stratham, and landowners Doug and Stella Scamman have reached an agreement to permanently protect the approximately 200-acre Scamman Farm, located off Route 108, Raeder Drive, and River Road in Stratham. The proposed acquisition of a conservation easement by the Town of Stratham was presented for a public hearing on Monday, May 4.

Under the terms of the proposed agreement, the Town of Stratham will purchase a conservation easement on approximately 200 acres of Scamman Farm for its appraised value of \$2.38 million. The appraisal, completed in late December 2008, was completed by a certified appraiser.

Funding for the acquisition is proposed to come from

Scammans for their willingness to proceed."

"The conservation of my family's land has long been a goal of mine," noted Doug Scamman. "Farming has always been something for which New Hampshire is known and that people admire as they travel and vacation here. There is nothing that could please me more than knowing that our family and our town will guarantee that future generations will enjoy the pastoral view and agriculture activities forever."

"Scamman Farm is a special place in Stratham, a scenic, productive landscape in a rapidly developing region," says Brian Hart, Executive Director of the Southeast Land Trust.

"We believe it is a place worthy of conserving through this public investment, and welcome the opportunity to work with the Town and the landowner to facilitate the protection of this special place."

For nearly the past year, the Trust has worked closely with the family and the Stratham Conservation Commission



The Southeast Land Trust facilitated the negotiation of an agreement to conserve the 200-acre Scamman Farm, pictured here. COMPOSITE PHOTO BY BRIAN HART.

the Town Open Space Bond and/or Conservation Fund, as well as public grant sources. The Town and Trust plan to apply for a grant from the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program.

"Since voters at Town Meeting first authorized our open space bond in 2002, the Conservation Commission has sought to preserve open space and agricultural land. We are thrilled that a proposed agreement has been reached," explains Patricia Elwell, chair of the Stratham Conservation Commission. "We want to thank our partner, the Southeast Land Trust, who negotiated the proposed terms for consideration by the Town, and the

and Ad Hoc Land Protection Committee to negotiate an agreement for the property's permanent protection.

Scamman Farm includes more than 160 acres of highly productive farm soils, of which approximately 40 acres are used for crop and hay production. The property augments existing conservation land, as it is adjacent to the 30-acre Town-owned Zarnowski property on the Squamscott River and includes 150 feet on the tidal river. One of the terms of the agreement is the right of the Town of Stratham to locate trails connecting the Zarnowski property to River Road and Raeder Drive through Scamman Farm. The property includes 240 feet

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GET Out & About

Field trips are free and open to the public. Registration is required – call 603.778.6088 or e-mail kmccormack@seltnh.org. Directions and site details will be provided to registrants.

Your Water, Your Wallet, Your Watershed Conference

June 13 • 8am to 4pm • Nottingham Town Hall

Fourteen towns share a common resource – the waters of the Lamprey River Watershed. Join your neighbors for a discussion on why working together across town boundaries makes sense for protecting our water. Learn what concerns residents most about their water supplies and what threatens our water in the future. For more information including registration details, visit www.lrwa-nh.org.

The Coldwaters of Wednesday Hill Brook

Saturday, June 20 • 9 to 11am • Lee

Danna Truslow will lead this fun and interesting hike along a coldwater stream and tributary to the Lamprey River in Lee. Danna is pursuing her Master's degree in hydrology with a specialization in ecohydrology. She is a past board member and executive director of the Seacoast Land Trust. Learn about her recent research, the unique geology and hydrology of the stream and about what keeps this cold stream cold. Wear your high boots! Easy to moderately difficult.

Historic Footsteps Along the Pawtuckaway

by Phil Primack, easement donor and Pawtuckaway landowner

Mary E. Folsom Blair would be thrilled that because of Land Trust action, future generations will be able to walk the paths, hear the waters, and swat the bugs on land in West Epping once owned by her and her Folsom ancestors.

Blair, a longtime teacher, 4-H leader, conservationist (before the term was coined), active Quaker, local historian and writer, was born in 1881 and spent most of her 92 years on what is now mostly forested property near where the Pawtuckaway River meets the Lamprey. I purchased the former Blair property a year after Mary's death in 1973 and, in 1998, donated an easement to the Trust for most of it and an adjoining piece along the Pawtuckaway. Last year, the Trust purchased the parcel directly across the river, as well as another riverfront property. Combined, the actions move the Trust much closer to its goal of conserving nearly two miles of shoreline and 400 acres along what it calls the Pawtuckaway River Corridor.

Blair was ahead of her time in many ways, including teaching through what would later be called the open classroom method. Using her small schoolhouse in West Epping – where she “invented” the hot lunch program, cooking meals on the wood stove for Depression-era students – she walked generations of school children into the woods to teach them about nature and life. The walks included treks through miles of fields and woods and roads to Arcady, her small cabin at Pawtuckaway Lake, where she would teach her young charges to swim. In a 1914 entry in her journal, she wrote of that *“winding woodsy way, with its arched lanes of shadow and its play of sunlight and the alluring paths on either side, and never a house or sign of folks to be seen. And at the willows where the brook first crosses and tinkles down into that ferny mossy dell that looks like a veritable haunt of nymphs – but alas it is inhabited by the bloodthirsty mosquitoes.”*

Leonard “Bud” Purington was one of Mary's former students in the early 1930s. A spry 88 years old who still operates a small saw mill, he recalls those walks through what was then mostly fields and pastures as a life's highlight. “I guess we did walk pretty far, but we never noticed, because Mrs. Blair never stopped teaching us the whole way.”

