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Welcome!

A Gift Inspired by Others

By John Richards

Putting land into conservation can be a lengthy process, so it's best to begin planning early. For Ruth and Victor McElheny, who just donated 27 acres to SELT along the Salmon Falls River in Rollinsford and Dover, this planning began in 2001. The McElhenys, whose ties to the Seacoast are deep, bought this beautiful spot in 1971 as a retreat for weekends and vacations. According to Victor, there was a clear aim among many local landowners to limit development and foster conservation. Included among those conservation-minded neighbors was Ashton Hallett, the founder of Strafford Rivers Conservancy. His family owned Three Rivers Farm, and the McElhenys purchased the land from them. This conservation ethos was embraced by the McElhenys, long-time members of the Conservancy and now SELT, and also broadly envisioned in South Berwick's 1991 Salmon Falls River Greenbelt Plan. As a result, much of the shoreline along both sides of the tidally-influenced portion of the Salmon Falls River remains markedly undeveloped.

The McElheny property consists of forested uplands, a 1,050-foot riparian corridor along Garvin Brook and 1,000 feet of frontage along a large salt marsh abutting the Salmon Falls River. These features alone make this gift singularly important. A wide diversity of wildlife use this land for food, cover and water. In addition, this property serves as part of a migration route and stopping point between habitats for a variety of birds and other animals. A recent report for the Great Bay watershed indicates that the natural land cover and buffer along Garvin Brook is an important filter, helping to prevent polluted surface run-off and erosion from entering the Great Bay Estuary. The salt marsh is also a highly productive nursery for many salt water species and provides valuable cover for waterfowl and shorebirds. And as sea level rises, this section of Garvin Brook will provide space for inland salt marsh migration. Thus the McElheny's foresight and vision for conserving the land will allow for this important ecosystem to change as our climate and sea levels change.

continued on page 7

Above: SELT thanks the amazing generosity of Victor and Ruth McElheny who donated nearly 27 acres to SELT as an addition to the existing Franklin Preserve in Dover and Rollinsford. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

Wildlife, Water & Woods: A Summer Recap

Our Land Conservation team has been busy finishing several important projects across our service area – including lands in Barrington, Dover, Rollinsford, Londonderry, Derry, and Nottingham. All of these projects provide significant protection for wildlife habitat and water quality, as well as public access.



Trail users and wildlife enthusiasts take heart – the Barr property is conserved!
PHOTO BY JOHN WALLACE

Barr property along the Isinglass River in Barrington

This parcel is 55 acres and includes 4,971 feet along a section of the Isinglass River known to New Hampshire Fish & Game (NHFG) as important for its native fishery. The easement on this land allows for the continued public use and Town maintenance of the popular Barrington Trail, which extends for well over a mile on the property and continues for several more miles to the Town ball fields on Smoke Street. The Town contributed significant funding toward this project and worked with SELT to secure several grants. Other funding partners included NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Aquatic Resources Mitigation Program (ARM), and Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (GBRPP).

Another link in the Pawtuckaway to Great Bay Greenway

This 66-acre land acquisition on Ledge Farm Road in Nottingham builds

continued on page 3

SELT Honors Exemplary Stewardship of the Land

On June 14th 2017, SELT members gathered at Alnoba in Kensington for our annual meeting to celebrate the conservation successes of the past year and to recognize SELT partners who helped conserve more than 1,800 acres in 2016. SELT presented The Ashton Hallett Award for stewardship, along with two other awards.

The Ashton Hallett Award was established to honor the original founder of the Strafford Rivers Conservancy (which merged with the Southeast Land Trust in 2014). This year SELT's Board decided to use this award to recognize the exemplary stewardship of land. The 2017 Ashton Hallett Award recipients were **Kate and Jeff Donald**.

Kate and Jeff were nominated because of their stewardship of Stout Oak Farm, the former Creamery Brook Farm in Brentwood. Nearly five years ago, they became the owners of the farm after working with SELT and the Town to permanently conserve it. Since then, they have worked tirelessly to transform the farm into a thriving and diverse community-supported farm growing veggies, fruits, and eggs. As farmers, they are exemplary stewards, asking for help from the Natural Resources Conservation Services and others to implement best



From L to R: Joan Pratt (SELT's Board Secretary), Kate and Jeff Donald, and Deborah Goard (SELT's Easement Stewardship Director). COURTESY PHOTO

management practices, control invasive species, and try new crops, all the while growing food for their community. They are model landowners, responsive to SELT's annual monitoring requests, and managing their land consistent with the

restrictions of the conservation easement. Beyond this, they have hosted field trips and other events to open their farm to the public.

