

## Invasive Species Threaten the Coastal Watershed

They often dot our favorite view of our protected lands, blending into the landscape. But they're quietly chipping away at our natural heritage.

By definition, non-native invasive species include plants and animals that spread aggressively within an environment where they have been introduced. They arrive from other continents both intentionally and unintentionally: early European colonists brought to North America familiar plants for agricultural or nostalgic reasons; global trade offers dispersal opportunities for species "hitchhiking" on shipments of cargo. Upon arrival in a new land, these species often find themselves without predators and able to monopolize resources to the detriment

of other species. The consequences of invasive species infestations can be dramatic changes to food-web interactions and ecosystem processes.

Invasive plants, including common reed, Japanese knotweed, oriental bittersweet, and multiflora rose, strangle, shade-out, or topple plants that have historically grown here in NH's coastal watershed. Insects like the hemlock woolly adelgid – recently found in Newmarket – disrupt complex ecological relationships that have evolved over thousands of years. As a result, invasive species have contributed to the decline of 42% of our rare species; for 18% of federally listed endangered or threatened species, invasives are the primary cause of their decline. In addition, economic impacts of invasive plants affect forestry, agriculture, and recreation at the local and national level. Seventy-nine species alone cost the U.S. economy more than 97 billion dollars annually in lost crops and control efforts.

"We're living in a modified ecosystem. It's a question of what we're willing to sacrifice. The battle against invasives can't always be won, but the goal is to strategize our efforts to protect our native diversity," said Kevin Lucey, chair of NH's Coastal Watershed Invasive Plant Partnership (CWIPP).

CWIPP's name reflects its mission to protect the ecology and economic vitality of the coastal watershed from invasive plant species, which are recognized as one of the greatest threats faced by land managers today. A voluntary partnership with representatives from eleven federal, state and nonprofit organizations, CWIPP meets monthly to share strategies and resources. It focuses its activities in NH's coastal watershed, an area that encompasses 42 towns in Strafford and Rockingham counties. The Southeast Land Trust is a member of CWIPP.

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A staff partner of the Coastal Watershed Invasive Plant Partnership maps the locations of invasives in the coastal watershed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GREAT BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE



## GET *Out & About*

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

### **Canoe the Lamprey River**

**Saturday, September 19th •**

**8AM-Noon**

**Lamprey River, Epping**

Enjoy vibrant fall colors reflecting off the quiet backwaters as you paddle the *Wild and Scenic* Lamprey River in Epping. Local canoe and boat craftsman Kevin Martin will guide participants along one of his favorite stretches of *Wild and Scenic* Lamprey River and discuss the wildlife that he’s encountered through his many explorations. We’ll also be joined by river, wetland, and wildlife experts who will discuss the river’s habitat and what local groups are doing to protect this valuable natural resource.

After the canoe ride, those interested can tour Kevin’s shop and discuss the various styles and methods of canoe building.

Participants will need to provide their own canoe, paddles, and life vests. At least one person per canoe should have some canoe experience. Participants should be in good physical shape as they may need to portage (carry the canoe) around fallen trees, beaver dams, etc. as many as 5-10 times. As always, dress appropriately for the weather and terrain.

For more information on the Lamprey River, visit [www.lampreyriver.org](http://www.lampreyriver.org). Co-sponsored by the Lamprey River Advisory Committee.

# Easement Stewardship: Ensuring Perpetuity

As summer winds down, the staff and volunteers of the Southeast Land Trust are gearing up for another season of easement monitoring.

With the acceptance of each conservation restriction, the Southeast Land Trust commits to its long-term monitoring and enforcement. This commitment is reflected in our policy and practice of easement monitoring and our plans to apply to the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission in 2010, which requires annual monitoring of all easements for eligibility.

“The signing of a conservation easement deed might suggest that the act of protection is complete,” notes Brian Hart, Executive Director. “In reality, the signing is only the start of a perpetual process to ensure that the goals of the conservation easement are met by current and future owners.”

