

# THIS LAND

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE SOUTHEAST LAND TRUST OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

## Land Trust Awarded \$1.2 million to preserve 265 acres in the Exeter River Watershed

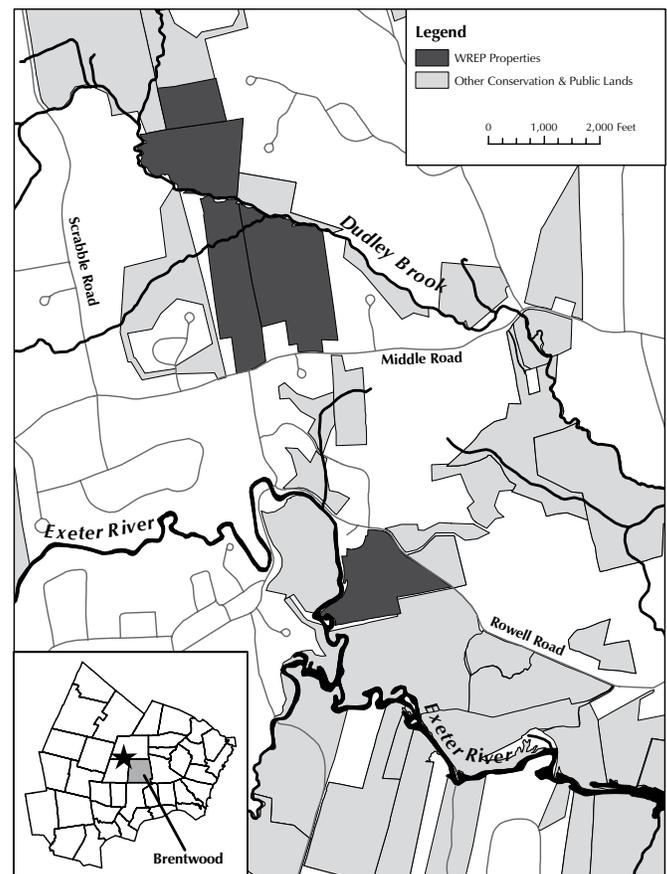
This April the Southeast Land Trust was one of 13 partners to be awarded \$1.2 million in federal funds for the restoration and permanent protection of high priority wetlands and associated wildlife habitat.

“This significant funding will build on the tremendous land conservation work already completed along Dudley Brook and the Exeter River in Brentwood and Fremont,” explains David Viale, Land Protection Specialist for the Land Trust. Under the cooperative agreement, the Land Trust agrees to administer the funding to acquire conservation easements on five properties totaling 265 acres. The easements will be held by the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through its Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program, or WREP.

Through WREP, NRCS awarded nearly \$15 million in financial and technical assistance to partners in 12 states under the WREP. “Seeing the limited funds available nationally, we were excited to be selected,” notes Viale.

WREP is a special component of the NRCS’ Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). As with WRP, private landowners can restore and permanently protect wetlands while retaining ownership of the land and the ability to generate income from grazing, forestry, or recreation approved by NRCS. The difference is that under the WREP, partners such as the Land Trust contribute technical and financial assistance as a match to leverage the federal funding.

The awarded funds will be used directly for the purchase of the conservation easements and associated costs such as surveys. The Land Trust’s ability to work on this project was supported through our partnership with the Brentwood Conservation Commission, who contracts with the Land Trust for land protection services in Brentwood.



Four properties in Brentwood along Dudley Brook and the Exeter River will be conserved with recently awarded funds from the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program.

*continued on page 4*



# Support Farmland Protection: Buy Local Foods

Contributed by Seacoast Eat Local

## GET Out & About

Unless otherwise noted, all field trips are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is required. To sign up, please e-mail [info@seltnh.org](mailto:info@seltnh.org) or call Karen at 603.778.6088. Directions and additional details will be sent to registrants.