Kate has also supported SELT through her participation in our Visioning Committee for SELT's Burley Farms, where her extensive knowledge as the prior tenant farmer has informed the possibilities for SELT's future use of the farm. Both are engaged members of their community, with Kate serving on the board of Seacoast Eat Local and Jeff serving as chair of the Brentwood Conservation Commission. Thank you Kate and Jeff for your exemplary stewardship and community engagement!

The other two awards presented were The Founders' Award and The Jack Heath Award.

The Founders' Award for Volunteer of the Year recognizes the individual whose volunteer efforts match or exceed the drive, skill, and perseverance demonstrated by SELT's founding Board members. The recipient of this year's Founders' Award was **Sherri Nixon** of Exeter, who has been involved with SELT for more than a decade and has served as a committed volunteer in our office since 2013. Sherri has tirelessly supported SELT's office needs, from entering auction items for the Fall Fundraiser to scanning literally thousands of conservation project documents! Thank you Sherri!

The Jack Heath Award was established to honor Jack Heath, the original founder of the Rockingham Land Trust. It is presented annually to a person or organization for vision, leadership, and enduring support of conservation in southeastern New Hampshire. This year, SELT selected the **City of Rochester** as the recipient of this award. The City, through its volunteers serving on the Conservation Commission to its professional planning staff to its City Council, has been an exemplary partner to achieve our shared goals. SELT is now working with the City to complete the conservation of the Gauthier Farm, the third project with the City since the 2014 merger.

Congratulations and thank you to Kate and Jeff Donald, Sherri Nixon, and the City of Rochester!

Get Outside this Thanksgiving Day

A Chat with Exeter Run Club

This Fall, SELT is honored to be a beneficiary of the second annual Thanks for Giving 5K & 10K Family Run/Walk Road Race put on by Exeter Run Club and held at the Exeter Area YMCA on Thanksgiving Day!

We had a chat with Exeter Run Club's Co-Race Directors Deidre McCarty and Anne Torrez to learn more about ERC's mission and how this event came to be! **See page 6 for more race details or register at www.sdimca.org/events.**

What is the mission of Exeter Run Club? How can people learn more?

Exeter Run Club is a group of local running enthusiasts based in Exeter. We started as a small group of people who had a love of running and helping each other become better runners. As time went on we wanted to do more, to give back. Our mission is to promote running, friendship, and community giving through road and trail races. ERC was officially founded in 2013

and received 501c3 status in 2016. It informally began as a group of friends who decided to run to the beach. Needless to say it grew from there!

We want to stress that ERC is a run club for ALL levels. All sizes, shapes, ages and paces are welcomed and encouraged. We want others to love running as much as we do and to form lasting friendships as a result.

Learn more or join at www.exeterrunclub.com/membership.

What inspired this event?

During the process of becoming a nonprofit, we learned the YMCA had been playing with the idea of a Thanksgiving race. We wanted to help our community too and organize an event that would bring families out to participate together and allow more competitive runners to join in. This all came together in the Thanks for Giving race!



Members of Exeter Run Club enjoy a post-race huddle. PHOTO COURTESY OF ERC.

Why choose SELT as a race beneficiary?

Many of us are trail runners as well and being in nature and combining a sport we love is the best reason to trail run. SELT sets a very high standard for trail stewardship, conservation and promoting family recreation. We have had a vision of partnering since we first formed and this is a great way to help SELT advance their mission.

A Summer Recap *continued from page 2*

upon the work SELT has been doing for many years in the Kennard Hill and Pawtuckaway River Corridor in Epping and Nottingham. The Zanard tract abuts the over 200 acres conserved with the Sweetser Family, which abuts the 1,130-acre Harveys' Kennard Hill Forest conservation easement that SELT secured last year. The Zanard tract includes an 11-acre beaver pond and stream system



The Zanard tract is a 66-acre addition within the Pawtuckaway to Great Bay Greenway. PHOTO BY MARK WEST

which includes important habitat for threatened wildlife species. Funding partners included NHDES ARM, Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetlands Reserve Program, and GBRPP.

