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A Full Circle of Conservation

By Linda McGivern, Board Member

My husband Ben and I were thirtysomethings with small children when Marion “Robin” Aikman first materialized on our doorstep with a handful of papers delineating a plan to conserve land in her beloved Rollinsford.

We had only just recently arrived in Rollinsford, the lucky/stupid high bidders on an auction property that everyone recognized from its rolling fields and seven-acre pond, but that no one really wanted to buy. It was a “fixer-upper” (and please apply the most extreme definition of that term when picturing the house and its environs).

When Robin showed up in her role as a Strafford Rivers Conservancy co-founder and board member to talk about land conservation, it was kind of like a space creature had just landed in her saucer-like craft and asked us to donate our property to the martians.

We were young. We had just poured a relative fortune, by young people’s standards, into moving a very ugly and unlivable black hole for money 1,200 feet away from busy Roberts Road. After this move, the whole house still required renovation that would take another 15 years!

Pretty much the very last thing we were thinking about on that summer day in 1998 was donating our property to the land trust, despite Robin’s obvious passion for the cause.

Even at that time, Robin was not a stranger to us. We had known her for many years through our friendship with the Hallett family

“I am here to report that it feels really good to offer up a signature vista for the enjoyment of not just our family, but for all.”

—Linda McGivern

and Strafford Rivers Conservancy’s co-founder Ashton Hallett. We regularly traveled the beautiful roads of Rollinsford that snaked along the many hundreds of Robin’s donated conservation acres. She is a Rollinsford institution. For that reason, we did not send her away like so many pamphlet-wielding door-to-door salesmen. We listened politely to her conservation pitch and

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Get Outside on National Trails Day!

HIKE IT. SAVE IT.

Hikers across the nation will be lacing up their boots on Saturday, June 4, to celebrate National Trails Day. Here in New Hampshire, SELT will lead two trips with access to scenic rivers, wetlands, vernal pools, and outdoor adventure. (See Powwow River Woodlands and Stonehouse Forest for details.)

If you can't make those trips, SELTies are welcome to visit the trails on other SELT's properties on your own. Trail guides are now available for four properties.

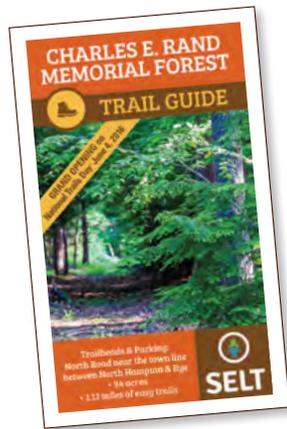
Stop by SELT to pick up your trail guides, or download guides online at www.selnh.org.

Powwow River Woodlands: Enjoy a leisurely paddle on the Powwow River in South Hampton. Launch your boat just a short walk (0.2 miles) through our seven acres of woodland.

Charles E. Rand Memorial Forest: Visitors can choose from three short trails on relatively flat, easy terrain. The trail head is located near the town line between North Hampton and Rye on South/North Road.

Tucker & French Family Forest: More than 5.1 miles of trails are available for hikers on 589 acres that cross over from Kingston into Danville and Brentwood.

Piscassic Greenway: With more than 440 protected acres, the Piscassic Greenway is a one of SELT's largest properties. Bring the whole family to explore more than 3.5 miles of trails in Newfields.



Grand Openings—Celebrate New Trails!

National Trails Day

Powwow River Woodlands

Saturday, June 4 · 10am ·
Trailhead: Jewell Street,
South Hampton

Get out your kayak or canoe and enjoy a slow meandering journey on the scenic Powwow River on June 4th. Float upstream to the 370-acre Woodsom Farm in Amesbury, or downstream to Lake Gardner. Join us for a ribbon cutting and paddle on the Powwow.

Charles E. Rand Memorial Forest

Date & time TBD ·
Trailhead: North Road,
North Hampton

Join the Rand family and SELT to celebrate the official grand opening of 1.2 miles of new trails on this SELT property in North Hampton and Rye! Forester Charles Moreno will do a guided tour of the forest, discussing how the Rand's stewardship of this land is being continued by SELT.