### Conservation Celebration & Cookout

**Batchelder Farm, Hampton  
Sat., June 16 • 10:15 am–2:30 pm**

The Board of Directors invites you to join us to celebrate the more than 1,100 acres of open spaces conserved in 2011 at our Conservation Celebration & Cookout at the Batchelder Farm in Hampton! See article on page 4 for more details.

### Summer Soulstice

**Verdant Pastures, Epping  
Friday, June 22 • 7:30 pm**

This is a benefit concert for the Southeast Land Trust featuring GRAMMY® Award-Winning Guitarist Ed Gerhard and special solo guest Liz Frame. Tix are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. See article on page 6 for more details.

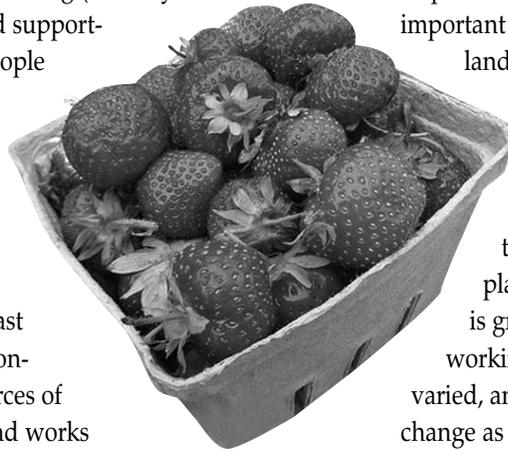
### Know Your Farmer Series

The Know Your Farmer Series is co-sponsored by Seacoast Eat Local and will showcase local farms producing food and fiber in our region. Look for these and other events this year!

*continued on page 4*

Of the 200 farms listed in the forthcoming 2012 *Seacoast Harvest*, the local food guide published annually by Seacoast Eat Local, 20% are under conservation easements. All of these farms are working farms, growing food and providing it directly to the public. They are growing everything from apples and honey to beef and eggs and milk. They are growing nutritious food that is healthy for our community members, our local economy, and our environment. Keeping these farms growing (in every sense of the word) and supporting and connecting people eager to eat this food, and grow some of their own, is the focus of Seacoast Eat Local's work.

For those of you unfamiliar with Seacoast Eat Local (SEL), SEL connects people with sources of locally grown foods and works toward a sustainable local food system that meets the needs of both producers and consumers. Our 2011-2012 Winter Farmers' Market season has just finished, marking our fifth year of organizing winter markets. At our series of 12 market events, over 20,000 shoppers purchased locally grown food (fresh greens in January!) all winter long. In early June our annual *Seacoast Harvest* local food guide will be published, listing the farms, farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs (Community-Supported-Agriculture) and more of Rockingham, Strafford, and York counties. The online edition is continually updated at [www.seacoastharvest.org](http://www.seacoastharvest.org).



It's strawberry season! Enjoy fresh strawberries from a nearby farm this June.

PHOTO BY SEACOAST EAT LOCAL

Offering SNAP/EBT at area farmers' markets is an emerging initiative for Seacoast Eat Local. Look for volunteers and staff at the Dover and Portsmouth Farmers' Markets this summer, where SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) recipients will be able to purchase nutritious food for their families while supporting local farm businesses; a win-win situation for the whole community.

The preservation of agricultural lands is a vital part of the challenging and important work of our region's land trusts. Seacoast Eat

Local is eager to support the conservation of farmland for future generations, maintaining the places where local food is grown. The needs of working farms are many and varied, and these needs may change as our local food system evolves. The integral mission of community-based food production on our working landscapes means that some conservation easements are being written so

that they allow for a variety of agricultural uses. Easements that take into account the needs of working farms are essential to the long term viability of local agriculture. To learn more about Seacoast Eat Local, visit [www.seacoateatlocal.org](http://www.seacoateatlocal.org). ■

