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## For the Love of Water

**D**ave Olson is a firm believer that decisions based on love always work out. His love for his land and the creatures who dwell there are at the core of his decision to conserve his 72-acre property – the Bel Ami Farm – for ongoing public benefit.

As a former professor at the University of New Hampshire, Dave taught wildlife biology, fire ecology, and forest management. He's always known the value of his land. Tucked away in a quiet corner of Madbury, it is nestled along the banks of the Bellamy River and Reservoir and is home to abundant wildlife, a blueberry plantation, a small 12-acre cut-your-own Christmas tree farm, and forests with nearly 35 species of native trees.

Dave's desire to conserve his land was driven by his educational and academic background, as well as the "Yankee tradition of keeping land open."

The first thing he did when he got the land in 1974 was to take down the gates and open access to the Bellamy Reservoir. He tries to speak with everyone who accesses the reservoir from this point. No easy task considering that, by his count calculating each visit and person, the property was accessed 8,000 times last year for kayaking, fishing, hiking, and other low-impact uses. It's his goal to continue to allow low-impact uses.

Dave thinks that the property's appeal is in large part because, "The reservoir isn't a shoreline dotted with houses and docks. It's wild. People get a chance to see beautiful wild landscapes, to catch fish, to hunt, to see a lot of different wildlife."

And, wildlife is abundant here. Ever the scientist, Dave tracks the biodiversity of his land. His detailed notes include whether creatures are nesting on the land or just passing through. It lists 108 species of birds, 22 large and small mammals, and 17 different amphibians and reptiles.

Beyond these values, the protection of the Bellamy Reservoir is a high priority for the City of Portsmouth, as the Bellamy is its primary water supply. With problems at Pease and increasing

*continued on page 3*

Above: Early February morning light on the frozen Bellamy Reservoir in Madbury. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

# Preparing the Stonehouse Forest for the Public

**T**hanks to the incredible support of more than 450 donors, the Town of Barrington, and many other partners SELT purchased the Stonehouse Forest – more than 1,500 acres in Barrington adjacent to the Stonehouse Pond. The land is now subject to a conservation easement held by NH Fish and Game Department and the Town of Barrington. There is huge public interest in accessing the property. With that, we are sharing our plans for its future.

This year, SELT is laying the groundwork for the public trail system that will link existing trails and woods roads. Our hope is to have the trail system approved by NH Fish and Game by the fall of 2018 with trail improvements beginning late fall and being completed in 2019.

To begin, SELT has hired Independent Archaeological Consulting LLC to complete a site assessment of the entire Stonehouse Forest. This work will identify areas that are significant for Native American or early Colonial settlements, allowing SELT to reroute trails or other ground disturbance activities away from these important sites. We anticipate receiving the results of this work by June of 2018.

SELT has also hired wildlife biologist Ellen Snyder of Ibis Wildlife Consulting, and licensed forester Charles Moreno of Moreno Forestry, to complete a comprehensive management and trails plan. This plan will incorporate the results of the comprehensive ecological and habitat inventory that SELT had prepared by Moosewood Ecological and the archaeological assessment. The management and trails plan will be completed in consultation with the Town of Barrington Conservation Commission and NH Fish and Game so that SELT can support critical wildlife and cultural resources through the relocation of existing, or creation of new, trails. This plan will also identify proposed parking areas, kiosks, trailheads, appropriate types of uses on each trail, and any trail connections to the adjacent Stonehouse Pond property.

During 2018, public recreational use of the Stonehouse Forest is allowed for hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, hunting, fishing, and nature observation. At this time, we ask that you refrain from snowmobiling, horseback riding, and mountain biking as the designation of trails for those uses must be approved by NH Fish and Game as part of the recreational trail plan.

While the Stonehouse Forest is open for public use, the location of parking areas will

not be determined until the recreation plan is approved this fall and won't be constructed until 2019. As a result, for a time parking will be limited. We ask that you kindly respect abutting landowners and do not block driveways or impede traffic when parking.

We greatly look forward to fully opening this property for SELTies and the public in 2019. In the meantime, thank you very much for your strong support and patience as we undertake the necessary planning and design work to ensure the resources that make Stonehouse Forest such a special place are not inadvertently impacted by our mutually strong desire to visit and enjoy the property.



