



SELTeverlasting

NEWS FOR OWNERS OF LAND PROTECTED BY A CONSERVATION EASEMENT

During the snowstorm on March 13th, I watched a group of robins that had come to my neighborhood a few days earlier. They flew between a red maple tree and a crab apple tree eating the small fruit the local family of turkeys left behind. While I watched them, I couldn't help but wonder if they were at all disappointed with the several feet of snow still on the ground and more on the way. This is the time of year I get a bit restless: wishing I could fast-forward a month or two to start my garden, keep the windows open, and spend the majority of my free time outside. This time of year also reminds me there's no choice but to be patient and adapt to whatever Mother Nature throws our way - and this year she seems fairly intent on again making us wait for spring to come and stay.

SELT staff who are directly involved in the stewardship of the conservation easements we hold and the lands we own must often adjust our plans based on the will of Mother Nature as well. Whether it's scrambling to walk conservation easement lands before an early snowfall, adjusting our intended timeframe for a timber harvest due to an early mud season or the needs of a bat species in decline, there's not much we can do other than step back, reevaluate, and modify our plans. Things may not go exactly as we had hoped, but successfully adapting to whatever comes our way is important for us to continue to keep our promise to help care for these lands forever.

Best wishes,

*Deborah Goard
Stewardship Director*

Annual Monitoring Changes

Since 2008, SELT has used a combination of on-site visits and the review of current aerial photos to fulfill our obligation to annually monitor all of the conservation easements we hold. Due to problems beyond our control, we have had challenges obtaining aerial photos on time for two of the last three years. For that reason, this year (2018), SELT staff will

be conducting on-site visits for all of our conservation easements.

While this change to our monitoring methods means more legwork for staff, we are excited to spend more time out of the office and, more importantly, we are excited for the opportunity to connect with all of you out on your land!

Land Conservation Update

In 2017, SELT closed on six new conservation easements in the towns of Barrington, Derry, Londonderry, Rochester, and Rollinsford, and added acreage to two existing conservation easements in Rochester and Windham. SELT also gained ownership of three new fee-owned reservations in Barrington, Brentwood, and Nottingham, and added acreage to two of our existing reservations in Kingston, Rollinsford, and Dover. Read on to learn about just a few of these newly conserved lands.



Willow Street | Derry | 63.42 acres



Island Pond Road | Derry | 75.36 acres

SELT partnered with the Town of Derry helping them acquire and conserve two different properties bringing the number of Town lands conserved with SELT to five. The first property is 63.42-acres off Willow Street (above left) consisting of forestland and forested wetlands. This land was conserved with funding from the NH Department of Environmental Services and helps to protect an active public water supply well. The second property is 75.36-acres off Island Pond Road (above right) with frontage on the Rockingham Recreational Trail. This property consists of forest and forested wetlands, and protects approximately 3,300 feet on both sides of streams that contribute to the nearby Ballard Pond, which is designated as a Prime Wetland by the Town of Derry.



Gauthier Farm | Rochester | 162 acres

Protected in partnership with the Gauthier family, the City of Rochester, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, this land will remain available for agriculture, provide connectivity with conservation land across the river in Maine, protect 9,000 feet of frontage on the Salmon Falls River.



DeYoung-Fralic Conservation Area | Brentwood | 104.86 acres

This land, conserved by the DeYoung family and transferred to SELT subject to a Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetlands Reserve Easement, contains approximately 3,675 feet of frontage along the Exeter River and a 7-acre abandoned gravel pit, which will be restored to create turtle nesting and early successional habitats.

Keeping the Promise of Stewardship

For the last 10 years, SELT has monitored every easement property – every year. From the time the snow melts to October, staff and 25 volunteers work to review aerial photographs and visit properties.

Before staff or volunteers visit your property, they read the easement deeds, look at aerial photos, and review any notes from the last year. They will then reach out to you to schedule the visit and invite you to join them.

These annual property visits allow us to build our relationship with you – the landowner – and ensure that properties are being managed in accordance with the terms of each easement.

According to Dani Almeida, Conservation Easement Steward, “The site walk’s one of the most enjoyable parts of the job. Many landowners have owned the property for decades – even generations. It’s really fun to walk with them and learn about the family history, the property history, and hear how things have changed over time. It’s also a great way to stay up to date about management activities and keep landowners engaged.”

Stewardship Director, Deborah Goard, emphasizes that SELT strives to keep an open line of communication and be a resource to landowners. In addition to this newsletter, SELT offers educational publications and referrals to professional resources, services and expertise.

On this important 10-year milestone, Deborah adds, “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.”