*Editor's note: The Southeast Land Trust is a sponsor of Seacoast Harvest and looks forward toward partnering with Seacoast Eat Local to conserve working farmlands for food production!*

[www.seacoateatlocal.org](http://www.seacoateatlocal.org)

# WANTED



## **VOLUNTEER EASEMENT MONITORS! {REWARD-ING!}**

**ARE YOU INTERESTING IN HELPING BUILD AND SUSTAIN OUR RELATIONSHIPS  
WITH LANDOWNERS WHILE SEEING A PROPERTY CHANGE OVER THE YEARS?  
IF SO, PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A VOLUNTEER EASEMENT MONITOR!**

**THE DAY** a conservation easement is recorded is just the beginning of the long-term protection and stewardship of the property. Once we accept a conservation easement, we are legally and ethically obligated to monitor the property. All of our easements are inspected annually to document human or naturally caused changes and to track the landowner's immediate and long-term plans. These visits help ensure the land's conservation values are preserved and the terms of its easement deed are upheld.

Our volunteer monitoring program began in 2005 and currently consists of 15 volunteers who help

monitor 20 of our easement properties. Once trained, volunteers are assigned a property to visit each year where they will walk the boundaries and other important areas, observe and document changes to the condition of the land, and complete an inspection form which is then returned to the Land Trust. These visits are coordinated by Land Trust staff who will accompany them on their initial visit to introduce them to the property and the landowners and to help them process their observations into reports. On average, the visit and reports take a total of 4-5 hours per property, and can be done at the volunteer's convenience.



### **WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING ENTHUSIASTIC VOLUNTEERS WHO:**

- ☆ enjoy spending time in natural areas and want to become familiar with a local property;
- ☆ are able to walk long distances over uneven and diverse terrain, including muddy and brushy areas (some properties are easier to walk than others);
- ☆ are able to commit time to monitor the same property once a year for at least 3 years;
- ☆ work well with people, exercise discretion and respect landowner privacy; and
- ☆ are attentive to details, able to orient themselves on maps, and to accurately record observations.

The training for new Volunteer Easement Monitors is scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, June 26th (exact time and location TBD). For further information or to express your interest, please contact Deborah Goard at 778.6088 or [dgoard@seltnh.org](mailto:dgoard@seltnh.org). Interested individuals will be provided details on the upcoming trainings and available properties for monitoring!



# Conservation Celebration & Cookout

Batchelder Farm, Hampton - Saturday, June 16 - 10:15 am–2:30 pm

The Board of Directors invites you to join us to celebrate the more than 1,100 acres of open spaces conserved in 2011 at our Conservation Celebration & Cookout at the Batchelder Farm in Hampton!

In the morning the Land Trust will hold its annual business meeting. Once the business is out of the way, we will celebrate our successes and recognize landowners and communities with whom we have partnered. At noon we will share a cookout lunch and the day will be capped off with a walking tour of the soon-to-be-conserved Batchelder Farm.

Members and non-members are welcome, so feel free to bring a friend or neighbor who might want to learn more about the Land Trust. The cost to attend the Annual Cookout is \$10 per adult, \$5 per child seven and over (children 6 and under are free).

Pre-registration is required. Please reserve your spot by June 8 by contacting Karen McCormack at 603.778.6088 or [info@seltnh.org](mailto:info@seltnh.org). Please specify if you intend to join us for the walking tour and whether you require a vegetarian meal. ■

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*Conservation Celebration & Cookout  
Batchelder Farm, Hampton  
Saturday, June 16 - 10:15 am–2:30 pm*

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## Land Trust Awarded \$1.2 million, continued

“This partnership, now in its fifth year, has been tremendously successful in supporting land protection and stewardship in Brentwood,” explains Brian Hart, Executive Director. “We thank the Brentwood Conservation Commission for their long-term partnership with our organization and their commitment to land conservation.”