A family explores boulders at Stonehouse Forest. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

# Diamonds

By Dave Olson

A cold clear February morning. I'm the richest man alive.  
My fields of snow are sprinkled with diamonds,  
Dead stalks in the garden transformed into fairy wands  
Breezes in the pines fill the air with diamond dust  
On snowshoes I walk on diamonds, apologetic for each step.

Many never see these diamonds – polarized lenses make them disappear  
Soon plowed into dirty drifts, scraped, covered and salted  
They are transformed before the sun is ready  
How drab and dirty the urban winter landscapes  
People there spend lives pursuing cruel, hard, sterile diamonds.

Come March the sun transforms my diamonds in many ways  
Some stay to prepare the garden for lettuce, beans and gladiolus  
Others rest in my well 'till called forth to water horses or make lemonade  
Some ride the air to far away places, perhaps to slake a desert thirst  
Others escape down the brook and river to taste the salt of the ocean  
Some become mother's milk nursing new babies into the grand circle of life.

Come next February diamonds will return to sprinkle my fields of snow  
Sparkling and shimmering in the sunlight – ready for new adventures.

Printed with permission from Dave Olson. If you would like to share your nature story or poem, please submit it to [info@seltnh.org](mailto:info@seltnh.org).

## Water *continued from page 1*

groundwater contamination, Seacoast residents – and their towns – now know that clean drinking water should not be taken for granted. Conserving land that surrounds, or includes, wetlands, rivers, streams, and larger bodies of water like the Bellamy protects water resources from the pressures of development and helps municipal water systems provide higher quality water at the tap.

That's why this February, SELT, the City, and Dave agreed on a partnership to permanently conserve this land through the sale of a conservation easement. To support the effort, SELT helped the City apply for – and receive – a grant from the newly established New Hampshire Groundwater and Drinking Water Trust Fund (see sidebar). These funds made conserving this property in Madbury possible.

According to Al Pratt, Water Resource Manager for the City of Portsmouth, "Portsmouth City Council support in appropriating the remainder of the funds for this purchase is very much appreciated and is in line with the City of Portsmouth's long-term commitment to sustainability."

He continues, "The conservation easement on Mr. Olson's property is an important step toward the continued long-term protection of the Bellamy Reservoir and the quality of the drinking water supply for Portsmouth and the Seacoast area. We hope that this project will be the keystone parcel for further land protection efforts in the Bellamy watershed."

Through this conservation easement, Dave is enshrining his passion for this special place. And in doing so, he's ensuring that people – whether by kayaking the reservoir, hiking its shoreline, or turning the tap on in Portsmouth, will experience the beauty and wildness of the Bellamy.

# New Fund to Enhance Public Water Supplies

This winter SELT helped the City of Portsmouth secure the first grant for a land conservation project from the Groundwater and Drinking Water Trust Fund. This fund was established by the State Legislature as a result of a 2003 ruling against ExxonMobil in favor of the state's case for methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MtBE) contamination. MtBE, previously used as a common gasoline additive to reduce emissions, contaminated public and private groundwater wells. After years of appeal, the fund is now fully supported by a \$236 million judgment and managed by the Groundwater and Drinking Water Commission.

According to Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem), "The Groundwater and Drinking Water Trust Fund has developed a program to distribute the MtBE settlement to aid in remediation efforts, including extending waterlines and protecting invaluable clean water supplies across our state."

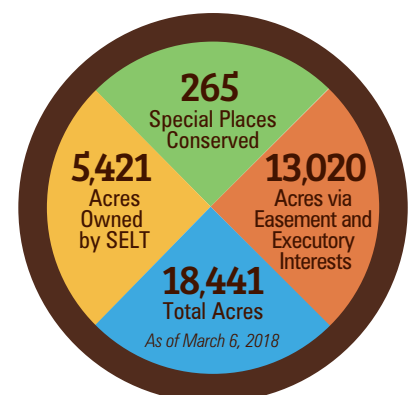
*"[Dave Olson's conservation easement] is an example of how the Trust Fund can provide matching funds that allow communities access to a clean, protected water supply in the greater Portsmouth Region."*

*–Senate President Chuck Morse*

This important fund will allow communities to prepare for a more secure water future by protecting the land that filters and buffers our water supplies and investing in the public water supply infrastructure.