Over the past two years, Land Trust staff and volunteer easement monitors have conducted a ground visit on each conserved property. “As the number of easements held by the Land Trust grew to more than 100,” says Hart, “we recognized that this approach simply would not be sustainable.

We decided to evaluate alternatives that would allow us to monitor properties as effectively and more efficiently.”

The new monitoring policy still requires monitoring each year; however, the Land Trust determines the specific method for each property based on a variety of factors

including its location, potential risks, and previous ground visit.

Each year Conservation Land Stewardship Manager Karin Rubin prepares a proposed schedule for monitoring of each property. “Our goal is to visit each property on the ground with a staff person or volunteer at least once every three years, and preferably every two years.” In practice, this means that 30-50% of the existing portfolio of easements will be inspected on the ground each year.



Aerial photographs like this of the South Kingston Town Forest provide a clear view of a property, and can help identify land disturbances, such as the adjacent gravel pit.

Prior to the ground inspections, the Land Trust purchases aerial photographs for all properties. These low altitude photographs are taken in May before new vegetative growth obscures the ground. Stonewalls, structures, and many ground disturbances are evident. The images are provided digitally

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# Annual Meeting

The 2008 Annual Meeting was graciously hosted by Stephen Kaneb and Verdant Pastures in Epping. More than 75 members enjoyed a tasty barbeque, a lecture by Tom Wessels on our culture's need to connect back to land, and the presentation of conservation awards to partnering communities and landowners.



Cy and Bobbie Sweet received the 2008 Jack Heath Conservation Award from Board President Tom Chamberlin at the 2008 Annual Meeting in June. The Sweets were recognized for their tremendous personal commitment to preserve the land and water of Great Bay and southeastern NH. COURTESY OF KARLA SINGER



Ecologist, author, and educator Tom Wessels guided participants on a tour of the recently acquired Pernokas tract on the Pawtuckaway River, pointing out unique features, including now-forested areas that were once planted with row crops and abandoned.

COURTESY OF KARLA SINGER

## *Invasive Species Threaten the Coastal Watershed, continued...*

### **How CWIPP Combats Invasive Plants:**

**Prevention:** *early detection-rapid response:* finding and eradicating small populations of newly discovered invasive species before they become a permanent problem. These efforts are currently focused on perennial pepperweed, a recent invader in NH's salt marshes with only two known infestations in the state so far.

**Restoration and Control:** implementing projects to control invasive plant species and restore native habitats. For instance, a CWIPP project located in New Castle freed a native pitch pine forest from the vines of oriental bittersweet. Long-term ongoing management and monitoring will be required.



Do you recognize invasive plants? Does your yard host any? This free, color identification and control guide can be downloaded from <http://extension.unh.edu/forestry/Docs/invasive.pdf>.

**Assessment and Monitoring:** Using coordinated assessment and mapping, CWIPP mapped invasive plants on 2,000 acres in NH's coastal watershed, using unified data protocols for collection housed in a shared database. Learning where the plants are located is the first step in implementing control.

**Cooperation and Collaboration:** If control measures are conducted only on land under single ownership, it leaves property vulnerable to infestations nearby.

**Outreach and Education** has led to increased awareness and identification of invasives throughout the state.

For further information about invasives and how you can help control their spread, visit <http://extension.unh.edu/Forestry/invasives.htm>. ■

## **Managing Invasives on Land Trust Properties**

The Southeast Land Trust owns more than 700 acres of land, and our properties are not free from invasives. "Invasive plants are a management concern that requires careful planning, coordination, and persistence," explains Karin Rubin, Conservation Land Stewardship Manager. Management plans, which have been completed for half of the properties owned by the Land Trust, help guide the staff in monitoring and control. Rubin works with volunteers, wildlife biologists, and foresters to monitor, prioritize, and treat affected properties. In 2006 and 2007, the Trust's Volunteer Land Stewards spent several hours controlling limited populations of autumn olive and Japanese barberry within the Rum Brook floodplain. While significant progress was made, efforts will need to continue over multiple years. If you'd like to volunteer for invasives control work, contact Karin Rubin at [krubin@seltnh.org](mailto:krubin@seltnh.org) or 603.778.6088.