Kimball Reserve

Date & time TBD ·
Trailhead: Pickpocket
Road, Exeter

After a ceremony thanking Martha Pennell for her gift of this land, enjoy a walk on the new trails and connect to the historic Jolly Rand Trail to expand your hike.



PHOTO CREDIT: JOSH LENT



Our public outreach events are generously sponsored by ReVision Energy!

Learn more about your options for solar at www.revisionenergy.com or call 603.679.1777.



Upcoming Events

For a complete calendar of events, please visit www.seltnh.org

We request registration for all events so please let us know you're coming by emailing register@seltnh.org. Suggested donation to attend SELT's outreach events is \$5 per person or \$10 per family. We hope you'll join us!

Conservation Celebration at SELT's Annual Meeting

Wednesday, June 1 · 6–8pm · Flag Hill Winery

Come celebrate the more than 730 acres of farms and forests, wetlands and habitat conserved in 2015 at the beautiful Flag Hill Winery, located on one of SELT's own conservation easements. Enjoy appetizers while taking in the incredible view. \$10 per adult, \$5 per child ages 7–15 (children 6 and under are free). Please reserve your spot by Friday, May 27. www.flaghill.com

National Trails Day Saturday, June 4

Grand Opening: Powwow River Woodlands

10am · South Hampton

See page 2 for details and more grand opening events!

Tour of Stonehouse Forest

9am · Barrington

Explore old growth trees, like the Black Gum tree. Covers steep terrain.

Hike at Harvey Forest

9–11am · Epping

Meet in Epping at the end of French Road to explore this beautiful property.

Get more details on our website and celebrate National Trails Day!

Book Signing with Author of *Balanced and Barefoot*

Thursday, June 9 · 5–7pm · SELT Office, 6 Center Street, Exeter

In partnership with Water Street Books, SELT welcomes author Angela Hanscom to discuss her new book about how outdoor play and the unrestricted freedom of movement are vital for children's

cognitive and physical development and growth, along with tons of fun.

Flatbread Benefit

Tuesday, June 14 · 5–9pm ·

138 Congress Street, Portsmouth

Join us for an evening of great food, and support our conservation work with your pizza order (take-out orders count too)! Flatbread Portsmouth will donate \$3.50 of each large flatbread and \$1.75 of each small flatbread to SELT. We hope to see you there!

Back Channel Islands Paddle

Saturday, June 25 · 9:30am–Noon · Portsmouth Kayak Adventures, 185 Wentworth Road, 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 discounted rental. There is a \$5 put-in fee for all boats.

Wildflower Walk

Saturday, July 16 · 9am · Location TBD

Enjoy a summer walk to explore local wildflowers with Patty Laughlin from Lorax Landscaping.

Family-friendly Fairy & Gnome House Building Workshop

Saturday, July 23 · 10am–Noon · Burley Farm, Epping

Join SELT staff member, Dani Christopher, and experienced fairy house builder, Sofie, in a Fairy and Gnome house building workshop. Fairy houses are made out of mostly natural materials like sticks, rocks, bark, acorns and pinecones. Bring extra materials to decorate your house like fake flowers or

colored stones and a shoe box to serve as a base for your house.

Margaritas Exeter Noche Mexicana

Thursday, July 28 · 5pm

Dine out and support SELT! Margaritas in Exeter will donate 20 percent of all pre-tax, food and beverage purchases to SELT. Gracias!

Salmon Falls River History and Conservation Paddle

Sunday, August 7 · 1–3pm · Bicentennial Park, Rollinsford

Join us for a unique tour of Rollinsford, Berwick and Somersworth by canoe or kayak. Learn about the historic points of interest along the Salmon Falls. To register, email info@paulwentworthhouse.org, or call 603.742.4747. Bring your own watercraft and flotation devices; however, limited boats available. (Please call ahead.)