Learn more at online at <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/index.htm>

## Land Conservation by the numbers





## With Deep Roots, Comes a Deep Commitment

It's clear from talking with Ron Kennard that he has an encyclopedic memory and a drive to keep his family history alive. His family first arrived at Strawbery Banke in the 1660s and has been living in southeastern New Hampshire and southern Maine ever since. There are Kennard roads, a Kennard Hill, and now – thanks to his donation – the Langley & Kennard Forest.

For years, Ron has been working to find the right opportunity to conserve his land. In 2016, he generously agreed to donate his 40 acres to SELT, subject to a Wetlands Reserve Easement held by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This land, tucked quietly behind the Lee Traffic Circle, has long been a target for residential and commercial development. Subdivisions and strip malls are the last thing Ron and his family want to see happen to this special place.

According to Ron, “I have no interest in making a profit for the sale of this land. In fact, I would be insulted if it were developed.” At the end of the day, Ron simply wants to know that his land will continue to be open for people and wildlife to enjoy peacefully, and that's one of the reasons he was driven to conserve his land with SELT.

Inside a boundary of historic stone walls, these 40 acres of old fields, forest, and wetlands along the Oyster River pack a multitude of benefits. Much of this land has been identified by NH Fish and Game as the highest ranked habitat in the state, providing critical resources for a diversity of wildlife and aquatic species. Ron – in consultation with his youngest sister, June – concluded these treasures are best left in the care of SELT, an organization dedicated to conserving land for people and nature. Similar to other SELT-owned reservations, the Langley & Kennard Forest will offer public access along a loop trail accessed from Stepping Stone Road.

Ron is deeply connected to his family history, and this land

plays a central role of that sense of place. He continues to live in the original Langley homestead, built in the early 1700's, and purchased by his father in 1948, who was just the second owner outside of the Langley family. The Langley cemetery still sits on high ground behind the barn, a quiet reminder of generations past. Upon deeper investigations into his own family history and land, Ron is even more inclined to conserve this property for future generations. Reflecting on this, he said, “I want to conserve the land in the memory of my father, William E. Kennard, and the Langley Family.”

The Town of Lee has changed significantly in Ron's 70 years. In 1950, when Ron was born, Lee had a population of about 900 people. Since his birth, Lee – still one of the smallest towns on the Seacoast by acreage – has multiplied to nearly 5,000 people.

Though the population of Lee has grown, Ron still feels there is strong support in his community to conserve its natural landscapes. While an earlier attempt to protect the land with the Town failed, the initial vote showed more than 400 residents in support – more than double those against. With the property under SELT's care, he hopes that the local community will continue to enjoy the property as much as he does.

With spring approaching, Ron continues to make his plans for the future. Fortunately, some of these considerations have eased knowing SELT will take good care of his family's land. He didn't want to leave it to chance saying, “Got to do it while you're still able.” Ron's years of commitment and stewardship have left an indelible mark on the land, and his generosity will be remembered and enjoyed by generations to come at the Langley & Kennard Forest.

Over the past 10-12 years, I have received 9-10 offers to sell this land for housing or commercial development.

Above: Ron Kennard on his property in Lee.

PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

Right: A snippet from one of Ron's many handwritten letters to SELT.

# Keeping the Promise of Stewardship

For the last 10 years, SELT has monitored every easement property – almost 200 – every year. From the time the snow melts through December, SELT staff and 25 volunteers work to monitor all of the conservation easements through a combination of aerial photos and site visits. This year, SELT will be visiting every property in person.

Deborah Goard, Stewardship Director explains, “The focus of our monitoring visits is building relationships with landowners – as well as ensuring that properties are being used in accordance with the terms of the easement and correcting any issues as they arise. The easements are entrusted to us and it’s our job to make sure that the properties are being maintained in the way that they were intended.”

Before SELT staff or volunteers visit a property, they read the easement deeds, check out aerial photos, and any notes from the last year. They will then reach out to the landowners to schedule the visit and invite them to join them on the walk.