## *Easement Stewardship: Ensuring Perpetuity, continued...*

in both true color and infrared and uploaded into our geographic information system software, ArcView. The infrared imagery provides the best view of ground disturbances, which show up in red, and allows staff to see remote portions of a property that may be inaccessible on foot due to difficult terrain.

Staff then analyze each aerial image for evidence of uses inconsistent with easement terms. If an area of concern is identified, the property may be added to the current year's schedule for a ground visit to further explore the potential concern.

"Over time these images will provide a visual narrative of the property's history," notes Rubin. "Should encroachments or violations occur, we anticipate that such documentation of prior years' conditions will be extremely valuable."

Despite the addition of an aerial monitoring component, the heart of the monitoring program remains the ground visits and communications with landowners. Ground visits consist of walking tours of a property, usually with the landowner, to observe the property's condition. A key aspect is discussion with the landowner about recent activities and future plans, including changes in management activities, construction of new structures, or pending sale of the property.

For the past four years, trained Volunteer Easement Monitors have visited 10-20 properties annually, establishing relationships with the land and landowners, and providing a valuable service to the Land Trust. These visits will continue and will be supplemented by the aerial imagery.

Since 2005, volunteer Alison Watts has monitored the Bobbie Byrne conservation easement in Newfields. "Being an easement volunteer allowed me to become closely acquainted with an important piece of land in my town," notes Watts. "There is a sense of continuity in walking the boundaries of a property every year; noting slight changes and trends, and feeling that you are participating in long term stewardship of a beautiful area."

"Bobbie was very attached to her property, but due to health

problems was no longer able to reach the more inaccessible areas, so I would visit with her after my site walk, and let her know how the trees in the back section were doing, or if the wetland near the railroad was bigger," explained Watts. "She would talk about the history of her property, and of the Town, and point out any areas within the easement which had changed and why. She was always proud of her conservation easement, and very pleased to know that her land was looked after by people who cared about it."

Observations from each monitoring activity – whether aerial observation or a ground visit – are documented. These important records inform future staff of changes in the property's natural land cover, associated uses, and landowner goals.

An ongoing aspect of monitoring is following up with the landowner – with observations, useful information, and suggestions. Rubin observes that "Our goal is to be a resource to help achieve the Land Trust's and landowner's shared goals as written in the conservation easement." Follow-up may include sharing with landowners best management practices for forestry, agriculture, or invasive plant control.

In 2008, the Southeast Land Trust spent just over \$31,000 on our easement monitoring program. Support for this work was provided by members and from interest and dividends earned from the Conservation Stewardship Fund, a dedicated fund whose purpose is to fund 100% of the Land Trust's long-term monitoring stewardship and legal defense of all conservation easements. The current level of the Conservation Stewardship Fund provides just 50% of the annual cost of monitoring and enforcement. To make a special contribution to the Conservation Stewardship Fund, please use the enclosed envelope or donate on-line at [www.seltnh.org](http://www.seltnh.org) (click on Donate Now).

If you are interested in learning more about the Volunteer Easement Monitoring Program, please call Karin Rubin at 778.6088, or e-mail her at [krubin@seltnh.org](mailto:krubin@seltnh.org). ■

### *Thank You* TO OUR SPONSOR

Diane and Arthur Caras of Derry generously underwrote the fall issue of *This Land*. As landowners who have permanently conserved their land with the Southeast Land Trust and Town of Derry, they are proud to support the Land Trust and our mission of conserving the significant land and natural resources of southeastern NH. If you or your business is interested in sponsoring a future issue of the newsletter, please call Brian Hart or e-mail [bhart@seltnh.org](mailto:bhart@seltnh.org).

# Conservation Updates

## Windham Town Forest

This June, the **Town of Windham** donated a conservation easement on 78 acres within the 500-acre Windham Town Forest. Both parcels are generally dominated by white pine with a mix of hardwood species such as oak and pignut hickory. These properties offer the Town future timber harvesting opportunities. In addition, the property's high rocky ridges, vernal pools, and forested wetlands support diverse wildlife. The remoteness and size of the Windham Town Forest provide area residents with great passive recreational opportunities close to home, such as hiking and hunting. The conservation easement was authorized by Windham voters at a special town meeting on September 9, 2008 and was a condition of a grant received from the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Water Supply Land Protection Program. This represents the first project completed by the Land Trust in Windham.