The habitats targeted by the grant include shrub wetlands, floodplain forests, and adjacent upland Appalachian-Oak-Pine forest communities. With more than 4,500 feet of shoreline on Dudley Brook and 3,000 feet on the Exeter River, the project will also support preservation of these watersheds. The Exeter River is one of fifteen rivers in New Hampshire designated for greater protection of outstanding natural and cultural resources under the State’s Rivers Management and Protection Program. The Exeter River originates in the towns of Raymond and Chester and flows easterly for approximately 32 miles before reaching the tidal zone of the Squamscott River in Exeter.

Dudley Brook is a smaller “sub-basin” within the Exeter River watershed and has been identified as an impaired watershed by the NH Department of Environmental Services and US Environmental Protection Agency. The acquisition of permanent conservation easements and the restoration of riparian buffers and wetlands have been recommended by the *Exeter River Geomorphic Assessment and Watershed Plan*. The plan was developed by the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee and provides scientific information to guide local efforts to restore and protect the Exeter River and its tributaries.

After the sale of the conservation easements to the NRCS, two of the landowners are planning to donate the protected land to the Land Trust. The Land Trust will own these properties and manage and maintain them for public benefits. The other properties will remain in private ownership and managed in accordance with the terms of the conservation easement. ■



## GET Out & About

**Know Your Farmer Series**  
Co-sponsored by Seacoast Eat Local

**Wine Tasting & Tour at Flag Hill Winery and Distillery, Lee**  
Wednesday, July 11 - 3 pm–5 pm

Wine and cheese anyone? The Flag Hill Winery and Distillery has graciously agreed to host an afternoon wine tasting and tour for members of the Land Trust. This beautiful 106-acre farm was conserved in 2004 by the Southeast Land Trust and many partners, and boasts a bounty of locally grown wines and distilled spirits. Owner Frank Reinhold will lead a tasting and a walking tour of what is the largest vineyard in the Granite State and share how the protection of his family land helped his business grow and expand. This event is \$4 per person. Reservations are required. Please contact Karen by July 6 at 603.778.6088 or [info@seltnh.org](mailto:info@seltnh.org) to reserve a spot. Payment will be collected at the door.

**Open House at Stout Oak Farm, Brentwood**  
Saturday, July 21 - 2–4 pm

Join us for an open house at Stout Oak Farm, now located at the historic Creamery Brook Farm on Middle Road! This is a great chance to hear first hand the challenges and joys of farming in New Hampshire from the land’s new owners, Kate and Jeff Donald. The Donalds acquired the property in January, which is protected by an easement held by the Land Trust. Participants will hear stories of the farm’s history from the Lyford family, learn of the plans and ambitions of the new owners, and have a chance to walk the open fields and see sweeping views from atop the hill.

# Species Spotlight: Blanding's Turtles

You may think your chances of seeing an endangered species are pretty slim, but it might be more likely than you think! Take this story of two Conservation Commission volunteers from Sandown. While visiting their town forest last spring to prepare for a tour of the property's vernal pools, they happened upon a large turtle. They weren't sure what kind of turtle it was, but they took note of a few distinguishing characteristics: its helmet-shaped shell and bright yellow-orange chin. Once home, they looked at New Hampshire Fish and Game's turtle website ([www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Nongame/turtles.htm](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Nongame/turtles.htm)) and were thrilled to find they'd actually seen a Blanding's turtle, an endangered species in New Hampshire, and one of the highest priority reptile and amphibian species for conservation in the Northeast.



The helmet-shaped shell of the Blanding's turtle is one of its distinguishing features.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL MARCHAND, NH FISH & GAME

Blanding's turtles are certainly rare, but we're lucky enough in the southeastern part of New Hampshire, to have a chance at spotting one of these beautiful turtles. Spring is an especially good time to see one, as they migrate from wetlands to nesting areas. They prefer to nest in upland areas with sandy soil and sparse vegetation where it's easy to dig a hole to lay their eggs. As they move across upland areas, they're also more vulnerable to threats, particularly when trying to cross roads. Individual turtles may move several kilometers between wetlands and nesting

grounds and utilize a variety of wetland types (marsh, beaver ponds, vernal pools) throughout the year. Large wetland complexes and intact surrounding uplands are especially important for the conservation of this species. The Blanding's turtle is a compelling poster-child for connecting parcels of conserved property across the landscape.