Second phase of "Expanding the Musquash" in Londonderry

Earlier this summer SELT completed the first phase of the "Expanding the Musquash" by partnering with NHFG to conserve the Mathes properties. The final part of this project was just completed, conserving the Doyle property in Londonderry. This 26-acre easement enhances and expands upon the over 1,400 acres of conserved land in the Musquash Conservation Area, which abuts another 600 acres of protected land in Litchfield. In addition to NHFG, funding partners included the NHDES Water Supply Land Protection Program, and LCHIP. The Doyle tract is important due to its water resources, because the property's streams and associated wetlands are part of the Watts

Brook watershed, which discharges into the Merrimack River near the intake for the Pennichuck Water Works. The property is also of high value for certain threatened wildlife species.

Watershed Protection and Trails in Derry

Public water supply lands continue to be a priority for SELT and no more so than in the Town of Derry, where SELT completed one of two projects to protect the Town's water supply. Derry now owns the 63-acre Caras parcel subject to a SELT easement. This forestland includes a large prime wetland and overlies the wellhead protection area for a public well. With a 1.5-mile network of trails, the public can enjoy the land not only for clean drinking water but public recreation.

For the remainder of 2017, SELT anticipates a dozen more closings on priority conservation projects. Stay up-to-date at www.selnh.org!



Saving a Secret: SELT seeks final funds for Stonehouse Forest

A secret lies in Barrington, nestled in forested hills, hiding behind “No Trespassing” signs dotting its boundary. These 1,500 acres were once slated to become a private exotic game hunting reserve for an exclusive few, posted against public access for decades. The secret landscape is the proposed “Stonehouse Forest”, an undeveloped area of forests, streams, ponds, and wetlands adjacent to the popular Stonehouse Pond (owned by SELT and managed in partnership with the NH Fish and Game Department – NHFG). ***If we fail to acquire this land, it will be sold and developed.*** Conceptual plans show 350 possible house lots with 8+ miles of new roads, fragmenting these unspoiled lands. The time to act is now.

What makes Stonehouse Forest so special?

This is SELT’s largest conservation project to date. 1,500 acres is a huge amount of land – it is one of the largest undeveloped spaces in the area. Clean water begins in these unfragmented woods with natural ponds, bogs and five miles of streams. In fact, Stonehouse Forest is the headwaters for Mendums Pond, eventually flowing to the Lamprey River and Great Bay. The majestic Round Pond and Little Round Pond found within the Stonehouse Forest are natural undammed ponds that resemble those found in New Hampshire’s North Country. Wildlife thrive here, such as reclusive turtles and bobcats, migrating waterfowl like black duck, and our state’s largest mammals like moose and bear.

Behind all of the “No Trespassing” signs is a woods road network with beautiful stone retaining walls that afford easy access for recreation and forest management. Under SELT’s ownership, new signs will invite the public to enjoy a trail network for hiking and exploring the Stonehouse Forest.

If successful, SELT will own the property, managing it for wildlife habitat, water quality, and public outdoor recreation. The NHFG and Town of Barrington will hold a conservation easement on the Stonehouse Forest, ensuring its conservation goals and public access are sustained.

Supporters will recall we first wrote about this opportunity in our winter 2015 issue of *SELT Views*. Now, nearly two years later, we are poised to complete this significant conservation project. With a 2017 closing required by our sales agreement, we announced in July that we were seeking the final \$175,000 to save and steward the Stonehouse Forest. Since that announcement, we have been awestruck at the response – with SELTies and area residents contributing more than \$65,000. Thank you to the more than 150 donors who contributed to date! **As we go to press, we have just \$110,000 left to raise toward this \$3.45 million effort.**

Help save this treasure with your gift today! If you’ve been waiting to make an impact, now is the time – please donate today using the enclosed envelope or online at www.seltnh.org. Visit our website for updates on our progress. And THANK YOU to the many donors who have already made generous gifts toward this grand vision!

