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Farms in Transition

When vulnerable farmland changes hands, SELT can help to ensure a conservation outcome

by Ellen Snyder

For 100 years Barker’s Farm on Route 33 in Stratham has been a vibrant family farm. It started small in 1917 when Willard Barker and his wife began raising animals and produce for their own uses on a few acres. Three generations later, the farm has grown to 88 acres, with 19 acres under cultivation, 7 greenhouses, and 20 or more seasonal employees. In season, 200 people a day visit the rustic Barker’s Farm Stand and leave with armloads of fresh vegetables, herbs, flowers, strawberries, pumpkins, and myriad other locally grown or made products. When Gordon Barker, great grandson of Willard, died suddenly in 2009, his wife Edie took on all aspects of running the farm and now their daughter Forrest, a recent graduate of Cornell University, is back to help run the family farm.

“Farming is the most rewarding work that you can do,” says Edie Barker. After a high school semester spent at the Mountain School in Vermont, Forrest Barker knew she wanted to be on her family farm. With a degree in Agricultural Sciences and concentration in sustainability, she is now focused on keeping the farm soils healthy.

In the next two decades, seventy percent of New England farmland is likely to change hands. Securing a farm legacy has substantial challenges, including financial, legal, and family complexities. Farms in southeastern New Hampshire also face increasing development pressures. Already one of the most densely populated parts of the state, this region is expected to absorb much of the state’s projected growth by 2020. SELT is tackling this trend by using conservation easements to help farmers like Edie and Forrest meet their unique needs and to ensure private farmland stays productive and viable.

Bob Hills has five beautiful, brown Jersey cows on his Chesley Mountain Farm in central Farmington. The 52-acre farm lies along a quiet, gravel road and borders the Rattlesnake River, which flows

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Above: Edie and Forrest Barker at their farm. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

2017 Going Out with a Bang

Because of your gifts to SELT, the following special places are being permanently protected in the last part of this year – **nearly 2,300 acres** of land conserved for public recreation, wildlife habitat, clean water, and farmland for our future! Through conservation easements and land acquisitions, SELT works to protect the unique character of this place we call home. **Thank you for supporting SELT and making all this possible.**

1 Stonehouse Forest, Barrington – SELT’s largest project ever! 1,500 acres of pristine forest adjacent to the popular Stonehouse Pond. This expansive landscape supports vibrant wildlife, free flowing streams, and miles of trails. This land will be owned by SELT, and permanently protected by a conservation easement held by the NH Fish & Game Department and the Town of Barrington. The easement will also guarantee public access for outdoor recreation. More than 360 generous donors have made gifts to help save this special place – THANK YOU! Other funders include the state’s LCHIP and Moose Plate programs, as well as the Town of Barrington.



Stonehouse Forest. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

2 Cafasso Donation, Barrington – John and Cindy Cafasso heard about the Stonehouse Forest project through Barrington’s public access television station and were excited about the project. When they started to think about what they could do to support the project, they realized they could donate their abutting 2.11 acre property along Swain Road, which includes a portion of an important wetland system on the Stonehouse Forest land. The Cafassos saw the SELT booth at a local winter farmer’s market and pitched the idea. Fast forward to today – and soon after SELT owns Stonehouse Forest, we will receive this generous donation of land!