## Scamman Farm

Recognizing the significant natural resources of the Scamman Farm, the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service has awarded the pending conservation easement with \$1.19 million in funding through the United States Department of Agriculture's Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program. The funding

represents 50% of the purchase price for the conservation easement on the ~200-acre farm and will match the **Town of Stratham's** commitment dollar-for-dollar. "We're thrilled that the Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program recognized what Stratham residents have always known: the Scamman Farm represents a part of our agricultural heritage worthy of permanent protection," commented Laura Prescott, member of the Stratham Ad Hoc Open Space Committee. The Land Trust and the Town hope to close on the easement by the end of 2009.

## Pawtuckaway River

The Land Trust's work to conserve the Pawtuckaway River in **Epping and Raymond** was awarded a grant of up to \$200,000 from Saving New England's Wildlife Grant program of the Open Space Institute. This funding will match \$60,000 from the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, \$75,000 awarded by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and a pending application for \$706,650 from the federal Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. If all funds are received, the Land Trust would acquire two separate parcels totaling 200 acres, adding to the Bond and Pernokas Tracts purchased in 2008. ■

## In Memory

We are sad to note the passing of Barbara "Bobbie" Byrne, Land Trust member, conservationist, and easement donor, who died on February 17, 2009. Bobbie's donation of a conservation easement in 2004 sparked the 329-acre Piscassic Greenway campaign. In honor of Bobbie and her commitment to conservation in Newfields, the Newfields Conservation Commission and Southeast Land Trust will name a trail within the Piscassic Greenway in her memory. ■



## GET *Out & About*

### Trail Work Day – Piscassic Greenway-Cole Farm

**Saturday, September 26 • 9am-3pm  
Newfields and Newmarket**

Volunteers are needed to help maintain and repair existing trails, and brush out and mark new trails on the Piscassic Greenway-Cole Farm in Newfields and Newmarket. The Land Trust will provide water, snacks, and work gloves. Bring your energy and enthusiasm for this moderately strenuous work day.

**Participants must pre-register no later than September 14** by e-mailing Karin Rubin at [krubin@seltnh.org](mailto:krubin@seltnh.org) or calling her at 603.778.6088.

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## Board Members

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# Save the Date! Fall Fundraiser set for November 14th!

If you haven't been to our past Fall Fundraisers, you've been missing one of the best parties around! Join us this year for an evening of food, fun, and live music on November 14th as we host our 7th annual Fall Fundraiser at the Seacoast Science Center in Rye, NH.

The fall fundraiser features not one but two auctions over the course of the evening. There are items for every taste and price range. Last year the silent auction included over 100 items such as locally made crafts, art, gift certificates to local businesses, and much more. Renowned local auctioneer Joe Shanley has generously offered to lead this year's live auction. So far this year's live

auction includes club seats to see the Patriots, a local sight-seeing and photography flight,

and a week's stay at a beautiful chalet in the French Alps. As always, we will serve delicious appetizers along with complimentary beer and wine. For an updated list of items,

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

Tickets are \$50 in advance by November 6th and \$60 after November 6th or at the door. To purchase tickets, please visit our website at [www.seltnh.org](http://www.seltnh.org), call 603.778.6088, or send an e-mail to [tickets@seltnh.org](mailto:tickets@seltnh.org). If you want to donate an item or lend a hand, please contact Karen McCormack at 603.778.6088 or [kmccormack@seltnh.org](mailto:kmccormack@seltnh.org). ■

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**Fall Fundraiser**  
**Join us to have fun, raise money, and save land!**  
*Saturday, November 14, 2009*  
*Seacoast Science Center, Rye, NH*

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## 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

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2008 Annual Report Enclosed:  
*14 properties and 700+ acres conserved!*

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

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