Above: A young girl enjoys the serene beauty of Stonehouse Forest while exploring the woods, trails, and streams with her family. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

Right: Map of the proposed Stonehouse Forest.

Help
save this
treasure with
your gift today!

Please donate today using the enclosed envelope or online at www.seltnh.org. Visit our website for updates on our progress.

For the Greater Good

Couple Pledges Gift of Land if SELT acquires Stonehouse Forest

John and Cindy Cafasso first heard about the “Stonehouse Forest” reading an article in the local newspaper. Intrigued by the idea that a conservation organization was hoping to acquire two and a half square miles of undeveloped forestland in their hometown of Barrington, they attended a Board of Selectmen’s meeting to learn more.

That’s when they realized the proposed Stonehouse Forest abutted their home and adjoining land they owned. Waking up the next morning, they both had the same idea: “Let’s help SELT make this piece of protected land a little bigger. Let’s give our land to SELT.”

Coming to such a magnanimous decision was borne from 33 years of appreciating the quiet solitude the forest had offered them. In 1984 they purchased this approved but undeveloped house lot across from their current home. As John explains, “We bought it for several reasons; as an investment that we may someday sell, as a gift to our son if he were to want to build there, to harvest some firewood, and to prevent development.”

Over time on this land the Cafassos have been witness to owls, black bears, and even a moose. “We came to enjoy looking across the street and seeing the untouched forest,” recalls Cindy, especially so in the fall when the sun would bathe their view with a rich golden hue just before sunset.

Last spring the Cafassos reached out to SELT to share their goals. After a site walk and discussions, they signed a pledge agreement to donate their 2.4 acres to SELT with one condition: SELT must successfully acquire the adjacent 1,500-acre *continued on page 7*

“Knowing now that our land will be a part of something much bigger, to be enjoyed by all, to be protected from rampant development, to have a forest conserved, to be home to wildlife; it has made us content knowing that we have done something for the greater good.”