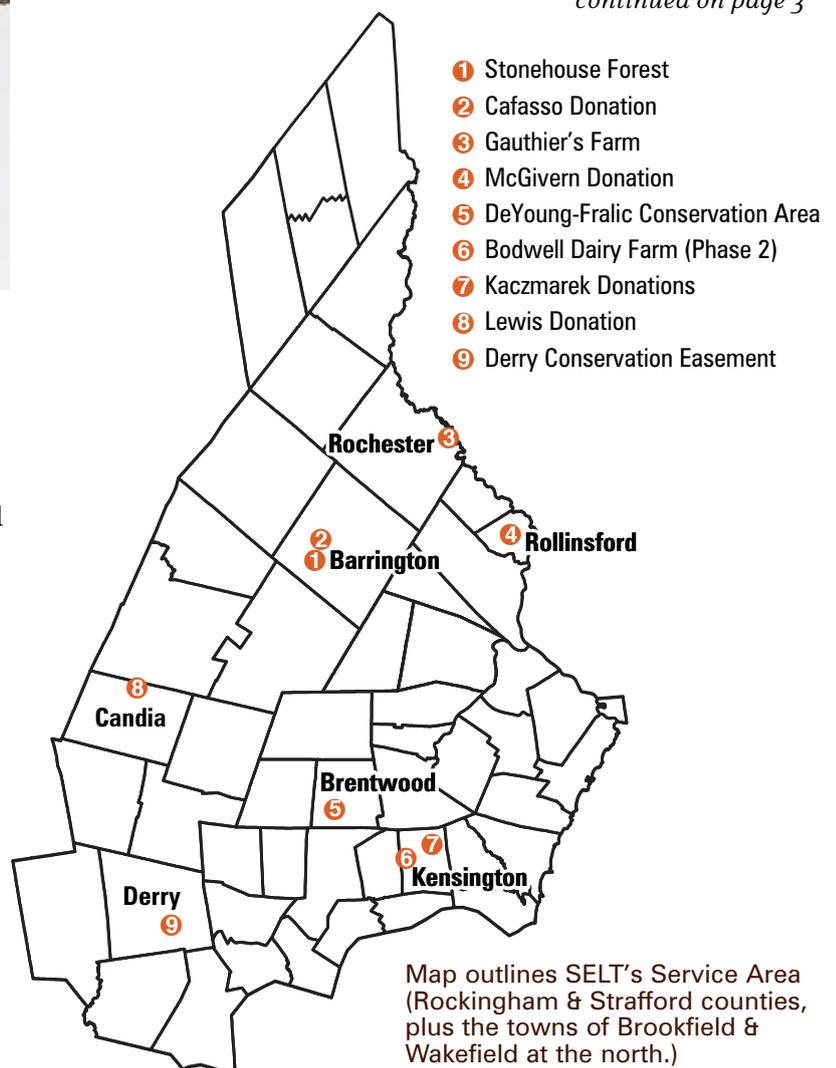
3 Gauthier’s Farm, Rochester – The Salmon Falls River was recently ranked the third most threatened watershed in the entire country due to projected increases in housing density. By conserving Gauthier’s Farm, SELT will permanently protect nearly 163 acres and more than 1.4 miles of precious shoreline along this river for the benefit of wildlife and people alike. Since 1966, Gauthier’s Farm has been welcoming guests with open arms, with a history of selling

a variety of agricultural products from maple syrup, to meats and vegetables, to eggs, and even the local favorite: Stump City hard cider! A significant portion of the funding and support for this project came from the proactive efforts of the Rochester Conservation Commission and the Rochester City Council. Other partners include the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Jane’s Trust.

4 McGivern Donation, Rollinsford – Linda McGivern and Ben Thayer know that the 39 acres surrounding their home in Rollinsford is a special place. The many grassland bird species they see in their fields, the monarch butterflies they’ve been monitoring as part of a larger research network, and the waterfowl utilizing their ponds and wetlands all point to productive wildlife habitat. These are things you can see, but what you can’t see is the role their land plays in maintaining clean drinking water for the Town of Rollinsford, whose well head protection area encompasses much of their property. SELT is extremely appreciative of this generous conservation easement donation by Ben and Linda.

5 DeYoung-Fralic Conservation Area, Brentwood – With the help of the Brentwood Conservation Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), SELT completed another multi-year conservation project along the

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Exeter River. Thanks to a generous donation by John and Lois DeYoung, this sought-after property includes 105 acres of forests, wetlands, and high priority wildlife habitat and contains more than 3,700 feet of pristine river frontage. Now known as the DeYoung-Fralic Conservation Area, this property will be added to SELT's growing list of reservations.

6 Bodwell Dairy Farm (Phase 2), Kensington – In Phase Two of a multi-year project, SELT is protecting the final 200+ acres of the Bodwell Dairy Farm in Kensington. One of only five remaining commercial dairies in Rockingham County, SELT has made this six-generation farm a top priority in its effort to protect important farmland. Bodwell Farm provides the surrounding community with milk, cheese, meats and other farm products while also maintaining critical open space, wildlife habitat, and scenic strolls that remind passers-by of a more agrarian past. Partners include the Kensington Conservation Commission, NRCS, LCHIP, the Lewis Family Foundation, the 1772 Foundation, and more than 120 area residents who made donations – THANK YOU!