So, look for our staff and volunteers this season and come enjoy a walk with us. We would love to learn more about your experiences during the past year and your plans for the future.

The site visit is just another way that you are working with us to Keep the Promise.



Dani Almeida, Conservation Easement Steward, on a site walk. PHOTO BY JERRY MONKMAN

CONNECT WITH US!

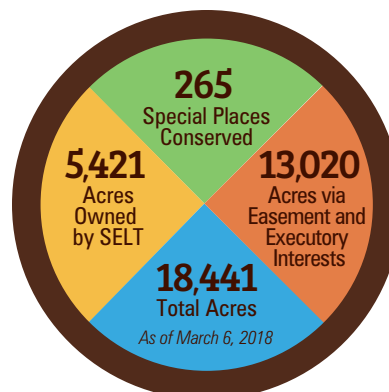
- Sign up for our **free monthly e-news** on our website or by emailing info@seltnh.org
- Stop by our office at 6 Center Street, Exeter, NH, and say hi!



Find SELT on Facebook to stay in touch with us daily!

www.seltnh.org

Land Conservation by the Numbers



Thanks for doing your part to assure these lands are permanently protected!

Landowners Can Help NH Bats in Decline

As landowners in New Hampshire, most of you have likely noticed a decline in bats on your property in the last 10 years. This decline is due in large part to white-nose syndrome, which is caused by a fungus that grows where bats hibernate, known as hibernacula. Because of this fungus, two bat species that were once common in New Hampshire, the little brown bat and northern long-eared bat, are now listed as endangered in the state. The northern long-eared bat is also listed as threatened federally under the Endangered Species Act. Currently, scientists across the country are working hard to get white-nose syndrome under control. We can help locally by recognizing the importance of bats, understanding white-nose syndrome, supporting research, and caring for the bats on our properties.

The Importance of Bats

Bats can be misunderstood and underappreciated. People think of them as dirty rats with wings or something out of a horror movie. In reality, bats play an important role in our lives, and without them our ecosystem would change drastically. I, for one, greatly appreciate bats for feasting on mosquitoes. In fact, they are the single greatest predator of night-flying insects! This is important for agriculture because bats feed on many crop pests, which helps reduce the amount of pesticides that need to be applied. They are also important pollinators and seed spreaders. In addition to helping with crops and maintaining our ecosystem as we know it, researchers have even been able to develop

vaccines and medicines, and improve flight and sonar technologies by studying bats. All of these benefits are at risk if white-nose syndrome continues to spread west and bat populations in New Hampshire don't recover.

What is white-nose syndrome?

White-nose syndrome is caused by an invasive fungus from Europe that thrives in the cool and humid conditions found in caves and mines. The white fungus grows on a bat's nose, ears, wings, and tail, irritating the bat and forcing it to wake up frequently during hibernation in the winter months. While awake, the infected bat will quickly use up the fat reserves intended to last through the entire hibernation and eventually it will starve to death. As the fungus is easily spread from cave to cave, it has quickly decimated bat populations in the northeast and is continuing to spread west.

Current Research and Findings

Fortunately, state and federal agencies, universities, and conservation organizations are working together to find a solution and recent studies are starting to show glimmers of hope for the bats. For example, new research by a U.S. Forest Service mycologist shows that UV light treatments may be a possible way to kill the fungus in caves. Additionally, a 2017 study from the University of New Hampshire (UNH) indicated that little brown bats may be developing a natural resistance to the fungus.

continued on page 5

The fungus causing white-nose syndrome can be seen on these brown bats.

PHOTO BY NANCY HEASLIP, NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



But, by no means are bats out of the woods yet. Researchers continue to closely monitor bat populations both in hibernation and in their maternity colonies. Another UNH study is currently investigating several little brown bat maternity colonies across New England. For this study, bats are temporarily captured, counted, and banded for long-term monitoring. Knowing that bats usually return to the same maternity colony every year, researchers can see who is surviving the winters in hibernation. Researchers can also track reproduction success, which is especially significant because bats typically only give birth to 1 pup per year. Studies like this stress the importance of protecting known maternity colonies in order to give every pup a chance to survive and contribute towards rebuilding the bat population.

The Role of the Landowner

Now that the northern long-eared bat is federally listed as a threatened species, there are restrictions on management activities that can occur near known maternity roost trees and hibernaculum. On lands with wetland easements held by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or when NRCS financial assistance for management

activities is being used (for example EQIP) there may be restrictions on tree cutting. The restrictions include but may not be limited to limitations on tree cutting between June 1st and July 31st and consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and NH Fish and Game if tree cutting throughout the remainder of the year occurs within ¼ mile of a known hibernaculum. Here at SELT, over the last few years we have had to work with these restrictions for some of our own forest management activities on land we own that are protected by wetlands easements held by NRCS.