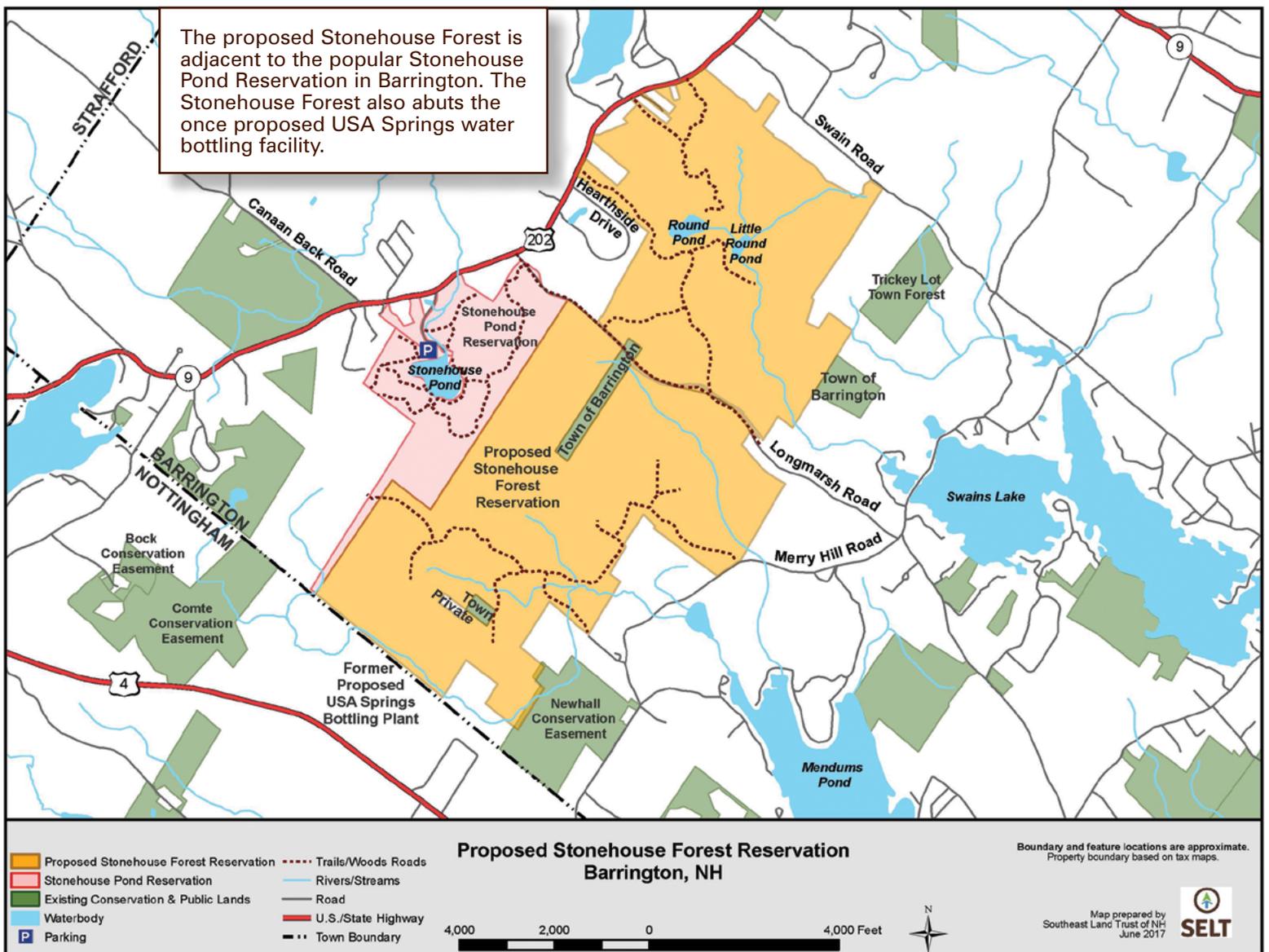




PHOTO CREDIT: KATE WILCOX

Upcoming Events

For a complete calendar and more event details, please visit www.seltnh.org

Registration for SELT’s field trips is easier than ever through our website. **For a complete calendar, and to register, visit www.seltnh.org (“News and Events” tab).** Registration closes at Noon on the day prior to the event. Suggested donation to attend SELT’s outreach events is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. All donations benefit our public outreach programs. We hope you’ll come along!

Back Channel Islands Kayak Adventure

September 23 · 9am–12pm · Portsmouth

SELT and Portsmouth Kayak Adventures are teaming up to offer you a fun and informative kayak trip through New Castle’s beautiful and unspoiled Back Channel Islands. Bring your own kayak or contact Portsmouth Kayak Adventures ahead of time at 603-559-1000 to arrange for a rental.

Bodwell Farm Tour

October 14 · 10am–12pm · Kensington

Join farmer and landowner, Hal Bodwell, and SELT Conservation Project Manager, Jeremy Lougee on a property tour of Bodwell Farm. Meet the happy cows, walk the lush pastures, tour the historic barns, and meet the hardworking folks that have kept this farm thriving for six generations.



SAVE THE DATE!

Fall Foliage Fundraiser

October 21 · 5–9:30pm · Abenaki Country Club, Rye Beach

Step right up for SELT’s annual Fall Foliage Fundraiser! This year we’ll gather at the Abenaki Country Club in Rye Beach. “Harvest Fair” is the evening’s theme featuring live music, fair games, delicious food, and over 100 unique items in the silent and live auctions.

Stonehouse Pond Trail Work Day

October 28 · 9am–3pm · Barrington

All hands on deck! Get outside and help us improve the trail network at Stonehouse Pond. More details online!

Explore the Horsburgh Forest

November 4 · 9am–12pm · Fremont

Walk one of SELT’s soon-to-be properties, the Horsburgh Forest in Fremont. This outstanding 343-acre managed forest has a great network of trails and is rich with wetlands and a diversity of wildlife habitats. Wetland scientist Mark West and SELT Property Manager Phil Auger will be our tour leaders.

Thanks for Giving 5K & 10K Family Run/Walk Road Race

November 23 · Exeter Area YMCA, Exeter

Start your Thanksgiving morning off right with the “Thanks for Giving” 5K and 10K family run/walk road race. Kid’s Fun Runs (12 and under) will start at 7:45 am. 5K/10K Race will start at 8:30am. 10K runners will do a double loop of the 5K course. Course will run through the beautiful town of Exeter. This will be a flat and fast course! Proceeds will benefit the Exeter Area YMCA’s Youth Programs, Exeter Run Club, and SELT! Register at www.sdymca.org/events.