7 Kaczmarek Donations, Kensington – Elaine Kaczmarek and her son Stefan have roots that grow deep into the land at Prescott Corner in Kensington. Little has changed on these two properties for centuries, and for good reason; open space abounds, streams meander, and lush fields grow hay to sustain local farms. Both Kaczmareks appreciate the beauty and bounty of these 70+ acres, and each have generously agreed to donate a conservation easement to SELT so that nature and the surrounding community may continue to flourish long into the future.

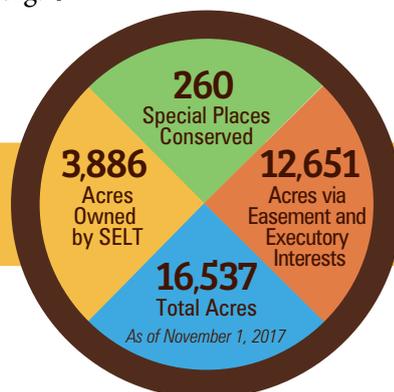
8 Lewis Donation, Candia – Dennis Lewis and his brother Daniel have pledged to donate a conservation easement in honor of their parents Ralph and Norma on 124+ acres of land, which the family has pieced together over the years. The land includes fields, a large forest and two old sugar shack foundations which the family hopes to revive someday. A diversity of wetlands including frontage along the North Branch River provides habitat for amphibians, songbirds, waterfowl, wading birds, and moose. This project has been supported by many partnerships including the state's Moose Plate program, Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership, and NH DES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (ARM).

This project is supported by funds from the sale of the Conservation License Plate (Moose Plate) through the NH State Conservation Committee grant program.



9 Derry Conservation Easement – With the aid of SELT and the Merrimack Conservation Partnership, the Derry Town Council and Conservation Commission stepped up to purchase 75 acres of land, which has been a high priority for decades. This acquisition grows an existing conservation complex to over 400 acres providing frontage along the Rockingham Recreational Trail, access to an existing trail network, and scenic views of Ballard Pond – all while helping to protect a downstream water supply reservoir. Transaction funding for this project was provided by the Merrimack Conservation Partnership, a public/private effort for land conservation in the Merrimack River Watershed. To learn more, visit www.merrimackconservationpartnership.org. ↑

Land Conservation by the numbers



Tri-City Subaru "Share the Love" Campaign to benefit SELT

Tri-City Subaru in Somersworth NH has selected SELT as its local charity of choice for Subaru's annual, "Share the Love" campaign. From November 16, 2017 to January 2, 2018, Tri-City Subaru customers buying or leasing a new Subaru will have the option of directing a \$250 donation to SELT from Subaru of America.



The donation partnership between Tri-City Subaru and SELT is part of Subaru of America's annual "Share the Love" event. Nationally, the Share The Love program is entering its tenth year and is hoping to exceed \$115 million donated throughout the life of the program to charitable organizations across the country. Customers have the choice of directing the donation to a national charity or to a hometown charity selected by the local Subaru retailer. National charities include ASPCA, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Meals On Wheels America, the National Park Foundation and in the case of Tri-City Subaru, SELT will be listed as the hometown charity of choice.

Tri-City Subaru believes and participates in the philanthropic spirit of Subaru. Partnering with SELT allows Tri-City to actively preserve and protect the beautiful lands around us for wildlife, recreation, and generations to come. Tri-City has elected to focus its efforts with SELT on the 1,500-acre Stonehouse Forest in Barrington, NH. Tri-City has committed to a long term financial agreement as well as active volunteer days to help conserve and maintain this magnificent place!



Tri-City Subaru
195 Route 108, Somersworth, NH
www.TriCitySubaru.com
Phone: 603-742-3647

Dealership Hours:
Monday–Thursday 8 AM–7 PM
Friday 8 AM–6 PM
Saturday 9 AM–5 PM
Sunday 11 AM–3 PM



PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

Winter's Whispers

Winter is spare, but not silent. On cold, clear days, after a fresh snow, I snowshoe into the woods, then stop and listen. After the thumping noise of my heart settles, I hear other sounds. Bronze-colored beech leaves, hanging tight into winter, rustle in a gentle breeze. Red maple tree trunks rub against each other, groaning in the frigid air. The wind whispers among the tall white pines.