National Parks 100th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, August 25 · 1–3pm · Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

Join Bev Shadley and other SELTies as she completes her quest to visit 100 parks at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in celebration of the National Park Service's 100th anniversary on August 25th. Saint-Gaudens is located on the NH/Vermont border and is a two-hour drive from seacoast NH. www.nps.gov. For more details on the events, visit us at www.seltnh.org.

Volunteers Blaze New Trails and More

Timberland Employees Help Build Bridges and Trails, and Construct Wheelchair Accessible Entrance at Mast Road Natural Area

Dozens of Timberland employees volunteered on May 12 to help out at SELT's Mast Road Natural Area in Epping as part of their company-wide Earth Day Project.

This 530-acre conservation area is part of a long stretch of the Congressionally designated Wild & Scenic Lamprey River. SELT conserved the property in 2011 through a partnership with the Lamprey River Advisory Committee and Natural Resources Conservation Service and now owns and manages the land which is protected through a Wetlands Reserve Conservation Easement.

"We're grateful to Timberland and their employees for volunteering with us. They made a huge impact and we are very excited that the property is now more user friendly and accessible for those who get outside via a wheelchair."

David Viale, Conservation Project Manager for SELT

Over the past five years SELT has been working to clean up the property from years of mismanagement to restore the trails and wetlands. As part of the trail restoration, Timberland staff helped SELT construct a wheelchair accessible entrance to the trail, build seven small bridges, prune and rake trails, install signs at the trail junctions and do a roadside cleanup. The longest bridge looks over a beaver pond which makes a great spot for wildlife viewing.

SELT manages the property for wildlife habitat and passive recreation and a large network of trails is open to the public for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. A full trail guide and map is planned to be completed by the end of 2016.



Group that worked to remove invasive species.

PHOTO CREDIT: PAULA SINGER

Academy Volunteers Help Remove Invasive Plants

Eighteen volunteers from Phillips Exeter Academy spent a sunny morning restoring wildlife habitat at the confluence of the Pawtuckaway and Lamprey Rivers. The property is part of SELT's Pawtuckaway River Reservation – a stretch of conservation land of over 500 acres along the Pawtuckaway River in Epping, Nottingham, and Raymond.

The volunteer workday was part of the Academy's Climate Action Day, a day where students learn about climate change, environmental activism, and ecology.

SELT staff Phil Auger and David Viale taught them about non-native invasive plants such as Japanese knotweed, multi-flora rose, and autumn olive. The volunteers used hand tools to remove the invasive plants that grow aggressively, eventually choking out the plants and wildlife habitat that naturally grow in our state.



Students from the Academy help remove invasive plants.

PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID VIALE

Loco Cyclers Peddle for SELT!

Hundreds of cyclists will be riding the gravel roads of Rockingham County on June 5th, as part of the Loco Cyclers Raid Rockingham. Five dollars of each registration is being donated to SELT with more than \$1,500 expected!

Funds will support a new trail on the Piscassic Greenway to create a full loop between Byrne Trail and Halls Mill Road. With the new trail, cyclists can do the loop, as well as hikers.



Arlon Chaffee of Loco Cycling presents Brian Hart, Executive Director, with ceremonial check.



PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY LOUGEE



Just \$10,000 Left to Conserve Monahan Farm. *Your gift will be matched!*

With New Hampshire's strawberry season fast approaching, it is a perfect time to help conserve a pick-your-own paradise – the Monahan Farm in East Kingston. SELT has just \$10,000 remaining to successfully conserve this family-owned, multi-generational farm.

Last year SELT reached an agreement with the family to acquire a conservation easement on these 28-acres at the intersection of Route 107 & 108. Funding partners include the Town of East Kingston and state and federal grant programs. Earlier this spring, SELT secured a grant from the NH-based Russell Farm and Forest Conservation Foundation. They will match your donation to conserve the Monahan Farm!



Double the impact of your contribution today!