SAVE THE DATE!

2018 Wild & Scenic Film Festival

Friday, April 20, 2018 · 7pm · The Music Hall Historic Theater, Portsmouth NH

Mark your calendars for our 8th annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival. A beautiful outdoor film experience in a magnificent historic theater!

For the Greater Good *continued from page 5*

Stonehouse Forest. The Town's assessed value of this land is \$60,000, a remarkably generous donation.

When compared to the larger Stonehouse Forest project, these 2.4 acres are small. But as any realtor will tell you, location matters. With nearly 700 feet of frontage on Swain Road, the Cafasso family land offers another potential access point to the Stonehouse Forest for SELT's future management needs. It also includes a buffer to (and a portion of) a larger wetlands complex. And its conservation limits the potential negative impacts of development on the site, particularly disturbance of wildlife habitat.

When asked why they decided to make this gift, John thought for a moment, and explained: "We have advanced in age, and that brings to mind what kind of legacy you want to leave behind. If we did nothing, we knew that our building lot would someday be sold and developed. But we also realized, that by donating it to SELT, it would be part of the Stonehouse Forest and protected long after we were gone. Knowing now that our land will be a part of something much bigger, to be enjoyed by all, to be protected from rampant development, to have a forest conserved, to be home to wildlife; it has made us content knowing that we have done something for the greater good."



John and Cindy Cafasso are pledging a gift of land adjacent to Stonehouse Forest if SELT is successful in acquiring these magnificent 1,500 acres. COURTESY PHOTO

A Gift Inspired by Others *continued from page 1*

What makes this parcel even more special is that it abuts SELT's 47-acre Franklin Reserve, creating a nearly 75-acre block of conserved uplands and estuarine habitat along the Salmon Falls River. The impact of the McElheny's donation is magnified by the large amount of land that has already been protected on both sides of the river. As you walk along the upland trails out toward the Salmon Falls River, it's nice to reflect on the foresight, hard work and generosity that go into conserving our wild places. In the rapidly developing Seacoast, natural landscapes seldom just happen. It takes planning. And for Ruth and Victor McElheny, their generous donation was sixteen years in the making.

Many thanks to the 2017 Wild & Scenic Film Festival sponsors!

PLATINUM



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Churchill's Garden Center
Northland Forest Products

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Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact SELT, please call **603-778-6088** or email info@seltnh.org.

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Website: www.seltnh.org

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HIKE IT. SAVE IT.

Wildlife, Water & Woods: A Summer Recap
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**For the Greater Good: Couple Pledges Gift of Land if SELT
acquires Stonehouse Forest**
see page 5

Your Comments Welcome! SELT Seeks Renewal of Accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

SELT is pleased to announce we are applying for renewal of accreditation with The Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This Commission is an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance and conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. Accreditation recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. SELT has been an accredited land trust since 2013.

A public comment period is now open. SELT encourages you to submit your comments about our work directly to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how SELT complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards please visit:

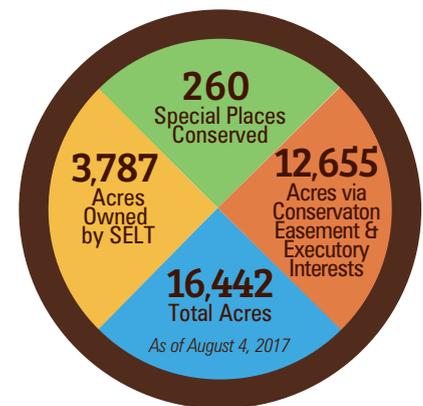
www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on SELT's application will be most useful by **October 1, 2017**.
Thank you!



Land Conservation by the numbers



A Mark of Distinction

The accreditation seal **AFFIRMS** national quality standards are met.



- ✓ SOUND FINANCES
- ✓ ETHICAL CONDUCT
- ✓ RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE
- ✓ LASTING STEWARDSHIP

www.landtrustaccreditation.org