I sit on a fallen log to catch the low winter sun, which casts long shadows. The understory is more open now, than in summer, when plants are fully cloaked in leaves. I tune out distant sounds of civilization that carry deeper into the spare woods and through the crisp, cold air. I listen close in for wild things: the soft tapping of a downy woodpecker searching for insects tucked into bark crevices; the nasal “yank, yank, yank” of a white-breasted nuthatch as it crawls along a tree trunk. A mixed flock of titmice and chickadees moves through. I hear the tinkling of their soft notes.

Suddenly a red squirrel scolds loudly from a nearby pine perch. It makes me realize that my feet are cold. Time to move. My steps and breathing block out other sounds. Instead I look

about – seeing more than hearing – as I hike out of the woods. I notice tree trunks: the smooth, pale gray bark of beech, the shagginess of hickory, the thick plates on a white pine, and the reddish hue of an oak. Briefly I remove my gloves to feel the bark, to absorb the diversity of form and texture, which seems all the more remarkable in winter.

My eyes shift to the ground as I snowshoe on, back toward home. The recent snowfall left a white canvas revealing animal movements. The dainty trail of a woodland mouse emerges from a depression around a fallen tree, and back again, repeated several times. A snowshoe hare track meanders between and under young growth. Coyote trails crisscross the hare’s habitat. Gray squirrels, wild turkeys, and deer have moved through the woods too, their tracks leading here and there.

Back home I sit in front of a crackling fire in the wood stove. The wind has picked up outside. Out the window I see beech leaves still holding fast as they are tossed about in the wind like bucking broncos. While sipping my hot tea and feeling grateful for my warm abode, I wonder what wild things I would hear and see if I were still sitting on a log in the deep woods. ⤴

By Ellen Snyder, who wanders through many woodlands, including SELT conservation areas, near her home in Newmarket.