Please make your special contribution for the Monahan Farm by using the enclosed envelope (note Monahan Farm in the memo line) or donating online at www.seltnh.org (click on Support Us and choose Monahan Farm). *Thank you!*

Picking up the Pace of Conservation

SELT currently has more than 50 projects under contract or actively being negotiated! These lands are part of large landscapes that sustain people and nature and include 20 farms and 15 properties that help protect public drinking water supplies. These projects are well distributed throughout our service area, ranging from the Seacoast, west to Londonderry, and north to Farmington.

Last fall SELT jumped at the chance to conserve a critical 70-acre parcel in **Nottingham** and entered into an agreement with two brothers to purchase this forest land. SELT is now pursuing the required funding. The proposed Zanard Forest includes a central, 11-acre beaver pond and provides great access to the pending Harvey's Kennard Hill Forest conservation easement. The property also abuts the Sweester Farm conservation easement, preserving more than 1,900 feet of beautiful views along Ledge Farm Road in Nottingham, and growing the Pawtuckaway to Great Bay Greenway.

In **Windham**, SELT is partnering with the town to amend an existing conservation easement to add an additional 68 acres acquired by the town as part of their Windham Town Forest. The Forest is enjoyed for its recreational opportunities and preserves the water quality of an aquifer serving public water supplies.

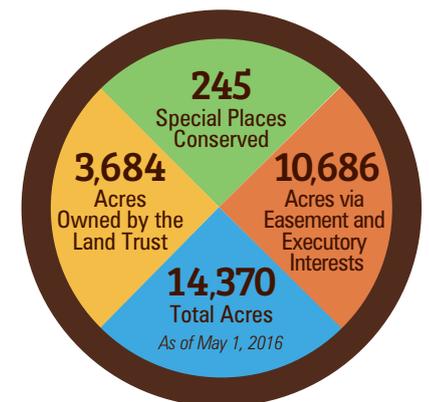
SELT is helping the neighboring Town of **Salem** pursue the protection of a large tract abutting the existing 172-acre Salem Town Forest. The Putnam tract has long been a priority in this densely populated and developed community.

Want more updates? Like us on Facebook for the current news! www.facebook.com/seltnh.



PHOTO CREDIT: JEREMY LOUGEE

Land Conservation by the numbers





An Old Family Farm Bestows Promise & Security for the Future

By Tracey Miller

The culmination of a more than 20-year effort to preserve the last piece of the 200-acre Thompson Family Dairy Farm in Durham was finally reached in late March. SELT and the Town completed the purchase and permanent conservation of 53 acres to create the Thompson Forest.

This land is significant because it surrounds the surface water intake on the Lamprey River for the Durham-UNH water system and includes nineteen acres that feed the Spruce Hole aquifer, which is also used as a drinking water source. Duane Hyde, Land Conservation Director, explains, “The family understood the importance of this piece of land for the community, which is why they held onto it for so long.”

This densely forested land has considerable conservation and wildlife benefits providing important habitat for many species. It also has 3,500 feet of frontage on the federally designated Wild & Scenic Lamprey River, one of only two designated Wild & Scenic rivers in New Hampshire.

Four generations of the Thompson family have been deeply rooted in this land. Shirley Thompson, was a local icon in Durham and was very devoted to the community. “The kids called her ‘Grandma Shirley,’” said Todd Selig, Durham’s town administrator. Before she passed two years ago, she asked her two daughters to promise that they would ensure that the land would be protected.

Thompson was involved with the Oyster River schools for 50 years tutoring kids in math and reading since her children were in school. She served on the School Board for 13 years and was elected to the town selectboard in the 1980s where she served with her father. She was also the town’s first-ever female fire commissioner, and served on the Durham Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary for 18 years.

Her daughters Kim Laughton and Norma Thompson worked with SELT and the Town of Durham to honor their mother’s wishes and make sure the land is protected. Laughton also accepted less than the appraised value to help bring down the

cost of the land. “This land has been part of my family for a long time. We hope that the people who come and visit the land will cherish it as much as we have,” said Kim Laughton.