Even if you do not have a federal wetland easement on your property or have not received funding from NRCS, restrictions may still apply if there is a roost or hibernaculum on or near your land. If you are planning to do any tree cutting, check these resources.

Are there bats near you?

- www2.des.state.nh.us/nhb_datacheck
- If you know you have bats, call 603-223-2541 to get timing advice and/or get a permit.
- If unsure, check out the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guide. fws.gov/Midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/KeyFinal4dNLEB.html.

Quick Tips for Bat Stewardship

- Avoid disturbing bats in hibernation-don't go in caves in the winter.
- If it is not necessary, don't exclude bats from your attic or barn.
- If you know you have a summer roost or maternity colony in your attic, barn or outbuildings don't disturb them. Report the population to NH Fish and Game.
- Leave dead trees or snags on your property for roosting.
- Build or buy a bat house to put on your property (size, color, and location matter!).

Learn which bats are on your property!

There is a small device you can buy called an Echometer Touch that connects to your tablet or smartphone and allows you to record and identify bat calls, echometertouch.com

Volunteer

NH Fish and Game is looking for people to help with summer bat counts <http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/surveys/bats.html>

Fun Facts

- Bat droppings, called guano, make excellent fertilizer
- Bats can eat up to 1,200 mosquitos in an hour
- Bats can fly up to speeds of 60 mph

Learn More

To learn more about bats, white-nose syndrome, and how you can help, check out the resources below. In this difficult time for bats, it is important that we do our part to understand and help them.

Bat Conservation International: Batcon.org

NH Fish and Game: wildlife.state.nh.us/nongame/bats-nh.html

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:

fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nleb/nlebfactsheet.html



Upcoming Events

Registration for SELT’s field trips is easier than ever through our website. **For a complete calendar, and to register, visit www.selnh.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!

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

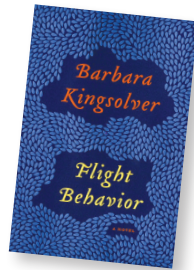
Birders, grab your binoculars for this annual event. Beginners and intermediate skill levels will enjoy exploring six different bird habitats.

SELT Book Club

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



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. Donation not required.

Conservation Celebration

Thursday, June 28 · 5:30–8pm · Flag 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 drinks, hors d’oeuvres, and conversation with like-minded SELTies. Tickets will be available soon!



Flag Hill Winery BY EVA POWERS



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

Welcome Seasonal Land Stewards

To help ensure we are able to visit each easement property in person, we have again hired two Seasonal Land Stewards that will work with us from May through August. Myrilla Hartkopf will be the first to join us in early May. Myrilla is a 2017 graduate of UNH with a B.S. in Environmental Conservation and Sustainability. Hannah Epstein, who will be graduating from UVM in May with a B.S. in Environmental Sciences, will join us in early June. As Seasonal Land Stewards, their main responsibility will be to conduct site visits on our conservation easement lands. And, for the first time, they will also help maintain trails and

boundaries, remove invasive species and conduct site visits on SELT's fee-owned lands. (Yes, we monitor our own lands too!)

If one of our Seasonal Land Stewards contacts you to schedule a site visit on your land, we encourage you to join them on the walk if you can. Visiting with the Seasonal Land Stewards to talk about your current management activities and future plans will not only help SELT understand what is happening on the land, it will also be a fantastic learning experience for them to better understand what motivates you, as a landowner, to own and manage your conserved land.



National Trails Day – Celebrating 10 years of 100% Monitoring!

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

What better way to celebrate 10 years of 100% Monitoring 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. Register online at www.seltnh.org.



SELT

SOUTHEAST LAND TRUST
of NEW HAMPSHIRE

PO Box 675 Exeter, NH 03833
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Annual Monitoring Changes

see page 1

Keeping the Promise of Stewardship

see page 3

Thinking of **SELLING YOUR PROPERTY?**

More and more conserved land is selling – meaning there is a whole new generation of landowners who need to understand what a conservation easement is and the associated privileges and responsibilities.

SELT can help make your sale smoother by working with your realtor to properly inform buyers about your conservation easement. Once you've decided to sell and have selected a realtor, please have him or her call us. We will provide an electronic packet of information to incorporate in your disclosures and can answer questions from buyers. Once you've scheduled a closing, please remember to give us the required notification of transfer of title in accordance with the terms of the easement.

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**

The Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Everlasting is published semi-annually and is the Easement Stewardship newsletter of the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire. Edited by Deborah Goard and Jennifer Pribble.