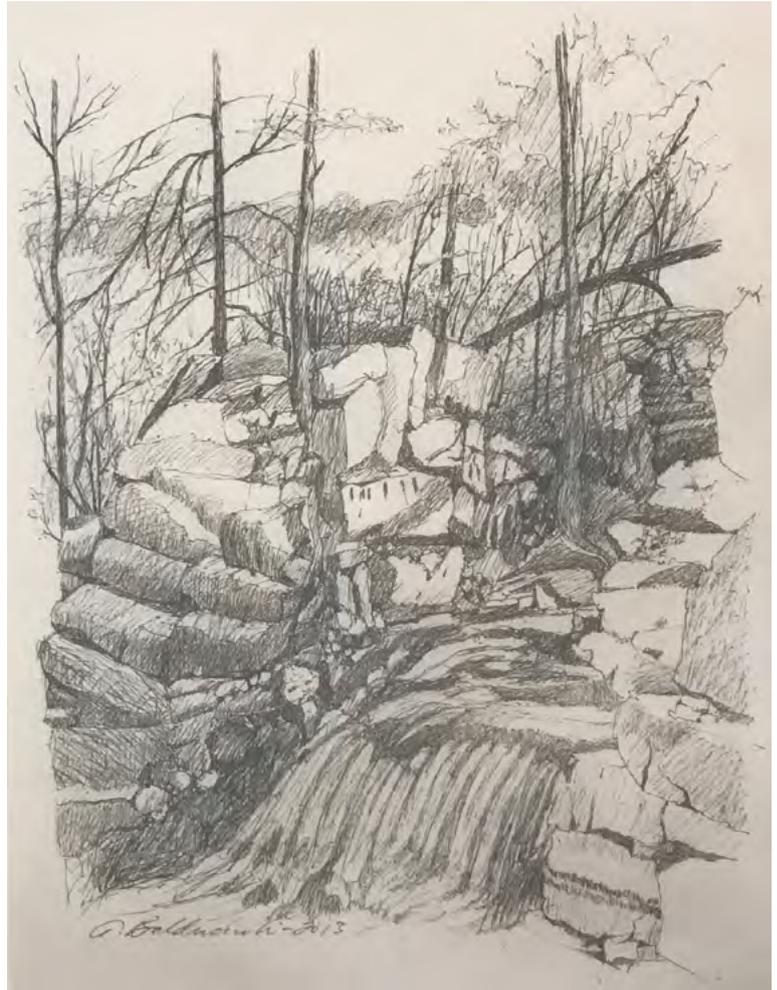
Local Landscapes Inspire Generosity

Living in New Hampshire, we are fortunate to have easy access to shorelines, mountains, rivers, open farmlands, and countless natural wonders. For Seacoast resident and artist, Arthur Balderacchi, these scenic treasures are the subject of much of his artwork – and have also provided inspiration for many of his students over the years. Arthur was Professor of Art at the University of New Hampshire for 37 years and often encouraged his students to find their muse in the natural beauty around them. In his retirement, Arthur has sought meaningful ways to give back. After consulting with his financial advisor he decided the best option would be to make a gift to SELT through his IRA (Individual Retirement Account) by taking advantage of the tax law allowing a person to apply some or all of his or her annual Required Minimum Distribution on a tax-free basis to a charitable organization. Arthur says “SELT is conserving special natural places here in New Hampshire for generations to come. Considering all that our local landscapes have provided me over the years – and will continue to offer artists and locals – making a substantial gift to SELT is very gratifying for me. Using some of my Required Minimum Distribution was easy and I plan to do it again this year!”

If you're at least 70½ years old, the benefits of doing this are significant:

- Satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution for the year
- Pay no taxes on distributions from your IRA to SELT
- Make a larger gift than you normally could to help further SELT's conservation work

One key provision is that charitable IRA distributions must be made directly to the charity. If you would like to learn more about making a charitable distribution from your IRA to SELT, please contact Executive Director Brian Hart at 603-778-6088 or bhart@seltnh.org. ⬆



At UNH, Arthur Balderacchi taught a wide range of subjects including bronze casting, life sculpture, and drawing. This is one of his pieces from 2013 (Untitled). PHOTO BY SAM REID

Harvest Fair Fundraiser – Thank You for a Fun & Festive Evening!

Much gratitude goes to our guests, auction item donors, and sponsors of SELT's Harvest Fair themed Fall Fundraiser on October 21st. We thank the following sponsors for making this event possible:

PLATINUM



GOLD

Churchill's Garden Center
Eric C. Mitchell & Associates, Inc.
Normandeau Associates, Inc.
ReVision Energy

SILVER

Bellamy & Watson Fields
Exeter Environmental Associates, Inc.
Ransmeier & Spellman, PC
Truslow Resource Consulting, LLC
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Altus Engineering, Inc.
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Graham Tire & Auto
Madden Realtors
People's United Bank
Ruffner Real Estate





Upcoming Events

PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

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 in \$5 per person or \$10 per family. All donations benefit our public outreach programs. We hope you’ll come along!

Tamed: A City Girl Walks from Mexico to Canada on the Pacific Crest Trail

Thursday, December 7 · 6–8pm · Phillips Exeter Academy (3rd floor of Academy Center), Exeter

Tamed, a book by Anne Elizabeth O’Regan, is an intimate portrayal of one woman’s journey through a myriad of internal and external landscapes while backpacking alone in the wilderness. Join her at PEA, as she talks about leaving city life behind and venturing into realms of the deep unknown on the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail.

Winter Solstice Bonfire

Saturday, December 16, 3–6pm · Burley Farms, 245 North River Road, Epping

Come celebrate the Winter Solstice at Burley Farms! Warm up with hot cocoa by the bonfire, meet other SELTies, bring the kids for stories, and brighten up the winter sky at this iconic SELT property.

Tree Identification Walk

Saturday, February 10 · 9–11am · Burley Farms, 245 North River Road, Epping

What’s that plant? Bundle up for a winter tree and shrub identification workshop at Burley Farms. This workshop is for all knowledge and skill levels. We’ll learn all about buds, branching, and bark as well as site, form, and ecology to help with woody plant identification during our leafless season.

Winter Wildlife Trek

Saturday, February 24 · 9–11am · Location TBD

Pull on your snowshoes and discover the traces of winter wildlife including fox, coyote, fisher, mink, and more! We’ll look for and learn how to identify various tracks and sign of wildlife.

Langley-Kennard Snowshoe Tour

Saturday, March 3 · 9–11am · Lee

Explore this newly acquired SELT property on snowshoes! On this trip we will get to see the Oyster River in all it’s glory and learn about the history of the property. With any luck we’ll get a peek at some of the wildlife that calls this special place home.