According to Dani Christopher, Conservation Easement Steward, “The site walk’s one of the things that’s most enjoyable about the job. Many landowners have owned the property for decades – even generations. It’s really fun to walk the land with them and learn about the family history, the property history,

and hear how things have changed throughout time. It’s also a great way to stay up to date about management activities and keep landowners engaged.”

Of course, there are pros and cons to any job, but Dani believes that the positives far outweigh the negatives. “Yes, I have to deal with ticks, mosquitos, and poison ivy. But, I also get to enjoy the freedom of a fresh breeze, the scents of the forest, and the sounds of water moving through the river. It’s a nice break from the computer.”

In addition to the annual monitoring, SELT strives to keep an open line of communication and be a resource to landowners. Landowners receive a print newsletter, educational publications, and connections to professional resources, services, and expertise.

On this important milestone, Goard said, “Every land trust strives for 100% easement monitoring; it’s good business practice. We’ve been making and meeting this goal now for a decade – even before it was an accreditation requirement.” Accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission affirms that national quality standards are met with sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and last stewardship.

This is just another way that you – as a member of SELT – are helping us keep the promise of stewardship.



Dani Christopher, Conservation Easement Steward, is joined by Mr. Huston on a site walk.

PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN



# Upcoming Events


For a complete calendar and more event details, please visit [www.seltnh.org](http://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](http://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!

## Alnoba Changemaker Series: The Importance of Farmland Conservation

Thursday, April 5 · 6:30–8:30pm · Alnoba, Kensington

Brian Hart of SELT joins a panel of local conservationists and farmers to talk about the importance of conserving our community's farmland. Conservation efforts at the Bodwell Dairy Farm will be highlighted. Experts will answer questions about how these efforts are crucial to the success and ongoing story of the local food movement and preserving the soul of our communities. This event is free; however, seating is limited so please register now. Suggested \$10 donation at the door to help support Kensington's Sawyer Park.



**Friday, April 20 · 7–10pm · The Music Hall, Portsmouth**

Enjoy beautiful short films that explore and celebrate our shared environment, telling amazing stories of the human-nature connection. **This is a sell-out show, so be sure to get your tickets early!** All proceeds benefit the conservation programs of SELT. Tickets are \$20. Purchase online at [themusichall.org](http://themusichall.org) or in person from The Music Hall box office, Travel & Nature, or the SELT office.

## Earth Day

Sunday, April 22 · 1–2:30pm · Stonehouse Pond, Barrington

In celebration of Earth Day, join other SELTies for light trail work (including litter pick up). This property is located directly adjacent to the Stonehouse Forest. Before we launch, we'll dedicate the trail's kiosk to Tri-City Subaru in honor of their remarkable support of the Stonehouse Forest's protection. If time allows once work is done, stay and enjoy the trails. Bring work gloves, if you have them. Registration is not required.

## Tree ID Walk

Saturday, April 28 · 9–11:30am · Mast Road Natural Area, Epping

Join us for a spring tree and shrub identification workshop – for all skill levels. We'll learn all about buds, branching, and bark – PLUS – site, form, and ecology to help with woody plant identification. *continued on page 7*



**The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment is proud to support SELT's field trips and educational opportunities.**

## Upcoming Events continued

### Vernal Pool Ecology Walk

Saturday, May 5 · 9am–Noon · Zanard Forest, Nottingham

Walk with wetland ecologist, Mark West, and explore several vernal pools on SELT's 70-acre preserve. Learn to identify amphibian egg masses, larvae, and major aquatic invertebrate groups associated with vernal pools. We'll also visit a large beaver pond on the property and discover how wildlife species utilize a variety of wetland habitats during their life stages.



Wood Frog egg mass.

### Birding the Piscassic Greenway

Saturday, May 19 · 6–10am · Piscassic Greenway, Newfields

Birders, grab your binoculars for this annual event. Beginners and intermediate skill levels will enjoy exploring six different bird habitats. Registration is limited to 20.

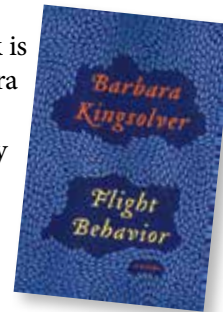
### SELT Book Club

Thursday, May 24 · 5:30–7pm · SELT Office, Exeter

**NEW!**

Join our new Book Club – soon to be a SELTie favorite – presented in partnership with

Water Street Bookstore! Our first Book Club pick is *Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver. Water Street Bookstore has generously offered to donate 20% of book sales to SELT if you purchase your copy of *Flight Behavior* at their downtown Exeter location. Get reading and join us prepared to snack, sip, and discuss! Light refreshments, beer, and wine will be provided.