Working with the town, SELT coordinated and led the effort to raise the necessary funds to complete the project. Funding sources included the Land and Water Conservation Fund, who played a leading role, as well as the NH State Department of Environmental Services, Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, Town of Durham-UNH Water Fund, NH State Conservation Committee (Mooseplate Program), and the Lamprey River Advisory Committee.

“This tract is a beautiful piece of land on the shore of a pristine section of the Lamprey River. Securing this land helps meet the town’s goals of connecting contiguous parcels of conservation properties. I’m so pleased we could find a way to finally fulfill the vision of Shirley and the Thompson family and find a path to conservation,” said Todd Selig, Durham’s town administrator.

The Forest will now be open to pedestrians to enjoy and the town is considering other opportunities to make it even more accessible.



From left to right: Todd Selig, Duane Hyde, Kim Laughton, Kitty Miller (LRAC), Dick Lord (LRAC) PHOTO CREDIT: TOWN OF DURHAM

A Full Circle of Conservation *continued from page 1*

only after she had left did we marvel at the audacity of a woman who would travel around town telling people what to do with their land in the interest of beautiful open space in Rollinsford.

So now, we will fast forward through the ensuing history, starting with Robin's recruiting me to the Conservancy's board in 2002 (only now do I understand her 'evil' plan) and ending with our decision in 2015 to donate a conservation easement on close to 40 acres of this property upon which we live. It is where we have worked, loved, played. It is where our three children have morphed from animal/nature-loving children to animal/nature-loving adults. We cannot imagine this property any other way. And the tax benefit (see below) is the icing on the cake.

Conservation in Rollinsford has come full circle and I am now the audacious woman who goes around telling people what to do with their land (you know who you are!) And, like Robin (though on a *much* smaller scale) we are walking the conservation walk and hoping to spark a sort of "conservation competition" to see whether our side of beautiful Route 4 can ever catch up to Robin's side in terms of acres conserved. She does have a thirty year head start. But regardless of whether anyone steps up to the competition plate, I am here to report that it feels really good to offer up a signature vista for the enjoyment of not just our family, but for all. We are merely the most recent stewards of this property, but we are proud to be, in the end, the ones who will preserve its unique characteristics for the years to come.



Board member Linda McGivern and her husband Ben Thayer anticipate completing their conservation easement on some 40 acres in Rollinsford this summer.

PHOTO CREDIT: LINDA MCGIVERN

Federal Easement Incentives Made Permanent

Last December, Congress gave conservation-minded landowners throughout the country an early Christmas gift by permanently authorizing the enhanced charitable deduction for donated conservation easements!

The incentive puts conservation in reach for more landowners – regardless of income levels – by:

- Raising the deduction limit from 30% to 50% of adjusted gross income;
- Extending the carry-forward period for unused donated value from 5 years to 15 years; and
- Allowing qualifying farmers to deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income.

If you've been thinking about conserving your land and are interested in exploring how this could apply to your situation, please call Duane Hyde, our Land Conservation Director, at 658.9718 to get the conversation going.

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Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire, please call **603.778.6088** or email info@seltnh.org.

PO Box 675, Exeter, NH 03833

Website: www.seltnh.org

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HIKE IT. SAVE IT.

Three New Trail Guides Available!

see page 2

Just \$10,000 remaining to conserve Monahan Farm in East Kingston! Your gift will be matched!

see page 5

Festival a Wild Success—A Sold-Out Show!

More than 800 environmental enthusiasts joined SELT for the Wild & Scenic Film Festival at The Music Hall on Earth Day, April 22nd. The films explored the relationship between people and nature all over the world – from Hellbenders in North Carolina, to ancient forests in Tanzania, to rock climbing in Lebanon – inspiring, more than 120 attendees to become SELTies – inaugural members of SELT! We are grateful to our sponsors, guests, volunteers and companies who donated prizes for helping to bring this wonderful event to life!



ReVision Energy's Dan Clapp and SELTie Sofie Self, joined Brian Hart for the intermission raffle.
PHOTO COURTESY CARINA SELF

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