As a youth, Bud worked for a while at the former Folsom Mill on the Lamprey River, the site of which is now also protected by the Trust and abuts the Town's Mary E. Blair Park, a legacy to Blair's love of children and the outdoors.

I keep looking for places about which “the woman known on a time as Mary E” described in her journals. During the heavy snows of this winter, I put on my own snow shoes to visit one of them she described in a 1904 entry:



Mary Blair

“There has been enough snow for my snow-shoes only once this winter, but that once was beautiful. I visited the woods back of Mr. Dean's where the hemlocks stood so thickly and were so weighted down with snow that it seemed like some dim mysterious pagan temple whose gods might whisper in my ear some message. I caught myself listening for a voice, and I heard – oh, well. I heard that voice of which the poet speaks ‘Whilst from all around, earth, and her waters, and the depths of air comes a still voice.’ It is in the heart of the woods where that ‘still voice is clearest.”

And where it will continue to be heard forever. ■

Annual Cookout & Conservation Celebration to Feature Ecologist Tom Wessels

The Board of Directors of the Southeast Land Trust invite you to the inaugural Annual Cookout & Conservation Celebration on Saturday, June 6th at Verdant Pastures in Epping.

The Annual Cookout and Conservation Celebration will begin at 10am and will feature Tom Wessels, a well known author, ecologist, and educator. His presentation will explore the importance of connection to community and place and how land protection can serve as a vehicle to accomplish both.

Annual Cookout & Conservation Celebration

Saturday, June 6, 2009 • 10am
Verdant Pastures Farm, Epping

As our culture has charged forward, our connections to community and place have been compromised, leaving people more isolated. If we are to reforge these critical connections, we will need land that can be accessed by the public as well as programs that link people to that land. Tom is a core faculty member of Antioch New England University (ANE) and is an ecologist and founding director of ANE's master's degree program in conservation biology. His books include: *Reading the Forested Landscape*, *The Granite Landscape*, *Untamed Vermont*, and *The Myth of Progress: Toward a Sustainable Future*.



Tom Wessels, author, ecologist and educator.

In addition, we will recognize the landowners and communities that partnered to conserve special spaces in 2008, outline our goals for 2009 and beyond, and enjoy a barbecue lunch served by the Board. The afternoon will feature a two-hour guided walk by Mr. Wessels, during which he will share his observations of the Pawtuckaway River landscape.

Verdant Pastures, the host of the cookout, is a new location for Farmsteads of New England, a non-profit organization which provides housing, jobs, and recreational opportunities to adults with developmental disabilities. This scenic and productive 80 acre farm is nestled on the banks of the Lamprey River on Route 27. The Annual Cookout costs \$10 (children under 12 are free!).

Pre-registration is required. Reserve your spot by contacting Karen McCormack at 778.6088 or info@seltnh.org. ■

Eat Local and Save Land!

Did you know that beef, eggs, pumpkins, apples, strawberries, and even elk and goat are raised right here in Rockingham and Strafford Counties? Thanks to Seacoast Harvest, a new guide put together by Seacoast Eat Local and Slowfood Seacoast, you can learn what produce is grown by which farm, and learn about the hours and locations of farm stands and farmer's

markets in southeastern New Hampshire. This year the Southeast Land Trust is one of many sponsors of this extensive guide. To download a copy, visit www.seacoastharvest.org (expected to be available by June). You can also search their farm database. Now you can enjoy local, fresh, and nutritious food – and help keep local farms growing crops, not houses! ■

Conservation in Brief

In January, the land trust and Town of Epping partnered to acquire an 11-acre property at the confluence of the Lamprey River and Pawtuckaway River. This floodplain forestland had been for sale for more than a year; fortunately, the landowner agreed to sell it for its appraised value. Funding was provided by the Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC) and the town. The town owns the land subject to a conservation easement held by the land trust. "This partnership is a prime example of how the Town conservation fund benefits the members of our community," said Greg Tillman of the Epping Conservation Commission. "The Town benefits through the protection of our drinking water, enhancing our flood protection, and providing open space for recreational and educational opportunities for our residents – all goals outlined in our *Town Master Plan*."

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Saving Scamman Farm, continued...

of frontage on Route 108 and 500 feet on River Road.

Every conservation easement is unique, with the landowner retaining certain rights while ceding others. The terms of the easements are set forth in legally binding language and are restrictive in perpetuity. In the case of the proposed Scamman easement, the Scammans will retain the right to farm the land and harvest timber. They have agreed to grant public access to the property for traditional, non-motorized recreational activities, including hiking, hunting, and sledding. During the agricultural growing season or timber harvesting, the easement would limit access to the fields on the property so as to prevent damage to crops.

In addition, the Scammans have generously agreed to provide the Town of Stratham with the option to withdraw groundwater from the property for a future

Town public water supply.

The conservation easement will be held by the land trust, with the town holding an executory interest. An executory interest allows the Town to ensure that the primary easement holder, in this case the Southeast Land Trust, is monitoring the property and enforcing the terms of the conservation easement. Should the land trust fail to do so, the Town has the right to enforce the easement.

"This proposed easement is consistent with our past approach to land protection, where we partner with a local qualified conservation organization. Doing so safeguards the Town's investment in this property without requiring us to do the annual monitoring and enforcement," explained Laura Prescott, member of the Stratham Ad Hoc Land Protection Committee.

For updates on this exciting project, visit our website at www.seltnh.org. ■



Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire, please call 603.778.6088 or e-mail info@seltnh.org.

PO Box 675, Exeter, NH 03833

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Website: www.seltnh.org

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Annual Cookout & Conservation Celebration to Feature Ecologist Tom Wessels

See page 3 for details.



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