### Conservation Celebration

Thursday, June 28 · 5:30–8pm · Flagg Hill Winery, Lee

Join us for an evening to celebrate conservation successes of the year. Enjoy a summer evening at the winery – one of our conservation easement properties – with tours of the vineyard, winery, and distillery; drinks; good food; and conversation with like-minded SELTies. Tickets will be available soon.

## Board Members

**Samuel Reid** President, Portsmouth  
**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  
**Dan Clapp** Madbury  
**David Kirkpatrick** Portsmouth  
**Scott Marion** Rye  
**Linda McGivern** Rollinsford  
**Robin Najjar** Portsmouth  
**Laurie Smith** Dover  
**Emma Tutein** Madbury  
**Dan Wyand** Portsmouth  
**Rob Wofchuck** Brentwood

## Staff

**Zoe Aldag** Development and Outreach Coordinator  
**Phil Auger** Land Manager  
**Dani Christopher** Conservation Easement Steward  
**Shaun Dillon** Conservation Coordinator  
**Deborah Goard** Stewardship Director  
**Brian Hart** Executive Director  
**Duane Hyde** Land Conservation Director  
**Jeremy Lougee** Conservation Project Manager  
**Kate MacKenzie** Development Specialist  
**Kylee Noga** Executive & Operations Assistant  
**Jennifer Pribble** Interim Communications Manager  
**Bev Shadley** Deputy Director

## Questions, Comments, Concerns?

To contact SELT, please call **603-778-6088** or email [info@seltnh.org](mailto:info@seltnh.org).  
 6 Center St., PO Box 675, Exeter, NH 03833  
 Website: [www.seltnh.org](http://www.seltnh.org)  
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*Printed on recycled paper.*

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#NATIONALTRAILSDAY®

## National Trails Day – Celebrating 10 years of Stewardship!

Saturday, June 2 · 9–11:30am · Plaistow Town Forest

What better way to celebrate 10 years of Stewardship than by getting out on one of our easements for National Trails Day? Join our Easement Stewardship Staff for a tour of the beautiful Plaistow Town Forest! Protected forever through a conservation easement with SELT, the forest offers miles of trails to enjoy and many unique natural features to explore and celebrate – including a heron rookery! We'll also highlight the great work the Town has put into managing the land and SELT's role as conservation easement holder on the property.

## A Mark of Distinction

The accreditation seal AFFIRMS national quality standards are met.





DRINK IT. SAVE IT.

**For the Love of Water**  
*see page 1*

**Keeping the Promise of Stewardship**  
*see page 5*



SYRCL's **WILD & SCENIC** FILM FESTIVAL  
WHERE ACTIVISM GETS INSPIRED

See details on page 6

**GROUNDWELL**  
FRIDAY, APRIL 20 • 7PM • THE MUSIC HALL  
HOSTED BY

WWW.SELTNH.ORG **SELT**  
SOUTHEAST LAND TRUST  
of NEW HAMPSHIRE

## New Faces at SELT

**J**ennifer Pribble joined SELT this January, filling the role of Communications Manager during Isabel Aley's maternity leave. Isabel welcomed a healthy son in February and plans to return to SELT in May. Jen is excited to help share SELT's successes and stories with you.

Kylee Noga started in late February in the expanded role of Executive and Operations Assistant to support the operation of the organization and SELT's senior leadership team. Kylee's previously worked for



L to R: Kylee Noga, Shaun Dillon, and Jennifer Pribble

Strawbery Banke and Mass Audubon's Boston Nature Center.

SELT's staff now has a little bit of international flair, with the hiring of Shaun Dillon as our Conservation Coordinator. Shaun is a dual citizen of Great Britain and Denmark. He has been working as a volunteer with the York Land Trust for the last two years. This new position supports the Land Conservation and Stewardship departments through mapping, research, and contract preparation.

Please welcome the newest members of our team!