SAVE THE DATE!



Wild & Scenic Film Festival hosted by SELT for its 8th year!

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

Tickets will be on sale in February. This show has sold out the past 3 years in a row!

Farms in Transition *continued from page 1*

northeast to the Cocheco River. The house sits on the crest of the land, with hayfields and pastures gently sloping away on each side. After retiring, Hills bought this place in 2013 and is thoughtfully rejuvenating the land. He has built two barns by himself—one for the cows and one for equipment—and, using cow manure and wood ash, he’s making the fields more fertile for hay and grazing. Like Hills, the cows are gentle and friendly. He plans to grow this small herd to provide fresh milk to local cheese makers and other dairy artisans.

“I want to see this land stay as a farm for future generations and not be developed,” says Hills, who is working with SELT and the Farmington Conservation Commission to place a conservation easement on his farm.

Steve Harriman is the fourth generation of his family to work the 205-acre Bedard Farm along Route 108 in Durham. When Harriman’s great aunt and uncle passed away, the farm was left to 13 heirs, a complexity that took a few years to sort out. Fortunately, all the heirs wanted the farm to stay in the family and supported Steve’s desire to resume active farming. The 1914 stone farmhouse sits atop a knoll at the end of a long,



Harriman Farm. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

gravel driveway that bisects the hayfield, and commands a sweeping view of the fields and sunsets. In addition to raising chickens—a large friendly flock greets any visitor—Harriman plans to continue haying the fields and raise Belted Galloway beef cows on pasture. As part of a large block of conserved land that extends out to Great Bay, Harriman likes that the farm is home to wildlife too. A conservation easement with SELT will help Harriman feel more secure about long-term investments in the farm. “I would like to create a setting where the public can visit the farm, where kids can see the animals,” says Harriman.

“Successful farms need markets for their products, farmers to work the land, and access to affordable, productive farmland,” says Jeremy Lougee, Conservation Project Manager at SELT. “Our role is to secure the land and ensure that it remains productive for future generations.” Many SELT partners help these farms thrive. Seacoast Eat Local supports year-round farmer’s markets, connecting farmers and customers. UNH Cooperative Extension, Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Bureau, and Land for Good mentor farmers and guide them in land use and business planning.

The farmers’ hard work and their willingness to conserve their land benefits their communities in other ways too. Each of these farms safeguards the water quality of streams, wetlands, and groundwater that lies on or under their farmland—a value that extends well beyond their boundaries. Barker’s Farm links to the Gordon Barker Town Forest and other conserved lands at Stratham Hill Park, which together host 10 miles of popular public trails for hiking, running, and mountain biking. Barker’s Farm is such an important part of the community that the 2017 Stratham Town Meeting voted unanimously to contribute \$400,000 toward the conservation easement.

Farmers cherish their farms and their connection to community as summed up by Edie Barker: “Providing our incredibly supportive community of Stratham and surrounding towns with healthy food is why we farm.” 📌

Your SELT membership dollars support our ability to work with farmers like Edie, Forrest, Bob, and Steve to help advance farmland conservation for the future of our special region. We are proud to be doing this work – **Thank you for making it possible.**

Board Members

- Samuel Reid** President, Dover
- Ann Welsh** Vice President, Durham
- Ann Smith** Treasurer, Kensington
- Joan Pratt** Secretary, Exeter
- Roger Stephenson** Immediate Past President, Stratham
- Terry Coyle** Portsmouth
- Bill Campbell** Exeter
- Thomas Chamberlin** New Castle
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Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact SELT, please call **603-778-6088** or email info@seltnh.org.
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Farms in Transition
see page 1



Winter's Whispers
see page 4



*Holiday
Online
Auction*
to benefit SELT

December 1-12

Take this chance to do a little holiday shopping and support your local land trust.

Visit www.seltnh.org to start bidding!

NEW Map & Trail Guide

Howard Swain Memorial Forest,
Deerfield & Nottingham

The 89-acre Howard Swain Memorial Forest was donated to SELT in 2011 by his widow Marguerite and their daughter Deborah Fexis. Howard was an avid outdoorsman who loved Pawtuckaway State Park and always wanted to conserve his family land, which directly abuts the park and shares much of its unique geologic features. Download the trail map at www.seltnh.org or stop by our office for a free full-color trail map & guide!