Like most wildlife in decline, the biggest threat to Blanding's turtles is the loss or degradation of their habitat. Their geographic range in southeastern New Hampshire coincides with the most populated part of the state. As development takes place, small, shallow wetlands can be easily drained or filled or critical upland habitats surrounding these wetlands can disappear altogether. Luckily, the Southeast Land Trust has conserved several properties where Blanding's turtles are known to occur, helping to prevent further development and fragmentation of this species' habitat.

Additionally, New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG) was recently awarded a nationally competitive State Wildlife Grant for the conservation of Blanding's turtles in the Northeast. Through this grant, NHFG will be working together with the other New England states, New York, and Pennsylvania to maintain and enhance functional habitat for Blanding's turtles.

And you can help, too. Be on the lookout when driving near wetland areas between May and July as there are likely to be nesting females trying to cross roads. Remember, when moving turtles across the road, always move them in the direction they are traveling – even if it is away from the wetland. Moving them back in the direction they came from will only force them to make a second crossing attempt. Most importantly, report any sightings (preferably with a photo) to NHFG at [raarp@wildlife.nh.gov](mailto:raarp@wildlife.nh.gov) or NHFG, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301 or go to [www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Nongame/reptiles\\_amphibians.htm](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Nongame/reptiles_amphibians.htm) for more information. ■



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**Karen McCormack** Office Manager  
& Membership Coordinator  
**David Viale** Land Protection & Stewardship Specialist

## Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire, please call 603.778.6088 or e-mail [info@seltnh.org](mailto:info@seltnh.org).

PO Box 675, Exeter, NH 03833

Fax: 603.778.0007

Website: [www.seltnh.org](http://www.seltnh.org)

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# Summer Soulstice to Benefit Land Trust

GRAMMY® Award-Winning Guitarist Ed Gerhard will perform at Verdant Pastures' Summer Soulstice in Epping on Friday, June 22! Verdant Pastures began Soulstice last year. Coinciding with the Earth's path around the sun, the twice a year performances celebrate the seasons by showcasing distinguished artists and funding important nonprofits.

Performing on a variety of guitars, Gerhard's virtuosity, generosity and humor shine through. His distinctive touch is unmistakable. From Tokyo to Rome and venues across the U.S., Ed Gerhard's music has touched audiences all over the world.

Whether performing a lush, sensual ballad or a haunting, bitter lap steel melody, Gerhard will mesmerize. His connection with the audience is palpable. Special solo guest Liz Frame is a singer/songwriter who delivers her songs with strong, distinctive vocals that fall somewhere between Dwight Yoakum's twang and k.d. lang's soul.

A portion of 2012 Summer Soulstice's proceeds will go to Southeast Land Trust to support its efforts to conserve farmland in greater Rockingham County. Enjoy a great night out and help conserve working farmland! Tickets \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door and can be purchased at [www.seltnh.org](http://www.seltnh.org). We hope to see you there! ■

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*Guitarist Ed Gerhard at  
Verdant Pastures' Summer Soulstice  
Friday, June 22*

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## Land Protection

BY THE NUMBERS

**As of May 18, 2012, the Southeast Land Trust has conserved 140 special places totaling 8,209 acres:**

- 5,876 acres via conservation easements and executory interests
- 2,333 acres owned by the Land Trust

*Land Trust Awarded \$1.2 million Grant*

See details on page 1

*Summer Soulstice to Benefit Land Trust*

See details on page 6

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Formed by the merger of the  
Rockingham Land Trust and Seacoast Land Trust

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